

To the assessing officer,

I wish to object to the proposed development at 164–172 and 174–194 William Street, Woolloomooloo. I am a unit owner at the Horizon directly impacted by the proposed development.

I am not against more housing in Woolloomooloo. I also support affordable housing in principle. This is a well-located area and it makes sense that new homes should be considered here.

My concern is that this proposal goes well beyond what the planning controls allow, even after the affordable housing uplift is taken into account. The result is a building that is too high, too permanent in its impacts, and not adequately justified by the material submitted.

### **The proposal goes beyond the Housing SEPP uplift**

The applicant's material states that the base height controls are 22 metres and 35 metres. With the Housing SEPP uplift, those controls would increase to 28.6 metres and 45.5 metres. That uplift is already a significant increase to the height otherwise allowed on the site.

The proposal does not stay within that increased envelope. The height variation report identifies the William Street frontage as reaching 66.1 metres and the internal park frontage as reaching 68.8 metres. The largest breach is 23.3 metres, or 51.2%, above the already-uplifted height control.

That is the main issue. The applicant is not simply asking to use the 30% affordable housing uplift. It is asking to go far beyond it. In my view, that should not be accepted.

### **The affordable housing benefit is temporary, but the building is permanent**

The Urban Design Report says the proposal relies on the infill affordable housing provisions, which allow a 30% increase in floor space and building height where 15% of the total FSR is provided as affordable housing for 15 years.

That creates an obvious imbalance. The affordable housing obligation is time-limited, but the extra building height, bulk and density will remain permanently.

Once a building of this scale is approved and constructed, the impact on the area cannot be reversed. The community will be left with the extra height and bulk long after the affordable housing period has expired.

That is not a good planning trade-off.

### **The development appears future-proofed for long-term private residential use**

The proposal also includes a large amount of parking: 32 retail spaces, 289 residential spaces, 10 visitor spaces and 331 spaces in total.

That matters because the built form is not temporary. The building, apartment yield, parking and overall scale will remain after the affordable housing obligation ends.

The development therefore appears capable of operating as a high-value private residential scheme in the longer term, while relying on a temporary affordable housing obligation to obtain additional development capacity now. That should be given real weight in the assessment.

A permanent increase in height and density should not be approved unless the public benefit is equally clear, durable and proportionate.

### **The Design Integrity Panel's comments do not support extra height**

The applicant relies heavily on design quality and massing studies to justify the preferred scheme. However, the Urban Design Report records a number of Design Integrity Panel concerns that should not be brushed aside.

The Panel noted that the modulation of built form, scale and material distribution had resulted in a "somewhat visually fragmented appearance". It also encouraged further refinement so the proposal better reflected the "calm, considered, and civic qualities" of the original competition-winning scheme.

Those comments are significant. They show that the proposal had not fully achieved the design intent relied upon to justify its scale.

The Panel also raised concerns about the new roof forms on the south of the FJC buildings, describing them as an additional architectural element and noting that other options should be explored. Those roof forms are part of the upper-level built form and contribute to the visual impact of the proposal. They should not be treated as minor details.

If the design outcome remains unresolved in these respects, it should not be used as a reason to approve a major height exceedance.

### **Affordable housing equity issues should be resolved before the uplift is accepted**

The Urban Design Report also records concerns about the affordable housing component itself. The Design Integrity Panel said more careful consideration was needed about the location of affordable housing apartments to provide a more equitable amenity and inclusive housing outcome. It also recommended further engagement with the nominated Community Housing Provider.

These comments go directly to the basis for the uplift. If affordable housing is being relied upon to justify additional height and floor space, then the affordable housing component should be fully resolved before the uplift is accepted.

The Department should not assume that the proposal is entitled to the 30% uplift while questions remain about equity, amenity and long-term management.

### **The applicant's preferred option is not enough**

The Urban Design Report identifies Option 1 as the "LEP + 30% Blanket Uplift" option. It then explains that other options were considered, with Option 6 selected as the preferred option for view sharing and overshadowing.

That may explain the applicant's design preference, but it does not answer the planning question.

The question is not whether Option 6 is better than other options prepared by the applicant. The question is whether the proposal should be allowed to exceed the already-uplifted height limit by up to 23.3 metres.

I do not consider that has been justified.

**Conditions are not an adequate answer**

This issue should be resolved before approval, not left to conditions.

Conditions can deal with detailed design matters or management requirements. They cannot fix a building envelope that is too high. Once the height and massing are approved, the main impact has already been accepted.

The appropriate response is to require a revised proposal that fits within the applicable height limits. If the Housing SEPP applies, the proposal should fit within the SEPP envelope. If the SEPP does not properly apply, the ordinary LEP height controls should apply.

**Conclusion**

I support more housing and affordable housing in principle, but this proposal goes too far.

The applicant is seeking a permanent height and density outcome that exceeds even the already-uplifted Housing SEPP envelope. The affordable housing benefit relied upon to justify the uplift is time-limited, while the building impacts are permanent. The applicant's own material also records unresolved concerns about design quality, roominess, affordable housing amenity and long-term management.

For these reasons, I object to the proposal in its current form.

The height exceedance should not be supported. The applicant should be required to submit a revised scheme that sits within the correct allowable height limits and resolves the design and affordable housing issues before any approval is considered.

Yours faithfully,

Name Withheld