

4 September 2018

The Hon. Anthony Roberts MP
Minister for Planning
GPO Box 5341
Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Minister

Pitt Street South Over Station Development

I object to the proposed redevelopment for a mixed use tower over the planned Pitt Street south metro station. In its current form, the proposal does not comply with planning standards and instruments and represents a gross overdevelopment of the site that will result in unacceptable impacts.

The proposed residential and/or commercial tower of 150 metres with 47-metre podium over the Sydney Metro Pitt Street south station fails to comply with the Hyde Park West Sun Access Plane and setback requirements in the Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012 at its boundary with the Princeton Apartments. It also fails to comply with its own claimed Over Station Development Design Guidelines whose objectives stated in the environmental impact statement aim to “minimise privacy and solar access impacts on the surrounding residential uses”.

Hyde Park Overshadowing

Hyde Park provides very rare inner city open space, which is heavily used by residents, workers and visitors. A growing number of residential apartments are being built in the central business district, all of which have no private open space, making it more vital than ever that we protect Hyde Park’s amenity to ensure the 500,000 daily visitors and local residents have nearby space for respite and passive recreation. This requires protecting sun in the colder months.

The purpose of the Hyde Park West Sun Access Plane is to end the progressive shadow creep from higher buildings that has occurred over the years and to retain the park’s remaining direct sunlight. Approval of any additional shadowing of Hyde Park in breach of the access plane on the grounds that it is only small sets a precedent for the cumulative loss of all winter sun from multiple developments over time.

The proposed development would increase shadows on Hyde Park between April and September to degrees that the application describes as varying from negligible to moderate. ***Introducing new shadowing of Hyde Park, particularly over the colder months, is in breach of the access plane and unacceptable, and must be rejected.***



Residential Overshadowing

Proposed overshadowing of adjacent homes in the Princeton Apartments is devastating, in breach of planning standards and completely unacceptable. Sunlight in 57 homes during winter would drop to below two hours between 9am and 3pm, as well as in one home in the Century Towers. This will significantly affect quality of life. Winter sunlight reduces the need for heating and lighting, helps plants grow and reduces dampness and mould.

The environmental impact statement justifies this extensive and destructive removal of sunlight in neighbours' homes as "usual and expected" in the "dense high-rise environment", it claims that homes in the Princeton Apartments receive sunlight "largely" because the site is "undeveloped", and it claims that overshadowing impacts are so large because the Princeton Apartments building is "not compliant". These arguments do not represent genuine planning justifications and unfairly diminish the real impacts on existing residents.

Residential amenity in the central business district should be protected like anywhere else: if it can be severely compromised by new developments just because it is the 'city', then inner city living will become unattractive with residential investment highly risky. The notion risks the development of ghettos as residential amenity in homes can be erased to promote profit and outcomes in newer buildings. This undermines the need for planning controls or environmental protections and flies in the face of all good planning principles.

It is wrong and disingenuous to refer to the site as "undeveloped" when it accommodated four buildings ranging from three to nine storeys high that have only been or are in the process of being demolished to make way for the Sydney Metro project. Treating the site as undeveloped sets a dangerous precedent that all air space is 'undeveloped' and therefore up for grabs.

The Princeton Apartments were approved in the mid-1990s, long before the planning instruments that the environmental impact statement claims the building fails to comply with were in force. It is deceitful to imply that so-called non-compliance on the part of the Princeton Apartments is the cause of the proposed loss in solar access.

The environmental impact statement does not provide any further information on sunlight impacts in adjacent homes. It is unclear what extent of loss these homes, or other homes that may already have less than two hours of sunlight or that would retain at least two hours of sunlight, would suffer. This lacks transparency.

No attempt has been made to protect sunlight in adjacent properties with the application providing a brief statement that increasing setbacks would only have "marginal" benefits in solar access. ***The proposal must be redesigned to ensure neighbours do not lose their winter sun.***

Privacy

The environmental impact assessment fails to address privacy. Its design guidelines claim to support protecting privacy in adjacent homes however the only mention of privacy is a statement that existing homes in the Princeton Apartments can use "screens" to maintain it, reversing the onus for new development to protect existing privacy.

Given the proposed non-compliant separation with the Princeton Apartments, it is unlikely that homes that border with the site will retain any privacy. The lack of transparency on this matter is a grave concern.

Forcing residents to use screens on their windows to get any privacy, particularly when their sunlight is being removed, is unacceptable and should not be approved.

Private Views

Apartment residents live with no private open space and views help connect inside their homes to the outside world and create a sense of space.

I am concerned about significant loss of views from the future Greenland building for homes situated at the mid-rise eastern side. The loss for these homes would be significant and because such an extensive portion of their outlook would be replaced with a building wall, it would also cause massive losses of light and brightness. While the building has not yet been constructed, new owners will have bought off the plan after seeing photomontages of planned views, not knowing adjacent buildings would be demolished and replaced with a high-rise. This is unfair.

The proposed Pitt Street South Over Station Development represents an overdevelopment of the site, breaches planning standards and laws, and will cause significant impacts on residents in adjacent buildings.

I ask you to protect Hyde Park and the residential amenity of adjacent homes and reject the proposal in its current form.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'AG', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Alex Greenwich
Member for Sydney