

OBJECTION TO THE PROPOSAL SSD 6116

Sydney International Convention, Exhibition and Entertainment Precinct (SICEEP) - International Convention Centre Hotel (ICC Hotel)

We object to the proposal Sydney International Convention, Exhibition and Entertainment Precinct (SICEEP) - International Convention Centre Hotel (ICC Hotel) for the following reasons:

- 1- Award Winning public buildings being removed;
- 2- New multi-storey buildings in the area would make the area unusable for locals and visitors;
- 3- Safety;
- 4- Impact on local residential area;
- 5- the Goldsbrough being an iconic and heritage part of Darling Harbour will be obscured from the public view;
- 6- the height and scale of the new International Convention Centre (ICC) and Hotel in relation to residential neighbours;
- 7- overshadowing of the Goldsbrough from the proposed ICC and Hotel and loss of winter morning sunlight;
- 8- removal of current convention centre walkway without a viable alternative public access;
- 9- the new over-developed ICC and new hotel accommodations on Darling Harbour relatively small site would pollute the area to the point making it unusable for locals and visitors.

OBJECTION 1: AWARD WINNING PUBLIC BUILDINGS BEING REMOVED

Two remarkable award winning public buildings, the Convention Centre and the Exhibition Hall are to be demolished. The cost, noise, dust and general discomfort etc required to demolish the old to make way for the new buildings must be seriously considered.

How nonsensical it can be to pull down the \$120 million and spend \$997 million in the hope of possibly making a small gains in the distant future (given the fact that historically all such estimates were grossly wrong)?

Does it make sense to pull down \$120 million worth of building that's perfectly all right while cutting urgently needed expenditure on health and education?

Few examples are on health and education cuts are listed below:

- 'Health budget slashed by \$3 billion' reported by Sean Nicholls viewed 5 May 2013, <http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/health-budget-slashed-by-3-billion-20120914-25vzg.html>

- 'NSW government remains firm on education cuts' viewed 5 May 2013
<http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/nsw-government-remains-firm-on-education-cuts-20121118-29jwc.html>

Objection 2: New multi-storey buildings in the area would make the area unusable for locals and visitors

Plans to build single tower hotel next to the new ICC on the grounds that guests need access to the new convention centre. The briefings given by Land Lease has indicated that a new hotel building will create monster standing on the foreshore blocking views and casting shadows which will make the area dark and depressing. This makes a grotesque and greedy grab for privileged few to the detriment of local population. The proposed ICC and a new multi-storey building are totally out of character in the area. It will increase the congestion in the area to the point that visit to the area becomes unbearable. It will remove the recreational use of the area for local population.

We seek that the proposed hotel comply with building height restrictions of the surrounding area, that community feedback is incorporated into the redevelopment proposal (so that it genuinely meets the principles of community consultation and not just a public relations process) and that the proposal meets the guiding principles stated by Lend Lease and NSW Government representatives at the community forum of "Darling Harbour being a great place....." We own flats in the Goldbrough residential apartment complex and will be significantly impacted by the loss of view and more importantly privacy and sun by the massive building that is proposed to be constructed directly in front of our apartments.

The primary issue raised during community consultation was the location and height of the proposed hotel. A number of alternative locations within the precinct were proposed by the community at the forums that would have less impact and still be within the Convention & Exhibition Centre. All suggested locations and alternatives were rejected by the Lend Lease representative. It is clear that money is in reality the only factor driving the location of the proposed hotel and there is no intention of keeping the hotel height within that of surrounding buildings or moving the location further south, away from the foreshore area.

Objection 3: Safety

The foreshore area directly in front of the proposed hotel is already at full capacity during peak times and special events. It cannot accommodate up to 3000 extra people. The hotel would make this area around the water's edge unsafe, particularly given the number of children that frequent the area. Placing the hotel further south would disperse crowds along the entire Darling Harbour precinct and reduce the number of people in the already heavily congested area around the water's edge.

Objection 4: Impact on local residential area

The area immediately behind the proposed hotel is Pyrmont village residential area. Currently Pyrmont Bridge Road (between Murray street and the Anzac Bridge turnoff) resembles a car park during peak periods – including weekends. Frequently traffic jams in this area completely block Harris St preventing residents from being able to travel to/from the northern part of Pyrmont. Placing the hotel in this location would exacerbate the existing congestion problem and increase traffic into local residential streets thereby negatively impacting those residents. This northern end of Darling Harbour feeds into a residential area therefore placing the hotel in this area will significantly impact this residential area.

OBJECTION 5: THE GOLDSBROUGH BEING AN ICONIC AND HERITAGE PART OF DARLING HARBOUR WILL BE OBSCURED FROM THE PUBLIC VIEW

In regard to the Great Old Wool store, the Goldsbrough Mort building (135 Pyrmont Road and Goldsbrough) is a proud reminder of the great Australian wool industry. The height of the proposed ICC convention centre is nearly to the top of the Goldsbrough's current height. The scale of the ICC and the hotel and their position will obscure the view of the Goldsbrough which is a building of iconic and heritage significance in Sydney.

As it stands, the Goldsbrough remains one of the last historic buildings in the Darling Harbour precinct that can be seen from the public areas. It is one of the remaining links to the area's historic past and one that has also been successfully reused as a modern building. The new ICC and the hotel will obscure the historic façade of the building from public view and one that has been part of the Darling Harbour landscape since Sydney's early days.

Heritage issues so strenuously fought for in the 1970s and 1980s and were responsible for the current attractive character of Pyrmont and Ultimo, must keep an honoured place in relation to this development.

See view below of the face of the Goldsbrough being obscured by the proposed ICC and hotel.



Current view of the Goldsbrough from Darling Harbour



A central function of the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority (SHFA) as stated in their website, is the care, management and interpretation of the significant natural and cultural heritage resources that exist within its jurisdiction, including buildings. Additionally, the Darling Harbour website also states the Goldsbrough building offers “a charm reminiscent of Sydney's colourful past. Originally built in 1883, the Oaks Goldsbrough Apartments maintain and incorporate unique historical features”. It also makes reference to the “magnificent neo-classical facade”. Clearly the wool stores are key historical buildings. Under the SHFA remit, they have a responsibility to ensure that the only remaining buildings of historical significance to Darling Harbour remain visible they don't allow it to be obscured from public view as shown in the two figures.

The proposed height of the hotel development is totally out of character with all building heights in Darling Harbour.

OBJECTION 6: THE HEIGHT AND SCALE OF THE NEW INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE AND HOTEL IN RELATION TO RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBOURS

At the meeting on 7 February 2013 at Ultimo, Mr Tim Parker, the Project Director, repeatedly said that the hotel is in bad location and will be relocated to reduce impact on the local residents. Yet the new hotel proposal disregards the local residents' interests. There is supposed to be a concept of view sharing in the city but in this case the whole of the eastern view of the Goldsbrough will be blocked out by the new ICC and the proposed hotel. In place of the current city skyline and Darling Harbour view there will be a wall of the rear of the proposed ICC building and the hotel.

Views to Darling Harbour and the city from our apartments and many others in the Goldsbrough's eastern facing apartments will be blocked. The heights and scale of buildings are to form a transition between the high-rise buildings in the city and low-rise buildings in the suburbs adjoining the Precinct. The heights and scale of new buildings are to respect existing buildings in the locality, particularly heritage items and buildings in conversation areas. Buildings fronting the public domain should have appropriate height, bulk, finish and street alignment so as to enhance its quality by respecting its character.'

The SREP No 26 is a well-constructed instrument that provides protections and guidelines for the general public and to allow the general public a general safeguard against over and excessive development. Such an instrument should not be simply ignored. The proposed plans show the high-rise tower could be placed further north which would minimise view loss of residents. The decision to keep the tower as far south as possible again demonstrates a total disregard for impacted residents in order to minimise impact on the Novotel building.

OBJECTION 7: OVERSHADOWING OF THE GOLDSBROUGH FROM THE PROPOSED ICC AND THE HOTEL AND LOSS OF WINTER MORNING SUNLIGHT

The ICC shadow diagrams show that there will be significant overshadowing of the Goldsbrough from the new ICC and towers, taking away morning sunlight in the all important winter mornings. This will result in increased heating costs for the apartments as well as the loss of valuable morning winter sunlight.

From the Shadow analysis diagrams in the DA it shows a significant loss of sunlight on Pyrmont Street in front of the building and the Eastern face of the Goldsbrough in winter. This is in direct contradiction on trying to make Sydney's buildings more environmentally friendly.

See Shadow diagram below from DA submission.



OBJECTION 8: REMOVAL OF CURRENT CONVENTION CENTRE WALKWAY WITHOUT A VIABLE ALTERNATIVE PUBLIC ACCESS

The vital walkway to Darling Harbour behind the current convention centre cannot be taken away as it is one of the major pedestrian traffic ways to the site and into the city, used by large numbers of people at all hours. Removing it will be a huge disaster for pedestrians and traffic in the area alike.

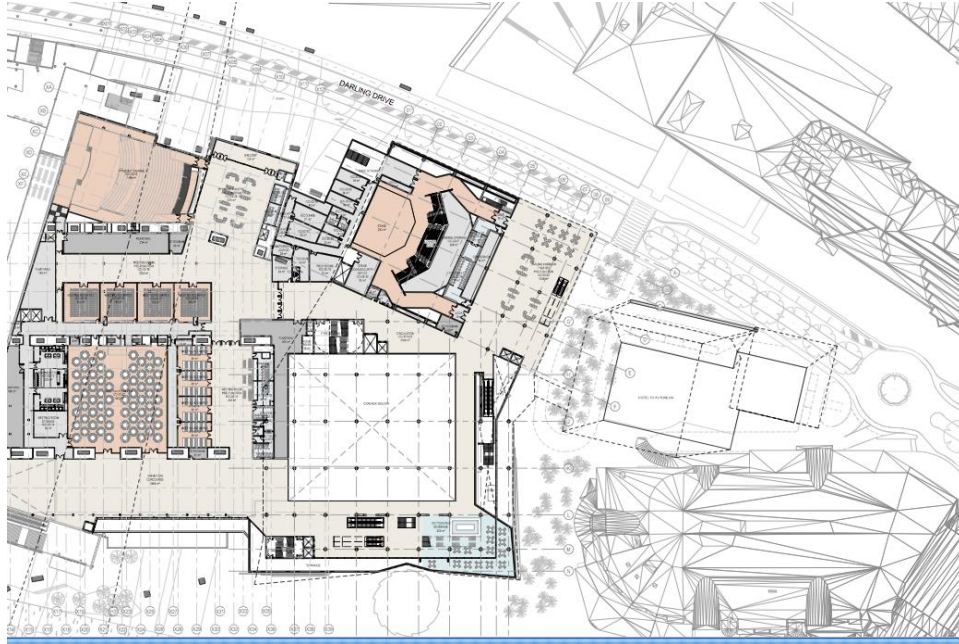
The proposed changes at Darling Harbour seem to take away an extremely important thoroughfare for the residents. From the plans it looks like the current overhead pedestrian walkway next to the Convention monorail station is being removed. Currently it is the easiest and safest walkway to enter the Darling Harbour precinct from the Western side. Currently it is estimated that there are around 7000 pedestrian traffic movements across this walkway on a regular day and many more on busy event days. It is the only safe way to cross the light rail tracks and Darling Drive and is the direct access for 2 major car parks servicing Darling Harbour. This walkway is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with continuous public access.

We note that there is no mention of the increased traffic flow within the immediate vicinity of the proposed complex. In particular we refer to the impact that such an increased amount of traffic will have on the ability of people to cross the road and the obvious increase in delays for traffic as people use the ground level pedestrian crossing.

If the walkway is removed it will affect all regular users from the public car parks on the Western side of Darling Harbour, the commercial building at 135 Pyrmont St as well as all the residential buildings on Harris in Pyrmont and the residents and guests of the Goldsbrough building.

How are pedestrians especially with children and elderly people meant to cross to and from Darling Harbour in a safe way at all hours?

From the Architectural drawings below it shows how the current walkway is removed in the proposed plan



The mentioned walkway



We seek to retain the current walkway which provides a safe and easily accessible passage way for residents and car park patrons. Removal of this walkway is irresponsible as the alternative is to make people walk over tram lines and traffic lanes. Not only is this unsafe, it will also create extreme congestion in the car park lift and bring the traffic to a standstill as people continuously stroll across the road.

Objection 9: The new over-developed ICC and hotel accommodations on Darling Harbour would pollute the area to the point making it unusable for locals and visitors

As it is, 'Darling Harbour is so choked with litter, much of it under piers and walkways out of the public eye, that it is one of the most polluted areas in Sydney' (reported by Boomerang Alliance – viewed 28 April 2013 <http://www.smh.com.au/environment/water-issues/darling-harbour-among-most-polluted-20130427-2ilaz.html>), the new over-developed ICC and contemplated hotels on a relatively small site at the edge of the water will not only remove the recreational use of the area for general public and local residents but will increase the pollution and congestion in the area to the point that visit to the area will become unbearable.

We hope Darling Harbour does not become another case of Australia not being able to look after its foreshores and heritage buildings that attracts international bodies' attention as per the case of Barrier Reef. ('UN plans to list reef as endangered' reported by Cameron Atfield, viewed 05 May 2013 <http://www.smh.com.au/environment/un-plans-to-list-reef-as-endangered-20130504-2izkq.html>)

We additionally refer to recent newspaper articles and refer to an article in SMH 14 September 2013 which quoted Carol Giuseppi (NSW Director for Tourism Accommodation Australia) "it's time for us all to face reality – there is a delicate balancing act in this city between hotel supply and demand. The recent Horwath report showed that with rising costs, profit margins for three to five star metropolitan hotels have failed to grow in the past five years despite higher room occupancies. The NSW government can avoid the mistakes of its predecessors – who took it upon themselves to artificially stimulate what were unfeasible hotel developments."

Also it must be noted that the argument that the city requires additional rooms is usurped by the following announcement published in SMH 17 October 2013, stating 'the state Planning Department has approved a \$160 million redevelopment and upgrade of the Sussex Street hotel (Four Points by Sheraton). A third tower will be built, comprising 230 rooms, new conference facilities and a 5,000 square metre, seven storey office tower. The upgrade will take the number of rooms at the hotel to more than 900.' We distinctively note that the height of this additional tower while being on the city side of Darling Harbour is substantially lower than the proposed hotel on the Pyrmont side of Darling Harbour.

Further, the Department of Lands Building is proposed to be redeveloped into a five star hotel.

Finally, the proposal that this new Darling Harbour hotel, while backing onto a residential local, will incorporate a 'lighthouse' glow at the top is a horrendous thought for those residents who require sleep at night.

It was extremely disappointing to see in the recent Sydney International Convention, Exhibition and Entertainment Precinct Assessment Report that hundreds of objections were disregarded because of the "scale and significance of the project". It is dishonest to advise people that they have an avenue for voicing their views through the submission process if there is zero intent to take those submissions on board. To date the "consultation" process appears to have been purely a Public Relations exercise, without any genuine intent in factoring in resident feedback and concerns. We hope that there is some level of integrity and respect for the people of Sydney in the process relating to the hotel and their submissions will actually be taken on board.

The Darling Harbour precinct belongs to all of Sydney not to bureaucrats. The people of NSW deserve equal focus on economic and community interests. The current hotel proposal is purely focused on economics and completely ignores the people impact. It is incumbent on the Department to ensure that the proposed hotel adheres to building height restrictions applicable to the rest of Darling Harbour and surrounding areas, and there is minimal impact on the foreshore area and the enjoyment of this area by locals, visitors and tourists.

Regards

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