

Proposed ICC Hotel at Darling Harbour.

Submission by Robin Nagy and Richard Campbell, Unit 137/ 149-197 Pyrmont Street, Pyrmont NSW 2009.

We would like to object to the current proposal for a 35 storey hotel next to Harbourside Shopping Centre.

1. There are already several hotels within a couple of minute walk of the new Convention Centre, notably the Novotel and the Ibis. There is no need to build another, closer but still disconnected from the Convention Centre. I note that in correspondence with me, The Community Development Officer Darling Harbour Live (employed by Lendlease) justified the building of the hotel as *“required as part of the State Government’s brief for the redevelopment in order to primarily service the new venues and enable Sydney to attract international events which typically prefer to be held where accommodation is integrated into the facilities”*. However, this hotel is no more ‘integrated into the facilities’ than the existing Hotels around it (Novotel and Ibis).
2. Although it only an artist’s impression the ‘lantern’ crowning the monolith is directed towards the CBD and away from the local community. This sets the tenor of the proposed development with Pyrmont, and the surrounding neighbourhood, effectively shutting-out Pyrmont from Darling Harbour. The local community will, should the proposal go ahead, endure years of noise and disruption due to the construction of the building. When the building is complete, residents will endure an hotel catering for hundreds of people on a 24/7 basis. Anti-social behaviour will inevitably result, fuelled by a combination of tourists, an increase in drinking/eating venues and other night-life facilities in and around the proposed development.
3. In addition, residents, businesses and guests in the other hotels in the area (of which there are many) will find themselves looked down upon by the hundreds of rooms in the proposed development. Yet, despite this monstrous disruption, and drastic fall in amenity, residents, visitors and business in the Pyrmont area, will have to be satisfied with a view onto the rear end of a monolithic slab of concrete and glass.
4. The building is out of proportion with the rest of the development and exiting buildings, especially its height – towering over everything else in the vicinity like a ‘giant erection’. Both historic and new buildings will be dwarfed into insignificance by this edifice. The character of the existing area as well as the new Convention Centre will be dominated by a single building (of little if any architectural merit). Residents and visitors will find

themselves in the shadow of a faceless edifice yet being 'watched' by the hundreds of sheets of glass and steel.

5. The building will not provide amenity to the existing residents, with increased noise and light pollution. It will also obscure the regular fireworks displays at Darling Harbour from Pyrmont. I would also question the effect the building will have on existing hotels and would suggest that, suddenly putting several hundred new rooms on the market would have an adverse effect on the existing local hotel trade. I suggest that the proposed development with siphon off trade and lead to the closer of smaller hotels, boutique establishments, cafes, restaurants and B&B's in the area.
6. In an article in the Sydney Morning Herald (Sept 22, 2013), Justin Owen, general manager of the Australian Hotels Association (accommodation division), said:
 - i. "...the [hotel] industry had only just regained a sense of equilibrium following a "chronic oversupply" of hotel rooms after the Olympics."
<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/09/21/1064082869458.html?from=storyrhs>
7. In an article entitled "In pursuit of rooms, beware the boom" (Sydney Morning Herald 12 May 2012) , Carolyn Cummins, the Commercial Property Editor argued that although figures show an apparent increase in demand for hotel rooms, these figures were incorrect. Cummings points to new economic research from Tourism Accommodation Australia (NSW) showing that Sydney's need for more hotel rooms is significantly lower than previously thought. She goes on the quote The director of TAA (NSW), Carol Giuseppi, who warns of:
 - i. "a real danger in NSW of another boom-and-bust cycle similar to that which occurred before the Sydney Olympics in 2000."
 - ii. massive declines in the revenue performances of hotels, "ultimately destroying investor confidence for a 10-year period".

In conclusion, there is no need for yet another hotel in the vicinity of Harbourside, Darling Harbour. There will be no improved transport link to this Hotel, so the light rail will become clogged with hotel guests, taxis will not be available for local residents, there will be an increase in traffic on the roads as hotel guests go back and forth from the airport and the signalled crossing will slow down and impede traffic along Darling Drive. The proposed building will be an eye-soar and dramatically decrease

amenity, outlook and quality of living for the residents of Pyrmont and the destruction of the pedestrian bridge via the old Convention monorail station has further reduced access from Pyrmont, effectively isolating Pyrmont from Darling Harbour, with no plans to enhance the already woeful access to Pyrmont. In addition, there has been insufficient consultation, for instance local residents in Paragon Apartments, 149-197 Pyrmont Street, have not received any letter of consultation on the ICC Hotel nor on any of the Darling Harbour redevelopment plans despite statutory consultation requirements to do so. There has been no public display of the plans for the site (which would be appropriate to display near the site with clear details of how to make a submission). Searching on the Department of Planning Website for 'Darling Harbour' does not yield any information on the Darling Harbour Live project and it is extremely difficult to find any plans through the poor and unclear navigation system on this website. It would appear that either systemic mistakes have been made or there is a concerted attempt to drive through planning applications, paying lip-service to legislative requirements and scorning local communities in favour of tourism, construction and big business.