

Submission relating to application SSD 6011

SSD 6011 – Mixed use residential development within the South West Plot

I am a resident of The Peak Apartments and we are against the proposed use of the Entertainment Centre Precinct for the construction of high rise residential building and the student accommodation. Reasons are:

- Gross underestimation of impact on traffic and infrastructure.
- Insufficient recreational areas and facilities.
- Excessive obstruction of view of many private apartments in favour of the new Lend Lease apartments.
- The residential towers do not enhance the Darling Harbour foreshore.
- Insufficient consultation and secretive planning process.

Gross underestimation of impact on traffic and infrastructure

The application proposes an addition of 1040 parking spaces in the new Darling Harbour precinct for the new residential and office towers. While the application includes a large number of parking spaces which will significantly increase the number of traffic in the area, it makes no attempt to create extra roads to alleviate the impact. In fact the only proposed change is to reduce Darling Drive to 1 lane each way which is going to worsen the current situation.

The EIS has conducted minimal evaluations on the major roads which would be impacted by the extra traffic generated by the new development. Following are just two examples:

- The EIS made no evaluation on Eddie Avenue which is the major inlet for motorists travelling from the Haymarket / Darling Harbour area to the Eastern suburbs. Motorists travelling on Eddie Avenue are already experiencing major congestions. A trip from Eastern suburbs during peak hours on Thursday or Friday would typically consist of a 30 minute wait at the Eddie Avenue at the George St intersection.
- Sussex St is typically congested on Saturday night from North to South, which will no doubt be adversely impacted by this project

The application proposes to build residential apartments and office space that could increase the population of Haymarket by approximately 5000 as a conservative estimate, yet there is surprisingly no plan for any extra public transport. With the completion of Central Park apartments the EIS should no doubt conduct a detailed analysis on the impact it would have on the capacity of the roads and Central Station.

Insufficient recreational areas and facilities

In the proposed development plan, the Haymarket population will almost double from the current 5376 (2011 census) to almost 10000, yet without any comparable increase in recreational areas for the existing and new residents. Part of the Tumbalong Park will be used to build the new Exhibition Centre, further reducing the recreational area available. Should there be any further increase in population it would only be sensible to extend Tumbalong Park all the way to include the current Entertainment Centre area, however once the land is transferred (99 years lease) and residential building are developed, this land will be lost forever (at least up to 99 years) for a very short term monetary profit to the Government.

From personal experience, the existing Ultimo Community Centre is also operating near capacity. The sports centre and facilities are already struggling to cope with the needs of existing residents around the area. An extra sporting centre should be built along with the proposed residential buildings. This is especially the case with the proposed student accommodation centre, as students have greater demand on sporting facilities than most other groups.

Obstruction of view in favour of the new Lend Lease apartments

The proposal includes the election of 14 towers which will block almost all view of the lower levels of North, North East and North West sides of The Peak Apartments, views of the upper levels will also be severely impaired, as evidenced by the envelope simulation given to us in the meeting with Lend Lease. The EIS claims that this is “inevitable” however I cannot agree with that. The fact is that the new Lend Lease apartments will be able to enjoy unobstructed 180° views which will be sold at correspondingly high value at the expense, both economic and psychological of existing residents around the site. The maximisation of monetary benefit to Lend Lease at the detriment of existing residents strikes me as grossly unfair, and this opinion is clearly shared by many owners of The Peak Apartments. A more sensible plan would be to reduce the number of new towers to create true view corridors and to reduce the height of the new towers to such that existing residents can also enjoy the magnificent Darling Harbour view that belongs to all.

The residential towers do not enhance the Darling Harbour foreshore

The land that Entertainment Centre occupies is a part of the public land that extends all the way to and includes Tumbalong Park. This land is a valuable part of the Tumbalong Park/Darling Harbour area that is available for future improvements of Darling harbour to foster the image of Sydney. We believe was the original idea of the Darling Harbour Development. It should never be "commercialised" and hence forever lost. The prime example of such destructive move is the commercialisation of area behind the Sydney Opera House – Bennelong Apartments, the infamous "toasters". The land should have been retained as the extension of the Opera House, not as part of the concrete jungle blocking any further improvement of the Sydney Opera House which we believe put Sydney on the World map. Had the land been retained instead of sold for the unsightly apartment blocks, it could be redeveloped whichever way to suit the demand of the time. We do not wish this to happen to Darling Harbour.

Insufficient consultation and secretive planning process

The Darling Harbour redevelopment project was conducted in a way that defies the norm. In the past, a major development project would involve stages of public consultation and an open tendering process to attract the best design which would balance the interests of all stakeholders. However in this case the tender process was conducted behind closed door, little consultation was made before the winner was announced, by which stage the re-development plan was already largely settled and contracts signed with the NSW Government. The project is largely in favour of Lend Lease at the cost of all the general public.

Conclusion

The near doubling of the population in Haymarket will have a strong adverse impact on the quality of lives of existing residents. The EIS does not adequately address the impact the extra cars will

have on the adjacent major arteries, which are already operating near capacity. There is simply no accompanying roads, public transport, recreational facilities, park areas for the new residents, instead it relies solely on already strained existing resources. The obstruction of view from the new Lend Lease apartment is also excessive and totally profit driven with little regards to the impact on the surrounding buildings. We believe that the proposed population increase is not sustainable and should be greatly curtailed. The heights of the new residential towers should also be reduced to more reasonable levels to enable view sharing. New recreational areas and sporting facilities should also be created for the new residents.

This submission is made on behalf of several residents of

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