

# D&A Markakis Pty Ltd

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The Minister for Planning – NSW Government Planning and Environment

Via Online Submission: [www.majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/page/on-exhibition/](http://www.majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/page/on-exhibition/)

Attention: Director – Key Sites Assessments & Minister for Planning

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Re: Objection to Application SSD 9194 at 13-23 Gibbons Street (SP 60485) proposing the construction of an 18 storey student accommodation development comprising of 488 rooms**

As the owners of the heritage property 118 Regent St, Redfern, known as the former St Lukes Presbyterian Church building ('St Luke's Church'), we are writing to object to the proposed construction of an 18 storey student accommodation development comprising of 488 rooms.

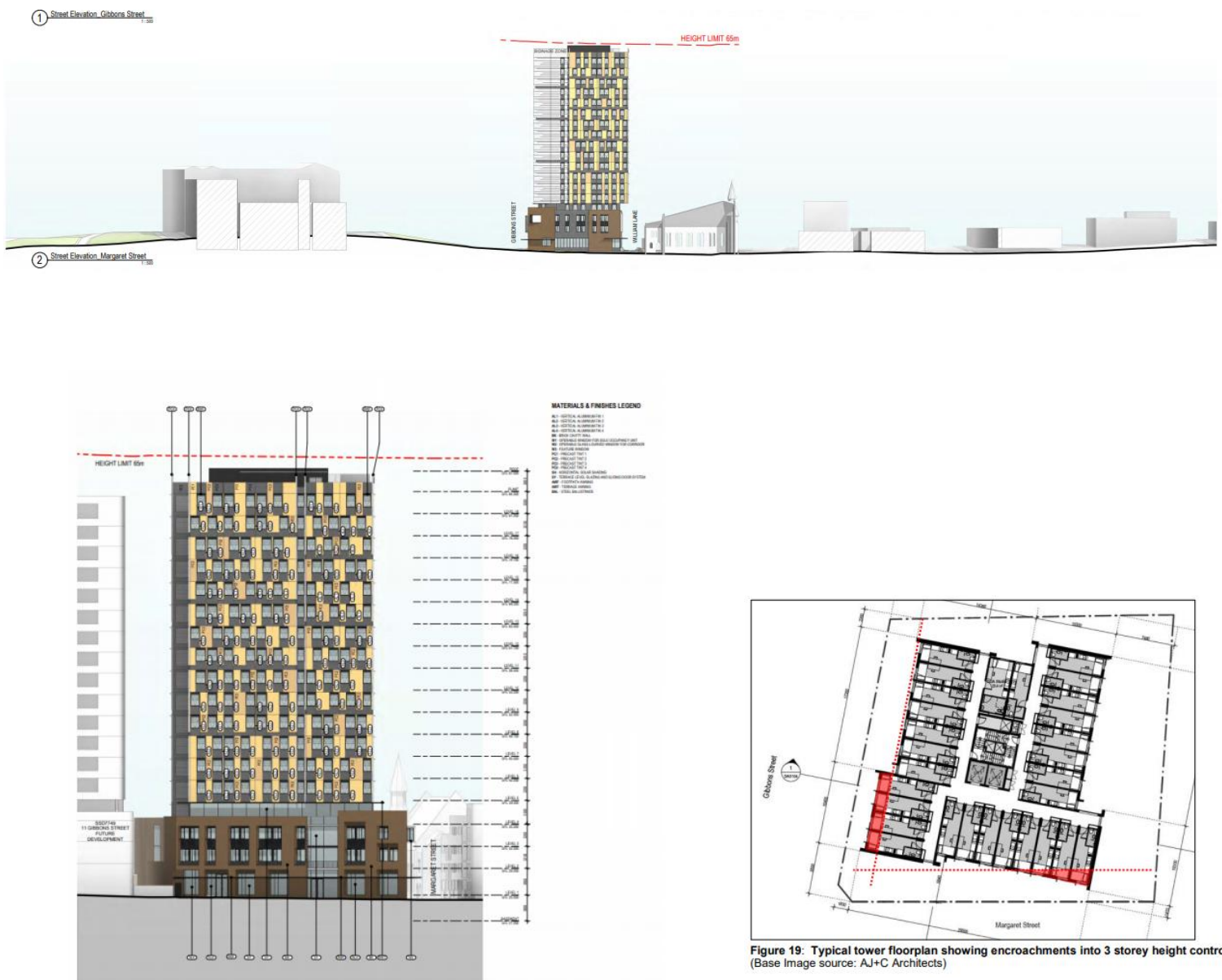
Our grounds of objection in relation to the proposed developments are as follows:

- The development is too large in scale, bulk and size given its context and the immediate low scale surroundings of the site to its east and south and especially in consideration of its proximity to the heritage property St Luke's Church
- The visual impact of the proposed development is substantially detrimental to the heritage of St Luke's Church given its congested design due to the development's proposed use, bulk and scale
- A significant increase in overshadowing would occur as a result of the proposal development over St Luke's Church which requires sunlight to be enjoyed by the community and for its occupants, being a heritage property and given its prominent history in the surrounding area
- The proposed use of student accommodation results in a considerable decrease in amenity to the surrounding area through the increase in congestion and impact on heritage
- Concerns over the construction and vibration impact on the heritage former church property

### Issues with Scale, Bulk and Size of Proposed Development given the Site and Locality

Historically, as acknowledged in the applicant's Statement of Heritage Impact, the surrounding context of St Luke's Church comprised of low rise commercial development and residential terrace housing. Despite the applicant's Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) stating that a number of buildings have obtained or are proposing 18 storey buildings in the northern part of the precinct, it is essential to consider the immediate locality of the site wherein the applicant's proposal is situated at the edge of the northern precinct on a site neighbouring existing low scale development (i.e. the BP service station, a three to five storey residential flat building and local heritage item, St Lukes Church, upon which the proposed development will have significantly detrimental impacts upon.

Whilst an 18 storey building on an adjoining site (the former City of Sydney Council depot) may be proposed adjoining the applicant's site, a sensible and reasonable planning outcome should consider an appropriate height for 13-23 Gibbons St to bridge the impacts between the southern low scale development and northern high scale developments. Please see the below excerpts from the applicant's architectural plans and EIS which demonstrate the immense incompatibility in bulk and scale between heritage item St Luke's Church and the proposed development.



**Figure 19: Typical tower floorplan showing encroachments into 3 storey height control area**  
(Base Image source: AJ+C Architects)

## Visual Impact on Church

The applicant's proposal further acknowledges a moderate visual impact on St Luke's Church, which we believe would significantly diminish the prominence and landmark qualities of the heritage church building. The NSW heritage database identifies that "St Luke's Presbyterian Church is a fine example of a Victorian Gothic Church which makes an important contribution to the streetscape and township of Redfern." We are deeply troubled by the effect on the streetscape and visual impact which an 18 storey building comprising of 488 rooms for the purposes of student accommodation will have in such close proximity to the heritage church building, especially in consideration of the church's historical context and it's identified importance to the streetscape which will be significantly impacted and undermined by the proposed development.

The intended use of student accommodation is additionally obviously reflected in the design of the building with an immense amount of prominent windows throughout the proposed development, which detrimentally impact on the heritage qualities and significance of the church. Please see below excerpt (figure 24) from the applicant's EIS showing an example of the window and narrow room configuration of the proposal which would visually overwhelm St Luke's Church and result in a bulky and congested appearance which substantially detracts from St Luke's Church. The excerpt to the right (figure 13) from the applicant's EIS also demonstrates the proposed development in the context of its existing and proposed/assumed surrounds which highlights the scale, bulk and visual congestion of the proposed development.



Figure 24: Indicative layout of ensuite room



Figure 13: The proposal in the context of surrounding existing and proposed developments  
(source AJ+C Architects)

Whilst the applicant has advocated that the proposed development provides a direct visual 'cue' to the adjacent heritage item via windows of the same scale and shape as the church windows, we are concerned by the height and bulk of the development and consider that the proposed development having windows of the same scale and shape as the church windows is closer to mimicking the church's heritage features instead of being complementary or sympathetic to St Luke's Church. The use of adopting such features within the proposed development which have been taken from St Luke's Church would undermine their significance in their original heritage and historical context.

Please see below images (the first being a professionally taken photo and the second a snapshot from Google maps) showing the heritage church as it sits in the current streetscape. These photos demonstrate how the present surrounding low scale development (with the existing site shown in the right side of the top two images) allows the heritage building to maintain a prominent presence.

These images can be contrasted to the concept image beneath them showing the proposed development provided to us by the applicant (we are uncertain as to the accuracy of the scale of the concept image). Any high density development in such close proximity to St Luke's Church will have a detrimental impact on the heritage property's contribution to the streetscape and township of Redfern.





The applicant's Heritage Impact Statement has also acknowledged that the proposed colour scheme comprising of a combination of painted yellow and grey concrete panels and bronze and white coloured aluminium, potentially distracts from the prominence of the church building. We believe that the proposed colour scheme and design will substantially distract from the prominence of St Luke's Church to the streetscape and surrounding area. Further to this, we disagree that the concrete blade wall offers a neutral backdrop that could maintain the silhouette of the church spire as advocated in the Heritage Impact Statement as the final concept image of the concrete blade walls appear to be very white and bright with a lined pattern, distracting and undermining the prominence and significance of St Luke's Church. In this respect, please see below excerpt from the applicant's EIS, a concept image of the concrete blade wall which is prominent to Gibbons St (the applicant has not provided a final concept image for the concrete blade wall which will face Regent St for consideration of visual heritage impacts). The below image also demonstrates the detrimental visual impact in consideration of the surrounding low scale developments.



## Overshadowing

Immense overshadowing as a result of the applicant's development would be experienced by St Luke's Church. During mid-winter, between 11am and 12pm the additional overshadowing as a result of the proposal would commence. By 1pm St Luke's Church will be significantly overshadowed, and from 2pm to 3pm completely overshadowed. In the present surrounding built environment, St Luke's Church experiences negligible, if any shadowing from what can be seen from the applicant's shadow diagrams, which is essential given its heritage significance and prominence in the streetscape of the Redfern township. The applicant's development application has given little consideration as to the additional visual detriment the overshadowing onto the presently prominent heritage building will also have on St Luke's Church. Further, the amenity of the building will be considerably detrimented by the substantial overshadowing impacts from the proposed development.

We also note that the applicant has included a shadow diagram in their EIS with what they allege to be 'likely future surrounding development' when in reality St Luke's Church is immediately and only surrounded by low scale developments. Likely future surrounding developments which the applicant has included are assumptive as heritage considerations on St Luke's Church from such 'likely developments' have not been addressed or accounted for and the maximum building height (which is immensely compatible with St Luke's Church) is also likely assumed in applicant's diagrams. Please find an excerpt of the applicant's shadow diagram in their EIS below which does not properly address their actual and resultant overshadowing from their proposal in their EIS.



**Figure 26: Mid-winter shadow diagrams which incorporate shadows from likely future surrounding development.**

Additional shadows created by the proposal over and above existing and future shadows created by adjoining development are shown outlined in red (source: AJ+C Architects)

The actual overshadowing diagram on the following page, during mid-winter at 2pm, provided to us by the applicant demonstrates the significant and direct impact the development will actually have on St Luke's Church, completely overshadowing the heritage church building.

#### shadowing : existing vs projected



1 Shadows exist mid-winter 1400



2 Shadows proposed mid-winter 1430

### Decrease in amenity to Surrounding Area

Presently, the existing development on 13-23 Gibbons St has 32 residential units with basement parking improving the amenity of the area by allowing for considerable off-street parking so that the community can utilise on street parking. Despite the close proximity to the nearby train station, occupants of the proposed 488 room development needing or preferring vehicular transport will place an enormous strain on the surrounding roads and infrastructure in close proximity to the development. Further, there is no management strategy which can adequately regulate or account for which occupants of the development will chose to utilise vehicular transport over train/rail.

In relation to the general management of the occupants, it will be extremely difficult to regulate the conduct of such an enormous amount of occupants in relation to behaviour outside of or nearby the proposed development on neighbouring properties, especially those of heritage status which require preservation.

In our opinion this proposed development falls far from an optimal development for the site, as the use of student accommodation is too concentrated and does not reflect the character of the area. If the area becomes a saturated student accommodation precinct, this will also undermine the heritage nature, character, culture and township of Redfern.

## Construction and Vibration Impacts on St Luke's Church

The applicant's proposal acknowledges a moderate to high impact to St Luke's Presbyterian Church by way of vibrations during construction activities. The consequences of any vibration impacts from the construction of such a large developments causing detriments to the structure or period embellishments and intricate architecture of St Luke's Church is highly undesirable for a heritage Victorian Gothic Church (constructed in 1876) which is integral to the streetscape of the Redfern township and irreplaceable.

The applicant's Heritage Impact Statement recommends on page v that...

*"The cumulative impact of ongoing development in the area, as designated for the Redfern Waterloo Growth Centre, should be considered in future assessments in the area to ensure impacts to heritage items are minimised where possible."*

In response to the above recommendation, we wholeheartedly agree, and urge that the development in its current form be refused by the Minister of Planning due to the development application's bulk, height, intensity, overshadowing, impacts on heritage, and other many detrimental impacts which would be created from the applicant's development proposal on the southern boundary of the Redfern-Waterloo sites area.

I welcome the opportunity to meet with you onsite to further explain our concerns. Please do not hesitate to contact me on 02 8596 2799 or via email to [jm@rwnewtown.com.au](mailto:jm@rwnewtown.com.au) to discuss further.

Yours sincerely,

Dimitrios, Anastasia, Anthony and Matthew Markakis  
Directors of D & A Markakis Pty Ltd