

Unit 414/50 Murray Street
PYRMONT NSW 2009

12/02/2017

Dear Sir

I am writing in response to the Mirvac State significant development application for the redevelopment of the low rise Harbourside commercial precinct into a new retail shopping centre and residential apartment tower.

I acknowledge the need to upgrade the facilities on this site, especially in light of the current neighbouring rebuilding programs. At the same time, I strongly suggest that this is a prime opportunity to address some of the existing issues with the current footprint and to avoid repeating them. It is imperative to ensure that the essential nature of the site is added to, rather than diminished.

My family has lived in the Darling Harbour One Building in Murray Street Pyrmont since 2000. We chose our home based on its location and the spaciousness and beauty of the natural environment, centred on the harbour and historic Pyrmont Bridge. It is this that makes Darling Harbour so unique. One has proximity to the city and its many conveniences, while enjoying the breathing space provided by the human scale area of the Darling Harbour Precinct. It is like a “back yard” to the city—a place to retreat to in comfort, to enjoy a walk, open space, the gardens, the playgrounds, and festivities throughout the year - a place to just get away from it all! A respite from the bustling, over-energised high rise city environment which is so close but from which we are protected by this beautiful open area.

The courageous vision behind the original development of this historical precinct at the time of Australia's Bicentennial celebrations - preserving it for public enjoyment and as a centre for tourism - deserves to be maintained and built upon for future generations. Our city should provide for and protect such areas.

A large commercial enterprise by its very nature, looks at a commercial site as an opportunity to maximise profit as its bottom line objective. As a local resident I appreciate the enhanced facilities and services that may emanate from this redevelopment proposal and will no doubt enjoy those on a daily basis. But I am also very aware of the risks involved for the environment if adequate care is not taken. The application in its current form seems to undermine the essential character of Darling Harbour.

For example, as a resident I am well served for retail needs in my local area. There is the extensive CBD shopping area, the Broadway shopping centre as well as the

Market city retail centre all within close proximity, and all providing a wide range of retail options. There is no need for increased retail development in Darling Harbour. This is not a place for excessive retail and commercial development. That would be in opposition to the current character of this public space and the purposes for which it was designed.

One of the pleasures of this precinct is the significance accorded to Darling Harbour and to Pyrmont Bridge itself. Local residents, Sydney-siders and tourists, national and international are all drawn to this centre. Sitting as it does against the backdrop of the city skyline, it provides an attractive and visually pleasing environment. It is almost an oasis, a counterpoint to the CBD itself. One can come here and still feel part of the great city of Sydney and yet have an altogether different experience of the city. And that simple fact adds great value to the city and the State.

Here in Darling Harbour people have been traditionally able to access the harbour directly. They sit by the water, watch the fireworks and engage in other activities provided for their entertainment. Or they come simply, often in family groups to quietly enjoy the ambiance of the environment. It is an open, gracious space where people and the environment are significant.

Aesthetically and visually, the volume of the harbour is the central feature. The integrity of this volume is enhanced by ensuring that the space around it is not compressed. There is in fact the chance to open up the space more, as well as resist further encroachment on the waterfront. This is a particular need in the section of the site at the northern end where the current complex provides a less than satisfactory outcome in this regard.

I strongly believe in ensuring the centrality and integrity of the harbour. In considering the benefits and drawbacks of this current application please ensure that Darling Harbour is not turned into a pseudo-canal by the developments around it. Setting firm requirements in relation to setback from the water, height and density of any structures are important in ensuring that the volume of water is not dwarfed or minimised.

Consider the Pyrmont Bridge itself - a wonderful working reminder of the history of our precinct. Currently the bridge on the proposed redevelopment site's northern end is accorded less than optimal conditions. It is severely crowded by the buildings and to a large extent not easily accessible. The bridge needs room to breathe. It needs to be seen unobstructed, in its full glory.

I draw your attention to the positive impact of the removal of the Monorail in helping to free up and de-clutter the structure of the bridge. Also the removal of the South Steyne Restaurant and wharf which again opened up the area beautifully. This

Mirvac redevelopment could add significantly to this de-cluttering if creatively approached. However I find little in the current proposal to assist in this - it wants to clutter the bridge further by tying it into its retail centre - rather than allowing it to stand as a defining feature of the harbourside.

We are being provided with a unique opportunity to fix the mistakes of the previous design solution by giving the structure some space . I urge you to allow the bridge to be appreciated by visitors to Darling Harbour through control of the proximity of buildings to the bridge. Let's enhance the feature of this heritage bridge rather than diminish it. Give more space between the it and any buildings and maintain the low rise profile, especially at the northern end of the site.

The Darling Harbour precinct as a whole has been sympathetically linked to the city historically. If we look at the buildings currently surrounding Darling Harbour and the Cockle Bay and King Street Wharf developments low line buildings have been the norm. Established building heights have provided both a step down from the City and a gradual and visually pleasing link as we move from the high rise landscape to the public spaces of the waterfront environment. By this means the looming presence of monolithic buildings has been gently transitioned.

I draw your attention to the fact that Darling Quarter, Darling Square and Darling Island all honour this precedent. More recently the Barangaroo site has continued to reflect this stepped arrangement with its direct foreshore buildings maintaining a low profile, with high buildings sitting back behind.

In recent times we have watched the invasion of large buildings into the Darling Harbour precinct to the south. The only saving grace is that they are not overtaking the harbour itself. Harbourside shopping centre site on the other hand, already sits close to the waters edge. As indicated earlier, proximity of the waterfront needs to be a prime consideration in assessing this application. Development that echoes the spaciousness of the harbour and mirrors the current low level built environment is needed to diminish the risk of compressing the space around the Darling Harbour waterfront.

A large scale podium, and a high rise tower would seem to be at odds with this basic need. Low rise development on the other hand will serve to enhance the sense of open space, and maximise exposure to sun and light for all those benefiting from time spent in the surroundings. It is hard to see the benefit to tourism and/ or to public use of the area, emanating from a high rise development such as that proposed by Mirvac. I note here also, that the City of Sydney through its submission has indicated that it believes the current proposal to be inappropriate for the site.

As a resident I have of course, an additional, very personal interest in the redevelopment of this site. Myself and another 200 or so owners/residents in One Darling Harbour apartment block, will be directly affected by the outcome of this redevelopment on a daily basis. This is our permanent home - it is not a hotel with transient guests exposed to the precinct for only limited periods. I have heard a lot of talk by the developers to this point about view sharing, a laudable objective, but one which has to be questioned when the three large hotels on the southern end of the redevelopment site stand to lose very little in the way of views while the permanent residents in One Darling Harbour and other nearby residential buildings stand to be very significantly affected.

For my part a significant risk exists in relation to overshadowing by this proposed redevelopment. One of the reasons for acquiring this apartment was the fact that it had a generous balcony where I could have a small garden and enjoy outside living in privacy. Both benefits are under severe risk within this current proposal. Our apartment is on the eastern side of the building, facing Cockle Bay and the city. If inappropriate height parameters are allowed, any high rise structure on the site, which lies directly in front of our home, will overshadow apartments on the Darling Harbour side of our building. Loss of sunlight and privacy will impact severely on the quiet enjoyment of our home.

I strongly urge the Planning Body considering this application to be fearless. The people of Sydney, tourists, local residents and myself have to rely on you to ensure that the best interests of the all are served by any individual proposal. This is a site that is predominately *public use* by its very nature. It is a significant tourist attraction for Sydney and Australia at large. Simple commercial decisions may need to be subjugated to ensure that the natural beauty and the essential character of this precinct are maintained for the people at large. This proposal represents an overdevelopment of what should be retained as a low rise structure, set well back from the water's edge and from the Pyrmont Bridge.

Yours sincerely

Diane Waddington