

## **DEVELOPMENTS IN PYRMONT/ULTIMO AREA**

I ask that you take the following comments into consideration. My initial intention was to write just in relation to the Harbourside concept proposal. However, in thinking about the merits of that development proposal I thought that it would be appropriate to look more into the overall (bigger) picture of developments in Pyrmont/Ultimo area.

### **Darling Harbour Redevelopment**

- The Harbourside site is owned by the people of NSW. Its usage which is set out in its 100 year lease signed in 1988 (Australia's Bicentennial Year), and still has 71 years to run, clearly states it is for use as a Festival Market to operate in a similar way to that operating at Baltimore Harbour, USA. Uses such as residential are not catered for in the lease. In the parliamentary discussions of Darling Harbour, the indications clearly were that this area and other Darling Harbour sites were being given to people of Sydney. So construction of a 45 level residential tower on this publicly owned waterfront site is contrary to lease terms. Aside from this being in contravention of the agreement, allowing such a residential building would have a significantly negative impact on the people of the Pyrmont area and, of course, also remove this gift from the people of Sydney.
- I would certainly not be opposed to some refurbishment of Harbourside as it is obviously in need of a 're do'. Indeed, it is a relatively tacky area not only for locals but also for visitors/tourists to Sydney.
- The building envelope, as presented, will ensure that the tower will obscure light and views of many of the East facing apartments in 50 Murray Street and the Ibis Hotel. The shadowing analysis appears to only assess the impact on 50 Murray Street residences yet the diagrams appear to depict winter shadowing affecting apartments as far away as Pyrmont and Bunn Streets. For much of the year the Cockle Bay waters will be in shade for most of the day, given that a commercial tower of similar scale is proposed for construction on the Eastern side of the Bay. Visitors/Tourists and those residents still fortunate enough to retain some view of the water will not see it in its best light. No account appears to have been taken of overall impact of the Harbourside redevelopment on what is potentially happening around it. The building envelope also seems to depict the podium as being closer to the heritage Pyrmont Bridge than the existing building, with the stepped platforms being much higher than the Bridge.
- I understand that the Darling Harbour Development Plan No1 (DHDP) would be the principal planning instrument applying to the site and that plan seems to define that virtually anything can be done. For example, the Dept (or PAC) might evaluate proposals not just on good planning and environmental impact grounds but also on economic grounds, possibly including investment decisions/profit motives of developers and on income to be generated for the NSW Govt. My view is that any evaluation should have emphasis on planning and environmental impacts and public good outcomes. I believe that to allow a building of the general size and height proposed so close to the harbour and to our beloved Pyrmont Bridge is bad planning and shows no regard to the good of nearby residents and people of Sydney more generally as well as to the heritage beauty of Sydney.

## **Need for Integrated Planning**

- Pyrmont and Ultimo have been shut off from both Darling Harbour and the CBD by the building of the blank walled ICC development facing these suburbs. Darling Drive has been very much impacted with events at ICC sites and is causing traffic jams. The people of Pyrmont are also faced with a 50 level hotel /residential tower/complex connected with The Star, a big office tower at Cockle Bay and the Bays Precinct Urban Renewal project. These proposals will all impact negatively on traffic congestion, overshadowing, loss of view and much pressure on a whole range on social infrastructure. This would include schools, child care health facilities, sporting facilities etc. Any traffic consequences will also be a constant source of frustration for Sydney people more generally who travel through the Pyrmont/Ultimo area. It is difficult to understand why there is not a more integrated plan for the whole area with oversight by Greater Sydney Commission. This should include working with government agencies responsible for all infrastructure and community activities as well as proper consultation with the local community. It could also include working with the various potential developers.

## **Traffic and Transport**

- With the traffic congestion on Darling Drive vehicles divert to Harris Street, causing increased problems there. Recent research (as published in SMH on 5 Jan) has revealed that Harris Street is the 2nd most congested road in Australia with the 1<sup>st</sup> being a Capital City CBD street. Any increase in traffic activity in the vicinity of Harris Street will make the current situation worse. It would surely be worthwhile considering an up-to-date traffic impact study for all major intersections in Pyrmont and Ultimo as part of a fully integrated plan for the whole area.
- Pyrmont Bridge is likely the busiest pedestrian/cycle route in Sydney and the current long delays with light changes can result in frustrated cyclists and pedestrians running red lights – this is a major potential accident issue. There is a need for improved arrangements at the Pyrmont Bridge/Pyrmont Bridge Road/Murray Street intersection with Darling Drive and proposed installation of a scramble crossing at the intersection. With the full impact on traffic of the ICC developments now becoming apparent there should clearly be a coordinated approach of all developers in the area(including ICC, Mirvac, The Star, proposed Bays Precinct Urban Renewal Projects) and RMS, to work together in funding and constructing a vehicular underpass linking Darling Drive with Murray Street/Pirrama Road, retaining limited connections to and from Pyrmont Bridge Rd and Murray St Sth, with Darling Drive, mainly for local traffic.
- Suggest that the proposed redevelopment of parking stations under Ibis and Novotel Hotels be incorporated within proposed integrated plan for Pyrmont/Ultimo as part of evaluation of the Harbourside concept proposal.
- Given its population (both residential and working), the Pyrmont Peninsula is quite poorly served by public transport. The Light Rail currently only travels to Central. It is acknowledged that passengers will be able to change to the George Street service to access other city areas when the new Light Rail extension is eventually completed. However, it is usually quicker to walk across Pyrmont Bridge. The 389 Bus (which runs from Maritime Museum, Pyrmont to North Bondi) is very unreliable and often involves waits of up to 45 minutes and sometimes comes to a complete standstill in Harris Street when traffic banks up on the Pyrmont Road intersection. The ferry service to Circular Quay runs only at 30 minute intervals but not late

at night. These public transport options service not only the local resident and worker community in Pyrmont/Ultimo but visitors/tourists to Sydney.

- There is no direct transport to the nearest shopping centre at Broadway.
- Public transport options should be part of an overall integrated plan.

### **Retail Outlets**

- The EIA identifies locals as potential customers of retail offerings at a refurbished Harbourside. Two main factors will likely make this an attractive destination – accessibility, including affordable parking for shoppers, and an affordable range of goods.
- Apart from the CBD the nearest local shopping centre is Broadway. As mentioned, there is no direct public transport from Pyrmont/Ultimo.
- A proposed retail strategy should incorporate elements attractive to and accessible by local community. This could include reasonably priced (or free) parking, affordable and locally designed and produced goods (which would also be attractive to visitors/tourists), a childcare centre, a cinema, some outdoor as well as indoor food outlets.
- Upmarket international brand shops such as at The Star are certainly not required.

### **Community Benefits**

- There is no reference in the EIA to provision of social infrastructure to support the proposed new development's (and other developments) new residents and workers as well as the existing local community. Affordable housing is at crisis point in Sydney and Pyrmont/Ultimo currently has a shortage of Affordable Housing Units mandated under the original agreements underpinning Pyrmont/Ultimo's urban renewal. Given the value of real estate around the area, it is unlikely the proposed new residential tower will do anything to address Affordable Housing or even housing for first home buyers.
- Pyrmont/Ultimo and much of the inner city area more generally lack adequate educational, childcare, health, sporting, aged care and community infrastructure. It is noted that the City of Sydney is redirecting developer contributions collected from ongoing developments in Pyrmont/Ultimo to other parts of the City eg Green Square. Virtually no Capital Works funding is allocated to the Pyrmont/Ultimo area over the next 10 years. Mirvac and other developers should be asked to consult with local community groups with a view to ensuring that developer contributions, whether in cash or in kind, are allocated to social infrastructure projects to address local community needs.

Thank you for your consideration to my suggestions.

Yours sincerely,

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