

12 April 2020

I am here to submit my objection on Harbourside Shopping Centre Redevelopment. The purpose of redevelopment is to improve and revitalize the existing, to design a better place and then try to achieve the best result, instead of creating the following problems and minimize the impact to all parties.

Consistency of Building Height

High rise building shouldn't be built along the water front in the first place. One of the many reasons obviously is to create separation and open space between the high-rise towers at CBD and the harbor. That's why the height of existing buildings which are the existing Darling Harbour Shopping Mall, the old Exhibition and Convention Center, old IMAX, Cockle Bay, Wildlife and King Street Wharf, along the waterfront are low and consistent. The skyline is beautiful and pleasant. Together with the new additions of ICC, Exhibition Center, Commonwealth Buildings, Barangaroo development (except the three International Tower) the consistency of building height has been retain.

Incoherent Design & Non-Integration Concept

Mistake was made with the development of the new Sofitel Hotel. A typical square block with glass façade standing alone with the low-rise hotels and apartments on the other side of CBD projects no relationship and connection with the neighborhood.

Next disappointment was the W Hotel A giant glass football or a wall separates the darling square and darling harbor



Let's not make a Third mistake, failure by building another new high-rise tower at Darling Harbourside Shopping Mall, it would not be 'read as a cohesive whole' as quoted below :

The Cockle Bay Wharf proposal has since been approved with a height of RL183. The Ribbon development to the south of Cockle Bay adopts a maximum of RL 93.50 as noted in the EIS and is currently under construction. The amended envelope for Harbourside reaches a height that provides a proportional relationship to the existing buildings of Darling Harbour, particularly the ICC Hotel, in consideration of height, separation and breadth so the precinct can be read as a cohesive whole.

Unless of course if the Department of Planning intention is to turn Pyrmont and Ultimo into an extension CBD with high-rise office towers. Then the 'story' will be totally different.

Skyline

A skyline is the overall or partial view of a city's buildings and structures against the sky. It can also be described as the artificial horizon that a city's overall structure creates.

Regarding to the proponent's response to reduction in height of the Tower, the height of the new tower should not be compared with Cockle Bay redevelopment and International Towers. It is because they belong to the CBD side, east side of Darling Harbour. Visually and land use wise are connected and form part of the skyline. See the comparison below. I would say there are two irrelevant, independent and middle finger-like towers pointing at the CBD.



Visual Impact and View Loss

The following are my concerns on the impact of the high-rise tower.



This photo is taken at the corridor between Ibis and Novotel. It was one of the main walkway to work for the community lives in Pymont .

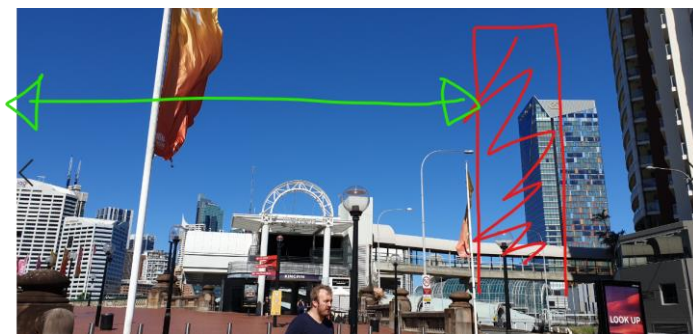
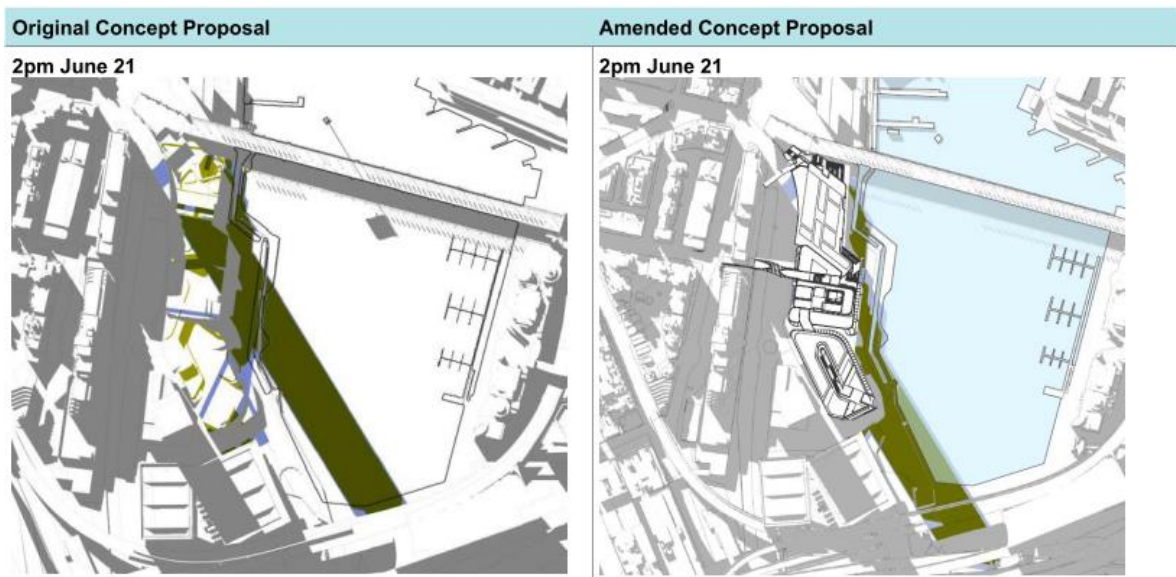


Photo is taken at the Pymont Bridge Rd, the main exit of Pymont. The open space is getting narrow as indicated.



↑ This is the main entrance of Darling Harbour. It is already not too welcoming as you can see the highway cutting across the area, causing overshadowing and noise. With the addition of the new tower, the width of the entrance will be narrower visually as shown above. The overshadowing during winter as marked in the report in a lighter green colour on the amended concept proposal (see below) made it look better & less impact? A misleading marketing strategy.



↑ to back up my previous statement, the green line shows the skyline of western Darling Harbour. You can see the tower is obtrusive to the skyline.



↑ Please note that these images do not express well than personal on-site experience. Feels like walls are building on both sides and behind (i.e. W Hotel and existing highway) and form a narrow visual corridor of the harbour. From my personal experience, it is sad, depressing and miserable with office building. No longer feels like a beautiful Darling Harbour, uncovered generous open space and a place feel like holiday with tourists.

Connection with the Surrounding

The Darling Harbour, Darling Square, Darling Quarter, Kings Street Wharf and Barangaroo are part of the State Significant Development. These precincts have been disconnected/ separated for a long time from the CBD by the highway to harbor Bridge, and from Pymont and Ultimo by Darling Drive and the Light Rail. The redevelopment on these precincts are successful, but of course can be better.

There is a disconnection between Pymont and Darling Harbour, caused by the Darling Drive, the light rail with fences and the significant level difference between the harbor side and street level of Pymont (e.g. Murray Street, Harris Street and Pymont Bridge Rd). Like a knife cutting across, isolating the entire Pymont Precinct. This is significantly causing inconvenience to the community and the visitors from public carpark behind the shopping mall to visit the harbor.

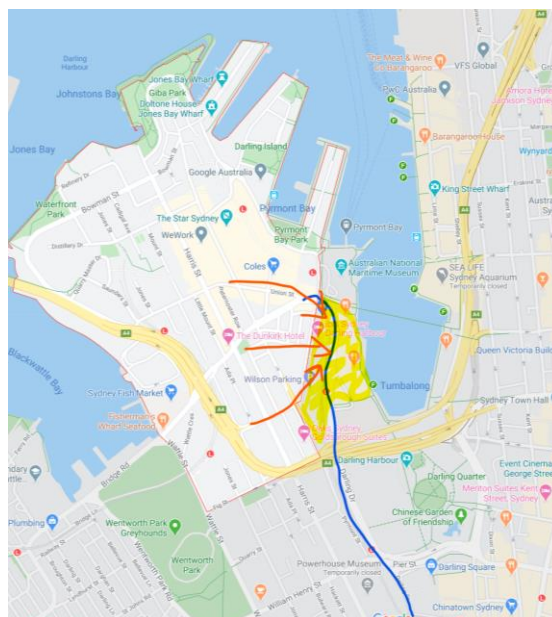
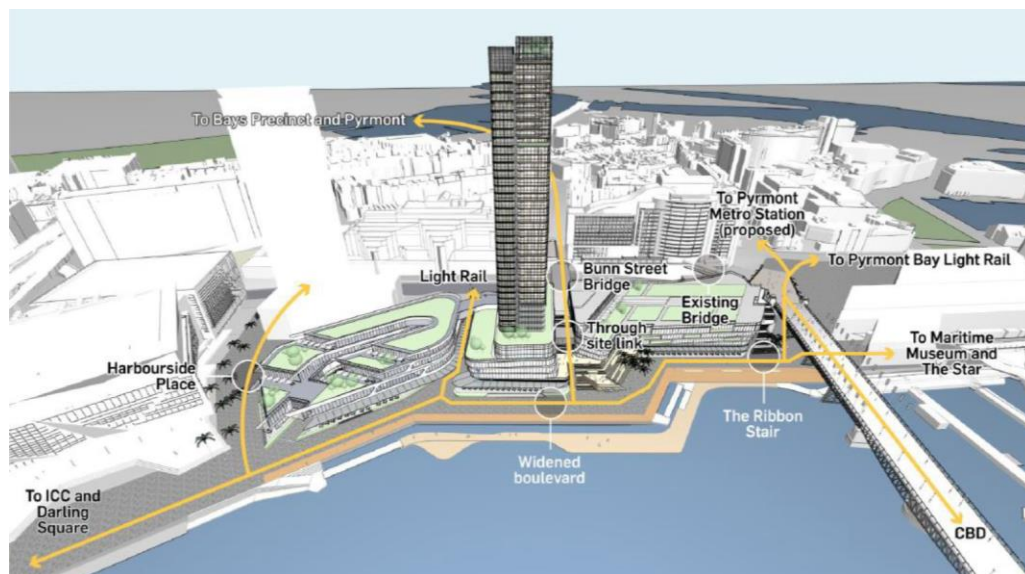
Building foot bridges to create access to harbor does not mean connecting the precincts or merging with the surrounding. Such redevelopment is a great and only opportunity to bring and introduce the Pymont precinct into the waterfront. Not simply and physically connecting them, but connecting them by the experience of the journey. The following is my suggestions:

1. The northern end of the redevelopment has already been connecting well with the Pymont Bridge and Pymont Bridge Road. The staircase can be more generous and open to allow pedestrian to look at the harbor while walking down. Currently it looks like a little alley stair coming down in-between
2. Regarding to the Roof Top Garden, it is a great proposal to bring some green in to the waterfront and in some way it connects the Darling Quarter and the Pymont Bay Park together. Although there are noise, safety or other concern, it will be good to allow people, especially community of Pymont, to walk from Pymont Bridge Rd or Casino to the Roof Top and gradually into the mall or directly to the waterfront, like
 - a transition area from suburb to waterfront

- a platform for local community to meet the tourist, business men for conferences at ICC and families from other community.
- A lobby area before entering the mall.

As a result, the redevelopment of the shopping mall will not be treated as a building block, but a true public domain.

3. Although foot bridge is the easy, simple and lazy way to give access to pedestrian, suggest to extend the podium along Novotel, Ibis and 50 Murray Street and connect with the Roof top garden. The proposal is for the future redevelopment of the Pyrmont precinct. Such connection significantly opens up the entire backyard of Darling Harbor.



When the Roof top Garden and the podium of the hotels are connected (highlighted in yellow), the separation of the two precincts (in blue) by the

driveway, light rail and level difference will be gone. The community are then introduced to the waterfront.