

28 April 2020

Director
Key Sites Assessments
Planning and Assessment,
Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
Locked Bag 5022
Parramatta, NSW 2124

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Objection to Mirvac Projects Pty Ltd (“Mirvac”) Amended Concept Proposal - State Significant Development Application SSD7874
Property: Harbourside Shopping Centre, 2-10 Darling Drive, Darling Harbour, Sydney (“Harbourside”)
Council Area: City of Sydney
Consent Authority Minister of Planning

I object to this Amended Concept Proposal.

I request you delete my personal information before publication of this letter.

I have not made any reportable donations in the last two years.

I set out below the reasons why I object to this application and development proposal.

Background

I am an owner of an east facing apartment on the 6th floor of the 17 storey One Darling Harbour, 50 Murray Street, Pyrmont (“**One Darling Harbour**”). My wife and I bought this apartment many years ago intending to move into it on our retirement.

Our apartment has uninterrupted, 180-degree views from the bedrooms, living areas and balconies over the iconic and historic Pyrmont Bridge, all the waterways of Darling Harbour and across Darling Harbour to Cockle Bay and the City skyline.

One of the things that makes our apartment so enjoyable is the uninterrupted views of pleasure craft on the water (including the rowing sculls and dragon boat races), the weekday pedestrian movement to and from the CBD across the historic Pyrmont Bridge and the flood of domestic and local tourists who flock to sunny Darling Harbour both on weekdays and weekends.

Notwithstanding all this activity, Pyrmont and Darling Harbour retains a village atmosphere. It remains a low key, historic, relaxing oasis of calm, within walking distance of, but not part of, the CBD. It celebrates its history, being one of the oldest villages in Sydney.

We paid a premium for our apartment when purchasing it as we placed much reliance on the fact title for both One Darling Harbour and Harbourside were 99 Year strata leaseholds which were then controlled by the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority (“**SHFA**”). On that basis we felt confident for 99 years there would be no redevelopment of Harbourside and SHFA would maintain good town planning principles for any future development around Sydney Harbour

and particularly Darling Harbour so our views and amenity of our unit (and hence values) would be maintained for the life of those leases.

Accordingly, we are genuinely concerned that Mirvac concedes Harbourside is now run down and out of date when it was Mirvac's obligation under its lease to maintain Harbourside to high standards as a "festival marketplace". Instead of complying with its obligations Mirvac is putting forward a SSD proposal that is inconsistent with the terms of its 99 year lease.

Darling Harbour was a gift to the people of Sydney. It is a place for everyone to enjoy. It is a designated tourist precinct and has been described as Sydney's great celebration space and playground for all ages.

Harbourside was designed to be a Festival Market Place Shopping Centre to complement Darling Harbour and cater to the international and local tourists and families who visit Darling Harbour.

We submit any redevelopment of Harbourside should have as its prime aim to comply with the terms of the lease and enhance the tourism and public purposes of the site rather than delivering to Mirvac another residential tower and a massive "Westfield" style shopping centre.

Why I object to the Amended Concept Proposal

Mirvac's Amended Concept Proposal, although much improved on its original proposal, is still inappropriate for the area. I say this because:

1. The Podium

- a) The owners and occupants of One Darling Harbour were led to believe Mirvac's intended to take on board the objections to its original proposal and its Amended Concept Proposal would include a less bulky, more streamlined Podium which was to be limited in height to the second level of One Darling Harbour and well removed from the historic Pyrmont Bridge.
- b) However, the Amended Concept Proposal has the proposed Podium height being approximately equal to a 7- storey residential building. It will extend to level 5 of One Darling Harbour. And it is too close to Pyrmont Bridge.
- c) The proposed Podium is still too high, too wide, too long and its design remains unacceptably bulky and boxy.
- d) The retail space in the proposed Podium will be more than doubled notwithstanding the operators of Harbourside have long struggled to fill the existing retail space with quality tenants. We submit this is entirely unwelcome and unnecessary for the historic village of Pyrmont. This is particularly so given the proximity to the main retail shopping and dining districts of the CBD, Darling Quarter, Darling Square, Broadway, Barrangaroo, King Street Wharf, Cockle Bay, China Town and Tramsheds.
- e) The proposed northern Podium is too high and too close to, and will dominate and detract from the appeal of, the historic Pyrmont Bridge.

- f) The iconic Pyrmont Bridge is on the State Heritage Register. It is the centrepiece of Darling Harbour. Any development near it should protect and enhance the heritage values of the bridge. The redevelopment of Harbourside should not detract from or diminish the heritage context of the bridge.
- g) At present Harbourside is essentially a 3-storey festival marketplace shopping centre. The roof of Harbourside is largely below the level of the Pyrmont Bridge handrail and it is not an eyesore to pedestrians who so enjoy walking across that bridge and the tourists who are drawn to it to watch it open.
- h) The proposed northern Podium is too tall, too long, too bulky and would detract from and block the views of and from Pyrmont Bridge.
- i) We are concerned our prime (and much prized) views of Darling Harbour and the historic Pyrmont Bridge would be seriously impacted by the proposed too bulky Podium.
- j) We are also concerned that the landscaping on top of the northern end of the Podium will cause us to lose more of our near views of Darling Harbour and Pyrmont Bridge.
- k) We are also concerned our apartment would experience a lot more noise and loss of privacy particularly from the publicly trafficable area of the raised rooftop of the southern Podium.
- l) We are also concerned the landscaped areas on the northern end of the Podium rooftop, although currently designated as non-trafficable, could in future be incorporated into the publicly trafficable areas of the Podium rooftop and this would affect our privacy and make our apartment subject to unwelcome noise.
- m) We are concerned our sense of openness and closeness to the harbour will be taken away by the too tall and too bulky Podium smack bang in front of our main view line.

2. The Tower

- a) Although it is a great improvement that the redesigned proposed tower is to be moved to a position in front of the Novotel and its height has been lowered slightly, the proposed tower remains too tall for this precinct being taller than the new ICC Hotel Tower which is itself out of keeping with the height of neighbouring developments.
- b) The proposed Tower is also too close to the harbour edge.
- c) If the tower is approved its height should be significantly reduced at least to the height of the ICC Hotel Tower.

3. Car Parking and Traffic Movement

- a) The tower and shopping centre will attract a lot more people and cars to Pyrmont but inadequate provision is proposed to be made for parking and dealing with moving that traffic into, through and out of Pyrmont. It already can take 30 minutes to get out of Pyrmont onto the Anzac Bridge.
- b) Contrary to the impression given that there are many local carparks in fact many of the local carparks have been permanently removed due to developments in recent years. This proposal only provides carparking for the residential apartments. No carparking is to be provided for visitors to the retail space which is to be doubled in area.

4. Pyrmont Precinct Master Plan

Lodgement of the Amended Concept Proposal is premature. The NSW government is currently developing a master plan for the whole Bays Precinct including a Pyrmont Precinct Master Plan.

Any redevelopment of Harbourside should only be considered if the proposal complies with that Master Plan.

Further, that Master Plan should incorporate accepted best practice, thoughtful town planning principles and be a transparent, unified, contemporary system of town planning controls developed by expert town planners (not developers) specifically for controlling developments around harbours and waterways in the best interests of, and in consultation with, the community.

5. The Amenity of the Neighbourhood

If this Amended Concept Proposal is given the green light the whole feel of our local Darling Harbour neighbourhood will change as the previously sunny walkways by the harbour and the Pyrmont Bridge will be dominated and overshadowed by the too tall, too long and too bulky northern and southern Podiums and the residential tower which will be far too close to the harbour's edge.

Any such overdevelopment of Harbourside would create a precedent that would have adverse ramifications for Sydney Harbour generally and in particular for the whole Pyrmont/Darling Harbour, King Street Wharf, Cockle Bay, and the Bays precinct areas to the ultimate detriment of the population of greater Sydney and tourism, one of NSW's greatest assets.

Amongst other things it would break the time-honoured town planning principle of stepping back buildings from the water's edge and create a precedent for bulky, unattractive podiums and tall towers crowding in on the harbour's edge.

Now is the time, in the interest of the community and good town planning principles, to counsel Mirvac to lodge a less ambitious proposal that reduces the bulk, height and scale of the Podium and moves it further away from both the historic Pyrmont Bridge and the harbour edge and reduces the height of the residential tower.

Darling Harbour, Cockle Bay and King Street Wharf are currently shining examples of how thoughtful, respectful development should be done around Sydney Harbour. Those areas should fiercely defend their point of difference in that they are close to, but not part of the "global CBD" rat race, and each remain a harbourside oasis and an important part of Sydney's much envied culture.

6. Likely Negative Impact on Tourism

The Darling Harbour Precinct is currently a very pleasant spot for Sydneysiders and tourists to congregate and enjoy our magnificent harbour. Any overdevelopment of Harbourside by Mirvac will detract from Darling Harbour remaining a magnet for tourists and significantly hurt the trade of hotels and the other retail businesses that depend for their livelihood on tourists coming to the Darling Harbour area.

Where To From Here

I call on you to await the implementation of the Pymont Precinct Master Plan before considering Mirvac's Amended Concept Proposal.