

SUBMISSION to IPCN : OBJECTION to Mirvac's Harbourside proposal

Views on Department's assessment report

SUMMARY : LACK of VISION

1) INAPPROPRIATE LAND USE:

The department claimed that it has considered the Mirvac's proposal being consistent to the Pymont Peninsula Place Strategy (PPPS) vision to transform the Pymont Peninsula, it ignores the fact that this is a site at the waterfront of Darling Harbour Cockle Bay where land use is specifically approved for public enjoyment, entertainment and festivities. Therefore this site is special and entirely different to the rest of the Pymont Peninsula which might have been zoned for residential/commercial/industrial purposes.

2) SIZE AND SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT SUFFOCATE DARLING HARBOUR COCKLE BAY:

The department did not consider objectively that the sheer size and scale of the re-development will cast big shadows in the afternoon and adversely affect the openness and natural lights in the area. Cockle Bay will become a little water pond surrounded by massive concrete structures on the east, south and western sides. The area will further lose its unique openness for the public to enjoy in the city.

3) MISSED OPPORTUNITY FOREVER:

While Mirvac is not a company with the expertise to develop shopping centres, the department must set clear guidelines for the re-development of the Harbourside shopping centre, and not just allowing Mirvac to build its usual run-of-the-mill residential/commercial building.

The department has not considered the reduction in retail areas from 20,000sqm down to 8,500 sqm will severely limit any future potential shopping centre business in the future at the site, while allowing a disproportionate floor space for commercial office/residential purposes.

Sydney has been lacking an area which can provide good shopping experience for tourists after hours once they finish their day trips. The department should look at global cities like Tokyo, Singapore and Hong Kong, which have designated open late/close late shopping districts catered for tourists. Reference could be made from the factory outlet like the DFO at Homebush where busloads of tourists visit on a daily basis (pre-COVID). Harbourside could be the best location in the city for such purpose to allow tourists to visit in the evenings. It will be a totally missed opportunity if the department allows Mirvac to build a simple commercial/residential building with a small retail presence at this prime Darling Harbour site, which will be of no difference to other similar buildings in the city.

4) REDUCED WATERFRONT WALKWAY SPACE FOR PUBLIC NOT IN INTEREST OF DARLING HARBOUR:

The claim of the increase in public access (including walkways, bridge access, rooftops of podiums) is misleading. The reasons most people visit Darling Harbour is to enjoy the atmosphere of the foreshore and surroundings, but not the bridge access and roof tops. The department did not consider properly the impact of the narrowing of the waterfront walkway at Harbourside from the current 29m down to Mirvac's proposed width of 20m. And Mirvac did not make any allowance for the Ferris Wheel. That waterfront area is the most important part where people

gather and enjoy Darling Harbour. It is already congested currently at the weekends and during festive seasons. There are times there is no room to stand or walk through the walkway, not to mention finding a place to sit in that area. There is no justifiable reason to narrow that walkway. It should be widened instead. Mirvac's proposal to reduce the width of that area is totally wrong and is not in the long term public interest of Darling Harbour.

5) NO SPECIFIC REQUIREMENT TO PROVIDE A FOOD COURT IN THE REDEVELOPMENT:

The department did not specify the requirement of a food court in the redevelopment proposal. Currently the Harbourside food court is the only one food court venue catered for family and kids. All other eateries in Cockle Bay, King Street Wharf and Barangaroo are restaurants/cafes of more formal/informal dining. Harbourside redevelopment must provide a food court which can cater families at a budget, with enough sitting areas for general public.

6) THE PARK ON TOP OF PODIUMS IS OF LIMITED BENEFIT:

The 2 tiered park on top of the podium would not be friendly to prams and disabled elderly and the access from the foreshore would not be convenient for all ages. The roof top park of podium can never be comparable to the foreshore areas around Darling Harbour Cockle Bay. The department has overlooked that the park on top of the podiums is merely an attempt to green-wash a podium that is unacceptable in bulk and scale to make it look like Mirvac is delivering a community amenity in the form of a park.

7) DESIGN and HEIGHT OF THE NORTHERN PODIUM

The northern podium envelope of the Harbourside Proposal should be consistent in bulk and scale with the neighbouring Cockle Bay redevelopment, particularly adjacent to the State Heritage Pyrmont Bridge. The current proposal (RL26.5m for 70m along the water) is twice the height of the bridge platform and creates inconsistency in the character of the Cockle Bay basin as the Cockle Bay Redevelopment was approved for RL12m for 65m along the water. The inconsistency creates lack of coherence in the developments at the east and west ends of the Heritage Pyrmont Bridge.

The northern podium should be reduced to a maximum of RL13.75m, i.e. the height as the Pyrmont Bridge Platform and extend south for 75m+ to be useful for public use. The park on top of the podium should be in one tier, as the proposed two tiered public park is not family friendly particularly for those who use prams and need wheelchair disabled access. Many families watch the fireworks and enjoy the Harbourside view during festive events, but being limited to a few lifts to traverse the three tiered levels will create unnecessary blockage and deter and discriminate against families and those who require disabled access.