

Submission to the Independent Planning Commission re Revised Harbourside Redevelopment Proposal

Thursday 20, 2012

Dear Commissioners,

First of all I would like to thank the committee for hearing the concerns of those objecting to the Mirvac Harbourside Redevelopment proposal. I fully support the IPC focus on the amenity impacts of the scheme. And in the light of Mirvac's latest response, which makes very little concession and seems to rely on "shifting the deckchairs" to get what they claim they need, rather than making any significant changes, I would like to submit my strong **objections** to their alternate proposal.

Strengths of the IPC proposal:

1. The proposed IPC Maximum Northern Podium height of RL 11.8 maintained as one single level extending south to the tower provides **greater public amenity, accessibility and connectivity.**

In a precinct that is designed to be primarily for the general public and tourism, user friendly, easily accessible open space is important for public events and celebrations. Walk around Darling Harbour any day, but especially on week-ends and you will be struck by the family focused nature of its visitors. A single level podium will attract and be more readily accessible by such families.

Also on a practical note, public safety issues could be addressed more effectively across one level than three, especially as it is proposed that the garden spaces would be open to the public 24/7.

Mirvac alternate response maintains a multi tiered podium featuring flights of stairs with significant access issues for families with prams, the aged or those requiring wheelchair/disabled access. This reduces public amenity and may alienate many potential visitors.

2. The proposed IPC Maximum Northern Podium height of RL 11.8 maintained as one single level extending south to the tower provides **improved view loss impacts.**

I have lived in Darling Harbour One for over 20 years with unfettered views of the Bay and the city from every room. The apartments on the Eastern side were designed around those views. Under the IPC proposal I and many others in this building will retain/ or improve our views. And even more importantly we will not lose our privacy. This amendment would truly provide genuine view sharing - even with the afterthought garden Mirvac included at the last minute.!

Mirvac alternate response: The podium is partially reduced from RL 26.5 (to RL21.35 nearest the Pymont Bridge and then a portion increased from 25 to 31 nearest the tower. This change does not significantly improve view sharing, it simply moves the loss of views around.

3. The proposed IPC Maximum Northern Podium height of RL 11.8 maintained as one single level extending south to the tower **provides greater planning and visual coherence for the precinct.**

Keeping the Northern podium low and on one level between Pyrmont Bridge and the proposed Residential tower is in keeping with the already approved Cockle Bay redevelopment. It will mean that the significance of the historical Bridge is acknowledged in its totality and will be book-ended in a similar manner.

Mirvac alternate response: A token reduction in podium level to RL21.5 means that the level of the Northern Podium will still sit well above the height of the Bridge platform. This looming mass will overpower the Bridge against which it abuts. Also, those walking across the Bridge each day towards the city will have restricted views for about a third of the crossing. A podium of this height also causes significant overshadowing in what is already a narrow pedestrian waterfront promenade.

4. Reduction of the maximum building envelope area (BEA) tower floor plate to 1,000sqm, with the western frontage of the tower retained/aligned in its current location **to achieve greater setback of the eastern frontage of the tower.**

As one who walks Darling Harbour on a daily basis, any effort to push back against encroachment on the available promenade area is seen as a desirable outcome. This, combined with the IPC proposed reduction in the general mass and density of the redevelopment at the Northern end will mean less overshadowing and a more pleasant public amenity.

Mirvac alternate response: takes this amendment on board.

Additional reflections:

Mirvac in its submission to the IPC meeting 6.5.21 (45) states that their alternate proposal “will address your concerns and make sure that we can proceed with the project on the **terms that are acceptable to Mirvac’s security holders**”.

Yet I see very little in the way of significant change in their proposal in response to the Planning Commission’s questions. Their response is driven primarily by returns and claimed non-commercial viability cloaked in threat and innuendo.

For example, Mirvac claims that reducing the Northern podium to RL11.8 would “reduce the built form to less than the existing centre height (RL17.64)’ This is somewhat ingenuous given the size of the residential tower they include. In reality the height, mass and density of the proposed building envelope bears little resemblance to the current building being “redeveloped.” They and their security holders are definite winners in this regard.

Mirvac bemoans their inability to “activate retail” if the IPC proposal was adopted. Yet their own proposal for the site has significantly less retail space than the existing Harbourside Centre. The majority of the increased space in this oversized development is earmarked for commercial office space and private residential - all private/employee only areas. Maybe they should review their mix. None of this space will be accessible to the

general public. It will not attract tourists to the area, or provide recreational retail therapy or dining out options, which are after all, some of the primary reasons for the existence of Darling Harbour.

Mirvac claims the loss of some office space/ or reduction in size of office floorspace would make it difficult to proceed. They invoke Covid to back their claim for the proposal to go ahead - citing "NSW's (*economic*) recovery ...requires the support of important industries such as the construction and development industry". Yet they have not taken into account that Covid 19 has altered the approach of many businesses, who are adopting zoom and other online platforms to assist working at home and who are reducing their office space requirements as a result.

Finally I would like to see the acceptable envelope resulting from this process very clearly delineated by the Commission so that after all this debate and to-ing and fro-ing there is not room for the developer to shift the RL heights and setbacks in any way. I am aware of that the ultimate design goes out to architects but we need very strict parameters _ not guidelines, in place within which the building must sit.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment further on this redevelopment. As a very close neighbour I stand to be greatly affected by the outcome. The future amenity and value of my home is at stake.

Yours sincerely Diane Waddington