

7 March 2022

The Hon. Anthony Roberts MP  
Minister for Planning  
GPO Box 5341  
Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Minister

### **Pymont Peninsula Draft Sub-Precinct Master Plans**

Pymont supports a vibrant, creative, connected and diverse community. It has huge advantages including an iconic harbour, significant heritage values, close proximity to the central business district and an inclusive and harmonious residential community. Any planning in the region must build on, and not compromise these public benefits.

The sub-precinct master plans make high level statements as part of its 'big moves' that recognise Pymont's important values and these big moves have strong community support. However, detailed master planning has raised significant concerns about Pymont's future, particularly around bulk and scale, affordable housing and local infrastructure.

Pymont residents are concerned that the draft plans do not reflect extensive community input provided over many years and successive planning processes since the Ultimo/Pymont redevelopment under the 1992 Sydney Regional Environmental Plan No. 26 City West (REP 26). The redevelopment included effective community consultation; plans for urban design, public domain and comprehensive building envelope designs; design competitions; integrated affordable housing requirements; minimum open green space levels; and heritage protection. This latest planning process should follow similar standards.

I urge you to ensure that their vital feedback in this process is taken on board so that Pymont's future can benefit from the community's local knowledge and to ensure the existing community is not disenfranchised from future change.

#### **Key Sites**

The Harbourside development has been approved and Blackwattle Bay is under consideration through a separate process. You can refer to my previous contributions on this project if required.

Similarly development at The Star for a 105-metre tower on the corner of Jones Bay Road and Pirrama Road has already been approved by the Pymont Peninsula Place Strategy. I share widespread concerns about overdevelopment of this site which are articulated in my submission on the draft strategy.

While the Pymont Peninsula Place Strategy has approved a tower at The Star, the master plan should limit its use to commercial and visitor purposes and exclude residential. There is no strategic planning need for residential development on this site. Should residential be permitted, it should be strictly limited to affordable housing, which is in grossly low supply in the inner city.

The one percent affordable housing levy for the tower at The Star proposed in the Explanation of Intended Effects is inadequate for a development of this nature, particularly one that grossly benefits the proponents over the community. The 12 percent levy set out in the exhibited Design Guidelines would provide a fairer and more appropriate contribution given the windfall benefits to the proponent and the dire need for new affordable housing in the inner city.

Master plans should also ensure that the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) tower provide educational purposes and/or student accommodation through the UTS Indigenous Residential College. There is no justification for any other purpose.



**Recommendations:**

- **Exclude residential development from The Star tower or limit such development to affordable housing;**
- **Increase the affordable housing levy for The Star tower to 12 percent; and**
- **Limit development for the UTS tower to education and an Indigenous Residential College.**

## **Sydney Metro Development**

There is strong community support for a metro station in Pymont. Existing public transport is inadequate to meet current demand and while the area is close to the central business district, there are a number of barriers to accessing the city, especially for those who cannot walk or ride bikes.

Development above stations must protect local neighbourhood amenity. I acknowledge the work done to protect Elizabeth Healy Reserve from solar impacts at the metro east site however it remains unclear whether neighbouring homes will have impacts. The draft master plan appears to relinquish residential protections to the building envelope design, leaving local residents with no guarantees. Increased bulk and scale for the site should be restricted in order to protect solar access in adjacent homes. The proposed height of RL 120 is too high and I support community calls for it to be reduced to RL 90.

There should be an express exclusion for residential development at both metro building sites, for which there is no strategic purpose. Notwithstanding there is community support for affordable housing at the metro east site.

**Recommendations:**

- **Protect solar access in homes adjacent to the metro east development;**
- **Reduce metro east tower maximum height to RL 90; and**
- **Exclude residential development, except for affordable housing at metro site east.**

## **Sites Capable of Change**

The local community strongly opposes inclusion of seven public and one affordable housing buildings as developments “capable of change”. Pymont’s social housing tenants contribute to a strong, supportive, inclusive and connected community and are a fundamental part of the region’s diversity. Redeveloping their homes could destroy the very vibrancy that makes Pymont a thriving precinct.

Relocating tenants would also have poor welfare outcomes for them as a result of disruption, uncertainty and loss of community connection. Even if they are guaranteed a place to return to, it will be a different home in a significantly changed neighbourhood.

It is unclear why the Nokia building on the corner of Bowman Street and Harris Street and the new building at 21 Harris Street have been identified as sites “capable of change” given their close proximity to the foreshore. Any increase in height would block views and sunlight to public areas and neighbouring homes, resulting in poor planning outcomes and undermining longstanding planning support for protecting public access and views to waterfront.

Similarly, I am concerned that increased heights as part of the Bank Street office buildings will erode amenity for adjacent homes, and public open space and parks by cutting solar access.

**Recommendations:**

- **Rule out any redevelopment of public and affordable housing; and**

- ***Exclude any increases to heights for the Nokia building, 21 Harris Street and office buildings on Bank Street.***

### **Transition Zone and Bay Interface Zone**

I do not support the Transition Zone which is not included in the approved place strategy. Proposed uplift in bulk and scale represents overdevelopment of the region that will compromise sunlight, privacy, views, heritage and open space. The proposed zone is inconsistent with the outcomes set out in the place strategy and should be rejected.

The Bay Interface Zone would allow for a more “intensified urban experience on the harbour”. Increasing bulk and scale along the harbour breaches longstanding planning principles that require heights to taper down as buildings get closer to the water. Increased scale on the harbour risks creating barriers between Pyrmont and the water, and creating other impacts like wind.

#### ***Recommendations:***

- ***Remove redevelopment proposals for areas marked as ‘Transition Zone’ and ‘Bay Interface Zone’ from the master plans.***

### **Infrastructure Contribution**

It is not clear how the proposed Special Infrastructure Contribution will interact with the City of Sydney local and affordable housing contribution. Significant increases to local infrastructure are needed to meet the needs generated from the master plan. The new contribution for north end to help fund the metro station must not replace the City’s existing levy.

#### ***Recommendation:***

- ***Ensure both the Special Infrastructure Contribution and the City of Sydney Local and Affordable Housing Contribution apply.***

### **Transport**

It is claimed that Pyrmont’s transport will cope with the uplift in development through the metro station, increased light rail services, a new bus route between Rozelle and Green Square, bus priority on Harris Street and Regent Street, a cycleway on Jones Street and a light rail stop at Wentworth Park.

However, other than the metro station, there are no funding commitments or concrete plans from the government to introduce these measures. The department must do more than “monitor” progress, it must advocate and work to ensure these improvements are achieved.

There is strong community support for the suggested ferry stop at Cadi Park. The On Demand ferry service trial that included Pirrama Park was discontinued. Ferry services must be reinstated linked to the wider transport network including the new Fish Market and Barangaroo so patrons can use Opal and concessions. The reinstatement of ferry services to Blackwattle Bay/Glebe provides a foundation for this route and these services could be provided with little lead-in time or need for capital investment or infrastructure.

Master planning for the region must resolve the lack of direct pedestrian access between Pyrmont and the central business district which was removed when the Western Distributor bus lane was constructed. Since these changes cut off the Fig Street walkway, access requires the use of a lift down to Darling Harbour, which is often out of service. Access remains one of the biggest concerns for Pyrmont residents and extending access further east must be a priority for the master plans. The recent Committee for Sydney report identified this as a key barrier to access and amenity.

**Recommendations:**

- **The department works to achieve transport improvements set out in the master plans; and**
- **Extend the Fig Street walkway to reconnect direct pedestrian access between Pymont and the CBD.**

***Pymont is a flourishing inner city village that must be protected. I ask you to act as custodian of this thriving region and its communities by ensuring the final master plans do not permit overdevelopment, retain and expand social and affordable housing, and ensure there is adequate infrastructure in Pymont into the future.***

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'AG', written in a cursive style.

Alex Greenwich

**Member for Sydney**

Copy to: Department of Planning, Industry and Environment