

# ROBIN NAGY

23 December 2021

## Submission Re: Peninsula sub-precinct master plans

It is very good to see a holistic vision for Pymont for the next 20 years of development with key strategies to improve life for residents of, and visitors to, the peninsular.

There are two particular aspects of the plan that I would like to endorse wholeheartedly:

1. **Improvement of Pedestrian access from Pymont Street to Darling Harbour via a new ground-level access point extrapolating from Allen Street – endorsement and further proposal for short-term solution.**



Detail from Fig. 21 – Pymont Exhibition Discussion Paper p.43.

It is difficult to see how this access will materialise without pulling down the existing multi-storey carpark under the Novotel Hotel on Murray Street (and therefore the Novotel building itself). This appears to therefore be an aspirational long-term plan rather than a practical short- to medium-term solution to the problem of a lack of east-west ground-level pedestrian access from Pymont to Darling Harbour.

**I propose an alternative short-term solution** that would provide immediate ground-level pedestrian access from Pymont Street to the heart of Darling Harbour and avoid the current state of affairs of having to walk through a multistorey carpark and down a stairwell that has a persistent smell of urine – both of which are significant health hazards.

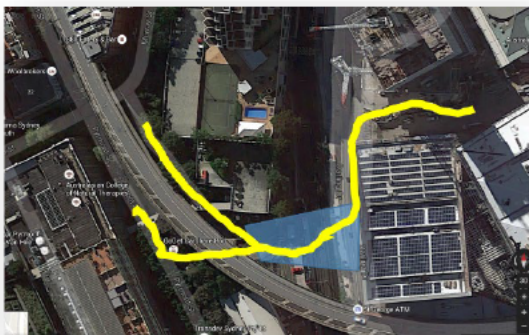


Fig.N.1.

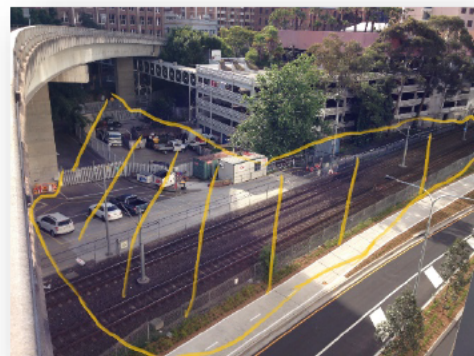


Fig. N.2.

My proposal is to open up the Murray St Spur Road to the South of the current Novotel/Harbourside car park and allow pedestrians to cross the light rail tracks directly into Darling Harbour at this point (similar to pedestrianised crossing of tram tracks elsewhere, such as

Market City). See Fig.N.1. and Fig.N.2. above for proposed pedestrian through-route (yellow line) and pedestrianised precinct (blue region on Fig. N.1. and yellow hatched region in Fig.N.2.). I am appending to this letter an Appendix of a submission I made to the redevelopment of Harbourside Shopping Centre in February 2017 as it contains further details of my proposal. I also note the following extract of a letter from Alex Greenwich MP, to the Minister for Planning on 17 January 2016 regarding the pressing necessity for improved pedestrian access from Pyrmont to Darling Harbour. It would be good not to have to wait a further 5 years before any action is taken:

**“Pedestrian Access**

The proposed street level pedestrian bridge from Bunn Street is an improvement on existing access however I am concerned that already poor access between Pyrmont and Darling Harbour and the city centre will be reduced during construction.

Constituents regularly contact me about the lack of pedestrian access between Pyrmont and Darling Harbour and the city. Despite the close proximity, there are few pedestrian access points, especially after part of the previous walkway attached to the Western Distributor was removed for new lanes as part of the 2004 Cross City Tunnel changes. Many Pyrmont residents are forced to walk long distances via indirect routes despite promises that the Sydney International Convention, Exhibition and Entertainment Centre Precinct redevelopment would improve access.

The timing for removing the car park bridge and installing the new Bunn Street pedestrian bridge is unclear. Should the redevelopment of the Harbourside be approved, conditions must minimise any temporary loss of access.”

*Extract of a letter from Alex Greenwich MP,  
to the Minister for planning - 17 January 2016*

**2. Pyrmont Street Park – endorsement and further suggestion for short-term Pyrmont Street upgrade.**

I welcome the plans for the south end of Pyrmont Street to include a new park (Pyrmont Street Park) and to turn what is an unattractive and forgotten wasteland into a productive and charismatic part of the peninsular. However, it is difficult to see how these plans will materialise without pulling down the existing Light Rail depot building and maintenance facilities. Is there a plan to relocate these to the end of the line or somewhere else away from this prime location? This appears to be an aspirational long-term plan rather than a practical short to medium-term solution to the problem of beautifying a forgotten area of the Peninsular that is sorely in need of a makeover.

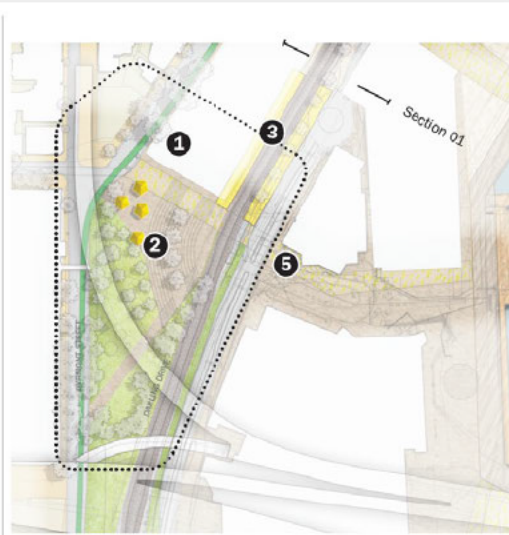
### Pymont Street Park

The Pymont Street Park provides an opportunity to create a pedestrian link between Murray Street and Darling Drive.

#### Objectives:

Future planning and development of Pymont Street Park could contribute to:

1. Establishing a through site link to allow for greater east-west sub-precinct movement.
2. Increasing at-grade landscaping under and around the motorway.
3. Creating an activated and amenity driven environment with improved setting of and access to convention light rail station.
4. Creating a place that showcases work from creative industries, start-ups and research through art installations and community infrastructure.
5. Generating better physical and



Pymont Street Park - Details from Fig. 4.6.9 – Pymont Urban Design Report p.80.

**In addition to the long-term aspirational plan for Pymont Street Park, could there be a short-term plan to beautify Pymont Street in the next year or so?** (from Bunn street all the way to the southern end by the Ian Thorpe Aquatic Centre), including:

- upgrading the footpaths/pavements
- having a moratorium on digging up the road/footpaths
- Fixing up existing worksites that have not been properly finished (e.g. the temporary cover in the middle of the road at the Experiment St/Allen Street junction).
- Making the East side of the street less of an eyesore (see photographs in Appendix 2, reproduced from the submission I made to the redevelopment of Harbourside Shopping Centre in February 2017 and which has not changed substantially since the redevelopment of Darling Harbour nearly a decade ago).

In addition to the two endorsed points above, there are aspects of the plan that are of considerable concern and which I formally oppose:

### **3. Elizabeth Healy Reserve - Objection**

It is unclear from the plans on pp.72-73 of the Pymont Urban Design Report exactly what is being planned for this area, but it looks from Figure 13 (p.21) of the Pymont Exhibition Discussion paper as if the proposal is to close the intersection of Gipps Street and Experiment Street to pedestrianise Gipps Street or maintain it as a private car park for the fire station. As a local resident, I would strongly object to this, as Experiment/Gipps Street provides an important vehicular access route to Pymont Street, allowing a contraflow against the direction of Pymont Street, without which residents at [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] could not easily access the Pymont peninsular and ANZAC bridge without travelling all the way down to Ultimo and turning right at the Harris Street/ Quarry Street junction. It is also used extensively by the Fire Trucks, to efficiently return to the Fire Station.

The current park is a delight, providing shade and rest under a beautiful Jacaranda tree and fig tree. The annotation in Figure 4.4.8. says "Increased canopy cover" but there is currently extensive cover from these mature trees together with the lime trees on the pedestrianised section of Gipps Street that also provide an important source of food/supplements for local wildlife (fruit bats and rainbow lorikeets). The jacaranda is a highlight of the current park. I do not wish the character of this park to be changed to 'support meeting and relaxing' that will end up being used predominantly by metro customers rather than residents. It does not need 'improving'!

### **4. Guardian Square upgrade and expansion including re-routing of Darling Drive – Objection**

It is not clear where exactly Guardian Square is, but it appears that it is the pedestrian bit at the end of Pymont Bridge (which does not resemble a square in any shape or form). The plans on pp.78 – 79 concern me greatly, especially the plan to re-route Darling Drive to underneath Pymont Bridge, to join up with the northern end of Murray Street and therefore not connect with Pymont Bridge Street or the southern side of Murray Street. This will cause considerable disruption to traffic flow and prevent driver residents of Pymont Street from being able to access this local route home, forcing them to travel far out of their way (NB. there is no right turn at Harris Street/William Henry Street). The area underneath Pymont Bridge is currently a well-used pedestrian precinct that does not need 'improvement'. There appears to be no benefit in changing the current routing of Darling Drive apart from those vehicles wanting to travel on to or past the Star Casino. This appears to be favouring residents/commuters of North Pymont and customers of the Star over residents of South Pymont. It is also not clear what 'improvements' are being made, if any, to the foreshore at the National Maritime Museum and under Pymont Bridge. I would strongly object to any changes to this area, especially the Festival Pontoon and the beautiful reef that has matured along the side of the foreshore and which supports a wide variety and array of fish life including bream, juvenile yellow-tailed kingfish, stingrays and estuary catfish. This proposal is a complete waste of money and would be better spent on other plans.

**Further additional suggestions not in the Exhibition:**

There are several issues that could be easily addressed to enhance residents' and visitors' quality of living and residential amenity that I would like to add as suggestions:

5. **Beautification of Pymont Street** – see additional suggestions under point 2. above and photographs in Appendix 2. The southern end of Pymont Street has been sorely neglected and is particularly unfriendly and unsightly for pedestrians. It does not feature in any upgrades to my knowledge and the only plan I can see for this is Pymont Street Park which is at best aspirational. Fixing up the pavement and spending some money on beautification in the short-term should be a high priority.
6. **No parking on Bunn Lane** – this is currently a two-way street and provides valuable access to and from Pymont Street. There is currently only room for one car's width with parked cars.
7. **Central Island or speed bumps on Pymont Street to slow traffic down** – It is great to see this happening on Bunn Street, but Pymont Street is often used as a race-track for hooners who race up the on-ramp to the Harbour bridge in rented Lamborghinis and Harley-Davidsons. It is not only dangerous for residents of Pymont Street, but is a considerable noise disturbance (frequently in the early hours of the morning).
8. **Left turn from Pymont Street into Murray Street at the Allen Street junction** to vehicles under 6m. This is currently prohibited but often flouted by motorists who do not want to drive to the end of Pymont Street and then turn right into Harris street and finally, after three more traffic lights, end up where they would have been 10 minutes previously! The only other legal option at the moment is to turn right at Allen Street and right again onto Experiment Street up to Gipps Street and finally cross over Pymont Street and continue down Bunn Lane to Murray Street. The importance of this route is described above in point 3. There is no reason not to allow vehicles under 6m to turn left at this junction and it causes considerably more traffic congestion by forcing them to travel straight on or turn right.
9. **Removal of Temporary Darling Harbour barriers.** Shortly after the billion-dollar upgrade of the ICC and Darling Harbour foreshore, temporary metal fencing was erected all around the harbour foreshore from Pymont Bridge to Pymont Bridge. It was also erected on some but not most of the new boardwalk. For many years, Darling Harbour offered locals and visitors an opportunity to get close to the water's edge, sitting on the side of the boardwalk, dangling your legs over the water. This is still possible to the north of Pymont Bridge on both sides of the Harbour, and indeed all the way around Pymont Wharfs. The use of these temporary metal fences appears to be some sort of quick fix for any liability claims for people falling into the water, but it is an absolute eye-sore and out of keeping with the harbour. Initially these barricades were erected before fireworks shows and then taken down, but they are now a permanent feature and have been screwed down to the boardwalk. I don't suppose there was any planning application for this, as I have tripped over the feet of at least one barrier that came unstuck from its fixing – presenting more of a hazard than not having it there in the first place!
10. **Darling Harbour Pontoon Boardwalk closure times.** The old boardwalk that abutted the pedestrian area in front of Harbourside was removed and it was replaced with a pontoon that starts to the south of the Ferris wheel and continues up to Pymont Bridge. It has another exit to the north of the Ferris wheel. However, the new pontoon is closed at about 6pm (sometimes earlier in the winter). There is no reason for this apart from the fear of litigation. Apparently if somebody falls in between the pontoon and the wharf, it is not possible to rescue them by boat as there is no access to boats. This problem was created by making a scenic pontoon boardwalk in the first place, so denying pedestrians access to it outside of 'working hours' constitutes a lack of amenity and a ridiculous imposition for those of us who would like to be able to go for an evening stroll and watch the nocturnal fish such as Port

Jackson sharks that only emerge after twilight. The boardwalk itself has beautiful lighting at this time and provides a wonderfully scenic experience that we do not get to have.

11. **Darling Harbour No Fishing signage** – it is forbidden to fish in Darling Harbour, but I have witnessed this happening on many occasions. It would help to have clear signage along the foreshore to prevent this happening (as exists in many of the Pyrmont Bays). Thanks to local residents who feed the fish, there is a vibrant resident colony of bream and juvenile kingfish that go on to stock other areas of the Harbour. They should have safe sanctuary in Darling Harbour so people can continue to enjoy feeding them.
12. **Replace traffic lights with zebra crossings on Darling Drive.** There are a couple of pedestrian crossing points on Darling Drive that have traffic lights. These serve no useful purpose as most of the time when they are red to pedestrians, it is safe to cross and they do, and when the lights change to red for cars, there are usually no pedestrians crossing (they have already crossed). Could these please be replaced with zebra crossings, where pedestrians can cross with care and cars can cross with care. It would be good to be treated more like adults.

I trust that these points are all clear, but I would be delighted to provide any further detail required or to be contacted for further input on these or other plans effecting Pyrmont residents.

Yours faithfully,



Robin Nagy



## Appendix 1 – Proposal For Improved Ground-Level Pedestrian Access From Pymont To Cockle Bay/Darling Harbour

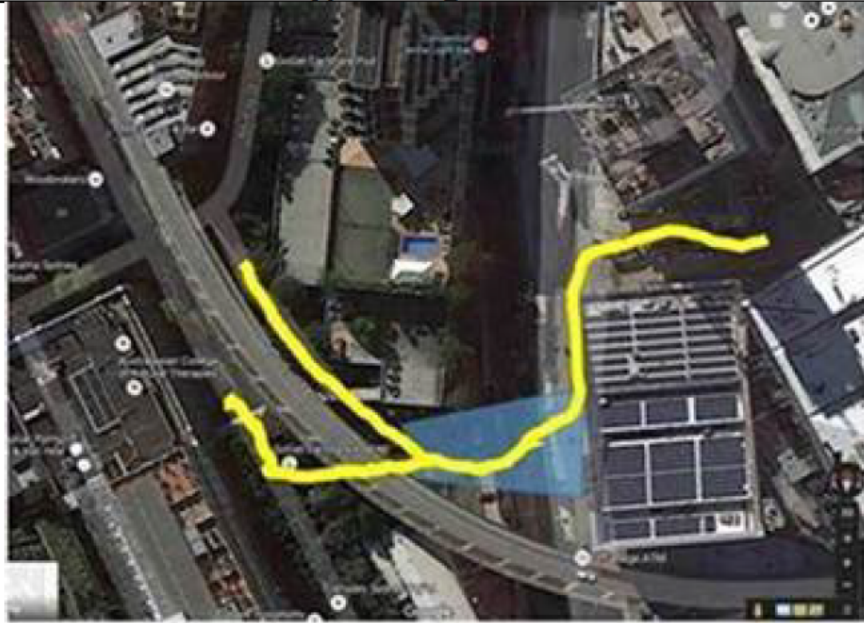


Fig.1. Satellite view of proposed street-level pedestrian access from Pymont to Darling Harbour



Fig.2 Street Map with proposed street-level pedestrianised area shown shaded in green

In order to substantially improve pedestrian access and amenity from Pymont to Darling Harbour, Cockle Bay and Harbourside, it is proposed to change the use of the land shaded in green in Fig.2 (currently owned by Property NSW and used as a potting shed, plant nursery and a private carpark) to become an open pedestrian area with substantial ground-level access across the light rail tracks to Darling Harbour (similar to the pedestrianised area by Market City where pedestrians can freely cross the light-rail tracks). Opening up Darling Harbour to Pymont was part of the original plan for Darling Harbour's redevelopment, but became ignored and sidelined

due to commercial pressures. This proposal, using the spur road off Murray Street (at the South end of the Novotel Carpark), will go a long way to restoring access and amenity which was taken away, not added to, by the recent Darling Harbour redevelopment (with the removal of a bridge which was in the footprint of the new ICC hotel).

Figs. 3 to 13 present photographs of the proposed area which would be opened up for pedestrian access to provide easy access to and from Darling Harbour from Pyrmont. The shaded orange region is the proposed pedestrian area which abuts the existing pedestrian crossing by the Convention Centre Light Rail Station and ICC Hotel. The area is currently (highly under-)used as a plant nursery and private car park for light rail employees:



Fig.3. View of proposed pedestrianised area (Murray Street Spur is to the left of the photo, existing crossing point at Convention Station visible on the right)



Fig.4. The shaded orange region is the proposed pedestrian area which abuts the existing pedestrian crossing by the Convention Centre Light Rail Station and ICC Hotel (right hand side).





Fig.5. View of proposed pedestrianised area (Gates at the end of the Murray Street Spur are clearly visible on left hand side).

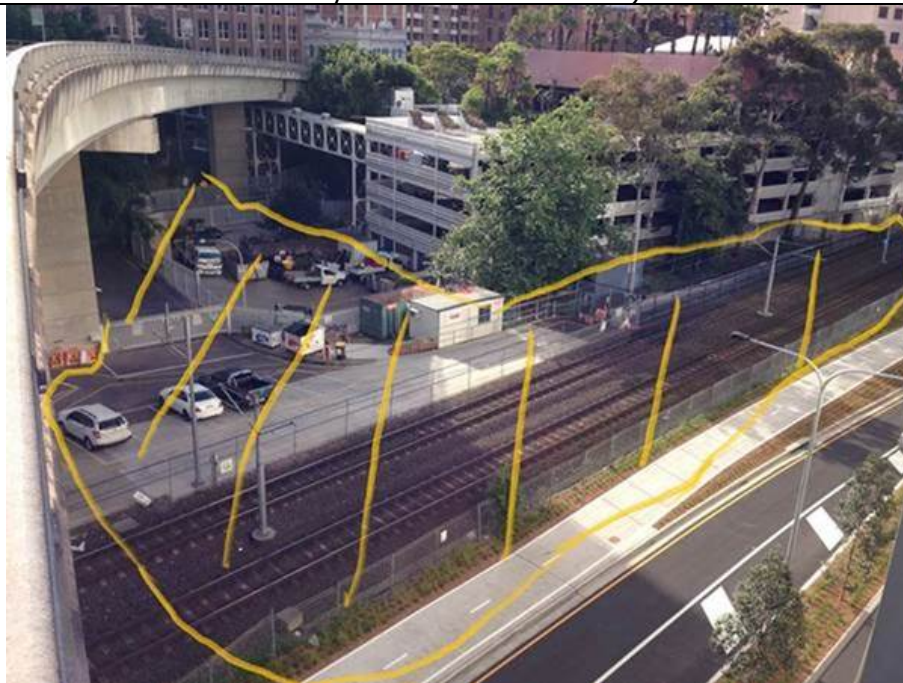


Fig.6. The shaded orange region is the proposed pedestrian area



Fig.7. View of current area owned by Property NSW and used as a plant nursery



Fig.8. View of the Murray Street Spur which is not used by public vehicles but by employees of the Light Rail private carpark





Fig.9. Under-usage of proposed pedestrian area – used as a plant nursery



Fig.10. Gates at end of Murray Street Spur



Fig.11. Gates at end of Murray Street Spur, ending in private car park (on public land)



Fig.12. Staff parking only for employees of Light Rail





Fig.13. The (underused) Staff carpark of Sydney Light Rail on public land which would be the proposed pedestrianised area.

APPENDIX 2 – ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF DARLING HARBOUR REDEVELOPMENT ON PYRMONT



New access to Exhibition Centre 'Event Deck' gates closed.  
Recommended access point to Darling Harbour to the North is through a carpark



Blue Arrows show nearest pedestrian access points from Pyrmont/Ultimo to Darling Harbour about 800m apart. North access point is through Harbourside Carpark!





New 'improved' access to Darling Harbour is shut (Quay Street)



Level of 'finish' of Darling Harbour redevelopment work on Pyrmont Street





Finished multi-billion dollar redevelopment of Darling Harbour on Pyrmont Street



LHS caged off section of undemolished, unfinished work on Pyrmont Street with new access bridge on RHS, showing lack of concern for standard of finish on Pyrmont Street.





View from Pyrmont Street - Old monorail platform left to rot rather than being removed. New Darling Harbour Redevelopment straddles it.



Standard of 'finish' on Pyrmont Street after Darling Harbour redevelopment



Barbed wire and girders from old Monorail station left untidily after redevelopment of Darling Harbour. View from Pymont Street.