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To
NSW DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, INDUSTRY AND ENVIRONMENT

Ultimo, 25 January, 2022

SUBMISSION PYRMONT PENINSULA SUB-PRECINCT MASTER PLANS

Friends of Ultimo (FoU) is a community **action** group, founded ten years ago to address local Ultimo issues. We communicate with our 300 members through regular emails friendsofucc@gmail.com and a Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/ultimofriends> .

Although we consider that the Pyrmont Peninsula Sub-Precinct Master Plans (PPSPMP) currently on exhibition have some positive features, we **OBJECT** to many of the proposed master plans.

The Pyrmont Peninsula Place Strategy (PPPS) was approved by the Planning Minister in December 2020 and, although too general and lacking detail, contained a number of positive proposals. It listed 5 “Big Moves”:

- A world-class harbour foreshore walk
- A vibrant 24-hour cultural and entertainment destination
- Connect to Metro
- Low-carbon, high-performance precinct
- More, better activated public spaces.

The first sub-precinct master plan, the Blackwattle Bay State Significant Precinct Study, was placed on exhibition in July 2021. It demonstrated the considerable difference between (some of) the apparently good intentions of the PPPS, and their detailed, sub-precinct by sub-precinct, implementation.

Specifically

- The harbour foreshore walk, only 10m wide in some sections, and over-shadowed by high rise towers, is anything but world-class.
- High rise apartment towers crowded along the Western Distributor are certainly not the promised “great homes that can suit the needs of more people”. They will overshadow and block the views of current residents of the “Pirrama sub-precinct” (North Pyrmont) and definitively will not “complement or enhance that area.”

We are now awaiting Infrastructure NSW’s response to the 2,400+ submissions they received.

The PPSPMP currently on exhibition also contains many departures from the initial Government-approved PPPS principles.

-1- "PYRMONT PENINSULA PLACE" BOUNDARIES AND SUB-PRECINCT DENOMINATION

The Pyrmont Peninsula Place amalgamates parts of Glebe (Wentworth Park and new Fish Markets), Darling Harbour and Ultimo with Pyrmont.

- These suburbs are located in two different state electorates: Pyrmont and Darling Harbour are in the Sydney electorate, while Ultimo and Glebe are in the Balmain electorate.

- Parts of Glebe and Darling Harbour were included within the "Place" on an apparently ad hoc basis:

(a) to include the new Fish Markets in the Blackwattle Bay sub-precinct.

(b) to speed up the approval of the Mirvac Harbourside Shopping Centre "State Significant" (over)development.

- Ultimo (West of Wattle St) is excluded from the "place", thus dividing our suburb into two ("in or out") sections.

- The Ultimo "sub-precinct" as described in the PPS includes only the south-eastern tip of administrative Ultimo whereas our traditional Ultimo Village, with the Bulwara Rd-Quarry Green intersection at its centre, is located in the Wentworth Park sub-precinct (Wentworth Park itself is administratively located in Glebe)!

This is a denial of the Ultimo community's unique sense of identity and highlights the poor understanding of local conditions by those responsible for the "Strategy".

-2- COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Community consultation has been totally inadequate since the beginning of the "Pyrmont Peninsula Place" process.

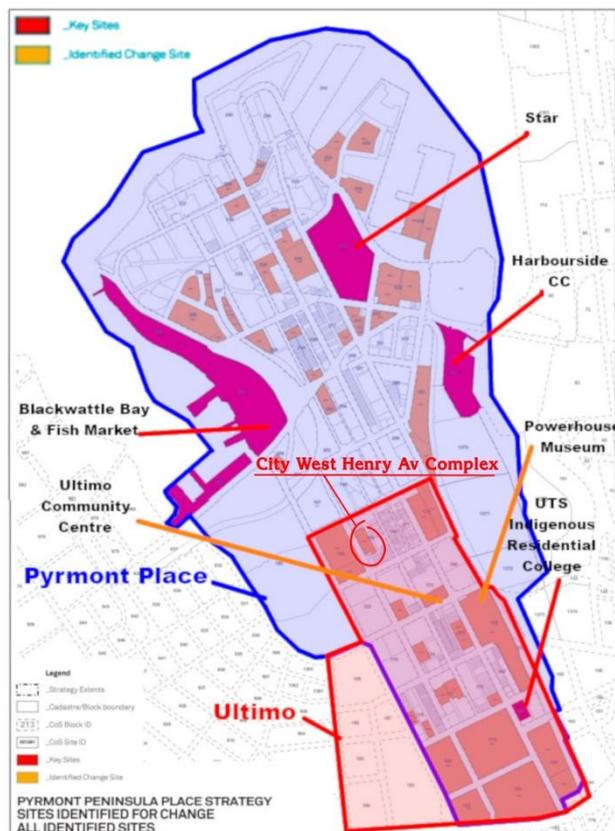
Specifically, the State Design Review Panels (SDRP) sessions (Pyrmont Peninsula Place Strategy Implementation – p14) made a mockery of community consultation since community representatives, whose main objective is to consult and inform their community, were **gagged by a confidentiality agreement**.

-3- SITES "CAPABLE OF CHANGE"

We strongly object to the concept of "sites capable of change".

These sites have "the potential to be developed or redeveloped to meet the residential and commercial floor space forecasts as set out in the PPS for the next 20 years", ie they could be **massively densified or their use varied** via impromptu manipulation of the LEP2012 controls (Height of Buildings and Floor Space Ratio but also Land Zoning or Heritage)

More than half of (administrative) Ultimo (East of Wattle St) is identified as "capable of change".



Disturbingly the list of sites includes, among others

- **The Powerhouse Museum**, which raises renewed concerns that the non- heritage listed Harwood building (and other parts of the Museum) could be commercially re-developed

- **The Ultimo Community Centre**, which could be closed and replaced by a commercial or residential high rise development, and

- **The Jones St/Henry Av Public Housing complex**, which raises concerns that residents could be expelled, and the complex demolished and replaced by a denser private development with a few public housing apartments, following the model of Glebe's Cowper St (completed), Wentworth Park Rd (planned) or Franklyn St (planned).

Finally we are troubled by the fact that the list of “sites identified for change under the PPS was informed by work done by DPIE **in consultation with Council...**” and that “**the City of Sydney Council** will use the output from the review to establish planning controls...” (ie to modify the LEP2012 controls as necessary).

-4- “PRIORITISED” SITES

Four sites are prioritised “in recognition of their **strategic importance**. They are:

- **Metro site East:** the main Pyrmont Station Metro site topped by a massive 120m high tower, a revival of the previous Star Casino South Tower which the community universally rejected

- **Metro site West:** this site is inadequate for a Metro development since is located in a Conservation Area (LEP2012 Sheet HER_007)



- **Star Casino:** A 105m high hotel tower, a revival of the Casino's North Tower which was strongly opposed by the community and rejected by the Independent Planning Commission. **It is difficult to understand how a Casino development could be listed as of "strategic importance"**.

- **UTS Indigenous Residential College:** We **strongly support** this project which could help revive a rather dull section of Harris St. Nonetheless, care must be taken with details when integrating the heritage-listed (item I2036) former National Cash Register building and taking into account the TAFE Sydney Technical College (former Technological Museum – heritage item I2051) across Harris St.

-5- INFRASTRUCTURE

The proposed infrastructure list (Pymont Peninsula Place Strategy Implementation – p30) lists 5 infrastructure types:

- Transport
- Open Space
- Community and Cultural Facilities
- Green Infrastructure
- Affordable Housing

...but notably omits Education and Health.

We generally support the infrastructure developments within administrative Ultimo as listed in the Pymont Peninsula Infrastructure Delivery Plan document (in relevant Pymont Village, Wentworth Park, Tumbalong Park and Ultimo sub-precincts)

(a) Transport

Ref	Description	Short term	Medium term	Long term		
T1	Contra-flow bus lane		X			Supported
T2	Shared Zones around UTS/TAFE	X				Supported
T3	Jones St New open Space	X				Supported
T4	Harris St Pedestrian Crossing	X	X		Where?	Supported
T6	Intermediate transit corridor		X		Lacks detail	???
T7	Bus stop changes	X	X		Lacks detail	???
T9	Goodsline North extension		X			Supported
T10	T10 Jones St active transport loop		X	X		Supported
T16	localised footpath widening	X	X	X	Where?	Supported
T27	Forest Lodge to City South bike network		X		Lacks detail	???

The Peninsula population relies heavily on active and public transport. Unusually in Australia, **half of Ultimo households do not own a car** (2016 Census: 0.5 vehicle per dwelling and only 12.5% travel to work by car).

The Strategy Infrastructure Plans are inadequate to support and sustain the current sustainable way of life in the Peninsula, providing only:

- Sydney Metro West

We welcome the Pymont Station but object to:

- The location of the West entrance in a Heritage Conservation Area (see above)
 - An unsightly 120m tall high- rise tower, highly visible from heritage-protected areas such as Union Square.
 - The Special Infrastructure Contribution (SIC) which would, exceptionally, make Pymont and North Ultimo residents pay (albeit indirectly) for their Metro Station (the \$15,000 per new dwelling paid by the developers will directly impact the already very high cost of living in the Peninsula).
- In addition the Peninsula residents are already “paying” for their Metro Station by having to tolerate the 120m tall tower above.

- Light Rail LR1

The modest increase in service frequency to a train every 5mn is not nearly sufficient to solve the problem of this grossly overused system.

The recent mechanical faults which resulted in the closure of the line for months show the fragility of this key infrastructure.

- Other proposals (a new bus line, a 200m long contra-flow bus lane or cycling lanes) are simply anecdotal.

(b) Open Space

Ref	Description	Short term	Medium term	Long term		
O2	Jones St linear Park		X			Supported
O3	Wentworth Park Improvement	X	X			Supported
O10	4 outdoor courts		X		Where?	Supported
O13	Youth Spaces		X	X	Where?	Supported
O15	Mary Ann Park Upgrade		X		Lacks detail	Supported
O16	Transform Area under Western Distributor		X	X	Lacks detail	???
O21	Goodsline North extension		X	X		Supported
22	Tafe open Space		X	X	Where?	????

- Jones St linear park (Thomas St to Broadway)

We support the transformation of this section of Jones St into a linear park (Quarry Green style?).

- Wentworth Park

We support the general concept of improvement of Wentworth Park, especially the removal of the racing tracks, stands and other structures once the Greyhound Racing lease expires. **This would restore the continuity of the Park which is currently split in two by the racing/gaming facilities.**

We also look forward to the removal of the “temporary” (since 2016!) **pop-up school** in Wentworth Park which has been located since then on the **CBD to Glebe strategic pedestrian/cycling route.**

- Goods line north extension

We strongly support the extension of the Goods line to the north, parallel to the Powerhouse Museum, under Pier St and along Pyrmont St.

This will, however, require the construction of a **comprehensive deck above the LR1 light rail tracks alongside the Powerhouse** since there is no space between the Powerhouse and the tracks.



(c) Community and cultural Facilities

Ref	Description	Short term	Medium term	Long term		
C4	New Production space for creative arts	X	X		Where?	Not supported
C6	Improved community access to MAAS auditorium and theatre	X	X		Too vague	???
C8	Work-based childcare in large commercial development	X	X	X		Supported
C11	New indoor recreation Centre (Landream)	X				Supported
C12	UCC upgrade		X			Supported

-Childcare

We support the development of childcare facilities in Ultimo, especially the approved "Landream" childcare centre,

- Indoor recreation centre (Landream)

Similarly supported

- Ultimo Community Centre

We welcome any improvement of our Community Centre **provided that its original purpose as a local community centre (+library and childcare) is maintained.**

We therefore strongly oppose the listing of its site as "capable of change" which could open the door to any kind of commercial transformation of this **revered community asset.**

- Powerhouse Museum

Since the announcement by then NSW Premier Mike Baird in early 2015, that the Powerhouse would move to Parramatta and the Ultimo site would be sold to private developers, we have consistently advocated that **the Powerhouse Museum be maintained in Ultimo with its original function(s) (a Science and Techniques Museum with world-class collections) and renewed funding to “restore it to its former glory” after years of government neglect.**

Our advocacy, together with that of many other groups and strong community support led to the announcement, in mid-2020, by the Berejiklian government that the Powerhouse Museum would remain in Ultimo.

We therefore welcome any “improvement” to the Museum such as a new main entrance from the Goods line or the extension of the Goods line to the north.

At the same time, we are concerned by the listing of the whole site as “capable of change” which could pave the way for any kind of commercial redevelopment of the site (and, above all, of the unlisted Harwood building)

An essential part of “restoring the museum to its former glory”, in our opinion, is **to retain the Harwood Building as the museum collections storage facility and back-office** (exhibition preparation, collection maintenance and curation, etc...). This is now called into question by the construction of new facilities in Castle Hill.

Owing to lack of details we cannot at this stage approve, options C4 (new production space for creative art) or C6 (improve community access to MAAS auditorium and theatre) which could open the door to **commercial ventures in the Harwood building and other parts of the Museum.**

We are also concerned by statements (Pymont Peninsula Infrastructure Delivery Plan p12&13) such as “the renewal of Powerhouse Ultimo will deliver dynamic retail, hospitality and outdoor activation opportunities ensuring a dynamic precinct throughout the day and night” and “the introduction of The Academy will accommodate up to 60 remote and regional NSW students to stay at the museum and immerse themselves in exhibitions and learning programs while having direct access to the creative industries within the precinct” or “a significant investment in the development of a creative industries precinct will deliver subsidised creative industry studio and workspaces resulting in a vibrant precinct that is an active contributor to the growing night-time economy..” which clearly suggest **the envisaged transformation of our internationally respected Museum into a “Carriageworks style” commercial venue.**

(d) Green Infrastructure

Wentworth Park, the “green lung “of Ultimo (although located in Glebe), is listed as an “open space” rather than a “green infrastructure”. Our comments above are relevant.

(e) Affordable Housing

We welcome the contribution increase which will bring our Peninsula in line with the remainder of the Sydney LGA:

- Residential: contribution increases from 0.8% to 1.0%
- Non-residential contribution increases from 1.1% to 3.0%

However we consider that those contributions are still a cheap way of avoiding actually building affordable/social housing and would welcome a **compulsory social/affordable housing ratio of, at least, 25%, of any future residential development in our Peninsula.**

The NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) lists 44,127 housing applicants on their register as of 30/06/2021 and expected waiting time for applicants in the Inner City (C01) varies from 5 to 10years for a studio/1 bedroom property to 10+ years for a 4+ bedroom property. (ref <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/housing/help/applying-assistance/expected-waiting-times>)

(f) Education

One of the glaring omissions of the Pymont Peninsula Place Strategy Implementation program.

- The Ultimo Public School (a permanent reminder of the NSW Government's short-sightedness which could have delivered a 1,000+ student public school on the disused City depot on Wattle St) is already reaching capacity.
- The need for a local secondary school in the Peninsula, advocated by many voices in the community, is still ignored.

Meanwhile the PPPS forecasts 8,500 new residents in the Peninsula (+43%) equivalent to 300+ primary school students (according to Census 2016 ratios) without making any provision for additional education facilities.

(g) Health

The other striking omission of the Pymont Peninsula Place Strategy Implementation program.

The Strategy plans to increase the Peninsula population by 43% (see above) and the number of jobs by 20,000 to 23,000 are not matched by any plan for new health (hospital, etc...) structures at a time when the current pandemic has clearly shown the limitations of the NSW Health system.

-6- CONCLUSION

The Pymont Peninsula Sub-Precinct Master Plans lists a number of positive punctual actions but demonstrates an **alarming lack of vision on key points such as education or health**, which are not even listed as infrastructure items.

In addition:

- The Plans demonstrate a major discrepancy between the PPPs sometimes good (although vague) intentions and the **site-by-site developer-led reality**. This is proved by the listing of the 105m tall Star Casino Hotel tower or of a 120m tall commercial building on top of the proposed Pymont Metro Station as "strategic"
- The concept of "**sites capable of change**" opens the way to frightening transformations of Ultimo vital sites such as the Powerhouse Museum, the Ultimo Community Centre or the Jones St/Henry Av City West housing complex.

We are extremely concerned by the City of Sydney Council's key role in the process.

- The transport delivery program falls far short of addressing the needs of a community uniquely focused on active and public transport.

Finally most of the shortcomings described result directly from a systematically inadequate and biased community consultation process.

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