

CONCEPT PROPOSAL FOR MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT WITH INFILL AFFORDABLE HOUSING 45-53 MACLEAY STREET, POTTS POINT

LOSS OF HERITAGE

The existing building at 45-53 Macleay Street, is a fine example of 20th Century design and merits preservation. The façade composition is rational with exposed slab edges and columns clearly reflecting the structural system of the building. The use of polychrome brick, concrete and aluminium façade framing highlight the authentic properties of the materials without extraneous decoration in the classic vocabulary of late modernism. Integral concrete window hoods for shading demonstrate nascent passive environmental design strategies that have become a fundamental aspect of contemporary design philosophy. The modulation of the glazed elements clearly mirrors the functionality of spaces within the apartments with large glazed areas allowing maximum natural daylight and views for all residents. The design of the Chimes reflects the ambitious objectives of the post war period which sought to democratise access to city housing while maintaining excellent amenity. The contribution of the Chimes was part of the creation of the contemporary Potts Point community. Its loss would be an irreversible injury to the urban design history of a vibrant part of our city.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

45-53 Macleay Street contains eighty (80) affordable apartments which have supported a diverse community of people for half a century. The demolition of eighty small apartments and the proposed replacement of eighteen (18) affordable units represents a backward step. The vast majority of the proposed accommodation will be large luxury apartments which only add to the undesirable trend of homogenous gentrification and the erosion of the access to low cost housing in close proximity to central Sydney.

EXCESSIVE BULK AND HEIGHT

The western side of Macleay Street has a distinct architectural character which is lower in scale than the eastern side. While the existing Chimes building is atypical, the existing height is consistent with the adjacent built forms, and it's design permits view corridors to be maintained. The proposed increase in height will amplify the already atypical impact of a tall building in close proximity to typical Victorian terrace scale structures west of the site. The proposed replacement building volume is self evidently taller and bulkier and does not represent an improvement to the existing urban design character. View corridors around 45-53 Macleay Street will be reduced as a consequence of the adoption of this proposal.

DENSITY

Potts Point is one of the most densely occupied areas of the country and this has been the case of many decades. The intent of SEPP 2021 is to increase housing supply and to improve affordability without undesirable impacts on existing communities. The proposal will have the opposite effect as it will reduce the total number of residences in Potts Point and

will replace more than 50% of site's existing smaller units with expensive luxury apartments. This represents a reduction in density and an erosion of the sustainable current mix of smaller and large apartments. It should be noted that Potts Point does not have a shortage large of high price apartment accommodation and that there has been a steady loss of smaller apartments in the locality through strata renewal developments. The blanket application of the bonus provisions in SEPP2021 to an area such as Potts Point, and in particular to this proposal is not justified as many of the overarching objectives of the SEPP will be undermined.

OVER SHADOWING

The increased height and bulk of the concept proposal will have a detrimental impact on the access to solar amenity of existing residences in the area. The majority of the surrounding buildings were constructed prior to the requirement in SEPP65 for a minimum two (2) hours solar access for living areas and external balconies/terraces. As a result, most older apartments do not meet this standard. The additional height and bulk that is proposed will further reduce the access to sunlight of those apartments that currently enjoy less than the minimum level of amenity. The aggregate outcome will be that more apartments will suffer worse amenity than those that will have acceptable access to sunlight. A proposal that deliberately reduces the amenity of neighbouring residents must not be given consideration for approval.