



Australian
Institute of
Architects

Pymont Peninsula

Submission to NSW Dept. of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE)

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PURPOSE

- This submission is made by the Australian Institute of Architects NSW Chapter (the Institute) to provide comments in response to Directions for the Pyrmont Peninsula Place Strategy published by the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, March 2020.
- At the time of this submission, the Chapter President of the Institute is Kathlyn Loseby.
- The State Manager is Kate Concannon.

INFORMATION

The Australian Institute of Architects (Institute) is the peak body for the architectural profession in Australia. It is an independent, national member organisation with around 11,500 members across Australia and overseas. More than 3,200 of these are based in NSW.

The Institute exists to advance the interests of members, their professional standards and contemporary practice, and expand and advocate the value of architects and architecture to the sustainable growth of our communities, economy, and culture.

The Institute actively works to maintain and improve the quality of our built environment by promoting better, responsible, and environmental design.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS/EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This submission has been developed in response to *Directions for the Pyrmont Peninsula Place Strategy* published by the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, March 2020.

The Institute commends the Greater Sydney Commission's (GSC) *Western Harbour Precinct including Pyrmont Peninsula Planning Framework Review Report* (GSC Review) September 2019 and its recommendation for a comprehensive masterplan for the area. The Institute note that GSC Review found that 'A number of major projects, on the edge of the Review Area, are being planned but are disconnected from each other.' A fragmented and poorly coordinated strategy for the precinct will not maximise the long-term benefits that this key area of land could contribute to Sydney.

The Institute supports the City of Sydney's response to the GSC Review, in particular the need for:

- aligning the planning framework for the area with the district and regional plans to help achieve the wider objectives for the area
- developing a Place Strategy supported by an economic strategy, masterplan, planning framework and governance model as recommended by GSC.

GOVERNANCE IS THE KEY

- Planning responsibility for the Pyrmont peninsula, including the existing Fish Markets site, must include a strong role for the City of Sydney.
- A comprehensive master plan must be developed, with key input from City of Sydney in collaboration with DPIE, Transport for NSW, Government Architect NSW and other key stakeholders, including a new Community Reference Group.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Australian Institute of Architects (the Institute) is the peak body for the architectural profession in Australia, representing around 11,500 members, with around 3,200 members residing in NSW. The Institute works to improve our built environment by promoting quality, responsible, sustainable design. Architecture influences all aspects of the built environment and brings together the arts, environmental awareness, sciences and technology. By combining creative design with technical knowledge, architects create the physical environment in which people live, which in turn, influences quality of life. Through its members, the Institute plays a major role in shaping Australia's future.

As a distinct profession, architects can and do offer services that directly impact on public health and safety issues and quality issues affecting buildings. The Institute's Code of Conduct expects architects to 'improve standards of health and safety for the protection and welfare of all members of the community.' This is an important distinction, beyond the basics of safety, and it is not just to serve interests of the client, the developer, or the financial institution, but everyone.

The Institute welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to NSW DPIE. The comments below relate to the following Terms of Reference:

Directions for the Pyrmont Peninsula Place Strategy published by the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, March 2020.

A number of related matters are also outlined for consideration by NSW DPIE.

2. DIRECTIONS FOR THE PYRMONT PENINSULA PLACE STRATEGY – INSTITUTE RESPONSE

This submission has been developed in response to *Directions for the Pyrmont Peninsula Place Strategy* published by the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, March 2020.

The Institute commends the Greater Sydney Commission's (GSC) *Western Harbour Precinct including Pyrmont Peninsula Planning Framework Review Report* (GSC Review) September 2019 and its recommendation for a comprehensive masterplan for the area. The Institute note that GSC Review found that 'A number of major projects, on the edge of the Review Area, are being planned but are disconnected from each other.' A fragmented and poorly coordinated strategy for the precinct will not maximise the long-term benefits that this key area of land could contribute to Sydney.

The Institute supports the City of Sydney's response to the GSC Review, in particular the need for:

- aligning the planning framework for the area with the district and regional plans to help achieve the wider objectives for the area
- developing a Place Strategy supported by an economic strategy, masterplan, planning framework and governance model as recommended by GSC.

The Institute has reviewed the Ten Early Directions for the *Pyrmont Peninsula Place Strategy* and responds as follows:

1. Development that complements or enhances the area

New or upgraded buildings fit with the Peninsula's evolving character.

RESPONSE: The evolving character of the precinct should be identified in a comprehensive masterplan that considers the individual character and potential of

sub-precincts as recommended in the GSC Review. The GSC also noted a project by project approach to development assessment has limited ability to address the needs of a place and effectively consider the cumulative impacts and benefits associated with other projects and developments. Individual precincts including the current Fishmarket site should be included in this masterplan and proposals developed in a coordinated manner. Design excellence in line with the City of Sydney processes should be followed. The masterplan should draw on the earlier urban design work by the City West Development Corporation and the City of Sydney.

2. Jobs and industries of the future

Investment and innovation to boost jobs, creativity, tourism and night life.

RESPONSE: The peninsular will require a balance of land use to ensure a diverse mix of commercial, education, entertainment, arts and other uses. The plan should be informed by a coordinated economic strategy.

3. Centres for residents, workers and visitors

New, lively and attractive centres for everyone to enjoy.

RESPONSE: The findings of the GSC Review noted that community infrastructure facilities, such as swimming pools and sports fields, are in high demand serving a growing number of residents, workers, students and visitors. Consultation with community representatives, industry, councils and other key stakeholders indicated some infrastructure is perceived to be at capacity, including open space, recreation facilities, social infrastructure, community facilities and primary education services. It is important to ensure that new community, cultural, education and health facilities as well as places for active and passive recreation are included in the plan.

4. A unified planning framework

Clearer rules delivering greater certainty and investment.

RESPONSE: The GSC Review noted the complexity and uncertainty of the existing planning framework generate inconsistency in the application of development standards and principles for development. There is a need to establish a clear governance framework, preferably led by the City of Sydney, which has extensive experience in effectively guiding the development of large precincts. The Institute supports development of a comprehensive masterplan for the area, including the site of the existing Fish Market. The coordinated spatial plan should guide the assessment of competing project priorities to deliver high quality place-making outcomes. Comprehensive and detailed planning at the local level is required to deliver the Innovation Corridor vision for the Western Harbour Precinct and Pyrmont Peninsula.

5. A tapestry of greener public spaces and experiences

Better spaces, streets and parks; a rich canopy of trees; and access to the foreshore

RESPONSE: The GSC Review noted that the Greater Sydney Region Plan and Eastern City District Plans state that delivery of high-quality place-based outcomes requires integration of site-specific planning proposals with precinct-wide place and public domain outcomes through place-based planning. A comprehensive Public Domain strategy is required, informed by the earlier work of the City West Development Corporation and the City of Sydney. Streets and open spaces should be under public ownership in perpetuity.

6. Creativity culture and heritage

Celebrating Pyrmont Peninsula's culture, heritage and connections to country

RESPONSE: The City of Sydney's Local Strategic Planning Strategy covers planning priorities and actions relevant to this area include addressing local issues such as active streets, local heritage character and improved transport connections. The GSC Eastern City District Plan recognises the importance of accessible and culturally appropriate social infrastructure to serve a changing population, encourage creative and cultural expression and support social connections.

7. Making it easier to move around

Safer, greener streets integrating with new public transport

RESPONSE: The Institute supports development of a comprehensive transport plan which addresses the findings of the GSC Review on the impact of regional traffic and freight routes on the quality of the place. The transport plan must provide a connected and reliable transport network supported by a fine grain pedestrian network. Consultation with community representatives, industry, councils and other key stakeholders indicated there is a need to improve transport connectivity, particularly pedestrian and cycle links east-west and north-south across the peninsula and to provide greater capacity on the existing Light Rail. Increases in density will need to be balanced by improvements to public transport, pedestrian and bicycle paths that are informed by detailed assessments of future needs. The Institute also support enhanced connection to the CBD and Darling Harbour and the Reopening of the Glebe Island bridge.

8. Building now for a sustainable future

An adaptive, sustainable and resilient built environment

RESPONSE: Developments and changes must enhance the quality of the built environment. This will include best practice sustainability standards, buildings which are well designed, crafted and durable and follow the City of Sydney's design excellence processes. Development must be required to improve the amenity of the public domain including fine grain subdivision patterns rather than mega-lots. All streets and public spaces must remain in public ownership in perpetuity. Changes will also need to consider resilience in the face of a changing climate and extreme weather events, contribute to the green grid, reduce the drain on resources (water, energy, waste), improve biodiversity and regenerate the environment.

9. Great homes that can suit the needs of more people

A diversity of housing types, tenure and price points.

RESPONSE: There has been a long-standing approach to affordable housing in the Review area, established under SREP 26, and any increase in density through changes to planning controls provides an opportunity for value capture for community benefits. Clear targets must be established for a range of housing types, including significant percentages of social, key worker and affordable dwellings as well as a diverse range of alternative and market housing.

10. A collaborative voice

A cohesive, agreed approach to bring about the best outcomes for the Pymont Peninsula.

RESPONSE: The Place Strategy must address the requirements of the Greater Sydney Region Plan and Eastern City District Plan across the themes of infrastructure, liveability, productivity and sustainability. The lack of detailed response to the GSC Review and the limited depth and coordination in the Ten Directions for the Pymont Peninsula Place

Strategy highlight the need for a more comprehensive arrangement to successfully drive the development of a place strategy for Pyrmont. The Institute supports establishment of a Steering Committee including City of Sydney, DPIE and other key stakeholders, engaged with a dedicated Community Reference group.

GOVERNANCE IS THE KEY

- Planning responsibility for the Pyrmont peninsula, including the existing Fish Markets site, must include a strong role for the City of Sydney.
- A comprehensive master plan must be developed, with key input from City of Sydney in collaboration with DPIE, Transport for NSW, Government Architect NSW and other key stakeholders, including a new Community Reference Group.