

6 September 2017

NSW Planning & Environment  
GPO Box 39  
Sydney NSW 2001

### Submission – St Leonards and Crows Nest Priority Precinct

PPD Planning Consultants (PPD) represents a number of landowners in the St Leonards and Crows Nest Priority Precinct. On their behalf, we have reviewed the draft vision, objectives and guiding planning principles that are currently on public exhibition and make the following comments.

#### **Employment Review**

There is general agreement and support for the findings of the employment review undertaken by SGS Economics and Planning. In particular, we note and support the following key statements:

- The North Shore possesses one of the most highly qualified workforces in the NSW and Australian economy and has existing locational advantages;
- A significant weakness in the St Leonards and Crows Nest centres is that many of the buildings are strata-titled with offices or suites held by different owners in the same building and this mitigates against coordinated redevelopment. This has the potential to prevent the sub-precinct from renewing and fully capitalising on its proximity to key pieces of urban infrastructure;
- The introduction of the Sydney Metro station at Crows Nest has the potential to increase the accessibility of this location from across metropolitan Sydney; and
- Focus therefore needs to shift to how state and local Government can make the most of limited capacity available in each sub-precinct to ensure that the present and future business community can generate the greatest levels of economic benefit to the region and State.

#### **Preliminary Urban Design Analysis**

The preliminary urban design analysis does a very good job in providing a baseline review and detailing the urban context of the precinct.

As part of the urban analysis and development of a preliminary precinct structure plan substantial work has been undertaken to identify the constraints and opportunities that will likely determine the future structure of the precinct.

If the St Leonards and Crows Nest Precinct is going to achieve substantial redevelopment, and therefore reach job targets and become a Strategic Centre as envisaged in the Greater Sydney Commission's draft North District Plan, then more has to be made of two (2) key development constraints that have the potential to mitigate against the precinct renewing and fully capitalising on its proximity to key pieces of urban infrastructure.

#### Strata Title commercial suites

Strata title commercial sites are identified as being a 'built form' constraint in the Urban Design Analysis and identified in the Employment Review as a significant weakness in the St Leonards and Crows Nest centres that can mitigate against coordinated redevelopment (see dot point 2 above). As identified in the Urban Design Analysis, there are a significant number of sites with over 8 strata titles.

Recent changes to the strata laws in NSW make it much easier for strata owners to come together and agree on redevelopment of their site. Consideration should be given to investigating an incentive based scheme that would encourage buildings owners of strata suites in the same building to come together and work towards more fully capitalising on their proximity to key pieces of infrastructure. These incentives could be focused in the key economic areas of St Leonards Centre/CBD and the education and health precincts around Royal North Shore Hospital, TAFE and Mater Hospital.

Large sites that are currently occupied by numerous strata owners should be identified as opportunity sites that should be incentivised to be redeveloped and return significant levels of economic benefit to the region and State.

#### Sites are too small for significant up lift

A significant number of sites in the precinct may also be considered constrained because they are too small for increased development potential. Although not specifically identified as a constraint in the urban design analysis it is important to recognise that, like strata title sites, there are a significant number of these single sites in the Precinct and that these sites still have potential to be developed with tall slender towers that can make a significant contribution to the economic up lift being sought in the Precinct.

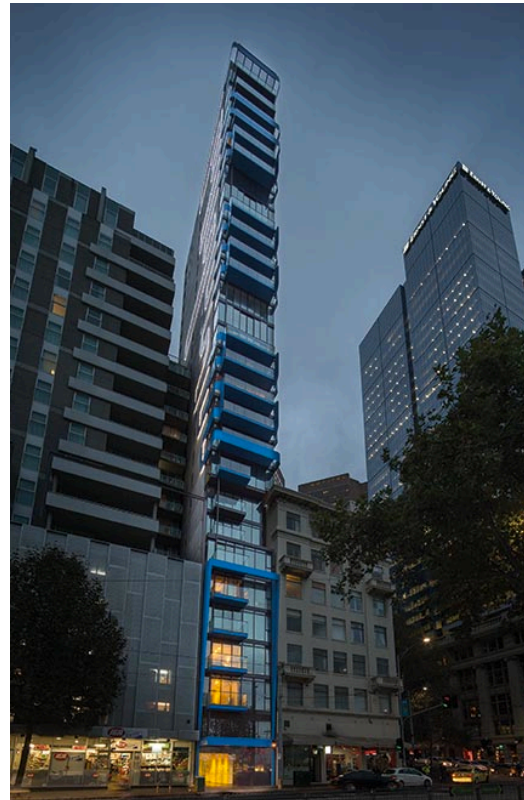
Tall slender towers have distinct advantages such as:

- They save space and accommodate more residents as compared to shorter slender buildings.
- The higher floors are relatively more airy and receive more sunlight.
- Taller buildings are a better option for the idea of a green building since they are more lit and airy.
- They are much more economical (need to buy less land) and can

provide more affordable dwelling units.

Development of these sites should be left to the market and innovative architects and developers to resolve at the appropriate stage in the approvals process.

Below are some images of very tall slender buildings on very small sites.



As part of the urban design analysis there could be some dialogue about how more can be made of limited capacity available in each sub-precinct, particularly in relation to sites that may initially appear to be constrained by such issues as multiple strata title ownerships or lot size. Being able to free up such sites will make a considerable difference to the limited capacity of development sites in the Precinct.

### **Existing Transport Conditions**

A review of the precincts transport opportunities and constraints suggest that increased future development will help address many of the transport constraints in the precinct by:

- Dedicated cycling facilities, particularly along Pacific Highway;
- More car share facilities;
- Improved pedestrian amenity and connectivity;
- Greater pedestrian activity at night;
- Delivery of diverse land uses that will support trip containment;
- Delivery of increased residents who work in the area and support local trips.

This review further emphasises the need to ensure there is increased future development in the Precinct because it will deliver public benefits in the form of improved transport conditions.

### **Social Infrastructure and Open Space Background Review**

The review provides a very good summary of the drivers and potential challenges that may influence the future design of social infrastructure and open space for the precinct that will in turn inform the St Leonards and Crows Nest Station Social Infrastructure and Open Space Study.

We look forward to your consideration of this submission.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Polvere', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

**Tony Polvere**  
Director