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Never underestimate a sandwich in the sun

■ Lisa Visentin

It is a futuristic, 83-storey tower and it may never see the light of day.

Planning officials have ruled it is more important for Parramatta residents to have access to the winter sun during lunchtime – a decision developers and their representatives say could crush attempts to establish the area as Sydney's second CBD.

The latest project to be threatened by the re-imposition of overshadowing rules is the proposed Holdmark tower, set to soar 266 metres over Parramatta from its slated Church Street address.

This week the developer released the design of a sleek building, which was the subject of an international design competition.

But plans for that building may be scuppered by the Greater Sydney Commission's decision last month to reject the development proposal for a nearby 60-storey tower in Macquarie Street, on the grounds it plunged parts of Parramatta Square into shadow between noon and 2pm during the winter.

That decision may mean the Holdmark tower would need to be limited to about 20 storeys in order to comply.

"We certainly weren't expecting it," said Gavin Carrier, Holdmark's head of development.

The commission's decision effectively overturned an attempt by the former Parramatta council to weaken restrictions on overshadowing.

The former council, replaced by an administrator, wanted to allow buildings to overshadow a public square in Parramatta, provided the shadows moved past within 45 minutes.

For Parramatta residents and workers, the impact of the decision is that they should be able to eat their lunch in sunlight in a busy area of Parramatta.

There are similar rules protecting parts of the Sydney CBD from midday shadow.

These include Martin Place.

But for developers, the impact of the decision could be far-reaching.

Chief executive of the industry group Urban Taskforce, Chris Johnson, said the high-rise vision for Parramatta was incompatible with the shadow restrictions.



The 83-storey tower planned for Parramatta.