

## Objection to SSD-97528708- 160 Oxford St, Paddington

I am the owner of 14 Shadforth St, Paddington and am writing to lodge my objection to the proposed development at 142-148 and 160 Oxford St, 13 Gibbs St, 6 Shadforth St, Paddington.

### 1. History

14 Shadforth St was built around 1840 by convicts as a worker's cottage to house builders working on Victoria Barracks. It is situated in The Paddington Heritage Conservation Area known as Little Paddington. This historic area houses a mixture of single to 3 storey houses dating as far back to the earliest settlement of Sydney.

My mother bought 14 Shadforth St in 1974 and it has been in our family now for 52 years. Our house, along with 12 Shadforth St, Paddington is featured in the iconic historical book *Sydney's Hidden Charms*, written by Daphne Kingston.

My mother bought our house unknowingly from Sydney's most notorious gangster called Johnny Stewart Regan (who is the subject of a recent podcast *The Gangster's Ghost*). According to my mum, he would turn up every time to the house with a different girlfriend and a different fancy car. My mum only found out that he was a gangster when his picture was plastered on the first page of every Sydney news paper on 22 September 1974-claiming that he had been gunned down in broad daylight.

14 Shadforth St had been built as an original 2 storey residence, identical to 12 Shadforth St, but had suffered a fire prior to my family buying it. In the mid 1980's my parents lovingly restored it to its former glory.

Shadforth St, sits perpendicular to Oxford St, directly opposite the historic Victoria Barracks. The street itself houses two-way traffic, but is only wide enough to allow one car to pass at a time.

### 2. The Proposal

The proposed develop seeks to completely demolish the current building housing 27 affordable units in order to build an 8 storey infill development with 4 rooftop pools and underground parking, which will require extensive excavation works.

The proposal will, if approved, have a net loss of affordable housing - seeking to only provide 10 "affordable" units (at a price that has not been determined). The other 30 apartments will be deemed to be luxury and it is argued that this proposal is at best a cynical attempt at trying to circumvent local planning regulations in order to seek state significant approval on the grounds of providing more affordable housing. On this measure alone, this proposal clearly fails and should not be approved.

### 3. Bulk and Scale

Currently the main structure situated at 160 Oxford St is a 3 storey building. Although it is a more modern building than its neighbours, its bulk and scale is such that it does not intrude onto the streetscape. The manner of its construction also has no impact on any structures to the north in Shadforth St.

It is vital to note that there are NO buildings in the surrounding area that exceed 3 storeys. The Paddington clock tower is the highest structure, but is not of any significant bulk and scale. Height, bulk and scale is very important when it comes to assessing the impact of any new development, as streetscape and potential impacts through privacy, loss of views and overshadowing must be determined not to have a material impact on the neighbourhood.

This proposal seeks to build an 8 storey building with 4 levels of underground parking. There is NO other building remotely this high in the surrounding neighbourhood and it is argued that the height, bulk and scale is completely at odds not only to any houses in its immediate vicinity, but also to any other structure in the neighbourhood. Similarly there is no evidence of any other structure in the neighbourhood with 4 levels of excavation for car parking.

Paddington is extremely rare in Sydney for its preservation of predominantly terrace houses that stand no more than 3 storeys (usually with only attics within the third floor). It is argued that the proposal, if approved, would set a completely unacceptable precedent for this heritage conservation zone. The proposal would be better suited to the surrounding precincts of Edgecliff, Moore Park and Randwick- all of which have zoning for higher residential buildings.

If this overdevelopment is approved, it would pave the way for the future demise of Paddington as we know it. It is argued that along with the Rocks, Paddington has immense cultural and architectural importance to Sydney. The planning of future development should not take a one size fits all rule in determining the housing policy for NSW. History and its preservation must play an important role in determining the future of our city. Much like Paris has protected areas, Sydney must take steps to safeguard certain parts. Little Paddington is very rare to be so well preserved and this proposal sets the precedent of undermining the whole area.

### 4. Parking and Traffic

Shadforth St Paddington is already a road that is at absolute peak capacity in terms of parking and navigating cars due to its extremely narrow width. The proposal seeks to excavate 4 basement levels to west of Shadforth St to accommodate around 80+ cars to

support the luxury units. The construction alone, will have an intolerable impact on the street and once completed will add an enormous burden on what is essentially a lane that feeds the many surrounding streets to and from Oxford St.

## 5. Privacy

Currently there are no plans that seek to demonstrate the potential impact on the surrounding neighbours. However with 4 rooftop pools and 8 levels of balconies, it does not take much imagination to determine that all the backyards of surrounding properties, including mine will have a material impact- completely losing any sense of privacy. Why should the rights of luxury unit holders over-ride the basic rights of privacy to the current homeowners?

## 6. Affordable Housing?

The rationale for this proposal is to over-ride local planning laws in order to provide affordable housing. It is important to note that the existing building houses 27 units of affordable housing. The proposal seeks to evict these tenants in order to construct luxury units that includes so called "affordable" housing for 10 units - a net LOSS of 17 units of affordable housing.

Nowhere does the proposal indicate how much these so-called affordable units are proposed to cost (apart from 20% below "market" set for 10 years) and one does not need to be too cynical to determine that in reality the proposal cares not one iota for affordable housing and is merely using this rule as a way to bypass local planning laws.

## 7. Conclusion

This proposal is clearly in breach of local planning laws - it is well in excess of current height restrictions and bulk and scale and setback requirements. It is the first of its kind in Paddington and if approved will have a hugely detrimental effect - not only on the surrounding neighbours and streetscape, but also will be forever known as a blight on Little Paddington paving the way for future unsympathetic development. Sitting directly opposite the historically significant Victoria Barracks, means that any proposed development must be sympathetic to the surroundings and play tribute to the heritage.

It is argued that this proposal is a gross overdevelopment that will visually detract and negatively impact the surrounding historical structures and will dominate the skyline in a manner that is inconsistent with, and ultimately detrimental to the area and its strong history and heritage.

Although it is acknowledged that there is a distinct lack of affordable housing in Sydney, this proposal, if approved will have a negative impact on the very goals the state government has sought to rectify. As such on every measure, this proposal fails to achieve the desired results of being in keeping with the surrounding, respecting neighbourhood amenities, not having a

detrimental effect on heritage listed buildings, all whilst not providing an increase in affordable housing stock.

As such I urge you not to approve this development.

Sincerely

Antony Partos

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