

SUBMISSION ON SSD-97528708 Mixed Use Development with infill affordable housing

Lodged by Gillian Appleton

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Background

I grew up in Watsons Bay and later life have lived Woollahra (1978-1990) and Paddington (2015 to date). My late husband the Hon James McClelland (1915-1999) was the inaugural Chief Judge of the NSW Land and Environment Court. We shared a deep concern for the history of this area and the preservation of the unique characteristics of the green and the built environment.

I own and occupy an apartment in 180-184 Oxford St, located on the western corner of Brodie and Oxford Streets. The building, originally the Greenwood Tree Hotel, was converted to contain eight apartments in 2006. The building façade was preserved, and since the building is within the Paddington Heritage Conservation Area, its façade is part of that heritage.

The location is one block from the existing four-storey 47-studio apartment building proposed for demolition and replacement, at the intersection of Shadforth Street and Oxford St. The entire area enclosed by Glenmore Road and Oxford St constitutes **the heart of the original Little Paddington Village**. The heritage importance of the area to Paddington history cannot be emphasised too much. It contains an exceptional variety of disparate dwellings, from small cottages which housed workers in the 19th century to modest early terraces and the grander houses marking the beginnings of Paddington's gentrification.

Shadforth St, Gipps St, Alfred St and the network of laneways and narrow streets around them and bordering the Royal Hospital for Women Park on Glenmore Road are much used by local residents like myself for recreational walks and access to shops, schools and adjoining suburbs, and by local and overseas visitors wishing to see a unique collection of Paddington history.

I fear the immediate and longer term impacts of the massive project proposed in this development, affecting not only residents and existing heritage buildings, but people living in adjacent suburbs and visitors wishing to explore the history of inner Sydney.

Concessions for designated State Significant Developments (SSD) are allowing developers to bypass potential objections and exclude any role for the relevant Councils. So it is vital that

planners hear the views of residents and business owners, indeed anyone who cares about the preservation of heritage. The inclusion in this development of 10 affordable apartments which remain so for a mere 15 years before being made available for sale under the SSD policy, is an insult to both current residents in the area and potential occupants of the so-called affordable housing.

Concerns: Potential Damage and Traffic

- 1) The impact of excavating for a multi-level underground car park in proximity to the small terraces in Shadforth Street, historic early workers' dwellings built with the primitive construction methods of the time which would not survive undamaged from the proximity of heavy machinery and drilling.
- 2) At a time when it is impossible to predict future needs and we are being urged to use public transport or alternative forms of transport, it is doubtful whether a four-storey car park makes economic or practical sense.
- 3) Anyone living in Paddington becomes accustomed to constant noise and mess caused by building and renovation activity, but the potential of the proposed development, confined within an extremely restricted area and involving multiple demolitions and the construction of a massive building, presages an unprecedented level of noise, disruption and disturbance to daily life for people in adjacent dwellings.
- 4) The prospect of up to 20 trucks a day attempting to negotiate the network of narrow streets and parked cars in this area suggests that the developer's assurances of minimal disruption are based on optimism rather than reality.
- 5) The two-way section of Shadforth Street before it joins Liverpool St is extremely narrow. Given that Brodie St is already closed to through traffic, Shadforth and Gipps Sts will also need to be closed for significant periods to permit access to equipment required to conduct excavations, use cranes, and deliver materials into and out of the work site. Traffic thus diverted will stream on to Glenmore Road, another narrow and already congested thoroughfare, to reach Oxford St.

The Proposed Building 160 Oxford St

Rationale: The developer states that its proposal would improve diversity of dwellings in the area, increasing the opportunity in particular for key workers to live close to high demand employment areas; enhance the street environment by providing more retail activation,

landscaping and quality architecture; and contribute to the vibrancy of the existing street life.

Since the 1960s, sections of Oxford Street have suffered the imposition of inappropriate and unsympathetic modern buildings, from Hyde Park to Bondi Junction. Nearer the Junction, remnant shops and terraces are constantly being demolished to make way for multi-storey residences and offices.

Concerns

- 1) It is crucial that Paddington does not become another barren stretch of high rise buildings. The design of the proposed 160 Oxford building is obtrusive and over-scale to fit the streetscape of Oxford, Gipps and Shadforth Streets and the old village generally.
- 2) The height of the proposed building will cast a shadow over part of Victoria Barracks and the spectacular jacaranda avenue which now attracts a large influx of local and international tourists annually when in flower. Overshadowing for significant periods display could affect sun exposure and inhibit flowering.
- 3) Affordable housing: The existing four-storey 27-studio apartment building perfectly fits the definition of 'affordable housing'. It has served small families and students in this area for decades. As recent buildings go, it is relatively unobtrusive. The developer's proposed *temporary* affordable housing in no way compensates for the loss of this building. There is no genuine intent to replace what will be demolished.
- 4) Retail: Oxford St Paddington does not need more retail activation. New retail is included the impressive development on Oxford St South between Taylor Square and Hyde Park of the formerly Sydney City Council-owned early 20th century buildings, currently opening after lengthy delays. The flow of visitors from Glenmore Road intersection to Paddington PO and onwards is increasing exponentially. On Saturdays it is already difficult for residents to navigate through crowds streaming east to fashion retail, cafes and the Paddington Market.
- 5) The street life in the proposed development area is already vibrant and does not require the enhancement of additional retail. There is already sufficient retail in Oxford St; some might say an over-supply, given the number of shops that have closed and remained so for long periods, to be replaced eventually by other types of retail such as cafes.

Community Consultation

On 7 November, Toohey Miller invited local residents by post to participate in an online community information session on 20 November 2025. I accepted this invitation. The session was constructed so that a representative of each element of the proposal spoke for that particular area. Not surprisingly, the effect was more of a marketing pitch than a genuine effort to involve community participation and feedback. There was minimal opportunity for feedback or questions. A survey 'to help inform the proposal' was also offered with a closing date of 25 November, five days later.

It is at least open to question whether the community has been allowed sufficient time to consider and respond to the TM No.8 Development Unit Trust's application for an SSD for this project.

The application, along with an environmental Impact Statement, was on public display via the NSW Planning Portal from 3-16 March, with a deadline of 16 March for submissions.



Gillian Appleton

Signed:

Date: 30 March 2026