

Stephen G. Palmer
14 Highfield Road
LINDFIELD NSW 2070

17 February 2026

The Manager, Major Projects NSW
Department of Planning, Housing & Infrastructure

Submitted via NSW Planning Portal

Dear Sir or Madam,

SUBMISSION OF OBJECTION
STATE SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION SSD-85974227
9-17 BALFOUR STREET, LINDFIELD NSW 2070

I reside at 14 Highfield Road, Lindfield, which is a contributory property in the Balfour Street/Highfield Road Heritage Conservation Area C29, as are the combined properties at 9-17 Balfour Street, Lindfield. By way of background, I am a finance professional and historian, with over 30 years' experience as a volunteer in the NSW railway heritage sector. I have researched and written several conservation studies for built heritage items, two of which were funded by the NSW Government under 'Caring for State Heritage' grant programs. My recommendations have been accepted by Heritage NSW and local Councils as appropriate for the conservation, adaptive reuse and sympathetic development of built heritage. My wife and I have lived at 14 Highfield Road since early 2000, and raised our two sons in the house. We have a keen interest in Lindfield's history and built heritage, and have been active volunteers for non-profit community organisations.

I object to State Significant Development Application SSD-85974227 on the following grounds. Many points of this objection are based on my personal, in-depth knowledge and experience of the immediate locality. Please read this objection in conjunction with the objection submitted by BBC Consulting Planners on behalf of the owners of 8 to 14 Highfield Road, Lindfield.

Impact on Ku-ring-gai's precious built heritage

The extant dwellings at 9-17 Balfour Street, Lindfield, are contributory properties within the Balfour Street/Highfield Road Heritage Conservation Area C29 (HCA) in the Ku-ring-gai Local Government Area. The HCA broadly consists of two distinct groups of houses in Balfour Street and Highfield Road. The Balfour Street group is largely homogenous in design, and has been described by Ku-ring-gai Council as 'an intact area of Federation Queen Anne style housing'.¹

¹ Ku-ring-gai Council, 'Balfour Street/Highfield Road Conservation Area - C29', 26 August 2020, <https://www.krg.nsw.gov.au/Planning-and-development/Planning-policies-and-guidelines/Development-control-plans>, accessed 16 February 2026.

The Balfour Street group houses were built for middle-class residents and their families, and are a dwelling type that is not well represented elsewhere in Lindfield's recognised heritage, either as heritage items or as contributory properties in other HCAs. The proposed demolition of these houses would be a significant and irreversible loss to the broader heritage story of Ku-ring-gai.

The classification of these houses by Ku-ring-gai Council as 'Federation/Queen Anne' is partially misleading; for example, 9 Balfour Street displays architectural characteristics more typically associated with the early inter-war Californian Bungalow style (prominent street-facing gable, gable roofing, dark bricks and plain chimney), while 15 and 17 Balfour Street are more correctly described as Federation bungalows. This misclassification does not diminish the heritage value of the houses as described in the paragraph above.

Although the Highfield Road group has also been described as 'Federation Queen Anne style housing', there are significant design differences between houses within this group. Of the four surviving houses in the group, 6 Highfield Road (a heritage item) matches the Federation Queen Anne style; 8 Highfield Road is a Federation bungalow; 10-12 Highfield Road has some Federation elements such as its complex roof structure, but with street-facing and side gables (with gable ventilators) similar to the Californian Bungalow style. In contrast, *Cheltenham*, 14 Highfield Road, built in 1921 and likely to have been the last of the group built, displays external elements that are significantly more from the early inter-war Californian Bungalow style. The Highfield Road group houses therefore individually and jointly contribute to the aesthetic character and streetscape appeal of the Balfour Street/Highfield Road HCA, by demonstrating the progression in building styles from the 1890s to the early 1920s.

The proposed development at 9-17 Balfour Street is completely disproportionate and out of keeping with the built aesthetics of the HCA, as described above. The proposed development does not respect the HCA's heritage context, and is not 'sympathetic in terms of form, scale, character, bulk, orientation, setback, colours and textures' of contributory properties in the HCA, nor does it meet the design principles specified in Section 19C of the *Ku-ring-gai Development Control Plan*.²

If implemented in its proposed form, the development will have a significant detrimental impact on the cultural significance of all contributory properties within the Balfour Street/Highfield Road HCA (including their curtilage and setting).

The applicant has obtained a Statement of Heritage Impact (SOHI) from Asteria Advisory in support of this SSD.³ This SOHI is inadequate and should be rejected on the following grounds:

1. The SOHI defines Balfour Street/Highfield Road HCA as the 'Balfour HCA', and then states that 'The report assesses the impacts on the Balfour HCA and the items contained within, as well as the heritage impacts to the adjoining areas'.⁴ The SOHI briefly

² Ku-ring-gai Council, '*Development Control Plan: Effective 4 December 2025*', 'Introduction' and Section 19C, 'Development within HCAs: Alterations and Additions and New Buildings', pp. 19.2, 19.13-19.33.

³ Asteria Advisory, 'Statement of heritage impact: 9-storey residential flat building with in-fill affordable housing. State Significant Development Application – SSD-85974227 9-17 Balfour Street, Lindfield', December 2025.

⁴ Asteria Advisory, 'Statement of heritage impact', p. 9.

considers the detrimental impact of the proposed development on 1 and 6 Highfield Road (both heritage items), but does not adequately address the significant detrimental impact that the proposed development would have on other contributory properties in the HCA. This is a major omission from the SOHI.

2. The SOHI assesses the contributory significance of the houses at 9-17 Balfour Street as though they were being considered for listing as Heritage Items in the *Ku-ring-gai Local Environmental Plan 2015* (KLEP) or on the State Heritage Register, and largely focuses on the extent of alterations as viewed from the side and rear of these properties. These are inappropriate grounds for assessing the contributory properties within an HCA. Instead, the SOHI should assess whether the proposed development ‘respects the established streetscape, and the historical patterns of development’, which this proposed development clearly does not do.⁵
3. The SOHI similarly focuses on internal alterations to the houses at 9-17 Balfour Street, which are also irrelevant to the established streetscape.
4. Although some alterations such as driveways and garaging have been made to the house-fronts at 9-17 Balfour Street, their street-facing façades are intact, well-preserved, and reflect their historical patterns of development. The lower-level garaging at 9 Balfour Street has been designed to harmonise with the original fabric of the house, while fencing and a hedge along the front boundary soften its visual impact. The driveways and garaging alterations to these contributory properties do not significantly detract from the HCA’s streetscape. All houses at 9-17 Balfour Street therefore continue to contribute to the established streetscape of the HCA.
5. The SOHI states that ‘Downhill from the study area along Balfour Street, at 19-25 Balfour Street, there is another [sic] development site comprising 4 lots within the HCA. These lots are the subject of another State Significant Development Application (SSDA) utilising the TOD and In-fill Affordable Housing provisions (SSD-82709458) by a third party. The proposed new building on those lots is a 9-storey apartment block, which would require demolition of all four houses’.⁶ This is an irrelevant consideration for SSD-85974227, which must stand on its own merits. Furthermore, the many objections to SSD-82709458 (including one of 38 pages from Ku-Ring-Gai Council)⁷ have raised serious legal, design, heritage and environmental issues with SSD-82709458, and its approval is by no means assured.
6. The SOHI acknowledges that ‘No specific consultation has been undertaken with regards to heritage issues on the site’, and states that ‘Aside from the owners and immediate neighbours, who are either aware of the proposal or will be notified of it in due course, there are no specific interest groups with which to consult in relation to the heritage values of this location’.⁸ This statement is incorrect; for example, Friends of Ku-ring-gai Environment ‘is a community group dedicated to the conservation and protection of Ku-

⁵ Ku-ring-gai Council, ‘*Development Control Plan: Effective 4 December 2025*’, Section 19A.1, ‘Subdivision and site consolidation for new development within an HCA’, p. 19.6, Objective 2.

⁶ Asteria Advisory, ‘Statement of heritage impact’, p. 42.

⁷ Ku-ring-gai Council, ‘Submission to SSD-82709458, Residential Development with infill affordable housing, Address: 19-25 Balfour Street, Lindfield’, 11 September 2025.

⁸ Asteria Advisory, ‘Statement of heritage impact’, p. 57 (underlining by the author of this objection).

ring-gai's built and natural environment'; the Australian Garden History Society 'brings together people from diverse backgrounds united by an appreciation of and concern for our parks, gardens and cultural landscapes as part of Australia's heritage', and the Ku-ring-gai Historical Society 'has produced award-winning publications on the area's local history, pioneer family histories and its built heritage'.⁹

7. The SOHI states that 'Given the identified need for additional density in and around railway stations in this part of Sydney, this significant upward pressure will see the character of the area including the HCA and the study site significantly increase in density and height over time. The proposal for this site is consistent with these changed planning provisions for the area'. The SOHI further states that 'It is also noted that there is a proposed State Significant Development with in-fill affordable housing immediately to the southwest of the study area, on the sites of 19-25 Balfour Street, which are also located within the HCA. Should that development be approved, approximately 50% of the HCA will have been redeveloped, including all elements along Balfour Street. This calls into question the viability of the HCA, as it would need to be reassessed taking into consideration the remaining buildings only'. The SOHI also speculates that 'it is anticipated that future developments of a similar scale will be constructed throughout the Lindfield TOD zone, which will fundamentally alter the character of the area in the longer term'.¹⁰ These are not valid considerations for a SOHI, which must assess the detrimental impacts on extant heritage structures, and not an assumed future state. Furthermore, even if SSD-85974227 and SSD-82709458 were approved, these statements presume to know the wishes of owners of other contributory properties within the HCA, who value and have conserved the heritage character of their homes.
8. The SOHI acknowledges that the Balfour Street/Highfield Road HCA has not been removed.¹¹ The continued listing of the HCA, together with the extensive points of objection on heritage grounds made by Ku-ring-gai Council against SSD-82709458, demonstrates the Council's continuing commitment to the conservation of extant dwellings on contributory properties within the HCA.¹²
9. The SOHI claims that 'this report addresses the requirements of Clause 5.10 of the KLEP with respect to heritage, through the consideration of the heritage impacts of the proposal to the HCA and adjacent heritage items'.¹³ This statement is incorrect. Clause 5.10(4) of the KLEP, which clause is specifically cited in this section of the SOHI, states that 'The consent authority must, before granting consent under this clause in respect of a heritage item or heritage conservation area, consider the effect of the proposed development on the heritage significance of the item or area concerned'.¹⁴ The SOHI acknowledges that 'The largest impact will be from the rear of the houses along Highfield Road, some of which will back onto the new building. While some screening is possible at lower levels, it will not be possible to entirely screen the new building from those properties at its

⁹ <https://www.foke.org.au/>; <https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/>; <https://khs.org.au/#>; all accessed 16 February 2026.

¹⁰ Asteria Advisory, 'Statement of heritage impact', pp. 59, 67, 70-71.

¹¹ Asteria Advisory, 'Statement of heritage impact', p. 61.

¹² Ku-ring-gai Council, 'Submission to SSD-82709458', Appendix A – Heritage, pp. 30-38.

¹³ Asteria Advisory, 'Statement of heritage impact', pp. 60.

¹⁴ *Ku-ring-gai Local Environment Plan 2015*, <https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/whole/html/inforce/current/epi-2015-0134#sec.5.10>, accessed 16 February 2026 (underlining by the author of this objection).

rear'.¹⁵ However, the SOHI does not otherwise address the significant detrimental impact that the proposed development would have on the contributory properties at 8, 10-12 and 14 Highfield Road, and therefore does not meet the spirit of Clause 5.10(4) of the KLEP.

10. The SOHI also states that 'No landscaping or vegetation of heritage significance has been identified within the study area' and 'No natural heritage values have been identified for this site'.¹⁶ These statements represent major omissions from the SOHI. Within the HCA, there is a wildlife corridor along the shared boundary between contributory properties in Highfield Road and Balfour Street, which has been classified as a Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Forest (a critically-endangered ecological community). The Forest includes several mature Sydney Blue Gums. These large-canopied trees have survived owing to the depth of blocks within the HCA, and because residents, acting as custodians, preserved the wildlife corridor for future generations. See further grounds for objection under 'Detrimental impact on the natural environment' below.
11. The SOHI contains brief descriptions of the gardens at 9-17 Balfour Street, but does not include an assessment of their heritage significance. The garden layouts were largely determined by the Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Forest, and may demonstrate traditional design techniques (for example; rockeries, paths and stone retaining walls). Furthermore, these gardens may retain rare examples of early exotic plant species. A heritage significance assessment of the gardens should be conducted by an independent horticultural expert (for example, from the Australian Garden History Society), prior to any alterations or removal.
12. The SOHI is clearly biased towards supporting the proposed development, and therefore lacks the objectivity of an independent heritage assessment.

Unknown impact on Ku-ring-gai's Aboriginal cultural heritage

The draft *NSW Heritage Strategy* stated that 'Aboriginal cultural heritage is the foundation of the state's heritage'.¹⁷ The applicant has obtained an Aboriginal Due Diligence Assessment (ADDA) from Biosys in support of this SSD.¹⁸ Given the significance of Aboriginal cultural heritage as stated in the draft *NSW Heritage Strategy*, and the scale and bulk of the proposed development, further due diligence and assessment is necessary on the following grounds:

1. The Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Forest and wildlife corridor along the lower rear boundary between the Balfour Street group and Highfield Road group include a *Casuarina Cunninghamiana* and an *Angophora Costata*, both of which are native mature trees. These species are commonly found near watercourses, and I have personally observed watercourses form near the common rear boundary during heavy rain. Local watercourses drain into Little Blue Gum Creek, approximately 200-300 metres south of Balfour Street.

¹⁵ Asteria Advisory, 'Statement of heritage impact', p. 62.

¹⁶ Asteria Advisory, 'Statement of heritage impact', pp. 63, 67.

¹⁷ Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, 'NSW Heritage Strategy: Sustaining the past for the future – Draft for public exhibition', 2025, p. 2.

¹⁸ Biosys, '9 storey residential flat building with in-fill affordable housing – Aboriginal Due Diligence Assessment', 26 November 2025.

2. Watercourses and their vicinity are known to have been valuable water and food sources for Ku-ring-gai's Aboriginal communities before European settlement. However, as far I am aware, no comprehensive study or archaeological assessment has been carried out over the Balfour Street/Highfield Road HCA to determine the presence of Aboriginal cultural heritage and/or human remains. Furthermore, the ADDA does not identify any such comprehensive study or archaeological assessment over the HCA among the investigations listed under the heading '3.3 Local Context', most of which 'were undertaken as part of development applications'.¹⁹
3. The ADDA also states that 'the AHIMS [Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System] database reflects Aboriginal sites that have been officially recorded and included on the list. Large areas of NSW have not been subject to systematic, archaeological survey; hence AHIMS listings may reflect previous survey patterns and should not be considered a complete list of Aboriginal sites within a given area'.²⁰ Consequently, a lack of sites in an area is not evidence that the area was not occupied by Aboriginal people, because either the area has not been surveyed for Aboriginal cultural heritage, or any such surveys may have been impaired by poor visibility and disturbances.
4. The scale and bulk of the proposed development will require removing very large amounts of soil including watercourse areas, and will permanently disturb and destroy any concealed Aboriginal cultural heritage and/or human remains. Furthermore, the ADDA also acknowledged that effectiveness of the survey conducted on 29 August 2025 over 9-17 Balfour Street was impaired by poor visibility and disturbances.²¹
5. It is therefore essential that a comprehensive study and archaeological assessment (including test excavations) should be carried out on the properties at 9-17 Balfour Street, in conjunction with independent representatives of the Aboriginal community, to ensure that any Aboriginal cultural heritage and/or human remains on the site are identified, then conserved and treated with dignity and respect.

Unknown impact on historical archaeology

The applicant has obtained a Historical Archaeological Assessment (HAA) from Biosys in support of this SSD.²² Given the scale and bulk of the proposed development, further due diligence and assessment is necessary on the following grounds:

1. The description of the area's early historical development in the HAA is superficial and inaccurate, in key respects that can be readily ascertained from publicly available sources. The earliest European land use in the Lindfield area was a sawing establishment close to the Lane Cove River, which commenced circa 1805 with convict labour. This establishment supplied heavy timber products from the area's Blackbutt and Blue Gum stands for the building construction, shipping and other industries in Sydney. By 1812, land in the Lindfield area was being promised to settlers, 'on the undertaking that they

¹⁹ Biosys, 'Aboriginal Due Diligence Assessment', pp. 21-23.

²⁰ Biosys, 'Aboriginal Due Diligence Assessment', p. 23.

²¹ Biosys, 'Aboriginal Due Diligence Assessment', pp. 29-34.

²² Biosys, '9 storey residential flat building with in-fill affordable housing – Historical Archaeological Assessment', 26 November 2025.

would improve the land by clearing the timber prior to farming'.²³ However, the HAA states that 'From the 1840s, land around Lindfield was promised to settlers who would undertake orcharding and farming, with these becoming the primary local industries'.²⁴ The local area may therefore contain evidence of European occupation from around thirty years earlier than the period stated in the HAA.

2. The site of the Balfour Street/Highfield Road HCA formed part of an early land promise by Governor Macquarie on 4 July 1811 of 30 acres to Richard Jenner or Jinners. The land was described in 1837 as '30 acres, County of Cumberland, parish of Gordon, commencing at the north-east corner of Thomas Wilson's farm; and bounded on the north-west by that farm, being a line bearing south 55 degrees west 20 chains; on the west by a line bearing southerly 14 chains; on the south by a line bearing north 45 degrees east 28 chains and 80 links to the Pennant Hills road; and on the east by the Pennant Hills road to the north-east corner of Thomas Wilson's farm as aforesaid'.²⁵ The 30 acres appears with the name of Jinners on various early parish maps of Gordon; however, the land was alleged to have been sold to Mary Millar and then to Richard Wilson at unknown dates, before a claim for deeds of grant was made by Samuel Onions in 1837.²⁶ These key early facts are omitted from the HAA, indicating the its authors have conducted insufficient due diligence in establishing the early pattern of European occupation, land usage, forestry and farming activities, for which archaeological evidence may remain on the sites of 9-17 Balfour Street.
3. The HAA identifies some potential archaeological resources on the site such as outbuildings, driveways, gardens and recreation areas,²⁷ but does not specify the potential for European occupation deposits on the site, which could date back to the original land promise to Richard Jenner or Jinners in 1811. Prior to the establishment of Council garbage collection services, occupation deposits were commonly formed in the area. Their presence may be indicated by depressions in the ground, or revealed by probing or test excavations. I have personally found occupation deposits consisting of glassware, pottery and other small domestic artefacts distributed across the site of 14 Highfield Road. The presence of similar archaeological deposits over 9-17 Balfour Street is very likely, and therefore their archaeological potential is high. The archaeological research potential of these deposits is also high, because they can increase our understanding of European occupation, land usage, forestry, farming, consumption and lifestyle activities on the site.
4. As noted earlier, the scale and bulk of the proposed development will require removing very large amounts of soil including watercourse areas, and will permanently disturb and destroy any concealed historical archaeology. Furthermore, the HAA also acknowledged that effectiveness of the survey conducted on 29 August 2025 over 9-17 Balfour Street was impaired by poor visibility and disturbances.²⁸

²³ Helen Malcher, Max Farley, Ruth Frappell and Margaret Wyatt (eds), *Focus on Ku-ring-gai: The Story of Ku-ring-gai's Growth and Development*, Gordon, 1996, pp. 15-17, 37.

²⁴ Biosys, 'Historical Archaeological Assessment', p. 15 (underlining by the author of this objection).

²⁵ 'Commissioner of Claims' Office: Case no. 66 – Samuel Onions', *New South Wales Government Gazette*, Sydney, no. 257, 11 January 1837, p. 29, <https://trove.nla.gov.au>, accessed 16 February 2026.

²⁶ Parish of Gordon, County of Cumberland, parish maps, Lands Department of NSW, 1835, 1882, 1883, 1886 and 1893, <https://hlrv.nswlrs.com.au>, accessed 25 January 2021; 'Commissioner of Claims' Office', *New South Wales Government Gazette*, p. 29; Malcher *et al.*, *Focus on Ku-ring-gai*, p. 8.

²⁷ Biosys, 'Historical Archaeological Assessment', pp. 38-41.

²⁸ Biosys, 'Historical Archaeological Assessment', p. 30.

5. It is therefore essential that a comprehensive study and archaeological assessment (including test trenching) should be carried out on the properties at 9-17 Balfour Street, to ensure that all historical archaeology resources on the site are identified, then assessed and conserved.

Detrimental impact on the natural environment

No mature trees should be removed from 9-17 Balfour Street on the following grounds:

1. Ku-ring-gai is well known for its beautiful natural environment, which includes large stands of native tree species that provide habitats for the area's diverse wildlife. Ku-ring-gai's bushland serves as "lungs" for Sydney, compensating (at least in part) for air pollution produced in other, overdeveloped areas that are without adequate tree canopies.
2. The native mature trees on 9-17 Balfour Street in the Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Forest have significance as Aboriginal cultural heritage. The Aboriginal Due Diligence Assessment (ADDA) obtained by the applicant from Biosys in support of this SSD states that 'Josh Marr of Metropolitan LALC [Local Aboriginal Land Council] advised that these mature trees should be retained during the development process. This vegetation represents cultural connections to the land which are significant to the local Aboriginal people of the Lindfield area and would assist in retaining the aesthetic of the natural landscape'.²⁹
3. In September and October 2024, mature trees were illegally removed from the combined properties at 19-25 Balfour Street, near the common rear boundary between the Balfour Street and Highfield Road groups. Suspected poisoning of trees also occurred on 19-25 Balfour Street and along the common rear boundary around this time. These unlawful activities were reported by neighbours to Ku-ring-gai Council. The affected trees included two *Eucalyptus Saligna* (Sydney Blue Gums), an *Angophora Costata*, two *Syncarpia Glomulifera* (Turpentine trees), all of which were mature native tree species. These activities have significantly damaged the wildlife corridor along the shared boundary. The wildlife corridor would again be greatly impaired by the further removal of mature trees and vegetation as contemplated by SSD-85974227.
4. The proposed side and rear boundary setbacks are too narrow and lack sufficient deep soil areas for the replacement of mature trees, and would not support adequate tree screening around the proposed development. The combined effects of these outcomes will destroy wildlife habitats with significant loss of biodiversity, and may create an urban "heat island" needing full-time air conditioning of apartments (as in other high-density areas).
5. It is remarkable that the proposed development is so unsustainable and destructive to the natural environment, and conflicts with popular expectations for addressing climate change.

²⁹ Biosys, 'Aboriginal Due Diligence Assessment', p. 35.

Comments on design quality and built form

The scale, bulk and height of the proposed development is completely out of step with the character of the immediate residential neighbourhood and streetscape, and particularly that of the Balfour Street/Highfield Road HCA. Neighbouring properties will suffer not only a full and unrelieved view of the proposed development above any successful screening, but also a loss of view lines to surviving green areas beyond the development.

The proposed development will not achieve a high level of environmental amenity for surrounding residential areas; instead, it will have a significant detrimental impact on all its neighbouring properties. The overshadowing and loss of direct sunlight will detrimentally affect nearby houses, the Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Forest and wildlife corridor along the common rear boundary between the Balfour Street and Highfield Road groups, and the rear gardens of the Highfield Road group. The proposed development is on the high northern side of Balfour Street, and will seem several stories higher when viewed from the lower houses in Highfield Road and Bent Street. Furthermore, the scale, bulk and height of proposed development will also result in a complete loss of privacy for neighbouring residents.

The proposed development will also reduce the social amenity of the local community, which currently enjoys a safe and friendly neighbourhood. Lindfield has a vibrant and culturally-diverse community that values the area's natural environment and built heritage, which most residents wish to protect for future generations. Large numbers of recent immigrants to Sydney have been attracted by these attributes, and have chosen to live in Ku-ring-gai to share in its heritage and cultural values. Many Lindfield residents also act as volunteers in local non-profit organisations, and thereby contribute to the area's strong sense of community.

The scale, bulk and height of the proposed development will contribute to overcrowding of the area, and will reduce its amenity for existing and new residents. The proposed development does not include sufficient outdoor living areas for its residents to enjoy, such as barbeque facilities and safe play areas. Moreover, there are insufficient parks with play areas in the immediate vicinity to satisfy outdoor living needs for residents living in apartments. This will encourage new residents to keep within their apartments, and will discourage them from engaging in community activities.

Traffic and parking

The Pacific Highway is congested throughout the day and especially during peak hours, carrying large numbers of buses, trucks and commuter vehicles. Balfour Street and Highfield Road are feeder roads to the Pacific Highway, and do not have any capacity for the significant increase in vehicle numbers that the proposed development would create. The proposed development is also near to both the Highfields Preparatory School and the Holy Family Catholic School.

Balfour Street and Highfield Road regularly become clogged with cars, and street parking is inadequate during school drop-off and pick-up times, in part owing to all-day parking by train commuters. As a result, frustrated parents will often engage in dangerous and abusive driving behaviour. Traffic has noticeable increased in Balfour Street since the opening in April 2025 of the Coles supermarket and residential apartment complex at the corner of Balfour Street and the Pacific Highway.

The proposed development does not include adequate off-street parking, to compensate for the further significant increase in vehicle numbers and on-street parking that it will create in an already busy area. Traffic congestion has already reached unsustainable levels in the precinct bounded by the Pacific Highway, Highfield Road, Wallace Parade, Bent Street, Balfour Street and Balfour Lane. This precinct cannot support the additional vehicle traffic and on-street parking that would arise from the proposed development.

Impact on other infrastructure

It is questionable whether the North Shore Railway and Lindfield Station have significantly more passenger capacity during peak hours, to address the large number of new residents resulting from the rezoning of Lindfield areas south-west of the Pacific Highway to R4 High Density Residential Development (within which the proposed development would occur).

Although the Sydney Metro train services operate from Chatswood, the North Shore Railway line from Chatswood to Hornsby still uses crewed electric trains on the 1890-1893 track formation. Four factors will prevent any significant increase in train and passenger numbers on the line: (1) the speed at which trains can travel on any line with gradients and curvature; (2) the limited capacity for additional passengers on current rolling stock, especially during peak hours; (3) the time taken for passengers to board and disembark at each station, and (4) the safe-working requirement for a section of line to be clear before another train can enter it.

Furthermore, it is also questionable whether the potable water supply, sewerage system and storm water drainage in Balfour Street are adequate to handle the increased usage created by the proposed development and its associated hard-surface areas. The pressure of the potable water supply in the area has noticeably dropped over the past 25 years, most likely because of the increased population living in apartment buildings along the Pacific Highway.

I have personally observed two major failures in the water supply and sewerage systems. Around 2005, the aged water main burst in Highfield Road with such force that a section of road was noticeably lifted. Secondly, in 2011, a major blockage occurred in the aged sewer line running through the Highfield Road group, causing a significant and unhealthy effluent discharge from the system onto properties in Highfield Road and Wallace Parade. This continued for several days until the sewer line was repaired.

It seems likely that the corresponding infrastructure in Balfour Street would be of similar age, and was designed early in the twentieth century to meet the needs of its single-storey dwellings. This design would not have contemplated the great increase in usage by a significant number of new residents, which would result from this proposed development.

This infrastructure must be assessed and upgraded as necessary to address the increased usage that would result from not only the proposed development, but also the general rezoning of this area to R4 High Density Residential Development.

Yours faithfully,
Stephen Palmer