

OBJECTION TO SSD-88511459 AND CONCURRENT REZONING PROPOSAL

33–37 Herbert Street, St Leonards

To the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure,

I object to the proposed State Significant Development Application (SSD-88511459) and associated rezoning proposal for 33–37 Herbert Street, St Leonards.

While I support the provision of additional housing in appropriate locations, including affordable housing, I do not support this proposal in its current form. The development represents an excessive intensification of the site, is inconsistent with strategic planning objectives, results in the unnecessary loss of industrial land and would create significant adverse impacts on surrounding residents and the broader urban environment.

The proposal should be refused, or substantially redesigned, for the following reasons.

1. Strategic Merit Has Not Been Demonstrated

The applicant relies heavily on housing delivery objectives to justify the proposal. However, housing demand alone does not justify the scale of development proposed nor the significant departure from the existing planning framework.

The key planning question is not whether additional housing is required, but whether this site is suitable for a development of this height, scale and density.

The site was not identified as part of the St Leonards–Crows Nest Transport Oriented Development precinct and sits beyond the core high-density growth area intended by current strategic planning policy. Approval would effectively extend the high-rise corridor northward through a site-specific rezoning rather than through a coordinated strategic planning process.

The proposal therefore represents an opportunistic planning outcome rather than an orderly and strategically justified extension of the St Leonards Strategic Centre.

2. Loss of Strategic Industrial Land Is Contrary to NSW Planning Policy

A fundamental concern is the proposed rezoning of the site from E4 General Industrial to MU1 Mixed Use.

The site forms part of the broader Artarmon and Herbert Street employment precinct, one of the most important employment and industrial areas on Sydney's Lower North Shore. This precinct accommodates urban services, trade suppliers, construction-related businesses, logistics, warehousing, technology businesses, medical support services and other employment-generating activities that cannot readily operate within residential environments.

The proposal would permanently remove strategically important industrial land and replace it with a predominantly residential development.

This outcome is inconsistent with the objectives of the NSW Industrial Lands Action Plan, which recognises industrial land as a finite and increasingly scarce resource that must be protected from incremental residential encroachment.

The Action Plan acknowledges that once industrial land is rezoned for residential purposes it is effectively lost permanently. The ongoing erosion of industrial land across metropolitan Sydney is recognised as a significant planning issue with long-term economic consequences.

The applicant has not demonstrated that:

- the site is surplus to future employment needs;
- the industrial zoning no longer serves a strategic purpose;
- employment capacity will be retained elsewhere;
- the proposal will not contribute to the cumulative erosion of industrial land across the Lower North Shore; or
- the public benefits outweigh the long-term economic cost of losing strategically important employment land.

While some commercial floor space is proposed, this is not a replacement for the economic function, operational flexibility or employment diversity currently enabled by industrial zoning.

The site's location adjacent to Royal North Shore Hospital, the Gore Hill health and innovation precinct and the broader North Shore employment corridor further reinforces its strategic employment value.

Approval of this proposal would establish an undesirable precedent for further residential encroachment into employment lands and would undermine long-standing State planning objectives seeking to retain and protect industrial land.

3. Excessive Height, Bulk and Scale

The proposed tower is excessive in both height and bulk and is inconsistent with the intended built form transition at the northern edge of the St Leonards Strategic Centre.

The proposal seeks a significant increase in both building height and floor space ratio beyond the existing planning controls. Rather than providing an appropriate transition between the St Leonards centre and surrounding areas, the development extends the high-rise skyline further north and introduces a visually dominant built form into a sensitive interface location.

The applicant argues that the development forms a logical extension of the St Leonards Strategic Centre. However, the proposal instead represents a substantial departure from the existing planning framework and disrupts the intended transition between high-density development and surrounding residential neighbourhoods.

The scale of the proposal is not justified by the characteristics of the site and creates an overdevelopment outcome that prioritises development yield over good urban design principles.

4. Excessive Floor Space Ratio and Overdevelopment

The proposal seeks a substantial uplift in floor space ratio that is disproportionate to the site's strategic significance and physical constraints.

Such a significant increase in development capacity should only be supported where there is a compelling strategic justification and where impacts can be appropriately managed.

The proposed density contributes directly to the excessive height, visual bulk, overshadowing and amenity impacts generated by the development.

The applicant has not demonstrated why a lower-scale development could not achieve meaningful housing outcomes while significantly reducing impacts on neighbouring properties and the public domain.

5. Overshadowing and Loss of Residential Amenity

The proposal will result in additional overshadowing of neighbouring residential properties, private open space areas and communal open space.

The applicant's assessment largely treats shadow impacts as an unavoidable consequence of urban renewal. However, the relevant planning question is whether those impacts have been minimised and whether the proposed scale of development is necessary.

The development will reduce access to sunlight for existing residents, particularly during winter months, and will diminish the quality and usability of outdoor spaces.

The impacts are permanent and must be considered in the context of the cumulative shadowing already generated by recent and approved developments throughout St Leonards.

Existing residents should not be expected to absorb ongoing reductions in solar access simply because additional density is proposed.

6. Visual Dominance and Adverse Urban Design Outcomes

The proposed tower would introduce a visually dominant and overbearing built form that would significantly alter the character of the area.

The applicant's own visual assessment acknowledges that the proposal represents a major and irreversible visual change and would block areas of sky and become a substantial new element within local views.

The conclusion that these impacts are acceptable appears to rely on assumptions regarding future growth rather than an objective assessment of impacts on surrounding residents and public spaces.

The development would increase perceptions of enclosure, reduce openness and contribute to a more congested and visually intensive urban environment.

Good urban design requires development to respond appropriately to context, scale, character and transition. This proposal fails to achieve those objectives.

7. Inadequate Consideration of Cumulative Impacts

The proposal has largely been assessed in isolation despite being located within an area already experiencing substantial redevelopment pressure.

Residents and the broader community will experience the combined effects of multiple developments, including:

- increased overshadowing;
- visual bulk and skyline impacts;
- reduced outlook and sky views;
- additional wind impacts;
- increased traffic and construction impacts;
- infrastructure demand; and
- cumulative loss of residential amenity.

The cumulative impact assessment is inadequate and does not provide confidence that the long-term consequences of continued intensification have been properly understood.

8. The Proposal Is Not in the Public Interest

While the proposal provides housing and affordable housing benefits, those benefits do not outweigh the significant strategic planning, environmental and amenity impacts generated by the development.

The proposal requires the permanent loss of industrial land, a substantial departure from existing planning controls and acceptance of significant adverse impacts on neighbouring residents.

A development of a lower scale could deliver housing while maintaining consistency with strategic planning objectives and reducing adverse impacts.

The public interest is not served by approving an overdevelopment outcome that undermines industrial land protection policies and weakens confidence in the strategic planning framework.

Conclusion

For the reasons outlined above, I respectfully request that the Department refuse SSD-88511459 and the associated rezoning proposal.

The proposal:

- lacks sufficient strategic merit;
- is inconsistent with the objectives of the NSW Industrial Lands Action Plan;
- results in the unnecessary loss of strategically important industrial land;
- seeks excessive height, bulk and density;
- generates unacceptable overshadowing and amenity impacts;
- creates significant visual and urban design impacts;
- fails to adequately address cumulative impacts; and
- is not in the public interest.

Should the proposal proceed further, substantial reductions in height, bulk and density should be required, together with a comprehensive reassessment of industrial land impacts, cumulative impacts and residential amenity outcomes.

Yours faithfully,

Anna Greco.