

Submission of Objection

Development Application: SSD-113872990

Proposal: Residential Flat Building with In-fill Affordable Housing

Site: 35–39 Darley Street East, Mona Vale

To the Assessment Panel,

I write to formally object to State Significant Development Application SSD-113872990 for the proposed residential flat building with in-fill affordable housing at 35–39 Darley Street East, Mona Vale.

While I acknowledge the importance of providing additional housing, including affordable housing, this proposal represents a level of development that is inconsistent with the established character, infrastructure capacity and environmental constraints of Mona Vale.

The Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 requires consideration of the environmental, social and economic impacts of development, the suitability of the site, the public interest and the adequacy of existing infrastructure. In my view, this proposal does not adequately satisfy these considerations.

1. The Proposal Represents a Fundamental Transformation of Mona Vale

This proposal is not simply an example of urban renewal.

It represents a significant transformation of Mona Vale's established coastal village character.

The existing neighbourhood is characterised by lower-scale residential development, landscaped streets, generous setbacks and a distinctive beachside identity. Developments of this scale introduce a built form that is substantially different from the surrounding area and contribute to a gradual but permanent change in the character of the suburb.

Residents are increasingly concerned that the cumulative effect of developments of this scale will transform Mona Vale into a high-density urban precinct rather than the coastal village recognised within Northern Beaches strategic planning.

Development should complement and respect local character—not replace it.

2. Existing Sewerage Infrastructure Has Already Reached Capacity

Existing wastewater infrastructure is already under considerable strain.

Residents have experienced repeated incidents where untreated sewage has overflowed into the ocean following rainfall events, resulting in pollution of beaches regularly used by local families, children and visitors.

This demonstrates that existing sewer infrastructure is already struggling to meet current demand.

Approving significant additional residential density before this infrastructure is upgraded risks increasing environmental impacts and public health concerns.

Essential infrastructure should be capable of accommodating growth before further development is approved.

3. Traffic Congestion Is Already Unsustainable

Traffic congestion throughout Mona Vale continues to worsen.

Darley Street East feeds directly into an already constrained road network, while the peninsula relies heavily on two principal routes for access in and out of the area.

Peak-hour congestion already affects residents, businesses, public transport and emergency services.

While individual traffic assessments often conclude that impacts are acceptable, they rarely assess the cumulative impact of multiple approved and proposed developments across Mona Vale and the wider Northern Beaches.

Council and the Department should consider the combined effect of these developments rather than assessing each proposal in isolation.

4. Bushfire Evacuation Presents a Significant Public Safety Risk

The proposal would substantially increase the resident population within a peninsula that has limited evacuation routes.

During a major bushfire or other emergency requiring evacuation, congestion on the limited road network could significantly delay residents attempting to leave the area while simultaneously restricting access for emergency services.

Given increasing bushfire risk across New South Wales, evacuation capacity should be a critical planning consideration.

Population growth should not outpace emergency management capability.

5. Water Infrastructure Is Already Under Pressure

Residents continue to experience inconsistent water pressure throughout the area.

Although infrastructure providers may advise that the network is operating within acceptable parameters, the lived experience of residents suggests that capacity issues already exist.

Further residential density will inevitably increase demand on water infrastructure unless significant upgrades occur beforehand.

6. Infrastructure Must Precede Development

One of the greatest concerns within the community is that infrastructure investment continues to lag behind residential growth.

Roads, sewerage, water supply, drainage, schools, health services and community facilities should be delivered before—or at least concurrently with—major increases in population.

Approving developments ahead of infrastructure places the burden on existing residents through worsening congestion, reduced service levels and declining liveability.

Good planning requires infrastructure-led growth, not growth-first planning.

7. Housing Affordability Should Not Come at the Expense of Liveability

Northern Beaches Council supports increasing affordable housing supply as part of a broader housing strategy. However, affordable housing objectives should not override the fundamental requirement that development be appropriate for its location and supported by adequate infrastructure.

Furthermore, where developments also include a substantial proportion of high-value apartments, the overall project does little to improve housing affordability for essential workers, young families or first home buyers.

Housing diversity is important, but it must be delivered in a way that maintains community amenity and protects the qualities that make Mona Vale an attractive place to live.

8. Community Infrastructure and Social Impacts

A successful community is measured not only by the number of dwellings constructed but by the quality of life available to residents.

This proposal will increase demand on parks, recreational facilities, schools, public transport, healthcare, parking and community services.

There is little evidence that corresponding investment in community infrastructure will occur before these impacts are experienced.

Without adequate planning for supporting infrastructure, developments of this scale diminish rather than strengthen community wellbeing.

Conclusion

This proposal represents development that exceeds the practical capacity of existing infrastructure and is incompatible with the established character of Mona Vale.

The cumulative impacts on traffic, sewerage, water supply, emergency evacuation, community facilities and environmental quality have not been adequately addressed.

The proposal also raises significant questions regarding whether the existing infrastructure can safely and sustainably accommodate the increased population.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that the Department refuse SSD-113872990 in its current form or require substantial amendments that:

- Reduce the overall scale and density of the development.
- Ensure infrastructure upgrades are delivered before occupancy.
- Protect the established character of Mona Vale.
- Properly assess cumulative traffic, environmental and emergency management impacts.
- Demonstrate that essential services have sufficient capacity to support the additional population.

The Northern Beaches community deserves development that is appropriately planned, infrastructure-supported and consistent with the long-term vision for Mona Vale.

Thank you for considering this submission.