

Dear Assessment Team,

Re: Objection to Mackenzie Street / St Francis Xavier development — SSD-88702457

I live in Walker Street, Lavender Bay, close to the proposed development. I am writing in my personal capacity to object to its excessive scale and the permanent damage it would cause to the heritage and character of this part of Sydney.

I have lived in Lavender Bay for 19 years and am raising my children here. My family's connection to these streets stretches back to the late 1800s, and my grandfather grew up here watching the Harbour Bridge being built. I feel a strong obligation to protect this special place for the people who live here, those who visit and future generations.

My greatest concern is the introduction of a 20-storey tower into the predominantly low-rise heritage setting south of the railway line. The railway provides a clear physical distinction between North Sydney's commercial centre and Lavender Bay. Describing this site as a "transition" from the high-rise CBD does not justify buildings whose height and mass would dwarf the adjoining low-rise heritage homes and overwhelm the historic setting in which they would be built.

I regularly encounter visitors on my street stopping to take photographs and expressing their amazement at the beauty of this part of Sydney. Its terraces, historic buildings, church and harbour setting create something that cannot be recreated once lost. How can we justify permanently damaging the very qualities that draw people here? The proposed loss of significant heritage fabric and the overwhelming scale of the new buildings would diminish both the St Francis Xavier precinct and the surrounding conservation area. Retaining selected parts of historic buildings does not preserve their heritage significance if their fabric and setting are fundamentally altered.

Parking is also an immediate, practical concern. On weekends, I often cannot find a parking space in the area. The proposed reduction in parking available to parishioners would place further pressure on streets that already struggle to accommodate residents, churchgoers and visitors. Proximity to a railway station does not remove this existing problem.

I am also concerned about the additional overshadowing of neighbouring homes and public spaces. Sunshine and an open outlook are important to everyday life in this neighbourhood. Their loss would be an enduring consequence of allowing buildings of this height and bulk.

I support additional housing in Lavender Bay. A carefully designed development of four to six storeys, with appropriate setbacks and genuine protection of heritage, would be a far more reasonable approach. Increased housing should complement the area and respect the community already living here.

I urge the Department to reject the proposal in its current form and require a substantially lower, more sympathetic design. The decisions made now will shape Lavender Bay permanently. We should not sacrifice its irreplaceable heritage and beauty for a development of this scale.

Yours faithfully,
Nicole Beavan