

Att: Karen Harragon
Director
Social and Infrastructure Assessment

Subject: Notice of exhibition - Lingard Private Hospital Expansion (SSD-60316710).

We are the owners of 3/11 Merewether Street, Merewether. Our property shares two boundaries (North & West) with the proposed development site.

We would like to share our concerns and request more information in regards to the development. Please find following details about our concerns:

1. Solar Access

Our home is built to take advantage of light from a northerly aspect. Our main living area, 2 bedrooms and our only outdoor space is on the north of our property. Our courtyard is very important to us and a space where we spend lots of time. We have a young child, and the ability to have a small outdoor space to play and relax is a big part of our life.

We have been in our home for more than 5 years, and in that time we have come to rely on our courtyard as another room of our home. We have planted fruit trees and a vegetable garden, passionfruit vines and lots of native plants to attract birds. We have a small cubby house and netball ring that are well used.

The proposed development of up to 3 stories on our north and west fence will tower over our space. We have reviewed the proposed drawings and have significant concerns about shadowing.

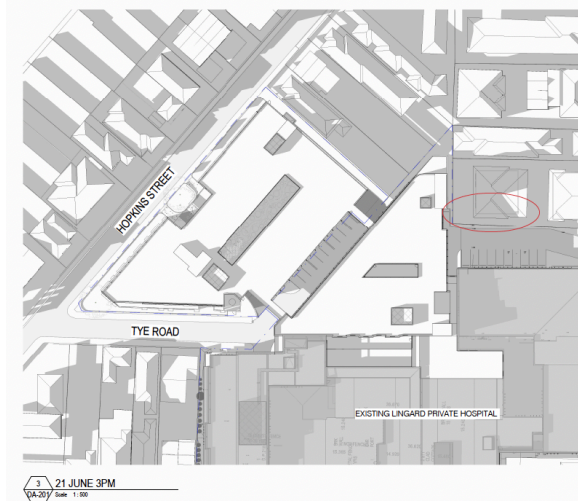
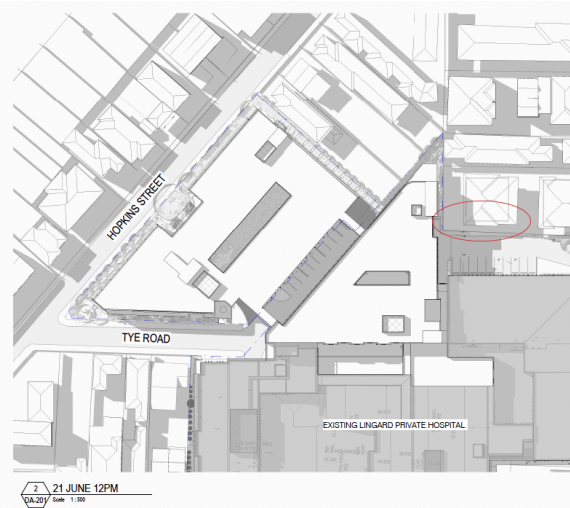
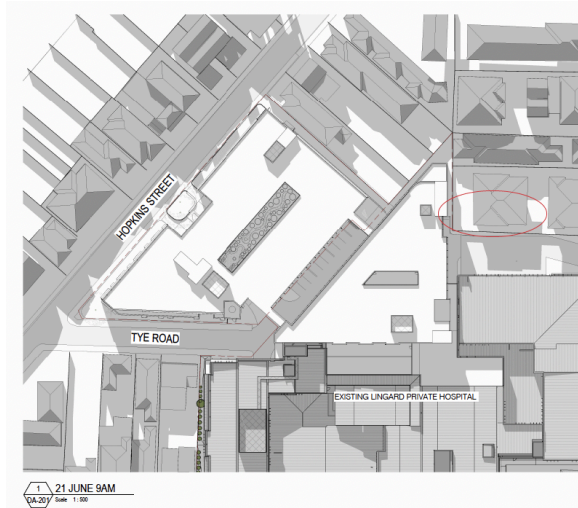
In the following image you will see the proposed June Shadow diagrams. Firstly, we would question whether the position of North is correct in these diagrams, as it appears to be slightly east of where it should be.

Also, the ground levels don't appear to be considered. Our ground level is lower than that of the development, meaning the shadows will be greater. At no point during the time we have lived here have surveyor levels been taken in our property.

In any case, these diagrams show that our small courtyard and the main living area of our house will receive solar access for less than 3 hours of the day in winter. This will be devastating to us.

We feel we have a right to maintain our current solar access. We would not be able to dry our clothes, our garden will be impacted, light into our living area and bedrooms will be blocked. It will have a significant impact on the amenity of our own house. Our north facing windows would be in shadow for almost the entire day in winter.

On our second floor our bedrooms will look directly at the wall of this building. We think that this will completely block the sky when we look out our bedrooms windows. We are also concerned about privacy from the ward windows looking into our house.





Our current outdoor living space. May 2024



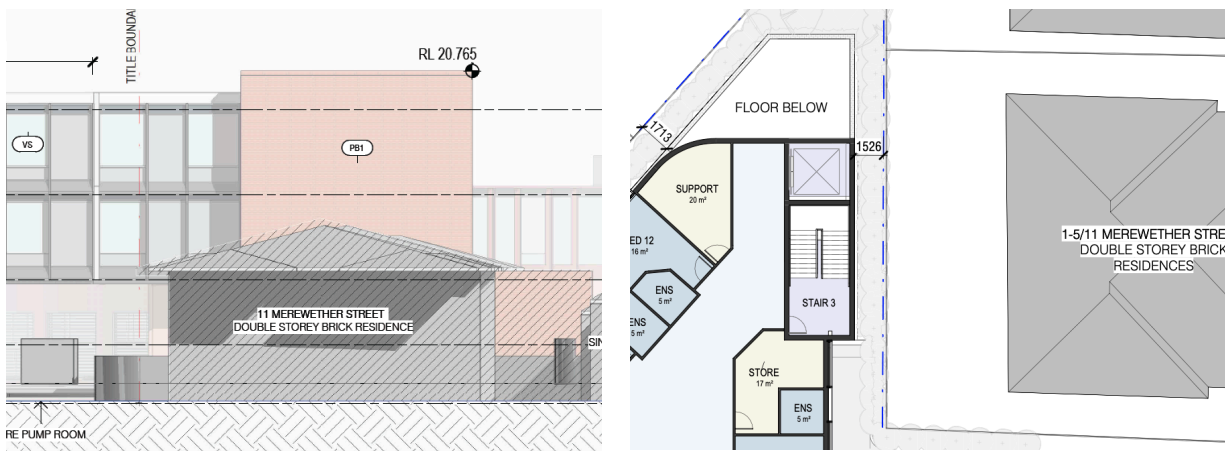
*Our outdoor space, 2.00pm, 24 June 2023 with current shadowing.
This image was provided to Healthe Care for consideration.*

The details of the drawings state that a dark stacked brick is proposed for the wall towering over our boundary. We are concerned this choice of a very dark colour will intensify the feeling of being constantly in the dark. It will absorb light rather than reflect it back to us. We don't feel like consideration has been given to the neighbouring properties in this choice of materials. A lighter coloured material would be a more appropriate choice.



2. Contiguous Building Mass

We are concerned about the sheer mass of the building. We feel that the visual dominance will be overbearing for our home.

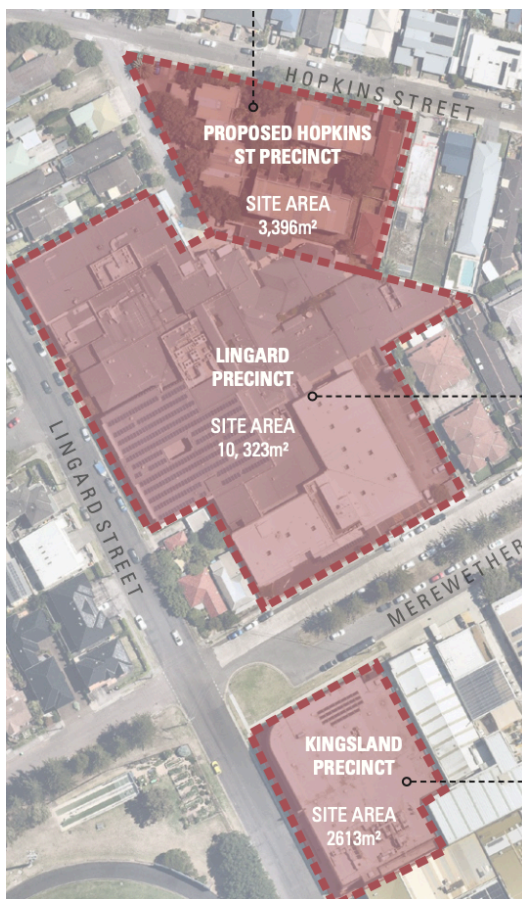


The plans suggest the building will be 1.5m from our back fence on the ground and second floor, and only slightly further back on the third level.

According to the drawings provided, the second level will be above 10m and the third level will be more than 13m in height. The weight of this property will overwhelm our home. The interface with the back of our house is exceedingly tight. The closeness to our property is more similar to what might be found on the side boundary between two residential homes, not on the back boundary, 13m high looking down into our living areas.

The design looks like they are trying to maximise consumption of the land area with a dense, contiguous building mass. There is little relief, open or green space. We would suggest there should be breaks in the building mass and more landscaping.

The density and bulk of the building also seems to be centered around our boundary, rather than trying to make use of their street frontage areas on Lingard and Merewether Streets, where there would be less impact on neighbouring properties.



The drawings suggest there will be 30 beds on both the middle and top floors. The density of occupation of this building suggests that it should be set back more than 3 meters from a neighbouring boundary.

We note that a previous expansion proposal from Health Care was rejected by a Joint Regional Planning Panel in 2019 over concerns about its height and floor space. There appears to be similarities with the latest proposal.

3. Access Road and traffic management

The proposal includes creating a new access road (Tye Road) through the middle of the block and along our west-side fence. We have concerns that this will cause 'rat running' as traffic and pedestrians will use this access to short cut around the block. This is a concern for us in terms of security, noise and social impact. It is not clear from the plans that any controls have been planned to control access to this road and prevent misuse.

From the drawings it is difficult to tell, but there appears to be limited casual observance of the new road from the hospital buildings as it passes down the side. We are concerned about how this road will be used, as a lot of it is somewhat hidden from view.

It is not clear if a crime risk assessment has been completed for the development.

4. Noise, air pollution and waste management

We would like more information on how noise and air pollution, and waste management are going to be managed, both during the construction phase and once operational.

As per Appendix U - Acoustic Report, the predicted noise along our boundary (noted as R29 in the report), is not compliant. The predicted noise from the traffic on the proposed road and the adjoining car park would exceed acceptable levels at all times of the day and night, but is particularly concerning in the evenings.

There is a staff shift changeover at 11pm each evening. It is mentioned that this is already the case. I confirm that it is, and it is a nuisance. We have spoken to the hospital before, particularly about loud vehicles, such as motor bikes that wake up the house. This would be exacerbated by a dramatic expansion in the size of the hospital and a through road. I think this would take the noise from the levels of nuisance, to unsupportable. The proposal suggests a remedy could be the installation of a 4m acoustic wall. We feel this would be similar to living inside a gaol.

5. Social impacts and zoning

The hospital expansion will consume numerous blocks that are currently zoned R3. This means the community is losing this important medium residential housing for a private business.

6. Community consultation

We have tried to take part in the community consultation, but this has not always been straightforward.

In June 2023, we were sent a link to complete a community survey. The timeframe was quite short (less than 10 days from receiving the letter). I tried to access the link to complete the survey before the deadline on 25 June, but it said that the survey had already closed. I emailed

the contact address on 26 June and 29 June to enquire as to how I could submit feedback when the survey was not accepting responses as advertised. I eventually received a reply from Matthew Kelly, who said he would escalate my concern. Unfortunately no one ever got back to me.

We also attended the community consultation session held at Mitchell Park Merewether in June 2023. We met with Karen Gallagher from the Healthe Care business. After seeing the plans for the first time we immediately shared our concerns about the overshadowing. She provided her email address and asked us to be in touch with her. I sent her an email with a photo of our backyard and living room window that I was concerned about. She replied that she would be in touch with us. We have not heard any further.

We have attached copies of the email attempts to be involved in the consultation with the applicant.

In the last month, we have reached out to our local council (City of Newcastle) through the town planning duty officer for advice and to discuss the proposal. We were told that they cannot help us as this is a State Significant Development and they do not get involved.

We have since reached out to our local member, Charlotte McCabe who has said she will look at the plans and get back to us. This was only in the last few days.

7. Traffic management and parking

The Healthe Care business is located in a predominantly residential area and lacks adequate parking in its current form. The expansion does not allow for enough capacity to keep up with parking demands. The only accessible public transport is a bus stop, which is not always practical for patients nor for staff that work shift work.

The streets surrounding us are parked out by 7am each morning, for many blocks. We have colloquially heard that staff prefer to park in the neighbourhood streets and walk because they are charged to use the onsite parking.

While parking is not a concern for us personally, as we have off-street parking, we are concerned about the safety of pedestrians due to the burden placed on neighbourhood streets to accommodate the business. There is a large public school only a few hundred meters down the road and every morning and afternoon many children walk and ride to and from school down these streets. We walk our child to school each day. We have sent numerous concerns to the local council in recent years because of the poor traffic management and inadequate parking. Our neighbours have also shared concerns they have sent to council. These are attached as PDF.

8. Impact on neighborhood value

We think it is unavoidable that this development will negatively affect the economic value of the area and the capitalisation of our land value, due to the sheer overwhelming scale of the proposal.

9. Summary

Thank you for considering our concerns. We understand this is a significant development proposed by the applicant, Healthe Care Group (a private company owned by Luye Medical, China) and there are many factors that you will be considering. We feel health care facilities are important in our community, and although this is not public health care, it has a part to play. Equally, the profitability of private health care businesses should not outweigh community concerns.

We look forward to hearing how the applicant can address the issues in the proposal.

Kind regards

Alison Cheek & Jerome Treize