

Re: 600-660 Elizabeth Street, Redfern - Mixed Use SSD

REDWatch Background

This submission is made on behalf of REDWatch Incorporated (REDWatch). REDWatch was set up in 2004 with the following objects in its constitution:

REDWatch is a group of community residents and friends from Redfern, Waterloo, Eveleigh and Darlington who support the existing diversity in these areas and wish to promote sustainable, responsible economic and social development.

REDWatch recognises the importance of the Aboriginal community to the area.

REDWatch has been formed to:

1. Monitor the activities of the Government (local, state and federal), the Redfern Waterloo Authority, and any other government instrumentality with responsibility for the Redfern, Waterloo, Darlington and Eveleigh area, to ensure that:

- (a) The strategy benefits a diverse community*
- (b) Communication and consultation is comprehensive and responsive*
- (c) Pressure is maintained on authorities*

2. Provide a mechanism for discussion and action on community issues.

3. Enhance communication between community groups and encourage broad community participation.

This may involve: Holding regular meetings; Holding community forums and other events; Establishing a website; Communicating with the community through other means; Meeting with government representatives and authorities; Cooperating with other community organisations; And any other means the association deems appropriate.

This Development application is on state government owned land and impacts the Redfern and Waterloo communities, hence REDWatch makes the following submission.

REDWatch organised a public meeting to allow Bridge to present its proposal and for community members to raise their concerns and questions.

REDWatch supports the development with some Concerns

REDWatch supports this proposed redevelopment, but has some concerns that it would like addressed in the SSD assessment process.

Reasons for Support

REDWatch has monitored this site since South Sydney Council approved a plan for the site in the early 2000s. We have witnessed the site remain vacant while there has been an increased need for housing in the inner city. This proposal finally agrees a future for this largely vacant housing site.

The exhibited proposal fits acceptably within the envelopes determined by the City of Sydney as appropriate for this site. The height variation requested is minimal and the FSR variation request argument seems reasonable, but needs to be tested by the Department against what else could be done to achieve the bonuses requested. REDWatch does not consider forcing the provision of low water use washing machines, which may not be in perpetuity, as an acceptable way of meeting the water use requirements.

The proposed development delivers a significantly increased community facility, which maintains this use on the site and replaces the current PCYC. The design seems to provide opportunities for community meetings, which would provide a space for such events for the Redfern Public Housing Estate.

The inclusion of Bridge Housing's office on the site is both a win for Bridge in terms of built security, as well as rent saving, but it also means that Bridge staff will be on site to deal with any issues that might

arise from the development or its intersection with the surrounding public housing. The provision of a community space operated by Bridge also provides an additional meeting space opportunity for the wider community.

In addition to delivering the social housing required by Homes NSW from the development, Bridge has found a way of delivering affordable housing on the site, rather than the private housing expected. The provision of a social and affordable housing development in an area accepting of social and affordable housing is an appropriate use of Government land with the housing on the site being either owned by a Community Housing Provider or retained by Homes NSW.

REDWatch is of the view that the best management of the social housing on this site would be achieved if Bridge Housing managed the Homes NSW Social Housing, rather than it going to the successful Waterloo CHP tender. Our reason for this is that Bridge will build on the basis of its experience in running social housing and will have their office opposite the social housing block.

REDWatch acknowledges that some in the community see the development of this site by a CHP as privatisation of public land and that they would prefer the site to remain in public housing and contain houses managed by government. While REDWatch would like also to see a stronger Public Housing system with such sites providing Government controlled Social and Affordable housing without the loss of land, this desired outcome is not likely under current government funding, hence the decision to at least accept a CHP proposal rather than a private commercial development.

REDWatch concerns to be tested in the assessment

Parking & Service entry

REDWatch is concerned that all traffic into the basement car park will be through the low traffic areas of the estate rather than directly on to Elizabeth Street or Phillip Street.

The closures on Walker Street to Phillip Street and Kettle Street to Elizabeth Street mean that to clear the area traffic will need to do so by Walker and Redfern Streets to the North and West, or by Morehead Street to the East and South. Most of the traffic is expected to end up on or crossing Phillip Street and / or Elizabeth Street. Hence an exit directly on to Elizabeth Street or Phillip Street seems more appropriate. In terms of residential impact an exit onto Elizabeth Street seems preferable.

Changing the exit to Elizabeth or Phillip avoids the development generating traffic through the Redfern Public Housing estate, which is a residential area containing many high needs residents. In addition changing the parking exit removes it from the high pedestrian area leading from the towers and the estate to the pedestrian crossing on Elizabeth Street at Kettle. A car park exit on Kettle will create conflicts with pedestrian and mobility scooter traffic along Kettle to the pedestrian crossing.

Retention of Street Trees on Walker Street

Concern has been raised by public housing tenants on Walker Street, during the REDWatch meeting with Bridge, about the possible removal of trees in the public domain in Walker Street. Walker Street residents will be significantly impacted by the redevelopment and the loss of their predominantly green outlook with the removal of trees from the redevelopment site. They are keen to maintain as much as possible of this tree cover, especially those that fall outside the site. Planning for this site should consider the impact of the loss of these mature trees on both the amenity of the residents in Walker Street, as well as in terms of targets for maintaining tree cover in the City of Sydney.

Walker Street Solar Impact

Public Housing tenants on Walker Street have continued to express concerns about the impact of the shadow from the development on their properties.

The design guide for the site sets a solar plane to assess overshadowing of the land on the eastern side of Walker Street rather than actually assessing actual overshadowing. At least 70% of the solar plane on Walker Street needs to receive two hours sun at mid-winter. While the proposal meets this requirement, this means that there will be almost 30% of the site that does not have 2 hours solar access. Because it does not assess actual shadowing the actual impact is not clear but it seems as if for some homes on Walker Street will only get about 1.5 hours of solar access in mid-winter. This is not a great outcome for public housing tenants living opposite the proposed development.

The shadow diagrams in Attachment A only show shadows across buildings within the development, but even at 3pm when one would expect there to be shadows across the top of some of the Walker Street buildings but no shadows are shown – they look like they are still in direct sunlight. This approach does not allow impacted tenants to get a realistic indication of the impact of the shadowing on them. Diagrams like those shown for Phillip Street impacts would have helped Walker Street neighbours to get a realistic idea of the actual solar impacts on them.

Height of Building S2

Residents at the REDWatch meeting expressed concern about the height of the building. As mentioned earlier, the heights are generally in line with the controls, as is the shadowing caused by that heights. For the 30% of Walker Street that will not have even 2 hours solar access, the height agreed in the controls is certainly a concern.

Building Design Concern – Privacy vs Ventilation

Concerns have been raised with REDWatch about potential amenity issues in the Affordable Housing building. The design places bedrooms along the open exterior corridor to the west which will have a level of noise from people using the exterior corridor. Privacy in these rooms has been addressed in a way that means that it is unlikely that tenants will open windows onto the common balcony for cross ventilation especially while in bed. This issue does not seem to be addressed in the proposal. The department should investigate the motel effect in its assessment.

Aboriginal Social and Affordable Housing

REDWatch is amazed that the EIS in its Aboriginal assessment does not acknowledge the call by The Redfern Waterloo Aboriginal Affordable Housing Campaign for the delivery of at least 10% Aboriginal Social and Affordable Housing on the redevelopment of Government controlled land in Redfern and Waterloo. REDWatch was involved in this campaign and is one of its Allies.

This land is the kind of land that the request for Aboriginal Social and Affordable housing applies to as it is currently public land. The call for Aboriginal Social and Affordable housing is aimed at retaining a viable multi age Aboriginal population in Redfern and Waterloo. Gentrification has pushed a large number of Aboriginal people out of the area over the last three decades to the point where most of those that play for Redfern All Blacks or come to Redfern for Aboriginal Controlled Organisations no longer live in the area.

There must be a commitment to the delivery of both Aboriginal Social and Aboriginal Affordable Housing in the Elizabeth Street development. The proposal documents do not currently reference this important need or undertake to meet this community request.

Conclusion

While REDWatch is generally in support of this development and the proposal, some concerns have been raised with us by residents that need to be investigated during the Department's assessment of the application.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposal.

Yours Faithfully

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REDWatch is a residents and friends group covering Redfern Eveleigh Darlington and Waterloo (the same area originally covered by the Redfern Waterloo Authority). REDWatch monitors government activities in the area and seeks to ensure community involvement in all decisions made about the area. More details can be found at www.redwatch.org.au.