



Chatswood Croquet Club Inc.
ABN 78 080 468 982
699A Pacific Highway
CHATSWOOD NSW 2067

16 March 2025

The Secretary
Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure

Dear Secretary,

Re: Objection to Mixed-use Development with in-fill affordable housing – 5-9 Gordon Avenue, Chatswood

Chatswood Croquet Club holds a licence from Willoughby City Council for the croquet grounds at 699A Pacific Highway, Chatswood, comprising the clubhouse and the three beautiful croquet lawns north of this proposed development. Ours is the only croquet ground and club in the City of Willoughby, and is a vital public recreation space, especially for seniors, in a densely populated area where there are precious few green spaces left for public recreation.

Willoughby City Council has recognised the importance of Chatswood Croquet Club to the residents of Willoughby, having recently renewed our licence over the premises. We are one of the oldest croquet clubs in Australia and have occupied the site for 115 years. The grounds and croquet club are an important institution in the City of Willoughby and the grounds are classified by Council as a 'Key Public Space'.

We object to any further expansion or uplift of this proposed development on the following grounds:

- Failure to have any regard to the impact this development may have on the croquet grounds which comprise a key public space in Chatswood and Willoughby City
- Excessive traffic congestion
- Negative impacts upon Parking
- Failure to consider Willoughby City Council's Precinct Control Plan applicable to Hammond Lane
- Failure to properly assess traffic congestion traffic implications by failing to consider other future high-rise developments that are likely to be built adjacent to Hammond Lane
- Excessive visual intrusion into the croquet grounds (a key public space)
- Negative impact of excessive reflected light

The following provides further details our concerns regarding these matters.

No thought whatever has been given in this proposal to the very negative impacts it would have upon the croquet grounds and this key public space, nor any suggestions or provisions made to minimise this.

On 9 October 2024 a Development Application was approved by the Sydney North Planning Panel in relation to the above premises for the construction of two storeys of commercial premises with a further 25 storey residential tower comprising 64 units. The present application seeks, under the State Significant Development pathway, to increase the tower height by a further 8 storeys for a total of 91 units, in return for the inclusion of an amount of affordable housing. **This is a 42% increase in the number of dwellings.**

This increase will dramatically overload the local infrastructure and create excessive traffic congestion around Hammond Lane, which is already a very small and narrow thoroughfare that will barely cope with the DA that has been approved for 64 units, where the architectural plans provide for all parking to the proposed units to be accessed via Hammond Lane.

We are at a loss to understand why the ingress and egress to a development of this now proposed size should be via Hammond Lane, rather than directly into Gordon Avenue, which would be much better able to cope with the increased traffic and would avoid overloading the much narrower Hammond Lane.

Under Willoughby City Council's applicable Precinct Control Plan approved by Council in relation to the eastern side of the Pacific Highway between Gordon Avenue and Ellis Street, Chatswood, Hammond Lane is also to be the access way for any proposed developments at 641-653 Pacific Highway and 655A Pacific Highway Chatswood, immediately to the west of the Chatswood Bowling Club property, as well as being the access to the Bowling Club. It is also to be the egress for any development at 689 – 699 Pacific Highway. Any such developments are certain to be high-rise unit developments of around 27 storeys and some are already in the planning phase. No regard has been had to this Precinct Control Plan in the Traffic and Parking Assessment Report by Varga Traffic Planning P/L submitted by the developer in support of this proposal, which fails to have regard to the inevitable future developments in the immediate vicinity of Hammond Lane, and the impact they, in combination with the proposed development, will have on aggravating traffic congestion in Hammond Lane. It is critical to look at the traffic implications of this proposed development in this context, and not just in isolation.

Our club currently has allocated parking spaces included in Willoughby City Council's easement for parking at the north-western end of the Chatswood Bowling Club's property, which we access via Hammond Lane. Under the Precinct Control Plan our ingress and egress for that parking is to remain via Hammond Lane.

The traffic assessment presented on behalf of the developer has neither considered nor had any specific regard whatsoever to the impact that the proposed massive increase in the number of residential units in the proposed development would have upon our club members' vehicle access to our parking area, from the point of view of traffic safety and congestion.

A further matter of serious concern to us is that, with such a large increase in the number of residents in the proposed building, it is inevitable that our parking spaces will be usurped by

overspill parking by customers of the proposed shops and owners of, and visitors to, the many units. We have precious little parking for our members as it is, and any degree of casual usurpation would be a major problem for us and could lead to a loss of members and resultant economic loss.

It is ironic that the project has styled itself 'Hammond Greens', no doubt to highlight the fact that it is adjacent to Hammond Lane and will have splendid views over the Chatswood Bowling Club and over our three croquet lawns. Yet none of the supporting reports produced on behalf of the developer has given any regard whatsoever to the visual impact that this proposal will have upon the croquet grounds themselves. The vastly increased size of the residential tower proposed will stand out like an ugly, sore thumb. This rare and precious key public space would feel depressingly 'boxed in' with the visual intrusion and obscuring of a considerable portion of the sky by any additional development of the scale proposed by the present application.

We are also concerned by the impact that reflected light from the many glass windows of the proposed building, particularly with the uplift in height to 35 storeys now being sought by the developer, will have upon our croquet grounds. The building, being south of our grounds and with much of the structure facing north, will have direct sunlight upon it for the greater part of every day of the year. The glare from this will further exacerbate the jarring nature of the visual impact of this building and will undoubtedly cause unwanted distraction, discomfort and eye strain to our members playing croquet.

The current and desired future character of the locality must include preservation of the pleasant ambience of this key public space from overwhelming and intrusive development.

For the reasons stated above, we object to this proposed development. The uplift to 35 storeys sought by this proposed development, so close to this important public recreation space, is not on balance in the public interest or to the benefit of the public.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Dan Howard', written in dark ink.

Dan Howard
President
Chatswood Croquet Club Inc