

STRONG OBJECTION TO CPDM DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL: 3-9 PARK AVENUE, GORDON

Dear Minister,

I strongly object to the proposed development by CPDM (Developer) at 3-9 Park Ave Gordon (SSD - 78775458). The proposal, as outlined in the exhibition documents, prioritises profit over the protection, respect, and preservation of the area's existing heritage and community well-being.

We must consider what truly merits "State significance," specifically the surrounding heritage homes and the Heritage Conservation Area (HCA), which this proposal disregards.

This proposal represents an opportunistic attempt to leverage 'affordable in-fill housing' and 'Transport Oriented Development' (TOD) planning legislation to fast-track approval for a set of excessive and overbearing high-rise apartments. The Developer's application clearly demonstrates that all design aspects have been manipulated to maximise density, with the aim of emotionally appealing to the Government's focus on housing supply and affordability as the primary justification for approval.

Key issues with this proposal include:

- **Excessive Height:** The 9-story, 30+ metre height is excessive, representing the tallest structure on the east side of Gordon. This will have a disproportionate and overbearing impact on surrounding heritage properties and the HCA, including inappropriate transition impacts, destroyed sightlines, and loss of privacy for numerous residences.
- **Poor-Quality Design:** The design is a poorly executed box-type structure, unsympathetic to the local heritage context and streetscape. It focuses on maximising density, creating an abrupt and jarring interface between high-rise apartments and existing low-rise heritage dwellings, with no consideration for visual harmony, privacy, or heritage cohesion.
- **Disregard for Heritage Significance:** The proposal fails to adequately consider its impact on the area's existing heritage value and significance, dating back to the 1830s, including heritage-listed properties opposite the site. The NSW Heritage Manual¹ and relevant case law² emphasise the importance of context, streetscape, and visual setting, requirements ignored in this proposal. This is further reinforced by the community's support for stronger heritage preservation, as shown in Ku-ring-gai Council's recent survey (refer Appendix 1)³, together with recent comments from NSW Heritage Minister Penny Sharpe⁴.

¹ NSW Heritage Manual (pages 4 and 7).

² Scott v Woollahra Council [2017] NSWLEC 81, which upheld that visual relationships and setting between heritage items are material to their ongoing value.

Millers Point Community Assoc Inc v Property NSW [2015] NSWLEC51, which found that the social and environmental context of heritage items was critical to their assessed significance.

³ Taverner Research Group TOD Alternative Preferred Scenario - Community Survey (representative of 2,516 respondents).

⁴ Revealed: The plan to protect Sydney's heritage buildings, Julie Power, SMH, 18 May 2025.

A nod of recognition is provided to properties adjacent the proposed development, however the strategic importance and impact of the development on heritage-listed dwellings and the Gordondale HCA immediately opposite the site have been ignored.

- **Inconsistency with Council's Preferred Scenario:** The proposal disregards key planning principles and is inconsistent with Ku-ring-gai Council's Alternative Preferred Scenario, developed after extensive community consultation, which the Developer acknowledges would more "appropriately manage local character and transitions in scale".
- **Selective Community Feedback and Inaccurate Social Impact Assessment:** Critical community concerns regarding the development's incompatibility with adjacent heritage sites and the HCA have been strategically ignored (refer Appendix 2). The Social Impact review also underestimates the negative impact on the community (in particular, the quantum of the impact on neighbouring dwellings likely to be affected by visual change (page 43, EIS)).
- **Traffic Overload:** With 100 apartments, this development, combined with others, will worsen the existing traffic choke point entering the Pacific Highway from Park Avenue, creating related safety issues (refer Appendix 3). This concern is further supported by the community feedback in Ku-ring-gai Council's recent survey⁵ (refer Appendix 4).
- **Devastating Tree Canopy and Wildlife Impact:** The development will necessitate the destruction of over 35 trees, impacting the natural landscape and destroying the habitats of native species such as Kookaburras, Rosellas, Galahs, and Echidnas.
- **Lack of Community Benefits:** This project offers no benefits to the existing community, instead, it only serves to destroy Gordon's heritage and natural environment.

Key issues / background context as the proposal pertains to my heritage listed home at 16 Park Avenue are noted below:

After an eight-year search, we chose 16 Park Avenue, Gordon, in December 2023, as the perfect heritage home to raise our five young children. We have spent the last 12 months significantly restoring this home, recognising and honouring the area's heritage values, not only for our benefit, but for the broader community.

"Kelven," built 150 years ago with 19th-century bricks, and the preserved character of the surrounding streets were crucial factors in our decision.

While we recognise the need for more housing, the proposed high-density development directly opposite our home is unacceptable. It demonstrates a blatant disregard for the impact of development on existing heritage, the surrounding streetscape, and the considerable personal investment we have made in purchasing, restoring, and maintaining our property, which is subject to strict heritage regulations.

⁵ Taverner Research Group TOD Alternative Preferred Scenario - Community Survey (representative of 2,516 respondents).

We are deeply concerned that the State Government can approve developments that will irrevocably alter the character of our neighbourhood and significantly devalue our home, despite our commitment to preserving its heritage. We are baffled by the blanket planning legislation that disregards the historical significance and value of heritage dwellings.

CPDM's proposal threatens to destroy Park Avenue, Gordon, rendering claims of heritage recognition and conservation completely disingenuous. We are now facing the prospect of being surrounded and overshadowed by disproportionate, unsympathetic, and out-of-context multi-story apartment towers, despite the Government's stated commitment to preserving the HCA.

The suburb we were sold when we purchased our home 18 months ago is about to be irrevocably changed.

Our family's livelihood, privacy, peace, and tranquility are all under threat, along with a substantial devaluation of our primary asset.

The daily stress and impact on our family's well-being is relentless. We are facing a situation that seems both undemocratic and deeply unjust for heritage owners who are actively preserving properties of 'State significance' in a local setting. Instead of enjoying these precious years raising our five young children (1-11 years old), we are forced to endure the daily stress of a short-sighted planning approach, which threatens to destroy all aspects of our family's life for the next decade.

The State Government's website clearly states that new developments in a HCA must enhance heritage values. How can this principle be ignored when a proposal is directly adjacent and immediately opposite heritage properties and a HCA, divided simply by a 10 metre residential roadway?

CPDM's proposal starkly illustrates a shift where developers benefit from an expedited approval process, while heritage property owners face significant disadvantages, with their lifestyle concerns seemingly disregarded, despite their role in preserving assets of 'State significance'.

We did not buy here 18 months ago to suffer a nightmare and penalty for investing in and preserving a piece of Sydney's history. We deserve better.

Regards,

Jeremy Watson

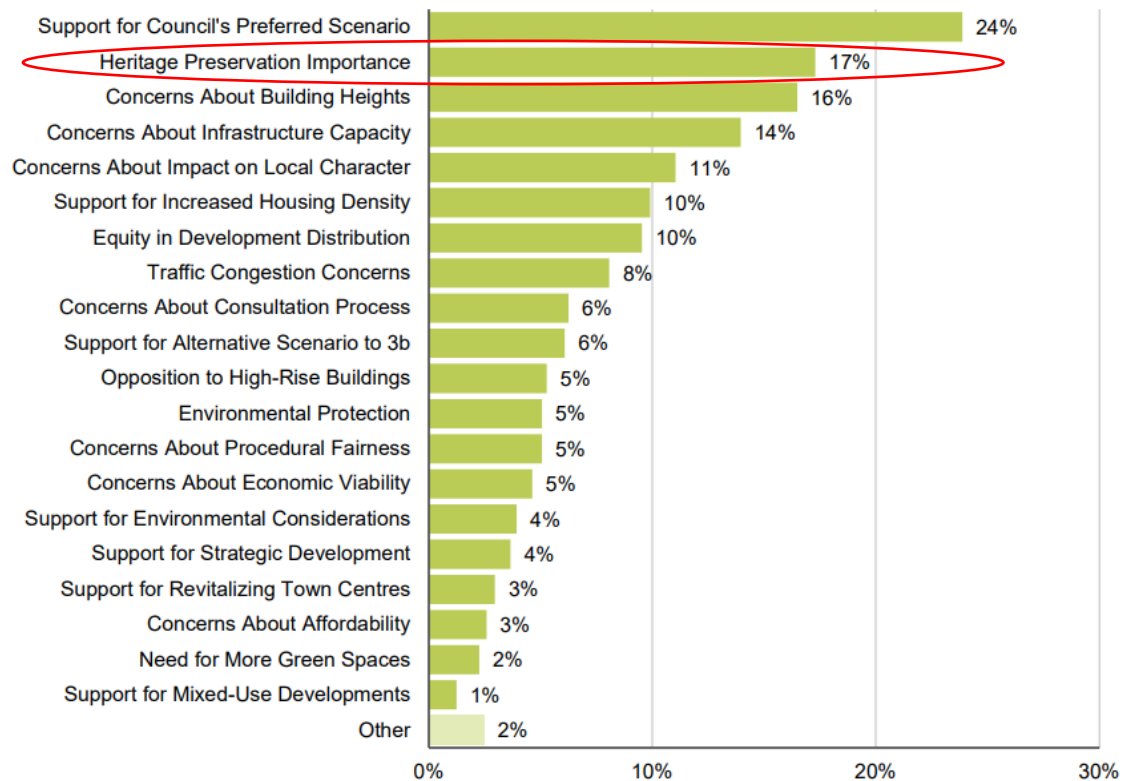
16 Park Avenue, Gordon

Appendix 1 - Extract from Taverner Research Group TOD Alternative Preferred Scenario - Community Survey (refer Attachment 1 to Ku-ring-gah Council Agenda to Extraordinary Meeting to be held on Thursday, 22 May 2025)

Figure 2: Comments about Council's preferred scenario

Q4 PLEASE PROVIDE ANY GENERAL COMMENTS ABOUT THE PREFERRED SCENARIO HERE. (IF YOU HAVE COMMENTS ABOUT AN INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY OR LOCATION, THESE CAN BE PROVIDED IN THE NEXT SECTION)

BASE: N=1,856



Appendix 2 - Email sent to Urbis on 18 March 2025 regarding community concerns which have been selectively excluded from the assessment

Objection to proposed excessive and overbearing high-rise development at 3-9 Park Ave, Gordon Inbox x

Sarah Watson <sarahjanewatson01@gmail.com>

Mar 18, 2025, 12:58 PM ☆ 😊 ↶ ⋮

to Urbis, councillors, bward, krg, sngai, ckay, martinsmith, kwheatley, mdevlin, ibalachandran, cspencer, jpettett, ataylor, davidson, bcc: Warren, bcc: Jeremy, bcc: simonrleir

To whom it may concern:

Together with the local resident action group, this email expresses the objection to the proposed 10-storey development at 3-9 Park Ave, Gordon, submitted by CPDM.

This proposal is **fundamentally flawed** and incompatible with the adjacent and surrounding cherished heritage sites and Heritage Conservation Area.

CPDM's eagerness to bypass Council and seek approval directly through the Housing Delivery Authority blatantly signals their prioritisation of profit over community well-being, with their stated "respect" for heritage lacking substance and detail, demonstrating a superficial approach to addressing genuine community concerns.

Their proposal includes numerous generalisations and non-specific benefits, which when challenged during the Community Webcast last Thursday evening, could not be detailed. At best their proposal appears to be an information brochure prepared using AI.

Further, the Developer's prioritisation of profit maximisation over community impact is evident in their pursuit of excessive density and disregard for heritage preservation, overshadowing, property devaluation, privacy, and community amenity.

A 31-metre structure on a ridge line, overlooking heritage homes, is **completely unacceptable**, with CPDM's scare tactics regarding potential future additional development cementing their utter lack of respect for the community.

As confirmed during the Community Webcast, your client is purely commercially motivated, with this development bringing long-lasting and detrimental impacts to the area, unfairly impacting neighbouring residents and undermining not only their historical significance and value, but also the unique character of Gordon.

This proposal is causing significant stress and anxiety for residents who stand to suffer significant financial loss as the value of their residence, which they worked tirelessly to acquire and maintain, is devalued if the development proceeds. Further, the quality of their lifestyle will also be devalued. A developer's profit **must not** be at the expense of current residents.

This proposal contains significant deficiencies and is incompatible with Ku-ring-gai Council's stated objectives of achieving the State Government's housing targets while simultaneously retaining the beauty and heritage of the North Shore.

Specifically, this development:

Disregards Heritage: The excessive height and proximity to heritage sites within a Heritage Conservation Area will irrevocably damage the historical character of the neighbourhood.

Severe Devaluation of Neighbouring Heritage Homes: As noted above, Local residents are set to suffer significant value destruction at the Developer's expense, on their major asset which they have worked tirelessly to acquire, maintain, and preserve for future generations.

Creates Overshadowing: The 10-storey structure will cast significant shadows on neighbouring properties and disrupt sightlines, with inadequate transition zones.

Reduces Residential Privacy: Floor to ceiling windows will ensure loss of privacy for residents within many kilometres of the development.

Destroys Trees and Wildlife Habitats: The removal of at least 50 established trees will negatively impact the natural landscape and displace native wildlife.

Exacerbates Traffic Congestion: The addition of over 100 apartments and the inclusion of 125 car spaces reflects significant additional traffic which will result from the development and worsen traffic congestion in the Gordon Station Werona Street area, and at the already strained intersection with the Pacific Highway.

Overloads Infrastructure: Local stormwater, transport (bus and train), and parking systems are already stretched and cannot accommodate this development's impact.

Causes Noise and Air Pollution: The extended construction period will subject residents to prolonged construction equipment, damaged and dirty roads, traffic congestion, parking issues, noise and air pollution associated with works expected to occur over a 6-day working week.

Offers No Community Benefits: The developer has confirmed no improvements to local amenities.

Alternative, under-utilized commercial sites along the Pacific Highway offer more suitable locations for high-density development without sacrificing the unique heritage and character of Gordon.

This opportunistic proposal **contradicts ongoing mediation between the Council and State Government** regarding sustainable development and **must be scrapped**. Should this proposal persist, we will be exploring other alternative courses of action.

Regards,
Sarah

Appendix 3 - Illustrative example of typical daily traffic choke-point on Park Avenue / Werona Avenue, Gordon intersection entering Pacific Highway



Appendix 4 - Extract from Taverner Research Group TOD Alternative Preferred Scenario - Community Survey (refer Attachment 1 to Ku-ring-gah Council Agenda to Extraordinary Meeting to be held on Thursday, 22 May 2025)

6.7. OTHER CONCERNS

Summary

Some 517 respondents (26% of the total sample) noted other concerns. The largest of these – by a big margin – related to traffic congestion and related safety issues. These concerns came from residents among all suburbs and station proximities.

Figure 15: Other concerns (top 10)

