

## **INTRODUCTION**

My name is Eliza Fagan. I am 24 years old and have spent my entire life in one house on Roseville Avenue. This place is my home but which I now find is located directly opposite the Hycorp proposed development site. I recently graduated as a landscape architect at UNSW with First Class Honours and the University Medal and I'm saddened that the first official document I write in my career is trying to save my own neighbourhood from the proverbial wrecking ball.

I welcome the notion of development that is sensitive to community needs rather than developer wants. We must meet the needs of our growing population and create a more connected and healthy Sydney. However, I believe Hycorp's proposal directly opposes the values of sensible development and the TOD program's objectives, seeking to achieve intensification to its own financial benefit but to the detriment of our local community, all without proper consultation.

I present my appraisal of the proposal documents, particularly the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), through the lens of my qualifications as a landscape architect, a student of urban design and a lifelong Roseville community member.

I have concerns regarding the following aspects of Hycorp's approach:

- **Community engagement** – promoting extensive community engagement despite implementing inadequate engagement strategies
- **Access and traffic** – understatement of the development impact on Roseville's vehicular capacity and traffic patterns
- **Character alignment** – despite claiming otherwise, failure to align with the surrounding neighbourhood's heritage character
- **Connection with Country** – vague and contradictory reference to Country values
- **Biodiversity** – poor consideration of practical biodiversity
- **Water management** – despite significant impact on stormwater drainage, there is and inadequate description of mitigation strategies

I believe that should this development proceed, the far reaching negative consequences that have been swept aside will be realised. Should the alternative KMC preferred outcome be implemented after this application's approval, it will see the development stand alone at 9 storeys in a neighbourhood of 1-2 storey homes as a lone monolith that is totally out of character with its neighbours.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to my voice.

## **ENGAGEMENT**

I am disappointed at Hycorp's community engagement. The proposal process has been conducted behind closed doors and with a neglectful manner towards the community Hycorp claims to serve and appreciate.

Hycorp's proposal states they have "engaged in extensive community consultation" suggesting thorough engagement with local residents and key stakeholders, however this seems a blatant falsehood for the following reasons:

- My household only received Hycorp's flyer in our letterbox notifying us about the community drop-in session AFTER the session had already occurred, not allowing our voices to be heard when it counted.
- Discussion with neighbours suggests this has been a common experience and demonstrates Hycorp's active avoidance of consulting with the immediate community throughout the design process but then claiming the opposite to craft a positive narrative.
- Two residents who attended the poorly advertised consultation event commented that they felt like they were the only ones there.

This leads me to believe that an accurate cross-section of local opinions and concerns has not been collated until now, but through the voluntary portal submission protesting the final proposal rather than through an active design consultation process as Hycorp claims.

## **ACCESS & MOVEMENT**

### **Vehicular traffic**

Contrary to Hycorp's claims of "minimal" effect, the proposed addition of at least 344 vehicles will have a large impact on traffic patterns in a local suburban context that should be considered in greater depth. East-side Roseville already faces congestion with its current vehicular load due to all major exits forming single lane bottlenecks at the end of which are almost inevitably "Left Turn Only", especially during peak hour. Other issues include:

- Clanville Road to the Pacific Highway, severely impacted by infrequent traffic light patterns, single lane rail bridge
- Hill Street to Boundary Street, left turn only
- Small suburban streets to Lindfield, filled with roundabouts and speed bumps to slow traffic
- Roseville College School Zone
- Two adjacent crossings in Roseville Village on Hill and Lord Street
- Split level in Hill St creates blind spots and difficult merges
- Enormous difficulty in exiting the area to head north

Martin Lane is locally renowned as a “rat run” that only allows one-way traffic flow at a time when cars are parked on just one or both sides of the road, causing frequent gridlocks as drivers weave and dodge for priority passing. Buses frequently get stuck and must reverse out and awkwardly reroute to Hill Street, an already busy area filled with local businesses and train station activity.

Combined, the impact of existing traffic patterns and increased density will overwhelm these chaotic streets, increasing accidents and delays to a system that is already struggling at capacity. East-side Roseville’s street network is filled with:

- Single lanes accommodating two-way traffic
- Seemingly wide roads growing narrow when cars pass in opposite directions (such as Roseville Avenue)
- Unfavourable exit points.

It is not designed to support the high traffic loads that this development proposes adding to the traffic ecosystem.

## **Commuter pressure**

Roseville has long been a hotspot for commuter parking, which has only increased with the recent introduction of the Metro at Chatswood. By 8am, available street parking is already at capacity on weekdays, particularly from Northern Beaches commuters. The development proposes underground parking but this will inevitably bring an increase in street parking from multicar households and visitors, which reduces community amenity and clogs streets.

## **Outdated traffic study**

The traffic study cited was conducted in 2016 and fails to account for the changes that have occurred in almost a decade of increasing vehicular usage trends:

- Increased local density from the nearby Boundary and Victoria Streets developments
- Roseville’s high value as a commuter parking train station
- Increase in private car ownership in the area as shown in the 2021 census.

The use of outdated traffic data is a further example of the proposal’s dismissive stance on traffic implications. This further suggests a rushed application in the interest of a quick approval.

## **CHARACTER**

### **Materiality**

The development proposal's EIS states it is aligning with its surrounds and "has been sensitively designed with respect to the local area" but the materiality palette fails to bring this vision to life.

The palette proposes blond, almost white brick as its primary material. Given east-side Roseville showcases a blend of designs from different architectural eras dating back to the late 1800s, the development's surrounding streets are generally dominated by one- or two-storey red and dark brick heritage dwellings, accented by intricate tile and fret work with lush gardens. One of these buildings is the heritage red brick scout hall, which is to be dwarfed and smothered by the very near and glowing white 9-storey development. This displays a lack of understanding and respect for the local character with which Hycorp is claiming to align, and a dismissal of relevant community concerns raised in EIS Section 5.2 (p.53).

### **Visual impact**

The Visual Impact Statement (VIS) states that "in most instances, the view to the subject site will be from dynamic viewpoints – cars and pedestrians, which serves to further diminish the likelihood of excessive visual impact" (p.12). I challenge this notion as one of the many residents who will live opposite, next to or around this large development that will cast extensive shade and block out a large portion of the sky. Residents have static viewpoints from their residences as well as dynamic viewpoints when walking the streets, both of which will be impacted by the enormity of the structures. It is our immediate community who will be living with this development and the VIS reduces our everyday lives to an inconsequential minority. Even the dynamic viewpoints Hycorp has identified as being visually impacted are likely to be experienced by locals who live in the immediate vicinity of the development, as they leave and enter their properties and navigate the public realm.

- **Claustrophobic street experience** – the 9-storey development is a 650% height increase on the approx. 4m tall dwellings it will replace, drawing more attention to it by the huge contrast with its surroundings. This creates a claustrophobic, excessively shaded public experience compared with the safe and open experience of the existing streetscape.
- **Materiality** – the white materiality creates visual dissonance to its surrounds, further exacerbating visual impact (see materiality section above).
- **Viewpoints** – the site is located at a low point so the development impairs rare horizon views (eg. the ability to see beyond Chatswood CBD from Roseville Avenue)
- **Uncertain future** – the VIS acknowledges that the development's visual impact will also be informed by the future of its surrounds, and thus minimised if surrounded by

other similarly sized buildings. Ku-ring-gai Council will be submitting an alternative solution for Roseville which, if approved, would see Hyecorp's proposed development standing alone in isolation in a heritage area and according to Hyecorp's own VIS, cause further visual dissonance and negative impact on its surrounds.

## **CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY**

The development has stated ways in which it will attempt to Connect with Country, however seems to miss the meaning of Country values. I do not have the authority to speak for the indigenous people but I can see some glaring pitfalls in the attempt to respectfully care for Country – for each key word ticked off, there is a “but” attached.

- **Retaining views for residents only** – the development actively pursues connection with Country through retaining and creating landscape views. It will create new viewpoints, however only for its own residents and only at the expense of taking those views away from the rest of the community who love this place. This is a particularly selfish view of Country as it does not consider Roseville's existing community.
  - **Longevity** – should this development set the precedent for other similarly sized buildings to follow, the aforementioned Country views will quickly be destroyed and leave residents looking into each other's windows high above the ground, disconnected from one another and from the landscape far beneath them.
- **Geometric planning** – this development is built on rigid geometric plans and at its 9-storey height stands as a beacon of colonisation dominating the undulating and organic landscape. This seems to stand in direct opposition to Country values.
- **Linear planting** – while engaging with an endemic plant palette opens the discussion of Country, the rigid planting structure identifies a lack of understanding of what Country means. Country-centred clumped planting is only permitted in the courtyard centre, a perpetually shaded space cut off from the rest of Roseville and thus unconnected. This stifles the concept of Country as a connected part of the whole and a place where fauna and flora are free to move and thrive.
- **Art, signage, nature play** – these elements are a good start but alone do not demonstrate an understanding of how to respectfully weave Country into the development as a core theme, not just as an afterthought to be placed around the fringes of the built form via some vague motifs.

## **BIODIVERSITY**

Roseville hosts a surprisingly large biodiversity profile with an interesting mix of endemic and exotic planting that reflects both its endemic Australian roots and modern European heritage layered together. The development dismisses biodiversity concerns on paper and boasts retention of significant trees, but I challenge the supposed nature-led design approach as threatening local biodiversity.

- **Canopy coverage** – Density of canopy coverage is a strength of the North Shore and this development sets a precedent to reduce our lush canopy by removing 89 trees and only replacing them with approximately 60 small specimens mostly lined at the very edge of the build envelope. This does not suggest a landscape-led approach.
- **Central eucalyptus tree** – This magnificent feature tree is planned for preservation in the central courtyard, however, it seems highly unlikely that the tree will survive the excavation of the development with three levels of sub-ground car parking encroaching closely on its root system, which will be very extensive as such a large and mature specimen. Coupled with the courtyard's perpetually shaded and therefore moist conditions and stifled growing conditions, I have concerns on this specimen's chance of survival.
- **Green corridor barrier** – The development's large building envelope reduces the connectivity of East-side Roseville, particularly in relation to the central eucalyptus tree specimen mentioned above, which is a significant biodiversity asset to the site. It forms part of a larger connected canopy and understorey network hosting a thriving population of important insects, possums and various small to large native birds (miner birds, rainbow lorikeets, cockatoos, magpies, tawny frogmouths, kookaburras etc.) that is being divided into isolated patches onsite.

## **WATER MANAGEMENT**

### **Drainage**

The development would bring a significant increase in non-permeable surfaces so water management is a primary concern. The placement of the impermeable flood walls will protect the development but by pushing more water toward the scout hall, Martin Lane and surrounding properties. This increases the risk of injury and property damage to the community. The proposal also states it will be using natural water management strategies such as swales, however, it has not articulated where and how this will be achieved.

- **Location and flood risk** – The area is not ideal for a development, as one of the worst flood-affected blocks eligible under the TOD program (see flood diagram below) at a junction of downhill water flows. It requires working against the landscape to force the development to work rather than working with the landscape.

Residential Development with Infill Affordable Housing  
16-24 Lord St and 21-27 Roseville Avenue Roseville (SSD78996460)

- **Swales** – I couldn't find specific diagrams or information explaining the development's intentions to use soft swales over hard engineering.
- **Outdated stormwater system** – the pipes around Roseville and the North Shore are some of the oldest in Sydney, yet the development fails to acknowledge this. And while adding more water to the struggling system, there is no attempt or offer to remediate it.

Figure 44 Hydraulic Hazard Map and evacuation routes in PMF Event

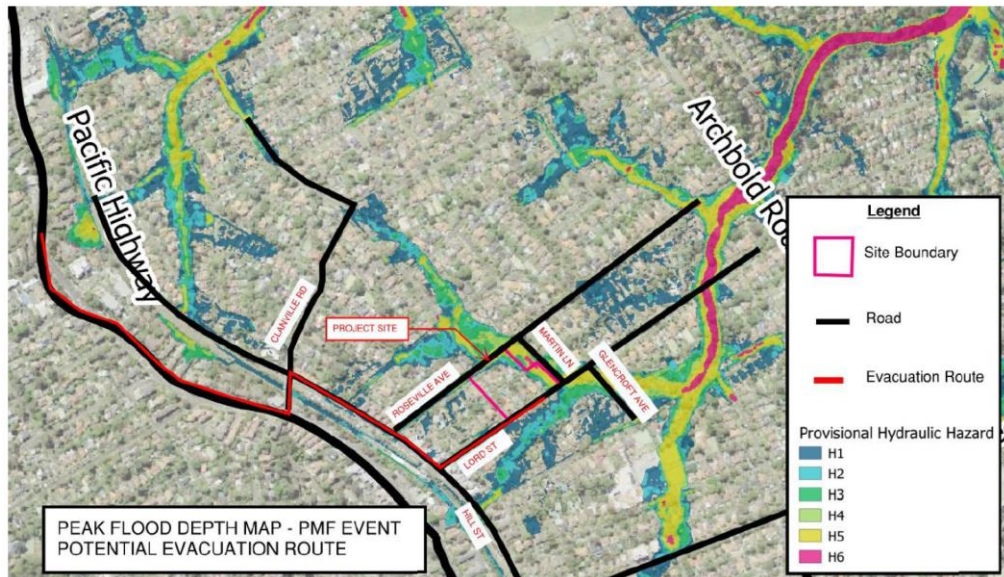
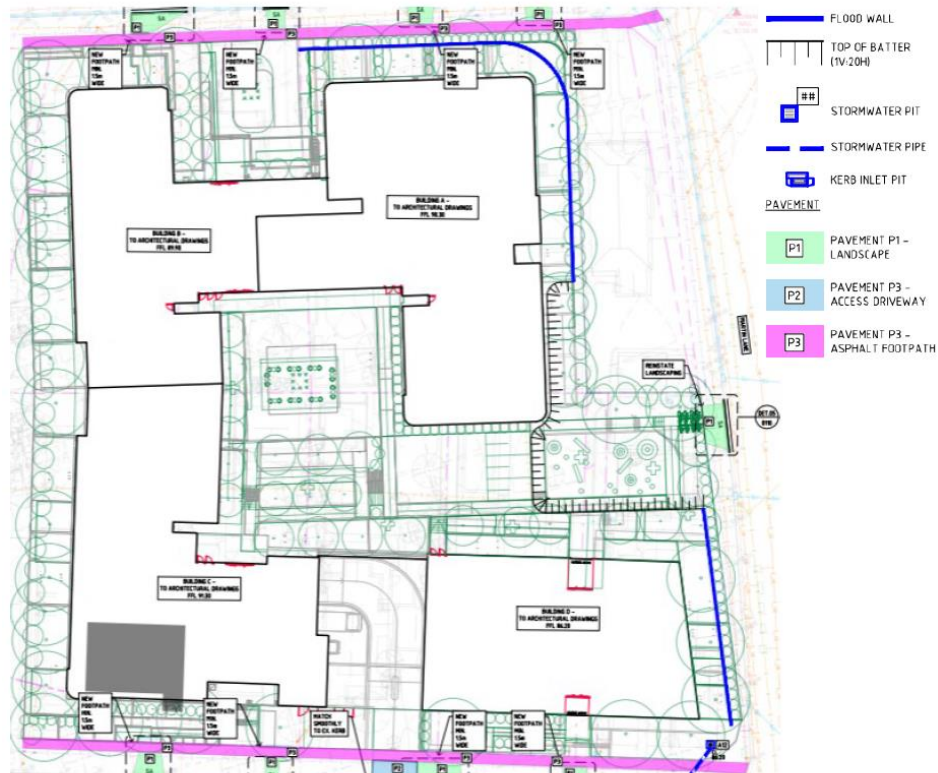


Figure 16 Proposed flood wall



Source: PTC

## **CONCLUSION**

It is not development that scares me. As a landscape architect, I see densification and the TOD program as the necessary and positive future to allow young people such as myself to afford to live in a connected city and an opportunity to create innovative green living spaces. However, Hyecorp's development is far too large and takes away more from the community than it gives back. The proposal package might dismiss this area as low biodiversity and low cultural significance but every place has more story to it than pure statistics. To align with Country, community and biodiversity, we must consider the whole connected view.

In assessing the highly complex and prolific proposal, there are some key dimensions on which it fails:

- Non-compliant with height limits and planning controls
- Severe and permanent damage to Roseville's heritage and character
- Undermines public confidence in fair and transparent planning processes
- Disregards environmental, infrastructure and amenity needs of the community
- Not compliant with the preferred Ku-ring-gai Council proposal

We are a close-knit community built on communication and openness. We can welcome change if it comes to our door with respect and consideration to enhance Roseville, not by trying to force through a DA without listening to our concerns and blocking out the sky.