

Ms Jasmine Tranquille
Contact Planner
Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure
4 Parramatta Square
12 Darcy Street
PARRAMATTA NSW 2124

Dear Jasmine,

Notice of Exhibition - Residential Development with in-fill affordable housing at 16-24 Lord Street and 21 - 27 Roseville Avenue (SSD-78996460) Development Application (Application) submitted by HPG General Pty Ltd (Hycorp)

Response to EIS on Exhibition

I write to express my strong objection to the Application lodged by Hycorp in my capacity as a neighbouring occupier living at Roseville Avenue, Roseville.

Before summarising the reasons for my opposition to the Application, a few introductory points about me:

- I am 25 years old. My generation is at the coalface of what has been described in the media and elsewhere as a '*housing crisis*' facing Sydney. Like me, many of my friends continue to live at home acutely aware that to afford a house before our 30's, renting is not an option and the only way to afford a house is to save up for one.
- Therefore, to dismiss my application as someone who is anti-development, a 'NIMBY' or a 'boomer' would be an inaccurate portrayal.
- I work as an accountant and am on what would be described as a low to middle income salary. Therefore, I am clearly not an expert in urban development, town planning, heritage or environment law.
- Indeed, I will leave those submissions to those others more experienced than me in urban planning. However, my submission will be based on my own understandings and thoughts having lived in Roseville since the age of 5.

1. The Housing Affordability Issue

I understand that the means for Hycorp to lodge their Application is owing to the provision of affordable housing as part of their development. I strongly support the provision of affordable housing on the North Shore and particularly in Roseville. I have felt uncomfortable about a certain stigma being attached to the North Shore that it is merely a haven for the rich and well off in Sydney. Therefore, the provision of affordable housing to support our essential workers is important and will support the diversity and dynamism of the Council area.

However, I understand that Ku-ring-gai council has spent many months preparing what has been termed as the 'Preferred Scenario'. As part of the Preferred Scenario, I am aware that Council

is proposing to provision 10% of new builds to be affordable housing. I applaud Council for this initiative which will hopefully go some way to reducing the stigma I have referred to.

Turning to the Application itself. I understand that affordable housing has a statutory definition, and a nominal number of apartments as part of the Application will be reserved for a period of either 15 years or perpetuity as affordable housing. However, my concern is with the affordability of the much larger balance of the remaining apartments to be sold.

I also understand that Hycorp has another development in the construction phase in Roseville - *Juliet* at 64 Pacific Highway, Roseville to provide some price comparatives. The *Juliet* project is proposing one, two, three and four-bedroom residences which to my understanding aligns with the Application on Roseville Avenue.

A rudimentary Google search of the *Juliet* Development reveals via *Urban.com.au* the starting 'off the plan' prices as follows:

- 1 Bedroom Apartments - from \$1,000,000
- 2 Bedroom Apartments - from \$1,725,000
- 3 Bedroom Apartments - from \$2,300,000
- 4 Bedroom Apartments - from \$4,000,000

From my observations, someone on a low to income salary (like me) would struggle to afford even a 1-bedroom apartment in that development let alone any of the other larger sized apartments.

I appreciate climbing the property ladder and building wealth is something that occurs over many working years of one's life. However, for a first home buyer, \$1,000,000 on the average salary would be an exceptional commitment and I note from a taxation perspective would likely exceed the thresholds of NSW Government's First Home Buyer Stamp Duty Exemption.

Therefore, if those prices were broadly replicated in the Roseville Avenue Application, I can't possibly see how the development will go any substantive way to supporting the further provision of affordable housing in Roseville (in addition to Council's Proposed Scenario). It will simply be another investment opportunity catering to domestic and overseas investors as well as downsizers. Furthermore, if the intention of the Development is to bring a younger demographic of first home buyers into the suburb in the context of a housing affordability crisis, I also struggle to see how this objective is supported.

2. The Merits Issue

I understand in reviewing the Application, consideration of approval requires the need to balance the need for affordable housing against the actual merits of the application. In my assessment of the merits, a phrase comes to mind often espoused by journalists, developers and politicians:

Density Done Well

My interpretation of the phrase density done well, is housing density aligning to its context. That is, the built environment contributing to the urban fabric of its surroundings.

As noted previously, at great cost and with expert expertise, Council have prepared a Proposed Scenario. To my mind, the Preferred Scenario seeks to achieve two objectives:

- (1) Support the NSW Government's objective to increase density around train stations and ensure Ku-ring-gai is reaching its mandated housing targets; and
- (2) To do so in a way that is sympathetic to the context of Ku-ring-gai and protects against the unique attributes of the Council area.

On balance, I think the Preferred Scenario, whilst not perfect, balances both objectives well. I understand as part of the Preferred Scenario that the eastern side of Roseville Station has mostly been excluded from the TOD principles, and without being a planning expert I would assume there are good reasons for that having regard to the unique qualities of the area including heritage and streetscape. However, as noted previously I will leave those detailed reasons to people more experienced than me.

Turning to the Application itself, I understand from my read of the materials that four, nine storey apartment blocks are proposed. If the Preferred Scenario is adopted, which is apparently likely, that will be 4 x 9 storey apartment blocks in a predominately low-rise residential area. From purely a commonsense point of view, that seems to be an absurd juxtaposition that would dwarf neighbouring properties and *'stick out like a sore thumb'* across the skyline.

To illustrate the irrationality, in the same way it would be poor planning to build a 30-storey office tower in the middle of Rocks district of inner Sydney (a well-connected area synonymous for its timeless history), it would be similarly a mistake to do the same by approving the Application in Roseville.

The phrase 'density done well' has good intentioned objectives that I support. But that phrase must be borne out in practice and to approve this development would set a poor precedent for the future types of housing in Sydney.

I appreciate the opportunity to share my thoughts on this Application.

Kind regards,

James Afaras