

Dear Sir or Madam,

22nd October, 2025

Reference: Application Number SSD-66876472.

State Significant Development – Berrima Hotel

Attention: Fadi Shakir

I write in Reference to this application for development now for consideration by the NSW Government.

I spent my childhood in the NSW southern highlands and have now been living in Berrima for the last 8 years.

I am writing to you to share my concern that the above proposal will have a huge impact on the unique historical nature of the village with it's rich colonial history and Georgian architectural style preserved and intact. Quite a rarity for Australia in the 21st century.

I am lucky enough to live in an 1858 sandstone Georgian house which we have renovated in a modest way and like everyone else in this village have been required to follow a very strict DCP in order to remain in keeping with the Georgian style. We are happy to be restricted in this way since this is why people move to Berrima.

Berrima Gaol should be seen no differently to other colonial buildings such as the Victoria Barracks in Sydney built around the same time and yet preserved for public enjoyment under a Commonwealth Heritage protection. Similarly, and closer to home, is the Berrima Courthouse built around the time of the Gaol and preserved for public enjoyment and learning about this early colonial period and is complimentary to the story of the Gaol.

I won't list further buildings since the list is not extensive so that is more reason to hold on to what we have in order to understand our early European history.

There are 3 main objections I have to this development:

- Impact on village atmosphere with accommodation for up to 200 additional people and staff at any one time
- Impact on the beautiful sandstone wall with partial demolition to accommodate additional doors/ walkways on the Argyle Street frontage
- Design and excessive number of hotel suites along the western side of the wall and outside the wall,

Village Uniqueness

I can't think of another village in NSW where the history has been so far preserved for us all to enjoy. I volunteer as a guide at Harpers Mansion, a National Trust house in the village which adds to the story of early colonial struggles in the early 19th century. Visitors are keen to learn about this history and to understand where we have come from. Many of these visitors have immigrated from other countries and keen to learn about early Australia and this rich history of their adopted nation.

Berrima Gaol switching to an Hotel

There are a number of reasons why this is an appalling idea. The concept of drilling holes in the sandstone walls in order to service a restaurant in a village already full of coffee shops and restaurants, all (I might add) sensitively designed to retain the village atmosphere and historical relevance.

The idea of having those ugly Hotel Suites outside the wall on the western side is of great concern. The drawings look to be so out of keeping with anything remotely aligned with colonial history. No other resident has been permitted to build so close to the river and this will set a precedent for future developers to propose similar projects. I also am not convinced that the impact this proposal will have on the riverbank, flora and fauna as well as the water integrity which feeds into the Sydney water supply has been examined closely.

Car parking for 195 vehicles. The impact on these cars as well as the service vehicles will considerably alter the "village" infrastructure with roads in and out of the village already under strain.

The adaptive reuse examples that the architects provide are successful projects that add character to large cities (Melbourne, Sydney, Stockholm, London etc) where infrastructure such as public transport can support public access and compliment contemporary buildings around. This will not be the case for our tiny village.

In summary, I understand that these old buildings must be developed in order to preserve the structures however this plan as presented will change the nature of this little village for ever with a development that is so out of place with the DCP currently in place to preserve this unique village.

This project as planned, will change forever the "village" atmosphere of Berrima.

Yours sincerely

Philippa Palmer

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