

Scott and Eleanor Kable  
284 Abercrombie St  
Darlington, NSW, 2008

Mr Simon Truong (or whomever it may concern)  
Environment and Planning  
NSW Government

Re: Development Proposal, Ref No.: SSD 14\_6724  
Site: 60-78 Regent St, Redfern

Dear Mr Truong,

I write to you concerning the development proposal referenced above. Firstly, some background. We have lived in the Redfern – Darlington area since 1991. We love this area so much that we bought an apartment on the 10<sup>th</sup> floor of the Deicota residential tower at 157 Redfern St with the view to retiring to this property once we are empty-nesters and a 3-storey terrace house becomes too large for our needs. The quality of the development of our complex was attractive, as was the beautiful views over the Eastern suburbs. I believe we have a very good understanding of what it is to live in the Darlington – Redfern precinct.

I am an academic at the University of New South Wales, previously the University of Sydney, and at 5 other universities in Australia and overseas. I directly supervise undergraduate and postgraduate students in my laboratory every working day and teach hundreds of undergraduate students every year. These students come from every walk of life, including domestic and international, high and low income and every type of family group conceivable. I socialize with students regularly and believe that I have a very good understanding of student lifestyle and student needs.

I strongly oppose the proposed development at 60-78 Regent St on several grounds.

**1. Detrimental impact on existing residents of Deicota tower (157 Redfern St)**

Our apartment is on the 10<sup>th</sup> floor of the Deicota tower on the south-east corner. This apartment is only 13 meters from the proposed development! (I believe that 13 m gap does not meet planning regulations.) The proposed apartments have big windows and desks that look directly into our main bedroom. In addition, the proposal is for student apartments. Students are social beings that like to party. We have a student rental house across the back lane from us in Darlington and they have perhaps a couple of parties per semester. The back of their house is about 25 m from our bedroom and the noise is significant, but a few times per year is manageable. With dozens of apartments close by the bedroom in our apartment I would expect significant noise disruption regularly.

We are currently the landlords in the Deicota tower. I expect the development of a large student residential tower right next door will significantly reduce the value of our property – both capital and rental. It will also permanently change our plans to retire there. I expect that the value of all apartments in this brand-new high-value residential tower will be significantly reduced. Of course this affects us significantly, but it will also reduce the

amount of stamp duty collected by the NSW government as apartments are turned over, and significantly reduce the ratable value of the property for the local council. In short, it will change the whole residential dynamic of the area.

## **2. Is there a need for more student accommodation?**

New student accommodation is blossoming in the Sydney Uni / UTS corridor, and literally thousands of new student beds are already approved for the next 12-24 months. We are already aware of the following **student accommodation** in this corridor:

- UrbanEst on Abercrombie St: 441 students;
- UrbanEst on Wattle St: 650 students;
- Sydney University Village: 650 students;
- Iglu Central: unknown number of students.;
- Queen Mary's College on Sydney Uni campus: ~800 students opening 2015.
- St Michael's College on Sydney Uni Darlington campus: 456 students. Opening 2015
- The Sydney Uni regiment site (cnr City and Darlington Rds) is approved for demolition and construction of accommodation for 500 students.
- Abercrombie St, Sydney Univ campus: 200 students opening 2015
- Darlington Rd, Sydney Univ: 200 students. Opening 2015
- Unilodge at Central Park: 800 students. Opening 2015
- International House on City Rd. Significant expansion (500 students?). Planning in progress.
- Merewether Building (Sydney Uni) is planned to be demolished for student apartments.
- There are early plans for the Biochemistry building (next to Noel Martin gym) on Sydney Uni campus to be demolished and high rise student accommodation to be constructed.

A feature of all the student apartments listed above is that they are either completely removed from residential apartments and houses (e.g. on Sydney Uni campus), or have significant set-backs from existing residents (UrbanEst and Unilodge). This is sensible town-planning. It promotes diversity, but recognizes different styles of living for short-term, young adult accommodation, from long-term residents and families.

It is now 4 weeks from the Orientation Week. When enquiring of Urbanest and Unilodge, they both have vacancies. While they expect to rent all rooms by the beginning of semester, one could hardly say that they are inundated, without even considering thousands of new beds coming on line in the next 2 years. Coupled with the poor choice of location next to high value professional accommodation, I seriously question the need for this development for student accommodation.

## **3. Wrong choice for Redfern precinct**

One of the significant attractions of the precinct next to Redfern Station is the convenience of an easy commute for professionals into the City. This is not an important consideration for student accommodation; students will simply walk to Sydney Uni or UTS. The proximity to Redfern Station is simply wasted for student accommodation. Sensible town planning would utilize properties next to significant public transport for people who would use the transport. Redfern is emerging as a sought-after location for professionals. Indeed this is the rationale for the two existing towers next to the station. The construction of student accommodation on this site is the wrong choice for Redfern.

**In summary,**

This is the wrong development for this site.

- a) There little evidence of need for further student accommodation given thousands of new rooms opening in the next 12 months;
- b) It is the wrong option for the site as this development has no need for the significant public transport on the doorstep;
- c) There will be significant negative impact on hundreds of existing residents;
- d) The development has to violate several planning laws to achieve the result.

I am also disappointed by the lack of public consultation for this development. We received no notification as landlords. Our tenants received no notification despite being the ones who will be most impacted. Our agent received no notification. We were eventually notified by the strata board, which found out almost by accident. At the very least, I strongly encourage you to seek significant consultation from existing stakeholders before considering it any further.

Sincerely yours,



Scott Kable

29-Jan-2015



Ellie Kable