

From: [Redacted]
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To: Brian Kirk
Cc: Alexander Scott
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Personal Information

Content:

SSD 8135 Pemulwuy Project Redfern - New Student Accommodation Building

As a [Redacted] with a commitment to heritage preservation, culture and community consultation (Paddington Ward) to ensure enduring development that is genuinely "of" the community I have been following this project since the commencement of the Redfern Aboriginal Tent Embassy when the wider public became aware of the issues at play with this very iconic and culturally important parcel of economically lucrative land.

The points on which I object to this development are as follows:

1) Inadequate community consultation notification or consideration.

There has been little to no local information about this development. I have been reviewing the Sydney City Council website planning applications for this land and there has been almost nothing. And yet there has been overwhelming developer interest in this site. Worth \$80M as a greenfield site and perhaps \$800M developed? There are inconsistencies here regarding the amount of discussion, review, heritage assessment and consultation that ought to be taking place. This is a significant Aboriginal Heritage site of more than 100 years post colonisation and if proper research is done there would be a great deal more pre colonisation which councillors have a responsibility to understand. We have in our midst the oldest surviving culture on the planet and we must take care to preserve what we can and what they remember of the places important to them. This is one of them.

Included should be the adjacent Aboriginal day care site which has been torn down (for this same development?) and which the Aboriginal elders of the area have an expressed wish for it to be rebuilt. Were you aware of that?

I attended the PR company managed event earlier this year and was perturbed to witness how biased the presenters were in favour of the Pemulwuy development, the same group who supported the "students before Aboriginal people" push in the previous development. Voices of dissent were removed and shut down. This is not a proposal that the wider community support and serves only to benefit one small family group who have demonstrated they do not have the wider local Aboriginal peoples' interests at heart.

Note the recent win by the community over the inappropriate development of the Bondi Pavilion and the influence it had on the council elections. People vote with their feet. Councillors have not given enough consideration and independent community consultation of their constituents for this significant development. Have you asked enough questions?

2) Inadequate representation of heritage and history of Aboriginal people and of The Block as a significant place for meeting, identity and resistance in the proposed plan.

The proposed development removes all opportunity for 'ownership' and voice over this piece of land and its history. A 99 year lease is proposed which means no say over the land for that period. By a development company with no interest or history in Redfern.

There is little in the new development that acknowledges either the pre or post colonisation history and the development company and the one previous do not have reputation of being able to sufficiently address this important responsibility. For Aboriginal people the concept of 'place' is profound and has little to do with commercial enterprise or money but is nonetheless, priceless. The loss of this 'place' for Aboriginal people (and it will be lost despite proposed shallow trappings suggesting the contrary, will have a significant impact on the collective spirit, on not only the local but national Aboriginal psyche.

3) The day the Aboriginal Tent Embassy vacated the site the AHC fenced it off to the public.

This had always been a very accessible place.

This was very telling about whether history and importance of access to the community was acknowledged or

respected. Who authorised that and why?

4) Using the "need for student housing" as an argument to subsume a 'place' of distinct Aboriginal significance into a development which seeks to offer majority/minority student housing over Aboriginal occupancy of this development. Not what has always been planned and promised for this site. If you read the history of The Block, affordable Aboriginal housing has always been planned, funded and desired for this site. To lose even a small amount to other interests, even student housing is a devastating loss for Aboriginal people who need so much to maintain a site wholly and solely their own.

5) "The Block" should remain under the supervision and custodianship of Aboriginal people.

[redacted] have lost their credibility to be able to provide this and a new governing body needs to be formed. Sydney City Council needs to demonstrate they can do this or risk wider involvement of other levels of government and a further campaign to protect the land in the genuine interest of Aboriginal people.

6) that the Aboriginal Housing Corporation who have facilitated the development and stand to gain the huge financial windfall of funds have a reputation of bullying, secrecy and mismanagement regarding previously donated federal funds back 30 years.

The books of [redacted] have never been reviewed. When Nigel Scullion Commonwealth Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, offered \$5M in 2016 [redacted] declined to accept these federal funds as it meant they would have to "open" [redacted] financial reports for review. This development stands to deliver hundreds of millions of dollars to that same small entity with a history of no transparency, governance or accountability to the community it is supposed to be serving. As representatives of those residents, Sydney City Councillors have a duty to ensure these funds are not misappropriated. The Aboriginal community deserve and warrant recognition, respect and the support of their local government.

This review needs to take place before further funds are provided to this corporation "on behalf" of Aboriginal people.

[redacted] with Aboriginal [redacted] has compelled me to advocate for the preservation of important places associated with our Aboriginal First Peoples.

[redacted] worked in public sector health and community development for [redacted] and know, with some confidence the concerns and desires of the Aboriginal people in Redfern. This proposal in its current form, holds little for them or respect for their history and culture. It could offer so much more with additional thought, energy and advocacy from their local government councillors.

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Submission for Job: #8135 SSD 8135 Pemulwuy Project Redfern - New Student Accommodation Building
https://majorprojects.accelo.com/?action=view_job&id=8135

Site: #3460 Pemulwuy Project
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