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Date: 13/12/2010 11:07 am
Subject: Scottish Hospital Development, 2 Copper Street Paddington MP10_0160

Scottish Hospital Development, 2 Copper Street Paddington MP10_0160

To:

Department of Planning
Tony Kelly, Minister of Planning

Lord Mayor Clover Moore, MP for Sydney

The Hon. Malcolm Turnbull, Member for Wentworth

Woollahra Council, General Manager

A Letter in strong Opposition to the above mentioned development proposal,

While my partner, Sacha de Vries, and I completely support the concept of a renovation of the current aged care site at the Scottish Hospital, to increase the capacity for care of the aged in our community, we find a number of flaws in the plan as it's currently being submitted, and as a result strongly oppose the development without significant revisions.

First, the scale of the project seems completely outsized for the neighborhood of Paddington where we reside. The massive increase in the height of the residence buildings being proposed (more than 15 meters in some cases and closer to Brown Street than the current building) will create a disequilibrium to a neighborhood than is dominated by terraces. The nearly tripled footprint of buildings on the site will reduce significantly the green space in the neighborhood, a characteristic that makes Paddington a special place to live.

Second, the majority of the project renovation is not even in service of the goal of increasing space and availability for the current nursing facility (only some 12 additional beds will be created), but rather the development of a retirement village which curiously has 39 individual 3 bedroom units among the proposed 82 unit complex, as well as a large number of 2 bedroom units, the vast majority with 2 underground parking spaces per unit. I say curious because I'm trying to imagine a retirement home (usually populated by a single person, occasionally by a couple) where the individual(s) are not downsizing from the residences that they'd lived in prior to their retirement, not to mention the seeming lack of need for two vehicles by these retirees. For most of the residents currently living in the neighborhood whom we've spoken to, the entire project seems like nothing more than a thinly veiled real estate development of high-end residential units, much like the site at the former Women's Hospital on Glenmore, and an attempt by the development arm of the Scottish Hospital and the Presbyterian Church to take advantage of the windfall economic opportunities of a prime piece of Paddington property. The definition of a retirement complex being set at the age of 55 for residents, as opposed to the age of 65+ when the majority of the population can afford to retire, has given the developers the legal opening to take advantage of this prime property for massive financial gain, but let's not be fooled into thinking that the development is

actually for the benefit of aged care. If this were actually the case, the current nursing facility would certainly be increasing by more than 12 beds, and this complex would be the focus of the development, rather than ancillary to the residential units.

Third, considering the number of new residents this one development will bring to an already congested neighborhood, the increase in automotive traffic from the new residents and their visiting families in a village that is already at capacity most times of day, the increased parking needs for the same (the proposed underground spaces will not accommodate the family of visitors that would be expected to come to see their retired relatives) in an area that is already above capacity for residents and businesses, and all this coupled with the already outsized increase in traffic and parking congestion that will arrive once the Advanx complex is completed just a hundred meters or so down Nield Street, the proposal would seem completely out of step with the community and the plan that would increase traffic and parking needs without the inclusion of a single change in road infrastructure. Even to the casual observer, this project looks to be a rather foolhardy endeavor on its face.

It should be no wonder then that a project which had its beginnings in 2000-2001 with Woollahra Council, and was defeated there, only to be revived again in 2010 as a designated Major Project by NSW, is taking its second shot with a larger government body after being rejected by the more local community based overseers. If a project of this nature, so thoroughly unresponsive to the needs of the local community were to be passed by the State government, one can only imagine the political ramifications for the current office holders, who are already so on the nose of the public for their developer friendly posture in the city at large at the expense of a better environment and good governance. Paddington remains what it is as a result of the care its residents put into maintaining its heritage qualities. Let's not allow those qualities to be spoiled by greed, as they have been elsewhere in our city.

Sincerely,

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