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RE: DA2018/1708 - 197 Sydney Road FAIRLIGHT NSW 2094

I have been a Manly resident for more than 70 years, living mainly in various addresses in Balgowlah and Balgowlah Heights. Some twelve years ago, my wife and I decided to downsize to a town house on Sydney Road, directly opposite the site of what is now proposed, which we consider to be a slum in the making. I know that this is not the application's official description, but that term is both apposite and appropriate.

We are not NIMBY types. When the original proposal for three townhouses on 195 Sydney Road was posted, we looked at it, we realised there would be some excavation, noise and inconvenience, but we accepted that as reasonable and commensurate with the Sydney Road ambience. We elected not to make an objection, because we are reasonable people.

We are not, however, willing to be trampled on by unreasonable people, to be treated to the silica dust, noise, rubbish, traffic and encroaching tradespeople during the building phase if this monstrous development is allowed to go ahead. We are certainly not prepared for an influx of backpackers, drunk and incapable drug users, people brawling in the streets, parking problems, loud parties, and dumping unpleasant materials on our property.

We are getting on in years and are now threatened with being forced out of our retirement property which we had expected, in extreme old age, to be able to sell for a fair market price or else to rent for a reasonable sum. With an instant slum across the road, I fear that we can bid farewell to those options.

This 'boarding house' is alleged to be "social housing", but this is a private enterprise: where is the evidence that it will operate for public benefit? How will tenants be selected or allocated spaces? Will the tenants be short-term or long-term? Will the rooms be let furnished or unfurnished? If they are furnished, how will problems with bedbugs, common among transients, be controlled? If they are unfurnished, how many removals trucks will be double-parked in Sydney Road each day?

More to the point, where is the evidence that this will not become just another Air BnB operation, filled with transients? This proposal smacks at every level of a deliberate attack on a community, with rapacious operators the only beneficiaries. The numbers are ridiculous, and there is a sneaky sub-clause, noting that the stated total of 126 residents does not include children under five: in reality, the number could be far greater.

The area along Sydney Road from Thornton Street to Austin Street is already parked to capacity every day and night, and we regularly get outsiders using our visitor parking and parking across our driveway in Brisbane Street.

There will also be a heightened level of traffic, not reflected in any of the facile commissioned "traffic studies". These studies, ordered to obtain a suitable result, will not show the reality, as people cruise the streets, looking for parking and not looking where they are going. Brisbane Street is a community-minded dead-end street with many children, and that community aspect applies also to the rest of Fairlight.

A number of the streets off Sydney Road, Cohen Street in particular, are very narrow, and two-way traffic is only managed by the cooperation of drivers who know the area.

These "units" have no cooking facilities, washing facilities or toilet facilities. Instead, there are shared facilities, and that can only lead to bad blood (and probably bloodshed). The lack of toilet facilities is the factor that makes me anticipate the fouling of our strata plan property, just across the road. How will infectious diseases be managed in such crowded conditions?

I suspect that the developers never intended to go ahead with this ambit proposal, and will counter with a less vicious approach, perhaps accommodating 80 people, but even that is too many. The ideal solution would be make them revert to the original DA, and duplicate it, allowing six town-houses on the two blocks, or a small number of studio apartments or one-bedroom units, each with cooking, toilet and bathroom facilities, and with a single allocated car parking space for each studio. The combined maximum number of people on the two sites should never be more than 30.

As one of the area's older residents, I have an ear to the ground. It is my understanding that the proposers already operate a backpacker slum on the corner of Ashburner Street and Darley Road Manly, on a site that is well-known to police. Do these people have a good track record, or are they run-of-the-mill slum landlords?

It would be helpful if councillors could call up the accessible information on this Manly site, and include that detail in the papers that go forward to the state government.

I urge Council to ensure that this DA, as set out, does not pass or gain even a hint of approval. That action would serve the interests of residents who bought their properties in good faith, rather than the interests of outsiders who, while pretending to do good, are destroying a neighbourhood so they may line their own pockets.