
Sent: 29/04/2021 3:23:52 PM
Subject: DA2020/1167 - objection
Attachments: Dear Lashta April.docx;

Dear Lashta,
Thanks for your time on this.
Please find attached my submission for DA2020/1167 – objection.
Kind Regards,
Po-Tien

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I acknowledge the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first inhabitants of the nation. I pay my respects to the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation as traditional custodians of the lands where I live.

Dear Lashta,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond the amended plans.

Unfortunately, the commercial priorities of this development still overshadow the benefit to the very people it seeks to help and to the existing community in Dee Why. This revised DA is still over-ambitious to the point where it loses sight of the local community and the very people it seeks to help; the residents for affordable housing.

Support for the plans continue to come from people who live outside of the area, and while they seem to have their heart in the right place, they do not consider the actual living conditions of the proposed residents or the impact to the local community.

The future residents of affordable housing should not be satisfied with rooms without windows, communal kitchenettes, lack of privacy, inadequate parking or be treated as an after-thought.

Due to public outcry, the number of disabled car spots has increased from 2 to 8. The original plan saw fit to only provide 2 disabled spots while seeking NDIS funding for this build of 80 units. Without the community, would the plan still have continued to put the affordable housing residents last?

The affordable housing units have now dropped from 80 to 70 with now reduced common living areas to reduce the scale of the build. However, the huge theatre and café remain untouched and seem to take priority.

Despite the genuine need for affordable housing, the desperation to supply this need should not mean that residents should be satisfied with rooms that give no privacy, natural light or adequate living space for mental health.

Current Francis Street community

It bears mentioning that many of the residents on Francis Street are long-term renters and owner-occupiers, with diverse working-middle class demographics and diverse Australian cultural backgrounds, including Tibetan, East Asian, South Asian, Brazilian, Filipino, Italian, South East Asian, South African.

In our small block we have 2 long-term renters out of 6 (3+ years) and the remaining 4 are owner-occupiers who have lived here for a combined period of over 30 years.

We are not wealthy or short-term investors.

Having lived at Francis Street for nearly 13 years, I have seen council develop the surrounding public spaces like Redman Road, Walter Gors and upgrades to the library to invigorate the changing and increasing population of Dee Why. It's been a positive change to meet the rising needs of our growing local community.

And these intelligently designed public spaces were much needed respites during Covid and are being used to this very day as places to catch some sun and fresh air. It shows that intelligent planning and design is crucial to a healthy quality of life.

Young families with kids wander up and down Francis Street, and there is an Active Seniors Health Centre on the corner of Redman Rd and Francis St.

There is currently traffic congestion on the road. Street parking is an issue as well as difficulty viewing traffic when exiting the apartments/ residences/ businesses.

As a volunteer at the local Lifeline store on Pittwater Road, and having worked with social enterprises at a professional or Probono capacity, I understand the very real and pressing need for affordable housing in Sydney.

From working at Lifeline, I understand the very real impact of Covid on mental health on the general public. From job security to isolation, we're seeing a greater need for intelligent public and social amenities such as libraries and public areas and green space/ parks.

As such, I urge to the developer and council to focus on quality, not quantity. On genuine social benefit, not commercial interest.

Lack of community engagement

I'd like to flag the very disappointing attempt at community consultation given the genuine frustration that was raised at the start of the development.

On Sunday 25th April we checked our mail to find a note from the developer dated Thursday 22nd April.

And that they would make themselves available for a short time for a discussion at the foyer of the church on Friday, 23rd of April, at 4pm.

Please note that this is less than 24-hours' notice and that Friday 4pm is during work hours.

We didn't check out letterbox until that weekend because we both work long hours.

Given our emails and contact details are listed publicly for contact on this DA review, this seemed like a disingenuous attempt at community consultation.

The community had previously raised concerns about the lack of consultation. There was no community consultation at the very start of the project.

We also flagged that the residents of this area aren't investor-retirees but working people with jobs. Some of us work night-shift or on call. The residents on the street have a variety of work - Coles/ Woolworths, medical care, office work, retail, run our own business or are on the road. Giving us less than 24 hours' notice for a meeting at 4pm on a work-day is not fair.

Since Covid, job-security has been a huge issue, and reviewing this plan has been overwhelming at times, if not totally unfeasible for most residents of Francis Street.

As raised, this community comes from diverse backgrounds. We are working to keep our jobs.

Many residents may not even be aware of their ability to review or provide feedback on this development or may not have the time to do so during this time of great uncertainty as they are more concerned with financial stability and keeping their jobs.

Additional reasons may be proficiency in English, the lack of awareness of their rights as tenants/ residents, cultural background (which may inform their aversion to "speaking up"), their age (technical knowledge) or ability to navigate the council's online submissions section.

It is completely unrealistic and unreasonable for the developer to cite this incident as an attempt at community consultation. The subsequent attempt by the developer to engage with the community seems wilfully rushed.

Reasons for not supporting this development

Construction:

- Damage to surrounding buildings: concerns due to close proximity of surrounding buildings similar to Mascot Towers. Surrounding apartments are over 20 years old, some 30 years.
- Pollution during construction – any environmental impact on the increased particle pollution as had occurred with new the construction on Pittwater Road.
- What is the recourse for residents and businesses for negative impact on health, business or living conditions during this build? Examples: loss of business, increased rate of asthma, mental health issues, stress.

Traffic considerations:

- Pressure on local parking due to minimal increase in car parking spaces.
- Traffic safety issues due to increased roadworks during build.
- Post-build: safety and increased traffic.
- Traffic report last year was during COVID lockdown/ quiet period. The reality of congestion on Francis Street is something the church can attest to as they have a strict “no parking” policy in their current car park due to parking congestion on Francis Street.

Specific to neighbouring buildings:

For 7 Francis Street:

The new plan will still block all of the natural sunlight to our backyards and living areas.

It's important to note that all of the homes on 7 Francis Street face the church. Meaning, all of our living areas and bedrooms receive direct sunlight ONLY from this facing. Therefore, regardless of whether our rooftops receive natural light for solar, we will receive no sunlight in our homes if this build proceeds.

Other neighbouring buildings:

Businesses and residents alike are more frustrated at the scale of this development than anything else. Residents on the street will be affected due to congestion, shadowing, noise – their quality of life will be impacted.

Impact:

Fresh air – air flow between buildings likely to be impacted. Pollution from car park, lack of ventilation and flow between buildings, potential for mold. Impacting health and mental health

Pollution – health implications

Natural light – mental health, quality of life

Congestion - safety

Duty-of-care: Commercial aspect still takes priority over the needs of future residents

The increased disabled car spots have increased to 8, which is an improvement from the 2 on the original plan. However, the cafe still gets 2 car spots, and the church/ events gets 15 car spots.

The housing residents get a total of 14 car spots, which is still less than the church/events.

Without the outcry from the community regarding the original plan, the number of disabled car spots on the plan would have remained at 2.

It took the outcry of the community to push for an increase the number of disabled car spots from 2. This was not an initiative from the development and sadly, this calls into question the very real duty of care and intent of the development itself.

What else is missing?

What else is being disregarded to prioritise the commercial side of this project?

What else will change if the development goes ahead?

I note that the Salvation Army has raised genuine and heartfelt concerns about the quality of life that residents are expected to receive within this development. Their concerns from the first plan are still raised:

- Size of rooms: very small, inadequate living space
- Rooms without windows
- Rooms without natural sunlight
- Ceiling height
- Communal Kitchenettes: ability to cook actual meals and health safety concerns especially during COVID
- Reduced shared living areas: quality of life, ability to feel safe/ at home, adequate space for all residents within the premises

I hope the developer considers prioritising the residents' privacy and quality of life over the café and theatre.

I urge the council to take the community's real concerns for their living conditions as well as the very people this development purports to benefit.

Thank you for your time.

Kind Regards,

Po-Tien