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To : Managers of the Development, Assessments & Planning Sections
& , the Parks & Reserves Section

SUBJECT : OBJECTION TO DA 2024/1303

Site : 20-22 Melwood Avenue, Forestville - The Forestville RSL (FRSL)

Dear Council Addressees ,

BACKGROUND & THE PROPOSED RE-DEVELOPMENT OF FORESTVILLE RSL

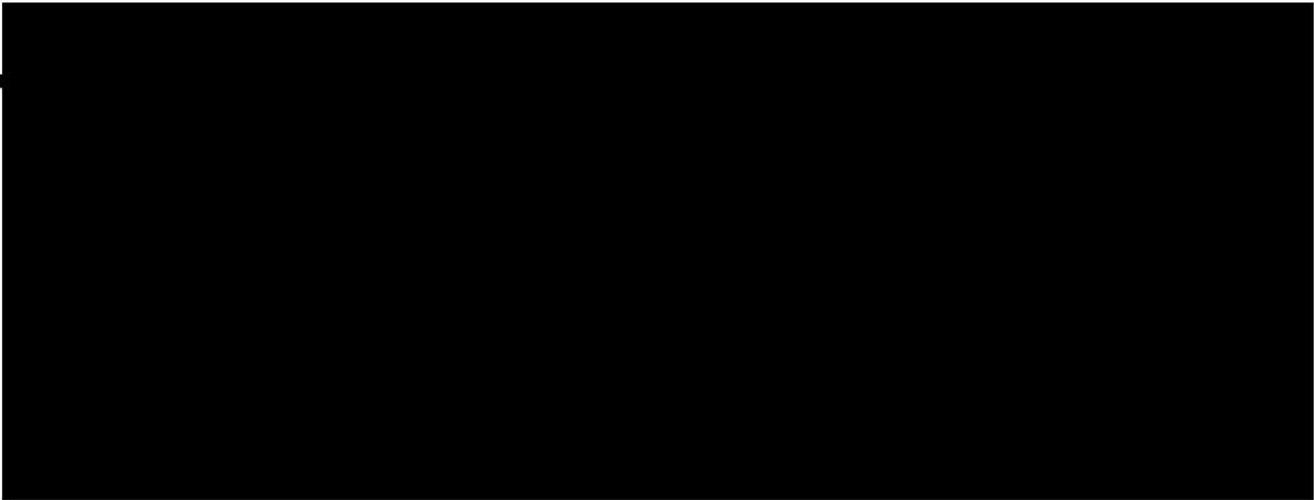
Just a few years ago, FRSL management announced plans to demolish its 2 bowling greens to erect a private building complex .

This caused such widespread community and member outrage that FRSL management was forced to back down and abandon those plans (articles in The Manly Daily refer) .

New FRSL management have now announced that they are demolishing everything on the picturesque Club site to build a 55 unit Retirement Village of 4 large imposing buildings and, that one of those 4 buildings (the one on the bowling greens) will contain a new smaller (single level) RSL Club on the 2nd level of its 4 above-ground levels (level 1 being a carpark , levels 3 & 4 being retirement units, and underground basement levels being additional carparks) .

REASONS WHY COUNCIL MUST NOT APPROVE THE FRSL DA

1



2

We believe the community ALSO DOES NOT WANT the Retirement Village :

Self-explanatory .

We ask Council to wait on the results of an up-coming on-line petition .

3 We believe that the RSL Club's best chance to survive is in its current family friendly form and, we ask Council to reject FRSL's MAIN REASON for the DA :

FRSL management's main justification for the Retirement Village is that it is necessary as an alternate source of revenue because of the remote chance that the government will introduce changes to gambling revenue .

But, everybody knows such changes are HIGHLY UNLIKELY compared to the VERY LIKELY government changes to categorise 'retirement-lease-arrangements' as a Financial Product , thereby bringing them under the control of ASIC . And , when this does occur, any revenue from the retirement/lease arrangement that FRSL will have with its retirement village component is likely to be annihilated.

And, this will mean THE CERTAIN DEMISE of the FRSL Club (see various '7-30' reports) .

4 There is no need for more retirement complexes in Forestville :

There is already a plethora of retirement complexes in Forestville and , all these are located far from Forestville's centre and , away from primary school children's facilities .

5 The Demography of Forestville does not justify another Retirement Village :

Any study will show that the VERY ESSENCE of Forestville , current and future , is centred around young families (the high concentration of schools in the area is proof of this) .

6 FRSL's Retirement Village does not meet government calls for 'Needed Housing' :

By intent and definition , young families , who are in most need of housing and , who are the mainstay and largest portion of the Forestville community , WILL BE BARRED from ever purchasing , or ever living in , any of FRSL's 55 units and , the high cost of the units will also exclude all others the government say need housing.

Note : FRSL say the 55 units will be sold for similar price to other residential units in the area . Conservatively, this will range between \$1.7M to well over \$2.5M each .

Clearly , only a small number of rich people will benefit from the Retirement Village .

7 FRSL has a MORAL DUTY not to target/entice retirees into the site :

THIS IS ESPECIALLY SO , because FRSL has a MONOPOLY as the suburb's ONLY Entertainment/gambling venue for retirees (unlike any other venue in any other suburb) and , the proposed Club has AN EMPHASIS ON POKER MACHINES and away from young families .

Many authoritative studies highlight the financial and emotional destructiveness of poker machines on retirees , with loneliness , personal loss , etc . , being sadly germane .

8 The proposed large Retirement Village will have a huge adverse effect on the local Environment and Community and, WILL DESTROY Forestville :

For its picturesque, family location , the artist impression of the *Retirement Village* shows an 'Out-of-Place', imposing, suburb-dominating, monstrosity which :

FRSL MANAGEMENT SHOULD BE UTTERLY ASHAMED TO PRESENT TO MEMBERS AND , INFLICT ON THE COMMUNITY .

The environmental study that FRSL have submitted to Council with the DA makes every possible excuse via NONSENSE RATIONALISATIONS to justify breaching height regulations and environmental suitability .

There is NO JUSTIFICATION for this environmentally unfriendly, imposing and ugly complex in such a beautiful, young children prominent area .

Unlike any other suburb where Council has allowed such a village , Forestville is a quaint , low-rise , family/residential/children suburb where the tallest building is only 2-stories and, the shopping centre is a small personalised one-street mall and, the only entertainment venue is the FRSL .

Furthermore , the many current retirement facilities in Forestville :

- (1) Are all located in its lower/valley end ;
- (2) Are all in open spacious areas where they blend into the surroundings ;
- (3) Are all set well off the road so that they do not impact or look into any young child facility or any residential home ; and ,
- (4) Are all mostly single-story .

WHEREAS , the 4 large, ugly FRSL *Retirement Village* buildings :

- (1) Will be on the highest and most central and scenic spot in Forestville ;
- (2) Will impose on the surrounding houses, the footpath, and the houseline (?) ;
- (3) Will be directly in the middle of Forestville's residential and most concentrated young children's learning and activities facilities ;
- (4) Will look into those residential homes and also into all those young children's facilities ; and ,
- (5) Will be the TALLEST and MOST DOMINATING structures in Forestville .

Moreover , the previous building proposed (as mentioned) to replace the bowling greens was rejected for being 'Out-of-Character' for that location ; DESPITE THAT , the largest of the 4 DA buildings proposed for that exact same spot is far more 'Out-of-Character'.

The *Retirement Village* is completely OUT-OF-CHARACTER for the area and , will be an ABSOLUTE ABOMINATION of picturesque/residential/children-rich Forestville .

IT WILL DESTROY FORESTVILLE !!!

9 Bowling greens must not be disposed of so quickly :

Bowling greens are disappearing all over Sydney . With the population rapidly aging , the need to keep the ones we have will grow . This may even force organisations (or even councils) to soon start subsidising Clubs that haven't got rid of their greens .

Meanwhile , the FRSL bowling greens are more than paying their way , bringing in hundreds of local parents and children , without the cost of maintaining them as greens and , ensuring they will be available in the future for possible reuse as greens .

10 (Further to Para. 9, above) : The existence of the FRSL bowling green area is ABSOLUTELY CRUCIAL to Forestville families :

The 2 bowling greens are currently being utilised as A FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT AREA and , (as mentioned) many hundreds of Forestville parents and children use this facility .

Parents love to dine alfresco on the greens socialising , relaxing and enjoying the Club , while their children run around and play in safety on the beautiful large , grassy area and , many nights this area has a carnival-like atmosphere , enjoyed by hundreds .

This facility is uniquely Forestville , and is indeed rare anywhere in Sydney and , Forestville must not lose this wonderful , vital , and SOLE family gathering place .

This facility is TRULY THE HEART and HUB of family life in Forestville .

FRSL argue that the new small , enclosed , tiny-roomed Club will be family friendly .

Does FRSL management actually believe that young families can be incentivised to patronise a Club in an age-facility ??? Perhaps they envisage parents excitedly saying : "come on kids , jump in the car , let's go up to the Retirement Village" ???

IT IS CLEAR FRSL management cannot replace the crucial bowling green family entertainment area with tiny courtyards shared as 'common-ground' by residents of an age-facility (as proposed) and , no parent wants their children in such courtyards .

Young families WILL NOT go to the Club if the bowling green family area is gone and , they will bear the cost of going outside the suburb for another family facility .

IT IS IMPERATIVE that Council witnesses what a wonderful and vital family asset FRSL management wants to SO NEGLIGENTLY and SO SELFISHLY rob from Forestville families .

11 There is far too little family dining area in the DA :

The current Club indoor and outdoor dining areas cater for several hundreds of patrons at tables (perhaps 300-400+) , with the option of hundreds more upstairs .

And , on busy nights all the tables are full , mostly comprising young families .

The proposed new Club appears to barely seat a small fraction of the number of families that the current Club does .

Where are all the families that miss out going to go ???

But , what is clear in the DA is that there is no similar reduction in destructive poker machine space .

12 Families will drive families from the Club and MUST NOT be allowed :

Families will not go to the Club if their children are forced use unisex toilets .

It is vital for parents to monitor their toddlers using a toilet though an opened toilet door . This is impossible in a unisex toilet , for reasons that SHOULD NOT HAVE TO BE EXPLAINED .

And certainly , parents won't even change nappies or tend to their children's toilet emergencies in a unisex toilet because , APART FROM THE OBVIOUS DANGERS , parents know that children from 1 y/o are self-conscience and can be traumatised if exposed to such situations .

Older children, especially girls , will not use , and should not be expected to use , unisex toilets , also for reasons that SHOULD NOT HAVE TO BE EXPLAINED .

Furthermore , there is a serious (known) hygiene problem for toddlers , who need to touch certain toilet parts to balance themselves . This problem is prevalent in unisex toilets after use by certain males and , that too SHOULD NOT HAVE TO BE EXPLAINED .

THERE IS NOTHING MORE FAMILY UNFRIENDLY AND HAZARDOUS TO CHILDREN THAN UNISEX TOILETS .

SHAME ON WHOEVER THOUGHT IT WAS ACCEPTABLE TO FORCE OUR CHILDREN TO USE THESE TOILETS IN THE CLUB AND EXPOSE THEM TO SUCH POTENTIAL DANGERS .

Furthermore , many adults will not use unisex toilets and they ALSO will be driven out of the Club .

Moreover , on the Club's busy days the current many rest rooms containing 30+ toilets & 5 urinals are barely sufficient , let alone being replaced by a couple of small unisex rest rooms without urinals .

13 There will be no more possibility for future major re-development of the Club :

The fact that the new small single-level Club will have 2 levels of residential 'long-term-lease' units on top of it (i.e., structurally attached to it) means that the Club can NEVER again be structurally re-developed ; NOT in 30 years , NOT in 130 years .

And , given the structural life-span of Clubs , this will dictate THE INEVITABLE CLOSURE of FRSL , as a simple mathematical certainty .

14 Property will be lost FOREVER to both the RSL and to the community :

When Club members accused FRSL of "selling off the farm" FRSL management argued saying : "it was not a sell-off", they claimed it was rather a "99 year lease-off" .

No matter what 'weasel' words are used , "sell-off" and "99 year lease-off" are the same and , in each case , the Retirement Village units and the land they stand on will be lost forever to use for either RSL or community purposes .

15 FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER there will be a real risk to the privacy, security & safety of young Forestville children :

Several reasons for this being :

- (1) Many of the front and right-side windows and balconies in the Retirement Village will view children in the Forestville Primary School playground, depriving those children of their privacy FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER.

Moreover, every part of this large playground and every child in it can be seen from the Melwood Avenue footpath, almost directly across the road from FRSL.

And, these young school children will also be at risk, as many use the footpath in front of the FRSL without adult supervision. And, the busy new entries and exits (at least 4 ?) will add to that risk.

- (2) All the rear windows and balconies in the Retirement Village will overlook the local Boy Scout and Girl Guide halls and, the dog park (immediately behind the FRSL).

Note: When the FRSL Club was re-built (about 30 years ago), the entire back wall was required to have no windows or balconies overlooking these children's facilities and, THAT MUST NOT BE ALLOWED TO CHANGE !!!

- (3) ALL the left-hand-side windows and balconies in the Retirement Village will look into the popular Council "Poppy Park" Reserve Children's Playground.

Parents are distressed about the loss of their children's privacy in that playground.

Note: The Council carpark in between offers no buffer, in fact, it optically increases the viewing of the children in the "Poppy Park" Playground.

- (4) ALL the left-hand-side windows and balconies in the Retirement Village will also look directly into the children's Melwood Council Reserve oval (adjoining the Rugby Club).

Young children play and practise their football in this very popular oval, and many do so having gone there without adult supervision.

It is believed that NEVER BEFORE IN AUSTRALIA has such a Retirement Village been allowed to be put SMACK IN THE MIDDLE of so many long existing young primary school-age children's facilities.

IMPORTANTLY, over the last 60+ years, no window or balcony on the FRSL site has EVER looked into any child facility and, THAT MUST NOT BE ALLOWED TO CHANGE !!!

Forestville children MUST NOT be put at risk FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER.

NEVER should such a Retirement Village have been contemplated for the centre of this Primary School-Age Children-Rich location.

16 The 5 year construction period will be destructive to the children in the Forestville Primary School and the popular Council 'Poppy Park' Playground :

Self-explanatory.

17 The parking will become impossible & the safety of children will be more at risk :

The proposed 99-to-99 Club-Patron-to-Resident carpark allocation is nowhere near enough.

On all popular Club nights the current 75-car carpark is full and the Club directs the overflow (of 40-60+ cars) to the adjacent Council carpark (the Club has a sign doing so).

And, the 99 resident spots is also inadequate. Many residents will have more than one car and they will have far more visitors than the 9 visitor spots allocated.

Consequently, residents will use Club spots and, few will be left for Club patrons.

Moreover, whenever a complex of this type is built (i.e., with a commercial enterprise attached to it), parking in that complex, and all around it, becomes a mess. This is typical for any similar complex.

The parking in the area is already bad, particularly on the weekends (due to the many children's facilities in the large Council Reserve Complex, next door to FRSL) and, the Council Car Park is often full and there is no parking for about a kilometre down Melwood Avenue.

And, many children also walk to the oval complex unescorted. They too will be at increased risk with the new entries and exits as they pass by FRSL.

Also, Retirement Village residents will also park in the Council Car Park, depriving parking to parents taking their kids to the Council Ovals and "Poppy Park" Playground.

And, parents are going to have increased safety, etc., difficulties dropping off and picking up their kids from the Forestville Primary School.

Furthermore, (it appears) the carpark entrances will not have clearance heights for the many Club patrons who are tradies or are disabled and, their patronage will be lost and, they too will have nowhere else in Forestville to go for entertainment.

18 The value and aspect of all Forestville homes will be devalued :

One of the main reasons Forestville has been so popular, especially for young families, has been the attractiveness of its beautiful, picturesque and family oriented FRSL and, local real estate agents have even used this as an attraction feature for years.

Surrounding homes, in particular, will be devalued by the Retirement Village, as all will now have windows and balconies looking into them for THE FIRST TIME EVER.

Moreover, when the north-west townhouses were built on 'disposed-of' Club land (about 30 years ago) the purchasers were assured by FRSL that they would never be built out.

But now, their townhouses will be overshadowed by large buildings just metres away and, may even have adverse structural impacts from the underground carpark.

19 An additional Safety and Eyesore risk :

The Retirement Village will see dozens of council bins being put on the kerb in front of the Club, in the most scenic exposed spot in Forestville. And, the narrowness of the nature strip necessitates those bins have to be lined along-side of each other.

Apart from being an eyesore, these bins will create a long wall between the footpath and the road and, children walking along the footpath will be at risk because they will be blind to road traffic and, to cars entering the Retirement Village; as will cars entering the complex also be blind to them.

20 (Further to Para. 8, above) FRSL is completely different to other clubs that Council has allowed to do similar re-developments :

FRSL justifies the Retirement Village by saying Council has let other clubs do the same, quoting Clubs such as Dee Why RSL, the Builders Club, & Chatswood RSL.

THIS IS NO EXCUSE TO BE ALLOWED TO DESTROY FORESTVILLE, and, furthermore :

(1) All those other clubs are in busy, built-up areas of high-rise home-units and commercial complexes, where such villages do not dominate their suburb.

Whereas, FRSL is in a quiet, low-rise, residential, 'young-children-rich' location, where the Retirement Village WILL INDEED DOMINATE THE SUBURB.

(2) All those other clubs are on populous, busy main roads and, are all located close to plentiful public transport hubs (so that club patronage is never at risk).

Whereas, a long and steep hill has to be negotiated just to walk to FRSL from the closest main-road bus-stop (and, even that bus stop, is in jeopardy of removal).

(3) All those other clubs are located within close proximity to many other club/pub-like venues, so locals (including retirees) have many other entertainment options.

Whereas, FRSL is the ONLY ENTERTAINMENT VENUE in the whole of Forestville.

(4) And, NONE of those other Clubs is located in the centre of most of the learning and activity facilities for primary school-age children in their suburb.

Whereas, FRSL is.

21 LAST BUT NOT LEAST : Forestville will lose its famous Sacred Memorial Ceremonies :

FRSL has admitted that, if their Retirement Village is built, ANZAC Day Dawn Services and other memorial ceremonies can no longer be held on Club property and, that the existing memorial/flag area will have to be demolished.

This is A BLATANT AFFRONT, not just to the Australian RSL movement but, to every Forestville community resident.

The ANZAC Day Service at FRSL attracts about 1000 people, increasing year after year and, all of Forestville is proud of its decades ON FRSL LAND adjacent to the memorial.

When criticised for forcing such ceremonies off FRSL land, FRSL management argued that future ceremonies might be able to be held on near-by non-Club land.

But, this is not assured, is not function-wise secured, and, is not acceptable.

And, away from the Club and memorial area, it is SACRILEGIOUS & UN-AUSTRALIAN.

GIVEN THE ABOVE , WE ARE PUTTING TO COUNCIL THE FOLLOWING
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1. Reject the DA, in totality .
2. Ensure members are given a vote whether they want the re-development or not .
3. No window or balcony in the development is to look into any of the 6 long-existing children's facilities that surround FRSL (The Scout & Girl Guide hall, the Forestville Primary School Playground, the "Poppy Park" playground, the Children's Council Reserve Oval, the Rugby Club & the Dog Park) .
4. No window or balcony is to look into any existing residential home .
5. There's to be no unisex toilet rather , 3 female and 3 male rest rooms with at least 24 cubicles divided between each , with urinals in the males' (similar to current ground level set-up) .
6. There must be more dining table space for families (at least 5 times more) .
7. Young families must not be banned from ever buying or living in the development and, under 18y/o children must not be banned from living there long-term .
8. No building is to be the tallest building in Forestville and, none can breach current height restrictions and, none can exceed or impinge on the current house-line .
9. The left side of the development (the Poppy Park side) must be set back several metres from the boundary (for privacy and building boundary restrictions reasons) .
10. The underground northern carpark must not come within 10 metres of the north/northwest boundary to ensure geotechnical safeguards .
11. The development must conform to the environment far better than the imposing looking one which appears on the website as an artist's impression .
12. The new Club must have a family outdoor area which is equivalent to the current one and, which is 'non-common ground' with the development's residents .
13. Retirees must not be enticed into the development if the Club has poker machines .
14. Local residents must be compensated by FRSL for any loss of value to their property .
15. At least 20 more parking spots must be provided for both Club patrons and village residents and, if the development decreases parking availability to local families using the Council Melwood Oval Complex, then FRSL is to provide such parking .
16. The Club underground carpark must have an entry clearance of at least 2.2 metres to accommodate the vehicles of tradies and the disabled patronising the Club .
17. At any time in the future , the RSL Club must be able to be COMPLETELY REBUILT and have major structural renovations and, these things must be able to be done without the approval of the residents of the Village .
18. No council bins are to put on the kerb at the front of the development .
19. All memorial services, including the ANZAC Dawn Service, must continue to be able to be held on Club land next to the memorial and flag area .
20. The memorial and flag area must continue to be located at the front of the Club .

IN CONCLUSION

Unique to other suburbs, the FRSL Club is the ONLY entertainment venue in the whole of Forestville and Killarney Heights (both have the same postcode).

And, the current picturesque and family-oriented configuration of the FRSL site is QUINTESSENTIAL to the very essence of both suburbs and, most demand that such family configuration MUST REMAIN AS IT IS.

And Certainly, nobody wants the family friendliness of FRSL to be significantly depleted (as proposed in the DA), while poker machine activity destructively thrives (as also proposed in the DA).

The CRUCIAL FAMILY CHARACTER of FRSL, and of the very heart of Forestville & Killarney Heights, must not be destroyed by this unwanted, 'Out-of-Place' Retirement Village.

And, there is NO CREDIBLE REASON for the DA, which it seems NOBODY WANTS other than FRSL management (who have refused to allow members to vote whether they want it) and, the small number of rich, self-interested people who want to live there.

ALL THINGS CONSIDERED IN THIS SUBMISSION, it is obvious, that the picturesque, *young-children-rich* FRSL location is not the place for this IMPOSING, DOMINATING, UGLY, UN-NEEDED and UNWANTED Retirement Village, which will be REPUGNANT and DESTRUCTIVE to the environments and communities of Forestville and Killarney Heights and, to the very purpose and continued existence of the FRSL Club itself.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO REPEAT: This ILL-CONCEIVED Retirement Village should NEVER have been contemplated for the beautiful, children-rich, family-oriented FRSL location !!!

If Council approves this abhorrent and poorly managed DA it will certainly mark:

- (1) The End of Forestville RSL ;
- (2) The End of the family and residential soul of Forestville and Killarney Heights ;
- (3) The End of Forestville's unique picturesque aspect ;
- (4) The End of the RSL IDEAL in Forestville ; and,
- (5) The End of the assured privacy, security and safety of Forestville's young children .

Please Council, DENY THIS APPALLING DA .