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04/12/2024

MR Justin Fletcher
45 Melwood AVE
Forestville NSW 2087
[REDACTED]

RE: DA2024/1303 - 11 / 0 Melwood Avenue FORESTVILLE NSW 2087

Dear Sir or Madam,

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the subject development proposal. I am writing on behalf of my family to express our opposition to particular aspects of the redevelopment proposal for the Forestville RSL Club as detailed in Development Application DA2024/1303.

The proposed development raises a number of concerns that render it inappropriate for approval in its current form. In particular, it represents a significant departure from the FSR planning controls applicable to this form of mixed use development and also I consider it is inconsistent with the local community's expectations and needs.

1. Excessive FSR & Building Height

The proposed development exceeds both the maximum FSR for seniors housing and the height limitations set forth by the applicable Planning Instruments. These regulations exist to preserve the low-rise, residential character of Forestville. Whilst I acknowledge that the height variation is modest, the same cannot be said of the FSR variation that represents a variation of 2,238m² or 49.65% (see pg. 2 of Clause 4.6 variation request). In my opinion, the applicant has not adequately demonstrated that compliance with this development standard is unreasonable or unnecessary, or that there are sufficient environmental planning grounds to justify the variation.

I note that requiring strict compliance with this statutory development standard would significantly reduce the scale and bulk of the proposed development. It would likely result in either reducing the height of the Stage 1 development by 1 floor (and thereby achieving full compliance with the building height controls) or reduction in the number of Stage 2 buildings from 3 to 2, thereby retaining significantly more open spaces for the benefit of future residents and the local community.

Approval of this DA with such a large FSR variation would set a dangerous precedent, undermining the enforceability of the relevant planning instruments.

2. Expansion of Gambling Facilities

The proposal to expand indoor and outdoor gaming spaces directly contradicts community expectations and government policies aimed at reducing gambling harm. Studies such as the Productivity Commission Report on Gambling (2010) highlight the detrimental effects of

increased accessibility to poker machines, particularly in family-oriented suburbs. Forestville is home to multiple schools and a thriving family demographic. Expanding gambling facilities undermines the club's role as a community hub and increases the risk of gambling-related harm.

3. Inadequate Facilities

The DA proposes replacing the current 12 male and female restrooms with just two unisex facilities. This design fails to provide adequate safety and privacy for women, children, and families. The absence of parent rooms and breastfeeding areas further demonstrates the applicant's disregard for community needs.

4 Construction Disruption

The proposed five-year construction timeline would inflict prolonged and unacceptable disruption on the community, including noise, dust, and safety hazards. This extended period of disturbance is a major concern for families living in close proximity and along the construction vehicle access routes. The reason for staging the development is obvious, but it is important that the overall development proceeds without undue delay between stages, so as to minimise the overall disruptive period.

5. Community Sentiment

The community's opposition to this DA is widespread and deeply felt, as evidenced by the number of submissions received already. Their concerns reflect the broader sentiment that this redevelopment is not aligned with the community's needs or values.

The Forestville RSL has always been a cornerstone of the Forestville community - a place where families gather, where children run freely on the grass, and where friendships are forged over meals. The ANZAC service draws hundreds of locals, standing shoulder to shoulder to honour our veterans in a uniquely moving and intimate ceremony. This proposed redevelopment threatens to have a negative impact on all of that. It would replace a family-oriented space with a much larger structure that will be out of character with the neighbourhood, bringing a focus on gambling that feels entirely out of step with community values.

Conclusion

This proposal attempts to prioritize profit over community. It is incompatible with Forestville's character and values, and its approval would result in a development that is well in excess of the relevant building FSR controls.

I urge the Sydney North Planning Panel to reject the Development Application in its current form for the reasons I have outlined.