
Sent: 10/08/2021 9:25:32 PM
Subject: Submission re DA2021/1039 - 14/16 Wyatt Avenue, Belrose
Attachments: DA2021-1039 Submission DB re Boarding House.doc;

Please find attached my submission re this DA and 3 video clips to accompany and form part of that submission.

Yours sincerely,
David Berry
22 Charleroi Rd
Belrose

 [v1.mp4](#)

 [v2a Front Camera.mp4](#)

 [v2b Rear Camera.mp4](#)

SUBMISSION RE DA2021/1039 – 14/16 Wyatt Avenue, Belrose

I strongly oppose the proposal to build a 62 room boarding house at 14/16 Wyatt Ave, Belrose.
(I am emailing this submission as I have only just become aware of this latest DA after on-line submissions have closed.)

The main reasons I oppose this application is due to traffic safety concerns, bushfire danger and that high-density housing is not in keeping with the character of the area.

TRAFFIC SAFETY CONCERNS

As a long term local resident I have seen traffic increasing in the area to the point where the local streets can no longer cope safely with it at certain times of the day. The local streets have to cope with local car and pedestrian traffic, school drop-offs at John Colet School, a public bus route as well as garbage trucks, and some times heavy equipment deliveries to the electrical sub-station¹.

The local streets are already under stress and unsafe, particularly for pedestrians. This has been ignored for some time with DA's for boarding houses, child care centres and extensions to school buildings relying on traffic counts which are disassociated from, or distort, the actual dynamics of what is happening in the streets and the difficulties drivers and pedestrians are encountering.

While I have not had the time to review all of the supporting documents, I did have a good laugh looking at the 'Traffic Impact Assessment' for the proposed development. Those photos (5a, 5b, & 5c) of an empty Wyatt Ave are beauties (as is the aerial shot of the Wyatt Forest Way intersection). They are accurate in so far as there are times during the day when such photos can be taken. However, at other times the street is lined/clogged/constipated with cars (particularly during school pick up and drop-offs). I have enclosed some photos below, taken in May & August 2020 which show the afternoon pick-up queue.

While school drop off and pick ups contribute considerably to traffic in the area there are other sources. For example the weekends see sports, particularly soccer in the winter, bringing participants and spectators to the area. There have been various plans for bike tracks and/or gardens to the East of John Colet which will also, if implemented, further add to traffic in the area.

What even my photos do not show is the car and bus traffic on the road that generally occurs, and is also common, at these times. However, the photos have just been included to provide a realistic and contrasting view to the amount of cars and pedestrian traffic that can be found on any weekday in Wyatt Ave. The submissions by the owner of 14/16 Wyatt Ave when objecting to changed traffic conditions / proposed median strip re DAs (2018/1114 & 2019/0238) for a child care centre next door contains a photo similar to those shown below, which should confirm the accuracy of these pictures.²

(I have also enclosed some video clips that show what the traffic is like on Wyatt Ave and at the intersection with Charleroi Rd. They show a normal weekday and show some pedestrian and bus traffic.)

1 As noted by the owner of 14/16 Wyatt Ave "The Substation at the end of Wyatt Ave feeds electricity to much of the Northern side of Sydney. This substation often transports very large transformers in and out of the substation. When transporting large transformers the energy authority notifies all residents of Wyatt Ave and they stop vehicles parking on both sides of Wyatt Ave so the wide load can access the substation in the early hours of the morning "

<https://eservices.northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au/ePlanning/live/Common/Output/LoadAppPropDoc.ashx?id=mptljcAiYPsV0A60ki4OEg%253d%253d>

2 Objection to DA2018/1114 <https://eservices.northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au/ePlanning/live/Common/Output/LoadAppPropDoc.ashx?id=gN7IM6p3kPe%253d>

Submission on DA2019 0238 <https://eservices.northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au/ePlanning/live/Common/Output/LoadAppPropDoc.ashx?id=QVm8EZQ6SUQV0A60ki4OEg%253d%253d>



1. a) Wyatt Ave at intersection with Cotentin Rd



1.b) Wyatt Ave at intersection with Cotentin Rd



1.c. The view from Cotentin Rd Looking Towards Wyatt Ave.



1.d. Wyatt Avenue & Cotentin intersection with driveway of the proposed development on left.

The photos in the applicant's 'Traffic Impact Assessment' don't really give a picture of the actual traffic issues locals encounter, to the advantage of the developer's case.

The council and any development board should base any decision on a balanced and accurate picture of what the actual traffic looks like (not just a number count), and it should consider the traffic when it is at its worst, particularly if the development may exacerbate the problem.

When the owners 14/16 Wyatt Ave objected to the DAs for a child care centre on the neighbouring property they claimed that the proposed child care centre would be a traffic hazard and cause "interference with public transport facilities" which at the time they estimated as 155 buses each weekday. (Amongst other things, they were also concerned about the increased general noise levels that would arise if the development application were approved.) I accept that a boarding house will not have drop-off and pick-up times like a child care centre, nor the noise pattern of a child care centre. However, it is a higher density of living than current and will require more parking and bring more cars into an area where motor vehicle ownership is already increasing with a low density housing footprint. It is likely that the activities and noise levels of the residents will also be more noticeable to the neighbours.

These static photos don't do justice to the actual traffic situation. The real fun happens when cars and buses and pedestrians are in motion. A more dynamic picture and analysis of traffic impacts and hazards would give a better basis for determining the merits of this DA and the opposing views. Therefore I have attached 3 video clips to give a rough idea of what the traffic in Wyatt Ave is like. One is a morning clip on a wet day on Wyatt approaching Charleroi Rd, and the others are morning clips (front & rear cameras) on a fine day leaving Charleroi onto Wyatt and then ForestWay. The presence of pedestrians adjacent to and on the road in Charleroi Rd, although not reflected in the morning clip, is common at these times as well as throughout the day as residents use the streets for walking in absence of pathways.

Figure 5 of the Traffic Impact Assessment does not give a good picture of how close the property is to the intersection of Cotentin Rd and Wyatt Ave. The star that identifies the proposed boarding house site has been placed so that it does not obliterate the 'Wyatt Ave' text. In so doing I don't believe that it accurately indicates its proximity to the intersection particularly given the scale of the map. (See photo 1.d above).

The Traffic Impact Assessment also concentrates on the intersection Wyatt/Morgan & Forest Way, and focuses on raw numbers. Neither of these gives a good picture of what the real traffic is, nor what it looks like from a congestion and safety point of view, especially during pick up and drop off at John Collet, and when buses and garbage trucks are travelling the streets. Quite a few parents use other streets like Cotentin and Charleroi to access John Colet School. The brief dashcam video attached show cars turning into Charleroi to avoid the intersection and lights at Forest Way. Sometimes school pickup and drop offs could best be described as organised chaos.

Again I highly doubt that the aerial photos in the Traffic Assessment reflect the peak traffic periods. Figure 6b shows **ONLY 2 cars** on Forest Way!!! And yet even with such light traffic on Forest Way there are **3 cars and a bus** waiting on Wyatt Ave to get out onto Forest Way. However, as I noted above the traffic in and around Wyatt Ave, Cotentin Rd and Charleroi Rd is just as, if not more, relevant than just the intersection with Forest Way.

Increasing the density of this one property to 62 will also increase the ancillary traffic required to service them. There will be more garbage bins, and garbage trucks will be in that vicinity for longer

to pick up those bins. If, as in our streets, they leave the bins in the roadway that will be interesting. Also those residents are likely to have home deliveries, visitors, etc, all contributing to the local traffic load.

Each of the various DAs we have seen over the past years claim that their DA will have minimal impact on the traffic in the area. However, the current reality and the totality of ALL the plans paint a different and concerning picture. These plans allow for 31 car spaces and given that it is proposing a 62 room facility it is not unreasonable to expect that further parking may also be required. Anyone who lives in the area will already be only too aware that there is not enough parking space to accommodate the current vehicles owned by residents in the area. Some residents park their vehicles in quieter side streets away from their homes. And this is without factoring the child care centre that I believe was recently approved for 12 Wyatt Ave despite the objections of residents (and possibly Council).

My concern is with traffic flow and safety. Below is a photo from a very quiet local cul-de-sac street (Kulalye Place) from January 2020. This is the sort of risk I think we should be looking to mitigate, particularly on streets like Wyatt, Cotentin and Charleroi, particularly with schools in the vicinity.



BUSHFIRE CONCERNS

Fortunately we have been lucky with bushfires in the area. However, in the early 2000's a bushfire approached the electricity sub-station and surrounding streets. Wyatt Avenue was crowded with fire trucks and police cars. Flashing red and blue lights of emergency vehicles were obscured by the smoke. A temporary swimming pool was inflated on Wyatt Oval for a helicopter to hover above and draw up water to fight the fire. Fortunately the fire was brought under control. However, given the proximity of Garigal National Park this possibility should be factored into any plans for the area. Once again this is probably a traffic management concern in the event of a bushfire. It impacts on public safety and the ability of first-line responders to do their jobs safely and efficiently in the event of a disaster.

The Bushfire Hazard Assessment attached to the DA makes no mention of previous fires in the area, nor likelihood of fires in the future. In terms of Emergency Management it recommends that:

The owners are advised to obtain the NSW Rural Fire Service – “Guidelines for the Preparation of Bush Fire Evacuation Plans” & ‘Bush Fire Survival Plan’ In the event of emergency, the owners should ensure they are familiar with the RFS Bush Fire Alert Levels and use their Bush Fire Survival Plan.

As we are seeing in Greece and Turkey at the moment the general plan when these things happen is “*get out into the street in your car, if you have one, and go*”, generally against the flow of fire-trucks and police cars coming the other way.

I note that the NSW Rural Fire Service opposes this DA on the basis of some technical issues. But no-one seems to raise the threshold issue about whether it is wise or advisable to substantially increase the residential density of this (and potentially other properties in the area), to the level of 62 people on this one property no less! Again any evacuation plan for the area will need to factor in residents, John Colet School, and the (approved?) Child care centre?

WATER & DRAINAGE RUN OFF

I will leave it to the council to address any drainage and water run-off issues. The Council raised a number of concerns when the previous DA for this property was under consideration. The Proposer of the current DA was also very concerned about drainage and run-off issues when the DAs for child-care centre next door were lodged (as evidence by the Worley Parsons stormwater management investigation (2 April 2008) lodged as part of their submission against those DA’s).

I am not an engineer but I certainly remember, again in the early 2000s, one torrential downpour we had in Belrose which was so forceful that it was like a river running down Charleroi Rd. I watched as eskies, toys, balls, and rubbish, etc flowed down Charleroi Rd and were deposited in the house at the bottom of the street. I would hope that the experts are aware of the history of the area and the capacity for massive downpours. The council would need to be assured that any construction, including ‘basement’ car-parking does not lead to problems for residents of the boarding house or neighbours.

CHARACTER OF THE AREA

The other obvious issue with this development is that such high-density housing is not keeping with the character of the area. The area is a predominantly low-density suburb. The council sees fit to impose restrictions on local residents to keep in nature with the area, if the council or development boards do not believe that the character of the area is not worth preserving then everyone should be allowed to do whatever they like, and not just those who have the time, money and profit-motive to submit, and resubmit plans for out-of-character developments because they have larger land size.

As I have pointed out in previous submissions, the resubmission of development applications leads to burn-out and the likelihood that peoples’ concerns are not properly recorded. When previous DAs were lodged for boarding houses, child care centres, and extensions to schools many of the concerns logged against them were generic in nature and applicable to any DA that increases the density of the area. A better picture of the issues and level of concern in the area would be painted by compiling the concerns raised against all those proposed developments in Wyatt Ave (including the DA s that were withdrawn). [It may be worth doing because experience tells us that whatever the result with this DA we are going to see further DA s that will result in more people and traffic in Wyatt Avenue.]

I would also hope that the council and development boards are not swayed by the connotation of such terms as “affordable housing for essential workers” or “Northern Beaches Essential

Accommodation.” The need and aspiration of affordable housing for essential workers is self-evident. It is hard for essential workers to buy into, or rent in, affluent suburbs like the Northern Beaches, particularly with the current \$ per sq metre and the size of lots. So often these words carry a positive connotation. But, at its best a boarding house reduces the size of the lot so that the total amount that the person has to pay is within their budget. At its worst occupiers pay a higher amount per square metre to live on a much smaller footprint while also making other concessions, eg. shared laundries, dining, less privacy.

‘Affordable’ doesn’t necessarily mean that the occupants are getting better, good, or even equal value, it just means they are getting something that they can afford. Generally, boarding house developments are driven by the profit motive rather than benevolence, with the advantages accruing to the developer.

‘Supporting the accommodation needs of essential workers’ is an issue that needs to be addressed, but it may not be as simple as allowing developers to build boarding houses particular in low density residential areas.

David Berry
Belrose Resident - Charleroi Rd