
Sent: 19/10/2024 3:17:17 PM

Subject: Objection Letter DA2024/1091 - Careel Head Road Avalon Beach NSW 2107

Dear Anne-Marie,

I am writing to formally object to the proposed development application DA2024/1091 at Careel Head Road, Avalon Beach, which involves the demolition of existing local businesses and the construction of a Dan Murphy's liquor store and a large childcare centre with underground parking. This development is deeply concerning for several reasons and is entirely inappropriate for our small community.

Key Concerns:

Traffic and Parking Issues

- One of the most significant concerns is the potential for traffic congestion caused by the proposed development's access points. The current plan indicates that the existing entry and exit driveways on both Careel Head Road and Barrenjoey Road will remain, which is already problematic.
- The entry driveway on Careel Head Road is located approximately 1.5 car lengths from the intersection with Barrenjoey Road, a location that already causes traffic issues. During busy times, traffic frequently backs up, and it only takes one large vehicle, such as a truck or van, to obstruct access to the driveway entirely. This blockage disrupts the flow of traffic, causing delays along both Careel Head Road and Barrenjoey Road.
- If parents are attempting to access the driveway for the childcare centre to drop off or pick up children, traffic flow could come to a standstill. This scenario will result in delays for motorists travelling in both directions along Barrenjoey Road, a crucial route in Avalon Beach. Given that this situation already occurs under current conditions, adding more vehicles to the traffic flow will only exacerbate the problem.
- Additionally, there is a bus stop located near the Careel Head Shopping Centre driveway. Private school buses regularly use this spot to pick up students, with parents dropping off children in the same area. The combination of childcare drop-offs, liquor store traffic, and school buses will create further congestion, presenting serious safety risks for pedestrians, school children, and other motorists.
- There is also a critical concern for emergency vehicles. Barrenjoey Road serves as the main thoroughfare, and congestion could cause significant delays for emergency vehicles that need to pass through, jeopardising public safety.
- These traffic issues are compounded during the tourist-heavy spring and summer seasons, which were not adequately reflected in the traffic assessment conducted for the development application. The existing traffic situation is already a nightmare, and this development would only worsen it, creating chaos for residents, visitors, and the local community.
- The estimated additional 20 vehicles in the morning peak is grossly underestimated and does not reflect the actual impact this development would have on local traffic.
- The recent incident on 19th October, when a large tree fell on Barrenjoey Road, caused chaos for hours, demonstrating how sensitive our local roads are to congestion and unforeseen events. For over seven hours, traffic was diverted up Careel Head Road, leading to bumper-to-bumper traffic and making it nearly impossible for residents to enter or exit their driveways. This incident highlights how quickly traffic can overwhelm our road system, raising concerns about the added strain from a new childcare centre and liquor store. Furthermore, this suggests that Whale Beach Road could become a "rat run" as drivers seek to avoid congestion at the intersection of Barrenjoey Road and Careel Head Road.
- The Traffic and Parking Assessment Report outlines that 19 of the 41 car spaces will be designated for the liquor outlet, contradicting the claim that this is a "bespoke" store. Allocating nearly half of the parking to the liquor store signals the large scale of this development and the likely impact on traffic congestion.
- An assault in May 2024 involving a 70-year-old man in the Careel Bay Shopping Centre car park highlights ongoing traffic congestion and parking issues. This incident underlines the already strained infrastructure and the heightened risks that increased traffic will bring to the area (<https://www.northernbeachesadvocate.com.au/2024/05/05/car-park-assault-at-careel-bay/>).

Environmental Impact

- The proposed development is close to Careel Bay Wetlands, a sensitive environmental area. The Careel Bay Masterplan highlights that the Plan of Management for Careel Bay Wetlands includes “measures to restrict human and animal access to protect birds and other species.” The potential for large groups to gather and consume alcohol in nearby public spaces, like Hitchcock Park and the playing fields, could disturb wildlife and lead to further environmental degradation (<https://eservices.northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au/ePlanning/live/Images/PDCP21/Appendix%2013%20-%20Careel%20Bay%20Masterplan.pdf>).
- The Careel Bay Shopping Centre was built on a former petrol station, raising significant concerns about contamination and potential groundwater pollution if existing buildings are demolished without proper remediation.
- Furthermore, the construction of an underground car park poses flooding risks, especially during heavy rains when Barrenjoey Road often floods, cutting off access to Palm Beach from Avalon Beach.

Impact on Local Businesses

- Avalon Beach is already served by several small, locally owned bottle shops. Introducing a Dan Murphy's would be unnecessary and harmful to these family-owned businesses, which are integral to the community. This undermines the Avalon Beach Place Plan's aim to support a diverse, resilient local economy.

Support for Local Economy

- The Northern Beaches Council's Economic Development Strategy emphasises nurturing innovative and creative local businesses, which would be undermined by introducing a large chain retailer like Dan Murphy's.
- The community values its unique character and the small businesses that keep profits circulating locally, ensuring the vibrancy and sustainability of our economy.

Social Concerns and Alcohol-Related Incidents

- Placing a liquor outlet next to a childcare centre is not only troubling but also quite disturbing, especially considering the Liquor Act 2007's guidance against situating liquor establishments near educational facilities and its emphasis on considering the potential impact on the community. (<https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/whole/html/inforce/current/act-2007-090#sec.48>).
- The Northern Beaches already faces significant alcohol-related incidents. In 2022 alone, there were 455 drink driving incidents, making the region one of the highest in NSW for such offences (<https://northsidelivingnews.com.au/beaches-bad-for-drink-driving/>).
- Additionally, the Northern Beaches has a high proportion of domestic violence assaults involving alcohol, with 42% of domestic violence incidents in the area linked to alcohol (<https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/the-sydney-suburbs-with-the-most-alcohol-related-domestic-violence-20240705-p5jrdr.html>).
- A large liquor store could exacerbate these issues, including increased risks of drink driving and alcohol-fuelled violence.

Building Scale and Community Character

- The Pittwater Development Control Plan for Avalon Beach clearly states that "Future development will maintain a building height limit below the tree canopy and minimise bulk and scale." This proposal does not appear to align with these guidelines.

Conclusion

This proposed development is unsuitable for our small community. It will exacerbate existing traffic congestion, threaten local businesses, and pose risks to our sensitive environment. I urge the council to reject this application to preserve the character and well-being of Avalon Beach.

Thank you for your consideration of these concerns.

Kind regards,

Michele Tick
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