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Subject: Online Submission

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RE: DA2020/1756 - 353 Barrenjoey Road NEWPORT NSW 2106

Dear Sir/Madam -

Submission re DA 2020/1756 - 353 Barrenjoey Rd, Newport

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the amended plans for DA 2020/1756, for 353 Barrenjoey Rd, Newport. I am opposed to this development going ahead in its current form.

Robertson Road has a relaxed and friendly atmosphere created by the low rise, small scale and idiosyncratic shops, cafes and arcades in the vicinity; exposure to morning sunshine; and its low volume of traffic. In normal times, residents gather for breakfast and morning coffee at the outdoor cafes, and in the evenings, restaurants buzz with visitors and lively conversation in a comfortable, human scale setting. Its old shop frontages give it a sense of what the Dutch call "gezelligheid" - a cosy, pleasant and inviting atmosphere. In fact, Robertson Road is one of the few local streets that has this type of atmosphere - one that you're more likely to find in an old European city like Amsterdam that has its centre largely intact.

However, the proposed development, despite its adjustments, will destroy this character - and does not even meet the requirements of council planning controls.

I believe the council should therefore reject this DA on the following grounds:

Traffic would enter and exit car parking for the development via Robertson Rd. Increased traffic would damage the quiet character of the street. However, a carpark exit would also be in contravention of the Newport Master Plan - in which Robertson Rd is destined to be a pedestrian plaza. It already closes for special events, adding to community cohesion and enjoyment. This would not be possible with a car park exit onto the street - which would also break the continuity of the streetscape, undermine the character of the road and residents' confidence in council planning processes, particularly those calling for public participation.

Size of the building

The monolithic building would be out of character with others on Robertson Road in its bulk and scale, with inadequate setbacks and would cause shadowing of outdoor cafes there until 11am each day - a busy period for businesses. In fact, some height limits still contravene the 8.5 metre limit for the site. Neither does there appear to be space for restaurant or cafe seating on the street - to tie in with other buildings nearby. The clinical glass retail frontages are also out of character with the street - with its small scale shops and arcades.

Tree removal

The proposed removal of the Lemon Scented gum tree from public land should not be allowed.

While it is an exempt species under council regulations, as a mature tree it provides habitat for birds and other species - as well as contributing to reducing the temperature of its surroundings. A replacement tree would take many decades to reach the same size. Similarly, it would be desirable to see developers plan buildings around the landscape, so that the five other trees to be removed from the site were integrated into a more sensitive design.

Disruption to businesses

The lengthy construction period will cause extensive disruptions to shops and cafes on Robertson Road, which they can ill-afford during or coming out of Covid.

The council has also rejected the DA on a number of grounds already that do not appear to have been updated including:

Environmental Health Referral Response - industrial use

The DA still does not appear to satisfy conditions for environmental health - industrial use. The council's environmental health officers previously rejected the application on the basis of a noise survey carried out in 2011 and called for a new acoustic report.

Engineering Referral Response

The Engineering Referral Response also failed to support the proposal due to issues regarding stormwater. Because of the depth of the excavation, the council found the development might be impacted by groundwater.

"The proposal to discharge site stormwater to the kerb in Robertson Road and Barrenjoey Road in four locations is not supported. It is recommended that the site discharge be connected to the existing Council pit in Robertson Road adjacent to the site."

Water Management Referral Response

Neither does the DA meet the Council's water management requirements, failing to meet targets for removal of phosphorus, nitrogen or total suspended solids. It found that:

"Further groundwater studies must be completed as recommended in the geotechnical report and as part of the waterNSW general terms of approval."

Conclusion

The community would lose overall from this DA - loss of small-scale character; loss of possibility of Robertson Rd closures for special events or a permanent plaza; loss of mature trees; loss of sunshine on a street that locals frequent for its relaxed outdoor environment. Given that the DA fails to comply with the Newport Master Plan, I believe it should be rejected out of hand. Planning controls are created to ensure private developments do not impinge on public well-being or destroy the character of an area, so that I, along with many others, would expect the council to enforce them at this site on Robertson and Barrenjoey Roads.

Miranda Korzy