

4 - DEC 2018

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26 Aitken Avenue,
Queenscliff 2096
30th November, 2018CONCERNING PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT OF24 AITKEN AVENUE, QUEENSCLIFF

Application No. DA2018/1761

We, the occupants of 26 Aitken Avenue, next door to No 24, wish to table our dismay and objection to the proposed redevelopment of No 24 Aitken Avenue.

The proposal involves an initial 16 weeks, at least, of demolition of the existing building followed by removal of tons of sandstone from beneath the present front lawn then back and deep beneath the present building. It is estimated that 50 truck loads of debris will be needed to be removed. The blockade of the street by these trucks alone will affect all residents.

There are two very strong objections to this massive sandstone removal. Firstly, the Australian Medical Association have recently warned of an imminent epidemic of SILICOSIS as reported on ABC television on 10/10/17. This fatal disease causes the progressive replacement of lung tissue by scar tissue following inhalation of silica dust - the very dust produced by sandstone when it is cut or drilled. We know our houses will be covered in this toxic dust if this sandstone removal proceeds. The developers say they will wet cut the sandstone. However, this does not confine the dust, as was demonstrated recently when some trial cutting of the sandstone was done using water cooling. The front section of the neighbours' house on the other side of the worksite was smothered in silica dust - just from a trial sandstone removal! When the water dries up the dust remains to blow everywhere. Another dangerous moment is when the sandstone pieces are dumped into the back of a truck by a mechanical shovel; the sandstone shatters sending plumes of silica dust into the air to blow wherever the wind is blowing.

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Apart from the danger to my wife and myself, our two children are still living with us. Inhalation of silica dust would considerably shorten their lives. Silicosis results in an appalling death as the victim progressively becomes unable to breathe. The AMA have issued the warning; surely it's up to the Council to act on it.

Secondly, we have been warned that removal of so much sandstone from next door could easily destabilise the foundations of our house. This could occur in the short term, or in the longer term by water percolating into openings created in the remaining sandstone and gradually eroding beneath our house.

Each of the above consequences is a powerful reason for the council to disallow this massive sandstone removal and we await your decision with great concern.

An even more disastrous consequence for us next door will be some loss of our livelihood. We earn our living teaching piano, partly in our home; this is our sole income. We teach several children each week who are accompanied by their parents or guardians. It will be impossible for us to teach against the noise of grinding, hammering, sawing, drilling etc. Meanwhile, the parents, who wait on our front porch, will be sitting in dust. Are the children to be exposed to inhaling silica dust because they take piano lessons? Probably our teaching practice will be affected and we will lose income. Surely this is unacceptable!

Our house faces south. Consequently, during winter especially, the only worthwhile sun we enjoy shines into the south-west corner of our lounge room during the afternoon. My wife likes to sit there on cold days. The architects for next door's project have informed us that the proposed new units will eliminate most of this minimal sun.

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The developer claims that the proposed multiple new garages will create more room in Aitken Avenue. He fails to mention that residents of Queenscliff Road park in Aitken Avenue; any vacant parking spots would soon be occupied by them, resulting in more cars - not fewer. Presumably, much of the proposed massive excavation of sandstone is to enable these garages to be built. On 22/11/18 the ABC 7-30 report televised another program concerning silicosis, featuring the international expert Dr Robert Cohen. He again warned of the danger of inhaling freshly cut silica dust, to those nearby. Several victims who are dying from the disease were interviewed, including one in his early adult life. Some of these inhaled silica dust created by cutting stone products for benchtops; sandstone is equally dangerous. The massive sandstone deposits adjacent our house at number 24 should remain in the ground for the health of all concerned.

The final point to make is that the proposed building(s) would be totally incongruous in Aitken Avenue. This is a lovely attractive street in which people live in houses. What is proposed would destroy the ambience of the street. Furthermore, we are warned by our real estate agent that, should this development application be approved, other developers will quickly begin buying up houses in the street to build more units with the council's approval. Thus would a very lovely street be ruined.

We love our home and its position and had planned to continue living here. We fear the proposed development might force us to sell, especially if we lose our income. Our house is our only asset and could lose value due to the resulting lack of privacy from the massive structure proposed for number 24.

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In consideration of all the above very significant consequences,
we respectfully request that the Council stand up for the rites
of its rate payers in regard to this development application.

Yours sincerely,

Geoffrey Cumming

NORTHERN
BEACHES
COUNCIL

30 NOV 2018

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Signature CD