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MS Joanna MawsonLee
1 / 12 McDonald ST
Freshwater NSW 2096

RE: PEX2014/0005 - 184 Wyndora Avenue FRESHWATER NSW 2096

Dear Sir/Madam

I live at 184 Wyndora Avenue with my husband who is profoundly disabled with advanced motor neurone disease. The address is also known as 12 McDonald St. For well over a year we have known the building was earmarked for demolition and the building of townhouses on the block. We live in independent apartments, with on-site staff who assist clients with personal care and independent living needs. For some residents here, the facility is more like a nursing home, but for others, such as ourselves, it has been an absolute blessing. When we married a few years ago, it was the only wheelchair accessible accommodation we could find. I had looked for 9 months prior to our marriage amongst rentals and kept coming up against the same barrier, which is accessible bathrooms.

There are many profoundly disabled adults here (maximum 20 in the past, now about 12 I think), enjoying the unusual mix of independence and yet community living that this site offers. In the developer's application it states that the site is too large for residential and is not in line with government recommendations for smaller homes, yet the business has attracted clients based on the very fact that it is NOT residential living, but independent living. Many of the clients here have packages from ADHC which go to people living in their own homes in the community, ourselves included. I found it unconscionable that the developer attracted clients on the basis it was NOT a residential home; we had to get permission from the Minister to enter the facility and it opened the way for many others, and yet then turn around and say it is a residential home.

Admittedly, for many living here, it is like a nursing home, but only due to lack of staff, and not to do with the structure of the building itself. A majority of the apartments have their own kitchens and ALL of them have their own accessible bathrooms, 'wet rooms'.

It is the latter... which causes me to write. An accessible bathroom, of which there are about twenty in this building, is extremely hard to find and the main barrier in finding accommodation. It seems a tragic waste of scarce resources to knock this building down, when there are so few apartments suitable for people with severe disabilities. At the very least, this site would work wonderfully well for people with moderate disabilities in a wheelchair... ie those who can still speak and move their arms and eat and breathe unassisted.

We have lived here for nearly four years, with 50 hrs of care, for which we have a schedule for when staff come in and out to help us. It is within walking distance of the beaches, we even had council fix some of the pavements for us so that we could easily walk down to Freshwater (30 minute walk with a fit carer). If the pavements outside the building were fixed up, so there is a pavement running right around the building, then that would help. Yes it is a bit hilly (as per the developer's application), but with wheelchair accessible vehicles (we bought one a few

months ago), you are just a short five minute drive from many wonderful places with wheelchair accessible paths.

Most people in wheelchairs, have electric wheelchairs now, so the hills are not an issue. Coles St, is a much milder gradient, as the hill on Wyndora is steep, but again, it's only very steep at the top, and a pathway going all around the building would assist. There is a small car park on the Wyndora side, and grass that runs behind the building, this could easily be opened up for more access.

Most people who live here, have nowhere else to go. They came here in good faith that there was a 30 year lease on the building. The care provider then went bankrupt, but because the building is earmarked for demolition, no care provider has been able to take over the accommodation, just the service.

ADHC are trying to rehome everyone, and so far, have re-homed no one. We are extremely lucky, as there is a 3 bedroom fibro cottage in Brookvale which has come up and no one can quite believe it. It is modified! A rarity! However, we went to see it yesterday and it's an old run down fibro, with a monster of a garden (which hopefully will be lovely once it's cleared and tidied) and on a busy road. We will have to reverse the wheelchair van onto Old Pittwater Road, to go anywhere and the nice quiet streets where we live, which we walk around in the evenings, will be replaced by an industrial area.

Everyone else is completely dependent on being 'rehomed'. People who thought they were moving into a long term home. One client, gave up a housing commission house to move here a couple of years ago for instance. Another has advanced MND and used this place for weekly respite care, when he would spend the week here and then go back to his wife (who had looked after him for 15 yrs), now he has to find a second home that fits with his arrangement. One or two, would be better living closer to their families, but for most, it is a huge upheaval.

The building itself, whilst in need of work (mainly in the roof, to get rid of possums, rats, pigeons), is a good solid building with much potential. All the room/apartments have been modified and the bathrooms are nice, with new kitchenettes in most rooms. The communal areas are awful, and in real need of renovation, but this place has such potential.

We have loved living here... if the rezoning approval is approved, then the owner will just knock this place down. If it is not, then maybe he will sell it to someone who will persist in preserving the building as a place for frail and vulnerable people to live. Many people remember this building, when we tell them where they live, so many people have said they have memories of having operations here when it was a private hospital. I think there is a heritage value too to the place.

And finally, there is a huge unused car park out the back, with some initiative, the older building could be preserved and another medium density living building could be built as well.

Hoping that this beautiful building, which gives independence to so many who have so little say in how they live their lives, will remain as part of the northern beaches diverse range of residential buildings.

Yours faithfully
Joanna Mawson-Lee

PS... The owner has given us until April to move out. Which is very kind of them to be so flexible as I am sure Sorento, who were hopeless financial managers, left them considerably

out of pocket. They should have become a housing provider, so the subsidized rent they were offering was matched by the government.