



27 April 2010

The Hon Tony Kelly MLC
Minister for Planning
Level 34 Governor Macquarie Tower
1 Farrer Place
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Minister

St Vincent's Research Precinct Revised Preferred Project Report

I write to object to the Revised Preferred Project Report submitted by St Vincent's Mater Health for its research precinct.

There is widespread community support for St Vincent's Hospital and the world-class research work associated with these facilities, however the proposal documented in the Preferred Project Report does not achieve an appropriate balance between development and protecting neighbourhood amenity.

The Revised Preferred Project Report fails to resolve the community's critical concerns raised during the exhibition period for the proposed Concept Plan last year. Amended proposals are token, with buildings proposed at heights that will tower over the local community, generate excessive traffic in an already congested area and cast shadows on nearby parkland and adjacent homes.

I am disappointed at the approval of the Cancer Centre Project Application, which has already allowed the destruction of heritage buildings and will result in development that is excessive for the Darlinghurst village precinct. As construction of The Kinghorn Cancer Centre has already commenced, my submission focuses on the West Street site and access to the precinct.

Process

The applicant prepared and presented a Masterplan for the site to the community in 2005, which was broadly supported following longstanding community calls for an overall plan for the precinct. St Vincent's now claims that this Masterplan is irrelevant because it was never approved and proposes an alternate Concept Plan for the precinct that reflects two buildings already completed, one already approved and under construction, and one proposed development.

Proposing a Concept Plan now, when only one additional site is available for development for which a purpose has not even been determined reflects poor process that cannot get the best outcome for the site or for the local community.

Traffic- Access and Circulation

Traffic on West Street is expected to more than double as a result of proposed development on the West Street site, which includes ramps to and from the car park and a new service driveway. I am very concerned about vehicles including delivery trucks queuing on West Street.

I share community outrage that a new service driveway is proposed on West Street when the Special Condition for approval of the Victor Chang facility is already being breached with service vehicles illegally using West and Barcom avenues.

Commercial vehicles using West Avenue at any volume pose a serious safety risk because footpaths are narrow and most pedestrians use the roadway. It is not enough to say that accessing the site via West Avenue is unlawful and signposted.

I restate that the Department of Planning must work with the applicant and the local community to prevent breaches of the Special Condition for the Victor Chang facility before approving new development that will increase traffic to West Avenue and Barcom Avenue.

Vehicles should be required to enter the site at Liverpool Street through Chaplin Street.

The Revised Preferred Project Report includes 300 new car parking spaces.

Staff working in the research precinct will be predominantly research staff, and not generally work on-call or late shifts. They will have access to buses on Oxford Street, Flinders Street, New South Head Road and Burton Street, as well as the Kings Cross Railway Station. An additional 300 car parking spaces in this precinct will encourage staff and visitors to use private vehicles instead of public transport, increasing local traffic congestion.

I am also concerned that the parking provided may also be used to generate income, at the expense of increased traffic congestion and local amenity.

Parking space provisions should be significantly reduced to prevent traffic congestion and encourage use of alternative forms of transport including bus, train, walking and cycling.

Building Height and Form

The Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute is eight storeys, the Kinghorn Cancer Centre will be nine storeys and the Revised Preferred Project Report proposes a research facility on West Street of eight storeys. These heights are grossly inappropriate for the local area, which consists of terrace houses, small cafés, and small art-deco apartments.

Afternoon sun is an essential source of heat and comfort to residents of inner city terrace homes but proposed development heights on the West Street site will block afternoon sun, forcing residents to increase use of electricity for heating and light and reduce their quality of life.

The height of the proposed developments on the site should be reduced to prevent overshadowing of local terrace houses.

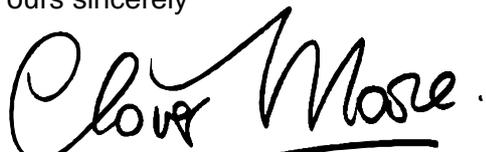
While I welcome setbacks on Liverpool Street, setbacks on West Street are inadequate. The bulky façade is only marginally scaled back from initial proposals, eroding West Street's amenity. The large flat wall and expected traffic congestion will dominate the character of this quiet Darlinghurst street and adjacent residential precinct.

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Loss of landscaping required in the approval for the Victor Chang facility is unacceptable. The landscaping is vital for those using the facility as well as local amenity that will be eroded by increased traffic congestion.

The current proposal requires significant amendment before it can be approved. The applicant should work with the City of Sydney and affected local residents to achieve a workable alternative along the lines of the City's 2009 proposal.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Clover Moore". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping "C" at the beginning and a period at the end.

Clover Moore
Member for Sydney