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17 December 2010

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

Dear Minister

**Scottish Hospital - 2 Cooper St Paddington
MP10_0016 - Seniors Housing and Care Facility**

The Scottish Hospital site is critically important to Paddington. It provides vital open space in this densely populated inner city precinct, remnant rainforest and historic gardens, and forms part of the heritage vistas to the harbour and the city within Paddington.

There is community support for aged care on the site and recognition of a shortfall in inner city aged care facilities, however I share community concern that Presbyterian Aged Care must be a good neighbour. The Scottish Hospital site is located within a Heritage Conservation Area, and it is vital that the development contributes to, not detracts from, Paddington's special character. The church must protect amenity, heritage and open space while meeting needs for aged care.

I have been contacted by a large number of local residents who are alarmed by the proposals, and concerned that their feedback to initial proposals has not been taken into account. The key concerns raised by the community are overdevelopment, inappropriate and unsympathetic design, loss of trees and green landscaping, loss of views and vistas, and traffic impacts.

Overdevelopment

Residents remain concerned that the proposed buildings are too large and will dominate the neighbourhood, detracting from Paddington's two and three storey heritage streetscapes.

Residents point out that the proposed floor space ratio is over 40 per cent more than that approved by Woollahra Council in 2002 for a previous contentious development application. I understand that the Woollahra Local Environment Plan (LEP) 1995 sets a height limit for new buildings in Paddington of 9.5 metres – approximately three storeys – and a floor space ration of 0.75.

The proposal includes a nine storey building with up to seven storeys visible above street level on Brown Street, and a six storey building on Stephen Street. I share residents' concern that these heights are inconsistent with Paddington's Victorian heritage, the Woollahra LEP, and the Paddington Heritage Conservation Area Development Control Plan.

The proposed buildings involve development deep into the site, impacting on green open space and vistas across the site.

Residents are particularly alarmed that the development would block the view corridor from Glen Street, and impact on views of the gardens from Brown Street, Glenview Street, Neild Avenue, Dillon Reserve, and Stephen Street, as well as views through the site from homes and along streetscapes of Brown, Cooper and Stephen streets. I share their concern that the bulky buildings will consume the entire outlook of what is now an urban forest.

Residents are concerned that setbacks are inadequate for the scale of the proposal, particularly on Stephen Street where they are as little as 2.5 metres. Residents also request a larger setback for the nine storey building on Brown Street.

Design

Residents are very concerned that the development will destroy intact heritage streetscapes, particularly along Brown Street, Stephen Street, and parts of Cooper Street.

Development in Heritage Conservation Areas must demonstrate high quality design excellence that is sensitive to context. While the bulk and scale of proposed buildings will dominate the neighbourhood, the proposed design also fails to complement the special character of Paddington, and would detract from the longstanding character of the precinct.

I share community concern that there is a need for dramatic improvement in the design of this development.

Presbyterian Aged Care should review this design to ensure that development adds to this sensitive precinct rather than detracts from visual amenity.

Landscape and Vegetation

While there is overwhelming community support for protection of heritage-listed trees, there is widespread community concern that 88 trees on the site are proposed for removal.

Trees are vital in the inner city, providing shade in the built-up urban environment, reducing temperature extremes and trapping airborne particles and pollutants such as sulphur dioxide, ozone and carbon monoxide. The Scottish Hospital site is one of Paddington's remaining urban forests and all trees on this site are vital to the character of the precinct and local amenity.

Where trees must be removed to enable essential development, a new tree should be planted on the site to compensate. Where mature trees are removed, mature trees should be planted to protect existing canopy microclimate and wildlife. Development should be contained within the vegetation canopy to protect amenity and heritage. This will also require sensitive management to prevent impacts on the significant wildlife dependent on this urban forest.

Consent conditions should require no net loss of trees or tree canopy, and ensure protection of habitat and wildlife.

The landscape is a significant part of the site's heritage and I share The Paddington Society's concern that there is no landscape conservation management plan or proper assessment of the historic significance of trees. This assessment should be provided prior to a determination on the application.

Removal of the terrace remains is not supported – these form part of the historic value of the site and there is no justification for their removal.

Paddington residents live with low levels of private open space with rare opportunities to increase public open space and ***I welcome the proposed expansion of Dillon Reserve.***

Traffic

The adjacent community is concerned about traffic impacts. Paddington streets are not designed for heavy through-traffic and I have worked with residents and Council to prevent through traffic impacts over many years.

The facility should not contribute to already congested streets that are unable to carry additional vehicles. Measures that limit through-traffic from residential streets and encourage public transport use by staff, residents and visitors should be required.

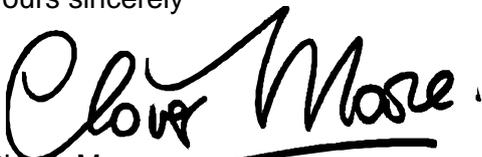
Stephen Street is a residential street and should not be widened to accommodate additional traffic.

I share The Paddington Society's concern that excavation of the site for 124 car parking spaces will result in loss of natural landforms and impact on significant tree root systems and prevent the planting of new trees. Consent conditions need to ensure their protection.

While there is strong community support for sympathetic development of this site and the provision of additional aged care, I share community concern that this proposal needs amendment to reduce its scale and impacts, and requires conditions to protect the important urban forest on the site.

I ask that a refined proposal be developed to address community concerns, protect the special character of the site and improve the quality of this development.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Clover Moore". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke underneath the name.

Clover Moore
Member for Sydney