

To: DIRECTOR – METROPOLITAN & REGIONAL PROJECTS - SOUTH

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Details of application:

5 Whiteside Street and 14-16 David Avenue, North Ryde (10\_0165)

Please note that I have never made any political donations.

I would like to register my continuing objection to the above application.

While the proponent has reduced the number of dwellings and the maximum building height, the development would still adversely affect the amenities enjoyed by surrounding residents.

The Community Consultation document of the original Whiteside Street Concept Plan claimed, in response to concerns about the adverse effect on traffic congestion, that “site access is now provided via Whiteside Street and Epping Road only, with no access provided to David Avenue”. The proponent now proposes, inconsistently, that access will be provided to David Avenue. As a result, the concerns of residents are no longer addressed other than through a 23.5 percent reduction in the number of dwellings. This number of dwellings would still have an adverse impact on peak-hour traffic in the area, and I would argue strongly that the impact would still be severe.

The proponent argues for the benefits of “transit-oriented housing”. I do not accept this argument in relation to the Whiteside development. Buses and trains to and from the area are already heavily patronised, especially bus services to the city. A barrier count that was kindly supplied to me by Railcorp on March 16th, 2011 suggested that the Macquarie University railway station was one of the busiest in Sydney during peak hour, with Macquarie Park also quite busy. Residential developments to be built north of Epping Road (such as those to be constructed on Herring Road) will further add to these numbers. Those residents who do not work in the city, Chatswood or Epping (and that would most likely constitute most of the residents) will still find it difficult to reach their place of employment by any form of public transport. For example, those travelling to Parramatta, Weatherill Park or Castle Hill (three major centres of employment) will continue to find it difficult to practically reach their place of employment by public transport. The overwhelming likelihood is that they will be driving and adding to the already overcrowded streets. In addition, city-bound trains from the Epping to Chatswood line add to the already high burden on the city’s northern line. A recent article in the Northern District Times (May 9<sup>th</sup>) highlighted the fact that this line is already running over its original maximum capacity, with no empty seats in peak hour. There is no need for a developer to “offer” to increase the number of passengers on this line.

The recent PAC refusal of the nearby Allengrove Crescent development (D128/12) was based on four emphatic reasons that must surely apply in equal measure to the Whiteside development. In particular, the PAC’s reasons for refusal recognised the adverse impact of noise and disturbance, traffic, overlooking and visual intrusion. There can be no argument from the proponent, even with the reduced size of the proposed development, that all of these elements apply equally to the Whiteside development.

**The following addition comments apply to the Preferred Project Report dated April 2012:**

In Page 2 of the executive summary, the proponent appears to bemoan the lack of “centre-supporting housing” within the Macquarie Park Corridor, implying that it somehow “compromises the potential vitality of the corridor”, which tends to shut down outside business hours. Clearly the proponent has never attended the restaurant area near the Macquarie Centre cinema complex outside business hours. In any case, I can assure the proponent that little time has been spent worrying about the vitality of the corridor by anyone living or working in the area and I doubt that any of the companies based in the area, be they pharmaceutical companies, pathology laboratories or telcos, ever envisaged a bustling restaurant and retail district would spring up within the area. I would hazard a guess that they prefer it exactly the way it is.

In the proponent’s ideal city, when you get a job in a certain place, let’s say the Macquarie Park Corridor, you then move to that area so you can easily get to work, maybe on foot or by bike. In my experience the residents of Sydney do not tend to deliberately move to be close to their place of employment. If you are living in a house that you own, then to change houses carries a real and significant expense. If you are renting, then you might consider renting closer to your place of employment but even then you might face the prospect of only having the option of a short lease. These are problems experienced by people living in Sydney. Let’s fix them first before we start making fanciful claims that Sydneysiders are going to go and live close to where they’re employed.

On Page 3 of the executive summary, the proponent is offering to help to “enliven the Macquarie Park Corridor”. As a resident of 20 years, I say no thanks.

On Page 4 of the executive summary, the proponent says that “the original concept plan comprised 213 dwellings with five buildings ranging from 2 to 8 storeys...”. Pardon me, but didn’t the original plan propose a maximum of 11 storeys? If it didn’t, then the original plan surely wasn’t ever going to be valued at \$100 million dollars, in which case it should never have been a Part 3a development should it?

On Page 9 of the executive summary, the proponent suggests that a communal market garden will help to “mitigate the environmental costs of food transport by allowing on-site food production”. Some elements of this PPR, this one included, suggest to me that the proponent does not have a firm grip on reality and is not mounting a serious case at all. In addition, the whole document is littered with typos, poor grammar and spelling mistakes, all suggesting that it was hastily written.

Another example is Page 14 of the section entitled “Site and surrounding development”. Under “Land Use – South” it’s stated, in relation to dwellings south of the proposed development, that “a number of these houses have had recent additional stories (sic) and extensions more recently which reflect the changing character of the North Ryde area”. A cursory inspection of Parklands Road, Beswich Avenue and David Avenue would immediately indicate to any observer that a substantial proportion of the dwellings consists of houses that have been rebuilt within the past 10 years. Many of these houses sell for in excess of one million dollars. The proponent’s statement suggests a substantial level of ignorance of the area around the proposed development.

On Page 34, in the section entitled “Community Consultation and Response to Submissions”, in the part of the table entitled “Impact on property prices”, it’s claimed that “Urban renewal and increased densities are widely recognised to increase surrounding land values”. In my experience “widely recognised” means that “I heard this somewhere but I can’t be bothered to look up the original study”. If the proponent is too lazy to back up his argument with some real facts and figures, then I don’t think we can accept this statement to have any veracity

whatsoever. In any case, is the proponent suggesting that he is somehow proposing to do us (the local residents) a favour? If so, I say no thanks.

Lastly, if the proponent is proposing a solution to concerns about vehicular access that will involve access to Epping Road for residents of the development only, then I would reject this for two reasons. Firstly, I believe it would only be a matter of time before full access was allowed for all to Epping Road via Whiteside Street, with a consequent increase in rat-running, and secondly I would foresee dangers in having cars turning from Whiteside onto Epping Road while cars are accelerating in the merging lane in order to merge with traffic traveling at 80 kph on Epping Road. Already drivers have to be looking in their rear-view mirrors while merging and having cars pull out of Whiteside would only increase the danger. Let's leave Whiteside exactly as it is please.

This concludes my submission.

Tim Nightingale