

**Sydney Office**

Level 12, 92 Pitt Street, GPO Box 4401, Sydney NSW Australia 2001

T +61 2 8270 8300 F +61 2 8270 8399 E sydney@rpsgroup.com.au W rpsgroup.com.au

Our Ref: PR107132-7

Date: 14 September 2011

Major Projects Assessments
Department of Planning & Infrastructure
GPO Box 39
Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: MP 10_0112 and MP 10_0113, 110 - 114 HERRING ROAD MACQUARIE PARK

RPS has been engaged by the Ranch Hotel to review the proposed mixed use development at 110 Herring Road, Eastwood (the "subject proposal"). The Ranch Hotel is located opposite the subject site on the south side of Epping Road. We have reviewed the proposed plans and supporting documentation and inspected the site of the subject proposal. Although in principle the development is supported, we have identified a number of concerns that may affect the operation of the hotel that should be addressed prior to issuing of any consent.

Background Information

The Ranch Hotel has been under the management of the ALH Group since 2005 and has operated within the boundaries of its land use consent. Due to the hotel's location in the growing residential region of northern Sydney and due to the demographic of this region, ALH have made the conscious decision to develop the Ranch as an all purpose friendly hotel and restaurant facility catering for a wide cross section of the community.

The Ranch Hotel is located on Epping road which is a main arterial road approximately 13kms north-west of the Sydney CBD. The hotels catchment includes a wide area of the Sydney urban area. In the past the hotel has had a number of noise complaints from the management of the Stamford Hotel (the subject proposal) which is to be demolished and redeveloped with apartments. It is assumed the noise complaints were on behalf of the Stamford guests in the rooms directly opposite the Ranch Hotel.

Whilst the Ranch Hotel have employed some changes to the hotel operation to mitigate sound spillage, in response to the complaints received, it is important to ensure that any redevelopment of the Stamford site, including apartments facing Epping Road and the Ranch in particular, take into account the continued operation of the Ranch Hotel.

We are particularly concerned that the proposed development has appropriate acoustic, setback, privacy and landscaping provisions to mitigate noise that may impact on the future residents of the new development. It is noted that the proposed development has a reduced setback to Epping Road than the existing Stamford Hotel which will further challenge the site in terms of mitigating amenity issues concerning traffic noise and other potential conflicts with adjoining land uses.

1. Acoustic

The development proposal fails to adequately consider and mitigate against noise impacts of both Epping Road and the operation of the hotel. The DA Noise impact Assessment, Revision 2, dated 14 January 2011 and the Statement of Environmental Effects dated June 2011, both submitted to support the subject proposal are inadequate in the following areas:

- The report fails to properly assess the cumulative impacts of existing noise sources in the precinct and the potential affect on the amenity of future residents of the proposed residential development.
- The Noise Impact Assessment Report makes no reference to the Ranch Hotel. It has only addressed traffic noise from the Epping Road and the Herring road frontages.
- The noise monitoring data includes both attended and unattended noise monitoring. It is noted that the attended noise data was gathered between 3:30pm and 6pm. This may be the peak traffic period but excludes the most popular or peak hotel time which is more likely to be 6pm to 10pm.
- In addition, the unattended noise monitoring data seems to indicate a peak in the background noise between 19:30 hours and 21:00 hours which coincides with the peak period for hotel operation. There is no explanation in the noise report as to the possible reason for this peak in background noise. Refer to the location 2 – Epping Road boundary data in Appendix A of the noise report.
- The Statement of Environmental Effects only discusses noise generation from its own development and fails to provide any discussion of acoustic impacts from the existing neighbouring developments on the subject proposal and any mitigation techniques proposed to avoid conflicts in the future.

In summary, if the noise assessment is not suitable and thorough taking into consideration all potential impacts, including those from the Ranch Hotel, the assessment and determination of the suitability of the site for the development in its current form and design may be deficient. Such negligence in assessment may result in ongoing future conflict between the proposed use and neighbouring uses. Adequate glazing and acoustic controls should therefore be included as a mandatory requirement at least along the full extent of both the southern and eastern facades of the proposed buildings.

2. Setbacks

It is noted that the highest proposed building called building “L” being 20 to 22 storeys high is to be located on the corner of Epping Road and Herring Road at a setback of only 5 metres from the road boundary. This is of some concern given that these apartments will be directly opposite the Ranch Hotel.

Consequently it is essential that the buildings along Epping Road are designed to accommodate not only the traffic noise impacts but also those noise impacts from the Ranch hotel.

3. Glazing

The Noise Impact Assessment states that the bedrooms facing Epping Road will have specific glazing and acoustic sealing requirements to mitigate the traffic noise impacts. In fact these bedrooms will also face the Ranch Hotel. Consequently we strongly recommend that appropriate acoustic standards be applied to all windows facing both Epping and Herring Roads to ensure that residents are not negatively impacted by environmental noise.

4. Privacy Screens

It appears that some of the apartments, which over look Epping Road, will have south west facing balconies. These balconies will over look Epping Road and the Ranch Hotel allowing potentially increased noise impacts from Epping Road as well as the Ranch Hotel. This issue will be accentuated in summer when occupants of the apartments want to enjoy the benefits of cross ventilation and also utilise their balconies for outdoor leisure.

It is essential that these impacts are minimised and managed in an appropriate manner. It is strongly recommended that any balconies, particularly on the lower levels, which over look Epping Road and the Ranch Hotel incorporate acoustic and privacy screens as a basic design measure to ameliorate noise impacts and also offer the occupants of the apartments some privacy as well as solar screening in summer. Such screening can be highly cost effective in addressing acoustic and noise impacts and can be viewed as a positive contribution to the amenity of the apartments.

5. Landscaping

It is important that the Epping Road frontage includes a managed landscaped buffer to mitigate noise impacts from both Epping Road and the Ranch hotel. The Statement of Environmental Effects notes that the existing trees along Epping Road will be retained, which is essential.

Further, not only will the 5m to 10m setback from Epping and Herring roads be landscaped, the majority of the 10 metre wide setback along Epping Road has been identified as a deep soil area meaning that trees can be planted and managed to create a landscaped buffer over time. It is essential that this component of the landscape design is carried out as described.

In conclusion we reiterate that we are not opposed to the development but on behalf of our client we are concerned that the apartments are designed to take into account the location and operation of the Ranch Hotel. Our client wants to operate the hotel as a responsible neighbour to the nearby properties. Nevertheless it is essential that all physical means possible are utilized to minimise the chance of future noise complaints from apartment residents resulting from the subject proposal.

The proposed development must compliment the Ranch Hotel and not be in opposition to, or source of complaints about noise impacts from the hotel. Residents of the apartments will appreciate having a hotel and restaurant within easy walking distance but at the same time the apartments must be designed to minimise the noise impacts which will result from locating a mixed use residential development opposite a popular existing hotel.

We trust our concerns will be considered during your assessment, however should you require any further details or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact the writer by telephone.

Yours sincerely

RPS

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Anthony Proust', written in a cursive style.

Tony Proust
Senior Environmental Planner