From: John
To: Plan Comment Mailbox
Subject: PP_2020_NORTH_004_00
Date: Tuesday, 24 November 2020 5:25:46 PM

Hello to the NSW Government Planning Panels Secretariat,

Below is my submission to object to the planning proposal entitled **PP_2020_NORTH_004_00** which Holly at your department and who works with Kim Holt assured me was correct in a phone call at 15:49 on Wednesday, 18 November. Later at appx 1am Tuesday 24 November 2020, your Sharon Edwards returned a call and said that *either* title, **PP_2020_NORTH_004_00** or **2020SNH005 – North Sydney – PP_2020_NORTH_004_00**, the one beginning the second paragraph in the distributed latter from your Project Officer Kim Holt dated 28 October 2020, would be accepted.

But before stating my objection and giving reasons why, I'd like to cover the unlikely possibility that your department might not be aware of the origins of this proposal. In late 2017 this proponent put a similar proposal to North Sydney Council to build as 47 storey tower on the site of 173-179 Walker Street. It was an agenda item at the full NSC meeting the night of Monday 19 February, 2018. It was rejected 10-0. An appeal lost. Later the proponent put in a revised proposal with less floors. It too was rejected.
Now, yet another proposal has emerged, this one adding 11-17 Hampden Street, but was somehow able to sidestep normal procedures, at least that's how it appears to me – despite the explanation given in a supplied link.
Seemingly of small importance but the name of the narrow street in front of 173-179 Walker Street is actually **Lower Walker Street**, according to residents in Hampden Street who've lived there for more than 30 years. Yet Google Maps say it's Hampden Street.

Regarding Planning Proposal **PP_2020_NORTH_004_00**

I object to the proposal.

The **REASONS** I object are listed here.

TRAFFIC CONGESTION

- As can be seen from the two images of the intersection of Berry and Walker Streets it is one that does not have much space for good traffic flow. The **most restrictive** is for **two lanes southbound traffic on Walker Street** which at the Berry Street lights permit just 6 or 7 cars through on green which often results in a tailback as seen in one attached photo. **Four lanes eastbound traffic on Berry Street is the least restrictive at the lights at that intersection**. Next best is the northbound traffic on Walker Street at those lights where the LH lane's green light allows that lane to go north ONLY and stays green for the remaining 2 other northbound lanes that can then turn right on a Right green arrow to enter Berry Street to join the Warringah Freeway (northbound) or go south towards the Bridge on Arthur Street. So, **at those lights there are FOUR lanes on Berry St, THREE**

lanes on Walker Street northbound but just TWO lanes on Walker Street southbound.

- Right now the SAP office block building at 168 Walker Street is all but completely demolished. It had appx 220 car spaces in basement levels. It's being replaced with a residential building that will have 372 car spaces, an increase of appx 150 cars on the road except there would be a real increase of 372 cars since there is no vehicular movement in or out of 168 Walker Street now.
- Design plans for the 173-179 Walker Street and 11-17 Hampden Street project anticipates appx 415 apartments. Providing two thirds of them would mean another 310 cars on the road in the immediate area near Belvedere. This is unsustainable.
- If this proposal were to be approved, this building's **vehicular traffic would have only a one-lane access via Lower Walker Street/Hampden Street as seen in the images and photos. Not two lanes, just one, and it becomes a cul-de-sac, i.e. no through traffic possible.**
- A significant factor in this area is the Heritage Listed RETAINING WALL that separates Lower Walker Street from the 2 lanes on Walker Street. Any thought of widening Walker Street or Lower Walker Street to make way for more traffic should be quickly dashed because that RETAINING WALL cannot be touched.

FIRE AND SAFETY

- In fine weather and daylight in December 2017 there was a FIRE emergency that resulted in FIRE trucks dispatched to the location of the above Lower Walker Street address. Fortunately it was a false alarm but as can be seen in one attached photo there was little to no room for manoeuvring those large FIRE trucks at that time. It's an untenable situation. A real fire in a 415 apartment building would result in horrific deaths because of the inability of firemen to do their job through lack of access for their trucks. This is INTOLERABLE. A SAFETY HAZARD.
- The congestion caused by just one FIRE Truck would prevent all and any people trying to escape the building in their cars because they'd be blocked from escaping. This is UNACCEPTABLE.

VIEWS

- A main selling point of my apartment was its views (See attached photo). While one cannot select one's neighbours, **what one sees from a property can often be the deciding factor in purchasing or renting that property**. In my case I visited the building five times before making my decision. On four of those occasions I'd asked about possibly being "built out" if the red-roofed houses opposite – 173-179 Walker Street, North Sydney – were to be replaced with a tall building, but on each occasion I was assured that wasn't possible because those properties were Heritage Listed so it couldn't happen. That bubble burst in late 2017. Not happy.
- At 7:15pm on Monday night 23 November, I saw a fantastic rainbow. It even had a reversed rainbow that was discernible. BUT this would not be something I'd see if this proposal were given a green light. Yet another reason to oppose it.

PROPERTY VALUE

- A building such as the one proposed would have a big **detrimental effect** on all

property values in Belvedere (138 Walker Street). Instead of the value of my apartment going up incrementally year-on-year, it would go down if this proposal were to be approved and built. If the proposal were to be a small number of retail low-rise shops and a restaurant, then it would enhance the value of all properties around it.

OVERSHADOW/BLOCKED SUNLIGHT

- Where I lived for 25 years **in Dubai this concept was a joke** but in most western civilised countries it is of real concern. This proposal would be harmful to the way of life in my building. Early morning sunlight streaming into my apartment would be blocked until the sun was high. People currently enjoy the forecourt area of it where there is a well-established café with a now-slowly-getting-back-to-normal level of patronage. To me such a building would be harmful because of the overshadow it would cast and blocked sunlight I currently enjoy.

PRIVACY

- All the east-facing balconies, especially those on the NE corner of Belvedere (138 Walker Street), are secure from prying eyes. One can sunbake, in whatever attire or lack thereof, without fear of being spied upon. Same goes for small private parties held on those balconies. That would be destroyed were this proposal to be approved.

CBD SHAPES/URBAN DESIGN

- Central Business Districts have **their tallest building in the middle**, not on the edge of the CBD area. This project would violate that standard and long-practiced norm **and be an eyesore in North Sydney**. Fly over Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth, New York City or even Chatswood and you'd see the common shapes show the tallest in the middle and slope down towards its edge. Beijing, Johannesburg, Nairobi, Bangkok and even Dar es Alaam are no different. I know because I've flown over every one of them. The building above Victoria Cross Metro Station will be one of the tallest and form part of the middle of our CBD. It would be bad urban design to have a tall building on the edge of our CBD. Avoid this eyesore.

HERITAGE GROUP

- The Victorian Era terraces comprising 2-14 Hampden Street are **Heritage Listed**. They are opposite to where this proposed project would replace what were Heritage Listed houses. Within 100m of 2 Hampden Street are several other Heritage Listed buildings, including one block of units that's actually called The Heritage. For the people living in 2-14 Hampden Street this project would be devastating they told me and ruin their lifestyle absolutely. It would seem that the authorities don't care about Heritage buildings any more, that as long as developers can squeeze more people into an already congested area and make a fortune doing it, then that's okay. IT'S NOT OKAY!

POPULATION CONGESTION

- What has already been approved and construction of it will commence soon, is a residential tower at **168 Walker Street** – replacing a commercial block for Mon-Fri office workers – that will have 441 apartments, 372 car spaces and have more than 1,000 people living there *every day* not just Mon-Fri. Add more than another 415

apartments – being 173-179 Walker Street and 11-17 Hampden Street's replacement – and that would increase the immediate population density by another more than 1,000 people. This is UNSUSTAINABLE. It's untenable. The ONLY WINNERS would be the developers whose greed was the catalyst for this proposal. Don't fall for it. There are other areas on North Sydney where density is light, e.g. along West Street and west of Pacific Hwy that would be far better suited for "expansion" but NOT at this location.

K Regards,
John Seymour 1802 Belvedere 138 Walker Street, North Sydney.

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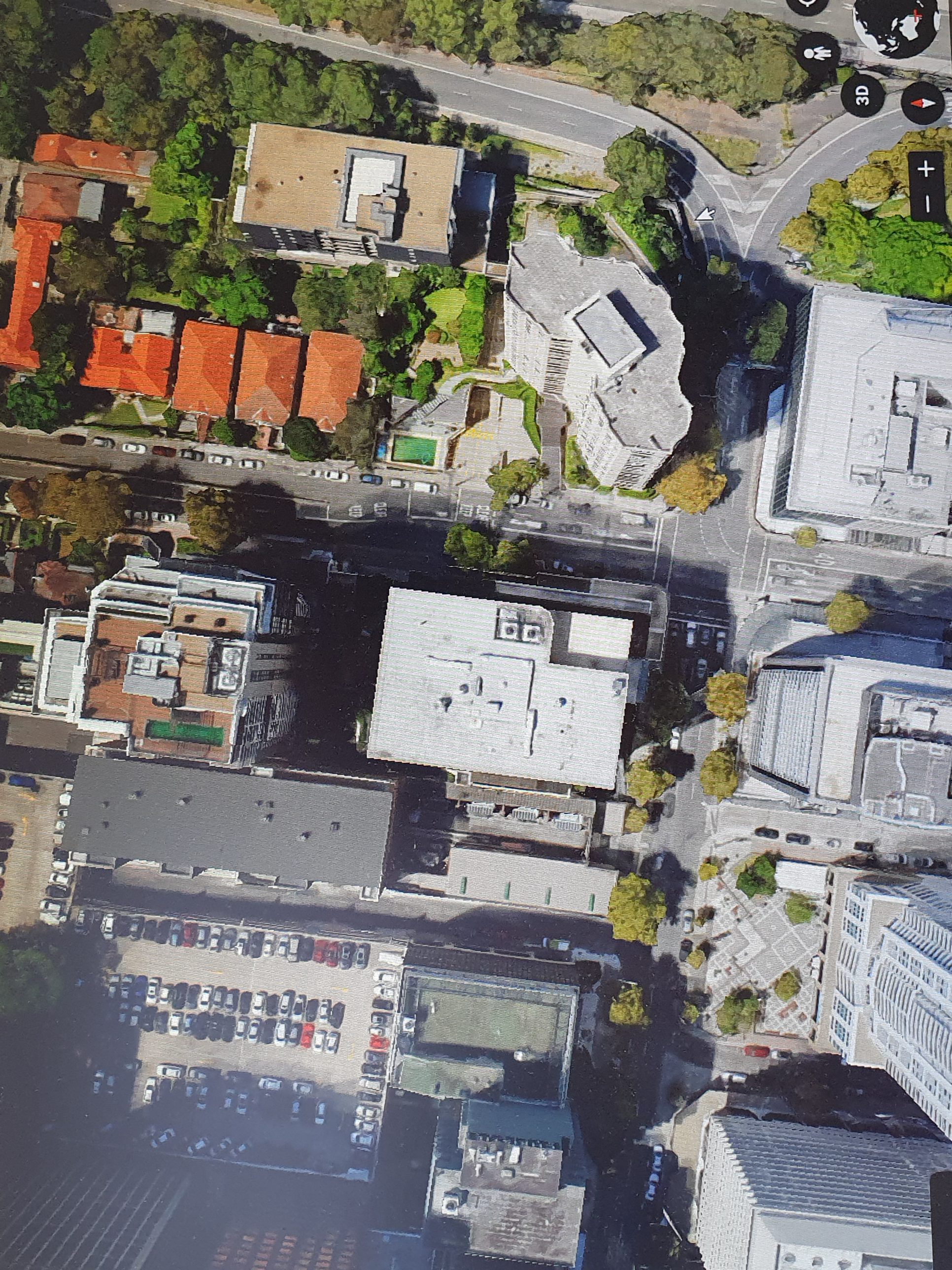
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