

Our Ref: 16-001931

30 April 2019

Sydney Central City Planning Panel
c/- Department of Planning
PO Box 257
PARRAMATTA NSW 2124

Attn: Dimitri Gotzis

Dear Dimitri,

Planning Proposal for 360-378 Windsor Road, Baulkham Hills (Bull and Bush Hotel) - PP_2016_THILL_016_00

Response to Submissions

The Planning Proposal for the Bull and Bush hotel intends to amend The Hills Local Environmental Plan 2012, particularly, the land zoning from R1 General residential to B2 Local Centre, height of buildings to 49 metres and floor space ratio to 3.2:1. These amendments are required to facilitate the development of: three mixed use towers containing 200 dwellings, 4,890 m² of commercial space, reconstruction of the Bull and Bush Hotel, a new multi-purpose public library and community centre as well as additional open space.

The Planning Proposal progressed to Gateway Determination on 12 May 2017 under the conditions that the planning proposal is amended to: remove the proposed housing diversity clause, revise specialist studies, include maps that show the existing and proposed controls, consult with the community and relevant public authorities. The Planning Proposal was amended in accordance with these provisions

The Public consultation (exhibition) period started on 5 December 2018 until 1 February 2019, throughout which 13 submissions were received and 1 statutory authority submission. Analysis of these submissions revealed that the majority were not in support of the proposed development, and comments have been grouped and summarised in respect of issues. We note that the issues raised can be satisfactorily addressed by the comments contained in this submission.

1 DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE – ABORIGINAL HERITAGE

The Office of Environment and Heritage submitted a response to the subject planning proposal, stating that numerous documents and reports are needed, in addition to amendments needed to the planning proposal. A review of these issues raised show that they have either been adequately addressed within the Planning proposal and are not required until the Development Application stage. These include:

- An Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment, should not be required for the Planning Proposal due to the site having a continuous use as an Inn/ pub for over 150 years.
- Indigenous Heritage Study – should not be required as the property has been used as an inn/pub for a significant period and thus it is not identified as containing any areas of significance for indigenous heritage. The site is in a fully developed urban context and has been so for decades.
- Social Impact Assessment – this is a matter that should be addressed at the DA stage. This Planning proposal seeks to change development standards applying to the site to enable redevelopment.
- Water Sensitive Urban Design – this is detailed in a site specific DCP and does not need to be further addressed in the Planning Proposal.

Additionally, the comments regarding alignment with the Central District Plan Priorities include:

- *Planning Priority C16, Objective 30 and 32: 'There is not detail in the planning proposal for percentage site green cover and consistency with this target' and 'The following response in the PP is inadequate'*

Comments: The overall amount of green/soft landscaped area will increase from the current levels on the subject site and this detail will be addressed in the Development Application stage. The site is currently fully developed and is mostly under building or hardstand carpark, with only limited landscaping and a few scattered trees. The site is not identified as a Green Grid link and it is not appropriate to apply this to a site in a Town Centre context.

• *Planning Priority C17, Objective 31*

Comments: A Social Impact Assessment is not required for a Planning Proposal and may be required at the Development Application stage. This planning proposal is seeking to change development standards to allow redevelopment to occur. It does not seek approval of the individual uses in the masterplan.

• *Planning Priority C19 Objective 33, 34, 35: 'The following response in the proposal is inadequate'*

Comments: This detail is not required within the Planning Proposal and may be required at the Development Application Stage.

These requests, however relevant to the site, are not required to be included within the Planning Proposal stage and these matters will be addressed within the Development Application stage.

2 PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS – SUMMARY OF ISSUES

Issues	Comment	Response
<i>Traffic Congestion</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Proposed development will make Seven Hills and Windsor Roads further crowded' 'Additional apartments will create additional traffic congestion'. 'Traffic at the intersection of Windsor Road, Old Northern Road and Seven Hills road has become a bottleneck'. 'Road infrastructure cannot cope with more residents' 'congestion, noise and vehicular emissions' 'upgrade to the existing intersection' 'Traffic is already a major issues at that intersection, and is well undersized in every direction'. 	<p>The Planning proposal addresses this concern within Section C- Environmental, Social and Economic Impacts. A traffic assessment report concluded that there is adequate capacity of the surrounding road network to accommodate for the traffic generated by the proposed development, following Council's road upgrades that are proposed to reduce the congestion at the Windsor Road, Old Northern Road and Seven Hills Road intersection.</p>
<i>Increased Density</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'High density puts additional strain on the current residents, schools and overall community conditions' 'Overcrowded Seven Hills/ Old Northern Road / Windsor Road intersection'. 'We like our space, we don't want overcrowding' 'Baulkham Hills is already condensed with high rise buildings' 	<p>The proposed development aligns with the strategic planning framework as The Hills Shire Council's Residential Direction specifies the need for residential density to be condensed around Baulkham Hills Town Centre to play a role in centre revitalisation and renewal.</p> <p>The planning proposal also adequately addresses the density concerns as the development is consistent with The Hills Shire Integrated Transport Direction that identifies the need for residential growth around the Baulkham Hills Town Centre to benefit from the bus transport network.</p> <p>Consolidation of urban growth around existing centres and transport nodes reduces redevelopment pressure in the surrounding suburban areas by limiting the areas subject to renewal.</p>
<i>Impact on community</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Whole community- feel is diminished by the day' 'Destroy the fabric of our community' 'Loss in public amenity/ identity' 'Removal of social venue' 'Upsets the balance a mix of land uses traditionally provided to suit the needs of the people' 'Bull and Bush is a great local pub bringing many together'. 'Schools are functioning under maximum capacity [...] this development would encounter maximum competition for schooling'. 'Schools are running at capacity' 	<p>The Planning proposal addresses the concerns centred on the loss of the Bull and Bush as a social venue as it proposes to relocate and upgrade the pub, with it being to focus of the development and incorporate elements of its heritage within the new development. The long term association of this site with a pub will continue post- development.</p> <p>However, the Planning Proposal cannot address the communities concerns regarding over capacity of schools as this is a state government responsibility, however, the future population of the subject site would be</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sporting facilities cannot cope with the demand of users' • 'Local schools already at capacity' 	<p>incorporated into the Department of Education's planning. It is noted that the Department of Education has not raised an objection to this matter</p> <p>With respect to demand for local facilities and services such as sporting fields, this would be addressed through Council's 7.11 Contribution Plan. Additionally, the Library is part of the VPA offer which possesses substantial community benefits.</p>
<i>Transport connectivity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No rail link at Baulkham Hills, only bus and motor vehicle transport' • 'Not in proximity to new railway line' • 'Suburb lacks in adequate infrastructure to support the current environment let alone several hundred more apartments' 	<p>The planning proposal addresses the concerns regarding the lack of transport infrastructure and connectivity to services. The size and nature of the proposed development is similar to numerous other locations across Sydney that rely on bus based transit.</p> <p>The proposed site has good accessibility to public transport services via Bus to Parramatta, CBD, Macquarie Park, Norwest Business Park, North Sydney, Castle Hill and Rouse Hill. The site is also 4km from Castle Hill Metro station and it is understood that there would be future bus links to that station.</p>
<i>History/ Heritage</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'The Bull and Bush is part of the Hills past, [...] is significant part of the history of the area' • 'Existing building is of historical significance.' • 'Why is there a need to demolish the Bull and Bush which has been a landscape in the area for many years' 	<p>The building itself was not the original public house on the site, being constructed in the 20th Century and has been extensively modified diminishing its heritage value.</p> <p>The planning proposal refers to the heritage report conducted that the inclusion of the use of the site for hotel facilities will maintain the association of this land with the hotel use and therefore, allow for interpretation of its history.</p> <p>Even though the pub is being demolished, the development proposes to make the upgraded Bull and Bush the focal point of the new development, so the historic association with the use will continue.</p>
<i>Physical amenity of suburb</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Beautiful old building, a landmark full of character'. • 'Permanent loss if public amenity and identity' • 'Needs to be a mix of land uses that meets the needs of those living and working in the area that serves the local, cultural and inherent greenspace requirements of the population'. 	<p>The planning proposal addresses this concern by explaining how the landmark status of the Bull and Bush will be retained and enhanced through urban design (page 19) The proposed development aims to enhance the physical characteristics and amenity of Baulkham Hills by creating more, activated public space and community services.</p>

3 ANALYSIS

Overall, 13 submissions were received from the general public which raised objections to the redevelopment of the Bull and Bush Hotel Site. These submissions were received by the Sydney Planning Panel during the public consultation period. None of the matters raised provide compelling reasons to reject the Planning Proposal or to make further modifications to it. The Planning Proposal is in alignment with the strategic policies for the future character of the Baulkham Hills Town Centre

The main reasons for objecting toward the Planning Proposal raised in the submissions include:

3.1 Traffic Congestion

Traffic Congestion was raised as an issue that the proposed development will increase the current congestion levels and the current road infrastructure will not be able to cope with the additional capacity.

The planning proposal addresses these concerns within Section C- Environmental, Social and Economic Impacts. A traffic assessment that there is adequate capacity of the surrounding road network to accommodate for the traffic generated by the

proposed development following Council's road upgrades. Further explanation of how traffic will be managed is contained on page 31 of the Planning Proposal. It should be noted that the potential increase of traffic arising from the proposal is relatively insignificant compared to the existing traffic volumes on these roads and future growth in traffic from other sources.

3.2 Increased Density

The proposal to increase the density of the proposed site to accommodate for an additional 200 residential units and community facilities was also raised by submitters, claiming that it will put additional strain on the current residents, schools and overall community conditions. One submission claimed that 'Baulkham Hills is already condensed with high rise buildings and therefore, don't need any more'.

The proposed density contributes to the needed development of the area into a town centre, and this is addressed within the Planning Proposal. The proposed development aligns with strategic planning framework as the strategic documents specifies the need for residential density to be condensed around Baulkham Hills Town Centre. This will help underpin the ongoing viability of the Town Centre and the facilities and services it provides as well as contributing to housing diversity and to Council's housing targets under the Sydney Central District Plan.

3.3 Impact on Community

The most common and reoccurring theme within the submissions is the projected impact that the proposed development will have upon the local community. Comments received from the public exhibition were all not in favour of the proposed development and was centred on how the removal of the current Bull and Bush pub will affect the whole community fabric and the removal of a social venue will further contribute to a loss of public amenity. Additionally, the public raised concerns regarding stress that this development may cause on the existing schools within the region and encounter maximum competition for schooling.

The Planning Proposal details that there will be upgraded facilities and infrastructure accompanying the planned development and the developer is prepared to work with Council to address appropriate local infrastructure. Additionally, the hotel use will be retained and upgraded within new development in its existing location addresses the communities concerns. In terms of strain on schools, the Department of Education haven't made any objections to the proposal.

3.4 Transport / Accessibility

Another concern that was raised within the community is how the proposed site will be serviced by public transport and concerns regarding the lack of adequate infrastructure to support the current environment in addition to 200 new apartments. Concerns about public transport servicing also focused on the location of the proposed development and lack of proximity to rail or metro networks. The proposed site has good connectivity to the major centres such as Sydney CBD, Parramatta, Macquarie Park and Rouse Hill, and access to rail is not the only determinant of redevelopment potential.

3.5 History / Heritage

The community raised additional concerns regarding how the heritage of the Bull and Bush site will be retained as the pub is a 'significant part of history to the area'. It is noted that the current building on the site is not the original and has diminished heritage value, owing to extensive modifications and loss of original fabric in the 20th century.

A heritage report concluded that 'the loss of the existing building will have some negative impact on the public perception of the Site as a heritage item, the use of the Site for hotel facilities and appropriate interpretation measures will maintain the long association of this land with hotel use and would allow for appropriate interpretation of that history'. It is noted that a required road widening on the site by RMS would result in partial demolition of the existing building in any event.

3.6 Physical amenity of suburb

Submissions received from the public in regards to the proposed development raised concerns about the physical amenity of Baulkham Hills and how this development will negatively affect the community. Most of these were centred on the Bull and Bush pub, and how demolition will contribute towards a 'Permanent loss of public amenity and identity'. However, the planning proposal identified how the landmark status of the Bull and Bush will be retained and enhanced through urban design on page 19. The proposed development aims to enhance the physical characteristics / amenity of Baulkham Hills by creating more, activated public space, reflection of the role of the Town Centre in a 21st Century construct.

4 CONCLUSION

Overall, thirteen (13) public submissions and one statutory authority submission by the Office of Environment and Heritage to the planning proposal were received by the Sydney Planning Panel during the exhibition. These raised a number of issues such as: increased traffic congestion, increased density, impact on community, transport and accessibility, history and heritage and the physical amenity of the suburb of Baulkham Hills.

As demonstrated above, the Planning Proposal addresses these issues and, there are no substantial reasons to reject or modify the planning proposal. We ask that the matter should now proceed to the Planning Panel for consideration.

Yours Faithfully,



Tom Foster

Senior Urban Planner