

24 February 2020

Gary James
General Manager
Woollahra Municipal Council

Sent via: records@woollahra.nsw.gov.au

Dear Gary

DA 477/2019 – 30 Alma Street – White City Redevelopment

White City is an important site for the local Paddington community, who have long campaigned to defend it from overdevelopment, conserve the valley floor, provide public open space and push for through-site access to Rushcutters Bay Park and Trumper Park. The strong community campaign resulted in the widely supported White City Development Control Plan 2007 (DCP).

While the outcomes in the DCP that the community worked for will not be delivered in the approved concept plan, there is support for upgrading the site which is currently in disrepair and for the planned recreation facilities with public access. Notwithstanding, further work is needed to the proposed modification to protect local amenity and safety.

Traffic – Construction

Construction of the proposed development will create up to 80 truck movements a day entering and exiting the site via Alma Street and Glenmore Road. While I welcome exclusion of the Alma Street entrance during Sydney Grammar School drop-off and pick-up periods, and the proposal to give priority to truck activity outside of school and peak traffic periods, I am concerned that proposed truck routes will create significant traffic congestion across Paddington, putting pedestrian safety at risk.

Trucks leaving the site are proposed to take a long and indirect route to New South Head Road. As they exit the site, they will turn right onto Glenmore Road, left onto Cambridge Street, left onto Gurner Street, right onto Cascade Street, left onto Hargrave Street, left onto Jersey and left onto Ocean Street before turning onto New South Head Road. This long journey through local streets seems unnecessary and will significantly reduce local amenity and pedestrian safety. Planned right turns onto Glenmore Road from the site are especially dangerous given poor sightlines, high traffic and significant pedestrian use. There is alarm that trucks will be travelling this indirect route along Cambridge Street past Glenmore Road Public School, putting young children at risk.

Trucks should be required to take a more direct route to New South Head Road with prohibitions on using Cambridge Street and turning right onto Glenmore Road.

Traffic – Operations

The Woollahra Municipal Council Traffic Management Strategy identifies the need for new traffic calming measures in Paddington based on existing traffic levels, including along Glenmore Road with priority at the intersection of Cambridge Street. The proposed use of the site will generate significant growth in local traffic especially from the use of the function centre which will seat up to 280 people, and the restaurant which will seat up to 80 people. Events may also coincide with sporting events at Trumper Oval and Weigall Oval adding to the potential for serious traffic congestion and jams.

Previous approvals imposed traffic calming measures such as safer turning movements between Glenmore and Cambridge streets and pedestrian safety and access improvements to deal with expected increased activity, however the proposed modification seeks to remove these conditions based on removal and deferral of the child care centre from the proposal. This is inappropriate and risks eroding Paddington pedestrian and traffic safety.

Existing conditions of consent for traffic calming measures must remain.



Further work is needed to ensure the proposed new driveway on Glenmore Road does not impact on safety and existing traffic congestion. The location already experiences high pedestrian and motor vehicle volumes and sightlines for vehicles turning right onto Glenmore Road are poor.

I support community calls to prohibit right turns from the White City site onto Glenmore Road.

Sydney Grammar School parents remain concerned about conflict between students and vehicles entering the facility at Alma Street. Impacts on school pick-up and drop-off including how the proposed loop will work need further independent assessment.

Parents welcome the commitment to a pedestrianised zebra crossing at the Weigall crossing, with signage on child safety and speed limits and I share their view that these should be set out in the conditions of consent. I also support the proposal for the conditions of consent to require traffic calming measures around the crossing and alternating pedestrian and vehicle boom gates to guarantee there is no conflict between students and vehicles.

Construction – General

Parents of students who attend Sydney Grammar School are understandably concerned about safety risks to their children from construction.

Parents refer to the poor safety track record of large cranes on building sites and point out that the growing frequency of serious storm events increases the potential dangers. They ask that the project adopt alternative methods of construction or take extra precautions. ***I support their call for specific conditions of consent to protect the school from crane accidents.***

Parents are concerned about exposure to asbestos which has been identified on the site for removal. To avoid such risks, they suggest that demolition be confined to the summer holiday period. Should this not be possible, ***it is vital that any asbestos removal and remediation plan is independently peer reviewed and approved by experts with regular audits as part of the conditions of consent.***

Location of Development

Concerns about the relocation of a large services building and plant adjacent to homes on Lawson Street and the school have not been addressed and there could be significant impacts for residents and the school from noise and air pollution.

Council should work with the proponent to relocate the services building away from homes and the school with appropriate setbacks from the boundary.

Public Benefit

Given the scale of this development and importance of the site to the wider Paddington community, the development should produce public benefit. Local access to recreational facilities is welcome however this will rely on affordability, especially for locals who experience economic disadvantage. Conditions should ensure community access to non-recreational facilities like “community” rooms.

The White City site includes green areas along Rushcutters Creek that the local community has identified could be part of an enhanced and linked green pedestrian and cycling corridor as part of the Paddington Greenway project. I have presented this project to the Minister for Public Spaces whose staff met with its proponents and acknowledged its benefits. Determinations over how the White City site is used now must not prevent this project from going ahead in the future.

Conditions of consent around public access should be imposed to ensure that the Paddington Greenway project can proceed should council and New South Wales government agencies work together to make it happen.

Trees and Vegetation

Paddington is highly developed and there are few opportunities to increase greenery. This site has the opportunity to retain a green lung for this densely populated community and help prevent predicted dangerous urban temperature increases. The large site must at a minimum contribute to tree canopy and vegetation.

There is community concern with the loss of trees and vegetation along the site's boundary as a result of the location of development.

Unnecessary tree removal should be refused, particularly along Glenmore Road, Rushcutters Creek and the boundary of the existing car park.

White City has the potential to provide Paddington with new recreation opportunities but it must be a good neighbour and protect local amenity and safety. I ask that council ensure these concerns are addressed.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'AG', written in a cursive style.

Alex Greenwich
Member for Sydney