

SAVE MARRICKVILLE

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General Manager
Inner West Council
Attention: Asher Richardson, Senior Planner

Re: DA201900421 – 315-321 Illawarra Road Marrickville - Objection

Dear General Manager

1. Introduction

Save Marrickville resident group is deeply disappointed that the amended DA submitted by the proponent for development of 315-321 Illawarra Road Marrickville does not address the objections and concerns in our first submission in May regarding the original DA. In fact the amended DA is in most regards more negative or no improvement, in particular concerning degradation of the precinct's character and value.

Save Marrickville would be willing to engage in meaningful consultation with the proponent to develop a proposal which would preserve and enhance the value of the Illawarra and Marrickville Road town centre, in the interests of all people who use and enjoy this area, in addition to providing a significant financial benefit to the proponent and additional accommodation. We maintain that the interests of the general public must be given greater priority than has been given in the amended DA.

We understand that the amended DA has been submitted following input by Council and its Architectural Excellence Panel. We do not know if the amended DA reflects the panel's views, however we respectfully but strongly disagree with the outcome.

Save Marrickville resident group recommends that the Local Planning Panel does not approve the amended DA in its current form.

Save Marrickville would support a DA for this site which: had built form and design of a two storey façade fronting the street which was sympathetic with and preserved the character of adjacent federation/ Edwardian shopfronts and town centre; did not exceed the allowed 5 storey height limit; and had adequate setbacks. This follows principles which we believe should apply to shop top developments in Marrickville.

2. About Save Marrickville

The Save Marrickville resident group appreciates the opportunity to provide a submission/objection regarding the amended development application which is with Inner West Council regarding the site located at 315-321 Illawarra Road Marrickville. Our group does not normally provide input on individual DAs for proposals of this scale, but we believe that this proposed development is particularly significant. Save Marrickville is constructive in its approach to development proposals, and seeks to achieve good planning and a positive built environment in the interests of current and future residents. We have a membership of over 600 local residents and households.

3. Summary of objections

The proposed development at 315-321 Illawarra Road Marrickville is likely to establish important precedent for future developments and the unique character and heritage value of the Marrickville Town Centre, in particular the central stretch of Illawarra Road between Marrickville and Petersham Roads. Marrickville Town Centre should be treated with the same importance as Newtown Town Centre along King Street, and Leichhardt Town Centre along Norton Street, in the preservation of character and heritage buildings.

The objections that we have to the amended DA as lodged with Council in September 2020 are that in the proposal:

1. The proposed building design and form including the street-front façade facing Illawarra Road is not sympathetic with the federation/ Edwardian buildings and shopfronts on this section of Illawarra Road, and should be redesigned to be sympathetic with the character of Marrickville Town Centre on Marrickville and Illawarra Roads. The built form in the amended DA is even more unsympathetic to heritage buildings along this section of Illawarra Road than in the original DA.
2. The 6 storey building height in the amended DA is too high and should be limited to 5 storeys, which is the allowed height under the current Local Environment Plan. Excessive height will unreasonably increase the building's dominance over neighbouring commercial buildings and residences, negatively impact on the area's character, and negatively impact shadowing and privacy.
3. The building height where the façade/ building front connects with Illawarra Road is too high at three storeys and should be two storeys to be sympathetic with the surrounding streetscape's scale and character. This issue in our original proposal has not been addressed.
4. The set-back from Illawarra Road for the storeys between three and five is not adequate and should be twelve metres, again to be sympathetic with the existing streetscape. This issue in our original proposal has not been addressed.
5. Car parking spaces in the proposal are not adequate and should be increased from twelve to twenty eight car spaces for the proposed thirty six studio apartments. This issue in our original proposal has not been addressed.
6. The vehicular access in the proposal would create a risk and impede access for pedestrians, and should be redesigned to protect and preserve pedestrian access along Illawarra Road. This issue in our original proposal has not been addressed.
7. Land use as Serviced Apartments is not consistent with existing land uses in the surrounding area, will provide no permanent accommodation for residents, and should not be viewed as a rationale for increasing building height and density, or reducing parking spaces.

8. Height and built form affecting character are not consistent with the Council's current LEP and Local Strategic Planning Statement, and sets a poor precedent as Council works with residents to frame the new LEP; it does not meet community expectations.

4. Character and value

The main focus of our submission/ objection is the impact of the proposed development on the neighbourhood's character, through building height where it meets Illawarra Road, set backs, and building design and form.

Our objections and recommendations are informed by *NSW Planning Circular PS18-001: Stepping up planning and designing for better places: respecting and enhancing local character*, which states that "character is a critical element of local areas and neighbourhoods, and needs to be carefully considered in future planning."

Our position is supported by and consistent with *Our Place Inner West – Local Strategic Planning Statement*. Inner West Council's new LSPS notes that: "Inner West has many qualities that make it a great place to live. Many of our neighbourhoods have a distinct character and vibe . . . (p38). Under *Planning Priority 6: Plan for high quality accessible and sustainable housing growth . . . with respect for place, local character and heritage significance*, a key objective is that:

"New housing is delivered in a manner that respects the significant character of local neighbourhoods or is consistent with the future desired character of the area." (p40)

Save Marrickville understands that Inner West Council policy is to preserve and enhance the existing character and heritage of Marrickville Town Centre, including the historic shopfronts along Illawarra and Marrickville Roads, rather than to have a significantly changed future character, and our recommendations supports this Council LSPS priority and objective.

Objection: The proposed building design and form including the street-front façade facing Illawarra Road is not sympathetic with other federation/ Edwardian buildings and shopfronts on this section of Illawarra Road, and should be redesigned to be sympathetic with the character of Marrickville Town Centre in Marrickville and Illawarra Roads. The built form in the amended DA is even more unsympathetic to heritage buildings along this section of Illawarra Road than in the original DA.

Background: The architectural drawings for the proposed development show the shop front/ facade of lower storeys facing Illawarra Road are very unsympathetic to and out of character with the federation shop fronts which are adjacent to the site and extend along both sides of the road on this block of Illawarra Road. This is shown clearly in the attached drawing of the proposed development, **(Attachment A)** included with the amended DA papers, and also the diagrams on page 35 of the amended DA's submitted photomontage, which shows "Streetscape at the same side of Illawarra Road" and "Streetscape at the opposite side of Illawarra Road."

The amended DA has dark masonry in the design of the street facades, which is even more unsympathetic to adjacent buildings than design drawings in the original DA. We understand that the proponent suggests that the whole of Illawarra Road should be redeveloped in the same modern form in the future. However, the expectation of the community and we believe Council is to preserve the heritage character and build form of Illawarra and Marrickville Roads. The

proposed built form and dark masonry of the amended DA seriously detracts from and is not sympathetic to the two storey Edwardian shopfronts on Illawarra Road.

The current Edwardian/ federation built form of Illawarra and Marrickville Roads provides Marrickville Town Centre with a unique character which is valued greatly by residents and visitors and adds very real financial value to the Town Centre as a whole as well as heritage value. Marrickville is currently recognizable and distinct from anywhere else in the world. Once destroyed by incremental replacement of Edwardian with generic appearing modern and over-large buildings, this character and financial value of Marrickville Town Centre cannot be replaced.

The higher storeys set back appear in the drawings as a solid black box form and are also completely out of character with and detract from the adjacent buildings and streetscape. The black box design may be intended to reduce the visual impact, but in fact exacerbates the impact. Visual impact would be better addressed through greater set back as recommended below. The design needs to be sympathetic to the existing streetscape and preserve the precinct's unique character, to achieve Council's LSPS objectives regarding character and heritage.

Sympathetic built form can best be addressed by adjusting the design to incorporate design and decorative elements consistent with the neighbouring federation shopfronts, such as vertical lines in relief at top of second storey and below second storey roof line. These features could also be repeated at the top of the fifth storey set back. See picture of 311 and 313 Illawarra Road (**Attachment B**) as a good example of these decorative elements. This approach was recently taken in the mixed use development at 392-396 Illawarra Road Marrickville, see picture (**Attachment C**) where the new shopfront was built to match the height and style of the shop building next to it. Another recent example of this approach is in the development of 429 New Canterbury Road, Dulwich Hill, where a 2 – storey shopfront façade sympathetic with surrounding heritage buildings was included in the design of this shop-top development.

It is also important that the new building as proposed at 315-321 Illawarra Road be broken up in to sections similar in width to existing shopfronts for consistency of scale and “rhythm” of shop fronts. And finally, the developer should be discouraged from completing the upper storeys in black. The upper storeys will merge better with the rest of the streetscapes if they are a sympathetic colour, in addition to the design and decoration elements identified above.

Recommendation on character: building design, form and decorative elements should be sympathetic to and consistent with adjacent Federation shop buildings so as to enhance streetscape and preserve character, similar to the recent development at 392-396 Illawarra Road Marrickville.

5. Height

Objection: The proposed height of the building's front where it connects with Illawarra Road is too high at three storeys, and significantly higher than adjacent shop buildings which are nearly all two storeys. This is shown clearly on the DA's Architectural Drawing No.1 which shows the street front of the proposed building at Illawarra Road at three storeys, rising well above the adjacent two storey federation shop fronts and facades, such as 311 and 313 Illawarra Road (**Attachment B**).

Objection: The proposed height of the building's set back areas at 6 storeys is too high, exceeds the allowed height limit under the current LEP, and will exacerbate the building's dominance over neighbouring buildings and residents, as well as exacerbate impact on overshadowing and privacy.

Background: Save Marrickville understands that the proponent has increased overall building height to 6 storeys while reducing heights immediately adjacent to residents at the rear of the building, and argues that it believes 6 storeys is admissible on the grounds that the LEP allows 6 storeys on sections of Marrickville Road, and has been exceeded in some instances on Illawarra Road.

Save Marrickville rejects this argument. Making an adjustment which follows good planning principles and reduces impact on neighbouring residents is commendable, but does not justify a second adjustment which has further negative impacts on the surrounding area and residents. The DA should incorporate set-backs at the rear as well as sticking to the LEP's height limit. To argue that the LEP allows 6 storeys in a nearby area is clearly not acceptable or relevant to the height area for the site being developed, and if approved would have no limit in its weakening of height restrictions. This would de facto rezone the whole precinct as 6 storeys, making a mockery of the LEP and height controls, and developers would soon site any other exceptions to argue for even greater heights. This would damage public confidence in the planning process.

Preservation of character in precincts such as Marrickville Town Centre is an important component of the Inner West Council's new LSPS, and an important element of an area's character is building heights and scale. Marrickville Centre's unique character and heritage buildings in Marrickville Town Centre is a key element of why people enjoy living, shopping and working in this precinct. It is important to maintain and enhance Marrickville's character, by ensuring that new developments are sympathetic to and consistent with the building and shop frontage heights of existing buildings. The shop buildings and particularly shop frontages along Illawarra Road between Marrickville and Petersham Roads are predominantly 2 storeys. See attached a picture of existing shop 313 Illawarra Road, adjacent to the proposed development, a fairly typical example of building heights and design.

The proposal for 3 storeys along the building's frontage along Illawarra Road would tower over adjacent buildings, disrupt the existing roof line of buildings, and in a major way change and detract from the character of this heritage stretch of Federation shop fronts. If this building were to proceed as proposed in this DA, it would possibly set a precedent for future developments, so that through this and future developments the character of the precinct would be dramatically changed in a way that would be negative and irretrievable.

Recommendation on height A: The building's frontage along Illawarra Road should be no more than two storeys high.

Recommendation on height B: The building's overall height should be no more than five storeys.

6. Set backs

Objection: The six metre set-back from Illawarra Road for the storeys three to five are not adequate for good design outcomes and preservation of streetscape and character.

Background: While the planning control may identify six metres as adequate set-back from the street front for storeys above two storeys and up to five, this will not in fact be adequate in terms of good design, final appearance and impact on the area's character and streetscape. In the current proposal the higher storeys, which will appear as a black box shaped structure and set back only six metres, will be highly visible from the street and overwhelm and detract from adjacent two storey federation shopfronts, and the lower storeys of the proposal. A twelve metre set back from the street for the storeys three to five would best achieve design and character objectives. This issue in our original proposal has not been addressed.

Recommendation on set backs:

Storeys three to five should be set back twelve metres from where the lower two storeys meet Illawarra Road, for best design outcome and preservation of character of streetscape.

7. Parking

Objection: Twelve parking spaces for thirty-odd studio apartments is not adequate.

Background: While twelve parking spaces meet LEP and control standards for serviced apartments and tourist accommodation, it is not realistic to assume that only one third of people renting these dwellings will be in possession of and need to park a vehicle which they own or hire. While the site is near to public transport, many occupants of these premises will require parking for their vehicle even as they take a train to the city. This will be even more pronounced if the studio apartments become permanently occupied dwellings in the future. The proposal's location on Illawarra Road is in the middle of a busy retail area, with time limited parking that is frequently full, particularly during trading hours. Therefore the number of parking spaces required in the proposed development should be increased so that there is a parking space for one car for the majority of studio apartments. These issues in our original proposal have not been addressed.

Recommendation on parking: Increase the number of parking spaces in the proposed development from twelve to twenty eight car parking spaces.

8. Street access for vehicles

Objection: The proposed solution for street access for vehicles using the building's parking spaces represents a significant injury risk to pedestrians and disrupts a pedestrian thoroughfare.

Background: The proposal is for a large driveway from the premises for cars to access directly on to Illawarra Road. The existing footpath running in front of 315-321 Illawarra Road is a major pedestrian way and has significant foot traffic, particularly during trading hours. This is a busy retail area during the day and also increasingly a night entertainment precinct. Cars driving across this footpath will either be a danger to pedestrians, or impede their movement if not designed correctly. The architectural drawings with the DA appear to show a two-lane vehicular entrance which severely interrupts and potentially blocks the pedestrian way when a vehicle uses this access point. This would be a significant change to the pedestrian footpath which is safe and mostly unbroken at present; the safety and amenity of people walking in this area should be protected through appropriate design. This design should include that the vehicular access be one

vehicle wide only, should proceed over an unbroken pedestrian footpath and not break it, vehicles should be slowed by speed inhibitor bumps, and there should be prominent signage for vehicles to give way to pedestrians plus appropriate markings on the entrance way. Our understanding is that the alternative proposal of vehicular access through extending the nearby O'Brien's Lane is not realistically achievable, as the land required is held by nine other property owners and not the proponent. These issues in our original proposal have not been addressed.

Recommendation on street access vehicles: That vehicular access be designed to incorporate the features outlined above, so as to protect pedestrian safety and not impede pedestrian footpath access, and ensuring that pedestrian traffic has priority over vehicular traffic.

9. Land use & nature of accommodation

Objection: The proposed land use as Serviced Apartments is not consistent with predominant land use and character of Marrickville Town Centre, would provide only short term accommodation for temporary visitors, and provide no housing for permanent residents.

Background: To the knowledge of Save Marrickville there are currently no serviced apartments in the Marrickville Town Centre or immediate area, which is predominantly retail, commercial and permanent residential land use. A key objective of Council's LSPS is to increase the supply of permanent housing including affordable accommodation, and the proposed land use will not achieve this objective. The proponent should be encouraged to amend the proposal so that the land use is for permanent dwellings and accommodation for residents, rather than hotel-style short term rental for tourists and other short term visitors. The development's land use should be for dwellings for long term accommodation for permanent and long term residents.

Recommendation on land use: The proponent should be encouraged to amend land use to permanent accommodation, and land use as Serviced Apartments should not be viewed as a rationale for increasing building height and density, or reducing parking spaces.

10. LEP and precedent

Objection: The proposed development's height and built form affecting character are not consistent with the Council's current LEP and Local Strategic Planning Statement, and sets a poor precedent as Council works with residents to frame the new LEP. It does not meet community expectations for the future development of Marrickville.

Background: Council's new Local Environment Plan is currently being developed with community involvement, and Save Marrickville will advocate in the interests of current and future residents in the planning for the future development of Marrickville. Key community objectives in planning are the preservation of character and heritage through architecturally sympathetic developments, maintaining 5 storey height restrictions, and adequate set backs. Our concern is that this amended DA, if approved, would significantly undermine these community objectives.

Recommendation regarding LEP: The development should adhere to the current LEP regarding height and not undermine Council's objectives in its future LEP regarding character and building heights.