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Subject: Fwd: St Leonards South Plan
Date: Wednesday, 15 May 2019 1:52:17 PM

SUBMISSION

NSW Independent Planning Commission Public Meeting on St Leonards South Plan

Unfortunately, I will be overseas when this public meeting is being held, so I am sending you this submission, because I have serious misgivings about the over development of the St Leonards South Precinct. This Plan is flying in the face of many recent concerns raised in the press and in other forums about how this type of development is drastically altering for the worse the character and culture of Sydney as a liveable city. Many comparisons are being drawn with other cities of similar size and scale and demonstrate that Sydney is not being wise in managing for its future population growth, in fact it is being downright foolish. So I, and many other concerned citizens who want to stay living in Sydney, must stop this rampant destruction of our environment before it is irreversible. Please note, I am not against development per se, but I am against the type of rampant overdevelopment we see happening in many suburbs with no regard for aesthetics, mixed housing, sympathetic architecture, corresponding infrastructure and plenty of green space to ensure the health and well being of our citizens, and it must not be allowed to continue.

The most important question to consider is: is the SLS Plan consistent with the stated aims of the St Leonards and Crows Nest Master Plan? and given that those stated aims are to create a liveable, attractive, healthy, green space for all demographics, with infrastructure keeping well abreast of developments, and a viable mix of commercial and residential tenants, then clearly that answer must be 'NO'.

I submit the following objections to the Plan:

The scale

The most obvious issue is that part of an existing suburban low density zone is being brutally converted into a high rise jungle.

138 bungalows are being replaced by 2,400 apartments comprising 27 high rise towers of 8 - 19 stories.

This will constitute an unacceptable encroachment on the remaining houses, block out the sun and create wind tunnels where once were sunny footpaths. Blind Freddy can see a potential ghetto here.

Surely the IPC could compromise with high rise simply along the highway, and transition back to low density as is normal development practice.

Schools

Schools in the area are already overcrowded in spite of current replacement of

demountables with permanent class-rooms.

There has apparently been no forward planning as to where the children from 2,400 extra residences will attend school.

This should be an obvious first step before residential zoning approval changes.

Traffic

It is reasonable to surmise that each apartment will bring with it at least two motor vehicles, and once visitors are taken into account, this will add an unacceptable quadrupling of cars into an area which already has inadequate parking.

Entry and exits from the precinct are limited to two existing intersections with the Pacific Highway and River Road, and these are already congested even though the precinct is currently a ghost town thanks to over zealous developers buying up all the houses. Although bike paths are part of the plan, a closer scrutiny of the detail will show that the paths begin and end at random and apparently appear and disappear quite strangely - indicating that whoever drew up those plans have no idea of the actual topography and existing roads of the area.

Parks

The only reasonable green space on the south side of the Pacific Highway is Newlands Park.

It is far too small to cater for thousands of new arrivals as it is already well patronised by the people in existing nearby dwellings.

Another proposed park, even smaller, will not help much especially given its location.

Health

There have been several articles in the press demonstrating that the mental and physical health of children, teens and adults who live in small, boxy housing with low ceilings, is severely compromised. Human beings are not meant to live in cages. Children need green space to walk, play and kick a football. In addition, a visit to the ER at Royal North Shore at any time clearly shows how those services are currently stretched to the limit. How can it possibly cope with an extra five thousand patrons?

I am adding my voice to those who are imploring the IPC to make serious modifications to this ill-conceived plan which has been haunting caring and concerned residents for several years now.

Yours faithfully,

Elizabeth Walton

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