

Camden Residents' Action Group

Incorporated

Camden – Still a Country Town

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24 January 2022

Dear General Manager,

**Re: DA 2022/1089/1
16 Old Hume Highway, 40 and 42 Macquarie Avenue
Camden**

*Demolition of existing dwellings, construction of 10 x 2 storey townhouse
development and strata subdivision*

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposal for the demolition of two existing homes and gardens and their replacement with ten dwellings each with four bedrooms. We made a submission on a previous proposal (DA 2020/702/1) to redevelop the site of 16 Old Hume Highway, and 40 and 42 Macquarie Avenue, which was for 22 units across three storeys, and note that it was withdrawn on 28 April 2021. The documentation accompanying the current DA refers to 16 Old Hume Highway and 42 Macquarie Street only. However, it appears that a boundary adjustment of approximately 2 metres into 40 Macquarie Avenue is required to accommodate the proposed development.

We believe the neighbourhood of the proposed development site, which is within easy walking distance of and identifies strongly with the historic town of Camden (1840), was first developed in the 1930s. Whilst we appreciate that this proposal is a vast improvement on the one withdrawn and that the site's zone (R3 Low Density Residential) permits multi dwelling housing, there is concern within the community that this type of development is inappropriate in this long-established area.

This view is reflected in Council policies.

As set out (under Local Priority 1) in the overarching Camden Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) ¹, the vast majority of future housing in Camden is to be delivered in the South West Growth Area precincts with no creation of additional housing capacity in established areas without *commitment to further catalytic infrastructure provision*.

There is no commitment to additional transport or other infrastructure in this established area commensurate with the potential for development of additional housing capacity under the zoning.

This policy of restraint on additional housing capacity in established areas is reiterated in Camden Housing Strategy² which prioritises *delivering the right housing in the right location* (Priority 3). An objective (7) of this Priority is that any *incremental housing in established areas is to preserve character and heritage values*.

This objective of preserving character and heritage value is supported by DCP 4.6 *Multi Dwelling Housing*³ controls on image and legibility which require that the proposed development:

- blend in with its surroundings and/or be in keeping with the character of the area
- be designed to be compatible with the streetscape
- create an appearance of a single or grouped dwellings that are separated by gardens and ancillary structures
- provide a minimum of 12m between front facades within the development so that the layout does not create gun-barrel vistas.

We submit that piecemeal demolition of extant fabric that reflects the cultural and historic development pattern of the historic town is not in the public interest.



¹ Camden Council 2020 Local Priority 1 (p.38) <https://www.camden.nsw.gov.au/assets/Uploads/adopted-LSPS.pdf>

² Camden Council October 2021 <https://www.camden.nsw.gov.au/assets/Uploads/0-FINAL-LHS-Website-Version.PDF>

³ Camden DCP 4.6 <https://dcp.camden.nsw.gov.au/residential-dwelling-controls/multi-dwelling-housing/>

In this case two original dwellings and gardens, which are integral to the character of the area and streetscape, are to be lost and replaced with minimal gardens and vistas constrained by the dense layout required to accommodate ten dwellings.



We specifically note and question whether there is sufficient separation between the buildings and the acceptability of the gun-barrel vista created by the driveway.

The Statement of Environmental Effects (SEE, pp. 14-19) addresses all DCP 4.2 *General Residential Controls*, headings 1- 12.

We note the controls under DCP 4.2.11 Fencing, including a fence height maximum of 1.2m. A greater fence height and denser material configuration is required for privacy as POSs front a public road. We question compliance with DCP 4.2.11 and how a lower fence height can be considered, as suggested (SEE, p. 19), as a condition of consent when an overriding consideration is privacy of residents.

Some but not all DCP 4.6 *Multi Dwelling Housing* controls are subsequently addressed under headings 13- 17 (SEE, pp. 19-21).

In particular we question compliance with

Control 11: *Driveways, manoeuvring areas, parking areas and garages are to be located away from bedrooms.*

Control 13: *Internal driveways should avoid long gun barrel appearance. The alignment of driveways should:*

- a. be varied to avoid a straight gun barrel appearance, particularly when parking is at grade;*
- and*
- b. be flanked by landscaped verges to soften development on either side.*

We submit that the architectural plans and Transport and Parking Impact Assessment, including the swept paths analyses, clearly show bedrooms located close to vehicle activity and a gun barrel driveway with minimal softening of verges.

DCP 4.6 sets out minimum setbacks in *Figure 4-8: Multi Dwelling Housing Setbacks and PPOS:*



This DCP diagram also shows a layout that provides a greater degree of privacy and private garden amenity for future residents than this proposed development.

We consider that the setbacks are insufficient to retain amenity and privacy of adjoining properties, particularly 29A Murrandah Avenue and 18 Old Hume Highway as well as 40 Macquarie Avenue.

Currently 16 Old Hume Highway is at the rear of 29A Murrandah Ave and the proposed units 9 and 10 adjoin the rear of 29 A. DCP states that rear setback for upper floors is 6m but the architectural plans show a rear setback for the upper floor of only 4m at the boundary of 29A.

The privacy and amenity of 29A in particular is greatly compromised.

On examination of the architectural plans, we do not believe that setbacks are fully compliant with the DCP.

Units 1 to 6 have no driveway access door so that visitors or anyone not driving into the garage would need to exit via the pathway between Units 3 and 4 and find the front door from Old Hume Highway.

The plans show steeping pavers and no disabled parking for visitors. Even if a disabled person found parking there is no apparent or easy wheelchair access to the units.

We therefore question compliance with DCP 4.6 *Access and Entries*.

It is noted that the Waste Management Plan accompanying the DA is not detailed and does not specifically address *DCP 4.6 Waste Storage Areas and Collection* controls.

We question the waste management arrangements and whether they are to be compliant, particularly as this is to be a strata development with an owners' corporation requiring an ongoing waste management plan. We question the impact and desirability of potentially 30 bins lined up in this short section of Macquarie Avenue on collection day.

A number of very mature trees are to be removed. We consider that the garden areas are unnecessarily minimal to maximise the number of units which is not in keeping with the leafiness of the area, or the character of Camden.

The 20 trees of 75L size, as indicated in the landscape plan, do not effectively replace the loss. We submit that the streetscape and restoration of tree canopy requires the maximum size and number that can be accommodated on the site⁴.

According to the NatHERS Report accompanying the DA, the overall star rating of the development is 5.9 with no dwelling reaching the current benchmark⁵ of 7 which is the minimum requirement of the 2022 National Construction Code.⁶ This outcome for a new development is also socially and economically unacceptable especially in terms of carbon emissions and cost of living.

We question the entire design of this development if it does not meet minimum standards and is not predicated on sustainability.

⁴ Mature trees are readily available, for instance see <https://winterhill.com.au/tree-sizes/>

⁵ Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, Nationwide House Energy Rating System <https://www.nathers.gov.au/>

⁶ Australian Government https://www.nathers.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-09/22726_Nathers_Newsletter.pdf

Conclusion

Whilst an improvement on the first DA for the three lots referred to in the DA description, a closer examination of this DA indicates the number of dwellings on the development area (which excludes most of 40 Macquarie Avenue), has again been maximised at the expense of amenity and sustainability.

The site's R3 Residential Zone permits multi-dwelling housing. However, the site's context and contribution in terms of place-based character, desired future character of Camden and respecting our history are important considerations that are addressed in Council policy and reflect community expectations.

We understand that the planning controls pertaining to the zone are mandatory, but we are unconvinced that this DA is compliant with them.

The community trusts that the substance and spirit of all Council policies will be enforced.

The community looks to Council to ensure that its policies are upheld and to retain Camden's amenity and character that it so highly values. The community also expects that pressing environmental issues and standards will be adequately and proactively addressed. We do not believe that this DA does that.

We do not believe these matters have been fully and appropriately addressed in this DA and therefore that it should be refused.

Your sincerely,



Glenda Davis
President