

From: Nicola Lucas [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 13 September 2020 7:27:42 PM
To: Council's Email
Subject: FW: Archer-Bertram-Johnson-Albert St. Development.

ATTENTION : IAN ARNOTT

Dear Councillors

I am the owner of the property, originally named 'Carramar', formally 'Hythe' that became home to 'Bambini House', a well known and respected child care centre catering for families in the WCC area. Bambini House is located at 17 Johnson Street Chatswood. The property sits on the corner of Johnson and Bertram Streets Chatswood. I am writing to express my distress at the revamped Chatswood CBD Planning and Urban Design Strategy and its interface with the South Chatswood Heritage Conservation Area.

At your meeting on Monday 14 September, council officers will be putting the amended Strategy before you for approval. We, along with other residents of the conservation area and also more broadly, hundreds of members of the surrounding community, are immensely concerned that councillors do NOT understand the impact on the community, of the proposed Strategy.

The Strategy does not address the guiding principles of the Weir Phillips Study that was commissioned. Councillors should be careful to ensure they each understand these principles and how the proposed Strategy disregards them. There is insufficient knowledge for councillors to understand the shadowing and natural light reductions, for the surrounding community members. Additionally, and critically, the proposal significantly increases the height of buildings in a block that was earmarked as a transition zone to the conservation area. Great care must be taken by councillors in ensuring full knowledge of the implications of any decision.

As an Early Childhood centre that has provided world class education and care for hundreds of families in the community you are each elected to represent, we are shocked that such a proposal could be considered given the impact it will have on the privacy and natural light available to the children in our care. Bambini House remains a special place to the past, present and future children and families. The physical beauty of learning within the walls of a 114 year old building is in itself magical and unique and has benefitted community members for the past two decades.


We wrote to Council in April 2019 outlining the importance of this service and how it is embedded into the community represented by Willoughby Council. That correspondence is attached for your reference.

We are not against development of Chatswood. However, we fervently believe any development must respect the heritage of the area. The amendments to the Strategy demonstrate council is aware of the impacts. The recently proposed amendments however in no way address the issues. There must be a more gradual transition zone, and heights of proposed towers dramatically reduced and setbacks increased. Properly considered and specified landscaping must also be incorporated into the reductions. This proposal sees multiple towers of excessive height obliterating any semblance of a transition zone. The alternative is to relocate the proposed development to an area that does not destroy such significant heritage.

We implore councillors to consider a vast reduction in heights and to undertake a tour of the impacted areas then ensure you are properly equipped to deal with this proposed Strategy. We remain available to meet with councillors on site to discuss any aspect.

Kind Regards,

Nicola Lucas
 Approved Provider – Certified Supervisor

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Bambini House
17 Johnson Street, Chatswood
New South Wales, 2067

**RE: Draft Chatswood CBD Planning and Urban Design Strategy to 2036 and
and Draft Willoughby Housing Strategy to 2036**

As the owner of 17 Johnson Street Chatswood, that houses the Early Childhood Centre known as Bambini House, I am registering my strong objection to the above strategies and associated proposed rezoning and subsequent development plans that will have a materially detrimental impact on the local and surrounding area of Chatswood. Specifically I object to the proposed development of the block bordered by Bertram, Albert and Johnson Streets.

I purchased 17 Johnson Street Chatswood as a home for our family in 2001 and as I had an existing Early Childhood Centre 800 meters from the home for 0-3 year old's we soon discovered the home would be an ideal preschool for the continuity of care between the two centres so that families were not left looking for care after children reached the age of three. Families in this area have a significant desire for a centre to be in a HOME with natural light and garden. The centre that was approved by Council in 2005 caters for children between the ages of 2-5 years. During that approval process we were required to comply to strict criteria relating to the protection of the building's heritage within the conservation area. Items such as building material, colours, fences, internal and external plantings, garden equipment etc all had to be thoughtfully chosen to ensure the development was in keeping within these requirements. Not only has the business, building and curriculum supported the very requirements of council, it serves as a testament to the requirements Willoughby Council itself set.

It serves an important and crucial need for the community of Willoughby. The thousands of families, all community members who have moved through the centre, and many of whom remain members of the community – and elect your council members applaud what has been achieved by this property in the conservation area. They are appalled to hear of this proposal...and are shocked at the proposed development. Let me reiterate, these community members are shocked that council would consider such a grotesque plan impacting the buildings, people, and community members, including their own children and future children, to such a dramatic extent.

Bambini House is well regarded internationally and nationally as providing one of the most unique learning environments for the early years due to the home like environment that also attracts quality educators who chose to work in this unique environment. Bambini House is a home, a home that is steeped in history at 114 years old, with significant internal detail, natural light and an

abundance of charm and ambience. many of the families that use the service live in apartments and are extremely delighted that their children are educated and cared for in such a space, providing internal accommodation that pays respect to the past and indeed many valued aspects of the conservation area, whilst also providing an exterior that allows the children to have abundant access to natural sunlight – not available to these residents in their apartment towers. One of the strongest points of attraction for local families is the provision of a home in which the children spend up to 10 hours per day in. We believe this is critical in a child's formative years. Until now, Willoughby council has been supportive in ensuring their council supports the provision of this type of increasingly rare service to members of the community.

The home known as Carramar is Heritage Listed and a local National Trust item.

It sits on the corner of Bertram and Johnson Street with land size of approximately 950 square meters. Its garden is on the side of the home parallel to Bertram Street, facing the proposed development site. Carramar's sister home Victoria is a mirrored image home to Carramar and resides on the other side of the property. It too shares the same heritage significance as do a number of neighbouring homes surrounding us. The homes are tightly held and are owned by many long -standing residents who have committed to and supported the changes to Chatswood to in the Willoughby Conservation Area. Our property is Heritage Listed and is part of the Conservation Area.

It was only most recently that I have become aware through the East Chatswood Progress Association that Willoughby Council have plans to rezone the town houses directly across Bertram Street from Bambini House at 17 Johnson Street. If this area is rezoned and approved, it is apparent then there are currently plans for council to approve an enormous development, of some 29 stories high (with a proposed and favoured "Hard Edge" design), directly across the road from our property. To reiterate, this is a Council recognised Conservation Area and one in which there are numerous Heritage listed properties.

I am totally offended, shocked and disgusted with the treatment I and others have been afforded by the council with respect to this proposed plan.

I do not object to progress or development the council wishes to pursue in order to accommodate a growing population and in accordance with State government plans and requirements. What I do vehemently object to is an approach that takes no consideration of alternatives that may serve the needs

of all parties. There will be a number of suitable alternatives that council must consider. To date the response to any alternatives has been underwhelming.

Specifically, and not in order of severity, my objections to the council's considerations and proposals are:

- The Draft Chatswood CBD Planning and Urban Design Strategy to 2036 has already been adopted by Council in June 2017, yet there was no direct notification to community members within the Conservation area that bears most of the brunt of the proposed development. I was made aware of the proposal by my neighbour who also was not notified by council - we find it remarkable that none of the members of the surrounding homes, or the members of East Chatswood Progress Association were in fact notified by mail by the council during the period that council say notification was made in 2016/17. Without wishing to accuse council of purposefully ambushing residents who are known to be passionate about conservation, we find it highly coincidental not one was in receipt of notification by council. These residents are all well known to council and have in fact worked harmoniously and effectively with council in protecting heritage properties in the conservation area as well as ensuring amenity for the local community members is maintained. This is remarkable action (or lack thereof) by the council. Somewhere the process of notification has failed, whether intentionally or not. We intend pursuing a detailed investigation determining just how this could have occurred and exactly where in the process this failed.
- Immediately upon learning of the proposal, I sought a meeting with the Mayor. Present was Senior Town Planner Ian Arnott. Ian and the Mayor are most favourable for a 'hard edge' building, stating this has been adopted in other cities. With respect, we suggest Council undertake or commission reputable research of the success or otherwise of these precincts internationally. The Sydney references that Norma Shankei-Williams refers to in her recent correspondence with Steven Knox on 18 April 2019 are now old news and in fact have been the cause of a new DCP that now protects heritage! As for quoting Frankfurt as an example of a successful hard edge – this

city is well known for inappropriate planning and unsympathetic development. Perhaps references should be sought from architecturally well respected international cities like London, Paris or Rome. We would also be interested to hear where approvals have been granted directly across a street from a beautiful Early Childhood Centre where the children's garden will be exposed to hundreds of residents direct visual interaction with young children playing and shadowing that will leave them in darkness.

- Drop in "consultation" sessions have been held by the council in an effort to show that there has been consultation. I found these completely unsatisfactory. In fact the sessions appeared to be an opportunity for planners to tell interested parties what they are planning to do, rather than seek consultation or comment. The feedback from community residents has been poor. Rather than encouraging residents to speak up, people felt overpowered by planners and interested parties with vested interests. Overall there was a feeling that council had already sold out to developers and were simply going through the motions to show residents that they had been 'consulted'.

The sessions would have been well served in inviting alternative proposals

- There has been no consideration of the 'transition zone' required for the conservation area. Instead, council appear to be favouring the concept of a 'hard edge' where the height immediately rises to 29 stories, directly across the road from single storey dwellings, with vast shadowing across the Conservation Area for twelve months of the year. This is outrageous bordering on inhumane. In my case my beautiful early childhood centre that I have spent my entire work life creating and advocating for children in this type of setting will be DESTROYED on many levels if council approve of the hard edge building of 29 storeys in Bertram Street. Clearly such a dramatic height will leave my children playing in an unprotected garden with hundreds of eyes peering down on them leaving NO PRIVACY .. Children deserve and have RIGHTS TO BE PROTECTED. The council

MUST NOT ALLOW THIS RIGHT TO BE TAKEN AWAY. CHILDREN deserve and HAVE RIGHTS to play in a garden that they can see blue sky, to feel the sun, see the sun and enjoy the wonderful garden that they know to be magical at Bambini House. The impact is not limited to the outside garden - when inside, the main preschool room has sunshine & natural light streaming through the western windows and into the large play room inside - A RIGHT they deserve and not to be taken from this unique home for any reason, least the reason to have a disgusting tower of apartments causing darkness in winter, limiting natural light and taking away PRIVACY. How dare you even consider this.

There will be other alternatives that MUST be considered including locating these developments away from the Conservation Areas and Bambini House Early Childhood Centre

Given the now severe shortage in time for us to engage with council, we are currently obtaining expert heritage planning advice in respect of the impacts of the proposed zoning change without a buffer to our listed heritage item and the conservation area. We are also seeking legal advice as to the most robust path available to us to ensure our rights are protected. Given the foregoing we respectfully suggest a material extension in the period of time to lodge any further submission pending that advice. We would appreciate your urgent response on this.

Yours Sincerely,

Nicola and Geoff Lucas
17 Johnson Street
Chatswood 2067
NSW

Email : 