

15 June 2023

The Hon. Rose Jackson, MLC  
Minister for Housing  
52 Martin Place  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Email: [office@jackson.minister.nsw.gov.au](mailto:office@jackson.minister.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Minister

Re: D/2023/21, 82 Wentworth Park Road GLEBE NSW 2037

Cc: Ms Kobi Shetty MP Member for Balmain,  
[Kobi.Shetty@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Kobi.Shetty@parliament.nsw.gov.au)

Councillor, Sylvie Ellesmore, Deputy Lord Mayor, City of Sydney  
[SEllsmore@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au](mailto:SEllsmore@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au)

On 24 January last, the previous State government lodged a development application to demolish the existing public housing complex at 82 Wentworth Park Road and replace it with a new building. The exhibition period for the application closed on 12 March 2023 just 13 days before the State election.

The current building has a mixture of one-bedroom flats and three-bedroom terraces comprising a total of 27 bedrooms. It was built in 1984 and was designed to be sympathetic to the Lyndhurst Heritage Conservation Area in which it is located. The Land and Housing Corporation have stated the building is *at the end of its useful life*. John Gregory, the architect who designed it, has advised *it is a robust building of double brick construction which could, like its neighbours, last 140 years*.

The development application proposes the complete demolition of the existing building and the construction of a new one which will provide an additional 26 bedrooms (making a total of 53 bedrooms) at a cost of \$21,723,996.

The Society has obtained a scheme from Hector Abrahams Architects. Hector has had a distinguished career as a conservation and design architect working with buildings, places and cultural landscapes in Australia and overseas. His, and Brianna Jessup's, design clearly demonstrates that better and more cost-effective results can be achieved by refurbishing the existing building and providing additional density.

It is an indicative scheme, designed to show it is viable to increase high quality, accessible public housing on the site, in a way which complements the existing buildings and allows public housing tenants to remain in their homes during construction. The Glebe Society would also be supportive of other models which increase public housing on the site in a similar, complementary way.

The scheme involves refurbishing the existing 12 one bed room apartments and 5 three-bedroom terraces and adding an additional 16 new one-bedroom flats.

The new flats are to be built against the existing stone wall to the rear of the site and will have entrances at both, the lower, Wentworth Park Rd and, the upper, Bellevue Street, levels. The new

building will have heights up to four storeys but because of the topography will be designed to present on Bellevue Avenue as one or two storey terrace style houses which will complement the existing heritage streetscape. There will be a large central garden and other common areas as well as an access lift.

A total of 43 bedrooms will be provided at far less cost than the \$21,723,996 for the current development application. We believe the savings will be more than sufficient to fund an additional 10 bedrooms of public housing, thereby providing the 53 bedrooms, and more, than the current scheme.

Our proposal has many benefits including:

- I. That it is more cost effective and enables more people to be housed
- II. That it can be staged so it does not involve the removal of public housing tenants
- III. That, at a time when there is a desperate shortage of public housing, it does not remove 27 bedrooms from the supply for a scheme which will take years to implement. This is an inherent flaw in the total demolition approach of the current development application
- IV. That it reduces green house emissions by conserving embodied energy not wasting it through demolition
- V. That it respects the historic context – the Lyndhurst Heritage Conservation Area

The proposal has been sent as a separate document (re: Attachment A, 82 Wentworth Park Road Design Report).

We are confident that the scheme **demonstrates that there are options that would be** significantly cheaper than the current development application thereby providing the NSW Government with significant savings (estimated to be in the order of \$10 million or more) which could fund more housing than the current scheme for the same cost. We are in the process of obtaining detailed costings and will advise you of these as soon as possible.

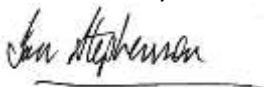
Hector Abrahams Architects would also be happy to provide you with further information about the scheme. They can be contacted by your office on 9299 7959 or email [bjessup@haarchitects.com.au](mailto:bjessup@haarchitects.com.au)

Minister, given that the Abraham's scheme offers a more rational approach to renewing and extending public housing in a heritage conservation area, and that we are in the process of obtaining detailed costings, **we request, as a matter of urgency, that you advise the Council of Sydney that you wish them to defer consideration of the current development application for 82 Wentworth Park Road, Glebe (D/2023/21).**

We see this as an opportunity for the new government to show it is using its initiative and intellect to provide the best possible approaches to increasing the supply of public housing, including cost effective use of money, respecting tenants and the community, urban character as well as reducing greenhouse emissions by refurbishing and extending rather than demolishing.

We would like to meet with you as soon as possible to discuss this matter and invite you and your office to contact us at any time.

Yours sincerely



Ian Stephenson  
President  
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