

Resolution of Council

11 December 2023

Item 12.4

Supporting the Community Vision for Public Housing at 82 Wentworth Park Road, Glebe

The original motion was moved by Councillor Ellsmore, seconded by Councillor Scott.

It is resolved that:

(A) Council note:

- (i) 82 Wentworth Park Road is a small public housing complex in Glebe;
- (ii) the NSW Government (through the Land and Housing Corporation) is proposing to knock down and rebuild the public housing, and has lodged a development application (DA) with the City of Sydney (D/2023/21);
- (iii) the DA proposes to replace the existing 17 public housing terraces and apartments, which are one and three bedrooms (27 bedrooms in total), with studio, one and two bedroom apartments (53 bedrooms in 43 apartments in total). The proposed new development would be similar in height to the existing buildings, but would change the housing mix to studios, one bedroom and two bedroom only, increase accessibility, and replace the private open spaces with two communal open spaces;
- (iv) the application was assessed by City staff and is recommended for approval subject to conditions. As a result of public interest in the DA, including a large number of submissions opposing the redevelopment, the DA will be decided by the Local Planning Panel at its meeting of 13 December 2023; and
- (v) now that the Council is not the consent authority in relation to the application, it is possible for the Council as an elected body to form a position in relation to a development application, and to make a submission to the Local Planning Panel;

(B) Council further note:

- (i) 82 Wentworth Park Road was, until recently, home to a diversity of public housing tenants including families, older people, Aboriginal people and people with a disability;
- (ii) the site is now nearly empty, as tenants have been progressively evicted and relocated. Some tenants had lived at 82 Wentworth Park Rd for more than 20 years. Directly opposite 82 Wentworth Park Rd is a community of rough sleepers, sleeping in Wentworth Park;
- (iii) 82 Wentworth Park Road was built in the 1980s by the former NSW Housing Commission and designed by the head of the Inner City Project Team John Gregory. This NSW Government team was responsible for the refurbishment, restoration and infill of a large number of properties in the 'Glebe Estate';
- (iv) the community, with the support of Glebe Society and Hands Off Glebe, have developed an alternative community vision for the site, which has been presented to the NSW Minister for Housing and the Land and Housing Corporation;
- (v) the alternative vision involves renovating and infilling the site to increase accessibility, while avoiding demolition of the existing brick buildings which are in good condition, and minimising the period the site would be vacant and untenanted;
- (vi) the alternative design:
 - (a) has been developed by architect Hector Abrahams, and includes input from other senior architects;
 - (b) includes equitable access for both the existing and proposed new (in-fill) building;
 - (c) would provide greater housing diversity, noting that the wait list for three or more bedroom housing in the area is more than 10 years; and
 - (d) would retain much of the private green space and verandas, and some of the shared open space, noting that these spaces are included in the design of much Glebe public housing from the period, because they are attractive, deliver good residential amenity and encourage connection between neighbours;
- (vii) the current DA is estimated to cost over \$21 million to deliver 43 studio, one-bedroom and two-bedroom apartments. The community's alternative vision has been costed at \$14 million to deliver 34 apartments with 52 bedrooms; and
- (viii) a renovation approach would also have a much smaller environmental impact than a knock down and rebuild approach;

(C) Council note and commend the community's alternative vision for the renovation of 82 Wentworth Park Road, Glebe; and

- (D) the Lord Mayor be requested to write to the NSW Minister for Housing requesting they consider upgrading and refurbishing buildings over demolition in all future Land and Housing Corporation redevelopments, including at 82 Wentworth Park Road Glebe, as proposed in the community's alternative vision for the site.

The motion, as varied by consent, was carried unanimously.

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