

## Item 12.4

### Notices of Motion

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

By Councillor Ellsmore

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 Abraham, 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 \$22 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:
- (i) note and commend the community's alternative vision for the renovation of 82 Wentworth Park Road, Glebe;
  - (ii) oppose demolition of 82 Wentworth Park Road, Glebe and advocate for alternatives which would prioritise renovation of public housing on the site; and
  - (iii) agree to make representations to the NSW Government and the Local Planning Panel outlining its position;
- (D) Council provide a copy of this Notice of Motion as a submission to the Local Planning Panel regarding D/2023/21 which outlines Council's position and request that the Local Planning Panel consider the following matters:
- (i) that there is a high level of demand for public housing in the inner-city – and in Glebe in particular, which has a large Aboriginal population – for families and people who require carers (i.e. that is, for public housing with two or more bedrooms), and that this housing type is proposed to be removed in the new development;

- (ii) that the City's preference is for renovation and refurbishment to be considered on this site, as a better approach to create more public housing and reduce the public housing waiting list while reducing costs and the construction timeline;
  - (iii) that a knock down, rebuild approach would not be consistent with the City's sustainability and net zero aims;
  - (iv) that the building is part of the Lyndhurst heritage conservation area, is a good representation of public housing built in Glebe from the period, is highly intact and in good condition, and requiring only modest repairs and maintenance;
  - (v) that there is strong community opposition to the project, with a petition attracting 1,722 signatures, and 400 community members signing letters opposing the redevelopment; and
  - (vi) that the project is not in the public interest; and
- (F) 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.

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