

Artarmon Progress Association
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26 August 2024

TOD submission

CC Health Minister, Premier, Planning Minister, Education Minister. Roads Minister

PROPOSED HERBERT STREET PRECINCT DEVELOPMENT “LOT 4B”

The Artarmon Progress Association strongly objects to the revised plans for the Royal North Shore Hospital site and is concerned about the impact on the immediate and broader community, the lack of supporting infrastructure such as schools, open space, roads, future health requirements and missing input from Traditional Owners.

Heritage issues and consultation with Native Title holders

We note that the Weir Phillips Heritage report (dated September 2018) pays scant regard to heritage issues for Lot 4B on Herbert Street. The report states that “A detailed history of the site and a full assessment of significance to NSW Heritage Division standards was not undertaken.” This is disappointing, especially for an area of such historic significance.

In this regard we note the following:

Native Title.

There is no mention of the existence or otherwise of a Native Title claim over the lot in question. It is well beyond the capacity of the APA to make judgements about such important issues as Native Title and dealings with Traditional Owners. However, our searches suggest that Lot 4B might be subject to a Native Title Determination (see plan in Appendix 1). If this is the case, have the Traditional Owners been consulted about this proposal? If so, what is their view about the proposed development.

We note that the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land, the Cammeraygal People of the Guringai language group, and that it pays respect to all Elders past, present, and emerging. We at the APA would like to see evidence that the Department has demonstrated genuine engagement and consultation in appropriate discussions with the Traditional Owners.

Heritage issues. Our searches have suggested that Lot 4B is the last remaining section of a historic recreational reserve which extended along the ridgeline upon which the Royal North Shore Hospital is built. As shown in Appendix 2, this reserve is referenced in 19th century maps of the St Leonards area. Inspection of the site and environs reveals that Lot 4B is the only remaining remnant of that reserve. Furthermore, it contains a segment of the creek system (SE corner), which now drains under Herbert Street. It is a unique area, and it is hoped that the watercourse can be protected from future re-development.

Disappointingly, the historical significance is not referred to in the 2018 Heritage report. The APA requests that a more detailed study is undertaken on this heritage site.

Overdevelopment of the Herbert Street Precinct will have a negative impact on infrastructure and the community

The latest Herbert Street Precinct proposal includes a 62-storey tower incorporating commercial and residential units near the junction of the Pacific Highway and Herbert Street. However, the land is zoned for hospital use. There has been no consultation with the community about future uses of this land.

At its proposed height, this building would be the tallest on the North Shore, and would dwarf the surrounding high rise, with consequent shade impacts. We believe that at this height it would rival the tallest in Sydney when measured above sea level. This is not within the design parameters to which the APA believes the local community is aspiring.

In addition, it may have a significant impact of the flight path of helicopters delivering emergency patients to the hospital. Royal North Shore Hospital is a major referral hospital for the whole of NSW. Changing flight paths could have a significant noise impact on existing residents in the area.

The proposed development will also exacerbate existing traffic congestion on Herbert Street and create a bottleneck along Pacific Highway from residents' entry/exit to the tower, commuter drop-off/pick-up, and shoppers and delivery vehicles accessing retail outlets.

With a population now over 5,500 people within a very small urban footprint, St Leonards is a vibrant hub that currently accommodates well over 100 houses and over 2000 units. The current proposal for over 3,000 additional dwellings on and around the Pacific Highway in this area, in our view, will result in an unacceptable increase in the population density of the area without the necessary infrastructure to support the increase

Adequate setback area between the proposed development and Reserve Road is necessary

Willoughby City Council's Development Control Plan requires a minimum 12-metre building setback to Herbert Street for any redevelopment. Maintaining a 12-metre setback is important to provide a satisfactory building transition and an inviting boulevard environment that accommodates deep soil planting of street trees with a shade canopy. Ongoing climate change will cause significant increases in urban heat so the loss of the setback and lack of tree canopy will result in higher temperatures in the area and greater demand for energy.

The Royal North Shore Hospital campus must be reserved for clinical and medical facilities

As discussed in our 2020 submission, the APA supports the Royal North Shore Hospital Master Plan developed in line with the 2012 Clinical Services Plan. The 2012 Master Plan focuses on ensuring the hospital provides world-class health and research facilities that respond to the community's future needs. Importantly, the 2012 Master Plan was endorsed by clinical and community representatives as well as the Northern Sydney Local Health District Board. The Ministry of Health building (built on Lot 4A), together with the Herbert Street Precinct, removes more than 22 percent of campus land proposed for much-needed ambulatory care and clinical support services. This land is the closest to public transport, which makes it the most accessible, level land for patients and outpatients and those with mobility issues. With a growing community and ageing population, we believe the NSW Government should be expanding clinical and medical facilities, not reducing them.

We at the APA are in accord with the vision expressed by your Department:

"Sitting at the heart of the Eastern Economic Corridor; connectivity, innovation and a commitment to great design will see the St Leonards and Crows Nest area transform as a jobs powerhouse. Mixing commercial and residential, the centre will offer workers, residents, students and visitors a variety of

homes, jobs and activities with increased accessibility with a new world class metro service.” (St Leonards Crows Nest 2036 Plan)

However, we see shortcomings in the proposal for the Herbert Street Precinct.

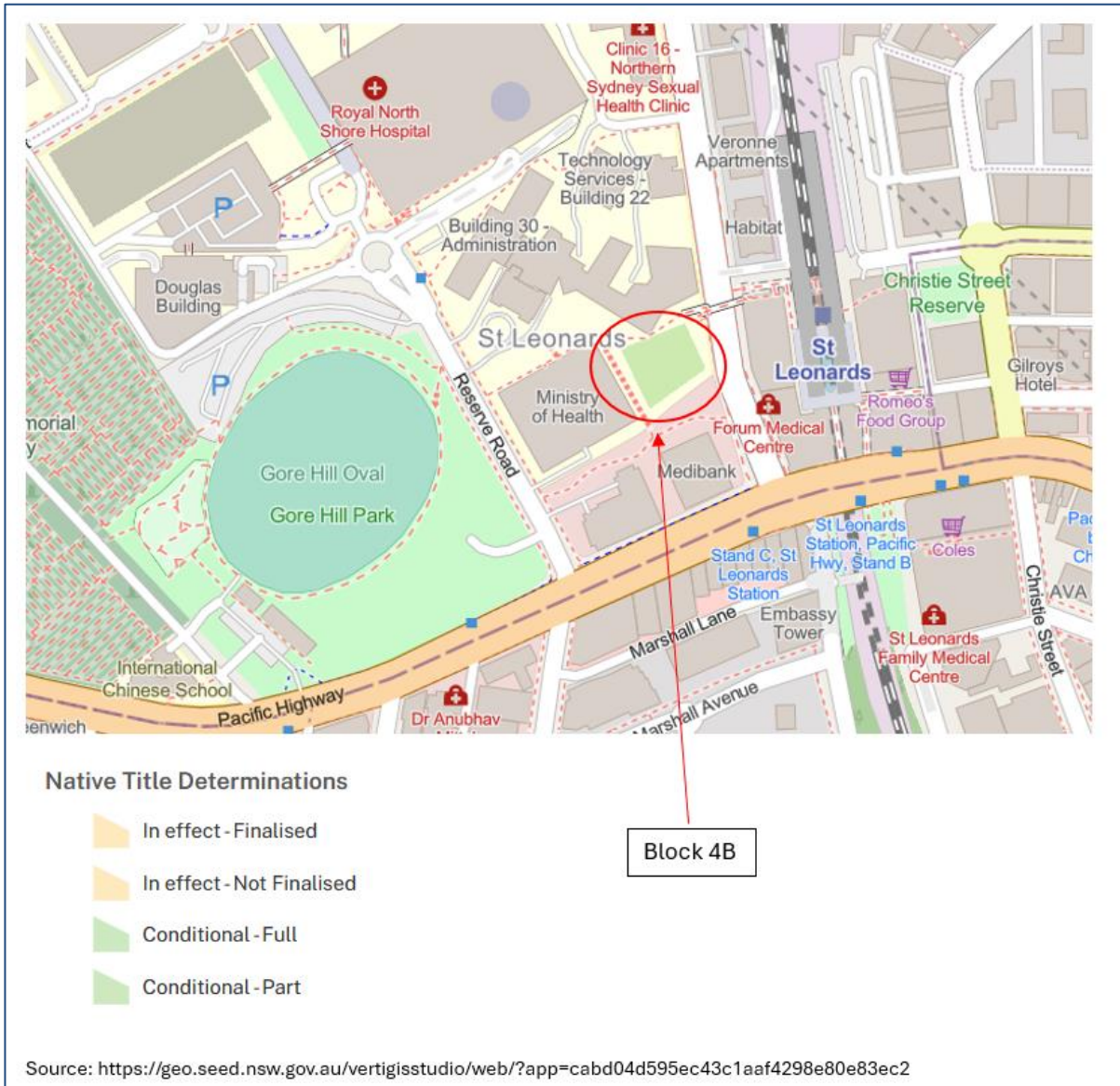
- We see no evidence that Traditional Owners have been consulted about this development.
- The proposal does not appear to be in the best interests of the Royal North Shore Hospital and its ability to deal with a rapidly expanding local community.
- Investment in public green space is inadequate and ignores the important heritage value of the site.
- Road congestion will surge and have significant negative impacts on the community’s quality of life and productivity.
- The inclusion of a 62-storey commercial/residential block will generate unacceptable population density growth for the immediate Herbert Street area without supporting physical and social infrastructure
- A 62-storey tower could not possibly be in keeping with sensible urban design for the Lower North Shore of Sydney.
- There has been no consultation with the community about changes to the hospital precinct (noting that already Royal North Shore Hospital is barely meeting its clinical delivery standards, beds are in short supply and ramping is not unusual). Removing land designated for hospital use creates future long-term problems.

The APA requests that the NSW Government reconsiders the proposal for the Herbert Street Precinct. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any queries regarding our submission

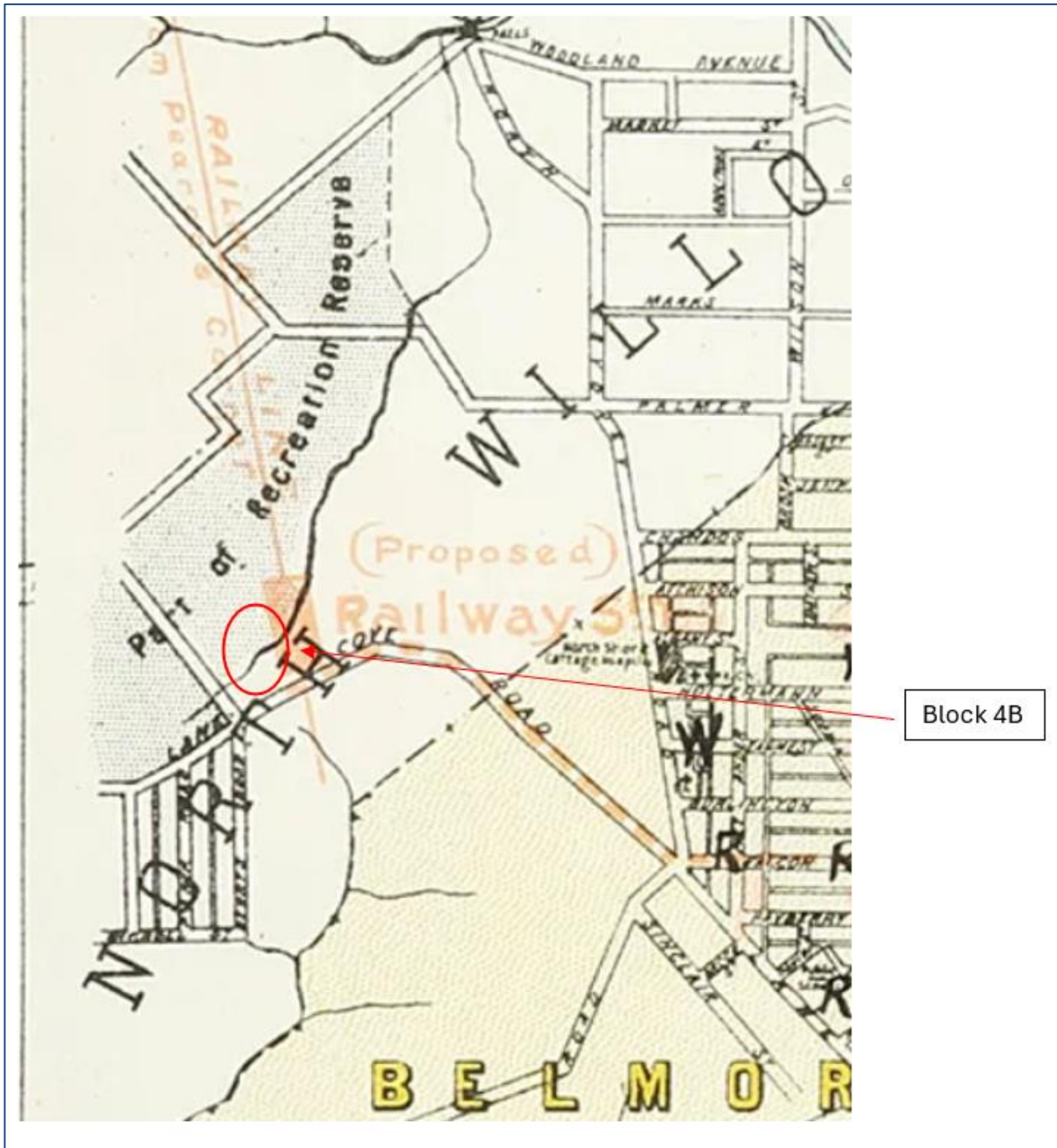
Yours faithfully,
Glenda Hewitt
President
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The Artarmon Progress Association, Inc. (APA) was founded in 1906 as a not-for-profit group and our objectives are to promote the welfare, physical and intellectual advancement of the suburb of Artarmon and the City of Willoughby, to protect the interests of the residents, and to encourage a keener spirit of citizenship and mutual help amongst residents. Our newsletter, the Artarmon Gazette, is distributed quarterly to over 5,000 homes and businesses in Artarmon. We regularly communicate with residents and act as a conduit between local residents and elected representatives on matters concerning our local community.

Appendix 1. Native Title Determinations



Appendix 2. Historic Recreation Reserve



Source: Higinbotham and Robinson's Atlas 1887