



**PRESERVING OUR HERITAGE**  
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NSW Planning Department

Via <https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/ppr/under-exhibition/gladesville-masterplan>

Dear Planning Department Staff

**Re: Submission regarding Gladesville Masterplan PP-2025-859**

The Hunters Hill Trust strongly objects to the Planning Proposal

The Trust is extremely disappointed that what is now being put forward is effectively a Site Specific Planning Proposal totally at odds with the aspirations of the original Gladesville Masterplan for the town centre from Pittwater Road to Junction Street.

Over the last 13 years, the Trust and individual residents have spent countless hours reviewing and commenting on each iteration of the proposals to revitalise the area around Gladesville Shopping Village, providing feedback on complicated documents produced by highly paid consultants who have argued for successively larger and more inappropriate schemes. These schemes have not addressed the well documented problems with the Gladesville Shopping Centre site and have created many unacceptable issues for the local community.

Instead of the holistic Masterplan approach, the 'sterilisation' impact of a Site Specific Plan excludes properties particularly along Victoria Road and will likely result in piecemeal development lacking a cohesive approach through fragmented and disparate objectives of property owners and businesses. Gladesville town centre has already seen the withdrawal of banks, commercial premises and other services and could now have three retail precincts dotted along Victoria Road with no single major shopping centre to anchor and attract customers. It needs a much stronger approach to master planning than the current narrowly focused proposal.

Additionally, well over \$1 million dollars has been billed to ratepayers for the Gladesville Masterplan designed to renew the entire site including the Victoria Road frontage from Pittwater Road to Junction Street, only for it now to be severely compromised to allow this much smaller Proposal.

**Specific Objections and Feedback:**

**1. Adverse Impacts of Building Heights**

The current Planning Proposal was sent to the Department of Housing, Infrastructure and Environment for a Gateway determination because the scale of development proposed is not allowed under the floor space ratio and building height provisions of the *Hunters Hill Local Environmental Plan 2012* (LEP). If these are increased, it will set a dangerous precedent for the whole LGA.

Community consultation in 2021 identified a preference for a maximum building height of 15 storeys and an open area of about 4300 square metres, Council resolved unanimously that **"lower height options be investigated"** and that it would **"continue to consult and involve the community in the development of the Masterplan"**. This has not happened and over four years have now passed without any further consultation.

Height - There will be multiple adverse impacts resulting from the height of the proposed 2 x 19 storey towers in terms of liveability, privacy and visual impact. These towers will overlook and overshadow existing and future homes in streets well away from the centre and will impact on the availability of sunlight for residents and school children alike – especially to the east in the afternoon which was not adequately modelled, and winter mornings at Gladesville Public School. The two Tower Blocks at 70m tall are *more than double* the existing developments in the vicinity. While the proposed towers are set back, there will be immense visual impact for residents at all points of the compass. The development will likely be visible from Top Ryde.

Further Impacts - If the Planning Proposal is approved and the developer decides to include the bonuses available for the inclusion of affordable housing, the project could result in buildings up to 91 metres tall and assumptions in the Planning Proposal about shadowing of surrounding areas, parking requirements and the impact on transport and traffic will be vastly underestimated and not valid.

Lack of accurate visuals - No attempt has been made to include accurate visuals in the Planning Proposal for the proposed two Towers. An artist impression shows only the ground and lower levels of shops and cafes. This lack of information only increases the scepticism in the community that height issues are being minimised.

The validity of the current economic analysis - The calculations appear to be based on out-of-date sales of units in less affluent areas. Current economic circumstances, the volatile Sydney housing market and changing construction costs likely mean these assessments are out of date. The conclusion that lower tower heights will not produce the number of units to make the development "economically viable" is likely contestable.

Housing Targets - We question why Council is far exceeding their LGA housing target of 400 additional units in one site. We understand that Council already has around 60 approvals towards this target and will be developing new Masterplans that will include residential developments at other sites within Hunters Hill and Boronia Park Town Centres, making the need for the overdevelopment of this one site in Gladesville hard to justify.

Victoria Road street frontage from Pittwater Road to Junction Street - the Trust supports the recommendations made by dfp Planning Consultants in their Statement of Heritage Impact, that building heights along the Victoria Road frontage must be limited to a maximum of 9 metres for a setback of at least 5 metres, in order to remove *'the remaining threat of diminishing the predominant 2-storey plus high parapet building typology and the loss of the contributory buildings altogether.'* These reduced building heights should be implemented by their inclusion in the LEP Maps, to strengthen their enforceability.

## **2. Adverse Impacts on Traffic**

Transport for NSW was critical of Council's lack of accurate statistics of existing and expected increases in traffic and car trips needed in order for them to make their assessments, and SIDRA modelling to assess the traffic impact on the surrounding road network. This did not happen as requested prior to the public exhibition and the community is yet to find out how these issues will be handled and what measures will be put in place to ensure traffic congestion is adequately addressed.

The increase in traffic is of major concern to residents, as Victoria Road is already congested in peak hours. Additional traffic generated by an extra 1000+ residents, with the corresponding car trips at peak hours, will make congestion a major issue particularly the left turn from Cowell Street into Victoria Road.

The cumulative impact of already built and planned developments further northwest along Victoria Road eg at the Woolworth's and the Primrose Timberyard sites, will further increase road usage and traffic jams at many points between Ryde and the city.

## **3. Adverse Impacts on Parking**

Transport for NSW has expressed their concern that Council has not provided the detailed assessments they require in order to assess the impact of the development. This includes evidence to justify the proposed reduction in parking supply and how commercial parking will remain adequate to meet increased demand.

Existing inadequate parking spaces is already experienced in local streets, the community is yet to be advised how Council intends to solve the future problems of increased need for public parking.

Shopping Centre Parking - Assumptions that visitors will partly have their parking needs met through excess spaces in the shopping centre need to be justified.

Allocations for car parking spaces - the developer cannot automatically assume that residents will rely on public transport as this is already overcrowded at peak times.

## **4. Adverse Impacts on Public Transport**

There has been no adequate examination of the existing pressure on public transport along Victoria Road. Local residents already experience full buses passing them by. Transport for NSW has stated that there are "*potential long-term upgrades to Victoria Road. However these investigations remain at an early stage and no defined options are available currently*". The proposed development will have more than 1000 new residents with a possible large contingent of commuters. How will the problems of already overcrowded buses be managed, particularly in light of the cumulative effect of other developments all along Victoria Road?

Transport for NSW requirement is that a "*Green Travel Plan must be prepared in relation to any development proposal that will increase transport demand to identify how residents, workers and visitors (as applicable) will make their transport decisions*". This must be done prior to the approval of this Proposal to assure the community that this problem will not be shelved for a future date. The absence of adequate provision of public transport could lead to a major loss of amenity and liveability for current and future residents.

## **5. Adverse Impacts on Public Open Space**

It is unacceptable that there is potential for the developer, who has already reduced the open space area from 4300sqm to 3400sqm, to further reduce open space to 1800sqm. The community needs to be assured that this will not happen. In addition:

Sunlight - Some of the planned open spaces will be sunless for much of the day due to the proposed towers and unlikely to be inviting to the public.

Delivery Trucks - There will be multiple delivery trucks accessing the 'open' space in the mornings and the connecting small local streets are likely to be difficult to navigate for trucks and pedestrians alike.

Artist Impression - The current artist's impressions of the open space cannot be relied upon and the community are well aware that reality may be quite different. This area must be properly represented and agreed as accurate prior to the development.

Rights of public space - The Trust is dismayed to see the 'public open space' is now being termed 'publicly accessible open space' that would '*remain in private ownership, but be made available and unrestricted to the public*' is in question. The community needs assurance that the long term future of public open space is secure.

## **6. Adverse Impacts on Water & Sewage Infrastructure**

There will be increased pressure on existing infrastructure and we understand that Council is awaiting comments from Sydney Water regarding their capacity to provide water and sewage to the Gladesville site. Residents have already experienced burst pipes and are concerned as to how the ageing infrastructure will cope with the influx of new housing.

Multiple developments are already built or under construction along the major route of Victoria Road up to Ryde, what guarantees are there that the infrastructure will be upgraded to cope, particularly when there have been multiple major water pipe bursts in Sydney within the last few years, some recently affecting more than 250,000 residents including those in Hunters Hill, Gladesville, Woolwich and Huntleys Point.

## **7. Adverse Impacts on Heritage**

The Masterplan study area contains five heritage items, and part of the site is within '*Hunters Hill Conservation Area No.3 Gladesville Village*,' as listed under the LEP. The heritage item at 10 Cowell Street is within the Planning Proposal site. Council deleted the house's local heritage listing in 2012 and it was sold (without public tender) to the former owner/developer of the Gladesville Shopping Village to allow redevelopment of the site. There was a glimmer of light after the previous Gateway process which imposed the following condition, reported on the Trust's website on 22 December 2017:

### **“10 Cowell Street relocation**

A condition of Gateway was that Council identify sites for the relocation of the cottage prior to exhibition of the planning proposal. To satisfy this condition the council report included three potential sites for consideration:

- Heydon Park, Rocher Ave (Council owned) for a Dwelling House
- Valentia St Reserve, near the ferry wharf (Council owned) for a Café/Restaurant
- Gladesville Reserve, near Huntleys Point Wharf (Crown Land) for a Café/Restaurant.

Council also said they would welcome other suggestions for a new location for the cottage.”

As the Trust commented at the time, Council offering up public parkland to the developer as possible sites for relocation of the building, massively compounded the original error in selling off its own heritage. The relocation needless to say was not an option and the cottage is now to be demolished. The suggested “interpretation” of this heritage item at another site is woefully inadequate and a poor substitute.

## **Conclusion**

As Hunters Hill Council is the smallest LGA in NSW and many residents use surrounding localities for shopping, services and entertainment, the community expects Council to collaborate with Ryde Council on issues arising from the proposed new developments along Victoria Road, such as traffic impacts on residents and the deficiencies of public transport, for the benefit of the community at large and long term cohesive planning.

Council has promoted itself as being in a powerful position to be able to set the agenda for this development and be an active player in developing design solutions to benefit the wider community. Instead of this, it is enabling developer returns to trump community expectations with resultant impacts on the liveability and amenity for residents and detrimental effects on the character of the surrounding area

Thank you for your consideration of our submission.