

5 May 2011

Epping Civic Trust  
PO Box 271  
Epping NSW 2121

**RE: Development 176-178 Ray Road Epping DA 359/2011**

Dear Graham,

As a resident of Epping and an active member of my community, I write to you seeking ECT support for a proposed SEPP Affordable Rental Housing development planned for 176-178 Ray Road.

I represent a large number of residents who are opposed to this development for many reasons that we intend to make you aware of later in this document. However the purpose of this letter is to bring our concerns of this development to the attention of your organisation and ask for your support to write to any key State Ministers amplifying our concerns.

The current status of the development is that it is currently pending approval within Hornsby Shire Council, objections shall close on the 25<sup>th</sup> of May.

I am not an expert in this field, I have simply researched and have tried to understand what a SEPP Affordable Rental Development actually is and how it may impact on me and my neighbours existing amenities.

We understand that Hornsby Council and in fact all Councils within NSW have a duty to provide a diversity of housing stock within their boundaries, including SEPP Affordable Rental Housing and are being pressured from the State Government to ensure these developments are approved. We notice that Cr Nick Berman has recently written to the NSW Planning Minister as a "Matter of Urgency" to address the SEPP & Urban Development demand, stating that there is an enormous backlash by the Shire residents and Council seeks support from Planning NSW to establish infrastructure prior to approving these developments.

Please understand, we are not against any development at 176-178 Ray Road and do not intend to stand in the way of change or progress but the said development is simply too large for the area and does not match the current streetscape or character of the area.

The current SEPP guidelines (Seniors Living Guidelines & Affordable Rental Housing SEPP Review) state that these developments should have:

- *An appreciation of neighbourhood character and good site analysis are key factors to producing quality developments under this Guideline. New development should contribute to the overall character of the area. New developments that increase residential densities need not be out of character with their context.*
- *Infill affordable rental housing developments must comply with minimum development standards for density and scale, site area, landscaped area, parking and deep soil zones. Projects must also have regard to urban design guidelines. The assessment and determination of infill proposals must also take into account relevant provisions of local environmental plans and other environmental planning instruments that apply to the site, in addition to relevant council development control plans.*
- *The proportion of the site given to landscaped area and deep soil should be increased in less urban areas, on large lots, and in areas already characterised by a high proportion of open space and planting.*

Key considerations:

*a) Maintain existing patterns and character of gardens and trees: (i) retain trees and planting on the street and in front setbacks to minimise the impact of new development on the street-scape (ii) retain trees and planting at the rear of the lot to minimise the impact of new development on neighbours and maintain the pattern of mid block deep soil planting (iii) retain large or otherwise significant trees on other parts of the site through sensitive site planning (iv) where it is not possible or desirable to*

*retain existing trees, replace with new mature or semi-mature trees.*

*b) Improve amenity by increasing the proportion of the site that is landscaped area by: (i) increasing the width of landscaped areas between driveways and boundary fences, and between driveways and new dwellings (ii) providing pedestrian paths (iii) reducing the width of driveways (iv) providing additional private open space above the minimum requirements (v) providing communal open space (vi) increasing front, rear and/or rear setbacks (vii) providing small landscaped areas between garages, entries, pedestrian paths, driveways, etc.*

*○ c) Provide deep soil zones for absorption of run-off and to sustain vegetation, including large trees: (I) it is preferable that as least 15% of the site area is provided as a single area at the rear of the site, where there is the opportunity to provide a mid-block corridor of trees within a neighbourhood (ii) where the pattern of neighbourhood development has deep soil planting at the front of the site, it may be desirable to replicate this pattern.*

It is of our opinion that the development does not adhere to the above guidelines and a number of our objections are based upon the above excerpts. The following are a number of key objections that we the residents are concerned about, these include in summary:

1. Privacy issues
2. Solar access to adjacent properties
3. Increase of noise from one family to ten families
4. Over capitalisation of the site - The setbacks are much less than the local planning laws allow, as is floor plan ratio of 0.75:1 where Council would normally only approve a floor plan ratio of 0.40:1.
5. A complete 'eyesore' against the current street-scape – Although similar multi dwelling developments have been constructed on Ray Road, albeit on the opposite side of the road, these developments blend in and match the existing street-scape. As an example, the Defence Housing development at number 209-213 Ray Road blends in perfectly with the street-scape. A two storey development running nearly the whole width of the site, parallel to duplicated dwellings behind them, not to mention that the front dwellings have their rear gardens facing Ray Road and the whole development resembles stacked shipping containers, is simply out of character with the existing street-scape.
6. Does not blend in with the current character of the area – The development is inconsistent with the low density residential character of the area, provides inadequate parking and shall impact on traffic. The current driveway is 'U' shaped and has two entries/exits, the new proposal sees the driveway reduced to only one for entry and exit (on the climb of a hill) for an estimated fifteen to twenty vehicles.
7. Expected to severely compromise the existing residents amenities by way of traffic, privacy, solar access, noise pollution and density.
8. Increase of traffic flow on an already choked section of Ray Road
9. Increase on street parking
10. Increased waste bins collection space upon Ray Road
11. There are a number of beautiful established and healthy trees on this property some dating back to the 1930 & 1940's. A total of thirty three (33) trees stand upon this property, these trees attract many beautiful native birdlife, we often see Kookaburras, Rosellas, Lorikeets and in the evening owls. The report compiled by Earthscape Horticultural Services nominates seven (7) trees that have a high retention value. Of these seven trees nominated the development only leaves two (2) standing. There are a total of ten (10) trees that have a retention value of moderate, of these trees only four (4) shall remain standing. The remaining trees are deemed either low or very low in retention value. It is expected that the bird life will diminish after the construction.
12. Open space for children within the development has not been considered. The nearest open space (Public Park) is some distance away.

Allowing a Developer to submit plans that over-ride many of the key Council planning restrictions under which residents bought and maintain their properties cannot be morally justified, given that many residents themselves have young families with large mortgages and are battling to build a better life for themselves.

I myself moved into this beautiful leafy suburb seven years ago, I chose Epping as I could just afford to buy here; the density of the housing was normal three/four bedroom houses on blocks that weren't too close

to each other, the area was quiet, the birdlife beautiful and the local amenities; traffic and schools matched with the quality of life I was accustomed to and what I wanted my children to experience growing up.

By allowing these high density developments to be built in areas such as residential areas of Epping or other similar suburbs seriously makes the future of Sydney housing bland and will eventually make this suburb no different to any other suburb in the Sydney region.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter, I can be contacted by phone or email should you wish to discuss the issue further.

Yours sincerely,  
Lex Strauss