Wednesday, 24 March 2021

Mr Adrian Pilton

Chair

Independent Planning Commission NSW

Lvl 3, 201 Elizabeth Street

SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dr Mr Pilton,

Re: Proposed Heritage Listing – MLC Building North Sydney

I am writing to express my objection to the continued delays to the redevelopment of the MLC Building on Miller Street. Since first being made aware of the proposed redevelopment on Tuesday, 7 July on the North Shore Times website, I have eagerly followed the progress of the development application, only to be disappointed by the ongoing delays and eventual Interim Heritage Order.

The redevelopment as described in several media reports sounds like the kind of proposal North Sydney needs. I can say without qualification that the MLC building was an eyesore when I attended school at Marist College North Shore 30 years ago and nothing has changed.

With my immediate and broader family living in the immediate area, I am disappointed with the lack of amenities North Sydney has to offer. Outside of business hours and on weekends the suburb is a black hole and completely devoid of any soul.

Currently, my family and I are forced to travel to alternative centres such as Chatswood, Crows Nest or Neutral Bay for access to any type of services such as restaurants, shops, and entertainment. The current coronavirus pandemic has highlighted how dangerous tens of thousands of people gathering in these “supercentres” are. With this redevelopment, I was hoping to see the creation of a decentralised suburban centre so we can travel within our own community feeling safe and secure.

In my opinion, just because something is “first” it does not necessarily mean it is of Heritage value. Nearby are the North Sydney Post Office, Mary Mackillop Place and Greenwood Hotel. These are magnificent buildings worth saving. To hold the current MLC Building in the same heritage class is an embarrassment to the classification.

There is no doubt in my mind that NSW needs to protect its heritage structures for posterity, however this is not a sandstone marvel of Victorian times – It is a cheaply thrown together 1950’s office block.

Having been a resident of the North Sydney area my entire life, I have lived watching the local area stumble through the decades on life support. – If you reject this redevelopment, you may as well be ‘pulling the plug’ on North Sydney once and for all.

Sincerely,

Matt Zanello - Resident