

Objection: Trinita Lighthouse Build-to-Rent, North Ryde

Dear members of the Independent Planning Commission,

Thank you for your careful review of this proposed development. As a resident of Ryde Gardens, I have substantial concerns about the Trinita Lighthouse Build-to-Rent development. I was particularly disappointed to see that Stockland have made no meaningful effort to respond to the widespread concerns raised by our local community in previous planning stages. I would like to raise an objection to the specific form of the building proposed, as well as my overall concerns for Build-to-Rent housing and the use of this site for a fundamentally residential purpose. I strongly believe that this development is not in the best interests of our community, and does not provide sufficient benefit to wider issues such as the housing crisis to offset the negative impacts it will cause.

Firstly, the proposed development purports to use Clause 7.7 (previously 6.9) to justify an increase in height from 12 storeys to 20 storeys, under the premise that Build-to-Rent (BtR) housing is classified as commercial, rather than residential property. Ryde Council has already expressed their concerns that BtR housing does not provide sufficient contribution to the GDP to satisfy the commercial designation. While BtR housing may be considered commercial in the sense that it allows corporations to profit from housing, it is fundamentally and functionally residential, and the Stockland development is misusing benefits intended to encourage commercial development for what is essentially a residential building. The applicability of this clause to justify the height increase is therefore questionable. Moreover, in order for this clause to be applicable, the development must provide substantial community benefit and communal recreation areas. The Department of Planning and Housing have also expressed doubts that the proposal provides sufficient communal space to satisfy the requirements of the clause. The initial proposal indicated only limited recreational and green spaces, which are not proportionate to the numbers of dwellings and residents suggested, while the amended proposal actually includes a reduction in commercial space. The 'increased public domain' spaces in the amended plans are primarily found in the boundaries of the site and represent a token gesture with negligible real increase to usable community space. There is overall insufficient green space, and particularly deep soil canopy. Without satisfying the requirements of Clause 7.7, the Stockland Development cannot be permitted to exceed its original height limits.

The proposed development will also result in unacceptable losses to views, light quality, and privacy in neighbouring properties. The *Tenacity Consulting vs Warringah Council* judgement establishes the precedent that view loss is a valid impediment to construction if the loss is qualitative or quantitative. Both are applicable here. The views from Ryde Gardens include iconic views of the Sydney city skyline, including the Harbour Bridge and Opera House sails, which are classified as protected views under the judgement. The view loss is also quantitatively unreasonable in that the Ryde Gardens apartments only have a single South-East facing aspect, so this will eliminate all viewpoints from our apartments. Not only is the loss quantitatively devastating for each individual apartment, it also affects all but the penthouse level apartments of our building.

In addition to the unjustifiable view loss, it will also result in a substantial loss of privacy. The buildings at Ryde Gardens were designed with the expectation, based on the long-term council LEP, that the site next door would be utilised for a 12-storey commercial building. As such, they

are not adequately equipped for close residential neighbours. The apartments have single-aspect, floor-to-ceiling windows. The proposed Trinité development is particularly close to Building A of Ryde Gardens, at points, less than 30 metres away (while notably, greater consideration has been given to the space between the proposed Trinité buildings, with a minimum of 52 metres between them). Residents of this proposed building would have direct and unobstructed line of sight into the entirety of my living space and bedroom. While the needs of a community may change, it is the responsibility of the developer to respond to the needs of existing buildings that cannot now be altered. A building of this mass at such close proximity will also substantially reduce the quality of natural light I receive. The issues around privacy and light quality also have an ecological concern, as they encourage residents to rely more on artificial light and heating. In our current climate crisis, it is essential that all new builds are constructed to optimal ecological conditions. I would also like to note that my concerns about light and privacy are not limited to myself and my existing neighbours, but also to the hypothetical future residents of this proposed development, who will also living in dark and overlooked properties. As my window overlooks the site, I know that this site experiences severe overshadowing from our building, usually entirely in shadow by 2 or 3pm. These issues beg the question if the Stockland design can truly be called 'skillful'. The adjustments made in the updated view-impact report show such negligible difference as to be comical.

I lived in the UK for 5 years while completing my doctoral studies, and in that time, I lived in 5 different properties. Moving so frequently gave me a strong understanding of the things I value in a property. I discovered I can work within the limits of virtually any physical space (and college housing certainly offered some interesting spacial challenges!) but something to look at, and natural light, were essential to my mental and physical wellbeing and so naturally, this is what I prioritised on my return to Australia. I did my due diligence before purchasing to ensure that these views would not be built out by the vacant lot next door, as the Ryde Council LEP plan for this North Ryde precinct overall had provision to protect those views by restricting the height of development on the Trinité Stage 2 site to 37 metres. The burden is on Stockland to justify the height increase and, based on the principles of Clause 7.7 and the Tenacity judgement, this burden has not been met.

Another concern with the Stockland proposal is the provision of parking. The Stockland development shows 296 parking spaces provided for 508 residential apartments, and 15 retail spaces. Not only does this particularly pitiful number of retail spaces highlight the lack of genuine commitment to commercial value, the DCP parking ratios suggest that approximately 450 residential car spaces and 74 retail ones would be a more appropriate number. While the developers can argue that they want to encourage people to rely on public transport, this is naïve and entirely unrealistic when census data shows that the vast majority of Australian households still own at least one, and often more, vehicles.

One reason often put forward to justify the rapid development of new housing is the current rental crisis. However, in this case, Stockland representatives have consistently stated that affordable housing is not something that they are obliged, or intend, to provide. This development, like other existing BtR developments such as LIV Indigo by Mirvac, will sit at the luxury end of the spectrum. Luxury apartments do little to help the majority of struggling Australian renters who are burdened by increasing costs of living and rising rents. As such, Stockland cannot argue that they are making any meaningful contribution to the housing crisis to justify this development.

Secondly, I have concerns about Build-to-Rent housing more broadly. As a young person who has experienced the stresses and instability of the rental market both here and overseas, I am concerned that commercially owned BtR housing does not actually have the best interests of its residents in mind. In particular, the designation of BtR as ‘commercial’ property means that vulnerable renters may be residing in buildings that are not protected by the same stringent requirements that govern residential housing. I am also concerned that in the long term, this may exacerbate the housing crisis, by allowing corporations to monopolize housing at a time when it is already so difficult for many to enter the housing market. Commercial BtR housing exploits the needs of Australians for commercial profit. This is exemplified in the amended Stockland development, which substantially reduces the number of 2 bed apartments while increasing the number of 1 bed and studio apartments planned (with a minimal token increase in 3 bed apartments). 1 bed and studio apartments offer greater rental yield relative to their floor space, increasing corporate profit margins, at the expense of the growing need for more substantial, family-sized apartments. This is particularly relevant for BtR housing, which bills itself as a long-term alternative to property ownership. If the State Government wishes to encourage and incentivise an increase in population and density around transport locations, it is essential to prioritise housing that meets the needs of the population.

Thirdly, I would like to put forward an argument that our community would be best served by retaining a truly commercial development of this site. This site is one identified as part of the wider State Government Macquarie Park TOD rezoning, which aims to best utilise the newly constructed metro service. The provision of housing around metro stations, however, is only one way this can be achieved. The provision of housing near North Ryde station has already been substantially met through Ryde Gardens, Centrale, as well as the ongoing development of Lachlan’s Line, which will see another 2000 apartments added within walking distance of the metro station in the near future. Compared to these, the addition of another 500 apartments through the proposed Trinita development is insignificant. According to 2021 census data, nearly 75% of North Ryde is individual houses or low/medium density apartments, which are not within walking distance of the metro. Substantial commuter parking facilities were constructed around the metro stations from Cherrybrook to Tallawong, and data from the Sydney Metro parking app shows that these commuter spaces are regularly filled. There is virtually no commuter parking available at North Ryde station, however, and the provision of this could open access to the metro for a far greater segment of the population than any residential development. The Canopy at Lane Cove provides an example of the significant benefit that skillfully designed parking and retail space can bring to a community. The provision of community and retail spaces has also been key to the boom of Macquarie Park as both a commercial and residential neighbourhood. For North Ryde to be truly future ready, we must retain space for commercial development that will incentivise companies and individuals to utilise this neighbourhood. This site, with its central location, and issues with overshadowing that may render it unsuitable for residential use in the first place, could be the focal point of an invigorated North Ryde.

I would like to state that I am not opposed to development or high-density living in principle. In fact, I am an advocate for it! I believe it has environmental and social benefits, and this is why I chose to move into a high-rise development myself. However, as the development of North Ryde continues in the coming years at other more appropriate sites, it is essential that we provide adequate community spaces. Moreover, it is essential that if the government wants to encourage people to consider moving into high-density environments, that they show that these spaces are viable long-term prospects and their residents will be cared for. Future hypothetical development

cannot come at the expense of existing, real, residents. When compared to the Lachlan's Line development, which provides far more substantial housing and community facilities including a sorely needed school, it is clear that the proposed Trinita Stage 2 development by Stockland offers negligible community benefit to North Ryde, is actively detrimental to the wellbeing of existing residents in Ryde Gardens, Centrale, and even its own hypothetical future residents, through the inadequate design for natural light and privacy, and does not have adequate community spaces or parking. It does not meet the burden to justify the extended height under Clause 7.7, or exhibit any attempt at view-sharing. This site could be of immense value to North Ryde, but the proposed Trinita Lighthouse development simply does not meet the needs of the community.

Thank you for your time and consideration in reading this letter.

Sincerely,

