

Mr Nick Armstrong
Senior Planning Officer
NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
Locked Bag 5022, Parramatta NSW 2124



16/02/2022

Dear Mr Armstrong

Re: Planning Proposal 2021-2417, 5-9 Gordon Avenue, Chatswood

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed development of 5-9 Gordon Ave, Chatswood.

Northern Sydney Local Health District (NSLHD) is committed to ensuring the built environment fosters places and spaces that support the health and wellbeing of individuals and the wider community. Our Healthy Built Environments team, made up of population health and urban planning professionals, is well-placed comment on this Proposal and has considered potential impacts to liveability and health.

The population of Willoughby Local Government Area (LGA) is expected to grow from 74,000 to nearly 92,000 by 2036 with most of the future growth and high-density development planned in the Chatswood CBD.¹

Current evidence suggests that well-planned high density housing and neighbourhoods can support physical activity, social interaction and access to daily living needs compared to low density neighbourhoods.² Conversely, poorly designed and poorly built apartments located far from public transport, open space, and amenities can have negative impacts on residents' physical and mental health.

To ensure the health and wellbeing of residents and workers is prioritised during the growth of the CBD, NSLHD encourages delivery of the *Chatswood CBD Public Domain Plan* as a priority, ideally prior to significant population growth and development. The Plan's key initiatives aim to increase public open space, create an urban forest and a connected 'green grid', ensure there is continuity in the design and embellishment of the public realm, and improve active transport networks across the CBD.¹

NSLHD supports the need for improvements to the public domain to ready the CBD for the proposed development. This is based on evidence presented in the Plan, showing that:

- Only 8% of the CBD is public open space, which is outside of the standards for open space planning in NSW (9-15% of total site area).³ According to the Greater Sydney Commission, high-density development (over 60 dwellings per hectare) should be located within 200 metres of open space and all dwellings should be within 400 metres of open space.⁴
- There is low tree canopy coverage in the Chatswood CBD compared to the rest of the LGA and a need to establish an urban forest and connected 'green grid' to mitigate the urban heat island effect. Ensuring a detailed Landscape Plan is provided by developers as a part of Planning Proposals will facilitate early consultation to support increased greening.

¹ Willoughby City Council (2021). Chatswood CBD Public Domain Plan. [Unpublished]. Provided by Willoughby City Council on 09/02/2022.

² Giles-Corti B, et al. (2012). Increasing density in Australia: maximising the health benefits and minimising the harm. Report to the National Heart Foundation of Australia, Melbourne. Accessed 10/02/2022. Available at: <https://www.heartfoundation.org.au/getmedia/91efe665-707f-4be1-839f-07461b79d05d/Increasing-density-in-Australia-Evidence-Review-2012.pdf>

³ NSW Department of Planning (2010). Recreation and open space planning guidelines for local government. Accessed 10/02/2022. Available at: <https://lo.unisa.edu.au/mod/resource/view.php?id=1337186>

⁴ Greater Sydney Commission (2018). North District Plan. Accessed 10/02/2022. Available at: <https://www.greater.sydney/north-district-plan/introduction>

- There is a need to establish and consistently apply good design principles to ensure continuity in design and development of the public domain. Currently, there are 10 different paving materials used in the Chatswood public domain. Refining the palette of pavement and other design features, such as wayfinding signage and street furniture, will provide clarity and invitation for users. Continuity in design is especially important when Council is seeking opportunities for the implementation of publicly accessible open space, green podiums and roofs on private land.
- More through-site links and activation of public laneways will promote walking, reduce congestion and provide opportunity for social connection.
- Improving the current cycle network as per Council's *2017 Bike Plan Update* and *Chatswood CBD to St Leonards CBD Bicycle Improvement Plan* will encourage more people to use active transport as a healthy and environmentally supportive means of travel. In particular, NSLHD recommends widening Frank Channon Walk – the existing pedestrian and cycle path between Albert Street and Nelson Street – and transforming this strategic connection into a green link. This will improve the safety, useability and overall capacity of this important active transport link. This path currently lacks the greenery and amenities consistent with the future desired character of the Chatswood CBD and its surrounds (see Figure 1). Developments such as that proposed for 5-9 Gordon Avenue, Chatswood, should integrate with key pedestrian and active transport networks like Frank Channon Walk, and be designed in a way that maximise passive surveillance whilst still maintaining residents' privacy.
- NSLHD recommends that active transport is further promoted to residents by mandating all new developments in Chatswood CBD provide a Green Travel Plan⁵ or similar as a part of the Planning Proposal.



Figure 1: Frank Channon Walk could be widened and transformed into an attractive green link to promote the health and wellbeing of current and future residents (Photo: NSLHD)

⁵ JMT Consulting. (2021). 44-52 Anderson St Chatswood Transport Impact Assessment. Accessed 10/01/2022. Available at: https://ehq-production-australia.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/5278a6be5c4ac4808b40fbfb558a5972ad09ed3/original/1628230429/5b00c2e46901800d228c0cec634984f8_Transport_Impact_Assessment.pdf?X-Amz-Algorithm=AWS4-HMAC-SHA256&X-Amz-Credential=AKIAIBJCUKDK4ZO4WUUA%2F20220131%2Fap-southeast-2%2Fs3%2Faws4_request&X-Amz-Date=20220131T003224Z&X-Amz-Expires=300&X-Amz-SignedHeaders=host&X-Amz-Signature=c6863cda0d6aadce7e50a9b98587f76445b836cf553cec66d272503fc0bc9f8

Overall, the Planning Proposal 2021-2417, 5-9 Gordon Avenue, Chatswood is considered to be beneficial because:

1. It provides for 4% of total private residential space as affordable housing which is to be available to low and middle income earners and is commended.
2. It will allow for commercial/retail spaces which will activate the street frontage and contribute to employment in the Chatswood area.
3. The mix of commercial, retail and residential development in this Proposal will contribute to a balance of land use in the Chatswood CBD Commercial area.
4. The building design appears to consider the likely interests and concerns of its neighbours.
5. The Proposal promises to replace aged commercial buildings with new buildings of the form, materials palette and general disposition compatible with the retail, commercial and residential buildings in the Chatswood area.

NSLHD hopes to be kept informed of the outcome of this Proposal and public domain initiatives planned for the Chatswood CBD. For any questions regarding this submission, please contact:

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Yours sincerely,

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