

Submission to the Hon. Anthony Roberts NSW Planning & Housing Minister

From the following Cook St Telopea residents:

- * Sharon & Michael Durkin – 24 Cook St
- * Florence & Raymond – 26 Cook St
- * Kaye Browne & Brian Pickering – 28 Cook St
- * Tanya & Trevor Woods – 30 Cook St
- * Anne & Rob Cooper – 32 Cook St
- * Michael Williams - 25 Cook St
- * Steven Sun & Alina Joungh – 23 Cook St
- * Les Hayley – 17 Cook St

Email: cookstreetlopea@gmail.com

Goodbye to the good old Aussie quarter acre block – you served the nation well!

Goodbye to the outer suburban Sydney 'McMansions' – your style is suited to some – but unsuited for the Telopea Priority Precinct.

Hello to the good people working to address the '**Missing Middle**' in what is the grossly under-utilised geographic centre of Sydney.

We agree this is a 'once in 50 years opportunity' to use the finite land resources in the heart of the city to provide really cool, low-rise medium to medium-high density housing to complement the new high-density hub in the heart of Telopea.

WE LIKE IT! WE'D LIKE IT EVEN MORE WITH SOME SMALL CHANGES...

This joint submission from 5 adjoining Cook Street neighbours (plus the 4 neighbours on the other side of Cook Street) applauds the current **Telopea Renewal Masterplan** noting the design resulted in its authors, led by Urbis winning '**Project Team of the Year**' as well as the prestigious **2017 PIA Best Planning Ideas – Large Project**.^{#1}

However, we believe there is a further opportunity to create the type of **high-density population hub** the Premier envisioned when she created the **Telopea Priority Precinct**, by **extending the proposed R4 zone - and its FSR of 1.1 and 15m Height - to include the full area bounded by Evans road, Sophie St., Marshall road, Howard and Brand streets.**

This would incentivise more property owners to band together to offer a combined lot (like us) suitable for **low-rise Medium Density dwellings** – thereby meeting the **NSW Planning Minister's** stated desire to 'fill the acknowledged gap in Sydney's housing market – commonly referred to as '**THE MISSING MIDDLE**' with low-rise medium density homes like terraces, dual occupancies, manor homes or townhouses'.

As the current NSW Planning Minister, Anthony Roberts said "**The benefit of this type of housing is that it can easily fit into established streetscapes and offers an alternative to apartment buildings.**"

THE FLAW IN THE CURRENT PROPOSAL

The current proposal has recommended the R4 Zone apply to the south-eastern side of Evans road and only the first row of properties on the south-eastern sides of Sophie and Marshall roads – but with a reduced FSR of .8 and a Height maximum of 11metres.

Strangely – properties literally across the road have been allocated a density of FSR 1.1 and 15m Height allowance with densities quite naturally then rising with increased proximity to the Train station.

Even stranger – the remainder of our entire section **Evans road, Sophie St., Marshall road, Howard and Brand streets** has been allocated a miniscule FSR of .6 and 11m Height.

Why the discrepancy? We've spoken with a number of people from the NSW Planning Department, NSW LAHC and the Parramatta City Council – who were all extremely helpful - but not one of them could offer any comprehensive explanation other than '**perhaps this section is further away from the Telopea train station/future Light Rail stop**', or '**because it's hilly**'. We appreciate they may not have been given more specific information from the actual planning consultants.

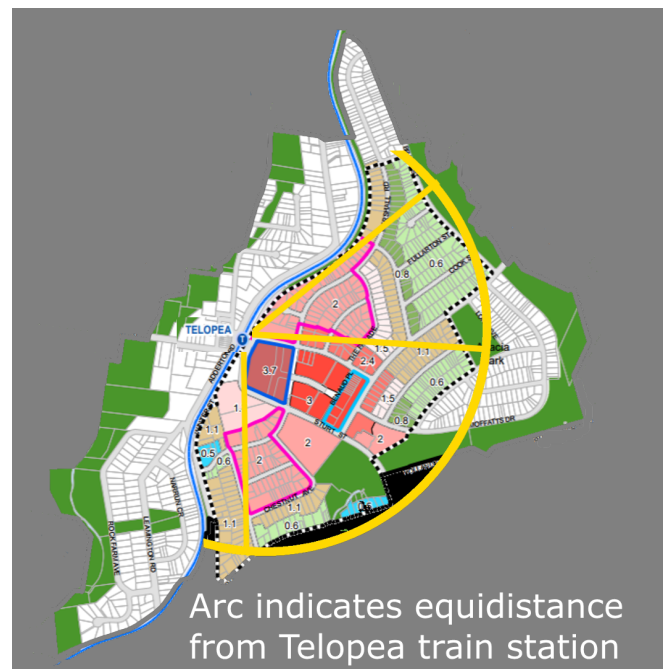
THE FACTS

This portion of the priority precinct being proposed to become R3, is in reality, no further to the Train station when compared to the three *farthest* points in the proposed R4 zoned sections on Evans rd., Marshall rd. and Kissing Point rd.

Telopea is built on gentle hills and entire generations (*including this writer's 90 yr old Dad*) have happily walked to and from the Train station and continue to do so. Our area is also well-served by buses going to the Train station, Parramatta, Olympic Park and Carlingford.

Plan A: We strongly believe this entire section should be re-zoned to match other areas which are equidistant to the Train stop, ie; **R4 with the increased FSR 1.1 and Height of 15 metres.**

Plan B: If there is some compelling reason which we haven't been able to uncover as yet as to why the south-western aspect of this section must have a lower density – then we would suggest that at the very least the NNW side of the hill which overlooks Rapanea Forest be given an **FSR of 1.1 and a higher Height maximum** which meets the Government's draft medium density design guidelines for 3-storey low-rise dwellings.



THE BENEFITS FOR FUTURE OCCUPANTS

It's a great area about to become ever better. It's the geographic centre of Sydney ^{#2} – close to Parramatta, the rapidly growing alternate CBD, also near Carlingford and Eastwood, with loads of infrastructure including the imminent Light Rail System which will also provide a direct link to Westmead hospital.

It's close to prestigious schools such as James Ruse Agricultural High School, and we're spoilt for choice when it comes to green spaces like Sturt Park, Acacia Park and The Greenway.

Nearby District level sports fields at Sir Thomas Mitchell park and Dundas Park are highly popular along with the Philip Rudduck Water playground.

We agree it's time to let more people enjoy a great lifestyle in the real centre of Sydney without having to move to the outermost fringes.

AMENITIES

The Outlook. The open space. The easy access to everything. Ample sunlight and solar. No flood risk. Great sense of community.

Most current (and future home-owners) in our section have uninterrupted views of the Rapanea Community Forest which is Sydney's largest and best example of the increasingly rare blue gum high forest. ^{#3}

The area is extremely quiet. Except at dawn when the Kookaburras, parrots and lorikeets announce it's time to wake. The forest is also home to a variety of owls which can be heard overnight from time to time. The views are extraordinary and ever changing. In the early morning you can see the mist coming up from the creek... while at dusk, the eucalypts turn the most magical shade of ochre.

Essentially the Rapanea Community Forest provides a vibrant, natural centrepiece between the suburbs of Telopea, Dundas Valley and Carlingford so it makes sense to include all of the section up to Brand street as part of a medium to slightly higher density during Stage One of the Telopea Priority Precinct.

(N.b. Stage 2 proposed Zoning details have yet to be made public.)

IMPACT ON NEIGHBOURS

The section we're talking about is just another small hill – the crest of which runs from Evans road in the east to Quarry street in the west.

If this section were flat, the lower density might be understandable, however, given the reasonably strong incline, we see no reason why designers would not be able to 'step down' the slope as per the NSW Government's ***Apartment Design Guide AND its Draft Medium Density Guidelines and Draft Medium Density Housing Code.***

These newer building designs are intended to take advantage of the slope to step down the hill giving future occupants the same feeling of spaciousness current residents enjoy, the same awesome forest vista while at the same time ensuring neighbours are not overshadowed during winter.

The new draft Guidelines provide examples, such as row housing, terraces or multi-dwelling homes or mansion houses – all of which could provide a much greater diversity in housing options than past developments in the area which have primarily focused on 4br Duplexes, instead offering 1 or 2-bedroom homes which better meet the needs of changing demographics such as seniors, couples and singles.

These types of designs also offer energy efficiency and thermal comfort through shared walls while still providing privacy.

As a precedent: In 2009, a row of 11 4br townhouses was built on 20-24 Fullarton Avenue with underground parking...without inconveniencing neighbours.

For the record – these townhouses were initially advertised and continue to be advertised as being:

Walk to transport (800m to station), shops & schools. ^{#4}

This re-zoning provides an opportunity to provide more types of housing, and housing styles which will adapt to changing lifestyles and circumstances.

COINCIDENTAL OPPORTUNITY FOR LAHC

The original subdivision of the land between Cook Street and Evans Road involved some 'interesting' dividing lines between properties, presumably in an effort to have blocks with similar sized areas.

For example, No.32 Cook Street is intersected by No.3 Brand street which provides social housing (also No's. 1 and 5 Brand St).

We're advised that from time to time, the LAHC does dispose of stand-alone properties if its viewed that it would not get enough uplift to make a redevelopment worthwhile.

The Cook Street group is hopeful the Corporation will make that decision to release the 2 properties once the re-zoning is complete and that the timing coincides with other redevelopment occurring alongside, further enhancing NSW Planning objectives to ensure that a 'once in a 50-year opportunity to harvest scarce land' occurs 'contributing as much as possible to new stock formation while achieving better outcomes'.

CONCLUSION

Thank-you for taking the time to read this submission.

As most of us are long-time residents in this very special part of Telopea we feel a strong connection to 'our' land.

It's the reason we're requesting planners take another look at the extraordinary opportunity which being a 'Priority Precinct' about to benefit from the massive infrastructure investment will provide... to tweak the current proposed density levels in the area bounded by Evans road, Sophie and Marshall streets, Howard and Brand streets to mirror the densities on the other side of the hill.

It's clear from the 'Draft Medium Density Design Guidelines' and 'Draft Medium Density Housing Code' that there is a strong desire by the NSW Government for more low-rise mixed use medium density housing types which are adaptable to newcomers while maintaining the character and livability of the area for current home-owners. We think so too.

We would be more than happy to discuss this further with any of the team involved in the Telopea Priority Precinct at any time.

On behalf of the Cook St Team noted above...

Kind Regards,

Kaye Browne & Brian Pickering

Email: cookstreettelopea@gmail.com

Footnotes:

#1 - PIA NSW Awards For Planning Excellence

<https://urbis.com.au/insights-news/urbis-scoops-4-wins-at-2017-pia-nsw-awards-for-planning-excellence/>

#1 - Telopea Master Plan Team Win Award

<https://urbis.com.au/insights-news/telopea-master-planning-team-win-at-greater-sydney-planning-awards/>

#2 - Welcome To The Centre Of Sydney – It's A Creek!

<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2004/01/24/1074732654089.html>

#3 - Rapanea Community Forest – Brand St Telopea

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritageapp/ViewHeritageItemDetails.aspx?ID=2240067>

#4 - Fullarton Road townhouses

<https://www.realestate.com.au/sold/property-townhouse-nsw-telopea-105943357>

Promoted as 'Walk to transport (800m to station), shops & schools'