

19 November 2018
DP/KG: Ref:002

Director, Sydney Central Urban Renewal
Department of Planning and Environment
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Sir,

**RE: 55 HUME STREET CROWS NEST
ST. LEONARDS / CROWS NEST DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN**

No. 55 Hume Street, Crows Nest is owned by the 55 Hume Street Trust with company Duskbout Pty Ltd acting as the Trustee. The building was purchased by the Trust in late 1994.

The 'Place Actions and Recommendations' incorporated in the St Leonards / Crows Nest Metro Area draft strategic plan indicates our building as 'proposed open space' and clearly intended as an extension of the Hume Street Park.

We strongly believe that the future resumption and demolition of the Hume Street buildings as a method of extending the park will not result in a satisfactory outcome for the respective stakeholders.

Our reasons and basis for this assertion are set out below:

1 HUME LANE

The demolition of the Hume Street buildings will fully expose our rear service lane (Hume Lane) as the eastern boundary of the extended park. At a meeting with the Department of Planning on the 29th October, the officers present indicated that it was hoped that the lane would become an "active" building frontage to the park. We believe this to be an extremely unlikely scenario and the lane will remain in its constant unsightly state for the following reasons:

- The buildings in the lane represent the unsightly 'back of house' facilities for the Willoughby Road retail and food outlets, and to achieve a more aesthetic and active form for the lane would require extensive site consolidation and redevelopment of these tightly held properties. This would destroy the very basis of the precinct plan to retain the present 'village atmosphere' of the Willoughby Road retail strip.

- The lane will always need to remain as a heavily utilised service lane handling food deliveries, frequent garbage collections, grease trap collections etc – these facilities will not be transferrable to other locations.

Accordingly, we believe the Hume Street buildings (either in upgraded or redeveloped form) should instead become the 'active' eastern boundary of the park, thus shielding the service lane from future park users.

2 55 HUME STREET PROPERTY

With the release of the draft strategic plan, we, as the owners of 55 Hume Street, Crows Nest now face an extended period of uncertainty whereby our previously valuable building site is now rendered virtually "unsaleable" until the final plan is agreed to and gazetted. Until this point is reached we in effect would not be able to sell or redevelop the property and would effectively remain in limbo until final decisions are made on the future use of our building site.

This is a completely unsatisfactory situation, particularly for our more recent shareholders, some of who have borrowed substantially to purchase shares in the building. As building owners, we are very concerned about our long-term tenants and the uncertainty with their businesses should they be required to relocate. This uncertainty will cause unstable leasing arrangements as we will not be able to offer them security of tenure.

At this stage we strongly require certainty as soon as practicable in terms of the final proposed timing and usage of our property in order that we may plan for the future and best position ourselves for future resumption negotiations.

3 COST OF RESUMPTIONS

The proposed plan to resume the five similarly affected Hume Street properties would, we believe, represent an extremely costly way of extending the park by a comparatively small area.

By way of demonstrating the likely cost of resuming the five properties, we received several offers from Developers during 2015 and 2016, culminating in an offer of \$5M in April 2016 (copy available if required). We note that this offer preceded the announcement of the location of the Crows Nest metro station. The five Hume Street properties all have the same 300 square metres area. Accordingly, this proposed part of the park extension is likely to cost the Purchasing Authority in excess of \$25M – \$30M in property acquisitions alone.

If the full extent of the proposed park extension is absolutely necessary to achieve a final specific area, we believe more cost-effective solutions should be explored.

One plausible method for example would be a reduction in width of Clarke Street (possibly to become one way) with the recovered area to extend the park on the western side.

An alternate method could be brought about by increasing the area of the currently proposed pedestrian plaza and walk-through to Willoughby Road (to be implemented by North Sydney Council).

This could be achieved by widening the plaza at the Willoughby Road end by acquiring the buildings each side of No. 90 Willoughby Road and 'squaring' up the whole of the projected plaza.

This would have a secondary beneficial effect whereby future pedestrian traffic through to Willoughby Road would not need to be directly confronted by the 'back-of-house' buildings each side of No. 90 Willoughby Road.

4 SUMMARY

For some time, we have envisaged the eventual creation of a vibrant outdoor and night time precinct in our adjacent park area, close to the entrance/exit of the metro station and bounded by upgraded Hume Street and Clarke Street buildings.

This will be complimented by the currently proposed pedestrian plaza and walk-through to Willoughby Road.

For all the reasons as set out earlier, we respectfully ask that the Department of Planning re-consider the prospective re-zoning of the Hume Street properties.

Yours faithfully,



Donald Powell
Secretary
DUSKBOUT PTY LTD