

Submission DA 159-167 Darley St, Mona Vale

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the DA for 159-167 Darley St Mona Vale. I am a Northern Beaches Councillor in Pittwater Ward, for which this development is proposed. I am therefore making this submission to support the many hundreds of residents who have attended at least three public meetings strongly objecting to the plans.

Location

This site is located within an area that was once wetlands - very close to the current Winnereremy Bay on Pittwater. The area is subject to flooding and Northern Beaches Council has had to improve stormwater drainage once already during the last four years while I've been on council, installing larger diameter pipes carrying water underground along nearby Park St. **Yet Mona Vale still floods when there is heavy rain - for example, recently on January 17, when it caused flash flooding.**

In fact, the Biodiversity report even mentions the waterway that crosses the site.

Due to this flood risk, the idea of a three storey underground carpark seems inappropriate, and in some situations could even be a danger to residents.

Another hazard that must be considered is bushfire risk. **The whole of the Pittwater Ward was subject to ember attack during the 1994 bushfires due to the extensive bushland surrounding the area. Evacuations were difficult** even then, due to the limited routes out of Pittwater - Mona Vale Rd, Wakehurst Parkway and Pittwater Rd. Each of these was gridlocked and closed by flames at some point during those fires. The site for this proposed development is less than 4km from Ingleside, where multiple homes were lost during those fires. In January, the Climate Council noted that it is only a matter of time before suburbs on Sydney's outskirts experience bushfires similar to those on the fringes of the city (see <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-01-06/bushfire-risk-australia-climate-council-report/106199356>).

This proposed development would add to those risks for current and future residents.

Height

The suburb of Mona Vale will be subject to a significant increase in density under the NSW government's Low to Mid Rise Housing Policy, with local planners estimating up to an extra 8,000 residents likely to live in the suburb as a result.

This site zoned R3 for Medium Density Residential is limited to 17.5 metres in height. However, the DA proposes three buildings with a maximum height of 21.17 metres. The DA justifies this 30 per cent variation with the offer of 10 per cent "affordable housing".

However, the height and bulk of these buildings will be grossly oversized compared to other single storey homes in the area. Residents have objected that the additional height will overshadow their properties, destroying privacy in nearby unit blocks, and block sunlight to their living spaces and solar panels. This is particularly unfair for residents who have outlaid the expense to electrify their homes.

Residents are not wholly opposed to increased density in Mona Vale but believe the four storey limit should be enforced.

Further, the median unit rent in Mona Vale is more than \$800 per week with newer apartments asking more like \$1,300 to \$1,400 per week. For example, one reasonably new three bedroom unit was advertised for rent in Darley St, Mona Vale, close to this site, during January at \$1,350 with a bond of \$5,400. With these high rental prices, it seems unlikely that new units in Mona Vale will be affordable.

Infrastructure and Services

I am particularly **concerned about the lack of infrastructure in Pittwater generally, and Mona Vale in particular, that will be needed to service the proposed 81 units.**

Darley St is already a busy road and **another 81 units will simply increase the traffic into and across Mona Vale's town centre - which is already congested and short of parking.**

My other significant concern is that the **Warriewood Sewage Treatment works, which provides only secondary treatment, is at or over capacity, with frequent overflows when it rains.** Its capacity should be increased and treatment upgraded to tertiary level before any further development occurs in Mona Vale - for the health and safety of all Pittwater and Narrabeen residents and to prevent polluting the ocean at Turrimetta Beach where the outfall is located.

Tree Removal

I believe the removal of 58 of the 88 trees from the site and transplanting of another two is insupportable, especially for a development that claims to be ecologically sustainable.

Additionally, the Arboricultural Impact Assessment report indicates that further trees will be effected by construction of concrete pathways, stormwater trenching, and possible trenching for services. Whilst not all 88 trees at the site are local natives (endemic species), such a large area of tree canopy provides many functions, such as reducing the heat island effect and cleaning the air, absorbing rainfall and runoff in the earth below, and providing habitat for wildlife. Both native and non-native trees contribute to these functions.

Planting new trees that will not mature and provide significant canopy in less than 50 - 70 years will not replace the immediate loss of this established canopy.

Further, Mona Vale is one of the suburbs on the Northern Beaches with the greatest loss of tree canopy, so the trees on these blocks are precious. (Arborists at the 2025 Treenet conference estimated that some mature trees could be worth hundreds of thousands of dollars to the community in terms of cooling for homes, footpaths and roadways with savings on electricity, environmental and health impacts (including mental health.)

Our council's Tree Canopy Plan emphasises the importance of retaining tree canopy where it exists, especially on private land where the loss is greatest. The removal of close to 60 trees does not accord with this policy.

Biodiversity

I note the claim in the biodiversity report that:

“Additionally, the Study Area is within one km of a substantial tract of bushland, which exhibits limited connectivity to vegetation within Ku-ring-gai National Park.” In fact, local ecologists have told me that there is connectivity between that tract of bushland and the Ingleside escarpment, which connects to Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park (via a wildlife bridge across Mona Vale Rd), Garigal National Park, and eventually to Narrabeen Lagoon.

Conclusion

I believe developing these blocks of six storey units as proposed in Mona Vale is inappropriate and unsustainable development. The location would expose residents to flood and bushfire hazards; the bulk and height will reduce privacy for existing residents and the “human scale” of Mona Vale; and it would contribute to overloading local roads and the Warriewood Sewage Treatment Works - polluting a local beach and endangering human health. Finally, the loss of 58 trees from the site - and threats to others - does not correspond with the council’s Tree Canopy Plan and should be prevented.

These are just a few of the complaints I’ve heard from residents and/or that I have been independently concerned about as a local councillor. I believe submissions by residents and Northern Beaches Council will raise many other objections and concerns.

Regards,
Miranda Korzy
Pittwater Councillor