The Rt. Hon. The Lord Mayor of Sydney
CLOVER MOORE AO

18 NOV 2026

The Hon. Paul Scully MP
Minister for Planning and Public Spaces
GPO Box 5341
Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Minister

Waterloo Estate (South)

I refer to the concept State Significant Development application (SSDA) for Waterloo Estate (South), currently under assessment by the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure.

I welcome your Government's commitment to include 50% of the dwellings as either Affordable Housing or Social Housing across the site, and that all Social Housing will be held in perpetuity. This follows years of our steadfast advocacy.

I also acknowledge the response to submissions, which positively addressed some concerns raised in the City of Sydney's submission, including improvements in built form, open space and the design of the public domain.

However, many of our concerns remain. The redevelopment of Waterloo Estate (South) represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity, and I call on you to ensure the following changes are made.

Planning controls

The concept SSDA seeks to modify the established planning controls, and includes changes to building heights, floor space ratios, land-use provisions and design requirements to facilitate a greater yield without appropriate concern for their impacts. In contrast, the existing controls seek to maintain an appropriate built scale when buildings are viewed from the public domain to provide a more human scale around the tower developments, and should be maintained.

The applicant largely responds to the City's concerns by providing justifications rather than substantive amendments to the proposal, as well as inadequate additional material. Some of our concerns were not addressed at all.

The applicant must properly respond to our serious concerns, including impacts on adjacent properties and the public domain, to Waterloo Park and the Waterloo Conservation Area.

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I ask that you consider the established planning controls and require the applicant to provide appropriate responses to the objections raised by the City in our June submission and September response to submissions letter.

Affordable Housing

I am extremely concerned that only 7% of housing in the development will be Affordable Housing for the long term ('in perpetuity'). As Sydney remains one of Australia's least affordable cities, and demand in our local area continues to grow, it is vital that government uses every lever available to provide Affordable Housing into the future.

I call on you again to require that all affordable housing in the development be provided in perpetuity.

Tree removals

The applicant has failed to address concerns about the removal of over 200 trees within and surrounding the site, including trees identified as having high or very high retention value.

Trees make neighbourhoods cooler, improve air quality, and provide critical habitat for birds and animals. The City is one of the only Councils in Australia to have consistently increased canopy cover over the past decade. It is not acceptable for the applicant to disregard our canopy targets and remove trees to facilitate building envelopes.

I ask that the applicant be required to adopt the City's canopy targets. I also ask that high and very high-value trees, especially large feature trees, be treated as a key site constraint that must be integrated into and responded to in planning and design.

Social impacts

The City remains concerned about the revised Social Impact Assessment (SIA) and Social Impact Management Plan (SIMP). While we have feedback to provide, I am concerned that the City has not been formally requested to comment on these as part of the application.

Questions remain about how the new Waterloo South community can be accommodated within the capacity of the existing and currently planned social infrastructure for the site, particularly relating to services for heath, employment and education.

I ask that the City be given the opportunity to provide formal feedback on the SIA and SIMP, and that the applicant be required to respond in detail to the concerns raised.

Climate resilience

I am pleased that on 28 September, Lisa Marigliano, Executive Director, Portfolio Development, Homes NSW, wrote on behalf of the Minister for Housing and assured me that Social Housing in the estate will include design features to increase energy efficiency and provide comfort in increasing temperatures. All housing within the estate should be designed to be passive and climate resilient, achieve thermal comfort, and have access to both mechanical cooling and heating devices such as ceiling fans and/or reverse cycle air conditioning.

I ask that you require the applicant to provide commitments that all homes in the development – whether private, social or affordable – will be designed to provide comfort, dignity and climate resilience.

I have also written to the Minister for Housing on this matter.

The City has worked consistently for many years to improve the redevelopment plans. I hope your Government will ensure Waterloo Estate (South) is delivered in a way that genuinely serves the community for generations to come.

If your staff would like to contact my office about this issue, they can contact Pamela Aleixo, Senior Policy Officer, on 02 9265 9229 or at PAleixo@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

Clover Moore

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