

Department of Planning and Environment
Locked Bag 5022
Parramatta NSW 2124

By email: explorerst@planning.nsw.gov.au

15 November 2023

To Whom it May Concern

Re: Rezoning proposal for Explorer Street Eveleigh

We write in relation to the Department of Planning and Environment's (Department) draft rezoning proposal for Explorer Street, Eveleigh (Proposal), which includes the master planning and new planning controls to guide the future development of this site.

Bridge Housing appreciates the opportunity to provide input into this key strategic planning document, which will support the much-needed renewal of this social housing estate.

About Bridge Housing

Bridge Housing is a leading Tier 1 Community Housing Provider under the National Regulatory System for Community Housing. We have been managing and developing social and affordable housing in Sydney, to the highest quality standard, for almost 40 years. Bridge Housing currently owns or manages more than 3,600 properties across 21 Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Greater Sydney. Of these, over 500 properties are located in the City of Sydney LGA, including 45 in the suburb of Eveleigh, adjacent to the Explorer Street site.

Our work in this area, as well as learnings from our recent successful tender for the development of 660 Elizabeth Street Redfern, has enabled us to form strong connections with the local community and given us a clear understanding of some of the challenges and opportunities impacting this area.

We have reviewed the Proposal from the perspective of our vision, mission and approach to increasing social and affordable housing supply in locations where there is growing need, and offer the following comments.

Support for proposal

Bridge Housing considers the Proposal to be comprehensive and well considered. In particular, Bridge Housing commends the Department for the following aspects of the Proposal:

- **New homes** – Bridge Housing supports the proposed delivery of 400 new homes within a highly accessible inner-city location, close to public transport, services and jobs. We particularly support the mandated 30% social and 20% affordable housing component to be delivered.

- **Larger homes** – we support the minimum of 10% of housing within the development to be for 3-bedroom dwellings. With a potential future dwelling yield of around 400 dwellings, this will amount to approximately 40 x 3-bedroom dwellings which would replace the number of large family properties currently on-site.
- **Aboriginal housing** – we commend the Department’s acknowledgement of the cultural significance of Explorer Street to Aboriginal people and the opportunities for collaboration and co-designing with locally connected Aboriginal people. We specifically support the commitment to 20% of the affordable housing to be delivered as Aboriginal affordable housing.
- **Certification targets** – we support the Proposal’s minimum requirements for Silver, Gold and Platinum Level units in the Design Guide, which will facilitate ageing in place and a diverse future tenant group.
- **Public space** – we support the proposed upgrades to the adjoining parks and streets, and the retention of solar access to these [REDACTED] new dwelling [REDACTED] building heights, setbacks and massing.
- **Environmental sustainability** – Bridge Housing commends the Department for its high sustainability requirements which will benefit the broader community, but suggests that work should be done to demonstrate how these initiatives will also result in lower energy and maintenance costs for the future tenants (particularly social and affordable housing tenants)
- **Consultation process** – Bridge Housing has appreciated the opportunity to be involved in the social impact assessment for this site. We support the consultation process so far and the ability for local interests to be taken into account.

Suggestions for further consideration

Bridge Housing makes the following suggestions for further consideration by the Department:

- **Allocation and rent setting approach** – social housing units should be allocated to households based on the NSW Housing Register and the allocation and ongoing management of affordable housing should be in line with the NSW Affordable Housing Guidelines. Critically, the NSW Guidelines guarantee that rent is affordable to households by overlaying the discount to market rent with the requirement that households pay no more than 30% of their income in rent.
- **4+ bedroom units** – we note that the Proposal has a requirement for 10% 3-bedroom dwellings, however we also recommend that a minimum number of 4+ bedroom units should be considered for the site. This is particularly important for the social housing component of the development, given the current wait time for 4+ bedroom properties in this area exceeds 10 years.
- **Rezoning of wider area** – Bridge Housing submits that consideration should be given to including the adjoining land in Rowley Street as part of the current rezoning proposal.
- **Standard of social and affordable housing** – Bridge Housing suggests that any social or affordable housing on site should be required to be delivered in accordance with Land and Housing Corporation “Good Design for Social Housing” design guide and tenure blind to any market housing within the project.

- **Design excellence process** – we note the requirement for a competitive design excellence process to be undertaken in accordance with the City of Sydney policies. We note the additional time and cost associated with this process particularly when combined with the design work required to support a government tender. We suggest an exemption for any buildings which are delivered solely for social/affordable housing or led by a CHP developer. This will maximise the number of units delivered and fast track project timelines to address the urgent unmet need for social and affordable housing in the inner city.
- **Feasibility assessment** – we note that a feasibility assessment was not included as part of the planning proposal package but encourage that it be considered to ensure the project remains attractive for the development and CHP sector and that the project is deliverable within the forecast timelines.

Please do not hesitate to contact me on [REDACTED] or by email at [REDACTED] if you require any further information about Bridge Housing or the matters raised in this submission.

Yours sincerely,



Christopher Dib

Executive Director, Homes