

804 residents legal at Legoland, Woronora

It's official: the maximum population for the new Woronora 'caravan park' is 804 residents, according to a report to Sutherland Shire Council on a redevelopment planned there.

By Don Pagé

This is one-third of today's Woronora population, but crammed on to an area of about a dozen normal housing lots.

Property values would be seriously reduced, with Legoland's parking overflowing into local streets.

This high-density living uses rubbery loopholes of the notorious planning scheme of the Shire, LEP 2015, and



Unofficial artist's vision for the future

recent State law. LEP 2015 was a pro-development vision of Shire councillor Kent Johns, a former mayor of Rockdale who left when the high-rise took over, moved to the Shire and became our Liberal Party mayor for a time.

The Shire's current Liberal mayor Carmelo Pesce carries on in his footsteps. He and a Council staffer met the developer to discuss his plans a while ago. The full agenda is not known. The plans involve two-storey container-like cabins at Woronora, nicknamed 'Legoland', to be used as display homes for the low-cost housing estate – a caravan park no longer. State Liberal MPs Lee Evans and Melanie Gibbons will be asked to help change NSW law to stop it (email addresses below).

Although "existing-use rights" are claimed as a caravan park, it now operates under different guise. Plans were recently put to Council, with objections due by December 7.

Both the NSW Government and Council have constantly moved the goal posts in recent years, with new laws allowing developers to replace transient caravans with permanent sites, and now to double-stack cabins. Some grounds for objections:

- Caravan parks are now prohibited in this RE2 zoning, but the redevelopment goes far beyond that as a two-storey eyesore. It violates current zoning rules by using its antiquated status as a van park, to create a high-density, no-frills housing estate.
- The crucial legal point is that this new development is not "substantially the same" as the previous caravan park: it will become a two-storey housing estate, for sale or rent at the low end of the market.
- It has approval for a theoretical overnight population of 804 people, with the 67 sites allowed 12 people each, under recent State law (moveable dwellings]. They could become boarding houses effectively, rented at about \$45 per mattress weekly.
- Car parking is one per site, plus three-only for all visitors. Local streets could soon be parked out by Legoland cars, if it goes ahead.
- Legoland would badly affect property values and the protected foreshore nearby.
- The project is on flood-prone land, unsuitable for normal dwellings.
-

- The site has gone from caravans about 1960, to permanent sites, to moveable dwellings, to double-stacked cabins lately. Whether the law will allow multiple-stacking in future, like Port Botany (see picture above), is not part of this plan.
- It is not clear if the plans breach the foreshore building line, but our councillors can exempt the developer from compliance, if they wish.
- Crucial documents were missing, then unreadable when finally published by Council.
- A draft masterplan was presented at Council's prodding, but is not official.

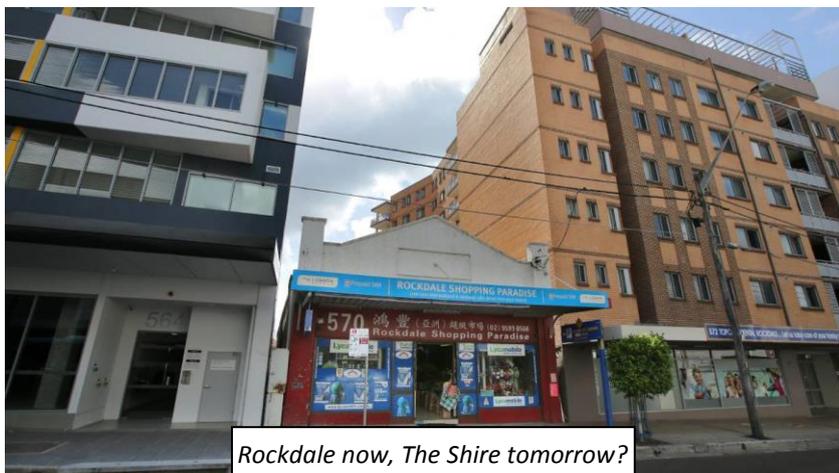
Objections can be made to Sutherland Council using the points above until December 7, an extended deadline due to complaints of poor notification: ssc@ssc.nsw.gov.au

The new Legoland estate stretches the legal concept into a low-cost, high-profit game. Building is quick and cheap, evading normal standards for the rest of Woronora housing.

PROPERTY VALUES THREATENED

Property values could plummet, especially near this gateway to all of Woronora.

When the latest proposal surfaced in early November, the weblinks first provided by Council did not work. The clock was ticking on the two-week display period – but with nothing displayed online. A council staffer told an inquirer on the phone that the documents were not displayed because the developer had not paid



his fees. But the clock was still ticking at Council, with nothing made public until a complaint was made. A neat trick for a developer, if you can manage it.

By the time many locals found out about the project, it was too late. There is now a second chance to object until December 7.

+++++

To object formally to Sutherland Shire Council by December 7, email ssc@ssc.nsw.gov.au
 Our E-Ward councillors are at: pscaysbrook@ssc.nsw.gov.au; jriad@ssc.nsw.gov.au;
stevesimpson@ssc.nsw.gov.au

Liberal State MPs can be asked to change NSW law to overrule this unwanted development:

Lee Evans at heathcote@parliament.nsw.gov.au;

Melanie Gibbons at holsworthy@parliament.nsw.gov.au

The site is located at 1 Menai Road, Woronora, and is irregular with an area of 9,017m². It is generally flat with 67 dwelling sites, an amenity block, office building, manager's residence and a road network. Under Sutherland Shire's LEP 2015 the site is zoned RE2, Private Recreation. Caravan Parks are now prohibited in the RE2 zone, however this one enjoys existing-use rights based on the approval by Sutherland Shire Council in 1988, although it is planned to become a no-frills housing estate.