



Submission on proposed redevelopment of Ivanhoe Estate

09 May 2018

Shelter NSW is the peak organisation working for a fair and just housing system in New South Wales. We are a non-government and not-for-profit organisation that speaks to the needs of those who are marginalised or excluded from our housing system because of social and economic disadvantage. We conduct research and advocate for the housing interests of low- to moderate- income and disadvantaged people, and provide community education to build the capacity of non-profit organisations to provide housing and housing related services. We envisage a housing system that is inclusive, and that challenges inequality by embracing social and economic diversity.

Shelter NSW is an independent organisation with no alignment to any political party or commercial organisation.

We make the following comments in response to the Aspire Consortium's plans for redevelopment of the Ivanhoe Estate as part of the NSW Government's Communities Plus scheme. These plans are currently on exhibition by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment.

As is noted in the plans, the proposed Ivanhoe Estate redevelopment represents an important moment for the NSW Government and its Communities Plus scheme, wherein it looks to unlock the value in land currently used for public housing estates to provide updated social housing infrastructure with no net loss of dwellings. The trade-off for this is increased density within a renewed estate, and a reduction in publically owned land, with the bulk of new dwellings being sold into the private housing market. Given its nature, it will be critical that the redevelopment and densification of Ivanhoe Estate is done well, and does not produce adverse consequences for its future social and affordable housing residents.

Our comments will focus on those aspects of the plans that relate to housing affordability, social mix and amenity within the proposed new estate.

Housing affordability

The plan proposes to redevelop a site that is currently owned by the NSW Land & Housing Corporation. 259 social housing dwellings now sit upon the site, which is to be transformed into a high-density neighbourhood of some 3,000 – 3,500 dwellings, including up to 1,000 social housing and 128 affordable housing units. The flagged increase in much needed social and affordable housing within the Sydney metropolitan area is, on the face of it, a welcome element of the plans. However, this is understood to be a critical component of the Aspire Consortium's successful bid for the rights to

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develop the site, and the plans do not provide much new information that would allow a proper assessment of the proposed redevelopment's impact on housing affordability.

For instance, the proposal identifies the 259 existing social housing dwellings as "townhouse and walk-up style apartment typologies". It does not provide details of bedroom configuration but, given the typologies and the era in which they were constructed, we can assume a predominance of two- and three- bedroom units. On the other hand, the redeveloped site would include up to 1,000 social housing dwellings and 128 affordable housing dwellings of predominantly one- and two- bedroom units. From this we can deduce that a higher number of smaller households will likely be accommodated in the redeveloped site, but we do not get a clear sense of just how many more people will have access to social and affordable housing in the redeveloped estate. Nor do we have a clear picture of how much accommodation that would be appropriate for families with two or more children will be lost to the social housing portfolio. Given the nature of the redevelopment, and some of the broader pressures the portfolio faces, this would be useful to know.

Similarly, the proposal identifies the aggregate Gross Floor Area (GFA) as 283,500 square metres, which includes all community and commercial space. Details of GFA for the residential component are not provided, nor any breakdown of GFA between the proposed tenure types that are to be included. This makes it difficult to interrogate the claim within the proposal that "tenures are [to be] evenly distributed within a simple staging framework ensuring a development which is truly tenure blind". It is a missed opportunity for the Aspire Consortium to provide more than a mere statement of principle on this issue.

Finally, we note while the proposal for 128 affordable housing dwellings is broadly within the targets outlined in the Greater Sydney Commission's Greater Sydney Region Plan, it is open to the Consortium to provide more. The lack of any real bridge between the social housing and market housing products – that a greater proportion of affordable housing would provide – will not only limit the estate's ability to produce a truly diverse social mix, but will have adverse impacts on community cohesion over time as those social housing residents who are ultimately able to move on to other tenure forms may struggle to remain within the estate. More immediately, there will be a need for workers on the estate to run schools, child care centres and other community infrastructure that is included within the proposal, but the lack of affordable housing will mean most of these workers will not be able to reside within close proximity.

Social mix

The plan provides no clear indication of how the estate will deliver "social mix", as details of how its social and affordable housing dwellings are to be distributed throughout the estate are not included. The Social Impact Assessment suggests the plan "proposes to adopt a building by building form of integration that will aim for 'tenure blindness'," however the plan itself implies more of a salt-and-peppered approach with reference to a "mix of residential tenure from market through to social and affordable" across the residential component of the plan. This ambiguity is unsettling, and is another missed opportunity for the Aspire Consortium – this time to make a strong statement of principle about how social mix is to be delivered in the new estate, against which it can be held to account.

If we choose to overlook this ambiguity, and accept the Social Impact Assessment's claim of a building by building mix, we remain in the dark as to where residents of social and affordable housing are to be located within the redeveloped estate, and how their dwellings are to be integrated within the overall scheme. Given the nature of the redevelopment, and its objectives as part of the Communities Plus initiative, this is an important consideration.

Amenity

Overall, the plan does a good job of outlining what future residents might expect from the estate in terms of amenity. Elements of building design, integration of public recreation and green space, walkability and movement corridors throughout the estate and community development opportunities are well set out and appear designed with tenure blindness in mind. There are, however, two aspects of the plan that raise concerns. These relate to the potential for social and affordable housing residents to be excluded from the proposed town centre as a dining and entertainment zone, as well as the high school as a critical piece of social infrastructure for young people within the renewed estate.

For the most part the proposal discusses the town plaza in terms of its built form – a “hard paved town centre pedestrian street”, “a paved area, with no vehicular access”, a place where “outdoor dining will spill onto the street”. It pays scant regard to how future residents will access and interact with the space, or how it will really function as “a place where people come to dine, have a drink with friends and watch the world go by” in a mixed tenure estate. No consideration appears to have been given as to how, in a discrete neighbourhood that will include perhaps 2,000 – 2,500 market housing residences, at least some commercial spaces will be tenanted by the kinds of business and enterprise that the estate's low-income residents will be able to afford. While proximity to other shopping districts may mitigate this somewhat, as households will have access to alternative commercial spaces, there is a risk that the future estate's low-income residents will be economically excluded from the community hub that is the town square. This is a critical omission from the Aspire Consortium's proposal.

More attention is given to this issue of potential economic exclusion where the proposed non-government school is concerned. The Community Infrastructure and Recreation Demand study report states that the school will “offer scholarships for disadvantaged students”, with an agreed number of subsidised places to be made available to the future estate's social and affordable housing residents on a no-fee basis. Given the importance of a high-school as social and community infrastructure for young people and their families, as well as an educational facility, further information on this proposed scholarship scheme would be useful. The proposal is unclear on how many subsidised places will be made available, and how these places will be allocated if demand exceeds what will be accommodated by the school.

A further concern around the proposed high-school is that, as a non-government school, there is a strong possibility that it will be non-secular and denominational. Some residents of the redeveloped estate may feel excluded from the local school, and by extension the local community, on account of this.

Please do not hesitate to contact Shelter NSW on (02) 9267 5733 for further discussion or clarification of these comments if required.