OBJECTION TO DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION A007083208 19 Chester Street and associated Chester Street/Morse Street properties, Newstead

To Brisbane City Council,

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I make this submission formally objecting to Development Application A007083208 for the proposed development at 11A, 13, 15, 17 and 19 Chester Street and associated properties on Morse Street, Newstead.

I recognise that Newstead is an inner-city area undergoing continued redevelopment and that appropriately designed higher-density residential development forms an important part of the area's future.

My objection is therefore not to redevelopment of the site, nor to residential development occurring in Newstead.

My objection relates specifically to the proposed scale, height, intensity and resulting amenity impacts of the current 35-storey proposal.

1. Excessive building height and scale

The proposed development reaches approximately 35 storeys.

This represents a substantial increase in height and built form compared with the development previously contemplated and approved on this site.

The previous development outcome for the Chester Street and Morse Street site involved buildings approximately 15 to 17 storeys in height.

A move from approximately 15 to 17 storeys to 35 storeys is not a minor design evolution. It represents a fundamentally different scale of development.

The proposed tower would become a dominant built form within this immediate section of Chester Street and would materially alter the relationship between existing buildings, the street and surrounding residential properties.

I ask Council to carefully consider whether this intensity and height represents an appropriate planning outcome for this particular site, rather than simply whether additional residential density is desirable generally within inner Brisbane.

2. Relationship with existing surrounding development

The immediate Chester Street, Morse Street and James Street area contains a mixture of residential, commercial, retail and hospitality development.

That mixed character is one of the area's strengths.

New development should respond to the established urban context rather than overwhelm it.

A 35-storey tower introduces a substantially different vertical scale to the immediate Chester Street environment.

The issue is particularly significant given the proximity of existing residential buildings.

The proposal should demonstrate a genuine transition in height, bulk and massing between the proposed tower and existing neighbouring development.

I do not consider the current proposal adequately achieves this.

3. Amenity impacts on 7 Chester Street

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The proposed building height and massing have the potential to materially affect the existing outlook and sense of openness presently experienced .....

I acknowledge that preservation of an individual private view should not determine the outcome of a development application.

The concern is broader.

The proposed development would introduce a substantial new built form into an existing open outlook and alter the visual relationship between neighbouring residential buildings.

Council should consider the cumulative effects of:

visual bulk;

loss of outlook and openness;

building separation;

overlooking and privacy;

shadowing;

access to daylight;

the perceived enclosure of neighbouring residential areas; and

the amenity of existing communal rooftop and recreation areas.

These impacts become materially greater as building height and mass increase.

4. Building separation and privacy

A tower of this height creates increased potential for overlooking between apartments, balconies, communal areas and rooftop facilities.

The proposed 35-storey scale means these effects extend well beyond conventional street-level interface considerations.

Council should require clear evidence demonstrating adequate separation distances and privacy outcomes between the proposed development and 7 Chester Street.

Screening and landscaping should not be relied upon as substitutes for appropriate tower separation.

5. Overshadowing and access to daylight

The height and mass of the proposed building also warrant detailed consideration of overshadowing.

Assessment should extend beyond public streets and consider effects on existing neighbouring residential buildings, balconies and communal recreation areas throughout different periods of the year.

A development of this scale should demonstrate that surrounding residents retain reasonable access to daylight and sunlight.

6. Precedent and cumulative development

The proposal should also be considered in the context of continued redevelopment throughout Newstead.

Newstead is already experiencing substantial residential growth.

Approving significant departures in height on individual sites has consequences beyond the boundaries of each development.

Approval of a 35-storey development on this site risks establishing an expectation for similar height and density outcomes on surrounding sites.

The cumulative result could substantially alter the intended scale and character of this part of Newstead.

Council should therefore consider the precedent created by accepting a development substantially taller than the development previously contemplated for this site.

7. Traffic and parking

The proposal contains 173 dwellings together with commercial and hospitality uses.

This will introduce additional residents, visitors, employees, service vehicles and delivery movements into the Chester Street and surrounding road network.

Chester Street already performs several functions, including residential access, servicing, parking and connections toward James Street and surrounding commercial areas.

Council should closely examine the cumulative traffic impact rather than assessing the development in isolation.

Particular consideration should be given to:

vehicle movements during peak periods;

access and egress arrangements;

service and delivery vehicles;

waste collection;

visitor parking;

pedestrian safety;

interaction between vehicles and pedestrians around Chester Street and Morse Street; and

cumulative traffic generated by other approved and proposed developments in Newstead.

8. Construction impacts

A project of this scale will involve a substantial construction period.

Residents immediately surrounding the site are likely to experience construction traffic, heavy vehicle movements, concrete pours, crane operations, road occupation, dust, noise and other disruption.

Given the site's constrained inner-city location and proximity to occupied residential buildings, Council should require a detailed construction management framework addressing these impacts before development proceeds.

Particular consideration should be given to construction hours, truck routes, temporary road closures, pedestrian management, crane operations, noise and dust management.

9. Flood overlay and site constraints

The public notification identifies building work within the flood overlay.

Given the proposed intensity of development, Council should satisfy itself that flood risk, evacuation, basement and building access, essential services and flood resilience have been adequately addressed.

The significant increase in residential population proposed for the site makes appropriate treatment of these matters particularly important.

10. Public benefits do not automatically justify excessive height

I recognise that the development proposes active uses, landscaping and pedestrian connections at ground level.

Those elements have potential public benefits.

They should be assessed on their merits.

They should not, however, automatically justify a development outcome of 35 storeys.

There is no inherent reason why improvements to the public realm, pedestrian connectivity, landscaping or ground-level activation require the proposed tower to reach this height.

Council should consider whether these benefits could be retained while substantially reducing the tower height and overall bulk.

11. Previous development demonstrates an alternative outcome

Of particular relevance is the fact that this site has previously been subject to substantially lower-scale development proposals.

Those proposals demonstrate that redevelopment of this site is achievable without a 35-storey tower.

The planning question is therefore not whether the site should remain undeveloped.

The question is whether the significant increase in height and scale now proposed represents an appropriate outcome for the site and surrounding neighbourhood.

In my view it does not.

Requested outcome

I respectfully request that Brisbane City Council refuse Development Application A007083208 in its current form.

Alternatively, if Council considers approval appropriate, I request that substantial amendments be required before approval, including a material reduction in building height and bulk, improved separation from surrounding residential development, measures addressing privacy and overlooking, demonstrated protection of reasonable daylight and residential amenity, and appropriate traffic, servicing and construction-management measures.

Newstead will continue to accommodate substantial growth.

That growth should occur in a manner consistent with sound planning principles and with appropriate regard to residents who already live in the area.

The current proposal represents an excessive increase in height and intensity for this particular site.

For these reasons, I object to Development Application A007083208 in its present form.

Yours faithfully,

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