

Not-for-profit nabs prime site for aged-care

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AGED CARE

An ageing car-wash ripe for million-dollar residential development in Sydney's Darlinghurst will be converted into a five-storey aged-care facility for the homeless in response to a growing housing crisis facing ageing Australians.

Not-for-profit aged-care group HammondCare has secured the Star Carwash site at 118A Darlinghurst Road, with plans to turn it a dedicated aged-care residence for the homeless.

Located next to St John's Anglican Church in the heart of a fashionable and fast-gentrifying strip including Mèssina Gelato and cocktail bars, the site could fetch tens of million as a residential development site.

However, HammondCare has negotiated a long-term lease from owner St Johns Anglican Church, which has forged a reputation helping the homeless population in the area which is steadily growing in number and in age.

"The aged homeless and those at risk of homelessness are increasing in numbers and sadly, often fall through the cracks of existing service provision," HammondCare chief executive Stephen Judd said.

The move comes in response to a growing issue of ageing homelessness, wrought by rising house prices and issues of affordability with a disproportionate impact on the ageing population.

HammondCare predicts the number of older people in the private rental market will increase by 115 per cent by 2026, and that weekly median rents in Sydney are likely to exceed the maximum age pension for a single person — even with rent assistance — by 30 per cent.

The 2011 census estimated that about 14 per cent of the national homeless population were over the age of 55. Equally, by 2021, older people are expected to be the largest demographic in need of social housing, making up a third of demand in NSW.

Most care homes for homeless people in the Darlinghurst area provided short-term shelter or long-term accommodation that came without high levels of care. The new facility aimed to alleviate this demand by providing long-term, specialist care for people with complex needs, Dr Judd said.

A development application will go before City of Sydney Council in April. The proposed building will accommodate about 50 people in a sustainable design with clear views of the church's heritage-listed spire.

HammondCare is also in-



The Australian

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HammondCare chief executive Stephen Judd at the Darlinghurst car-wash site yesterday

BRITTA CAMPION

involved in discussions with health and community providers in the area, including St Vincent's Hospital, about possible referrals for the home. It has also begun meeting,

in partnership with St John's, with community and resident groups to discuss the project.

"We believe this project will make a significant contribution to

the lives of people who are currently homeless, or who are at risk of ending up on the streets," Rector the Reverend Edward Vaughan said. "St John's has been serving

homeless people for almost 30 years ... we welcome HammondCare's plans to provide quality accommodation and aged care for people doing it tough."