

— **Exclusive**

Addenbrooke sells site meant for controversial land swap deal

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Property developer Addenbrooke has sold the Sydney site that was intended to be part of a controversial [land swap deal with A2B](#)

[\[https://www.afr.com/property/commercial/land-swap-deal-with-addenbrooke-to-net-new-135m-office-for-a2b-20211117-p599oa\]](https://www.afr.com/property/commercial/land-swap-deal-with-addenbrooke-to-net-new-135m-office-for-a2b-20211117-p599oa) – which led to the listed taxi group's board being replaced – ending an almost three-year saga.

Developer City West Housing acquired the Bourke Road site in Alexandria for an undisclosed price. The site is four kilometres from Sydney's CBD. City West intends to turn the site into affordable housing apartments.



City West Housing will turn the 20-26 Bourke Road site into 138 apartments for affordable housing.

Private property developer Addenbrooke is run by the O'Neils, one of Sydney's wealthiest families, which owns some of the harbour city's most prominent residential projects such as the Goldsbrough Mort Building in Darling Harbour and The Rex in Potts Point.

The private property developer had entered into a lucrative memorandum of understanding with A2B – which operates 13cabs, Silver Service and Cabcharge – in November 2021, where the two would undertake a land swap deal.

Addenbrooke was to swap its 2440 square metre site – while also building an office on the site for A2B – while getting the taxi group's 8489 square metre site on O'Riordan Street in return. The two sites sat beside each other between O'Riordan Street and Bourke Road.

A2B had valued its larger site at \$57 million but a NSW government valuation said the land was worth \$71 million. Meanwhile, Addenbrooke's smaller site was valued at only about \$20 million by the NSW government, but the total value would have risen to \$135 million after an office was built, according to the A2B board at the time.

Due to the land value differences between the two assets, the proposed deal drew the ire of A2B's biggest shareholders, including Sandon Capital, and eventually fell through.

The shareholder backlash that arose from the proposed deal led to the resignations of A2B's entire board at the time, including chairman Paul Oneile and chief executive Andrew Skelton.

After the land swap deal fell through in early 2022, Addenbrooke put its site on sale in August last year before finally finding a buyer in City West Housing.

A2B, now led by Mark Bayliss, has also dusted its hands off the property saga. The taxi group sold its site to Double Space, a joint venture between Chinese companies Enice and Bestplace, for \$78 million in March last year before it was acquired by [\[https://www.afr.com/companies/transport/singapore-giant-in-182m-buyout-of-13cabs-operator-a2b-20231222-p5etai\]](https://www.afr.com/companies/transport/singapore-giant-in-182m-buyout-of-13cabs-operator-a2b-20231222-p5etai) Singapore's ComfortDelGro for \$182 million in December.

City West Housing will turn the Bourke Road site into 138 affordable housing apartments, subject to City of Sydney approval. The site adds to City West's inner-city plans, which also include transforming a similar site on Wyndham Street, which is located less than 2 kilometres away, into apartments.

"This development site in the City of Sydney will provide much-needed affordable housing for essential workers and other households on very low to moderate incomes close to public transport, local amenities and employment opportunities," City West Housing chief executive Leonie King said.

At Wyndham Street, the affordable housing developer has proposed to build about 104 units on Wyndham Street to replace warehouses, a pet store and a basketball facility.

Both sites are minutes' walking distance from train stations that sit within the Botany Road Corridor, which was recently rezoned by the City of Sydney to encourage more affordable housing.

Colliers' Michael Crombie and Trent Gallagher managed the sale.



Leonie King, chief executive of City West Housing.



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