



PRESERVING AUSTRALIA'S OLDEST GARDEN SUBURB

P.O. Box 85, HUNTERS HILL, N.S.W. 2110

The Councillors
Hunters Hill Council
Alexandra Street
Hunters Hill

24 June 2014

Dear Councillors,

Re Gladesville Shopping Village development

The Hunters Hill Trust is heartened by the fact that Moch Pty Ltd has withdrawn their application to develop the Coles site. We also congratulate councillors on the decision to revise the DCP with a view to incorporating the original five metre wide set back from Cowell Street for any new development on this site.

The setback would ensure any new proposal incorporates deep soil planting and a green wall along this boundary. These would provide a softer transition from the higher density commercial zoning on the western side of the street to the lower density residential zoning on the eastern side.

As well, the setback would allow for a pedestrian footpath along the western side of Flagstaff Street, which presently does not exist but which is clearly necessary to make Flagstaff Street a more active street front as well as allowing proper pedestrian flow around and through the site.

The Trust strongly believes that Council must insist on the incorporation of the heritage-listed cottage at 10 Cowell Street into the overall design of any new proposal. We reiterate our dismay that Council ever considered selling this property without insisting on its retention, restoration and inclusion in any proposal to re-develop the site.

In relation to this, The Trust cannot understand why Council decided to overturn Paul Davies' recommendation, in his 2005 Heritage Status Review of the Gladesville Shops, that 10 Cowell St be upgraded to a (then) Schedule 6 Heritage item in LEP 2010 (Draft). The item was previously listed as Schedule 7, *Contributory Building* in the old LEP. However its listing was removed entirely prior to the submission of the new LEP to the Department of Planning.

The original reason given was that Council didn't have time to conduct a review of all properties in the Davies Report. This is not consistent with the fact that the Davies report proposed seven sites to be upgraded. All of these were included in the new LEP schedule 5 with the single exception of 10 Cowell St.

The General Manager gave a clue as to the real reason why No 10 had been overlooked when he conceded at the 10 February 2014 Council meeting in response to a question without notice "more time was required to discuss with Council's Heritage Planner (1

day/week position) whether the significance of 10 Cowell Street was such that it outweighed the impact it would have on the development potential of Block 21.” In other words, heritage should not be an impediment to commercial development.

The NSW Government’s mandate for the protection of heritage properties makes it clear that economic benefit is no justification for the removal of heritage protection.

Councillors should be aware that, because of the lack of clarity and transparency in the removal of the 10 Cowell Street’s heritage status, there is a feeling in the community that, not only were our interests overlooked, but also that the process had an air of duplicity about it.

The Trust believes Council must take this opportunity to revisit its original decision. We feel this would reassure our members and the wider community that Council is committed to transparency in its dealings with developers as well as being fully committed to the preservation and care of our heritage.

Finally, we urge Council to encourage the site’s developer to aim for the highest architectural values in any revised proposal. Rather than attempting to use the existing car park as the base for any new building, any revised development proposal must involve completely rebuilding the structures on the site starting with a new underground car park that addresses all the access issues noted in the Architectus review.

Excavating and placing cars at levels lower than the existing basement would allow for a scheme that has its residential towers starting at a level that is more in keeping with the existing pedestrian levels along the right of way and Massey Street. This would allow the main shopping and retail areas to be set a level lower and lead to a reduction in the bulk and scale of the proposal.

We are opposed the residential units having their own gated outdoor space that excludes the public. We urge Council to insist that the new proposal gives much more back to the community in terms of publicly accessible space and community amenities.

If councillors are looking for inspiration, a very good example of how a large development can integrate public and private space and create a fine landscaped public area can be seen at the new Centra Square on Broadway.

Yours sincerely,

Tony Coote
President The Hunters Hill Trust

Copies to
General Manager Hunters Hill Council
Group Manager Development and Regulatory Control
The Hunters Hill Trust membership