

CASTLECRAG PROGRESS ASSOCIATION INC
GENERAL MEETING HELD AT MARION MAHONY HALL
GLENAEON SCHOOL AT 8PM ON Wednesday 17 October 2018

MINUTES

Present

There were 96 people attending the meeting, including Mayor Gail Giles-Gidney, Councillor Denis Fernandez and Councillor Brendon Zhu, but not including those present from the Quadrangle Development team (the Q-Team).

The meeting was chaired by the Association President, Paul Stokes who delivered the Acknowledgement of Country.

Apologies

There were 30 apologies including Dr Stanley Quek.

Confirmation of Previous Minutes

Confirmation of the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of 28 June 2018

Moved: Lindy Batterham

Seconded: Gay Spies

Carried

Welcome from the President

The President welcomed all those present and moved to suspend standing procedures in the interest of time. As such, the Treasurer's Report and Correspondence were held over to the next General Meeting in June.

The President made reference to the issue of the Northern Beaches Tunnel noting that several committee members had attended a meeting of the Naremburn Progress Association at which representatives of the RMS made presentations on a proposal to place a "dive site", to access the tunnel during construction, in the Flat Rock Drive bushland area. He noted that there was to be a meeting on this issue at North Sydney Leagues Club, the following week, and that there was additional information at the back of the hall.

Presentations by the Q-Team

Brian Elton - Managing Partner of Elton Consulting and leader of the Q-team.

Brian described the process of consultation with the community, ultimately to take a proposal to Council.

Brian noted that:

- What was being shown was not yet a design;
- The Q-Team had been engaged in consultation with a number of community groups including CPA, WBGS, and FOH;
- A draft planning proposal was expected to go to Council towards the end of 2018;
- The QLC had been established by CPA to interact with and challenge the Q-team and that it brought a range of significant skills to the process;
- The Q-team had met with Council officers to brief them on the process and flag a number of issues for future discussion:
 - relocation of Castlecrag Library;
 - appropriate standards for car parking;
 - employment within the site;
 - the planning process;
- An arborist had provided a detailed report on a number of very significant trees on the site regarding their health and ability to survive redevelopment of the site. All but 4 are in fantastic condition and they are confident that all the healthy trees can be retained;

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- The legacy of Walter Burley Griffin was an important part of the place and consideration was being given to housing the Griffin puppets within the development and also the Bim Hilder sculptures;
- The current public space on the site has an area of 450 sqm but the proposed development would provide for 900 sqm (75 m x 12 m). Dr Quek has agreed, in principle, to a “Design Excellence” competition to produce a detailed design for the site, within the control elements, where 3 or more architects will be invited to submit. Local people would participate in preparing the brief and judging the submissions;
- Dr Quek was amenable to the idea of local residents being given a first option to buy units on the site;
- It will be at least 2 years before any consideration could be given to a Quadrangle proposal by Council or State Government.

Michael Neustein - Director of City Planning Works and Q-Team member.

Michael described the planning process for the development noting that:

- They were nowhere near finalising a Planning Proposal;
- A Planning Proposal represents a new zoning plan for that site only. It defines planning parameters such as height and floor space but not a specific design;
- The Planning Proposal is lodged with Council who have 90 days to consider;
- If Council doesn't consider the proposal within 90 days, the applicant has a right of review with the Dept. of Planning;
- The Council's determination of the proposal is then reviewed by the Dept. of Planning – the Gateway Process – and returned to Council for public exhibition (~28 days) and preparation of a report to State Government for final approval and incorporation into the LEP for the site.
 - **Ian Arnott**, Planning Manager WCC, noted that Council's intention is for the Planning Proposal to go firstly to the Local Planning Panel for advice, before it goes to Council. Council will then decide whether the Proposal goes to Gateway.
- This process can take around 2 years;
- Once the LEP is formalised, a “Design Excellence” competition will be held and a DA prepared for submission to Council;
- The DA then goes on public exhibition with a specific building design;
- If the DA is approved, detailed construction drawings are prepared and ~ 3 years (from DA approval) demolition, excavation and construction can begin.

Bruce Swalwell – Q-Team Architect

What is being shown is not the design but how the site might look. The concept presented shows:

- Considerable landscaping and preservation of the trees on the site;
- Layered building plan
 - Level below roadway (LG) is accessed by escalators & lifts. It contains the supermarket, some commercial office space, short-term drop-off, disabled parking and ramp system – 2 levels of parking below;
 - Public space (~900 sqm) on the northern side of the building at Edinburgh Rd level – larger than currently - surrounded by shops and some commercial space
 - 3 levels of units above the ground level – 3rd level setback from first 2 to reduce the visual impact and scale of the structure.
 - 4th level (above the ground level) has 8 “garden penthouses” with substantial landscaping.

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Questions and Answers

The following questions and comments were put to the speakers without notice:

- Helen Levitt (resident) – the density of trees on the site is not as shown in the concept sketches – the trees are old and do not provide the amount of shade suggested
 - Bruce Swalwell (BS) – a qualified arborist has been engaged to determine the locations and size of the trees and of their root systems;
 - Brian Elton (BE) – the photographs of the trees shown in the images are real photographs of the trees. We believe that the trees can be retained in the development. He is happy to share the arborist's report.
- Kate McCann (resident): Trying to understand the scale of the development
 - On one hand giving community back twice the open space
 - Developer getting 7- 8 floors
 - Community “giving up a whole lot” – density, car parking issues, traffic congestion etc.
 - Don't believe that the development can be assessed alone but must also include what happens on the other side of the street
 - BE – In order for the existing centre to be renewed there needs to be sufficient development to make the project commercially viable but not so much as to alienate the community – the “sweet spot”.
 - BS – the extra underground floors are required to accommodate the current parking on the LG floor plus additional parking for units.
 - Michael Neustein (MN) – the commercial parking is essentially the same as now with additional parking for apartments -- traffic generation from apartments is about 1/3rd of that from commercial so traffic generation will not be greatly above current volumes. Thorough modelling of the traffic implications is a necessary part of the process.
 - BE – the Gateway process requires a range of impact studies to be undertaken as part of the process of which traffic is just one of several that are open to public scrutiny.
- Stuart Frith (resident & QLC member) – the QLC has been working to understand and challenge the developers' assumptions. We have constructed our own financial model of the project and the Q-team have shared many of their assumptions with us. We have concluded that “something like” the proposal may be needed for feasibility, having regard to the fixed costs of the project. In the process we have also learnt that the developer pays a large amount of money to Council to cover a range of infrastructure costs incurred by the development.
- Sandra Bushell - (resident) – the design concept is bland and unimaginative and out of scale with the other side of the road. Does the Q-team have plans for the other side of the road? The design competition is a good idea.
 - BE – Dr Quek has shown no interest in the other side of Edinburgh Rd. Regarding the height, the north side has a planning control of 11 metres, while the south side is 9 metres currently. Noted again, this is not a design, only an indication of what might be.

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- Ian Davis (resident) – How long will the construction process take and what might the experience for residents be like?
 - MN – about 3 years to begin construction
 - About 2 years to get the planning proposal
 - 9 months plus to get the DA
 - 5 months – construction drawings
 - 2-3 months to negotiate construction contract
 - 2 – 2 ¼ year build
 - BE – regarding the experience during construction,
 - the developer is obliged to have, and adhere to, a construction management plan and a traffic management plan which are public documents that require development consent.
 - “Considerate Constructors Methodology” (started in the UK) has been adopted to make sure that the construction process is managed as well as can be done.
- Suzie Gold (resident) – how does this project fit in with the new planning processes?
 - Ian Arnott (IA) – when a Planning Proposal is submitted, Council is obliged to seek advice from the Local Planning Panel (formerly IHAPS) which is incorporated into the report to Council for decision. At the DA stage, the application may go to either the Local Planning Panel or, if over \$30m, to the Sydney North Planning Panel. At panel meetings, anyone who has made a submission to the DA is given an opportunity to address the panel.
- Ben Gerstal (resident) – the majority of units seem only to have natural light and ventilation from one façade.
 - BS – the diagrams are only indicative envelopes at present for the purpose of identifying the key planning elements for the project. The details will have to comply with all regulations and controls.
 - IA – when a developer submits a Planning Proposal, Council seeks to have a Concept Design included to aid in the understanding of the planning implications of the proposal – there’s no a guarantee the result will look like the concept.
- Chris Lewis (Edinburgh Rd West) – How long will construction take once the bulldozers arrive?
 - BE – could be 16 to 18 months or a little longer depending on site conditions.
- Neil Buhrick – (resident) – How accurately does the presentation represent what will be built?
 - BS - The pictures are constructed analytically and show the view lines as accurately as possible. A physical model may be a better representation for the future.
- Andrew Davis – (resident) – How many people do you envisage living in the apartments and how many cars?
 - BS – noted that
 - they are looking at ~80 apartments, mix of 1- 2- & 3- beds;
 - there are currently 117 car spaces – they envisage up to 200 over 2 levels.
- Mark Crew (resident) – Has any consideration been given to an alternative access to Castlecrag from EVW other than Edinburgh Rd. Safety, traffic flow and ambience are all issues? You risk killing the very thing you are buying into.
 - BS – consideration has been given to access from the site directly into EVW but the advice received, based on traffic analysis, has been that it is very dangerous.

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- Scott Graham (resident) – it was suggested that retail parking might be reduced but there appear to be more shops? Also note, the car park is full much of the day.
 - BS – Under the present plan, retail space on the ground floor is 2,500 sqm plus the supermarket on the LG floor at 1100 sqm. Total retail space, with basement parking, is 3,600 sqm.
 - IA – Council will be reviewing car parking rates in the context of the Local Centres Strategy and CBD strategy, which is yet to be done but the focus is likely to be on the residential component where the intention is to encourage less car usage.
- Hugh Stowe (resident) – are car parking needs driven by minimum required by Council or what is optimal/convenient from the perspective of the community?
 - BS – the developer is open to all considerations and has no desire to “dig a big hole in the ground” and would be happy to have less excavation rather than more.
- Roger Gidley (resident) – Has any thought gone into determining what texture the building should have given the WBG heritage?
 - BS – This will be fleshed out in the future with a recommended palette of materials and finishes that is consistent with the WBG ethos.
- Margaret McGirr (resident) – There is an inadequate bus service from the eastern end of Castlecrag which is almost non-existent on weekends.
 - BE – likely that a “T-Map” (transport map) will be required that looks at the adequacy of local transport in the context of the development. This could include innovative methods of transport sharing or even local mini-buses sponsored by the developer, although no commitments could be made.
- Barbara Hastings (resident) – might it be possible to purchase properties to the south of the Quadrangle, on the Postern, as part of the project, to create an alternative access to Castlecrag other than Edinburgh Rd?
 - BE – It is an option that has been considered but it has many difficulties.
- Barbara Grimm (resident) – How does Kensington Lane dining precinct fit into the consideration. The existing noise from the restaurants, on Edinburgh Rd, is already a problem and more restaurants will just make it worse.
 - BS – A retail mix study will be done as part of the public exhibition of the Planning Proposal.
- Diana Jones (resident & CPA) – When called for a show of hands ~80% of those present agreed that their household had 2 or more cars.
- Ruth Kendon (resident & CPA) – Is there a possibility of a third floor of parking?
 - BS – it all depends on Council parking rules as to how much car parking is required.

The meeting was closed at 9:30 pm.

Next General Meeting will be held on 20 March 2019.