

CASTLECRAG PROGRESS ASSOCIATION INC

GENERAL MEETING HELD AT THE WILLOUGHBY PARK BOWLING CLUB ROBERT ST, WILLOUGHBY

AT 8PM ON WEDNESDAY 20 NOVEMBER 2019

MINUTES

Present

There were 223 people attending the meeting, including Mayor Gail Giles-Gidney, Councillor Denis Fernandez, Councillor Hugh Erikson, Councillor Brendon Zhu and Director Greg McDonald. Of those attending 86 were financial members.

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

Apologies

There were 9 apologies registered before the meeting.

Confirmation of Previous Minutes

Held over to the next General Meeting.

Treasurer's Report

Held over to the next General Meeting.

Correspondence

Held over to the next General Meeting.

Welcome from the President

The President welcomed those attending and outlined the nature of the meeting.

- The meeting is a General Meeting of the CPA to which both members and friends have been invited to attend so that they may express their views regarding the future of the Castlecrag Local Centre. To that extent it is a "public meeting".
- As a General Meeting of the CPA it is being held under the terms of the Constitution of the CPA.
- Any vote taken will be an informal vote. It will not be limited to members nor will a formal ballot be taken and, as such, any vote will be an expression of the view of the meeting and not of the CPA.

Presentations by Architectural Design Teams

The three firms, selected to take part in the Quadrangle Design Excellence Competition gave brief presentations of their entries. They did not take questions. Summarised versions of the presentations may be found on the CPA website: castlecrag.org.au

FJMT – Richard Francis Jones

Richard spoke to FJMT's design noting that:

- Their entry is informed by 10 principles:
 1. It is a collaboration between architecture and the landscape;
 2. It seeks to reflect Griffin's vision of living close to nature and the bushland;
 3. It reflects, in miniature, the changes in landscape from the cove to ridge;
 4. It proposes a radial alignment of the structures that reflects that found on the Griffin Estate to the East;

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5. It incorporates, abstractly, landscape features like the “gully ravine” between two central pavilions leading down the slope to the “gully walk” running along the southern boundary of the site, from EVW to The Postern;
 6. It reflects the terraced nature of the peninsula with four pavilions representing rocky outcrops found around Castlecrag;
 7. It incorporates public space, with a “bushland landscape”, facing North along Edinburgh Rd;
 8. There are recessed colonnades along Edinburgh Rd beneath, the cantilevered pavilions, reflecting features of Griffin houses with their stone walls and deep, colonnaded recesses;
 9. The Griffin’s environmentalism is reflected by having 100 kW of PV giving net zero energy draw from the grid.
 10. The landscaped terraces would be planted with endemic species and be shared by the residents.
- Richard noted that the 2 eastern pavilions would be 4 storeys in height, including the “Attics” on top of the pavilions while the 2 western pavilions would be 5 storeys with their Attics. Without the Attics the pavilions would be 3 & 4 storeys.
 - The lower ground floor (below the level of Edinburgh Rd) would contain the IGA supermarket and some apartments and there would be 2 basement levels for parking.

Tonkin Zulaika Greer

- TZG found the design of the Quadrangle to be an intriguing proposition given the wonderful landscape characteristics to the East and EVW with traffic of 30,000 cars per day.
- Broader context of the site includes:
 - the landscape of Middle Harbour
 - Council’s planning objectives
 - the Castlecrag peninsula
- There is a “conundrum” between the urban proposition of the high street on the one hand and homes within a bushland setting.
- Physical considerations for the site involved looking at the Griffin Estate c.1921 and its the pattern of pathways. The design “pulls these pathways into the site” linking the The Postern to a public space in the middle of the development via a “forest walkway” and a diagonally aligned “forest stairway”. The central public space, or “town square”, would include a large mature tree – the “Meeting Tree” with buildings to the East and West.
- Philosophical considerations related to the Griffin design principles:
 - Landscape & landform
 - Massing within the landscape
 - Articulation of the massing
 - Materiality & tectonics
 - Architectural detail
- Car parking & traffic strategy seeks reduce impact of generated traffic on Edinburgh Rd with a segregated loading dock – 3 options for traffic flow were presented.
- There are 2 designs proposed:
 - one with 3 to 5 storeys, over the site, offering 85% open space on the site; and
 - the other with 4 storeys offering 69% open space.
- There were a number of images shown depicting the building materiality & articulation e.g. sandstone pillars, “knit-lock” patterned walls;
- A number of sketches were presented illustrating the building from different directions.

Alex Tzannes

- Alex noted that Castlecrag was a place “like no other” especially given its connection to Marion and Walter and the elements of the Griffin-Mahony philosophy;
- Commitment to community – all voices should be reflected;
- The design values incorporated seek to:
 - distinguish through landscape as a source of identity
 - have a distinctive character
 - reflect the Griffin philosophy
- Quadrangle layout is about designing with nature and looking to a low carbon future;
- First principle designs:
 - that reflect a progressive society
 - that are practical and able to adapt to future needs
 - that incorporate distinctive materiality
 - that are of a scale and bulk that is appropriate to the place;
- Two options were explored, both with floorspace ratio of 1.8 above Edinburgh Rd and 0.4 below. The reduced 4 storey option has reduced community space compared to the 5 storey option;
- The designs include:
 - a zig-zag form along the western side of the building facing EVW;
 - 2 major courtyards, rather than 1 to reduce “heat island” effect;
 - a ground floor of concrete and sandstone construction with the upper floors clad in copper which will turn green over time;
 - elevated landscape gardens and residential courtyards
 - supermarket entry from both EVW and from the Western courtyard.

Presentation by Michael Thomson Vice President of the Walter Burley Griffin Society

Council is currently considering an application by the Griffin Society to have the Griffin Centre placed on the Heritage Register. This submission was based on a heritage report prepared by Hindmarsh & Robertson.

It was noted that:

- The Griffin Centre was designed in 1921 by Spargo and construction completed in 1922. The design was approved by Griffin.
- The design was holistic in nature and reflected the principle of the building being subordinate to the landscape.
- The building was a single storey above Edinburgh Rd.

The full text of Michael’s speech can be found on the CPA website: castlecrag.org.au

Presentations by the Group of Four Concerned Residents (G4)

Andrew Davis introduced the himself and the other authors of the Master Plan Principles: Kate McCann, Malcolm Latham, Ross de la Motte. Andrew stated that their group was pro-development but that they believed that the community did not want any more than 3 storeys above Edinburgh Rd and that any development must preserve the unique character of Castlecrag.

Kate McCann gave a review of the events of the last couple of years noting that Council would be voting on its Local Centres Strategy at its 9 December Council meeting.

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Ross de la Motte noted again the overarching principle that Castlecrag buildings should be “subservient to the landscape”. He stated his view that any building should be lower in height than the existing mature trees. Any 3rd storey should be considerable set back from the 1st and 2nd storeys. He noted that Castlecrag was a “suburb in the bush” and the careful handling of the trees was essential. He noted that there were already issues with traffic and was concerned about the incremental effects of development.

The presentation slides used by Kate and Ross can be found on the CPA website: castlecrag.org.au.

Questions & Debate from the Floor

Scott Graham - Which stakeholders does Council respond to?

- Greg McDonald (WCC) – submissions had been received from many residents across the LGA in response to the Local Centre Strategy process arising out of the Greater Sydney Commission. Officers are in the process of preparing a report on the Strategy and a recommendation to go to Council on 9 December.

Hugh Stowe – He expressed concern that a limit of 3 storeys combined with a requirement for open space might unduly harm the viability of redevelopment of the Quadrangle. and lead to the current developer selling on.

Anna Nilsson - Expressed concern about what was happening in Northbridge could happen here. She pointed to Dr Quek’s consultation with community groups and his record successful developments.

Matthew McCann - He noted that the discussion was about the Planning Principles that are going to Council based on what’s good for the site. It has nothing to do with the appropriate planning outcome for the site.

Helen Fraser – Helen asked why Council came to see the architect designs.

- Greg McDonald answered that they were there because they hadn’t seen the designs previously.

Ute Koehler - She believes that the majority of people in the suburb want no more than 3 storeys and wondered why Council was here to listen to 4 and 5 storey options.

Leon Smith - Leon expressed the view that the developer was being demonised and that those who do, do not speak for him. The development needs to be viable. If Dr Quek moves on there is a risk that we will get something we don’t want.

Fabia Claridge - Fabia noted that she lives in a Griffin house and those who oppose more than 3 storeys do speak for her. She wondered whether the developer “would have to sleep on the street” if he didn’t get 4 storeys.

Ruth Kendon - Ruth noted that, in the end, everyone needs to get on with each other and that in the spirit of compromise a consensus might be found around 4 storeys.

John Tamblyn - John noted that from discussions with others around the village, who may come to meetings without expressing their views publicly, he felt that there was a preparedness to accept either 3 or 4 storeys and that viability was necessary.

John Moritelli – John sought clarification from Council about process but felt that in formulating design principles we should not try to be too prescriptive

- Greg McDonald – Greg noted that a DA coming before Council that was within the “controls” would pass through smoothly. However, he noted that there were provisions for the controls to be exceeded through a Planning Proposal but this would be a more lengthy process. On 9 December Council will look to adopt the Planning Strategy. It will take another 12 months to produce the Planning Controls with further community consultation.

Rod Gillespie – Noted that it was possible to build to a limit of 3 storeys if there were less open space.

Motion from the Floor

During the meeting, the G4 requested that the following motion be put to the meeting assembled:

“That this meeting adopt the Castlecrag Local Centre Master Plan Principles as submitted to Council on 19 September 2019 and requests Council to incorporate them in its revised LEP/DCP for the Castlecrag local centre”

On a show of hands, the motion was:

- agreed to, by a majority of those present; with
- a substantial minority (between 30% and 40%) against the motion; and
- a number of people neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

The motion was not a formal motion under the constitution of the CPA and was not seconded nor was voting limited to members of the Association:

- There were 220 people present who signed in before the meeting and possibly an additional 30 or 40 more who had not been able to sign in.
- Only 86 of those present (~30%), excluding the President, were financial members of CPA.
- Over 60 of those present had not provided an RSVP before the meeting and were not on CPA's mailing list. As a consequence, we were not able to email a copy of the Principles document to them prior to the meeting.

For all of these reasons, the vote was indicative only, expressed the range of opinions in the room and was not binding on CPA or any other person or group present.

Meeting Closure

The meeting was closed at 10:00 pm.