



Major Projects Unit  
Department of Planning & Infrastructure  
23-33 Bridge Street  
Sydney 2000

**Attention:** Helen Mulcahy, Senior Planner  
Metropolitan and Regional Projects South

7 March 2013

**Re: 78-90 Old Canterbury Road, Lewisham**

**MP08\_0195 MOD 1 - Amendment of building footprints, access arrangements to onsite parking, open space, building heights, building use and conditions of the approval and Statement of Commitments**

## **A. Preamble**

This submission relates to proposed amendments to the above mixed use residential and retail development, known as the Meriton site.

The Meriton site and adjacent Allied Mills site are in a critical location between the “urban villages” of Summer Hill and Lewisham, at the junction of the Western Rail Line, the Inner West Light Rail, the GreenWay Shared Use Path and two heavily trafficked roads (a regional and a state road). The two sites combined have the potential to showcase best practice urban design and sustainable living and could become a vibrant, attractive, accessible, safe, pedestrianised and prosperous hub in a prime inner city location. The development will be judged not just by the quality of its built form, but how well it connects to the precincts around it.

We object to a number of the modifications proposed, as detailed below, because they appear to undermine the very qualities of pedestrian accessibility, sustainability, community connections and best practice urban design which a development of this nature should demonstrate. In our view the proposed modifications significantly impact on the qualities of the development precinct and its ability to relate to the Lewisham West light rail stop, the GreenWay and the adjacent (mainly) residential precincts in an appropriate and meaningful way.

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Working towards a recognisable  
environmental, cultural and  
non-polluting transport corridor  
linking the sub-catchments of  
the Cooks River and Iron Cove.





## B. Introduction to the GreenWay

The GreenWay and Inner West Light Rail corridor runs North/South through the middle of the Allied Mills Flour Mill/Meriton site precinct. The GreenWay is approximately 5km long and follows the route of Hawthorne Canal and the Inner West Light Rail corridor (see map).

The GreenWay is a multi-purpose corridor containing cycling and walking paths, significant open space, recreational and sporting areas, bush regeneration sites, infrastructure and a range of sites of cultural, built form and historical significance. Several thousand people enjoy “getting out and about” in the Greenway every week, which makes it a significant resource for Inner West residents and visitors.

The GreenWay Program is funded principally by Canterbury, Marrickville, Leichhardt and Ashfield councils. Over the years funding has also been allocated by the NSW Government to several GreenWay projects eg open space and storm water improvements, sport, education and public art. In 2009 the GreenWay received a \$1.8 million grant from the NSW Environmental Trust. An Urban Sustainability Project team was established from 2009 to 2012. Project outcomes included bush regeneration, cycling events and training, the GreenWay website, resident surveys, GreenWay Primary Schools Sustainability project, the GreenWay Festival and a number of GreenWay “Hub Days”. The project developed comprehensive strategies dealing with key GreenWay issues, including active transport, biodiversity, public art and bush regeneration.

Following completion of the Environmental Trust funded project in 2012, the four councils committed on-going funding for two part-time positions, a GreenWay Place Manager and a GreenWay Coordinator. Their role is to implement the outcomes of the Urban Sustainability Project and continue to develop and implement the GreenWay vision in partnership with the community, the state government and key stakeholders.

The redevelopment of the Allied Mills/Meriton site presents a unique opportunity to achieve pedestrian and cycle access to the light rail and GreenWay, enhance community connections, increase activation and achieve other key aspects of the Greenway vision, most particularly best practice place making/management and improved urban sustainability.

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## **C. Detailed comments on the proposed modifications**

### **C 1 open space adjustments and subsequent impacts on pedestrian access**

The modification proposes a significant increase in private open space. This is not supported, because the result is a significant reduction in ease of public access through the site, particularly in a North – South direction from Brown St to Hudson St. The amendment proposes that the North – South pathway be reduced to 1m width which is unacceptable. It will restrict pedestrian flow, significantly reduce sightlines/surveillance and will make the path feel constricted and unsafe for pedestrians. This is contrary to what the development as approved should be trying to achieve, which is to maximize pedestrian safety and comfort, encourage permeability and sightlines and to facilitate pedestrian access to and through the site. We therefore object to any modifications which are going to restrict or eliminate comfortable and safe pedestrian access to and through the site. The approved public/private open space provision and pedestrian access ways should therefore be maintained.

### **C 2 pedestrian access to and across Old Canterbury Rd/Longport St**

There is a lack of clarity about how pedestrians are most likely to cross Old Canterbury Rd or Longport St. to access Lewisham Station. This is a vital consideration and needs to be clarified by the proponent. For example, Fig 12.3 of the proponent's modification report proposes a signalized intersection at Old Canterbury Rd and Hudson/Henry St., which has been rejected by the Roads and Maritime Services on several occasions. Similarly, Annexure 2 (under access) identifies a proposed public footbridge from the North end of Brown St., which presumably will go across Longport St. to the railway embankment? The drawings do not detail this overhead bridge. These very important pedestrian linkages need to be properly articulated by the developer and consistent with the traffic authorities' requirements.

### **C 3 deletion of William St car park access and construct a ramp on Western side of site**

We object to the creation of a car park access ramp along the Western boundary of buildings A and B because:-

- it is a major visual and physical barrier between the site and GreenWay/light rail corridor;
- it removes any potential to create a shared vehicular/pedestrian zone along the Western boundary, adjacent to the GreenWay and also significantly reduces room to establish street trees and/or appropriate landscaping along this important boundary;
- it severely restricts comfortable and safe pedestrian access from the site, across the proposed at-grade road, to the GreenWay/light rail corridor;
- it creates a narrow footway "hemmed in" by car ramp walls and fences which will restrict pedestrian flow, significantly reduce sightlines/surveillance and will make the path feel more constricted and unsafe for pedestrians, and
- The car park could be vulnerable to basement flooding, because sections of the site occupied by Buildings A, B and D are within the 1 in 20 year ARI flood zone. Engineered approaches to flood mitigation would exacerbate the ramp's visual/ physical barrier effects.

#### **C 4 narrowing of footpath width on William St**

We object to the proposed reduction in footpath width along William St. There is no obvious justification for this and, once again, it restricts pedestrian comfort and safety along a road which will be used by pedestrians to access the site, GreenWay and light rail from Lewisham Station.

#### **C5 modifications to building footprint and ground floor retail/commercial uses**

The proposed modification to the building A footprint is not supported because it will restrict sightlines from the Eastern side of the site to the GreenWay/light rail corridor and physically encroach on the access hub and community/open space area on the site's south western corner, adjacent to the light rail stop. Similarly, the proposed elimination of dual use and potential ground floor retail/commercial uses for buildings A , C and E is not supported. Both of these modifications will restrict the potential for activation of this important part of the site, which is adjacent to the main access way to the GreenWay and light rail (see also C 7 below).

#### **C6 amended statement of commitments (Annexure 2) - removal of ESD**

We object to the proponent's removal of the requirements to implement best practice ESD (ecologically sustainable development) and, instead, to just adopt the minimum requirements under BASIX. As mentioned in section A above, the development site has the potential to be a high quality and sophisticated model for sustainable, 21<sup>st</sup> century living. It has excellent potential to reduce car dependency and increase walking and cycling (and associated fitness, community connections and general community well-being) because of its proximity to light rail, heavy rail, the GreenWay and the urban villages of Summer Hill and Leichhardt. It follows that the development can also model best practice ESD in respect of energy, water and waste management. We support the approved statement of commitments (section 3.22) which advocates use of photo voltaics, co-generation, best practice water conservation/management (eg through water sensitive urban design) and appropriate selection of materials and fabrics to compliment and enhance the development.

#### **C7 amended statement of commitments (Annexure 2) - remove community and cultural**

We object to the proponent's removal of the requirements to implement community and cultural activities and to provide appropriate public domain, community buildings/facilities and/or public art. These important elements will activate the site, facilitate community connections and encourage a range of social and cultural activities of benefit to site residents and the broader community.

The precinct surrounding the light rail station (on both sides of the rail tracks) is potentially a very important community hub for people of all ages. It has great potential to be an attractive, safe, accessible and vibrant place. Not only will this enhance the liveability and prosperity of the development site, but it will also encourage maximum use by the community of the light rail

and GreenWay during the day and into the evening. This will directly benefit the residents and other users of the development site and the broader community as a whole. The programs and facilities outlined in the statement of commitments to support community and cultural activities should be retained. Appropriate negotiations should take place between the developer, the Councils and the GreenWay Place Manager during the preparation of future projects/DA's and/or VPA's to establish and maintain a tangible, place-based approach to the provision of community and cultural facilities which can be sustained by the stakeholders in perpetuity.

A number of strategic documents have been prepared by the GreenWay stakeholders which outline the importance of enhancing community well-being and safe, activated, connected communities. The documents also contain practical suggestions about how this might be achieved through an integrated, place-based approach which can be applied to the Lewisham West light rail precinct and the approaches to it. The documents include:-

- council strategic plans eg "Our Place, Our Vision" – Marrickville Community Strategic Plan
- issues specific council strategies eg Marrickville Council precinct plans, public art strategy
- GreenWay Active Transport Strategy and Action Plan (2012)
- Draft Design Principles for Major Development Fronting the GreenWay (2011)
- Interim GreenWay Arts and Community Culture Strategy (2011)

Strategies for public art and community culture are currently being prepared by Ashfield Council and Tf NSW which are directly applicable to the GreenWay and Inner West Light Rail. These documents can inform ongoing negotiations about community and culture activities and facilities within the development site and in the public spaces and access ways adjacent to it.

#### **C8 amended statement of commitments (Annexure 2) - *remove design excellence***

The proponent's desire to delete the need to achieve design excellence is not supported. As outlined in section A above, the site has the potential to showcase best practice sustainable living and design excellence because of its unique qualities and its proximity to light rail, the GreenWay and the heritage rich urban villages of Summer Hill and Lewisham. Design excellence will enhance the site's look and feel and will make it a more valuable, prosperous and sustainable place for residents and visitors into the future.

It is recommended that negotiations take place between the proponents, council representatives, the GreenWay Place Manager and other stakeholders about how best to achieve design excellence in an appropriate and balanced way.

#### **D Conclusions and recommendations**

We appreciate the opportunity to make this submission on the proposed modifications to the conditions of consent for the Meriton site development.

Our recommendations are as follows:-

- (i) **Increase in private open space.** Not supported due to consequent reduction in pedestrian access to/through the site and the impacts on permeability and pedestrian comfort and safety.
- (ii) **Pedestrian access to/across Longport Street and Old Canterbury Rd.** More detail and clarification needed about how pedestrian access to/from Lewisham Station will be achieved.
- (iii) **Deletion of William St car park access and construct a ramp on Western side of site.** Not supported as this would significantly impact on pedestrian access to/from Lewisham West Light Rail Stop and the GreenWay. It would impact on amenity, sight lines, pedestrian comfort and safety and the potential for street trees and landscaping. It may also increase vulnerability to basement flooding.
- (iv) **Narrowing of footpath width on William St.** Not supported due to impacts on pedestrian access to/from the site and Lewisham West Light Rail Stop.
- (v) **Modifications to building A footprint and ground floor retail/commercial uses in buildings A, C and E.** Not supported as this would reduce sight lines to the light rail stop and GreenWay and undermine activation potential.
- (vi) **Amended statement of commitments (Annexure 2) - removal of ESD.** Not supported. The development should incorporate ESD best practice, as outlined in the approved Statement of Commitments.
- (vii) **C7 amended statement of commitments (Annexure 2) - remove community and culture.** Not supported. This would significantly impact on the potential for the Lewisham West Light Rail Stop precinct to become an activated, prosperous, safe and attractive community hub for residents, visitors and users of the light rail and GreenWay. Negotiations should take place during the preparation of future projects/DA's and/or VPA's to establish and maintain a tangible, place-based approach to the provision of community and cultural facilities which can be sustained by the stakeholders in perpetuity.
- (viii) **Amended statement of commitments (Annexure 2) - remove design excellence.** Not supported. The development should incorporate design excellence, as anticipated in the approved Statement of Commitments. Negotiations should take place at appropriate stages during the development process to achieve design excellence in an appropriate and balanced way.

Yours sincerely

Nick Chapman  
GreenWay Place Manager