

Helen Mulcahy - Re: Application to Modify Major Projects MP08 0195 78/90 Old Canterbury Road Lewisham

From: Michael Johnston <majkam@bigpond.net.au>
To: <Helen.Mulcahy@planning.nsw.gov.au>
Date: 4/4/2013 10:44 PM
Subject: Re: Application to Modify Major Projects MP08 0195 78/90 Old Canterbury Road Lewisham

Dear Ms Mulcahy

I am writing to follow up on the submission from the No Lewisham Towers Inc Committee re the above proposal.

There is simply no doubt that you stand between the ordinary citizenry and the commercial ambitions and desires of the applicants in this matter. The vast majority of citizens have no idea what fate befalls them. There is to be a massive development in their suburb about which they possess scant knowledge and awareness. The trust we have in public officials to represent a community - dare I say collective - interest as regards the impact of developments pursued by individual corporations now rests with you. It is an onerous task.

One is reminded of the tragedy of the commons as it is writ large in the situation that confronts us.

The facts are that the community has little or no knowledge of the applications being considered by Government. The latest DA application to Marrickville Council regarding a small part of the McGill precinct development runs to over 30 items some of which are in excess of 60 pages. Ordinary citizens are ill-equipped to critique such documentation. We rely on you.

What do you rely on?

Can you have regard to design excellence? Do you have access to qualified professionals to advise you on the efficacy and implications of the applicants's designs?

I understand that Meriton has made a request to be exempted from the Director General's Design Excellence guidelines for individual buildings. Is this the same applicant who developed the World Square project? Have we, the body politic, learned anything from the World Square project?

The proposed application represents nothing less than an imposition of a whole new suburb onto an otherwise harmonious community setting. There has been little regard for infrastructure support in terms of roads, schools, open space and, I think, drainage, electricity, water and other amenities. Emergency access was made paramount in a recent fire at the mattress factory on Old Canterbury Road which, had it occurred in peak hour, could easily have resulted in loss of life as emergency vehicles would have found the site inaccessible.

Without the requirement for a Design Competition approach, there will be no expert oversight to ensure that there will be at least some degree of design quality in the development.

What is currently being proposed does not give us confidence that the developer has this objective in mind. It proposes poor quality urban landscape and very undistinguished 'off

the shelf' architecture.

There are no no legitimate grounds for exemption for this developer to avoid design excellence. It's fine for this developer to make a lot of money from this development but not at the cost of the community. We should not have to cross-subsidise their bottom-line profit and loss account. We can have a degree of confidence in the design excellence of a body of peer architects and design professionals and we seek your support to ensure that , at least in this regard, government is with the community.

The inclusion of a public art strategy would add further value for the people who use the space both as residents and travellers through the development to other destinations. The cultural experience provided by good architectural design, art and built and natural landscape adds immeasurably to the quality of people's lives

I am also concerned at the very poorly designed proposals for pedestrian and vehicular traffic including:

- the placing of a roundabout at the light rail stop creating significant pedestrian and car conflict
- excessive traffic impact at this roundabout caused by the change of car park entry creating a long ramp along the western boundary of the development
- the deleterious impact of this ramp on the ground floor units of block A and B
- lack of good public pedestrian and cyclist permeability through the development
- lack of connectivity to the proposed open space in the adjacent Mills development.

I respectfully request that you put yourself in our shoes and try to imagine what it would be like to live with what is being proposed for our much loved suburb.

I therefore strongly urge you and the Department to not to allow an exemption from the requirement to meet the Director General's Design Excellence guidelines and public art contribution, nor to to allow the bad traffic design to be approved.

Yours sincerely

Michael Johnston and Christian Moloney, long term residents of 4 Dover Street, Summer Hill