

Dear Ms Mulcahy

**Re: Application to Modify Major Projects 'Lewisham Estate' MP08 0195 78/90  
Old Canterbury Road Lewisham**

I live in Summer Hill not far from the proposed development. I am also a Councillor on Ashfield Council but write this in a private capacity.

While not a planning expert myself, I note and support the submissions by Ashfield Council, Marrickville Council and members of the No Lewisham Towers Committee who have considerable expertise. I supply my own interpretations of the exhibited plans while drawing upon that expert analysis.

I am writing to you because I am deeply concerned about design quality and the Lewisham proposals, especially Meriton's request to be exempt from the Design Competition approach for individual buildings. The condition imposed by the PAC regarding design excellence, is an important mechanism for developing what will be a highly dense and, in reality, constrained site, set in an otherwise low density context. The Meriton DA proposal lodged with Marrickville Council does not demonstrate that the results will be **'a manifestly outstanding building', and that 'the architect has a reputation for delivering buildings of the highest quality.'**

This and the adjacent Mill site are the largest developments ever in this area and it is important to get the quality of design right. This condition needs to stand as no other means is available to enforce design quality. The existing residents of this area will have to live with the development long after Meriton has departed. Future residents of this estate also need to be considered. We do not need to repeat the mistakes of other such developments.

With this level of density we must try to achieve the best possible design outcomes, not sameness and monotonous buildings which do not activate the streets effectively. While I have previously argued to improve the outcomes for the adjacent Mill site, what is proposed here is inferior. The street level activation needs to be far more imaginative, considering the number of people who will be living in an urban island surrounding by very busy roads on three sides. There needs to be much improved permeability. As to the buildings themselves the facades are dull and uninteresting – monotonous. Public and private space is not well differentiated and the limited, non- active open space needs to be enhanced. It seems the battle to provide much needed active open space has been already lost.

The long ramp along the western boundary of the development, as pointed out in the Transport for NSW submission, is a poor option. One of the slender hopes for future and nearby residents is the construction of the light rail, which may, to some degree improve the access to and from the site, as well as permeability.

In summary:

- a roundabout at a light rail stop is unacceptable because of the need of kiss and ride;
- a high quality pedestrian path/shared zoned through to any public space/footpath is needed;
- no adequate paths or connections are apparent to the light rail;

- connectivity to the light rail stop, as well as the wider connectivity through to the proposed open space at the Mills development should be enhanced not ignored;
- the cafe area is poorly designed in terms of connecting to pedestrian flow from the light rail.

The fore-mentioned ramp will also affect the ground floor units of block A and B and seems to be the only entrance to the car park. Hudson Street will need, therefore, to carry more traffic meaning more traffic flow, in turn, through the roundabout, affecting access and the safety of those wanting to use the light rail.

This will be a large, crowded development in what will be a dense precinct. Amenity within the development will be paramount. Thus, Public Art set as a condition will help to retain interest in the public spaces with less need to travel outside the precinct for people to enjoy 'down time. 'It will also help to add interest for those in nearby neighbourhoods, enhancing the integration of this development. This condition should not be deleted. If Meriton is not interested in fulfilling this requirement, they should fund Marrickville Council to do so.

There remains some opportunity to get the best possible outcomes in what has already been an example of much opportunity missed. Design excellence remains as an opportunity to improve what may become a very poor development. The best architects should be in charge of design, including the achievement of the most achievable sustainability. Meriton must be required to go beyond BASIX. I believe the PAC was wise to insist on this condition in the circumstances inherited by the commissioners.

The Department must not change any of the conditions set by the PAC. The imposed conditions are an attempt to make a bad concept somewhat better. Nothing should be changed to make matters worse for the future residents of this development and those in surrounding areas.

Yours Sincerely,

Councillor Alex Lofts

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