

NEUTRAL PRECINCT MINUTES
Tuesday 12 March 2024, commenced at 7:00 pm

1. Guests: Council's Service Unit Manager Strategic Planning and Council's Senior Strategic Planner: Presentation and discussion on Neutral Bay Village Centre Planning Study

GC welcomed guest speakers to the meeting.

NMc provided a brief background to the Study which was driven by development pressures, and the need for more commercial space and open space and took the meeting through the key elements of the Study.

The objective of the proposals in the new Study is to provide a better balance between building heights, which were rejected by the community in the 2022 Study, and the provision of public open space.

The key enhancement proposals of the Study are:

- A total of 4,000 sq metres of new plazas (Grosvenor Lane and Rangers Road)
- A new community centre and a re-imagining of the current small community centre
- Through site links – Rangers Road to Yeo Street; Military Road to Grosvenor Lane Plaza; Grosvenor Street through Waters Lane to Grosvenor Lane Plaza;
- Cycling movement and storage
- Improving the pedestrian crossings of Military Road through realignment, light phasing and timing. This need to be discussed with Transport for NSW who own/manage Military Road.
- Provision of sufficient parking and accessibility in the centre
- Changing the minimum floor space ratio for non-residential uses from 0.5:1 (roughly half a storey) to 1.2:1 (roughly one and a half storeys) and 1.5:1. The current minimum non-residential floor space allows all residential above ground level but the change will encourage more commercial space.
- Increasing building heights to 6 storeys from 4-5 storeys allowable under the current LEP. Plus 8 storeys on 5 key sites: Grosvenor Street Coles site; 2 sites along the northern side of Military Road between Waters Road and Young Street; the corner of Rangers Road & Military Rd (Phillips Building) and the Rangers Road Woolies site. It was noted that the Pienza development in waters Road has been granted 6 storeys by the Land and Environment Court.

The rationale for increased height on the identified sites is their location at the centre of the commercial area, their proximity to the B Line transport, interaction with proposed new public open spaces; less impact on solar access /shadowing of existing residences, lots size and consolidation consideration and the protection of heritage buildings e.g. Priceline Building.

JL presented a set of slides with freehand drawings of key areas and advised that Council had engaged a Landscape Architect to inform the Study. The outcome is that the proposal incorporates set-backs at the podium level to reduce the visual

impact of higher buildings. A setback of 2.5 meters is proposed at bus stops to improve pedestrian movement.

The Waters Lane access to the Grosvenor Lane Plaza will be 6 metres wide and will protect existing mature trees.

10 at-grade vehicle parking spaces and access for a loading dock is proposed for the Eastern end of the proposed Plaza.

NMcC set out the current position with the following DAs and PPs in the NB:

- 1-7 Rangers Road (Woolworths site): A re-zoning Review by the Sydney North Planning Panel (State Government) decided a height of 8 storeys (Rangers Road) and 6 storeys (Yeo Street) for the site. Council is currently awaiting a Gateway Determination which when granted will allow the proposal to go on Exhibition for public response.
- 183-185 Military Road (Andrews House): Currently listed for a re-zoning review which Council anticipates will be heard in April. The developer is seeking a height of 12 storeys which Council has rejected.
- 41-53 Grosvenor Street (Coles site): A DA has been submitted and will be determined by the Sydney North Planning Panel and not by Council. (This is because North Sydney Council is a part owner of the Land being the Grosvenor Lane Public Car Park). There are a number of issues including that Coles is seeking a height of 31 metres. The NB Planning Study recommends 28 metres for this site. It is expected that Coles will respond to the Study.

PE advised that Coles developer Titanium is presenting at the Brightmore Precinct meeting on Wednesday 13 March and GC advised that Titanium are also presenting at the Neutral Precinct meeting on 9 April.

- 255 – 275 Military Road (Cnr Military and Wycombe): Council believes the Land & Environment Court is close to making a decision.
- 12-14 Waters Road (Pienza development): The developer sought a greater height and was granted an additional storey (to 6 Storeys) under a PP Appeal.

NMcC outlined the key elements of the State Government's Housing Reform Package which is currently on exhibition:

- The reform package is a response to the current housing situation in NSW
- The proposals are to increase housing density across Sydney plus Newcastle and Wollongong:
 - i. Within 400 meters of a town centre - a height of 21 metres (6 storeys) with a Floor Space ratio (FSR) of 3:1
 - ii. From 400 – 800 metres of a town centre – a height of 16 metres (4-5 storeys) with a FSR of 2:1
- North Sydney Council has made a submission and does not agree with the 'One size fits all' approach to planning. Council wants a 'place based'

planning approach. Council thinks that the FSRs will result in very bulky buildings.

Questions and Answers

Q. There is a 3 metre difference from the Waters Lane side of the proposed Plaza to the Military Road side. Will that require the installation of escalators such as those which are currently used on the Theo's Arkadia and The Grove sites?

A. The aim is to achieve a graduated progress across the site but we are not at the stage of deciding that level of detail. Council will wait until the designs are submitted by developers. The Landscape Architect engaged will provide advice on this issue.

Q. What does ADG stand for?

A. Apartment Design Guide. It provides guidance for building elements such as cross ventilation, solar access, separation between buildings etc.

Q. Regarding the connectivity between different parts of the Neutral Bay commercial centre, has thought been given to a pedestrian walkway overhead Military Road?

A. Yes, it has been raised. Overhead bridges are challenging as you need an available landing site on either side, a lift which means ongoing management/maintenance and it has an impact on retail in the immediate area. The same goes for a tunnel under a road. We need to balance between people being able to walk around and the construction costs etc.

Q. Can we look again at the slide about residential/commercial/retail space. Is there an increase to commercial space? There are lots of 'For Lease' signs about. Is the increase to commercial space sustainable?

A. Commercial sites have been declining under the current LEP. To improve this we are proposing the increase. Council hopes some of the proposed improved public domain elements in the Study will improve commercial demand.

Q. The traffic study says the majority of sites when redeveloped are expected to have a reduction in vehicular trips and the cumulative impact on intersections is a reduction in traffic at a number of intersections, especially in the PM peak and including Military Rd / Ben Boyd Rd, Ben Boyd Rd / Grosvenor St, and Grosvenor St / Young St. Does this reflect an expected reduction in retail space, including on Site 2 (Arkadia)?

A. I am not a traffic engineer but I understand that in building a traffic model you take notice of a variety of factors. I will need to obtain clarification on this issue.

Q. On what basis can we trust the traffic counter on Military Road when it is set in Mosman to count traffic accessing/ travelling through Neutral Bay?

A. Council makes representations to the State Government and challenges the premise of modelling traffic decisions when it is just informed by car movements.

Council believes the better approach is to provide viable alternatives to car use. The Metro will assist this in other areas of the LGA. Council has asked the State Government to 'think bigger' than just providing the B Line Network for the area.

Q. If the current State Government housing reform proposals are approved what actions can Council take to address issues in impacted areas of the LGA?

A. Council's planning methodology is to look at the public benefit from each development and to get improvements where possible. Legislation does not allow the Council to do more, however it is not an exact science.

Q. Can you clarify what conflicts current DAs have with the NB Planning Study?

A. Coles was driven to submit a DA instead of a PP due to the timeframe of the end of the Woolworths lease of the site. To go through a PP takes longer than a DA. The DA height request is 31 metres. Council has recommended 28 Metres with a more graduated build across the site.

Q. Coles has submitted a graduated building . Has the extra uplift requested in order to deliver the public benefit of the Plaza?

A. If Coles didn't have the commercial imperative to re-establish a supermarket then I expect they would be using the PP process.

Q. Has Arkadia submitted any proposals?

A. Arkadia has had a discussion with Council and suggested some ideas.

Q. What are the options for Arkadia to access their sites in any future development?

A. Potential locations are identified in the Access section of the Planning Study. Additionally Coles has proposed possible access through the proposed underground public car park.

Q. Developers are saying that 8 storeys is not enough and 10 storeys is needed to provide commercial viability. How would Council respond?

A. An example would be to remove the proposed new community centre from that site for it to be commercially viable.

GC encouraged all residents to make a submission to Council by 2 April.

GC thanked Mr McC and Ms JL for attending and the room applauded the presentation.

Meeting

2. Apologies – JMcl, MS.

3. Additional item added to the Agenda:

- i. Update: establishment of Kurraba Point/ Hayes Precinct
GC advised that a public meeting hosted by North Sydney Council and attended by the Mayor, Zoe Baker was held on 27 February for residents of the inactive Kurraba Point and Hayes Precincts. 38 residents attended. The decision of the meeting was to re-establish a joint Precinct for these areas. Council's Community Engagement Team will now take action to establish the new precinct and hold a meeting to elect office bearers.

SL, a Kurraba Point resident advised that no further communication from Council has been received. GC will follow-up with the Community Engagement Team to establish the current position.

4. Business from minutes of meeting held 13 February 2024:

- i. 13 February 2024 minutes were confirmed by EC and seconded by TM
- ii. Council responses to Precinct February motions.
(4.ii). DA 339/04/4 1-7 Rangers Road - Amend condition I1 so that the Rangers Road Store can continue operation when the temporary closure of the supermarket at 45-43 Grosvenor Street occurs for redevelopment of that site which includes a new supermarket.

Council noted the Precinct's submission and Council's Executive Assessment Planner has advised issues related to trolleys being abandoned in the car park are not strictly relevant to the DA.

5. Development Applications

- i. DA 141/21/7: 34 Phillips Street NB. Section 4.55 modification to approved development including changes to roof access, solar panels and landscaping. No affected resident attended the meeting.

6. Current & Ongoing Community consultations were noted:

- i. **Heritage Strategy for NSW - closes 31 March**

<https://www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/nsw-heritage-strategy>

(NSW Government is developing a Heritage Strategy to set a new direction and vision for protecting heritage in the state, ensuring it responds to community aspirations in delivering a better future for our heritage)

- ii. **Draft Neutral Bay Town Centre Planning Study - closes 2 April**

<https://yoursay.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/nbtcps>

The *draft Neutral Bay Town Centre Planning Study* (recently renamed 'Neutral Bay Village Planning Study') has been prepared to guide future development and protect existing employment opportunities through managed height increases in the town centre; and deliver much-needed public domain improvements and community facilities.

7. The following upcoming meetings were noted:

- i. Neutral Precinct – 9 April www.neutralprecinct.com GC advised that Richard Hamilton, Director Titanium (Coles developer) will attend the April meeting to update the community on the DA for the Coles site in Grosvenor Street / Lane Neutral Bay followed by a Q & A.

- ii. Council – 25 March, 8 April www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au

Meeting concluded at 8:40pm