

The Glebe Society Response to the Draft Planning Controls for Harold Park
City of Sydney Council Planning, Development and Transport Committee
Monday 19th July 2010

Thank you – for opportunity to participate in planning processes (a fast disappearing ‘right’ these days).

I speak for the Glebe Society and on behalf of the 400 or so members of the Glebe, Forest Lodge and Annandale communities. Also the Rozelle Bay Association has conveyed full support for our position.

A general comment

We support the redevelopment of this site to include substantial residential accommodation and appropriate small/moderate scale retail and commercial activity

We support the right of the Pacing Club to make a reasonable, fair commercial profit on property it purchased with its own funds for the benefit of its members.

We are **opposed** to over-development of the site – as determined by its broad context and capacity. And we are **opposed** to the Pacing Club gaining an unwarranted windfall profit from the tramsheds.

Some specific comments on community reaction to the draft controls.

It is clear that the CoS has considered our public resolution and principles.

- We strongly support the dedication of 35% of the site as open public space; and the requirement that it be continuous and incorporate a full size sports field; We have an opportunity to expand one of Sydney’s great harbourside parks for Sydneysiders as much as locals ;
- The need for additional sporting fields in the area is well known and well documented.
- We strongly support the requirement for at least 50 units of affordable housing. This is a matter on which a specific vote was taken – clear that there is very strong community support for this intervention
- We strongly support the continued designation of the Tramsheds as a heritage item and the requirement that 500m² of floor space be allocated for community uses.

The draft controls fall short of the community principles on a number of major points.

- The height of the buildings at the perimeters of the site is a major concern and disappointment. We have given much consideration to this – surely a better design/configuration can deliver appropriate and reasonable density while maintaining lower buildings at the perimeters.
- We do not support the location of the public open space entirely on the Glebe side of the site incorporating a buffer between the cliff face and the new high rise buildings. We continue to find this configuration puzzling.
- We are not convinced the implications of the traffic that will flow from the development has been given anything like sufficient consideration.
- And if the development includes **large** scale commercial/retail activities in the tramsheds this would greatly exacerbate these traffic problems.

Principle 9 - Appropriate Returns to the Pacing Club on the Tramsheds Site

- This is a matter on which the community feels very very very strongly.

- To the extent that arguments for increased density and less public open space are driven by the wish of the Pacing Club to generate a maximum windfall profit from the whole of the site - this is a matter of major importance.
- The Club acquired the publicly owned Tramsheds site largely with public money so they could build a sporting facility. This never eventuated.
- The Pacing Club should get an appropriate reimbursement for the sum they 'paid' – rather than a windfall development profit for the Tramsheds site
- This would still provide the Club with a very handsome profit for the benefit of its members.
- There is no legal impediment to the Pacing Club trying to get a maximum return. But neither is there any legal impediment – or even (we understand) high risk of a damages case – to Council/CSPC or State Government acting to properly protect the community interest in this matter.
- The allocation of 35% of the site to public open space and 500m² of the Tramsheds to community use goes some considerable way to achieving this.

The Political Context

The consideration of the Harold Park proposals will be conducted in the context of a threatening State Government review of the CSPC. We share the widespread apprehension that this review is intended to further reduce the planning powers of the CoS and further shut out the community.

While we do not agree with some very important aspects of the current proposal for HP, we will be defending the role of the COS and the CSPC in the planning for our city and arguing they should have a stronger role. We remain opposed to the Part 3 powers which allow the Minister to override community and local government views. We know the Council has invited and considered the views of its community. We have no confidence that this will be the case if the rezoning goes to the Minister.

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