



RE: Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy 2012 – Wickham Precinct.

This response to the proposed Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy 2012, as it relates to the Wickham precinct, has been prepared by GLOW (Great Lifestyle of Wickham)

GLOW is a community forum group and represents a broad spectrum of residential owner-occupiers, residential landlords, commercial owner-occupiers, commercial landlords and developers with land holdings in the precinct.

This response has been prepared following consultations with numerous affected individuals and companies.

Following this, we would make the following comments for consideration:

1. There is a uniform consensus that Newcastle City Council's current LEP 2012 strategy for the Wickham Redevelopment area, as shown on their map sheet WRA-004FA, has a number of shortcomings, as follows:
 - The proposed land dedications for the diagonal transport corridor through the north-west corner of the precinct will isolate this corner of the precinct, create undesirable block alignments, and result in both increased traffic generation and vehicle speed. The current Pacific Highway/Stewart Avenue/Hannell Street corridor is the principal traffic corridor which is easily accessed by vehicle generators to the west and south of the CBD area.
 - The proposed land dedication for laneways affects a number of properties either totally or significantly. The affected owners are essentially 'crippled' from considering any form of development or even capital improvement. These laneways basically require a larger developer to purchase numerous land holdings to consolidate the properties until a large enough holding is available to dedicate laneways to Council.

Further, it is considered that narrow laneways will create poorly maintained and poorly lit corridors in an area already poorly maintained by the local Council.

2. At present the precinct has a good mixture of residential, commercial and light industrial buildings.

There is currently a clear requirement to maintain the current mixed use zoning, as a number of light industrial & service companies in the area have recently made capital improvements to their current buildings.

However, we would consider that this zoning should not preclude the redevelopment of light industrial buildings that lay vacated to residential developments, or nor should it require that any redevelopment to residential development must include a commercial component where the proposed developments are on smaller lots.

We consider that Wickham's natural progression will be to residential housing, principally within the building height envelopes & the FSR's as currently detailed in the strategy (figures 5.3 & 5.6 of the strategy). This progression should be driven by both good zoning and commercial consideration, and we would request that the strategy allows this progression to be facilitated by lifestyle choices of people wanting to live in the area, and revitalising otherwise neglected buildings & land holdings, by creating residential developments on smaller lots without the need to incorporate a commercial component.

3. Wickham's streetscape is varying. The area includes blocks of 2-3 storey terraces (in excess of 100 years old), traditional & refurbished older weatherboard houses on small lots, warehouse refurbishments (for commercial & residential occupation) on small to medium lots (300 – 1000m²), and larger light industrial sites, and 3 storey unit developments (larger lots for rental accommodation, smaller lots for owner-occupiers).

It would be considered that larger lot development within the area of smaller lot holdings will have a negative effect on the streetscapes & neighbourhood amenity, particularly since GLOW see the future of Wickham developing along similar lines to Surry Hills in Sydney.

Wickham occupies a unique position, in that it can compliment the current foreshore development in the Honeysuckle area by providing a lower 'key' form of recreation and entertainment. Whilst Honeysuckle offers high-end multistorey residential development with a mix of high-end office, restaurant and retail outlets to the lower levels, Wickham could develop to provide arts & crafts, streetside cafes and small office buildings in a quieter and significantly less expensive environment. The current narrow street network would facilitate this usage.

Further, development of student accommodation in the area would complement and support the above usages.

4. There is currently sufficient provision for the disadvantaged in the area, as follows:
 - Samaritans homeless youth accommodation
 - Matthew Talbot crisis housing, for men
 - Salvation Army drug rehabilitation, for men
 - School for teenage boys suspended from state schools
 - St. Vincent de Paul short term accommodation, for men
 - Awabakal program for teenage boys (proposed)

Wickham however is suited for providing affordable rental housing for low to moderate income families, & student housing for the future University development in the Honeysuckle area, being within easy walking & cycling distance to the proposed University site, and close to public transport. Further, this accommodation could be provided in small

lot holdings without the need for consolidation, which allows for the streetscape to be developed in a less intrusive manner and allow the character of the area to develop to facilitate Wickham's future, for tourism and corporate services and accommodation.

5. The strategy's proposal to reduce the height of developments along the Station Street corridor to a maximum 24m is supported, as it allows a much better transition into lower height residential areas
6. However the owner of a significant number of properties fronting onto Railway Lane, west of Railway Street, has expressed a preference for the current proposed FSR & building height envelopes to be reduced in this area to allow smaller lot 3 -4 storey residential development. Current land usage consists of vacant lots & a building that hasn't been tenanted for in excess of 5 years. This section of Wickham serves no commercial purpose (previously utilised for bulk storage warehouses transported by the railway or truck haulage), is neglected, and offers an ideal location for small lot affordable housing or student accommodation. The underdeveloped nature of the area also allows easy inclusion of vehicle parking in any development.
7. There is a proposal to develop a multi-storey development, consisting of food outlets, lower level commercial and upper level residential, at the north-west corner of the Church & Hannell Street intersections. The development will face onto the Fisherman's Co-operative, Yacht club and Marina on the eastern side of Hannell Street.

This style of development will have no adverse effect on the development of the inner Wickham precinct, and would facilitate the commercial opportunities seen for the local area.

As such, GLOW supports this development.

(Also note that there is a recent development approval for a 24m high 42 unit development at the corner of Hannell and Bishopsgate Streets)

8. However current Mines Subsidence Board restrictions affect development north of Throsby Street & west of Railway Street, where at present the Board are not approving any current application exceeding 2 storeys high, unless substantial costs are incurred in grouting deep mine workings.
9. The scope of this GLOW community submission on the Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy 2012 does not include comment relating to the recent decision to truncate the rail line at Wickham. GLOW are very concerned on the influence this decision will have on the strategy proposals. GLOW would merely like to draw attention to the following quote from the

economic assessment document that forms Appendix 2 of the strategy, currently on exhibition:

"It should be noted that this Economic Assessment assumes that the railway line that runs the length of the City Centre and study area remains..."

We would hope that our comments are considered when reviewing the current strategy. GLOW has a good working relationship with the Council, local businesses, Police and the Port Waratah Coal Loader Authority.

We would hope that we would be involved in any further review process, and would be happy at any time to expand or clarify on the matters raised in this response.



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