

Response to draft Newcastle City Centre DCP March 2014

EXHIBITION AND CONSULTATION

The community of Newcastle has been presented with a draft DCP draft SEPP and draft LEP as a means to accommodate UrbanGrowth's proposal for a development that is well outside the current planning framework. The existing framework and NURS was the result of extended and extensive consultation and any amendments should be given the same time and due consideration.

The period for community consultation should be extended for an additional 4-6 weeks and additional briefing sessions should be provided to assist the community to understand all of the issues.

DRAFT DCP

Generally the draft DCP provides a clear and well considered approach to building scale, response to heritage context and quality of the pedestrian environment. It is supported by good examples and graphics.

However it is difficult to appreciate how this DCP will be applied to assessment of the UrbanGrowth proposal. The proposed development of high rise residential in the centre of the city that was laid down in the 1820s flies in the face of many of the good urban design principles espoused in the draft DCP.

The draft DCP does not reflect the height limits proposed in the draft LEP and the associated impacts of heritage, character and amenity.

The DCP should either acknowledge the impacts on heritage, character and amenity values - or the urban design work in the DCP should inform a revision to the draft LEP HOB layer.

OVERALL PRINCIPLES

The Overall Principles on p12 are laudable but there is an obvious disconnection between most of the Principles and the current proposal of UrbanGrowth.

Overall Principles

- a) The unique character of each Character Area is enhanced.
- b) New development has regard to the fabric and character of each area in scale, proportion, street alignment, materials and finishes and reinforce distinctive attributes and qualities of built form.
- c) Heritage items and their setting are protected.
- d) Public spaces, including streets, lanes and parks maintain high levels of solar access.
- e) Active frontages address the public domain.
- f) Existing significant views and vistas to buildings and places of historic and aesthetic importance are protected.

In particular the proposed development

- does not respect local character and scale,

- intrudes on the setting of the cities pre-eminent heritage buildings,
- interferes with solar access to public streets and the park and
- seriously compromises significant city views and vistas and their aesthetic importance.

UNDERMINING AND GROUTING

The DCP makes no reference to the issues of undermining and grouting. The Newcastle city centre needs major infrastructure funding for grouting under most sites to enable any significant development.

The DCP makes no reference to efficiencies of assembling of sites, mechanisms for grouting, maintaining building stability, and implications for basement parking.

It seems that Newcastle is expected to accept an excessive scale development that devalues the city's unique heritage and urban qualities in order to compensate for the failure of state government to provide independent infrastructure funding to repair past undermining.

A separate infrastructure fund should be provided for grouting of sites so that it is feasible to develop at a scale appropriate to the heritage setting and scale of the older city centre.

FLOOR LEVELS

Ground floor levels up to 500mm above footpath are supported with allowance up to 1.2m on sites with crossfall.

Ground floor levels below footpath level create commercial spaces that are uncomfortable, difficult to let and lead to lower than desirable awning levels above the footpath.

*Ground floor levels should be **above** footpath level.*

BUILDING SEPARATION

The DCP provides several illustrations of building separation for commercial buildings and then shows photos of mixed use with residential above.

Most city centre buildings will have residential floors above and the DCP gives a false impression of likely density and yield.

The DCP should illustrate both commercial and residential building separations.

LACK OF UPPER LEVEL SETBACKS ON LANES

Buildings on lanes should have an upper level setback above the 4 storey street wall for privacy of residents and to increase amenity for pedestrians in the lane.