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April 3 2017 - 12:30AM

EDITORIAL: New hotel for Newcastle, as Honeysuckle focuses on Cottage Creek.

Our Say

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GOING UP: Artist's impression of a building containing a 149-room hotel, 62 residential apartments and five serviced apartments, proposed by Canberra-based Doma Group for 42 Honeysuckle Drive, Newcastle West, next door to the Hunter Water building.

WITH the Hunter Development Corporation selecting Canberra-based Doma Group to develop one of the final vacant Honeysuckle sites – between Cottage Creek and the Hunter Water building – it is worth looking back to an earlier phase of the city's urban rejuvenation to see how attitudes towards development in Newcastle have changed.

Twenty years ago, in 1997, the state government of the day intervened in what had become a long-running dispute over a proposed luxury waterfront hotel. Frustrated at delays, it stripped Newcastle City Council of its planning powers over Honeysuckle.

The hotel would eventually be built as the Crowne Plaza, and while some critics still believe it was built in the wrong place, it did kick-start an era of development west of Merewether Street that is now coming within sight of its logical conclusion at Wickham.

Today, friction remains between City Hall and Macquarie Street over big urban planning questions, but the usual focus nowadays is on the rail corridor and Hunter Street, rather than at Honeysuckle, which is living up to its promised hype as a desirable place to live, work and play.

That is not to say that the Hunter Development Corporation – which absorbed the previous Honeysuckle development corporation in 2007 – should have carte blanche when it comes to reshaping this crucial corner of harbour frontage.

In its latest annual report, the development corporation notes it is looking closely at “the interface” between Honeysuckle and the government's urban renewal and public transport program, especially as far as the Wickham interchange and the light rail is concerned. Even so, the corporation could do more than it has to reveal its overall thinking for the area. A Cottage Creek community consultation process was run in 2010, but little has been heard since then beyond a suggestion that the three heritage buildings standing isolated and forlorn next to the old Wickham station were likely to come down.

A growing acceptance of the push to use high-rise apartment blocks to revitalise the inner city – together with market confirmation of the need for another upmarket city hotel – makes the Doma Group proposal an obvious use of this long-vacant site. Even so, the public would benefit from seeing the proposal in its broader context.

ISSUE: 38,455

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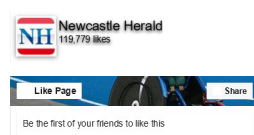
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Monica • a year ago

The government's urban renewal and transport program comprises building on the only open space left in the city, and that is the rail corridor. High rise buildings squeezed between other buildings, without a street frontage. This public land should remain public space. Their transport program comprises running light rail down already busy streets, eliminating parking along those streets, when the light rail should go along the corridor. This is their transport 'program'. Perhaps the government should have had a transport 'plan' for Newcastle before they started their program.

3 ^ | v • Reply • Share

Danny • a year ago

Surely they can't demolish heritage buildings? It'd be great to see Cottage Creek restored to being an actual creek as these developments take shape. The developers could surely contribute to making this area a nice, healthy waterway with some shade and a few barbecues for all the new residents and visitors. They all seem to use "Cottage Creek" in their marketing materials; I guess it has a nicer ring to it than "concrete stormwater drain".

2 ^ | v • Reply • Share

acruia → Danny • a year ago

There used to be a huge swamp there and lots of mangroves. Restoring all of that could meet with some robust opposition.

^ | v • Reply • Share

JamesN • a year ago

So you think that "the public would benefit from seeing the proposal..." Words fail me.

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share

acruia → JamesN • a year ago

I know where to get one, but am not even interested. Of course those opposed can always pretend that if they can't see it, it doesn't exist. Dogs aren't interested in things they can't see or smell either.

^ | v • Reply • Share

Ward • a year ago

At the speed that HDC works my great grandchildren might get to see the proposals. We complain about Council but HDC is unbelievable in their slowness and we are paying them a small fortune.

^ | v • Reply • Share

Montesa → Ward • a year ago

Not to mention that BAD decisions they have made in the past and continue to make, if only the Government would listen to what the people want?

^ | v • Reply • Share

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April 3 2017 - 12:30AM

Doma to build new \$45m hotel in Honeysuckle, Hunter Development Corporation announces

•

[Brodie Owen](#)

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THE transformation of Honeysuckle will take another giant step with the Hunter Development Corporation unveiling a new \$45 million four-star hotel to once again change the skyline.

The hotel – which will be built opposite the harbour and near the future Newcastle light rail stop – is being lauded as a future gem of Newcastle's tourism offering, bringing with it "much-needed" rooms to the city centre.

Located on Honeysuckle Drive next to Hunter Water's headquarters, Canberra-based Doma Group's hotel pitch was selected from a range of proposals for the 3700 square-metre vacant block, which was [released to the market late last year](#) and settled for an undisclosed amount.

HDC said construction was tipped to start mid-2018, dependent on planning approvals, and would create 60 jobs upon completion and more during construction.

The hotel will have 149 four-star rooms; 62 residential apartments; five serviced apartments; and more than 1000 square metres of commercial and restaurant space.

A [shortage of parking in the Honeysuckle area](#) could be eased if the hotel's parking space is made publicly available, which HDC says is a possibility.

Do you like the hotel pitch for Honeysuckle?

☐ Yes, but only if the parking is publicly available

☐ Yes

☐ No

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"Newcastle's revitalisation has been gathering momentum for quite some time and this project is further proof of a city really maturing into a diverse, vibrant place," HDC chief executive Michael Cassel said. "This is hardly surprising given the momentum being generated by the Revitalising Newcastle program and the \$500-plus million investment being made by the NSW Government."

[Map Overview](#) [Back To Beginning](#)

BOOMTOWN: HOW THE WEST IS CHANGING
More than 20 projects are proposed, under construction or approved for Newcastle's city centre. Take a look at what's planned in the city.
[Start Exploring](#)

Mr Cassel anticipated Doma Group to lodge a development application "within four to six months".

HDC will undertake mine subsidence remediation works for the site, he said, while Doma agreed to contribute to the landscaping of public space near the Cottage Creek stormwater channel.

Property Council of Australia Hunter director Andrew Fletcher welcomed the proposal.

"To become a world-class regional capital Newcastle needs world-class tourism developments," he said.

"This certainly fits the bill."

The hotel will be Doma Group's third development in the Honeysuckle precinct.

The developer already has plans for three new buildings on [prime waterfront land at 21 Honeysuckle Drive](#), although a development application for that project is yet to be lodged.

It has also completed a [mixed-use commercial and residential building](#) at nearby 18 Honeysuckle Drive.

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November 28 2017 - 4:00PM

Doma Group submits DA for new \$40.5 million hotel at Honeysuckle

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Anita Beaumont

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Milestone: An artist's impression of the proposed \$40.5 million hotel at Honeysuckle. Construction could begin mid-2018.

CONSTRUCTION on a \$40.5 million hotel at Honeysuckle could begin as early as mid-2018, with the Doma Group lodging its development application with Newcastle City Council.

The proposed plans for the Little National Hotel at 42 Honeysuckle Drive include 147 rooms, 52 residential apartments, seven serviced apartments and more than 1000 square metres of ground floor retail space.

- [Checking in: Plans unveiled for new hotel](#)

If approved, the hotel would be an “exciting step forward for a booming city” that would create new tourism and jobs, Valentina Misevka, acting chief executive of Hunter Development Corporation (HDC), said.

“This is exciting momentum for the Honeysuckle precinct, and the broader city, that will lead to an important boost in employment opportunities,” she said.

“We anticipate around 60 jobs will be created on completion of the hotel, with more during construction.”

HDC selected Doma Group’s proposal for the vacant 3700 square metre site, next to the Hunter Water headquarters, in April.

Doma Group’s general manager of development, Gavin Edgar, said the site next to the Hunter Water headquarters was well positioned for a new hotel offering in the city.

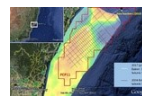
“42 Honeysuckle Drive is in a key location for our first Newcastle Little National Hotel, with close proximity to the newly opened Newcastle Interchange as well as the attractive waterfront and Honeysuckle precinct,” Mr Edgar said. “Our Little National Hotel was awarded the Property Council of Australia National Award for Innovation in 2017, and the proposed hotel in Newcastle follows that same successful formula.”

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