

**Vincentia Ratepayers and Residents Association Inc.
P O Box 149,
Vincentia,
NSW 2540.**

20th May 2011

The Department of Planning,
PO Box 39,
Sydney.

For the Attention of John Phillpott

Dear John,

Vincentia District Centre (MP06_0025) Mod 3

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Mod 3 submitted by Fabcot (Woolworths).

Mod 3 seeks to amend the previous approvals by:

Enclosing the mall;
Reducing the number of specialty shops;
Rearranging the car parking;
Rearranging the layout which creates difficulties for the Library in Stage 1.

We will comment on these modifications and also on the roadworks proposed in Mod 2.

Enclosing the mall

Before commenting on the proposal to enclose the mall it is worth reflecting on the design aspects of the original approval for the VDC included in the Environmental Assessment Report prepared by Don Fox Planning for Stockland dated 22nd April 2008.

"Urban Design, Streetscape and Public Domain

The core urban design attributes of the District Centre have largely been established through the design excellence competition process. The design developed by Rice Daubney is based on the "building in the bush" typology which includes a limited palette of lightweight and largely raw materials and low scale single and two storey buildings with elevated roof structures which respond to the topography.

The core building elements containing the supermarkets will be flanked and disguised by single and two storey verandah forms containing specialty shops and commercial tenancies. These define the built form along the Moona Creek Road streetscape creating a scale consistent with the likely scale of future residential on the western side of Moona Creek Road. These lower scale shop fronts also define the main internal public domain spaces being Arbour Walk, Canopy Walk and Boardwalk. The District Centre frontage to Moona Creek Road together with Moona Creek Road's function as a main arrival point will sufficiently activate the District Centre frontage to the street without introducing land uses or a level of activity that would conflict with the residential uses on the western side of Moona Creek Road.

Visual Impacts

The low scale of buildings themselves will assist in minimising visual impacts. Existing and proposed landscaping will tie the District Centre in with the surrounding vegetation.

The street tree planting along Moona Creek Road will provide a strong landscape theme to assist in integrating the commercial/retail uses and residential uses on either side of Moona Creek Road.

The use of 'raw' materials including metal cladding, weathered and raw timber, pre-finished steelwork, louvres and metal screens, stretched canvas and stone walls will reduce visual impacts and improve the visual experience of the District Centre.

Sustainability

Stockland is committed to a strong sustainability strategy aimed at establishing a high sustainability benchmark for the District Centre. Stockland propose to exceed the targets specified in the Director General's requirements and propose to use a combination of the Green Star Pilot tool for the retail components, a 4.5 star Australian Building Greenhouse Rating and 4 star Green Star for the commercial components as well as meeting the minimum performance requirements of Section J of the Building Code of Australia."

This vision was the result of a design competition initiated by the Department of Planning aimed at producing something worthy of this environmentally sensitive site adjacent to the Jervis Bay Marine Park and the Jervis Bay and Booderee National Parks.

The subsequent Mods have downgraded the vision of something special and enclosing the mall will take another step away from the original vision and towards "just another shopping mall". We do not accept the proponent's assertion that "*Vincentia experiences weather extremes*", on the contrary in our experience Vincentia has one of the most equable climates in Australia. However, we realise the convenience of a weather protected shopping centre and believe many in the community would support the enclosure.

Whilst we have seen site plans for Mod 3, we have not seen elevations or visual representations as to how the new mall will look. We therefore submit that before approving the enclosure the Department should consult with Rice Daubney to see how the conflict between the original aesthetic design commissioned by the Department and the practical convenience of weather protection can be resolved. Perhaps the answer is to limit the area to be enclosed?

Reducing the number of specialty shops

We understand that there may be a limited demand for specialty shops when the VDC opens particularly if the Burton Street shops in Vincentia are at that time remaining. We therefore have no objection to this aspect of Mod 3.

Rearranging the car parking

The proposed revision of the car parking appears to lack the shade trees in the parking lines shown in Mod 2 and also the shielding of the car park from Naval College Road appears minimal. We draw your attention to the vision quoted above and the concept of "*building in the bush*". We would not wish to see such a large car park without trees to soften the visual impact both internally and from the main road. We note the deletion of car parking behind the Big W and adjacent to the Library site which is discussed below.

Library

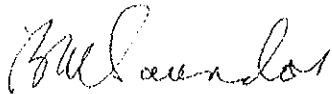
Currently Woolworths and Shoalhaven City Council are in discussions regarding the possibility of including the Library in Stage 1. As the car parking for the Library would disappear in Mod 3 we cannot support Mod 3. Woolworths suggest that a library could be housed in an area designated for specialty shops in Mod 3. However they point out the lease cost would be much higher than the cost associated with the Library site shown in Mod 2. We believe Council should take the opportunity to confirm the Library site shown in Mod 2 and therefore the associated car parking should not be deleted.

Woolworths decision to delay the Library to Stage 2, for which there is no start date, is based on a Council resolution of December 2009. This resolution called for further reports on a new Bay and Basin Library. It did not specifically endorse the attached Consultant's report which indicated a time frame of 5 years. Woolworths are suggesting a likely opening date for the VDC as 2013, possibly as late as December. Therefore to meet a 5 year time frame the Library must be included in Stage 1.

Roadworks

In discussions with Woolworths we pointed out the inconvenience of the roadworks split into 1A and 1B as per Mod 2, Woolworths indicated they would prefer to complete the roadworks in one hit but the environmental permission required for the new entrance to the Bay and Basin Leisure Centre was the stumbling block. We understand this permission needs to be initiated by the former owners of the land, Stockland. May we suggest the Department use its good offices to speed up this process to the benefit of all parties.

Yours faithfully,



Brian Saunders,
President.

Tel.0438 230 992

John Phillpott - Vincentia District Centre. - Further comment.

Mod 3

From: "Brian Saunders" <brians88@bigpond.com>
To: "John Phillpott" <John.Phillpott@planning.nsw.gov.au>
Date: 6/12/2011 6:43 PM
Subject: Vincentia District Centre. - Further comment.
CC: <adamsp@shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au>, "Britton, John"
<BRITTON@shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au>

Hi John,

We have reviewed the documents you sent and also the artists impressions on your website. These appear to similar to the original documents except that one of the pictures now shows a roof over Canopy Walk. This seems to be a glass roof, if so, does it meet Fabcot's aim of minimising heating and cooling? The Arbour Walk remains open but as we understand it, this will not be built until Stage 1B or Stage 2, by which time of course there will undoubtedly be further Mods.

The elevations are artist impressions and it is difficult to gauge how the final building will look. It appears that only the roof over Canopy Walk has changed from the previous artists impressions.. The main entrance to the VDC has changed from being via Arbour Walk on Moonah Creek Road to being from the carpark. This new design particularly the carpark is reminiscent of Nowra Fair and certainly, in our opinion, not in accord with the "buildings in the bush" philosophy.

The finishes are now referred to "panelised" as opposed to the statement in the EAR of 22nd April 2008, *"The use of 'raw' materials including metal cladding, weathered and raw timber, pre-finished steelwork, louvres and metal screens, stretched canvas and stone walls will reduce visual impacts and improve the visual experience of the District Centre."*

We note that the concept of the Bayswood housing development seamlessly integrating with the VDC will also be lost, not only with the proposed change of main entrance but also as a result of Stockland constructing a high fence along their boundary to Moonah Creek Road.

The latest information you have provide has not dampened our fears that this will turn out to be "just another shopping mall" but hopefully you can maintain some of the integrity of the original competition winning design.

Kind regards,

Brian Saunders
President,
Vincentia Ratepayers and Residents Association Inc.
Tel' 0438 230 992
For the latest news on Vincentia see www.vrra.org.au

From: Mark Corrigan <mark.corrigan@live.com>
To: <john.phillpott@planning.nsw.gov.au>
Date: 5/22/2011 10:32 pm
Subject: Submission re Vincentia District Centre Modification 3

Dear John,

I would like to comment on Vincentia District Centre Modification 3 (Corner Wool Road and Naval College Road , Vincentia) that is currently being considered by the NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure.

When Bayswood residential and commercial development was initially submitted to the DoP, Part A4 of the approval conditions outlined that the District Centre should be submitted to a "design excellence competition". This condition was positively received by local residents as there was some concern that the shopping centre would become yet another generic mall. The design of such developments may well maximise profit for the developer and operator, but they can also be social and aesthetic disasters with little to no architectural merit. The DoP recognised that the District Centre was more than a development to maximise consumer activity. It is also a place to sit, walk and meet people. These are essential community activities that are beyond the primary interests of a developer and retailer such as Woolworths.

The successful design from Rice Daubney was excellent. Instead of a vanilla-flavoured mall, the district centre design became a pleasant community space. The various "walks" were open at the ends and partially exposed above. This responded to the design considerations of natural ventilation and sunlight. Importantly, it also created a more democratic communal space without the normal entry barriers of a shopping mall.

The design modifications proposed by Woolworths significantly impact on the integrity of the original design that had been accepted unanimously by the panel. Closure of the "walks" with doorways and roofs is a major, negative and unnecessary change.

* *The design takes away any natural ventilation and demands artificial climate control for a larger volume of the building.*
Contrary to the proponent's assertions, Vincentia has a very mild climate and does not require the shopping area to be sealed. There is only 9°C variation in monthly average maximum temperatures and 6.5°C average difference between daily minimum and maximum temperatures. The coastal position ensures mild winters and cool summers. An attraction to the area is the sunshine and climate. The design revision seeks to prevent residents and visitors from enjoying both.
As Paco Underhill, the CEO of Envirosell and author of several books on shopping mall design, wrote:

/"...After so much time inside the air-conditioned bosom of the enclosed mall, breaking out sounds a little like heaven. There's something poetic about all this, isn't there? The mall was a little too hermetically sealed for our tastes. This trend [neo villages] renews my faith in humanity."
/P. Underhill, "Call of the Mall", p211
/

I was part of a focus group during the initial concept stage. The overwhelming response of residents was that any design should

reflect the natural surroundings of the area. People rejected the sanitized development style of, say, Shell Cove. Woolworth's proposal to close in the walks through the district centre now offers indoor plants as a feeble interface with nature. This is contrary to the aspirations clearly communicated by the community and the intent of the winning design.

* *The design changes the walks to private spaces*

Vincentia currently enjoys a shopping centre developed around a road reserve mall. This allows circulation around the shops to be largely in public-owned space. That space is "ours" rather than "theirs".

Whilst the openness of the original Rice Daubney design may only be a contrived public space (since it is still owned by the developer), it still sought to provide a personal freedom that doesn't exist in a sealed shopping mall. Closure of the walks with doors introduces a barrier that converts the pseudo-public space into a space that is definitely private. Security guards can use such barriers to determine who are acceptable entrants. Indigenous? Poor? Teenagers carrying skateboards? Those sitting who may be considered loiterers?

Closing off the entrances introduces a step change to the original design that can have consequences unhelpful to the inclusiveness of the local community.

* *Public library*

It is clear from the design that inclusion of a library in Stage 1 is being actively discouraged by the proponent, or at least not being taken seriously. Consideration is only being considered to replace shops with a library if the Council is willing to pay rent suited to a prime retail location. The entrance to such a location would be through the internal walks rather than via public space. Use of such a facility would be further hindered by closing off entrances to the walks with doorways, particularly if there was a need to use a library outside retail hours. There can't be a reasonable negotiation between the proponent and Council if there is not an acceptable public space being made available at a reasonable price in the first stage. By comparison, the library location in the second stage is prominent, easily accessible and close to parking. The choice has the effect of forcing timing of library construction to a later indeterminate date in Stage 2.

* *Parking*

There seems to be little effort in the design to reduce conflict between pedestrians and traffic in the main carpark. The main flow of traffic is across the entrance face of the centre. Those accessing the centre entrance are required to walk along the roadways and cross this main access route. The design may be better served by moving the main access road away from the building, or integrating the pedestrian ways to further reduce conflict. There is no reason that pedestrians should be secondary in a car park when the intent is to allow troublefree movement between vehicles and the centre.

Sincerely,

Mark Corrigan

mark corrigan | 32 plantation point parade | vincentia nsw 2540 |
+61 2 4441 5152