



## NSW PLANNING ASSESSMENT COMMISSION

26 August 2009

### **REVIEW OF RECOMMENDATION IN THE DG'S REPORT PROJECT APPLICATION FOR THE HONEYSUCKLE CENTRAL PROJECT**

#### **REQUEST FOR REVIEW**

On 14 August 2009, the Minister for Planning requested the Planning Assessment Commission to assess the reasonableness of the recommendations of the Department of Planning's Assessment Report (DG's report) for a project application for subdivision, bulk excavation and construction of 3 x 8 storey buildings in Honeysuckle, Newcastle.

#### **BRIEFING BY THE DEPARTMENT**

The Commission was briefed by senior staff of the Department on Friday 21 August 2009, who advised that the Proponent had been provided with a copy of the Department's recommended approval conditions.

#### **PROPOSAL**

The proposal is a joint venture between Buildev and Eureka and involves the development of a mixed use complex in the in the Honeysuckle Precinct on the southern side of Newcastle Harbour and the northern side on the Great Northern Railway Line.

The proposal includes the subdivision of land into 3 Torrens title lots, excavation, construction of 3 x 8 storey buildings comprising 21,370 sq.m of GFA, 356 car parking spaces, commercial or retail services at the ground floor level, landscaping and the construction of utility services and associated infrastructure.

#### **KEY ISSUE**

##### **Urban Design**

The Commission considered a key issue in this project to be urban design, and notes that the Department is generally satisfied with the proposal in this regard as it is consistent with the applicable development standards, is generally consistent with the scale and design of surrounding buildings and would provide an interesting and consistent façade along Honeysuckle Drive.

The Commission notes that Council raised several concerns regarding the detailed design of the project. In particular Council raised concerns about the reverse sloping northern facades of the tower elements, as well as their consistency of form and lack of individual identity. In response the Proponent advised that they were willing to refine the design of the tower elements in consultation with Council prior to construction.

Council also raised concerns regarding the proposed landscaping and recommended a reduction in paved areas for larger scale deep soil plantings.

These concerns are reflected in the Department's proposed Condition B6 which requires the Proponent to prepare revised architectural and landscape plans in consultation with Council prior to submitting them to the Department of Planning for approval.

### **CONCLUSION**

The Commission regards the Department's recommendations as being reasonable, but it does have concerns regarding the practical outcome of Condition B6, which requires the Proponent to consult with Council regarding revised architectural and landscape plans. Whilst the Condition is reasonable and should be constructive, the Commission is concerned that there is no mechanism for dispute resolution if Council and the Proponent fail to agree. This could lead to unnecessary delays to what is essentially a good development for the Newcastle region and the CBD in particular.

Accordingly, the Commission recommends that the Minister endorse the Department's proposed conditions on the basis that Condition B6 be amended by the Department to provide for the Proponent's plans together with Council's comments to be submitted to the Department for determination if after a reasonable period of time agreement can not be reached between the parties.

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Garry Payne  
PAC member

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Lindsay Kelly'.

Lindsay Kelly  
PAC member