

DALKEITH: A VISION FOR A GARDEN SUBURB

A reply to the administration's
rejection of the people's vision

A report to City of Nedlands
Dalkeith Redevelopment Steering Committee

by

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As I pointed out at last week's Committee meeting, the rejection by the people of the Dalkeith Redevelopment Guideline report was so overwhelming that in setting out their objections the 400 or so opponents provided such a clear-cut alternative view of Dalkeith that it was able to construct the following planning brief.

Sustain and maintain Dalkeith's historic and long established position as one of Western Australia's first garden suburbs in keeping with its founding philosophy of providing an owner-occupied, free-standing, single-family friendly housing environment with a close-by and easily accessed range of basic social, recreational, shopping, medical, educational, and community funded facilities, and encapsulated within a parkland landscape of treed gardens, open front lawns, street trees, green areas, parks and recreation areas appropriate to its semi-isolated location as river foreshore lined peninsula, free from through traffic, yet easily accessible by public transport to nearby second level shopping facilities in Claremont Town Centre, Stirling Highway and to a lesser extent in Broadway.

Your committee accepted this as a working brief on which to base their report to Council.

A People's Brief, we must note, is quite different from a Mission Statement.

Mission statements are written and prepared for an organisation as executive directives and are designed to set out how an organisation and its staff shall operate in securing stated objectives and are essentially top-down statements. There was clearly the model adopted in preparing the original "vision adopted by the project team" which I will now repeat to demonstrate the contrast between the people's bottom-up and the administration's top-down views;

"to provide a vibrant, pedestrian friendly destination a diverse range of housing options and services not only to the local residents but to the wider population in an innovative and sustainable manner."

The administration vision is a version of the all too common "at a distance" rootless "any place anywhere in modern suburbia" vision statement more a reflection of current Western Australian planning thinking than of what the people of Dalkeith who actually live there actually want.

A People's Brief is, by contrast, a highly localised a bottom-up statement by the people drawn up without the guidance of planners and facilitators at public or confidential consultations, aided by cleverly worded questionnaires all aimed at leading the people, usually only a tiny fraction of the inhabitants, to adopt a pre-determined planning outcome.

The Dalkeith People's Brief, drawn up as a bottom up statement by people who actually chose to live in Dalkeith, not only provides a sound foundation on which to base a plan for Dalkeith, but is also the best example I have ever seen of a people's assessment of a professional planning proposal.

Why the Administration's Analysis and Recommendations fails

The process in which we are engaged is comparable to the briefing of an architect to design a dream house in Dalkeith for a family and its lifestyle.

On this analogy, the People's Brie provides a brief on which you as councillors and policy makers solve this impasse between the people and their carefully worded brief, and your administration's idea as to what Dalkeith should be. The two are poles apart.

Furthermore, the People's Brief is more than a statement of ideas, it is also a set of performance criteria by which to measure all future planning proposals for this part of Nedlands in guiding the administration in assessing planning applications as they come in within a framework set Council with regard to Dalkeith.

It is not, therefore a wish list, but a set of clear directives which to guide all future development.

However, since the administration has still not provided an adequate I written analysis of the nearly 500 written submissions, we can only assume that only the following recommendations were adopted from the People's Brief:

1. Convert all proposed most but not all Urban General areas to Urban Residential.
2. Redefine Precinct 18 boundary so as to exclude Circe Circle and Alexander Road North (except Lot 383) from the precinct where no change will be development in Circe Circle, and existing Alexander Road Guidelines.

These I supported at your Steering Committee's last meeting.

That this is as far as the administration is prepared to take notice of the People's Brief is confirmed by the way in which it chose to justify retaining bits of the abandoned *Dalkeith Redevelopment Guidelines* by reusing the data in the City of Nedlands Future Housing Choice Survey taken from the 2006 *Housing Diversity Study*.

The bits and pieces salvaged from the original Precinct 18 Report by the administration include:

3. The redevelopment of the City's Dalkeith Hall land in built form rather than specified it be retained and redeveloped for civic and community uses;

4. The inclusion of a wide range of residential and commercial uses on the south side of Waratah Avenue facing the Village in a zone defined as Urban General. These include strata titling to a maximum of 4 per lot, aged or dependent person's dwellings, medium to large apartments, and ground floor retail and commercial uses to a maximum of 100m².
5. The built form idea of step-backs to disguise the true height of a building by stating, with reference to urban residential that it "presents to the street as a 2 storey building;" and with regard to the Village it presents as a "3 storey building." These statements imply the possibility of at least one additional storey.

From the Housing Diversity study the administration uses the Housing Choice survey to introduce a wish list of what people might want if given open slather to do as they please at sometime in their lives. Using this data for the whole of Nedlands, the administration then proceeded (on page 10) to make the most outlandish estimates of future lifetime needs for Dalkeith six different categories of what it calls "Housing Choice."

On this basis it concluded that there were 814 "surplus" large single stand alone dwellings, and a shortfall of 382 small block single stand alone housing on a small block. This we assume is the measure on which the administration based future needs.

It also concluded there was a shortage of 65 town houses, 43 retirement homes, 82 lifestyle 55+ housing and 33 undefined housing.

Urban Residential proposals

Using this as a reliable estimate on which make a policy decision, the administration then proposed that land zoned *Urban Residential* should offer the following based on a maximum 2 lot subdivision:

- Small house on 400-500 sq. metre blocks;
- Townhouses (multiple dwelling);
- Villas (grouped dwelling).
- Medium to large apartments;

Since the area covered by land zoned Urban residential is by far the largest of all the land uses, to adopt these proposals would do more to change the character of Dalkeith than any other development in its entire history: and exceeded only the even more radical proposal to turn the ground floors of almost exactly the same area into retail and commercial uses.

Villa development generally take the form of multi-lot development in which villas area are grouped around an open and generally paved area with some degree of landscaping. They are generally commercial spec-built developments and require the acquisition of two or more lots. This would be totally out of character for Dalkeith.

Town houses or multiple dwellings are also multi-lot development and in style follow the model set by Sydney's traditional balconied terraced housing. Again they are commercial developments generally beyond the scope of single residential land owners as it would be in the case of single lot subdivision. These are more akin to the established trends in the city and Subiaco and busy highways such as Broadway.

Large apartments are similarly commercial spec-developments but could probably be accommodated on a single block.

Administration is, therefore, asking your committee to accept in another guise what was overwhelmingly rejected by the submissions and something which the founders of the People Against Density Dalkeith movement with its membership of more than half the total population of Dalkeith set out to oppose: density development in excess of two storeys.

Finally, last week I pointed out that Council would have to contend with the Waratah Avenue subdivision petitioners whose financial expectations were raised as the result of confidential staff conducted meetings with the landowners. Whatever one's opinion of its merits, the petition succeeded in confusing the issue. Furthermore, to accept the petition without further research would be tantamount to the Steering Committee recommending Council make policy decision encouraging residential landowners anywhere in Dalkeith to make wholesale applications for sub-divisional approval.

This would run counter to the people's overwhelming opposition to open slather subdivisions.

I believe that the only course of action is for your steering committee to adopt only those of the administration's recommendations which are in conformity with the People's Brief as follows:

6. **Discuss recommendations with regard to Village Character Area (excluding lots 1 – 4 Dalkeith Hall).**
7. **Prepare a special report for the future development of the Dalkeith Hall site (Lots 1-4) for community uses including an updated hall and facilities, with the possibility of retired person's accommodation on second floor.**
8. **Change Lots 397- 403, 1 and 2 on south side of Waratah Avenue from Urban General Character Area to Urban Residential Character Area.**
9. **No density increases in Urban Residential Character Area (Lots 340-248, 220 – 236.**
10. **Exclude Circe Circle and Alexander Road North including Lot 383 from Precinct 18 Boundary with no change in permissible development in Circe Circle, and existing Alexander Road Guidelines.**