

Our Submission to Council

We considered ourselves very lucky to be able to move to a truly unique suburb like Dalkeith. Dalkeith is not a major shopping hub, it is not a corridor to somewhere else. You cannot hear traffic noise in the distance. Dalkeith is a beautiful garden suburb and people only go to Dalkeith if they live in the vicinity. What other suburb in Australia can boast being a better location?

We were very upset when, just before Christmas, we received the Council's letter in relation to its redevelopment proposal for Dalkeith.

As a result, we have read the following:

1. The Dalkeith Concept Draft Built Form Design Guidelines (the Concept Plan);
2. The Urban Design Study;
3. The Council Minutes of Meeting dated 28 November 2006;
4. The Housing Diversity Study;
5. The Strategic Plan 2006 – 2020.

We have given PADD the authority to act on our behalf in relation to providing a submission in response to the Concept Plan.

Below are some of the matters we feel strongly about and the rest we shall leave to PADD:

We support limited mixed use zoning on Waratah Avenue between Adelma Road and Alexander Road but only on the condition that;

1. there is no extension of commercial and retail activity beyond the existing established areas;
2. the total height does not exceed 3 stories at the Dalkeith Village shopping centre site and 2 stories everywhere else along Waratah Avenue;
3. use of land as a hotel, motel or tavern not be allowed;
4. the Dalkeith Hall remains. It can be used for community purposes such as youth, senior and leisure activities as well as for parents with preschool children. It is on the City of Nedlands' Heritage Inventory and the Council cannot expect people to respect heritage values if it does not do so itself. Also the parking area on this site is well used and needed;
5. the original garden city design of Dalkeith is extended to this area.

We believe that the Concept Plan is contrary to the Strategic Plan and the Council Minutes of 28 November 2006 for the reasons stated below;

1. The Urban Design Study's vision statement for the area the subject of the Concept Plan is:

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

This statement should have been formulated by the Council after extensive community consultation, not by consultants who probably do not live in the area.

Page 17 of the Study states as follows:

"The prime importance for the successful redevelopment of this area is to create a destination, a reason for people to visit, as well as creating a critical mass of local residents to be able to support increased shopping activities. Improved housing diversity through innovative urban design can increase the number of residents offering local business's a better chance of commercial success."

The Concept Plan is based on this view which is a great leap from what the Council resolved in its meeting on 28 November 2006. Did the Council instruct the consultants that they require increased retail and commercial space in the area and if so why? There is no reference to increased commercial or retail areas in the Housing Diversity Study, the Strategic Plan nor the Council Minutes of 28 November 2006. Increased commercial space does not make a "vibrant" community, in fact it does rather the opposite.

The Council is not considering the interests of it's community as a whole but instead, the few landowners who stand to make substantial financial gains from their developments.

Let me remind you that the Council Minutes dated 28 November 2006 actually resolve in para (f) as follows;

"redevelopment of the following areas is supported subject to further planning to establish appropriate built form outcomes which will facilitate denser, more diverse dwelling types"

Para (b) also states:

"the character, amenity and current open spaces in the City of Nedlands must be respected and maintained"

Both these resolutions have been completely ignored and on this basis the Concept Plan should be completely scrapped;

2. We have not seen any evidence which shows that the existing infrastructure of Dalkeith can support such a large scale development. No traffic, environmental, social or other studies been done in this regard. On this basis the Concept Plan should be completely scrapped;
3. We cannot find any evidence or reason to support the Council's decision to treat Dalkeith as the highest priority for redevelopment over the other areas designated by the Council in its meeting on 28 November 2006. Is there a reason for this?;

4. The Concept Plan states that:

“building height limits will be increased to four and five storeys without detriment to the surrounding urban areas”

How can that possibly be? Buildings with 4 or 5 levels will adversely affect all adjoining owners' use and enjoyment of their land (including their property values). The mock up drawings in the Concept Plan (on page 8) make Waratah Avenue look like St Georges Terrace! These heights will absolutely destroy the village atmosphere and character of this suburb. Allowing setbacks and landscaping do not change this. Also, how can the Council expect residents to accept height limits which the Council has not even allowed on Stirling Highway? The Council meeting on 28 November 2006 limited height levels there to 3 to 4 stories on the south side. Are there any developments of this magnitude in similar suburbs in Australia which Council can point to as being a good precedent for these height levels?;

5. The village atmosphere will be destroyed if developers are allowed to demolish all the shop fronts which currently exist (ie the Ricarda and Cimbalino buildings have great character shop facades);
6. You do not need to conduct a traffic study to realise that the Concept Plan will have a significant impact on traffic numbers through all streets leading back to Stirling Highway, not just those streets in Dalkeith. Page 18 of the Urban Design Study suggests that the traffic along Waratah Avenue be slowed down by a speed limit of 40km/hr and by using traffic calming devices. This will result in cars diverting to Philip Road and Watkins Road which roads are already used as a way of ingress and egress from the Village area;
7. The many ingress and egress points for properties on Waratah Avenue are very dangerous for pedestrians particularly the elderly and those with prams and young children. It doesn't matter where these ingress and egress points are moved to, given the size of the proposed development, they are always going to be very busy and dangerous;
8. The Urban Study points out that parking shortages are already evident on Waratah Avenue. Cars are often parked on Philip Road, Edna Road, Alexander Road as well as Adelma Road and Waratah Avenue east of Adelma. What is the Council doing about this problem?

In conclusion we are very angry about the amount of time that we have had to spend working and researching this proposal in order to search for answers on how this outrageous Concept Plan evolved. We have found no satisfactory answers. Are you able to answer the questions put to you in this letter?

Finally, if the development in the Concept Plan is allowed to go ahead, Dalkeith will be under a cloud of building dust for the next 20 years. I worry about how this, and the stress of it all will affect our health, and more importantly that of our children.

We urge the Council to regroup, scrap the Concept Plan and act in accordance with the wishes of the whole community. Stand up to the State government and fiercely protect our quality of life and the precious assets of our fantastic suburb.

Yours Sincerely

Nadia Sabatini and Dr Donald Latchem