



NORTHBRIDGE
PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

Working for the advancement of Northbridge since 1919

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MEDIA RELEASE

July 19 2007

Residents protest Northbridge Plaza expansion plans

More than 150 residents from Northbridge and surrounding suburbs braved a particularly chilly evening to attend a lively meeting in Northbridge on July 18 and protest about the planned expansion of Northbridge Plaza shopping centre.

The meeting unanimously resolved that ownership and control of the publicly-owned Plaza car park land should remain with the community and that the shopping centre's retail space should expand by no more than about 10% compared with the current space in the centre.

The meeting also wanted any redevelopment to have minimal impact on current traffic volumes and on local neighbourhood shops and businesses. Any residential units built on the site should be in keeping with existing residential units in Northbridge, such as two-storey units in Eastern Valley Way.

Residents requested that access within the Plaza shopping centre be improved for elderly and disabled members of the community. Car park safety, security and convenience should also be improved, whether or not the car park would be relocated underground. They also wanted minimal impact on the residents of Harden Avenue, Tenilba Rd, Northbridge Gardens Retirement Village and the Paulian Villa Nursing Home, which are located close to the Plaza site.

The meeting, which was organised by Northbridge Progress Association, was attended by Willoughby MP Gladys Berejiklian, Mayor Pat Reilly, several Willoughby councillors and representatives of AMP Capital Investors, the Plaza managers. It was well supported by other Willoughby Progress Associations - Castlecrag, Castle Cove, Chatswood East, Willoughby South and Naremburn.

Northbridge Progress Association President John Becroft told the residents: "What happens to the Plaza shopping centre and the adjacent Council car-park could have a profound impact on local traffic, shops and businesses, not only in Northbridge but in surrounding suburbs. It could literally change the character of our suburbs".

A representative of AMP Capital Investors, Mr Gavin Boswarva, said that the existing centre would not be demolished, only enhanced. "We want to work with Council and the community to move forward with the Masterplan process," he said.

Mr Mark Monk, the president of a newly formed residents' action group, Willoughby Residents Against Plaza Overdevelopment, told residents that the group was not against development of the Plaza, only retail expansion. He said that a retail expansion would create five times as much traffic as residential development.

Residents applauded when Mayor Pat Reilly assured them: "Northbridge Plaza has always been a community shopping centre and it will stay a community shopping centre". He said that if AMP could not accept a 10% retail expansion "perhaps the shopping centre needs another owner". In regard to the potential for NSW Department of Planning to take over as consent authority for the site, Mayor Reilly said, "Council wants to control the Masterplan process; rest assured that we won't give easy access to the Minister."

Councillor Judith Rutherford said, "The car park land is community land – we all own it. Council has to keep control of the land." Councillor Wendy Norton noted that she hopes to persuade Council to conduct the Masterplan over the site, not AMP.

Willoughby State MP Gladys Berejiklian said that no development should take place without the direct involvement of the community in an open and transparent process. "The last thing we want to see is the project landing on a Minister's desk," she said.

For further information, contact Malcolm Lye, Secretary, Northbridge Progress Association (phone 9958 7566)

Attached: The text of the resolution passed unanimously by the meeting on July 18

Northbridge Progress Association Inc

RESOLUTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY AT THE JULY 18 2007 MEETING

RESOLVED that this meeting does not oppose the redevelopment of the Northbridge Plaza site with a high quality shopping centre and residential units (including seniors' units) provided that:

1. Ownership and control of the car park land will remain with the community.
2. Retail space will expand by no more than about 10% compared with the current retail and other space in the centre.
3. There will be minimal impact of the redevelopment on current traffic volumes or on local neighbourhood shops and businesses.
4. Any residential units built on the site will be in keeping (that is, in height, bulk and quality) with existing residential units in Northbridge.
5. Improvements will be made to access within the shopping centre for elderly and disabled members of the community.
6. Improvements will be made to car park safety, security and convenience, whether or not the car park is relocated underground.
7. There will be minimal impact on the residents of Harden Avenue, Tenilba Rd, Northbridge Gardens Retirement Village and the Paulian Villa Nursing Home.