



NORTHBRIDGE
PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

Working for the advancement of Northbridge since 1919

ABN 733 956 702

PO Box 357 Northbridge 2063

September 2 2007

The General Manager
Willoughby City Council
PO Box 57
CHATSWOOD NSW 2057

Dear Mr Owen

**Re: Northbridge Plaza and car park
Set out of Working Group and Reference Committee**

This letter comprises comments on the above report, which was dated August 23 2007 (with the substantial attachment dated August 8) and received by this Association by email on August 30. The letter has been approved by the Executive Committee of the Association.

The prospect of a major Northbridge Plaza expansion is of great concern to the residents of Northbridge and nearby suburbs. The Association therefore welcomed the Mayoral Minute and the subsequent July 23 2007 Council resolution which proposed two committees for the Northbridge Plaza Masterplan process on both of which the community would be represented.

We note that the July 23 resolution did not alter in any way Council's June 25 resolution in which the Masterplan would be limited to "a retail floor space increase of approximately 10%".

The Association accepts the above report with the following exceptions:

1. We note that the July 23 Council resolution called for "a Technical Working Party comprising ... and qualified community representatives ..." Yet the report now proposes only one community representative on the Technical Working Group (TWG). The Association asks Council to implement its resolution and to select at least two community representatives on the TWG, both to be chosen through an Expressions of Interest process.
2. The report recommends that the community representatives on the TWG shall "be qualified in urban design, town planning, traffic engineering, architecture

or similar relevant qualification”. The Association believes that this may unnecessarily restrict the choice of community representatives or involve the community in substantial costs for consultants. (We question whether both AMPCI representatives on the TWG possess such qualifications?) The Association requests that the report’s words be replaced by: “The nominees shall demonstrate relevant skills and experience to contribute meaningfully to the committee.”

3. The report proposes that the community representatives on TWG shall be selected from an Expressions of Interest process by the Environmental Services Director alone. The Association believes that the Mayor or a Councillor nominated by the Mayor should also be involved in the selection.
4. In the report, there are no persons nominated to select the three community representatives on the Reference Committee (RC) from the Expressions of Interest process. The Association believes that these decisions should involve the Mayor, a Councillor and a Council officer.
5. The report recommends that an AMPCI representative shall be the secretary of TWG. The Association believes that the secretary should be a Council staff member in order to preserve the principle of independence of the committee. It is also likely to be more efficient.
6. The report suggests that the RC shall meet only once each two months, yet the draft Masterplan is expected to go on formal exhibition “in early 2008”. It is therefore possible that the RC will meet only two or three times. The Association believes that, for the RC to have a genuine oversight role and a meaningful understanding of this large and complex project, it needs to meet at least monthly.
7. The report indicates that the business of the two committees will be confidential and not released to the media or to the community. Rather than keep the community in complete ignorance of the Masterplan process for several months, we request that a monthly summary statement be prepared for release to the community.
8. Lastly, the Association feels strongly that the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) should be deferred from consideration by both committees until after the draft Masterplan is approved by Council. The Association has received advice, and believes strongly, that to negotiate or deal with the community land before any project has been agreed by Council would be inappropriate and could even lead to intervention by the NSW Planning Minister.

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Lye
Secretary

Copy: Councillors
Castlecrag, Willoughby South, Chatswood East, Naremburn and Castle Cove
Progress Associations
Willoughby Residents Against Plaza Overdevelopment