

Camden Residents' Action Group (CRAG) Inc

Public Address: ORD 013 Business Paper 22 November 2016 Tender T002/2017 Construction of Oxley Street Car Park Extension, Camden

Concerned citizens have campaigned vigorously against this decked car park. Social media and CRAG's website evidence significant issues about the process that led to its contentious approval by the previous Council.

Given this level of community concern it is requested that the tender not be approved at this meeting.

New Councillors of course need time to familiarise themselves with the issues and satisfy themselves that public funds are to be used prudently and with accountability. It would also make sense that the car park be considered by the Heritage Committee, as proposed by Councillor Cagney and unanimously supported.

Yesterday the Greater Sydney Commission published its draft plan acknowledging Camden as an historic country town with exceptional heritage significance and uniqueness of character. The Commission states that in managing Sydney's growth, the town and its landscapes must be protected. Liveability Priority 7 would require that Council demonstrate how the development of a decked car park is protecting, and preferably enhancing, Camden's character. Arguably this would be impossible.

It can easily be shown that best practice, as set out in the Local Government **Capital Expenditure Guidelines**, was not followed in assessing the car park.¹

1. The Guidelines strongly encourage community involvement in capital expenditure decision making and state that public engagement is expected to be undertaken PRIOR to making any commitment.

- Commitment to this project is evidenced as early as 20 June 2014².
- However, consultation took place from late July 2014.
- The community were not aware that the car park would be designed to take additional decks in the future, thus contravening the 7 m height limit.
- Anecdotally and academically³ the consultation was shown to be flawed.

¹ Division of Local Government Department of Premier and Cabinet (2010) *Capital Expenditure Guidelines*
<https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/Capital-Expenditure-Guidelines.pdf>

² Camden Residents' Action Group Inc (2016) *Timeline of issues with Camden Council September 2012 to 2016* pp 29-32 http://www.crag.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Timeline-of-Community-Issues-with-Camden-Councils-Faction-_Term-2012-to-2016_-as-at-28-Sept-2016.pdf

³ Ian Willis (Feb 2016) *Force or farce Community consultation in local government*
https://www.academia.edu/26423228/Force_or_farce_Community_consultation_in_local_government

2. The Guidelines require analysis of costs and benefits to be unbiased, rigorously evidence based, and concluding decisions to be logical and transparent.

- No cost benefit analysis has been made public, including of qualitative factors such as heritage and community amenity.
- Evidence commissioned from and provided by Brown Consulting⁴ was ignored
- Estimated costsⁱ are not specifically publically documented in terms of cost per car space for this capital project, the aim of which is to provide more parking in the town centre. However based on the information publically provided the costs would seem extraordinary being between \$69,000 and \$100,000 per additional space, not including ongoing maintenance or opportunity costs of lost heritage amenity. Available research⁵ shows that the typical order of magnitude of costs (in 2010) for constructing basement or underground parking roughly averaged \$50,000⁶ per space, with the advantage of retaining valuable land. Likewise, at ground parking typically averaged \$3,000 per space.ⁱⁱ
- The community perceives bias in that a decked car park adjacent to Council buildings will disproportionately benefit Council's finances and/or its tenants. Council as a landlord is not required, as are other landlords of businesses, to provide onsite parking or pay s94 contributions, but is instead using public land and money to provide parking. Questions have been asked about the contractual arrangement with the lessees. Any answers have not been made available to the community.
- Further it is troubling that s 94 parking funds from Narellan are earmarked to meet costs of this car park. It is unclear how future s 94 contributions from Camden would ever pay back the Narellan loan.
- Overall it is perceived that the car park decision is non-transparent, less than rigorously evidenced-based and advantages Council as a landlord, and inadequately accounts for impacts on heritage and community amenity.

3. Although the Guidelines state that all project alternatives need to be assessed, these alternatives for example were not considered:

- A requested moratorium until after Council's move to Oran Park despite a community petition of 4,219 signatures;
- Parking restrictions in prime areas as recommended by Brown Consulting
- At ground parking adjacent to Civic Centre on corner of John and Mitchell;
- The potential of Onslow Park for longer-stay parking and more disabled parking throughout the town;
- And in particular basement or underground parking to resolve heritage impacts.

The community requests that the new Council revisit parking needs using best practice differential analysis of alternatives and follow the Capital Expenditure Guidelines for local government.

⁴ Brown (2014) *Multi Storey Car Park Study April 2014* Reference Number: X13060.01

<http://www.camden.nsw.gov.au/assets/pdf/Major-Projects/2015/Camden-Town-Centre/Camden-Town-Centre-Multi-Storey-Car-Park-Study-April-2014.pdf>

Brown (2013) *Camden Town Centre Traffic and Transport Study September 2013* Reference Number: X13060. <http://www.camden.nsw.gov.au/assets/pdf/Major-Projects/2015/Camden-Town-Centre/Camden-Town-Centre-Traffic-and-Transport-Study-September-2013.pdf>

⁵ Chris Coath (2011) *Parking: A Basis or Burden to Liveable and Accessible Communities* p.3

<http://esvc001492.wic025u.server-web.com/Data/Sites/1/pdffiles/parking---chris-coath.pdf>

⁶ Camden Council, at the meeting of 22 November 2016, provided the information that the cost for Camden would be around \$70,000 per space

i Calculations:

Council cost estimate	\$ 3,300,000.00	\$ 3,600,000.00	\$ 5,250,000.00
Council estimates spaces in decked car park to be	150	150	150
Parking spaces currently available on the proposed site	98	98	98
Resulting in new parking spaces	52	52	52
Less spaces lost to traffic lights 8, and left turn at lights 3	11	11	11
TOTAL Additional PARKING SPACES	41	41	41
Approximate cost per space (150)	\$ 22,000.00	\$ 24,000.00	\$ 35,000.00
Approximate cost per new space (52)	\$ 63,461.54	\$ 69,230.77	\$ 100,961.54
Approximate cost per additional space (41)	\$ 80,487.80	\$ 87,804.88	\$ 128,048.78
Source	Verbal: \$22,000 per space provided at Council meeting 10 May 2016	http://www.camdenadvertiser.com.au/story/3902091/oxley-street-car-park-approved/ and p23 at http://www.camden.nsw.gov.au/assets/pdf/Council/AboutCouncil/2014/BusinessPlansAndMinutes/25-November-Notes-Attachments.pdf	Verbal: \$35,000 per space provided at Council Meeting 22 Nov 2016. \$35,000 x 150 spaces = \$5,250,000

ii Research into costs per space:

Coath (2011) states: The cost of parking obviously varies depending on how it is provided on a development site – at grade, basement parking, or above ground multi deck parking. Some typical parking costs (per space) include:

- Construction costs of parking^a:
 - o Basement parking: \$46,100 – \$49,700 per space
 - o Open parking areas: \$2,925 – \$3,155 per space
 - o Multi deck parking: \$19,700 – \$21,200 per space

^a Rawlinsons, *Australian Construction Handbook, 2010*, rate adopted for Melbourne conditions.