

Council Address 28 November 2017: Milk Depot

Thank you for this opportunity to address Council after the site inspection, which regrettably some Councillors could not attend.

Unfortunately, the inspection served more to confuse than clarify. There were no markers indicating height, which is far higher than the maximum legislated by the LEP. The few markers indicating the building footprint seemed inconsistent with the architect's drawings.

I was unable to imagine the proposal within the context of the original Milk Depot and Conservation Area and must accept that it is as incompatible in design and size as the plans indicate.

Being a council inspection, residents in attendance were not able to have their concerns specifically and directly addressed. My understanding is that a local Council represents its electorate, and I am very disappointed that similar opportunity to have my questions answered has not been available to me.

My particular and personal concern, regarding flooding, was exacerbated by the visit to the site which to me shows evidence of fast water flow such as a carved out channel.

It is disturbing that the developer, supported by Council's report, is confident that the proposed building will not adversely affect surrounding properties in a flood because its footprint is within a flood storage area.

This is not true. The Worley Parsons Report does not appear to have used anecdotal data to verify and calibrate its floodway modelling although stating it is extremely valuable to do so. Those with lived experience know that the site is in a floodway. Building in a floodway is prohibited because it is dangerous and affects other properties.

Council originally voiced misgivings about the hazardous flood risk. The developer's Flood Risk Report of March 2017 is based on this fictional argument:

Compensatory earthworks are proposed across the site to ensure that no adverse flooding impacts result from the development. This ensures no loss of flood storage or changes to flood levels as the floodwater contains very low velocities in major flood events.

A statutory declaration from a previous owner of the Milk Depot site from 1975 over 28 years states that both sides of the Milk Depot building are in the path of fast flows. He describes a floodway from a high spot near the Trattoria Restaurant as a "***...full flood flow which continues up until the Milk Depot building***"

and further states

"Both sides of the Milk Depot building are subject to flood flow: there is no backwater on this part of the river...the land where the new building is being proposed has always been scoured out by floodwatersThe highest flood...wasapproximately 10 feet to 12 feet of water across the showroom floor."

There are many long-time locals who are willing to corroborate that the proposed development is in a floodway and that it is dangerous. Another local I spoke to said and I quote:

In my experience the Milk Depot, the intersection of Argyle and Edward Streets and Edward Street itself is part of the Nepean's pattern flood flowAt the Argyle end of Edward Street the flood flows very quickly. The fact that lives have not been lost, to date, in a big flood is miraculous.

I moved to Camden, attracted by its village integrity, rural surrounds and history. Standing in rural floodplain on the edge of the 1840 town, this generic development, if approved, may well be the end of Camden's uniqueness. I urge Council to reject this proposal and encourage a suitable alternative. A single restaurant within the original building, designed to incorporate the heritage features of the site, would be an ideal alternative which I believe would receive a lot of support from the Camden community.

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