

Camden Residents' Action Group

Incorporated

Camden – Still a Country Town

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The General Manager
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7 November 2018

Dear Sir,

Re: DA 2018/1095/1
152-156 Argyle Street, Camden
Construction of a single storey commercial building and associated site works

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on the above DA which proposes the construction of single storey commercial building within the heritage conservation area (HCA). The location of the new building would be at the rear of the existing building facing Argyle Street which currently houses a number of businesses including Camden Valley Meats and Sarita's Emporium, a women's clothing store.

We note the Statement of Environmental Effects (SOEE) states that a pre-DA meeting was held with Council officers on 7th December 2017 which mainly covered, as well as drainage, what we also see as major considerations: (1) car parking rates and configuration and (2) heritage and urban design.

Our comments on the proposal follow:

1. Car parking rates and configuration

The SOEE (p.15) states

We note that the existing site improvements, being the two-storey building oriented to Argyle Street comprises a floor area of 357.3sqm. Based on current use (being retail on the ground floor and office premises on first floor), this would generate a demand for 13.2 car parking spaces. We contend under these circumstances that there have been no previous Development Consent conditions requiring the provision of onsite car parking, and that any parking on-site has been provided and utilised in an informal manner only. As such, the proposed development will deliver a surplus of onsite parking and any future redevelopment of the existing built infrastructure oriented to Argyle Street will involve the examination of onsite car parking provision.

Our background understanding indicates that there was a time that the whole back area was used for parking “informally”, but that the reference to providing on-site parking in an ‘informal manner’ could only be considered correct up until about 10 years ago when the current fences were installed. The building owners originally kept the gate closed and it was marked “staff parking only”, but after some backlash from customers they then fenced off the area closer to the existing building for staff and the remainder was marked as “customer parking”.

Access to the back of the shops is necessary for deliveries, especially for the butcher shop. With the new building limiting the current car parking area it would seem that truck deliveries would be more difficult and that cars entering and reversing from the proposed car spaces could create a dangerous proposition in relation to the need to cross what is described in the plans as a “right of footway 3.5 m wide”.

Council has indicated through its construction of a decked car park within the HCA with its protective planning controls, that it regards car parking as an overriding issue in Camden. By our calculation the above DA proposes the loss of 10 parking spaces, with a reduction from 30 car spaces to 20 spaces upon construction of the proposed building. In this sense the proposal sets a precedent for reduction of existing parking rather than an increase, and makes no contribution towards the cost of the decked car park.

We request that the assessment and consent conditions of this DA require:

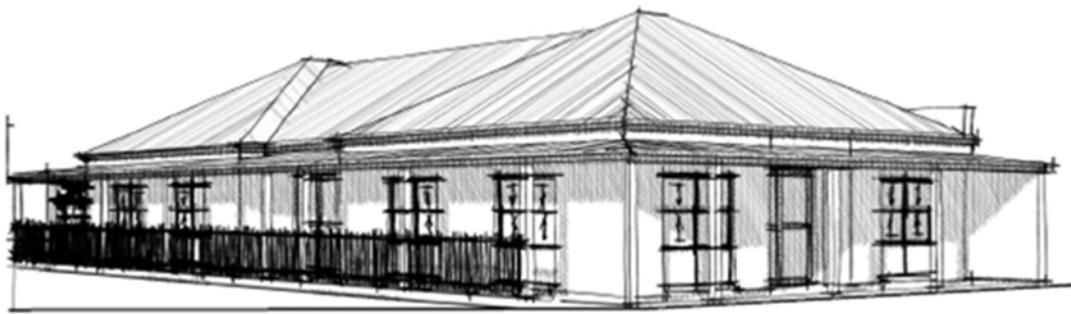
- the assurance of safety of the walkway for pedestrians;
- the factoring in of consequent impacts on parking availability and deliveries of potential similar proposals from owners of other buildings backing on to the John/Murray Street public car park.

2. Heritage and urban design.

The hipped roof elements, small-scale and cottage appearance from the public car park are consistent with the recently approved Urban Design Framework for the Camden Town Centre and are welcomed as an enhancement to the HCA.

We see no issue with the 7m height limit being exceeded by 1.82% to allow for a compatible and aesthetically pleasing roof form and support the variation under LEP 4.6, which we understand may also be supported under LEP 5.6.

The artist's impression of the proposed building in the SOEE as shown below indicates that the proportionality and architectural form of the building is consistent with Camden's human scale and 19th century townscape, and we trust that the reality will be similarly harmonious and deliver its promise of an enhancement to the HCA.



We trust that the veranda posts and pitch of the veranda roof will be similar to that evident within the cottage character of the HCA. The colour palette as indicated is unassuming and sympathetic to the surrounding built forms.

The choice of fabric including of windows and doors can make or break the aesthetics and traditional techniques and materials are preferred in conservation (Burra Charter Article 4.2).

We note that the window frames are to be of aluminium rather than wood, which is traditional and predominant in the HCA. Whilst the proposal is for a new building most would agree that if windows and doors were to be made as compatible as possible with the form and fabric of 19th century architecture, the new building would be more compatible with itself, with its immediate surrounds, as shown in the photo below extracted from the SOEE, and be of greater enhancement to the HCA. At a minimum, if aluminium is permitted the choice should be confined to the traditional and more substantial forms of aluminium doors and window inserts that are commercially available, and which can be demonstrated to be sympathetic in size and shape.



We request that the assessment and consent conditions of this DA require:

- a construction that delivers on the artist's impression,
- a traditional veranda consistent with the cottage character of the HCA,
- a shape and fabric of windows and doors that are compatible with the inherent character of the HCA.

Overall, we congratulate the applicant and architect because we find that this proposal should enhance the HCA, and is superior to many recent proposals that have simply tried to maximise floor space at the expense of aesthetics and the character of the HCA which is so highly valued by the community.

Yours sincerely,

Glenda Davis, President