

Camden Residents' Action Group

Incorporated
Camden – Still a Country Town

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Local Planning Panel 30 August 2022

Re: DA 2021/1960/1 Re-notification

21 Elizabeth Street CAMDEN

Construction of new commercial tenancy within existing building and creating new strata

Thank you for the opportunity to address this Panel on behalf of Camden Residents' Action Group.

The property at 21 Elizabeth Street is situated on the corner of Mitchell and Elizabeth Streets and is thus in a prominent signature position, within the Heritage Conservation Area (HCA) where certain constraints are imposed on proposed Developments.

Some context here will provide perspective around the building and this proposed DA.

The original proposed design for this building was flagrantly an overdevelopment and contrary to the character of the Heritage Conservation Area, and other guiding principles for developments within the Precinct, including being over height and over bulked. Following discussions, a compromise evolved producing a design, if not overly pleasing, at least far less displeasing. The height exceedance was placed well back from the streets and the impact of the bulk was broken into a complex of buildings, reducing the overall sense of bulk to a finer-grain and more acceptable design.

This DA sets about undermining the original concessions.

We lodged a GIPA¹ to obtain the documents associated with the 2001 approval. We disagree with the Agenda report that the infill is consistent with the approval. Our reading is that the void area now proposed to be infilled was intended to be open because it reduces scale and bulk, and provides space that mitigates the impact on the setting of heritage listed Chesham's cottage².

¹ On 21 January 2022 for additional information relating to the original 2000 DA and its approval on 9 April 2001, which was received on 9 March 2022.

❖ **making use of articulated, primary detached buildings and varying boundary setbacks, which reduce impact on adjacent properties.**

The registered listing of Chesham's Cottage (c1850) states:

the house remains significant as one of Camden Township's likely earliest dwellings, and as such, is an important contributor to Camden's history, growth and development."

And further states in its recommended management: "*Conserve and maintain setting*"

The Agenda Report states that the adjacent infill addition will be most visible from the rear of Chesham's Cottage. Clearly the infill looms large, overpowers the domestic scale of the cottage and does not maintain its heritage curtilage and setting. The height at 7.126m is at least 2m higher than the cottage.

We disagree that existing trees and a low-lying hedge are sufficient or should be relied upon to soften its visibility.

We refute as unsubstantiated the claim in the Heritage Impact Statement commissioned by the Applicant that the infill will contribute positively to the visual quality and character of the commercial component of the HCA. Clearly it will negatively impact the domestic character of the adjacent and nearby heritage listed cottages.

We do not consider that the lack of an objection from the owner of Chesham cottage is relevant given that it is seemingly unused and possibly considered a land investment. Given its heritage significance and legislated listing it must be protected and conserved.

We find it very insensitive and extraordinary that in the wake of a series of floods in the HCA this year and issues with evacuations that additional development should be even considered in the high risk 20-year (5% AEP) or that the loss of flood storage area is insignificant. The NSW Premier stated on 17 August 2022 that we cannot keep developing in areas that are at high risk of floods... We've been doing that for the last 100 years. It has to stop, and today it does³.

576 words

³ ABC 17 August 2022 NSW 2022 Flood Inquiry report recommends flood zone buy backs, changes to disaster response Available at <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-08-17/nsw-independent-flood-inquiry-report-madepublic/101331288>