



The Carlton Residents Association Inc.

A0034345G ABN 87 716 923 898
PO Box 1140, Carlton, Victoria, 3053
secretarycra@gmail.com

CLC design Sub-committee – Elgin / Nicholson preview meeting 4 August 2011

Meeting held at DHS Offices – 50 Lonsdale St

Attendees : Gabrielle Staugaitis - DHS, Ping Vincent, Warren Green - CRA,
David Jones & Kyle Reeve - Citta (Living Carlton), Matt -Jackson Architects,

The purpose of the meeting was to review Stage 3 design prior to the formal design review meeting to be held on Thursday 11 August.

Stage 3 comprises the three new buildings proposed for the western portion of the Elgin / Nicholson DHS precinct, two of which will be private the other public.

The anticipated program outlined indicated town-planning approval by years end and commencement of construction before March 2012.

The documentation tabled was almost sufficiently advanced to be appropriate for a town planning application with the DPCD. The formal DHS design review meeting on the 11 August will undertake an assessment of the documented design in the light of relevant stakeholders submissions and it's own specified criterion.

Without having an intimate knowledge of the design criterion and the relevant constraints, the overall impression is attractively contemporary with the architectural treatment of the private and public housing buildings being only marginally different. The private blocks exhibit a slightly more elaborate external architectural treatment. We were assured that the renderings of the buildings presented in the tabled documentation were a realistic representation of the finished product.

Functionally, the public housing apartments are not skimmed by current day standards and are generally 5 to 7 sq m larger than their private counterparts. 10% of them conform to the accessibility requirements of the BAC and the remainder, are all readily adaptable to these requirements. Environmentally, the energy star ratings for apartments range from a minimum of 5.5 up to 7. The design has incorporated provision to connect adjoining apartments to provide flexibility in housing options. There are 13 such opportunities ranging from 2x1.5 = 3.5 bed to 2x2= 4.5 bed.

The percentage mix of private and public units in Stage 3 is, 112 to 116 or 49% however, this reduces to 32% after the construction of approximately 122 additional private apartments on the eastern (stage 7) portion of the Elgin / Nicholson Precinct This means that the precinct mix will then be within the range 25 - 40 %, specified by the Development Agreement.

The mix of 1, 1.5, 2, 3 and 4 bedroom apartments within the stock of public apartments also conforms to the agreement requirements and Gabrielle assured that the mix was appropriate for the anticipated occupants who will be a combination of returning residents and applicants from the Department's waiting list.

There has been no repeat of the fenced/gated communal open space for the private apartments as was incorporated in the Rathdowne / Princes St Precinct. All communal open space is shared. A limited number of private and public apartments have ground level courtyards.

Car parking is provided at the rate of:

Private - a minimum of 1.0 per apartment
Public - 0.6 per new apartment
Public – 0.45 per existing apartment

All of which are more generous than the CoM's current minimum requirement.

There was some discussion relating to the remoteness / inconvenience of the car spaces dedicated to the apartments in the existing northern red brick tower, which will be accommodated in the basement of the new of public apartments. There appeared to be no practical alternative.

With regard to the design's compliance with the 2007 Development plan, it is in "general accord" which apparently is sufficient to satisfy the agreement with DHS. There are however, two serious omissions in the design. No provision has been made for space to accommodate gatherings of cultural / interest groups nor is there any space for local service facilities. Neither may be present on the current site, but there is no excuse for excluding them in this major redevelopment and "upgrading".

The documentation tabled provided minimal detail of the two private apartment blocks, however, aspects of the design identified as not conforming to the 2007 Development Plan, are as follows:

- Private Buildings EN 1 & EN 2 have effectively swapped location and the related under-croft parking has been replaced with basement parking. Eliminating the roads required to access the under-croft parking provides additional public park space and external courtyards for the ground floor apartments. The communal open space would appear to have been enhanced by this change due to the reduction of paved areas, elimination of the traffic into the space, the increased area of the park and improved permeability due to the relocation of a pedestrian access from the north to the west.
- The height of the two private blocks EN 1 and EN 2 generally exceed the heights nominated in the Development Plan by approximately 3.5 m. (one floor) The reason for this is not fully understood, however those in attendance were assured that although the yield of apartments had increased, they were still within the limits set by the Development Agreement. We were also assured that the extent of overshadowing would be no greater due to the set back adopted at the upper level.
The shadow diagrams supporting this are attached.
- Saving the large plane tree, identified for protection, has been deemed unachievable. All parties involved DHS, CoM, Living Carlton and their respective consultants are apparently in agreement on this issue.

The funding model was discussed and at the risk of over simplifying an obviously extremely complex financial agreement, it is as follows.

The government sells the land for the private component to the development partner for a sum determined by the Valuer General. However this is a minimum figure, there is a mechanism by which the parties determine whether a further payment to government will be made.

Needless to say, it is a complex formula and involves several parameters such as market conditions, sale price and profit. The development partner does have the benefit of not having to pay for the land until the settlement of the contracts of sale, at which time the purchasers provide two cheques, one for each party.

The development partner bears the cost of all communal facilities such as the park and associated works, and any upgrading of infrastructure and services including, power, gas, water & sewer. The government pays the development partner to construct the public housing apartments.

The issue of the contentious "salt & Pepper" mix of private and public accommodation was raised. It is not and will not be a consideration in this precinct. Gabrielle has offered to seek departmental comment on this issue and I will advise as soon as I have it to hand.

Summary:

- The proposed design lacks accommodation for cultural or interest group gatherings.
- There has been no provision for local service providers.

Any concerns that CRA may have can be presented at the Formal Design Review on the 11 August or alternatively submitted to Gabrielle who will present them on our behalf.

Warren Green
8 August 2011