



Mt Barker & District Residents' Association Inc

PO Box 494 Mount Barker, South Australia 5251

For the Community

13 July 2015

RTC DPA Submissions
Po Box 54
Mt Barker 5251 SA

To the Planning Dept

RE: Response to Regional Town Centre DPA

This Association appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback to this DPA. The Association has been involved in the consultation process from the beginning of this process in 2012. It feels the community input during the past few years has had some impact to the shape and tone of this DPA. Sections of it meet the community's needs but there are several areas of concern which we address further in this submission.

Our members attended the information sessions at the Institute several weeks ago. There was no real chance to receive feedback from the Council staff attending as they either did not have sufficient detail, or they suggested we provide feedback in writing via this process. We have read the DPA and the Explanatory Statement documents. It is almost impossible to compare this document with the existing plan. Some of it is highlighted green, but not all the additional items are highlighted (eg Attachment C, 9-13; Att C 20 is highlighted but it is not different from the old 13; all of Att D is new, but not highlighted). It would be useful if a comparative document were available to be sure that any changes have been captured and communicated to the community.

Ongoing dialogue about the matters in this submission would be most welcome as we feel they are areas which concern the community the most. (Mr Marc Voortman agreed to meet with us last week, but unfortunately he was on sick leave.) We will focus our submission on three main areas: Heritage, Open Space and High Rise.

1. Heritage

We are pleased to see the addition of the Kia-Ora Heritage precinct and the retention of Gawler St with its current heritage protection. The historic buildings in the Gawler St, Hutchinson St area must be preserved. During our 175th birthday celebrations last year the Association conducted two walking tours of the central

part of the town. Over 70 people attended and they stated quite categorically that this heritage area of the town must be retained and preserved for future generations. It also has significant tourist value which Council does not promote sufficiently.

This area includes Council's Institute (Town Hall) Building in Gawler St which (we anticipate) will eventually have additions built onto the rear on land owned by Council. Any such additions must ensure synergy with this precinct and the buildings surrounding it, including the Barker Hotel's buildings.

Hack Street precinct

The classification of the Historic Conservation area of Hack Street has 4 listed cottages (Nos 21, 23, 25 and 27) to be removed from the Register in order to create a 5 storey high rise precinct. Why would you do this in a heritage precinct? This area is one of the oldest areas of Mt Barker (dating from 1851) and although two houses have had hammerhead additions added to the rear, the streetscape is still 18th century and does not detract from the historic amenity of the area (despite the consultant's comments to the contrary in the Explanatory Statement).

After reviewing pages 24 – 27 of the Explanatory Statement, it is still not clear to us why you would select these four houses to build 5 storey apartments when there are many other parts of the town where 5 storey buildings would not impact so significantly on the adjacent area (eg on Council owned land behind the ANZ bank).

Immediately across Mill St there are more such heritage cottages on Hack St. By allowing these 4 to be delisted and have the potential of 5 storey buildings to be built in this area will result in a significant degradation of this whole street and precinct. Situating five story high rise buildings beside historic worker's cottages just does not make sense in such a small town.

If you view similar examples in Norwood, Eastwood and Kensington where double and triple storey buildings have been built in heritage precincts, particularly where the street comprises largely small former worker's cottages, the resulting streetscape is diminished due to the significant difference in size and scale between old and new buildings. This is less offensive in areas where the heritage buildings themselves are of 2 or 3 storey and can sit with pride besides a newer taller building.

We request that these four cultural assets to our town are not lost forever and they are retained in the heritage precinct and that an alternative location be sought for the 5 storey building eg behind the ANZ bank.

Cameron Road and Dunn Mill

It appears that this small precinct is not included in the Heritage Overlay, despite the Dunn Mill being on the State Heritage Register. We request that this error needs be rectified as it is an important asset to our town.

Church of England/Uniting Church precinct

How does the classification of 'Civic/Commercial' impact on the Church of England, Uniting Church, Bowling and Croquet Clubs? This entire area is of heritage value and potential tourist attraction. By placing a Civic/Commercial zone here will detract from these cultural and community assets. We request that they are protected from commercialisation.

Druids Ave and the Historic Oak Trees

What has happened to the protection of Druids Ave south side which was previously a buffer zone? Has that zoning now been removed? What does that mean to the Woolworth's land? This Association has been working to promote this vacant land as a Town Square. It is here that 3 or 4 storey buildings could be placed to encourage commercial activities, or inner town housing. The ground floor areas could be used for retail and restaurants, cafes and other eateries.

In previous planning applications, Druids Ave and the historic oak trees were protected to some degree by the zoning. This appears to be lost. Once again we ask that buffer zoning be retained in this precinct to ensure Druids Ave and the oak trees are preserved.

Also what is a pedestrian Permeability frontage on Druids Ave?

Auchendorroch House

The historic streetscape should include Auchendorroch on Adelaide Road. This needs to be protected.

Other queries:

- MTB/11: Landmark building site – what does this mean? If it is a heritage building it's indiscriminate.

Steam Ranger

It is noted that the Steam Ranger area is to be rezoned to 'Bulky Goods'. In the supporting flyers it is suggested 'the historic railway goods shed used as a focus and central element in future redevelopment of land currently occupied by Steam Ranger'. This is vague and unclear. When we asked Council staff about the move of Steam Ranger, they indicated that Steam Ranger was not moving. Why do you need to change this zone to 'Bulky Goods'? The next statement in the documents suggests that the steam engine tourist railway line in conjunction with the adjacent 19th century railway station continue to be used. This can only occur if the Steam Ranger is retained. We object to this zone change because it changes the use and in the long run will be an encouragement for the Steam Ranger to be replaced with something more profitable. Community feedback on Facebook also indicated this was a community asset which should be retained and promoted. It is one of the main reasons that tourists come to Mt Barker.

2. Open Space

The Council has developed an excellent network of trails for biking and walking. The DPA needs to extend these further with road closures in parts to encourage pedestrian and cycling activity. There is no point placing 5 storey apartment blocks and then expecting people not to use cars. The placement of these high rises will impact significantly on the traffic in these areas. Plans need to be adjusted to enable cycling and walking to and from the retail and transport nodes.

It is not clear that any new bike paths or trails have been included in the plans or zoning. It has been suggested that a walk/bike way be developed from KS Park up to the Park N Ride. Any connections between important precincts would be supported to reduce the reliance on motor vehicles.

It is excellent to see the retention of Dunn Oval and its ongoing linkage to the linear trail. It is also pleasing to see an addition to open space as that land designated in the Policy Area 8 adjacent to the Morphett Street/Dumas Street intersection. An open trail could be incorporated linking this area to the existing network. It currently sits in isolation to the trails network.

Mountain Pool

It is not clear what will happen to the swimming pool or the park precinct in which it lies. Currently this area is split into two – with one area designated for 5 storey high rise. The DPA remains silent about the swimming pool. We received no satisfactory answers from planning staff about this asset either. We suggest this be explained in further detail to the community.

Keith Stephenson Park

It is excellent to see that Keith Stephenson Park is retained as open space for the community. It is unclear what the impact will be on the visual aspect of the park from Adelaide Road if tourist accommodation is placed on the top of the rise adjacent to the Park N Ride. This development needs to be investigated further to ensure the attractiveness of the park is not lost.

Bowling and Croquet Clubs

It is pleasing to see the 'Community Green' on Mann St: does this mean the Bowling Club will be retained at this location?

3. High Rise

In this matter our members are not all in agreement. Some believe that high rise is essential if we are to save our open space and agricultural lands. Others believe that high rise is not appropriate in areas of historic zones and narrow roads. Others believe that high rise is welcome in the Town Centre to increase the population and

hopefully create a vibrant hub. The vibrant hub will only occur if businesses are willing and able to open longer during the evenings and on weekends. Currently most shops on Gawler St close after lunch on Saturdays and are not open on Sundays. The vibrant hub in the Town Centre depends very much on retailers, as well as Council enabling parking (not just for one hour in Gawler St). One trader we spoke to said that reduced parking times in Gawler St (now only 1hr parking) had reduced his trade significantly.

A high rise component has been include in our plans for the Town Square on the Woolworths land thus we see the general need for it in parts of the district. This does not have to be five storey but could be 2 or 3 storey instead. The use of 5 storeys in such a small town seems somewhat ludicrous if compared to high rise developments in other regional cities such as Mt Gambier, Pt Pirie, Whyalla and Pt Augusta. It may be more useful to include high rise developments in the new subdivisions so that people moving into the district are aware that high rise buildings will be in their neighbourhood. Any such high rise developments must include adequate linkages to open space, the trail networks and pedestrian facilities to the town centre. Otherwise they will become silent ghettos. There is sufficient evidence in towns in England to support this.

There is some fear from members that high rise apartments may degrade areas as it may attract people who do not care so much about their environment. Considering the need for affordable housing in this DPA, there is some risk that this may occur without proper social and community support mechanisms in place.

Conclusion

We appreciate the considerable effort undertaken by Council staff to include the community in the development of the DPA. We hope the feedback has been constructive and will help to develop a Town Centre that will be our pride, meet our community's needs and attract tourists to our region.

We look forward to meeting with Council Officers to discuss these and other matters relating to the DPA.

We would like to be heard at the Strategic Planning Policy Committee meeting on 10 August.

Yours sincerely

Dianne van Eck

Dianne van Eck
Chairperson