



NOTES FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID PLUMRIDGE'S DESK

ISSUE No 30

14 JULY 2009

**COUNCILLOR DAVID PLUMRIDGE AM
AREA COUNCILLOR - CITY OF ADELAIDE**

32 Dukes Lane Adelaide SA 5000
Email d.plumridge@adelaidecitycouncil.com

Tel 8232 0515 Mob 0417 088 992
Website www.davidplumridge.com

DEVELOPMENT AT ANY COST



(a) Light Square

The townscape character is established by the massing, proportions and robust architecture of the former industrial, warehouse and commercial buildings. These buildings about the Square and major street frontages, enclosing and defining the open space of the Square. A peripheral wall of refurbished older buildings and sympathetically designed high quality new buildings employing predominantly red brick or masonry construction should reinforce the townscape character.



The elegant and charming Light Sq building on the left is to be demolished to make way for a 13 storey office tower following a Development Assessment Commission (DAC) decision made in camera last week. Once again this was contrary to the advice of the Council's Development Assessment Panel (DAP). The media made much of the fact that the DAP ruled the building to be over height (which it was, by 12.7% and with no set-backs) but conveniently chose not to report the complete failure of the building to show any respect for the Desired Character statements for development in Light Square as set out very clearly in the clip above. **These provisions of the Plan seem to have been set aside by the DAC and in so doing it has called into question the plan's integrity and the fundamental principles that the Council believed it had adopted in 2006**

The 'architects' of the 2006 City of Adelaide Development Plan must be feeling very pleased with themselves because hidden behind a thin veil of improved planning processes they introduced the strategy which is leading to the steady destruction of much that has made Adelaide special when compared to its eastern states counterparts. The strategy talked up mixed use zoning, more flexibility in assessment, better protection of the Park Lands whilst at the same time dismissing incentives for better planning outcomes such as plot ratios and TFA to encourage retention of heritage buildings. After due process of public consultation, the Council adopted the plan.

Either the Council was not effectively briefed by its administration or it was simply 'asleep at the wheel' when it resolved to adopt the 2006 Plan because that is the plan which is failing to protect the essential character of the city which so many of us love and would wish to see preserved. And when I say 'preserved' I do not mean as a museum piece, but developed in a way which maximizes its development potential consistent with maintaining the character that sets Adelaide apart. **It would be a crying shame if posterity comes to remember the 2006 Plan and the Council that adopted it as being what led to the sacrifice of the city's long-term well-being on the altar of short-term gains for avaricious developers.**

The fundamental flaw which is leading to the tension between the so-called 'pro-development' and 'anti-development' lobbies is not about actual development but rather about the quality of development of both our buildings and, just as importantly, the public spaces which surround and inter-connect our built form.

At the risk of over-simplifying a complex process let me try to explain it as I see it; the Development Plan provides a set of criteria against which any development is to be measured; these criteria fall broadly into 2 categories:

- ▣ **Qualitative Measures** which talk about the Height, Bulk, Scale, Composition and Proportion of a building – abstract ideas that architects spend years studying and then decades debating. Architects are passionate about these things because they are what make good buildings great and ordinary cities memorable. **They are also the qualities which astute developers and their architects aspire to because they know that in the end these attributes will safeguard their investment.**
- ▣ **Quantitative Measures** which go to the Area, Number of Levels, Plot Ratios, Dwelling Unit Factors, Private and Public Open Space, Shading, Car and Bicycle Parking, Storm water disposal, Energy Efficiency, Land Use and all those things that can generally be assessed by running a ruler over the development. This is the work of the assessing planners and the various engineering disciplines they embrace.

At the end of the assessment process someone has to decide whether or not, **on balance**, a Development is in accordance with, or seriously at variance with the Development Plan. This is where subjective opinions come into play and **Quality** has to compete with **Quantity**. This is where the appointed members of the DAP are required to exercise their judgment and to apply their skills and expertise which is why Council appointed them to the Panel.

When it comes to promoting city development, Quantity must never be attained at the cost of Quality.

CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN - THE BIGGER PICTURE

Council applied 1% of its rates last year (and again this year) and added the same amount from general rates giving it \$1.3m to spend on Climate Change mitigation initiatives. **The Carbon Neutral Council Action Plan 2008-2012** included 9 projects for 2008-2009. Of those projects, at the end of the financial year, 4 are complete

▪ Procurement of Renewable Energy ▪ Energy Efficiency Programs in the Central Market and the others are well on the way to completion. Local actions to combat climate change are vital but Australia, as one of the largest per capita polluters has an obligation to give leadership and to “see the bigger picture”. The **Stern Report** says *“The poorest developing countries will be hit earliest and hardest by climate change, even though they have contributed little to causing the problem. The international community has an obligation to support them in adapting to climate change”*



Some recent meeting decisions (full details are available on the Council's website 5 days after the meeting)

DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT PANEL Meeting held 6 July (NB next meeting 3 August 2009 at 5.30pm)

▪ Non-Complying Applications

▪ The Panel resolved to **Not Proceed with Assessment** of a proposal to change the use of **171-199 Gouger Street** from an existing vacant site (previously cleared for a residential development) to a temporary car park for a period of 2 years (DA/342/2009)

▪ It was agreed to **Proceed with Assessment** of the construction of a 3-storey detached dwelling plus basement cellar at **7-9 Watson Street, North Adelaide**. (DA/459/2008)

▪ Applications for consideration on Merit

▪ An application to erect four banner signs to the façade of the **YHA building at 135 Weymouth Street** was **deferred** pending consideration of a proposal responded to a number of concerns of the Panel. (DA/418/2009)

▪ Schedule 10 Matter

▪ The matter which related to a proposal to demolish existing building and erect a four-level mixed use building incorporating retail and tourist accommodation at the corner of **Rundle Street and Union Street** was considered in confidence and it was resolved to advise the Development Assessment Commission that the Panel did **Not Support** the application because it involved the demolition of a heritage-significant building (DA/920/2009)

BRIEFINGS were held on 30 June (Gandel Development of Harris Scarfe site and City Heritage CBA/MU DPA Agency Consultation Outcomes, both confidential) and on 7 July (Park Lands Roads - speed limits and 2010 Adelaide Festival of Arts preview of events – confidential)

COUNCIL AND KEY COMMITTEES

Meetings held on Monday 13 July 2009. (next meeting Monday 27 July 2009 at 5.30pm)

Motions on Notice were moved by **Cllr Ralph Clarke** requesting development of a Sister City relationship with the Spanish city of **El-Ferrol** and by **Cllr Michael Henningsen** seeking additional sponsorship funding for the **Special Olympics** to be held in Adelaide in April 2010. Council agreed to waive 50% of the Aquatic Centre fees.

Cllr Francis Wong moved for a report on Council's Sister City relationships of which there are currently four.

▪ Council received an update on construction of the **Bowden tramline extension** and agreed to a changed design for a shared bike/pedestrian path plus an on-road bike lane. It was also agreed to **waive \$225k of fees** due to be paid by DTEI for 2 construction compounds in **Bonython Park** for a period of 6 months. It was also agreed to contribute **\$150k** towards the estimated \$700k construction cost of the shared bike/pedestrian path.

▪ Council accepted revisions to its **Public Communication and Consultation Policy** including Minister Gago's request that revocation of Community Land include provision of an on-site sign explaining Council's intentions and on my request it was agreed to hold **public meetings** for any lease as described in Sec 21 of the Park Lands Act.

▪ It was agreed that a group of Councillors and senior staff should accept an invitation from the Lord Mayor of Melbourne to visit his city on a **2-day study tour** looking at a range of issues of interest to Adelaide including the strategies used to market and activate the city, urban design work and the activation of the Laneways.

▪ Council **approved** the use of **Bonython Park** by the **Somersault Circus Spectacular**, a fund-raising event for **SCOSA** to be held on 31 October and 1 November. Parking fees will be waived for this event courtesy of U-Park.

▪ Council considered, in confidence, a report dealing with **future options for the Adelaide Aquatic Centre**.

City Strategy Committee

▪ The Council gave support in principle to **ElectraNet's** proposal for the Adelaide Central Reinforcement Program which involves construction of a new substation at Keswick with a new 275kv transmission line from Torrens Island with part of the line running on the western edge of **Bonython Park** and the former SA Water Depot site.

City Services and Facilities Committee

▪ The Report on Council's Fee-Based Facilities which covers the Aquatic Centre, U-Parks, Golf Links and the Town Hall for May 2009 show that all centres have under-performed but that end-of-year outcomes for the Aquatic Centre and the U-Park are on track to achieve the objectives set by Council's strategic directions.

▪ The Report on Corporate Property Fee Based Facilities Report for May covers the **Central Market, Properties Portfolio and Wingfield Waste and Recycling Centre** show a net unfavourable variance of \$311k, year to date but predicts that the overall 2008-2009 business plan outcomes for the fee-based facilities are on target.

▪ The committee considered in confidence a request for assistance by the **University of Adelaide** regarding the **Barr Smith Boat Club**. The grounds for confidentiality were that the report related to a legal matter.

▪ Also considered in confidence was an item dealing with the continuing management of the **Adelaide Central Market**. This time the reason for confidentiality was that the matter related to a contractual matter.

The views expressed herein are those of Cr Plumridge and do not purport to be those of the Adelaide City Council.