

SUBMISSION: DA 2020/1756 351 & 353 Barrenjoey Rd NEWPORT

I have previously made submissions regarding this DA and some of its anti-community non-compliances with the Newport Village Masterplan (NMP), a plan “*that aims to enhance the amenity and design quality of the centre, and to support social, economic and cultural activities*” (page 1). NBC Planning claims these factors have already been duly considered: I contend that they have been ignored. But I appreciate this Panel is primarily interested in specific comment on the Draft Approval document so I will concentrate on that.

This DA affects the very core of the ‘planning process’ ability to deliver on both the vision and the practical outcomes of the NMP.

I take exception to many of NBC employee, Jordan Davies’ comments in this Assessment. They would appear to be all about ‘box-ticking’ and providing rationales for non-compliance – rather than adherence, to achieve a positive, community-friendly evolution of our village.

Under “***Is the proposed variation in the public interest?***” he states: “*strict compliance with the height control would result in reduced supply of adequate apartments on the site, therefore, unable to supply for the growing housing needs in an area that is highly accessible, facilitated by local services and suitable for young families*”. Talk about tunnel vision! So the needs and enjoyment of thousands of resident and visiting community to Robertson Rd are to be sacrificed for what? Convenience for one, maybe two, resident couples and for developer profits?

Under “*Section 4.15 (1) (b) – the likely impacts of the development, including environmental impacts on the natural and built environment and social and economic impacts in the locality*” Davies further states: “(ii) **Social Impact** *The proposed development will not have a detrimental social impact in the locality considering the character of the proposal.*” This one-man’s-opinion is monumentally at variance with the hundreds of members of the community who have made formal submissions to say why they want Robertson Rd’s staged development to be in total compliance with the NMP.

Under the same Section, Davies continues: “(iii) **Economic Impact** *The proposed development will not have a detrimental economic impact on the locality considering the nature of the existing and proposed land use*”. One can’t help but wonder if the man has ever visited Robertson Rd? Has he seen the nature of these small shops, the welcoming variety of the shopfronts and the inviting ease of flow between the shop and café facades and the integrated outdoor eating areas?

I suppose we are expected to be grateful that awnings are incorporated into this design? A slight advance on the same developer’s end-product at 316–324 Barrenjoey Rd: a two+storey wall of steel and glass – an emblematic example of CBD façade architecture, **totally out of place in a village** and **totally out of tune with the NMP**. While on the subject of that development, I attended two L&E onsite hearings during its determination. I recall that after residents were already moving in, a neighbour complaint revealed that

of 34 L&E conditions attached to the approval, a whopping 31 had not been complied with! (You'll have the resource to check if my memory is as good as I think it is.)

All the way through this Assessment, I come across dozens of rationales on why aspects of the NMP should not be applied because they are merely "*indicative*". Yet the developer grabs anything that may deliver a cost advantage and translates any absence of a specific (eg retention of a specific native tree) as a firm planning indication. This is at its most glaring when it comes to "**Parking**". The developer grabs the opportunity to reduce his costs by a full storey of below-ground excavation and construction to reduce the vehicle flow into the building (totally in breach of the DCP) but gives what in return? Relocating the vehicular entry for the benefit of the wider community? NO. Redesigning a wall so it might be knocked through in 10 years, 20 years, sometime, never? Yes – what a consolation!

It still leaves the future of Robertson Rd – and the non-delivery on the NMP – exactly where it was with the original DA: "a little bit pregnant". (And we all know that outcome option: an unwanted child or an abortion – an analogy I'll resist developing further.)

If this Panel is looking at endorsing this DA with anything less than drastic change, then it needs to accept that it is sentencing the Newport Village Masterplan to **death**.

Or it needs to give us some extensive input as the Panel which oversees the Planning of our Locality – because at this point, it appears that no individual or no other institution accepts any responsibility for our village's evolution.

For instance, why not instruct that all parking is to be removed from this DA and, in return for that concession, be replaced with a special Section 94 levy. A levy which can fund the NBC's future Newport off-site development of the equivalent of the original 50 underground parking spaces proposed by this developer for this site? That would keep very much alive the foreseeable future of Robertson Rd as the core of a central pedestrian hub, as promised to the community in the NMP.

What we are experiencing, from this developer (in all his past and now his current DAs) and too many other developers targeting Newport, is what I recall from secondary school History as "*the inevitability of gradualness*". The plan for the future of our village, researched and developed with the community and formally adopted by Council not quite a decade ago, is being progressively eroded. This DA is not just a nibble; in its current form it is a massive, debilitating bite out of the village's constructive evolution.

Ms Tuor, Ms Esposito, Mr Brown and Mr Cotton, please accept the responsibility which now rests with you, our **Local Planning Panel**, in not merely the determination of this DA but the determination of our village's future and that of its current and future communities.

Peter Middleton