

# Double Bay Residents' Association

## Protecting Sydney's Stylish Bayside Village

Monday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2023

Dear Member,

We hope 2023 has started well for you. Five weeks into the year, already there are several issues of concern to us.

**The Double Bay centre** looks more and more like a construction site and the latest development application, for a six-storey development stretching from 27 to 31 on the north side of Knox Street, will exacerbate the situation if it is approved. We are working on a submission on this and will circulate it as a basis for members' own letters/emails which have to be submitted by 24<sup>th</sup> February.

It is now more than eight months since Woollahra Council completed its survey of residents' opinions on the Council's draft Double Bay Centre Planning and Urban Design Strategy, yet no results have been published. We understand public submissions are still being reviewed and a revised version of the strategy, amended in response to community feedback, is likely to be published sometime in the first half of 2023. Meanwhile, the Council has commissioned a detailed heritage study of the centre.

We've received no further information about progress with plans for the Cross Street car park redevelopment – a project which the Council seems determined to advance in secret, ignoring the fact that that indirectly it's owned by ratepayers. We hope to learn more during a meeting with Craig Swift-McNair later this month.

### Other significant development applications

**19-27 Bay Street:** Good news! On 10<sup>th</sup> January, the Land and Environment Court dismissed the developer's appeal against refusal of DA 535/2021. Many thanks to all members who objected to this proposed development, and especially to Malcolm Young who spoke persuasively against it on several occasions. The developer has an existing approval for part of the site and we'll have to wait to see what happens next.

**294-298 New South Head Road/2-10 Bay Street:** The developer has appealed against the Woollahra Local Planning Panel's refusal of DA2022/280 and the matter will now be decided by the Land and Environment Court. The next stage will be a conciliation conference on-site on 22<sup>nd</sup> February, starting at 9.30am. If you would like to make a submission, either at the conference or beforehand, please contact James King of Lindsay Taylor Lawyers on 8235 9722 (email: [james.king@lindsaytaylorlawyers.com.au](mailto:james.king@lindsaytaylorlawyers.com.au)) by 10<sup>th</sup> February. Malcolm Young has agreed to speak on behalf of the DBRA, as he has at previous hearings

**98 Manning Road:** Disappointingly, the Woollahra Local Planning Panel has approved the demolition of this house and construction of a childcare centre for 30 children. We are most unhappy that an independent traffic study commissioned by neighbours was not taken into account.

## **NSW state election**

The current state planning system has stripped councils of their responsibility for most planning matters, resulting in development decisions which many residents have opposed and which are changing the character of Double Bay. For this reason, the election on 25<sup>th</sup> March could have significant implications for Double Bay. Our concerns are not limited to over-development; this will result in increasing traffic congestion and pressure on schools, parks and other infrastructure which will affect the lives of future generations living in the Vaucluse electorate.

At this stage, we are aware of four candidates: in alphabetical order, Karen Freyer (Independent); Margaret Merton (ALP); Kellie Sloane (Liberal); Dominic Wy Kanak (Greens). We have met Karen Freyer and Kellie Sloane to discuss issues of concern to Double Bay residents and are trying to arrange similar meetings with the other two candidates.

The DBRA is not aligned with any candidate, and we encourage members to question all of them to establish how, if elected, they would lobby to change the current planning system, restoring responsibility for planning decisions to local councils and taking residents' interests and views into account.

Another issue you may like to raise with candidates is an Office of Local Government proposal to stop residents from addressing council committee meetings. If enacted by the government, this would reduce democracy further.

## **Active transport**

In December, your association submitted feedback on the Council's draft Active Transport Plan. In general, we supported the preparation of an active transport strategy, but commented that current development proposals would have significant impacts on traffic generation, capacity, amenity and safety. We made a number of suggestions, including that the Council should undertake new traffic, transport and access studies on key routes and precincts, including New South Head Road and Double Bay. Please let us know if you would like to receive a copy of our submission.

## **Parks and recreation**

We understand that draft plans of management and strategies for parks and recreation will be placed on exhibition later this month. We have been invited to provide additional input and recommend that members who use our parks and recreation facilities should review and comment on the plans when they are available.

## **Parklet trial**

The Council is inviting residents to comment on the 'parklet' program which is being trialled in Double Bay. Parklets provide additional seating outside restaurants, replacing parking spaces; there are three in Double Bay so far: outside Matteo, Baker Bleu and Next Door. If you would like to comment on this initiative, you can do so via the Council's 'Your Say Woollahra' website page.

## **Strickland Estate and Nielsen Park draft Master Plan**

We recommend that members who enjoy visiting Strickland House and Nielsen Park in Vaucluse review, and consider commenting on, the master plan which has been proposed by National Parks and Wildlife Services and can be accessed on NPWS's website.

If adopted in its present form, the master plan will change the Strickland Estate and Nielsen Park forever, with buildings providing short-stay accommodation to generate revenue.

The Woollahra History and Heritage Society believes 'there are a number of cogent reasons why the plan is fundamentally flawed and should not be adopted'. The society is concerned that the plan is being rushed through without adequate public consideration and has proposed that the current consultation period should be extended from 15<sup>th</sup> February to 30<sup>th</sup> June. We'll pass on further information as we receive it.

### **Final word**

We are grateful to Councillor Mark Silcocks for drawing our attention to an article by Michael Koziol in the 31<sup>st</sup> January edition of the Sydney Morning Herald. This includes the following quote from Milly Main, founder of the lobby group Street Level Australia:

'Imagine if we could take our cues from Paris or cities that have actually planned beautiful places at a precinct level. If we want density to happen we cannot keep opening up the vacuum to this crappy development. We need to think about beauty to solve sprawl.'

If only our governments and councils agreed and acted accordingly!

Best wishes,  
Anthony Tregoning  
President

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