

Victoria Rd, Drummoyne Urban Design Review

Community Reference Group Meeting No. 1

Date: 20 December 2018

Location: Halliday Room, City of Canada Bay

Time: 6 pm to 8 pm

Attendees

Angelo Tsirekas	Mayor, City of Canada Bay
Michael Megna	Councillor, City of Canada Bay
Warwick Williams	Business Representative
Joe Cordaro	Business Representative
Phyl Blennerhassett	Resident Representative
Les Pall	Resident Representative
Paul Dewar	City of Canada Bay
Anthony Wynen	City of Canada Bay
Diana Griffiths	Studio GL
Felicity Lewis	Studio GL

Apologies:

Margaret Harte	Resident Representative
Daniela Ramondino	Councillor, City of Canada Bay

Minutes

Welcome and introduction

Mayor, Angelo Tsirekas welcomed attendees and provided background to the Study. There are concerns about the general decline in the amenity of the area and an aim of the study is to identify opportunities to reinvigorate the area to create better outcomes for businesses and residents.

The Mayor noted that he had recently put a Mayoral Minute to a Council meeting which recommended that a parking study be undertaken. The study would seek to find opportunities to address concerns raised in relation to the provision of public parking.

Pecuniary, non-pecuniary interests and other conflicts of interest

- *Angelo Tsirekas* *No land ownership. Resides on Victoria Road.*
- *Michael Megna* *No land ownership in Drummoyne.*
- *Warwick Williams* *Ownership of 192, 193 and 194-200 Victoria Road.*
- *Joe Cordaro* *Ownership of 169 Victoria Road and 6 strata lots at 159 Victoria Road.*
- *Phyl Blennerhassett* *Ownership of 81 Formosa Street.*
- *Les Paul* *Ownership of 11 Renwick Street.*
- *Paul Dewar* *No land ownership in Drummoyne.*

- Anthony Wynen *No land ownership in Drummoyne.*
- Diana Griffiths *No land ownership in Drummoyne.*
- Felicity Lewis *No land ownership in Drummoyne.*

Overview of the Study was provided by the Urban Design consultant, Studio GL.

Discussion

Vision

- There was general consensus that the public domain and built form outcomes in the study area could be improved.
- It was considered important to achieve an outcome that balances the needs of business with the expectations of the resident community.
- The ideas that are generated through this process will provide a foundation for improvements to the Victoria Road commercial precinct over the short to long term.

Business / Retail

- Need to find a way to make the area more attractive for *local* shopping so that residents don't leave the area to shop elsewhere.
- Business and landowners need to accept responsibility for the maintenance of their buildings/tenancies and keeping rents competitive.
- It was suggested that a greater resident population was needed to improve the viability of existing businesses and the potential for new businesses to be established.
- It would be beneficial if the area could provide places for experiences, perhaps fresh food and services, with popup shops to help with the revitalisation.

Parking / Traffic

- Parking was identified as a key constraint for business, who largely rely on Council owned public car parks to service the parking needs.
- There is more traffic both on Victoria Road and surrounding streets and there is not enough parking available for commercial and residential uses.
- The traffic, including 6 lanes of Victoria Road, creates an environment that is not friendly for pedestrians and is not safe. This issue is exacerbated by residents that choose to drive instead of walk.
- A positive is that there is good access, via public transport, to the city.

Development / Buildings

- Future development needs to be carefully considered to avoid creating a tunnel like effect created by large continuous built form similar to the new Tempo building. This building has a large block length without breaks in the building.
- New development should seek to create more/improved through-site linkages so as to break down the scale of buildings and improve the walkability of the centre.
- Opportunity should be explored to increase the number of retail frontages addressing new lanes or Formosa Street.
- The quality of buildings currently under construction on the eastern side of

Victoria Road is poor.

- Victoria Road is not an appropriate location for housing given the noise and pollution impacts on residents.

East Side

- The eastern side of Victoria Road is distinctly different from the western side.
- It is not possible to provide vehicular access from certain properties on the eastern side of Victoria as they directly adjoin residential lots. Development of sites on the eastern side of Victoria Road also creates issues in relation to visual impacts and overlooking. It may not be viable to develop this side of Parramatta Road.

West Side

- The western side of Victoria Road has greater scope for redevelopment and change. This side has seen more recent development, there are newer commercial tenancies and more residential than the eastern side.

General

- The Council Administration Centre is outside of the study area but has the greatest potential for change.
- There are insufficient community facilities such as a library, plaza, gathering/meeting places and the distance to services, as well as topography makes access to services difficult, particularly for an aging population.

Ideas

Parking / Traffic

- There were many suggestions to improve the amount of public parking in Drummoyne and to address the existing traffic impacts.
- Suggestions included the construction of a tunnel from Rozelle to the Gladesville Bridge, expansion of Edwin Street, further policing, transfer of development capacity, locating destination businesses/services near bus stops, provision of temporary parking while sites with existing parking are redeveloped, encourage use of public transport with no cars and no parking permits.
- Encouraging pedestrian activity was identified as key to activate the area.
- In addition to traffic/parking issues, sites on the east side of Victoria Road will also have difficulty providing access for construction vehicles and it was suggested that access be provided from Renwick Street.
- Birkenhead Point has become an attractive destination for shopping which has created traffic and parking issues in the vicinity.

Development

- Attendees questioned the likelihood of properties being purchased and demolished on Renwick Street to facilitate access to properties on the eastern side of Victoria Road. It was suggested that there were many constraints to the

redevelopment of this side of Victoria Road.

- There would need to be sufficient incentives in place for residents on Renwick Street to sell and redevelop. Not everyone in the community is likely to support the redevelopment of land on Victoria Road where they deem their amenity will be unfairly affected.
- It is important for new connections to be provided as part of future development (i.e. laneways) and that better architecture/design outcomes are achieved.
- Consideration should be given to taller buildings within the current floor space ratio so as to facilitate better design outcomes.
- Car free housing should be considered to reduce traffic on local roads.
- There is a need for affordable housing and housing for the aged, however not at the expense of poor design.
- Mosman, Cremorne, Majors Bay Road and Crows Nest were identified as town centres that have managed to retain local character and facilitate appropriate development outcomes.
- Council owned land throughout the centre presents an opportunity to create change for the better.
- Consideration should be given to a competitive design competition for future development. Such a process could encourage new ideas and outstanding, memorable, unique design.

Activation

- Pedestrian access must be improved and this could perhaps involve encouraging more pedestrian activity on Formosa Street, as well as opening commercial properties (including cafes/restaurants to Formosa Street to minimise the impact of Victoria Road. This would need to be carefully managed to minimise any potential impacts to Formosa Street residents.
- There should be investigation into the use of vacant shops and the creation of a pop up community of food trucks with more diverse food options, plazas, gather spaces, nightclubs, and funky unique shops to improve vibrancy.
- The retention and adaptive reuse of heritage buildings was also identified as being important for local identity and activation.
- An opportunity should be identified within the centre for children to play.