Parramatta City Council

Councillor, Lorraine Wearne reports

74 RAWSON STREET, EPPING – Demountable and construction sheds.

I have been advised that the introduction of sheds to the vacant site in Rawson Street is to provide a depot and site office for the road widening works at the corner of Carlingford and Beecroft Roads. I have requested Council to contact the Roads and Maritime Services to ascertain whether this site can be changed. To have, even at night, a depot in Rawson Street will have unacceptable traffic impacts.

Neighbourhood Hub

Parramatta City Council has called for Expressions of Interest (EOI) to identify opportunities to establish a ‘Neighbourhood Collaboration Hub’ in Epping, Granville or Westmead Town Centres. The Hub would provide residents with a suburb-based point of contact with Council where they can engage with staff on issues affecting their local area, lodge a service request, pay rates, or access Council’s website and development portals.

Greater Sydney Commission

The Greater Sydney Commission (GSC) was formally established on 27 January 2016 to coincide with commencement of GSC Act and amendments to the Environmental Planning and Assessment (EP&A) Regulation.

The GSC will have responsibility for decisions on major development applications via the establishment of Sydney Planning Panels (SPPs). Once established, membership of SPPs will be similar to the current membership of the Joint Regional Planning Panels (JRPPs) except for the JRPP chair being replaced by a District Commissioner. Deborah Deering has been appointed as the North District Commissioner.

The GSC will also be responsible for finalising District Plans to guide the development of Sydney’s six districts, with public exhibition to commence by 27 January 2017. Preliminary information concerning research papers to inform district plans is now available on the GSC website: www.gsc.nsw.gov.au. When in force, Councils will be required to amend their LEPs to give effect to the District Plan.

Forest Park Planning Proposal

At its meeting on 13 April 2016, Council considered proponent initiated Planning Proposal and VPA Letter of Offer for a development site adjoining Forest Park, Epping. The proposal sought to reconfigure the existing zoning and increase the building height to support approximately 654 units, dedication of public open space in the form of an urban plaza, tiered gardens, open space embellishment and a monetary contribution towards a swimming pool or like facility in a location to be decided by Council. Council resolved not to proceed with the proposal on the grounds that it is inconsistent with Council’s adopted strategy for the Epping Town Centre, urban design, traffic and amenity impact on Forest Park and insufficient public benefit commensurate with the proposed intensity of development.

The proponent may either seek to appeal Council’s decision via a Gateway Review with the Department of Planning and Environment or re-lodge the proposal addressing the issues raised.

Hornsby Shire Council

Report

The Epping Civic Trust is a dedicated community group which has the best interests of Epping and adjoining areas of Carlingford and Eastwood at heart.

This year is already proving to be a hectic one with many submissions to Council regarding developer applications that do not meet guidelines and negatively impact our suburb. Our executive is also involved with a broad range of other issues on behalf of members such as town planning, parks, transport and environmental issues. However, the Trust cannot cover all the issues without support from its membership.

The proponent may either seek to appeal Council’s decision via a Gateway Review with the Department of Planning and Environment or re-lodge the proposal addressing the issues raised.

Ordinary General Meeting Dates

- Tuesday, August 16, 2016
- Tuesday, November 15, 2016

Church of Christ Hall, 31 Bridge Street, Epping at 7.30pm.
Stage 1 upgrades in Boronia Park

Parramatta Council is currently undertaking an upgrade of Boronia Park Epping using funds that have been allocated by the NSW Government’s Precinct Support Scheme and local Council.

These upgrades include:
• new 1.5 metre wide concrete footpaths and new path lighting through the park;
• a new picnic space near the existing children’s playground which will have three new covered picnic shelters and one barbecue installation;
• an upgrade of the children’s play area and associated landscaping;
• new park furniture;
• a new amenities block located adjacent to the picnic/children’s play area;
• an additional pedestrian bridge over the storm water canal to open up access to under utilised areas of the park.

Current works are due for completion by July 2016.

Traffic flow issue

Last November, the Trust discussed a number of traffic issues in the local area with a senior Traffic Management Officer from Parramatta City Council. This included the traffic congestion in Rawson Street Epping caused by the pedestrian crossing at the southern end of the Coles car park where pedestrians continually cross with little consideration to the vehicle traffic.

The Trust recommended this become a controlled signalised crossing so that pedestrians crossed in groups. However, Council decided to install a sign asking pedestrians to “Please cross in groups.” This has had no effect on easing the traffic situation and the Trust intends to meet again with Council to ensure a satisfactory outcome is achieved as soon as possible.

Development Applications Update

Great news for the Epping community

The “Forest Park” planning proposal has been rejected by Hornsby Shire Council (HSC).

Ninety-five submissions (including one from the Trust) were received by HSC in response to the planning proposal lodged by JBA Planning on behalf of the Austin Property Group for the land bounded by 2-18 Epping Road, 2.4 Forest Grove, Forest Park and 725 Blaxland Road.

Concerns were raised in submissions regarding the impact on the adjacent Forest Park, building height, traffic impact and the financial inducements offered. Submissions from Roads and Maritime Services and Parramatta City Council did not support the proposal either. HSC has wisely resolved to not proceed.

Development application at 12-22 Langston Place

This development application lodged by CBUS Properties is for the property previously owned by Westpac/AGC at the corner of Langston Place and Epping Road and extending through to Chambers Court and Pembroke Street. The application is for three towers ranging from 16 to 26 storeys.

The Trust has lodged a submission on this proposal and sees many problems with the application. For example, the 26 storey tower on Epping Road is higher than the zoning allows and will cast long shadows over the currently zoned storey land on the southern end of Epping Road and as far as Forest Park in winter.

There are also problems with the setbacks from other properties. A commercial property neighbour has already formally complained that the separation from their property is almost half the legally required separation of twelve metres.

Another problem is that the developer is proposing to use public land in the Chambers Court/Pembroke Street precinct to provide access to their property. It is estimated in the developer’s traffic plan that up to four extra vehicles per minute will pass through Chambers Court in peak periods.

It is also disappointing to see that the application is in conflict with the good work already undertaken by Hornsby Shire Council to develop a new town square in the Chambers Court/Pembroke Street precinct. If the developer’s application were to be approved in its current form it would mean that Council’s detailed planning work in this precinct will have been for nothing.

Development application at 35 Oxford Street, Epping

Further to the Trust report in the February newsletter, the Catholic Church (owner of 33 Oxford Street) decided not to join the developer of 35 Oxford Street in the 22 storey tower development on these blocks. Following this decision, an amended development application was lodged with Hornsby Shire Council for a 22 storey stand-alone development at 35 Oxford Street.

Most of the concerns conveyed to Council by the Trust in earlier submissions were not addressed in the amended application. When Council re-exhibited the application in March 2016, the Trust decided to lodge a fresh submission and, with the approval of our members, contracted a private consultancy firm to undertake this task. The conclusion in our submission was that the proposal is not in the public interest due to its negative impact on the character of the existing Oxford Street shopping centre, local heritage items in the vicinity and its size being dramatically out of scale with the surrounding buildings.

The Trust is now aware that Council also has concerns about this development and at the time of writing was about to convey those concerns to the applicant. A further complication has since arisen in that the developer has lodged an appeal with the Land and Environment Court, however, the purpose of the appeal was unclear at the time of writing.