

Ben Holmes

From: Vibha Bhattarai Upadhyay
Sent: Friday, 15 April 2016 2:21 PM
To: Ben Holmes
Cc: Katrine O'Flaherty
Subject: RE: Planning Proposal - 24 Edward Street, Morpeth

Hi Ben,

I reviewed the documents that you sent. The preliminary comments in relation to the Planning Proposal are:

- The site has never been used for the residential purposes. The subject site zoned RE2 Private Recreation is surrounded on three sides by land zoned RE1 Public Recreation.
- The site exists within the Morpeth Common which has historically been reserved for recreational purposes.
- One of the objectives of the Morpeth Management Plan is to 'sustain Morpeth and its surrounding rural area...'
- Although there are no heritage items in the subject site, it is located within the Morpeth Heritage Conservation Area.
- The subject site is within the *Rural Outskirts Precinct* of the Morpeth Heritage Conservation Area. The specific character of this precinct is defined by its open rural nature that provides views to and from Morpeth of the surrounding plains, the Hunter River and the hilltop township of Morpeth as viewed from the entry roads into the town.
- We agree to Richard Lamb Associates' Peer Review that 'The predominant character of the east side of Edward Street south of Close Street and Brisbane Fields Road is that there is no housing, the outlook is to vegetated, rural or recreational land and that this character continues around into Duckenfield Road. Housing on the subject site would appear isolated and out of character'.
- We support the view of the RLA's Peer Review Assessment that views from public areas to the site would be significantly affected by future residential development of the site.
- We believe that the residential development on the subject site will have adverse impact on the clearly defined edge of Morpeth and a distinctive form in a rural setting, thus affecting the heritage significance of the Morpeth Heritage Conservation Area.

These are preliminary comments and like you we believe that should the proposal proceed it can potentially create a precedent for other similar development proposals that may have detrimental impact on the heritage values of Morpeth. We will be keen to know of the outcome of the Gateway. We will happy to provide formal comments if Gateway supports the proposal. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have further queries.

Kind regards,
Vibha

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From: Ben Holmes
Sent: Friday, 8 April 2016 4:19 PM
To: Vibha Bhattarai Upadhyay
Cc: Katrine O'Flaherty
Subject: Planning Proposal - 24 Edward Street, Morpeth

Hi Vibha,

Thanks for talking with me earlier.

Maitland City Council has submitted a planning proposal to the Department to allow seniors housing as an additional permitted use on the former Morpeth bowling club site at 24 Edward Street, Morpeth. The Department is currently undertaking its assessment before making a recommendation to the Gateway about whether the proposal should proceed.

We have concerns that should the proposal proceed and the land be developed for seniors housing it would change the historic town layout and street grid, would allow housing in the rural/ recreation fringe, and would result in a use occurring on the site which is not in keeping with the Morpeth Common and its historic use (recreation) – undermining Morpeth's heritage.

In our view it would also potentially create a precedent that may benefit other development proposals for land on the fringe of Morpeth which may have similar adverse impacts on the heritage values of Morpeth. Further, given the different advice Council has provided to the Department on these proposals (eg Council strongly opposed the Duke St seniors housing proposal but supports this seniors housing proposal for Edward St) Council's decision-making appears inconsistent and not transparent.

In light of this, we are considering not supporting the proposal until such time as Council has undertaken a review of its Morpeth Management Plan (ie Council's strategic plan for the management of Morpeth) in consultation with the relevant stakeholders, and considered the proposal in the context of the revised management plan.

If you could undertake a preliminary review of the planning proposal that would be appreciated. It would be helpful to have your thoughts on the proposal given your knowledge of Morpeth's heritage and heritage issues more broadly.

Attached are the relevant documents. Appendix 3 will come in a separate email as it has a large file size. Also attached is an excerpt from the Swan Street Planning Proposal which shows the other potential development sites that are active at the moment.

Happy to discuss this with you over the phone if that is easier for you. If the Heritage Council prefers a formal request from my Director then I can arrange for this to occur early next week. Let me know if so.

Thanks.

Ben

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