



24 April 2014

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Cc: East Ward Councillors

Yacaaba St extension must not block view corridor

Submission on Proposal for Yacaaba St Extension on Exhibition March-April 2014

TRRA has been closely involved in discussions about the proposed extension of Yacaaba St to provide a further link between the Nelson Bay Town Centre and the Foreshore.

We have been generally supportive of the objectives of the proposal and process of consideration of a number of Concepts, and generally agree with the arguments in favour of the preferred Concept 5 that has been exhibited at the Business Association premises (although unfortunately not at Tomaree Library where local residents would expect to find it).

However, having now looked more closely at the plans, and Council minutes, we have major concerns about the reservation of such a large part of the site for future commercial use. We believe that the detailed design of Concept 5 *would not* guarantee an outcome that would meet the 'aims' set out on page 22 of the Council minutes.

Specifically, we think that the Concept 5 design would allow for the future commercial development to the east of the site to intrude too far into the public domain, and severely limit the visual sightlines to the Foreshore. We note that this link was one of the key view corridors identified in the adopted Nelson Bay Town Centre and Foreshore Strategy (View 12, page 52). We believe that most stakeholders expect the Yacaaba St extension to provide not only the pedestrian/cycle connectivity but also an attractive view corridor that would allow sighting of the foreshore from Magnus St. We have been led to believe that this would be a clear goal of any design for the connection.

Commercial development has never been put forward publicly as an objective for future use of this land, although we have no problem if some incidental development can be included without compromising the primary objectives.

While any commercial development would have to be the subject of a separate rezoning proposal and DA, Council would not have commissioned such a detailed 'floorplan' as appears in all the Concept plans unless this is at least roughly what they have in mind.



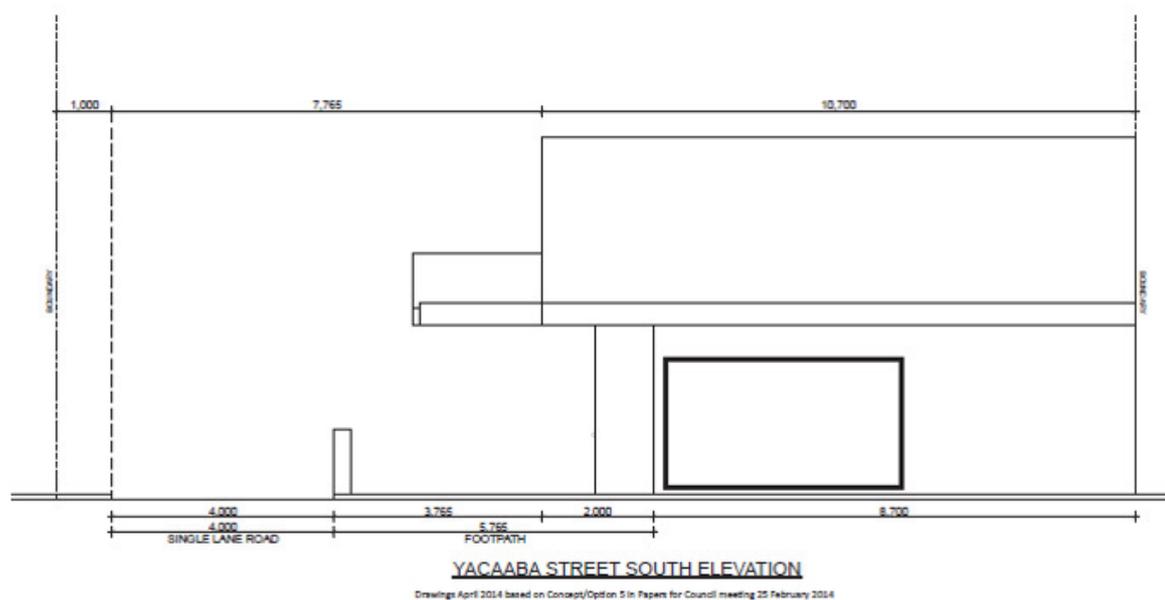
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We note that a commercial building as shown on the Concept 5 plan – 70 mtrs long and with a width/depth of 8.7 mtrs (ground floor) and 10.7 mtrs (second floor) - would have a total floorspace of around 1200 square metres. The Concept 5 design could result, ultimately, in a relatively narrow shared use public domain, with a maximum width of 10.7 mtrs at ground level and only 8.7 mtrs at first floor level.

The design, and in particular the photomontage at Attachment 6 in the Council papers, rely on the 4mtr width of the driveway on the adjacent property to the west to in effect add 50% to the apparent width of the 'throughway' and view corridor. We understand that this property is privately owned and could at any time be redeveloped up to the boundary (at least at second floor level), leaving only a long and very narrow 'alleyway' if the Concept 5 design is locked in. An apartment building adjacent to the north west also currently has a set back of 4 mtrs from the boundary but could also be redeveloped up to the boundary

To allow an assessment of the true impact of the proposed design it is necessary to view an elevation or cross section showing both the shared use roadway/footpath and the possible commercial building with the overhanging second level and awning currently shown only in plan view and at small scale.

We requested an elevation from Council but they were unable to supply one. We have therefore obtained one drawn professionally based on the measurements on the Concept 5 plan.



We submit that the current proposal be deferred, and a further option/concept should be developed to ensure that a wider public domain space is reserved on the Council owned land. This will require at least a set back to the 'footprint' of the commercial area proposed, and preferably a complete re-think of the balance between commercial and public space. It may still be possible to identify a substantial development site through which Council could seek to raise some revenue to offset site acquisition and

infrastructure costs. A re-design could also incidentally avoid the need for purchase of land from the property adjacent to the northwest, which is shown as required on the Concept 5 plan.

We urge Council not to waste this major opportunity to realise the key 'view corridor' objective of the Nelson Bay Strategy. Having spent so much time and money over a lengthy period to secure this land, it would, we submit, be extremely short sighted for Council to adopt a design which could result in a narrow alleyway rather than the attractive shared use link and view corridor that we all agreed was desirable for this site.

We remain strongly of the view that any vehicle traffic on the new link should be one-way north only, recognising that the role of the extension should primarily be to encourage foot and cycle traffic, and that it should not be seen as a vehicular by-pass route. Reserving more of the site as public domain would however incidentally keep long term traffic options open – we know this is a concern of some interested parties.

Another variation that should be considered is negotiation with the owners of the property on Magnus St adjacent to the west, to secure air space that could form part of the view corridor – this could potentially allow a deeper commercial building on the Council owned site without the risk of a narrow alleyway effect. Purchase or lease of some of the adjacent property could also allow for a more attractive gateway to the link from the south, with a new access to that property's car park provided off the new link road.

We note that the Concept 5 design shows a semi-circular terrace at the northern end of the commercial building – if this would be part of the public domain we would welcome it as it would make the link more obvious, attractive and welcoming from the foreshore. We also suggest that consideration be given to reserving more of the land at the southern end to allow for a wider public domain, which could include landscaping and street furniture to make the link more welcoming from Magnus St. The land reserved for a commercial building could be set back rather than the hard corner shown on the plan. Again, we acknowledge that detailed design of any building will be for a future DA – our immediate concern is to reserve all the necessary land for an effective public space – as this should be the primary objective of all phases of development of this land.

Finally, we submit that any decisions about this land, and the proposed extension of Yacaaba St should expressly set it in the context of the adopted Nelson Bay Town Centre and Foreshore Strategy and accompanying Implementation Plan. (July 2012). We fear that Council may have lost sight of the need for an integrated approach as set out in the Strategy and Plan, including parking improvements and signage, without which the Yacaaba St extension will not deliver its full potential.

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