



25 January 2017

The General Manager
Port Stephens Council

Attn: Renier Lourens

council@portstephens.nsw.gov.au

Subject: DA 2016-876 – Service Station development at 155 Salamander Way - Submission

Planning Context

TRRA has previously expressed concern about Council's approach to the development of its landholding at 155 Salamander Way.

We have consistently argued for a redevelopment strategy that focusses on mixed use and integrated development rather than a continuation of the outdated 'separate site' approach. Encouragement of stand-alone commercial developments is undesirable, as it increases car-dependency and traffic movements, is visually unappealing, and fails to take the opportunities this landholding presented for innovative and attractive mixed use, including shop-top housing. It also fails completely to comply with the provisions of the Port Stephens Development Control Plan 2014 (DCP) 2014 that encourage active street frontages for commercial developments.

We accept that this particular DA has to be assessed on its merits with Council's approach to subdivision and commercial arrangements as a 'given', but seek to ensure that the service station is a visually appealing as possible.

Submission relating to this DA

Assessment and determination – conflict of interest

We note that the application is made by a company on behalf of Council as the current owner of the site – we assume that there is an arrangement for sale or lease conditional on DA approval.



We submit that this DA should be assessed and determined by an independent third party to avoid the obvious conflict of interest if Council were to judge its own application.

Ownership/lease arrangements

The proposed ownership/lease arrangements are not clear. The community needs to know if all of the development site will be privately owned and managed, or remain as Council owned and/or maintained, as this has implications both the future cost of maintenance and for control over access to and use of any parking at the service station.

Public toilets

We submit that the service station should be required to provide and maintain public toilets to be available whenever the service station is open. Existing public toilets in the Salamander Centre are barely adequate for existing customers, particularly at peak periods. As the entire landholding is further developed, demand for toilet facilities will increase – and the service station will be a considerable distance from the existing Centre toilets. The needs of elderly members of the community are particularly important given the demographics of the area.

We submit that all major developments provide an opportunity to obtain a significant public benefit at no cost – either capital or ongoing – to ratepayers. We note the precedent of requiring the new Woolworths store in Nelson Bay to provide public toilets and submit that a similar requirement for the service station would be appropriate.

Landscaping

The SEE contains very limited information about proposed landscaping, but implies that it will be relatively minimal.

We support concerns made in a personal submission on the current DA 2016/883 by one of our members, and experienced landcare volunteer, Margaret Wilkinson, about the selection of plant species. These concerns may be equally applicable to the service station DA.

Ms Wilkinson's submission raises concerns, in particular, about an overdependence on *Lomandra tanika*; pigface and grasses, with some more suitable and 'lower care' alternatives being overlooked. Also, the blueberry ash

trees, while attractive, are slow growing, and consideration should be given to alternatives such as more of the M.Qivs already providing valuable shade in the main shopping centre car park.

We request that Council consider the proposed landscaping for the service station against these observations, to the extent that they are applicable. Service stations are traditionally unsightly, and we submit that Council should take the opportunity to set a higher standard.

We also submit that Council should require landscaping that is consistent throughout the shopping centre and adjacent streets and roundabouts.

Street frontage and appearance

Clauses C2.9 and C2.10 of the DCP specify that commercial development should be to be built to the front and side boundary to maximise continuous active street frontage, which is further encouraged by C2.16.

Clearly compliance with C.2.10 is impractical for a service station. However, Chapter D8 of the DCP contains specific standards for the Salamander Bay Shopping Centre (defined to include the currently vacant Council owned land, including this site)

The Chapter includes an 'Integration' principle (clause D7.2 - we believe this should be D8.2):

'To ensure future development is sympathetically integrated with the existing surrounds and appropriately activates the precinct.'

We submit that the 'established character' of the Salamander Centre shopping precinct is highly undesirable and that the adopted Principles in Chapter D8 should be applied with the objective of changing and improving that character.

While we accept that major setbacks, and largely 'unactivated' frontages are an unavoidable consequence of a 'standard' service station design, we submit that Council should try to ensure that the building design and landscaping go beyond the usual bare minimum and contribute instead to an overall improvement in the visual appearance of the shopping centre.

Nigel Waters
Convenor, Planning Committee
Tomaree Ratepayers & Residents Association Inc.

0407 230 342 planning@trra.com.au



A: Po Box 290, Nelson Bay 2315 **T:** 4981 0828 **E:** planning@trra.com.au