

Cherrybrook Station State Significant Precinct rezoning proposal

Dear Sir,

The Beecroft Cheltenham Civic Trust (Trust) has a number of concerns with the rezoning proposal for Cherrybrook Station (SSP). The Trust supports the principle that there should be higher density uses around the Metro station. This principle is sound town planning practice and the rezoning documents supporting this principle are very comprehensive.

While the Trust's support base is predominately residing in Beecroft and Cheltenham, the Cherrybrook Metro will have both a direct and indirect long term influence on our local residents. Hence this submission.

The Trust has also prepared a submission on the Place Strategy. Both Place Strategy and the SSP rezoning proposals have different time frames for implementation but they must be considered together to avoid conflicts. So a holistic approach should be taken when assessing both submissions together and not treat them in isolation. Both submissions will tend to focus on the area within Hornsby Shire LGA, as opposed to the Hills LGA.

Overall, the Trust supports the proposed lower buildings as explained in the planning report. However there are still matters that warrant further analysis and are outlined below.

Infrastructure delivery

The infrastructure delivery strategy, relating to planning agreements and developer contributions, simply highlights the dilemma of funding the necessary infrastructure changes required to redesign an existing suburb so the state metro can function. The burden to deliver the final stage of this visionary metro project should not now fall upon the two local councils. Both the SSP and the surrounding Place Strategy require massive changes to the suburbs' infrastructure, all ultimately driven by the metro project. This funding issue is inferred in the studies.

Being a state government initiated project, the state government should be contributing more. Otherwise there is no guarantee that the added value to the wider community of the Metro project will be achieved, even in the longer term. It is also worthwhile to point out that since the State Government's council amalgamation process Hornsby Council is not in as strong a financial position as it was prior to the amalgamation.

Therefore the State Government must continue to take an overarching responsibility for the delivery of the total metro project that includes appropriate infrastructure changes in the SSP and the surrounding catchment.

Built Form

The high voltage transmission line and its wide easement bisects the precinct in a general north south direction and is within the R4 zoned land that extends through to Franklin Rd. Figures 25 - 27 on p46 in the Ethos Urban planning report provide an appreciation of the adverse impact the power

line and easement will have on the adjoining residential development fronting Franklin Rd. The transmission line bisecting the main part of the site will always be a visual blight on the overall SSP site, impeding optimum redevelopment. While the studies acknowledge this fact, the future of the transmission line, whether it can be relocated or placed underground, requires further serious consideration at this rezoning stage.

The planning report emphasises the importance of visual elements to the north with a transitional built form together with the importance of vegetation screening. However the Place Strategy proposes 5 storey units abutting immediately to the north, thus contradicting the desired outcomes of the SSP. More thought should be given to how the Place Strategy will integrate seamlessly with the SSP site.

The merit based site specific DCP is very detailed, however there will be some challenges in order to achieve the intended merit based outcomes at the western and eastern ends of the precinct. The smaller lot sizes at the Roberts and Franklin Road ends of the precinct will struggle to achieve decent amenity with their minimal setbacks. This is regarded as a serious issue.

The Trust believes 5 storey complexes should have a minimum of 8 metre setbacks, including similar setbacks for basements to allow decent deep soil planting and visual amenity. A good example of setbacks is in Chapman Avenue Beecroft.

However the eastern and western sites, including the land between Franklin Rd and the transmission line, are extremely constrained due to their limited lot shapes. 3 metre setbacks facing Franklin Rd for these sites will not provide the merit based desired outcomes in the DCP.

Both ends of the precinct, which are key visual gateway sites to the precinct, (local landmark opportunity is used in the studies) require large setbacks, not small setbacks. Also the heritage report on nearby Inala recommended a vegetation screen along Franklin Rd as being highly desirable.

In addition, the metro tunnel easement appears to be located directly below the land facing Franklin and Castle Hill Rd. The studies indicate that there could be significant restrictions on excavation for foundations and basement parking. Further investigation is required to achieve a better outcome.

State government policy

There is a huge opportunity for the State Government to deliver on affordable housing for the long term. If the State Government is serious about delivery then the relevant SEPP can be amended to make affordable housing more permanent and not limited to the minimum 10 years, and ownership remains in government ownership.

The green vision

When the interconnectivity of the open space and pockets of trees is closely analysed the vegetation corridors are likely to struggle to achieve the desired outcomes. If large indigenous trees are to be planted, like Blue Gums, then the proposed 3 metre wide corridors incorporated into the building setbacks will be too narrow.

The main vegetation link appears to be along the transmission line easement, however the vegetation that can be grown in the easement will be very restricted. Large trees over 3 metres in

height are unlikely to be permissible within the transmission line easement, thus diminishing the intended quality of the vegetation linkages. Identifying the easement as having deep soil planting may be correct but it will not be able to be used.

The place strategy emphasises the importance of a vegetation corridor between the Blue Gum reserve in the SSP and the Cumberland State Forest. The studies for the SSP appear to ignore this matter. This needs to be clarified.

The future viability of the Blue Gum reserve in the SSP is a concern. The long term viability of the biodiversity in the reserve's limited area and the impact of edge effects with continuing interaction from surrounding activities needs clarification. Perhaps greater connectivity or buffers may need to be explored in the Place Strategy that surrounds the reserve. This needs consideration.

Some of the cross section street diagrams infer that there will be no setbacks to the higher storeys from the street. The Place strategy does indicate upper storey setbacks. This needs correcting or clarifying.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the SSP is located in a very constrained area, as acknowledged in the design study. Besides its poor shape there are serious topographical constraints. Not to forget the obvious transmission tower and easement. The studies have attempted to achieve a workable design but the Trust questions whether the studies are trying too hard to optimise the development potential of the far from perfect SSP site to the detriment of the desired outcomes. The Trust would like all the matters raised above to be seriously explored. Many good desired outcomes have been identified but the Trust has reservations that these outcomes will be achievable with the design presented.

Yours faithfully,

Ross Walker OAM

Vice President

Beecroft Cheltenham Civic Trust

25 August 2022