



4 July 2017

Environment Planning And Sustainability Directorate
GPO Box 365
Canberra ACT 2601

Re: Development Application 201731646

The Belconnen Community Council (BCC) are providing this submission regarding DA201731646 Block 2, Section 200 on Emu Bank, Belconnen Town Centre.

The BCC are supportive of the development, and strongly support the mixed retail and residential approach taken by the proponents. This type of development will add to the residential density of the Belconnen Town Centre, be built adjacent to existing public transport services, and provide employment opportunities for town centre residents in the retail space detailed on the DA plans. The development makes good use of a block formerly used solely for car parking purposes. We feel that if the concerns raised in this submission are resolved, the development will be a valuable addition to the town centre.

The concern that the BCC have related to DA 201731646 is ensuring that the number of storeys in building 2B of the development remain the same after a DA is approved and during the construction and marketing phase of the development. EPSD must ensure that approval for a 27 storey building does not result in a 34 storey building being constructed.

Section 200 has no building height limit, but it does have a limit of 27 storeys for a building. In initial pre-DA consultation the developer proposed a building of 34 storeys. They were advised this would be unacceptable, as the maximum permitted height is 27 storeys. The developer then presented an almost identical design with the building at the same height as the earlier 34 storey design, but now at the permitted 27 storeys. This was achieved by increasing the ceiling height from 3.250 metres (from floors one through twenty one) to a ceiling height of 5.100 metres (for floors 22 through 27).

If there is ample ceiling height within the apartments on one storey for them to be converted into two storeys, then that storey could be considered as two storeys. The BCC appreciate that a mechanism exists within the planning regulatory environment for planning permission to be granted for variations to leases, or to approve non-compliant buildings in some circumstances. We urge EPSD to make it clear to the developer that cannot occur with this development.

Geocon have a consistent record of obtaining a development application approval and then altering approved plans in a significant fashion. Many elements of the Wayfarer development on Eastern Valley Way originally shown to the BCC have not eventuated, or were changed after the DA was approved. The number of residential apartments was

increased significantly post approval (with appropriate lease variation charges paid). There is no hotel at Wayfarer, there is no pedestrian precinct at the base, there is no retail presence at ground level, and there is no publicly accessible observation deck on the 27th floor. The material finish, landscaping and streetscape shown in the community consultation with the BCC bears little relation to what is now in place.

Although Geocon have met the bare minimum required, they promised a high quality development at Wayfarer that was more than another residential tower. It can be argued that has not been delivered. It has certainly been approved and in compliance with planning and building regulations.

Even in the Section 200 development, Geocon have massively changed the proposed development from the conditions of sale for the site. The number of apartments has increased to over 1200, and their proposed parking provisions for the patrons of the Belconnen Labor Club are at variance from the conditions of the deed of sale.

The BCC are supportive of the development. The concern of the BCC is that approval gained for a building of 27 storeys could be changed post DA approval to the original 34 storey proposal rejected by EPSD in earlier conversations with Geocon. An argument could be made that the height has been approved, and that it makes little difference that the internal structure is changed from 27 to 34 storeys. The BCC believe that a DA for a 27 storey building, should result in a 27 storey building being built, and trust that EPSD ensure that this is made clear to the developer.

The committee is available to discuss this submission with the assessors.

Regards

Dr. Elizabeth Hirst
Chair, Belconnen Community Council