

Who approved THAT development?

The next twelve months will see the skyline of Auburn, Lidcombe, Berala and Regents Park change dramatically.

Despite the significant vote against high rise development in the 1999 election, Councillors are now approving 7 storey developments. These decisions, to override the recommendations of Council's own Town Planners are clearly against the wishes of the majority of residents in the Auburn local government area.

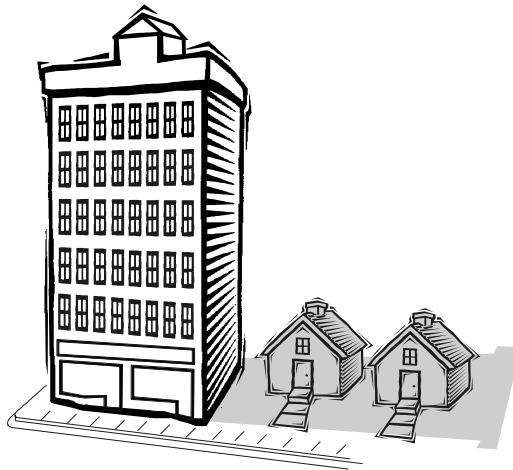
In Lidcombe, on the corner of Swete and Church Streets, an eight storey development is already being constructed. This was approved not by the current council, but by the previous one. The ONLY councillors who opposed this development were Judy Jones & Erica Hockley of the Resident Action Group (RAGAA)

A 7 storey development at the corner of Childs Street and John Street, Lidcombe has just been approved. This development consists of shops at ground level, with six storeys of flats above. Town Planners, acting for the developer, argue that this building will fit in well with the existing streetscape. *We ask just how could it "fit in well" as the highest building on this block is Mattar's supermarket, which only has a single storey residence above the shop. It is hard to imagine a building of that size NOT standing out like a sore thumb. It is also worthy to note that all the residences on that side of Childs Steet are freestanding single storey houses.*

This development was approved by 9 votes to 2, with Labor supporting the development. Despite whatever they may say in their defence in the

future about this, you, the community, need to be aware that if Labor had voted to refuse the development, it would have been refused 6 votes to 5. (Cr Irene Simms with Cr Bala Balendra voted for it's refusal). Crs Le Lam, Minh Hua, Mohamed Saddick, Michael Tadros and Michael Ghamraoui voted for the building. *But then, they usually do.*

Also in Lidcombe, Councillors have approved a 2 storey block of flats despite the fact that it is in an area zoned only for single houses only and being strongly opposed by the Platform St. residents. *Only Cr. Irene Simms had her name recorded as voting against this development.*



In Berala, the development at the old petrol station site is nearing completion. This development would nowadays be termed a 'gateway'. This is the new catch phrase used by developers to signify something that is, in our opinion, usually too big and too bulky for the area.

If you drive past the site and think, 'who in their right mind could have approved THAT?' The answer is simple, all the councillors of the previous council, except for your RAGAA representatives.

But wait, there's more! Berala has a 3 storey height limit in the business area, but an application was lodged a few weeks ago for a building from Kesby's Chemist along to, and including, Rothman's Restaurant. This will have 3 levels of basement parking with up to 5 storeys above. Featuring 6 shops, 1 office area, 3 bed sitters, 1 x 1 bedroom, 6 x 2 bedroom & 22 x 3 bedroom flats.

There is still time to do something about this proposed development, but you must do it NOW. Don't assume that your Councillors will refuse it, simply because it is higher than our rules allow. Plans can be inspected at the Council...just go to the front counter and ask OR ring your Councillors!

Regents Park also looks like following suit. It is important to know that the current group of councillors have also approved a three storey height limit in Regents Park. Despite this, this council has approved yet another 'gateway' development at the roundabout near the old Post Office at Regents Park. This consists of a single storey of shops, with three levels of flats above it. Interestingly enough, this development has now been sold as a block of land with development approval. Councillors Appleby, Balendra, Hua, Lam, Saddick and Tadros all voted for it's approval with Cr Ghamraoui absent.

Auburn (Former Police Station site) Just recently approved, this development consists of one level of shops, with six storeys of flats above. Next to this site, on Rawson Street there are 3 storey blocks of flats. This development completely overshadows the first adjoining property as well as impacting heavily on the next.

To minimise noise from the road, the residents of this NEW development will have to keep their windows closed.

Councillors argued that the building looked “classy”. *We are not so sure that the people living in the adjoining block of flats who will find that they can't even get access to direct sunlight, will agree.*

There was unanimous refusal recently for a 7 storey development in Parramatta Road Auburn. *It was all residential.*

Auburn (The old Venture Site). Approval had been given back in 1998 to build a 7 storey building at Auburn Road with a 4 storey building at the Harrow Road end of the site.

The developers have now re-applied to Council for twin 8 storeys towers, with shops at street level and 109 flats above

Where will it end?

Which Councillors voted for the new height limits?

Despite the Council's own strategic town planner's recommendation to keep most commercial centre development to three storeys, right throughout the shopping centres, the councillors, in their wisdom, chose to allow 6 storey development in Lidcombe and Auburn, and even higher if 'merit' is shown in the development.

This height was supported by the two **Unity** Councillors, Crs Lam and Hua, the two **Liberals**, Crs Tadros and Ghamraoui, the four **Labor**, Crs Cassidy, Curtin, Murray and Perry, and **Independents**, Crs Saddick and Balendra. It was only opposed by Crs Irene Simms from RAGAA and Cr Kim Appleby (*but Cr Appleby opposed it because she preferred NO height limits and did not think that good enough reasons were given to depart from Council's own town planner's recommendation and pick an 'arbitrary' height*).

All the developers that have asked for a height greater than Council's limits, have done so on the basis that their particular development has 'merit'.

The town planners have recommended refusal in almost every instance, yet the majority of the councillors have put the developers first and the community second, yet again!

While RAGAA has an obvious interest in development in our area, we are not limited to this issue.

There is currently a Local Environment Plan (LEP), which has been on exhibition, which relates to parts of **Silverwater** and the Carter Street area. The LEP proposes to rezone areas East of Silverwater Rd., (which are still currently zoned to allow flat development) to allow only houses, town houses or villas. **We strongly support this rezoning!**

There have also been several developments proposed for this area that would be quite out of character with the planned and existing streetscape. We have been working with many residents in this area to assist wherever we can.

Similarly, some of our members have had meetings with residents from **Mariner's Cove** and made representations on their behalf to OCA and Council. These representations included issues regarding access to one of the 'mounds' near the archery park, trying to address issues with the Bennelong Road bridge and provision of extra tree plantings, as well as parking concerns in, and around, Mariner's Cove.

We are happy to listen to any concerns and ideas to improve the Auburn local government area, and offer this same help to our newest residents at **Newington**.

WHO ARE RAGAA?

RAGAA was formed after two well-attended public meetings, called by some concerned residents to discuss what they perceived as the increasing over-development in residential areas.

The group was formed in 1995 to fight for better quality and 'appropriate' development.

What do we mean by 'appropriate'

- reasonable for people to live in
- doesn't generate too much traffic or overtax our existing infrastructure - schools, hospitals, community services, water pipes, for example
- does not cause problems to the neighbours such as overlooking, overshadowing, too much noise, or too close.

There should be 'ecologically sustainable development' i.e. plenty of natural light and ventilation, without everyone living on top of each other

We are working towards a local government area where people are proud of where they live, how they live and have a sense of community.

This is what the Residents Action Group for Auburn Area (RAGAA) believes in, and works for.

DO YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT US?

If you would like to know more about the Residents' Action Group for Auburn Area, or would like to contact us, our representative on Auburn Council is Councillor Irene Simms ph. 9643-9703

Our mailing address is : PO Box 273, Lidcombe. 1825.