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22 September 2020

Your Reference:12L12/2229

By email

Dear redacted,

RE: Discontinuance of Laneway / Road
LAND: Rear 600 – 604 Smith Street, Clifton Hill

We have been engaged by Blackstone Developments Pty Ltd, owner of land at 628 – 632 Smith Street, Clifton Hill.

On behalf of Blackstone Developments Pty Ltd, we object to the sale of the government laneway ("the road") as shown in your correspondence dated August 13, 2020.

We submit this is not surplus land, rather, remains an integral feature for many businesses that form part of this commercial precinct bound by Smith Street (west), Alexandra Parade (south), Reeves Street (east) and Council Street (north). This precinct is zoned Commercial 2. The primary purpose of the zone is *'to encourage commercial areas for offices, appropriate manufacturing and industries, bulky goods retailing, other retail; uses and associated business and commercial services.'*

The laneway network that services these properties provides a competitive advantage as the width of the laneway being 3.4m wide (approximate) and treated with bitumen rather than bluestone ensures deliveries, loading and unloading activities are conducted at the rear of premises. It is simply not feasible to conduct these activities along either Smith Street or Alexandra Parade. Both Smith Street and Alexandra Parade are primary arterial roads and are considered one of many regional traffic movement roads. It is unrealistic to expect loading and unloading of goods to occur from either Smith Street or from Alexandra Parade, when there exists excellent ROW access to the rear of these properties.

With respect to Smith Street, normal traffic volumes often see south bound traffic banked up to Council Street given the location of the tram stop to the south adjacent to the intersection with Alexandra Parade. Whilst Covid-19 has impacted traffic flows, we anticipate the immediate area will encounter greater traffic volume with the completion of works on land opposite (west) at the old Fitzroy Gasworks Site. The works on the four (4) hectare site propose a mixed-use development comprising five (5) built form clusters ranging in height of between six (6) to fourteen (14) storeys. The provision of schools, open space, residential land use and commercial land use will add traffic volumes to this section of Smith Street.

For these reasons it remains imperative, the existing laneway network be retained, as shown below.

View south looking towards Alexandra Parade. Image taken standing at the rear of 628 Smith Street.

View east looking towards Reeves Street.

View north looking towards Council Street. Image taken standing at the rear of 628 Smith Street.

View of the rear of 628 – 632 Smith Street, Clifton Hill

This laneway network is used on a daily basis. Equally, the direct access to Alexandra Parade ensures that delivery trucks do not have to exit the site via Council Street and then onto Smith Street in order to access Alexandra Parade. Whilst the same could be said in terms of accessing Reeves Street, the existing laneway network does provide convenient and efficient opportunities for the loading and unloading of goods and it's closure cannot be justified.

Apart from our business related operations, we also raise a concern the closure of the laneway will create a dead end feature whereby anti-social behaviour can occur. As indicated by the photos, the laneway is utilised on a daily basis. It is clean, devoid of rubbish demonstrating its high usage. Discontinuing the road will only encourage antisocial behaviour which is considered to be a poor urban design response and should be avoided.

For the reasons expressed above, we object to the closure of the laneway ("the road") as indicated in your correspondence dated 13 August 2020.

Should you have any further questions or require any clarification please do not hesitate to contact our offices.

Yours faithfully,

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