

Second Reading Speech

Parliament Square Planning Permit Bill 2012

Mr Speaker

As members will appreciate, the *parliament square* site comprises nine buildings bordered by Murray Street, Davey Street, Salamanca Place and Parliament House.

In August 2009, the Citta Property Group Pty Ltd was selected as the preferred developer, following an extensive public tender and consultation process.

Mr Speaker, in October 2009, Citta lodged a development application with the then planning authority, the Sullivans Cove Waterfront Authority. A conditional planning permit was issued by that Authority on 2 March 2010.

To address the conditions raised in the Waterfront Authority's planning permit, Citta amended its design, and was provided with a second planning permit.

There have since been extensive and prolonged appeals surrounding the proposed demolition of 10 Murray Street and 2-4 Salamanca Place.

A few people have taken a view that these buildings must be fully retained so as to ensure that the project as outlined under the planning permits does not proceed.

Mr Speaker, the Government holds a different view.

This is a strong and positive project that will revitalise this important precinct and provide \$100 million of valuable activity for the construction industry.

The Government believes that the project has broad public support and overall achieves strong heritage conservation outcomes and new public open space.

These appeals have gone on for too long and could continue for substantially longer.

Despite following all required planning processes, after more than three years there is no certainty for the developer, Citta.

Mr Speaker, the Government has decided to show strong leadership, provide certainty to the developer and ensure that there are no further planning delays for the project.

The proposal has been assessed and approved multiple times by all relevant planning authorities. This has included approvals by the Sullivans Cove Waterfront Authority, the Hobart City Council and Heritage Tasmania.

The planning authorities, Tribunal and the Supreme Court have already ruled that 10 Murray Street can be demolished.

The current appeals are now focused on stopping the demolition of 2-4 Salamanca Place with the effect of stopping the project.

The former Printing Authority Building at 2-4 Salamanca Place arguably does not have significant heritage value, whereas other buildings on the site, such as 36 Davey Street, the former St Mary's Hospital, do have a highly significant heritage standing.

Mr Speaker, this project will deliver the restoration and re-use of such significant heritage buildings.

The legislation before the House today provides that the second planning permit that has already been issued takes effect from the date of Royal Assent.

Importantly, the legislation also provides that all current appeals in relation to this planning permit are extinguished, and that there can be no further appeals in relation to the permit.

Mr Speaker, the Government understands that some people may have concerns with this provision, but we believe that, given the significant economic and community benefits and the broad public support for the project, steps need to be taken to ensure that the project proceeds without any further delays.

The legislation also provides that further amendments to the planning permit will need to be considered by myself as Minister for Planning.

The Treasurer has asked me and my colleague, the Honourable Minister for Environment, Parks and Heritage, to review the relevant legislation to ensure that similar situations do not arise in relation to future developments.

Mr Speaker, once the legislation is passed, based on moral rights, the Government will pay all reasonable legal costs, including expert witness costs, incurred by those appealing against the relevant permit up to the date of the legislation being introduced into Parliament.

This recognises that legislation is being introduced which will have the effect of changing the appeal rights to the project, noting the appellant has submitted its appeal within an existing, legal, framework, which will be removed.

In closing, Mr Speaker, the intention of the Bill is to facilitate the redevelopment of the *parliament square* site.

I am advised that if the legislation is approved by Parliament then the developer should be able to start work within a matter of weeks.

It is expected that, once work commences, the project will take approximately four years to complete.

This project, which was estimated by Citta to increase Tasmania's economic output by about \$100 million, is an important development because not only will it enhance the heritage values of the parliamentary precinct, it will also provide a much needed boost to the building and construction industry.

Mr Speaker, I commend the Bill to the House.