

Architects spreading ugliness

I WILL expand on Lillian McDonald's letter about the context of buildings in their surroundings, and how notable architects have created buildings and places that enhance the built environment through the centuries (*Mercury*, June 8).

Most architects seem not to have the skill to design anything that will become famous and enhance their reputation, so they dismiss any thought of social responsibility and submit to the developer's demands. The idea of being in context with surroundings, or protecting the public domain, or creating better places for the community to appreciate are not important and disregarded. The bigger the buildings the higher the fees, so grab the money and run. Ugly and inappropriate architecture has been and unfortunately will continue to be built and the community left to lament why for the next 50 or 100 years.

**Rod Scott
Bellerive**

Just not safe

MANY have commented about the inappropriate height levels of the Fragrance hotel development being proposed near Hobart's waterfront precinct. Let's get practical about the reasons why any amendment to the height restrictions is a thoroughly bad idea. Safety! In the case of an emergency, such as fire, in a building of this size the reach of the Fire Service truck extension ladder is about 43m, which is well short of the proposed 120m height for the Davey St hotel. I bet that guests booking into the top floors won't be told that in the event of an emergency they have a very long walk to the ground floor.

**Lea Symonds
Hobart**

Listen to community

I FEEL really despairing about the way our state and country are headed. Our elected representatives are just not listening. We may as well be living under a communist regime. Peter Gutwein has turned into a little dictator, grabbing ratepayer-owned assets. Will Hodgman just wants to be liked by everyone.

Why are foreign developers allowed to ruin our beautiful landscape when they have only one objective, making more and more money? They don't give a damn about our communities and the effect they have. Here in my own backyard, beautiful Bellerive, we are having an ugly, inappropriate multi-storey building foisted upon us, despite so many objections from locals.

Kangaroo Bay has so much potential, a building of this type is just so out of place. All our objections are falling on deaf ears, be it local, state or federal government.

I really do despair at the legacy I am leaving my grandchildren. At least I, like hundreds of others, still have the freedom to voice our concerns through the *Mercury*, and for that I am thankful.

**S. Ireland
Bellerive**

Insidip approach

THUS far the public debate concerning the proposed development of two high-rise buildings in Hobart's CBD has been about height and civic identity. It seems that any structure considered unusually high (75 to 120m) is intrinsically bad for Hobart and fosters a loss of city identity. Using Brisbane as an analogy, Federal Group boss Greg Farrell recently stated: "Destinations like Brisbane have lost their

identity by allowing generic high-rise buildings to dominate a once interesting and unique cityscape," (*Mercury*, May 27).

As a long-term former resident of Brisbane I would argue that this city has acquired a new identity, one that has emanated from an ongoing vibrant transformation that is in sync with the progressive attitudes of its inhabitants and city council.

Civic identity is an evolving and ever-changing phenomenon. It helps generate a city's uniqueness and difference. Conversely upholding the status quo, that is the current situation of opposing high-rise development in Hobart, engenders sameness and architectural uniformity and monotony.

Hobart as a model of civic excellence is insipid and unexciting at best. It's why many of us escape to Melbourne and Sydney, to Queensland and abroad at regular intervals. The current public debate concerning these two major architectural projects is mind numbing, where a few prominent figures and diehards (certainly not the quiet majority) voice their cliched and derivative views disapproving of change to the city skyline.

Likewise Lord Mayor Sue Hickey's lack of leadership on the issue is symptomatic of the Hobart City Council's inertia when it comes to championing contemporary projects of this kind.

I envisage both projects being approved, but their development so adversely regulated by council, especially regarding height, that they would become further examples of lacklustre architecture for the CBD rather than models of civic pride and confidence.

**Stephen Rainbird
New Town**