

Nattrass opposes State grab of Northbridge private property

GARETH PARKER

Perth City Council will take the unprecedented step of calling a special meeting on Monday night to fight the State Government's resumption of private land on Roe Street to build a 24-hour police lockup and watchhouse.

Lord Mayor Peter Nattrass and Planning Minister Alannah MacTiernan stood side by side this week to announce plans for a \$1.5 billion,

people-friendly redevelopment of the central railway lands, but yesterday Dr Nattrass described the Government's behaviour as "cavalier and overbearing".

While the council sought and applauded a greater police presence on foot in Northbridge, a major police station and lockup at the prime gateway to the city's premier entertainment precinct would be an unwelcome blight, he said.

Under the Northbridge Link mas-

terplan, that "prime gateway" is likely to become Northbridge's most prominent entrance with a proposed new road connection over the sunken railway lines between King and Lake streets.

Police Minister John Kobelke last month said the Government would resume the former Peter's ice-cream factory and Kailis fish markets site on the corner of Roe and Lake streets to build an \$80 million replacement for the East Perth lockup.

The resumption order was signed without any discussion with the long-standing landowner, Northbridge businessman Graham Hardie, who is an unwilling seller.

Mr Hardie has plans for an eight-storey, \$140 million residential retail and office complex on the site, which is likely to become vastly more valuable now that the Government has announced the Northbridge Link.

Mr Hardie said yesterday he still had had "no contact whatsoever from

anyone with the Government", nor had he been told how much the Government would pay for his site.

Dr Nattrass said there was "no justification at all for (the Government) to take away an individual's property rights" when the Government's 13.5ha Northbridge Link site was "across the road". Ms MacTiernan said there was an immediate need for the new police facility.

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