



Malvern East Group

MEG Supports *PLANNING BACKLASH*

C/- 14 Chanak Street,

Malvern East Vic 3145

Phone/Fax 9572 3205

Email meg@chezsamuel.com

Web <http://www.chezsamuel.com/meghome.php>

MEG Newsletter...February- March 2013

From the Convenor's Desk

On Dec.20/12 there was an article in the Age about the dreadful floods that paralysed much of Jakarta and we noted comments from local people who blamed the catastrophe on a variety of issues. One said, "There's all this asphalt and concrete so the water doesn't have anywhere else to go." Another talked about the 'poor drainage' and yet another stated, "The problems have been exacerbated by deforestation outside the city which allows rainwater to flood in."

Hands up everyone who can point to a spot right now where once a tree stood!!! Hands up everyone who bemoans the existence of 'all this asphalt and concrete.' I can see hands up all around Stonnington.

The Jakarta floods were not entirely a natural disaster but one caused mainly by man. Building in flood prone areas, the relentless cutting down of trees, excessive hard surfaces caused by endless development for an ever-increasing population...all contributed to the tragedies that occurred during this period and we wonder if our 'powers that be' ever learn anything from such occurrences. Still our vegetation is mulched, the concrete still creeps over more and more land, the Yarra is still dirty, our storm water is not saved and re-cycled and still the developers are relentless in their quest for more and more concrete and the Government is equally relentless in its quest for more and more people to fuel the economy even though it is clear that infrastructure in Melbourne is simply not coping.

Metropolitan Planning Strategy

We mentioned this in our last newsletter and told you that we had 3 hard copies for anyone who didn't want to view the plan on-line. Two hard copies are still here and we wonder how many people have looked at it online. We know how hard it is to actually look at these documents and put pen to paper but we urge you to make an effort to lodge a submission by March 28. (Planning Backlash persuaded the Minister to extend the closing date.) This is your city and the city your children and grandchildren will inherit. How do you want it to be for you ...and for them?

MEG will send you some pointers about the principles in the Strategy and hopefully you will send in comments about at least **one** of them. Submissions do not have to be long. They do not have to cover all

aspects of the subject. In a submission you need only make brief comments about certain aspects of what is proposed. We urge you to consider doing this.

You will have received mail regarding Council's Information Session on Wednesday March 6 from 4-7p.m. you can "drop in" for as long as you like to the Upstairs Foyer at Malvern Town Hall. Staff will be there to answer your questions. In the meantime do have a look at it on planmelbourne.vic.gov.au

Planning Zones Reform This document will be in place prior to the overall strategy for Melbourne. The 'zones' will, hopefully, give the suburbs some protection against over-development. MEG is hoping that much of Malvern East and the neighbouring suburbs will be in the Neighbourhood Zone. Our submission is on the MEG website.

Neighbour Character Study

Yes...it's come up again. Remy Favre and I attended a series of Committee Mtgs about this in 2005...and on February 18/2013 it is again an Item on the Council Agenda. This time 4 broad character areas have been identified...Inner Urban, Garden River, Garden Estate and Garden Suburban. A total of 21 areas have been preliminarily identified as potential areas requiring further planning protection such as a Neighbourhood Character Overlay control. Overlay controls have been prepared for Baldwin & Clarence Sts. Schedules are being prepared for the other 19 areas. More details are available in the Notice Paper and Attachments for Council Meeting of February 18/13.

Neighbourhood Character Overlays

Council has proposed an NCO for Clarence St. and this process is nearing completion. An overlay is also proposed for Findon, Chanak & John Sts. Hopefully these overlays will protect these streets from excessive development. Needless to say they cannot be protected from detrimental impacts such as those implicit in the application (see below.) If you want to see what can be done beside a single storey house in a street without any form of protection have a look at 23 Cawkell St. Malvern.

781-805 & 807 Dandenong Rd.

And talking of more and more concrete please note that an application for an 18 storey development was

lodged on Dec. 5/12 for the site of the "Fitness First" gym...corner of Dandenong & Tooronga Rds. cafes, shops and 352 apartments are proposed by Bensons. Spare a thought for the residents of John St. Residents in Boardman St. will also bear much of the immediate adverse impact of this proposal. If permitted this development will impact adversely on the large surrounding residential area to the north. There is mention made in the documentation of future development on that whole site from Tooronga Rd. to Boardman St. When the application comes to a Council Meeting we hope that Councillors apply the same conditions they applied recently to 590 Orrong Rd. with a site of one and a half hectares. Council says only 6 storeys there and a mere 250 apartments! The Dandenong Rd. site is less than half a hectare.

Is this part of Malvern East going to become another dreary Forrest Hill Precinct...a mini suburban Docklands?

Council has prepared **Amendment C173** which seeks to minimise the adverse impact on the residential area but the 18 storey proposal has got in first. MEG fears that the Minister won't sign off on the Amendment before that proposal is dusted and finished and even if he does he may accept Council's proposal that there be no height limits on this particular site. We lodged a submission re Amendment C173 and at a meeting with the Minister on February 26 MEG brought this matter to his attention. Our submission will be on the MEG website in due course.

Masonic Temple..945-947 Dandenong Rd.

There is a heritage overlay on this site. The applicant proposes demolishing the entire building except the façade and constructing behind the façade a 7 storey building with 48 apts. and basement car parking. Apart from the appalling nerve of the applicant to want to do this sort of damage on a heritage site, the proposal also appears to have a somewhat devastating effect on Moama St. This application has not yet been advertised and the Planning Department has requested further information from the applicant. This must be received by March 31.

Unbelievable Stupidity

We read in Business Age on Feb 23 that the Education Department sold the former Monash Primary School to a developer and is now "seeking to re-zone **five** more former school schools within the area, again with a view to selling the sites to residential developers." This is a total of 13.4 hectares of public land sold to developers in the neighbouring municipality of Monash. This "will help meet strong demand for more houses in the area."

When people with children move into this housing where will the children go to school? If they have children in the future where will the children go to school? Will Monash be like Stonnington with primary schools packed to overflowing and no open entry State secondary school in our entire city? MEG

thinks that some forward planning is in order. When Moreland High School closed in 2002 it was used for TAFE courses and now that it is required again for children it has reverted to being a Secondary School. That's the sort of action we need. Selling school sites to developers is unforgivable, especially when we read that "Melbourne's growth area needs \$10 billion spent on new education, transport and health services over the next 15 years." (Age Feb.13) How much do we need for spending on these services in the established areas?

At a Conference of Teleworking at Melbourne University on Nov.12/12 participants were given an eye-opening example of the need for infrastructure. In the City of Whittlesea every year the population increases by the same amount as the entire population of Swan Hill (about 9000) without any added infrastructure. This sort of population increase means that every year they need a new child-care centre, a primary school, a swimming pool and a medical centre....and they don't get these facilities.

Keep our Gardens Safe from the Ravages of Development.

A CSIRO assessment has found that "Australia's landscape soaked up a third of national carbon dioxide emissions from burning fossil fuels." (Age Feb. 21/13) The details of this study can be found in the international journal *Biogeosciences*. What we can do about it is to save our trees. In the Age on Jan.30 a spokeswoman for Melbourne City Council said that "the council considered trees to be valuable community assets that were **vital** to the city's liveability and character." She added that the council wanted to increase the tree canopy not to reduce it....and MEG says, "Here, here!"

Building Commission

The building industry commissioner Michael Kefford has left the Commission "amid calls for the Ombudsman to investigate his decision to award a \$10 million dollar contract to a company part-owned by his friend, despite his own expert panel advising against the move." (Age Feb.7) Building Commissioners aren't lasting long in the job are they?. His predecessor left in January 2012. Meanwhile it has been reported that Minister Guy has 'sacked the butler' hired by Places Victoria for duties at their various functions. Quite right, too!!!

Letters to the Age

In Dec.'12 and Jan 13 a number of letters deplored "the Stalinist eyesores in Footscray" and "the bland, cheap, nasty slums." We've all seen these 'things.' These comments brought a defensive letter from an architect saying that not all developments are "unkind" and not all are the work of apparently "cynical" and "disappointed" architects. He protested that there are architects who "work against the tide of those profit-driven, built to the boundary, cheap and nasty developments." MEG would have liked him to cite

some examples. We could certainly have cited examples of “eyesores” in Stonnington.

Chadstone Shopping Centre

Council approved redevelopment works for CSC at the February Meeting. Of course this was a foregone conclusion.

No-one argued against it. No-one even mentioned that one of the applications exceeded the huge building envelope CSC was given in Amendment C154...and exceeded it by 5-9m. It probably couldn't have been stopped but at least one Councillor could have deplored what the owners continue to do to the residential area in which the centre resides.

The only positive thing that was done was a bit of fiddling around with construction times. Crs. Davies and Klisaris had conflicts of interest and were unable to take part in this item on the Agenda.

Reg Hunt Site

We know you wait with bated breath for an update on this site. Well, there's nothing to report! The Arcare sign is still up on the purple fence and not a blow has been struck. You may be interested to know that Becton who sold the site with a permit for an aged care facility “has been pushed into limited receivership.” (Bus. Age Feb.27)

Cabrini Hospital

Council approved a \$20million extension to the main building in Isabella St.in 2012. Some residents who are often driven to distraction by hospital activities have lodged an appeal Against Decision to Grant a Permit. The Directions Hearing is on March 8, Mediation April 3 and Merits Hearing in June. At the request of Cabrini this will take 3 days because they believe a tour of the hospital is essential.

A short time after this application was approved Cabrini lodged an application for a Medical Centre at 4 Coonil Cr. A decision is yet to be reached on this. Meanwhile work has ground to a halt on the carpark at 185-189 Wattletree Rd. We can only ponder on the reason for this. Is it possible that Cabrini might intend to lodge an application for an extension to this operation in a Res.1 Zone where they demolished 3 houses? There is a strong rumour that Cabrini has plans for an eight storey extension on the corner of Isabella St. & Wattletree Rd. Meanwhile (another ‘meanwhile’) work has commenced on the 4 storey facility at 152-154 Wattletree Rd. The heritage buildings were demolished some time ago and the concrete is going up. MEG wonders what Cabrini's next target will be.

Proposal to Increase VCAT Fees

MEG lodged a submission deploring the proposed increases and suggested that VCAT could start reforming its processes so that each planning appeal is a compact and less expensive situation. We suggested that appellants could either self-represent or be permitted one (only) person to represent them. Developers would not then have a stream of “expert

witnesses” (so-called) giving unsworn evidence at huge cost in time and money. All evidence could be produced by one person, the process shortened, the costs cheaper. We have said all of this at forums with the heads of VCAT, in previous submissions, at meetings with the Attorney General and the Planning Minister....and now we've said it again. If VCAT continues to get away with no reform of their practices then residents will be priced out of appealing Against a Decision to Grant a Permit. Our submission is on the MEG website.

Prahran Campus of Swinburne

Holmesglen TAFE is not the only TAFE with eyes on this campus. The Northern Metropolitan Institute of TAFE has “submitted an expression of interest “ in a takeover. (Age Dec.4/12) It is reported that Swinburne intends to leave the site in 2014 and according to the Age “leaked documents to the media showed Swinburne hoped to sell the campus and expected to receive \$50 million.” Most of the site belongs to us...**the people**. We wonder if Swinburne is trying to outdo Deakin University's sale of Stonington Mansion and the land around it which also belonged to us...**the people**.

590 Orrong Rd.

At its meeting on Feb.18 Council did not accept the Panel Recommendation for this site. The approved motion included mandatory height controls with a maximum height of 17m., maximum site coverage of 50%, 250 units and a 6m setback from all boundaries. The Supreme Court case regarding a potentially flawed VCAT decision will be heard on April 16 & 17.

Rooming House

This is defined as a building where individual rooms are available for rent to four or more people and amenities are shared. These houses must be registered with Council to ensure they are located in an area where a rooming house is permitted and that they meet health, building and safety regulations. If you know of any of these situations and have doubts that they are complying with regulations contact Council on 8290 1333 and report the situation.

A Gem from a Council Meeting

At a recent Council Mtg. a Councillor addressed the gallery directly without reference to the Chair and told residents that they need only send one email in future rather than a number saying more or less the same thing. Another Councillor leapt up and, again without reference to the Chair, suggested to the same residents that they “keep them coming.” MEG's advice to residents is to lobby all councilors when the Planning Application in which they are interested is coming to a Council Mtg.

Ward Meetings

East Ward... 7p.m. Phoenix Park Community Centre... Thursday March 21.
South Ward... 7p.m. Functions on Chapel... Wednesday April 3.
North Ward... 7p.m. Functions on Chapel... Thursday April 18

Planning Applications

Listed are **some** of the Planning Applications in which MEG members are involved.

114 Burke Rd. 3 storeys, 7 apts., 16 car spaces. In advertising,

12-16 Carrum St. VCAT Permit for 3 storeys, 24 apts, basement car parking.

4 Coonil Cr. Malvern Cabrini appl. for a Medical Centre with 2 pkg spaces on site and 24 on car pk at 185-187 Wattletree Rd.

8 Gordon Gr. Malvern 3 storey development with basement car parking. Refusal from Pl. Dept. VCAT appeal Against Refusal to Grant. Awaiting date.

3 Midlothian St. Construction of 2 dwellings on a lot. Info. Requested.

69 Macgregor St. Construction of 2 dwellings on a lot.

121 Waverley Rd. Works ass. with use of site as a Medical Centre. Car parking dispensation. Info Requested.

379 Wattletree Rd. Demolition of existing res. & dev. of 3 storey bldg. with 12 apts, basement car parking. VCAT Appeal Against Failure to Determine. May 16.

648 Warrigal Rd. Construction of multi-dwelling dev. VCAT appeal Against Refusal to Grant. March 4.

646 Warrigal Rd. Construction of multi-dwelling dev. Permit Granted by Councillors... Nov. 19

1 Clarence St. Construction of 4 dwellings on a lot and removal of significant tree. Amended plans are being prepared. Will be re-advertised.

26-28 Emo Rd. Alterations to existing apt. bldg. incl. construction of 2 extra apts. VCAT appeal Against Conditions. Awaiting date.

32 B Epping Rd. Pt. dem. & bldg. & works for constr. Of a Place of Assembly (Church Hall) and part use of site as an edn centre & reduction in statutory car pking req. in Res.1 Zone & H.O. VCAT appeal Against Decision to Grant. Awaiting date.

9 Camira St. Dev. of site for multi-dev. VCAT appeal Against Failure to Determine. May 21.

100 Argyll St. Construction of more than one dwelling on a lot. Info. Requested... due on April 5.

2 Maroora St. Five 2 storey bldgs. on a lot.

METROPOLITAN PLANNING STRATEGY

INFORMATION SESSION

MALVERN TOWN HALL

WEDNESDAY.. MARCH 6

DROP-IN 4-7P.M.

HAVE YOUR SAY

LODGE A SUBMISSION BY MARCH 28