



Malvern East Group

MEG Supports **PLANNING BACKLASH**

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Newsletter Jan-Feb 2008

From the Working Group

Just after we sent out our last newsletter, we read a letter in the Leader from a Year 6 student at Lloyd St. Primary School. Tara had investigated our impact on the planet and she made suggestions about how we can reduce this impact by installing tanks (if possible!), having shorter showers, recycling grey water and planting trees. We applaud the wisdom of some of our youth. We'd like to find Tara and have her join MEG. Congratulations to the staff at Lloyd St. P.S. for promoting this awareness.

At the other end of the spectrum is, as we all know, the indiscriminate destruction of our 'green' environment by developers. The Interim Report of the Select Committee into Public Land Development spells this out in no uncertain terms. Developers don't just want the built environment in your backyard. They want it everywhere. We quote Ron Barassi (Age Dec.1/07) when commenting on the development of the St. Kilda triangle:

All over the world you find the same exploitation, which ends up destroying the atmosphere that makes people want to go there in the first place.

More recent than Tara's letter was an article in the Age (Jan.17/08) by Helen Elliott about "paradise lost to developers." Elliott discussed the perennial situation of seeing one day a house with a cared for shady garden up for sale and within days of the sale noting that there was "no garden, not a blade of grass, not even a single tree standing" and the house demolished. "fifty years growing and four days of annihilation." The residents of Wilmot St. (and many other streets in Stonnington) are more than familiar with this scenario. A flood of letters to the Age on Jan.18 responded angrily to the wanton

destruction of our built environment and the quality of home life.

Objectors to a similar story of imminent destruction at 13 Nirvana Av. must have been fascinated to read in the submission by the Q.C. representing the applicant that Council "in its wisdom saw fit to reject the proposal," after a recommendation by the Planning Department to demolish and replace because it didn't suit Councillors "political wishes." He states that such an action by Council is "hypocritical" and "warrants severe criticism." Perhaps this Q.C. is not sufficiently aware of the fact that it is only 3 East Ward Councillors who might depend on our votes and who, therefore, have a reason to act politically. The other 6 Councillors do not need our support. The decision to refuse the application on valid planning grounds was unanimous.

The hopes of the young Taras should not be dashed by the misdeeds of greedy, ruthless individuals such as those described above. This is why groups like MEG need to exist, and need to make their voices heard. This is why we must keep up the good fight. Every bit of resistance against the destruction of our built heritage, every delay we can cause to the disappearance of public and private spaces, are small victories that help protect what is still unspoilt by this madness.

Earth Hour

Melbourne will take part in this global initiative to change people's attitudes and behaviour by creating awareness of climate change. We urge you to join this action by switching off all the lights in your homes from 8p.m.to 9p.m. on Saturday Mar.29/08.

How about having a candle-lit dinner party?

MEG Membership

Subscriptions (\$5) were due on July 1/07. If you have not renewed your membership, please do it at the earliest opportunity. We will soon adjust our mailing list to limit future communications to paid up members. Thanks for your support and our thanks to those who renewed their commitment to our cause. A warm welcome to a large number of new members.

Bowen St. Precinct

We had a last minute request for help from a resident of this area when tenders were called for the public land at the Bowen/Fenwick St. site.

Residents believed that there had not been enough notification or consultation about the sale or, indeed, about the whole project. MEG advised residents to email Mayor & Councillors immediately and contact East Ward Councillors, indicating that the proposed sale was precipitous and that the process should be delayed.

MEG's advice worked. At the Council Meeting the following night (Dec.3/08) Cr. Anne O'Shea submitted a Notice of Motion that Council give notification of the proposed sale by post to all residents in the area bounded by Belgrave/Warrigal/Waverley & Dandenong Rds. The motion was unanimously approved. Residents were notified during the week ending Jan 27/08.

Apparently MECWA has a lease of part of the land until 2013. As Council does not have vacant possession the immediate sale would indeed be precipitous. We congratulate and thank Cr. Anne O'Shea and the other Councillors for their commitment to due process.

Chadstone

The tentacles of this great octopus keep reaching further and further, out and up. There were 3 planning applications from the developers of this centre in 2007. Each application exceeded the 2005 building envelope "just a little." The David Jones car park "just a little extra," the central mall "just a little extra," the 2 storey office block on the eastern side of the site will be extended to 4 storeys (not yet approved) "just a little" outside the envelope. Each application does not exceed the envelope sufficiently for Council to refuse it. So they

get more and more, bit by bit. The building envelope is not considered to be definitive. It is MEG's opinion that each incremental creep should be refused and that the developers should be forced to appeal to VCAT. Of course, they'd win there but at least they'd have to make a greater effort.

Landscape Conditions

How often do we see in the Recommendation to Grant a Planning Permit that one of the conditions is that a Landscape Plan must be submitted to the Planning Department? MEG believes that a Landscape Plan should be an integral part of any Planning Application so that residents are fully aware of the whole application. Apparently, this is not possible though why this is not so is a total mystery to us. In Council Notice Paper of Dec.17/07 a condition of permit for an Armadale site was that once the Landscape Plan is submitted and approved, "landscaping must then be maintained to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority, including any dead, diseased or damaged plants are to be replaced."

MEG believes that this condition should be included in any Recommendation and then, if residents notice dead or diseased planting on site, they should report it to Planning Enforcement officers who have the power to demand that they be replaced. If this is not done, developers will be fined.

Venue For Meg Meetings

We have reported previously that we can no longer use Northbrook House as a venue for our meetings. It will now be exclusively used for the purpose of... storing archives! Council has decided that the 70 community groups that used this historic venue are of lesser importance than archival material...paper before people?

We have been requested to liaise with the Phoenix Park manager. We have investigated the available space at Phoenix Park and have found one small upstairs room where the noise from other activities (such as basketball matches!) does not intrude. There is no disability access to that room.

Three MEG members are investigating other venues in the area. Council has advised us that it is planning to have new meeting rooms available at Malvern Town Hall for community use in 3-5 years. One of our

members has written to Council requesting that the decision re Northbrook House be reviewed and we will be doing that too. It would be great if Council received a flood of letters from MEG members about this issue at its meeting on Feb.4/08 or at any subsequent meetings.

If you write to Council and want your issue made public, put a note on the letter saying that you want the letter read out and that your name can be used.

Planning Backlash

Members of the Planning Backlash Working Group met with Minister Madden on Nov.27/07. The time and effort it takes to arrange these meetings, to get beyond the wall of bureaucrats that protect this precious person from the people, and the time it takes to prepare the material so that he can be informed by the community and then to find that, behind his very pleasant facade, is an ex-footballer, 'inexperienced architect' who says what the bureaucrats tell him to say is disheartening, to say the least. We came out of this with the opinion that the whole thing is a farce, that this government is not interested in listening to the people and that we shouldn't waste any more of our time with him.

Planning Applications & VCAT Hearings

It is extremely difficult to get up to date information from Council. Most Councillors have been extremely supportive of our requests for regular updates but the administration is not so helpful to us...or to them. Here is all the information we have managed to discover.

Reg Hunt Site there is no new application for this site. Extension of Permit for the approved 6 storey building expires on March 31/08.

Planning Applications

6 Anfield Crt, Dual Occ. Deferred by Council on Dec.17/07. Will come to Council on Feb.4/08.

16 Alma St. Four 3 storey townhouses. Cons. Mtg held. Report will come to Council probably in Feb.08.

60 Ardrie Rd. Part. dem., alterations & additions to a dwelling in a Heritage Overlay.

57 Nirvana Av. Part. dem., alterations & additions to dwelling in a Heritage Overlay.

67 Coppin St. Part.dem., alterations & additions to dwelling in a Heritage Overlay.

24 Manning Rd. Part dem., alterations & additions to dwelling in a Heritage Overlay.

50 Nirvana Av. Alterations & additions to dwelling in a Heritage Overlay.

Darling Rd. 7 Bus shelters. Cons. Mtg. to be held early in Feb.'08.

19 Prior Rd. Three 2 storey dwellings.

35A Emo Rd. First storey extension in a Heritage Overlay.

305 Wattletree Rd. Construct a courtyard and increase seating from 50 to 100 patrons.

177-179 Darling Rd. Two 2storey units behind existing 2storey shop and offices. The offices on the first storey to be converted into a 3rd unit.

30 Central Park Rd. First storey extension in Heritage Overlay.

66 The Boulevard. Five 2-storey dwellings.

VCAT Hearings

11 Villers Sq. Permit issued by VCAT. (A MEG member said to me, "How can one man have the power to go against all of us?" That's the power the Govt. has vested in VCAT.)

52 Belgrave Rd. Dual Occ. Against Refusal to Grant. 12/3/08

790-792 Warrigal Rd. 2 flats & basement car parking. Against Refusal to Grant. 13/12/08. Awaiting Decision.

13 Nirvana Av. Dem. of dwelling & erection of new dwelling. Against Failure to Determine. 19/12/08. Permit issued by VCAT.

781-805 Dandenong Rd. (Cnr. Tooronga & Dandenong) Gym, shop & cafe. Against Failure to Determine. 1/2/08.

1023 Dandenong Rd. Student Accom. 27 units. Against Failure to Determine. 8/2/08.

615 Waverley Rd. Student Accom. 16 units. Against Failure to Determine.

280 Waverley Rd. 4 storey bldg. with shop, office & dwelling in a Business Zone and Heritage Overlay. Against Failure to Determine.

16 Hilda St. Two 2 storey dwellings & subdivision. Against Refusal to Grant. 14/12/07. Awaiting Decision.

MEG's Postal Address

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