

**BULLETIN****Bulletin No. 83****June 2014****New Residential Zones, Housing & Neighbourhood Character Review (Amendment C160)**

We await advice of the Minister's approval of this major Planning Scheme Amendment and the introduction of the new Planning Zones, together with various other changes to Local Planning Policies, on 30 June. These changes followed the extensive public review which replaced the exhibition process which normally precedes an amendment of the Whitehorse Planning Scheme. It is hoped that the changes will bring some of the clarity and certainty missing from the current Scheme which has allowed so many cavalier claims to circumvent the residential communities preferred outcomes for development around their homes.

Unfortunately the changes also allow applications to be made for certain classes of development in residential areas about which the resident is unable to object.

Plan Melbourne

The Melbourne Plan was finally released on 19 May. Despite what the Government describes as an extensive process of public engagement and amendment of the previous draft (October 2013) following a review of submissions, the new document remains substantially the same apart from a few cosmetic changes and revised population figures. The absence of substantial changes was to be expected given that the Government had already adopted or implemented many of the nominated strategies, some even before releasing the earlier document.

One of the few significant changes is in relation to the current and future population figures which, along with other demographic variations have prompted increases in estimated housing requirements (e.g. across Melbourne additional dwellings needed by 2051 are said to be 1.5 million. Translated to the eastern region of Melbourne, by 2031 up to about 110,000 dwellings will be needed and about 80% are expected to be apartments, townhouses or units). See: <http://www.planmelbourne.vic.gov.au/Plan-Melbourne>

Subscriptions Due. (New - Life Membership & EFT)

We have adopted a couple of member suggestions and for 2014/15 two new membership options are available. Firstly for a one off cost of \$100 you can become a Life Member of BVRG. This means no more annual subscriptions. Donations of course are still welcome. Secondly subscriptions and donations can now be paid online through electronic banking, but remember to include your initial and surname in the payee details field. E.g. J McKenzie.

The enclosed blue renewal form for 2014-2015 has all the details.

We value your continuing membership and would appreciate prompt payment of the \$5 fee which we have managed to retain since incorporation eight years ago.

The reason there has been no increases to date is in part due to your continuing membership and donations. We would like to thank those of you for their generous and continuing support and have again made provision in the renewal form for any such additional donations members may care to contribute.

Blackburn Level Crossing and Railway Station

On 2 May the State Government announced that the Blackburn Road level crossing would be one of the three to be replaced with an under road rail separation by 2017. We mentioned the likely shape of developments in our last Bulletin and now understand that a third track is most unlikely – if that understanding is wrong then those who patronise the local shopping centre can certainly say goodbye to what remains of its special feature, the trees, shrubs and grassed areas in the reserve between the railway and South Parade.

Attention should now be focused on design of the grade separation and the station and some clearer idea given of what is proposed for control of traffic once the boom gates are removed. Assuming additional through traffic will be generated following their removal, we need to know what changes are proposed to stop blockages north of the line and what measures might be introduced to improve vehicular access to the South Parade shopping centre and pedestrians crossing at Blackburn Road.

60 Main Street

Refused by Council last December, the applicant was granted an out of time appeal to contest the decision before VCAT. The proposal remains as originally submitted, reinforcing our view that the applicant has no regard whatsoever for the sensitivity of the area or for the policies designed to respect its special character. At the time of writing we have no indication of a likely Hearing date.

Central Road Parkland

Following community surveys Council produced a Concept Plan for the area in April 2014 and invited further comment during May. The resulting Plan is based on recommendations aimed at improving public access to an area where existing indigenous vegetation will be protected and plantings increased, and where the natural soft edge road boundaries will be preserved.

BVRG is pleased that works have commenced. We have long lobbied for a plan for the land and endorse the consultative approach taken in this instance. The community are the better for the enhancement of this valuable addition to public open space.

One recommendation of BVRG, on the Concept Plan is to adopt a more suitable name for the area. It has already been described in a number of different ways by Council, who have given this Concept Plan the rather prosaic title of 36 Central Road, Blackburn. Given the long community campaign to obtain the land as public open space we believe it should at least include reference to its use as a Park - or just as Parkland.

If you would like to suggest a name for the area or would like to assist with the fortnightly weeding and planting tasks please contact Ann Payne of the Blackburn Lake Advisory Committee on 9878 1152.

104 Main Street

What might be regarded as minor changes to the original proposal to plant a large, bulky building in a totally inappropriate setting had been lodged by the applicant to VCAT. At a preliminary VCAT Hearing on 11 April the parties agreed that there would be little sense in holding a Mediation Hearing later that month. The matter was heard over 4 days from 16th June 2014.

The BVRG and other objectors recorded their concern that the applicant had not forwarded them formal advice of amended plans along with Form B in connection with this latest proposal. In our view this was a blatant failure to follow due process and would have had the effect of disenfranchising those who might otherwise have considered attending and presenting at the Hearing. Ultimately, and somewhat tardily, the notices associated with amendment of the application were mailed to objectors.

BVRG and other objectors did make presentations at the VCAT hearing and at the time of writing we await the determination of the Tribunal.

25 Blackburn Road

While not on as large a scale as the proposed development at 104 Main Street the BVRG has lodged an objection to the construction of a two storey building of six

dwellings on this site. In our view this would not only be an overlarge building crammed on to the site to the detriment of its immediate neighbours, but would set an unwanted precedent for over development in a residential zone adjacent to areas subject to special planning recognition.

Street Landscape Works

Central Blackburn residents will have received notice of the Stage 2 works to upgrade the shopping centre footpaths and install new seating as well as planting new shrubs and trees along South Parade and the 'island' at the intersection of Whitehorse and Railway Roads. The works commenced in April and the intention is that they be completed by end September.

End of Year Function

Please make a NOTE IN YOUR DIARY on Saturday afternoon 22 November.

We have decided that, while an annual dinner is an enjoyable function for those able to attend it has become too costly and inconvenient for many to participate, especially at a time of year when competing with many similar activities. We have therefore planned for a more informal and inexpensive get-together to be held on the afternoon of Saturday 22 November at the Blackburn Lake Visitors Centre. Please look out for more details in our next Bulletin.

Committee News and Membership

Welcome to new members of BVRG. We encourage active involvement and if you have enthusiasm and have a desire to help retain the unique bushland environment that characterises Blackburn, there is always room on the committee.

There are always planning issues arising and it could soon be next door to you so community involvement is most welcome.

Committee Members – Phone 9894 2531 or email bvrg@ymail.com

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