



BLACKBURN VILLAGE RESIDENTS GROUP INC.

Protecting the distinctive features of Blackburn since 1987

BULLETIN

www.bvrg.org

Bulletin 93

September 2017

2017 AGM.

BVRG invites members to attend the 2017 AGM to be held at the Blackburn Lake Visitors Centre, Central Road, Blackburn, Tuesday 24th October at 7:30 PM.

Nominations for Office bearers can be made on the attached form.

End of year Function.

Diary Note: Sunday 12th November, 4:30 - 7:30pm - BVRG end of year members and friends BBQ at The Blackburn Lake visitors Centre. See enclosed flyer.

In March 1987, residents of Blackburn were so appalled at a proposed large scale shopping centre at Blackburn that they formed a residents group to oppose the development. Blackburn Village Residents Group (BVRG) has now clocked up 30 years of standing up for the amenity values of Blackburn. We reflect on the beginnings of the group below.

2017 is also drawing to an end and we remind members of the upcoming AGM and end of year function. Joining the committee provides an opportunity for active community members to influence development outcomes in Blackburn.

The end of year function at Blackburn Lake visitors centre provides an informal setting for members to socialise and reflect on the year past.

As indicated in a number of local planning issues mentioned below we are concerned about development applications that reappear as an even larger development proposal after the conclusion of the first application process.

Our web site development continues with a new History section. Our page under Planning Issues provides many links to help residents research details of planning applications, the planning scheme and mapping resources.

We thank members for their continued support and always welcome new members. The strength of local advocacy is underpinned by the number of financial members.

30 Years On.

At a public meeting on 10th June 1987 attended by over 300, the meeting agreed that the existing shopping centre needs revitalising but unanimously rejects the present proposal as "grossly inappropriate and detrimental to Blackburn's environment". The founding committee consisted of Mrs A Taylor (Sec), Mrs M Harrison and Mr R Grainger.

 **BLACKBURN VILLAGE
RESIDENTS NEWSLETTER**

MAY 1987

REDEVELOPING CENTRAL BLACKBURN

JUST ANOTHER SHOPPING CENTRE?

Plans to construct a new Blackburn Shopping Centre will soon be before the Ministry for Planning and Environment. They include another supermarket, six times as big as Anstees and 65% larger than Woolworths in South Blackburn.

The complex would include some thirty smaller shops and off-street parking for about 500 cars (almost a quarter of that now available at Forest Hill.)

- **Is such a large scheme warranted?**
- **What impact would it have on the village character of Blackburn's shops?**
- **What effects would the increased traffic have on residential streets?**
- **What impact would it have on the livelihood of the present shopkeepers?**

WE BELIEVE THAT BLACKBURN SHOPPING CENTRE NEEDS REVITALIZING. WE BELIEVE THAT THE PRESENT CARPARK IS A SUITABLE SITE.

WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT A NEW SHOPPING CENTRE SHOULD BE OF A SCALE AND DESIGN APPROPRIATE TO BLACKBURN'S VILLAGE CHARACTER.

BUT WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE PRESENT PROPOSAL IS ON AN APPROPRIATE SCALE, NOR IS IT AN ACCEPTABLE DESIGN.

We seek your support in putting these views to Council and to the Ministry, as well as your ideas on the kind of shopping centre you would like to see.

History tells us that the shopping centre was not built. In November 1988 the planning Minister (Tom Roper) announced his decision to refuse the rezoning required for the development proposed by Stock Constructions and recommended the parties and residents discuss alternatives. A revised smaller proposal was adopted by the Nunawading Council in August 1990. The development company however went into receivership and the shopping centre development never proceeded.

Panel gives go ahead to Shopping Centre

Following its adoption by Nunawading Council and subject to approval by the Minister for Planning and Urban Growth, the shopping centre now has the green light. The BVRG welcomes most aspects of the Panel Report. The residents and traders of Blackburn can now look forward to a shopping centre of quite unique design which will in many respects reflect the special qualities of our suburb. Its prospects of long term viability will, the Panel believes, be enhanced by an upgrading of the existing shops.

If you think back to what this Panel Report itself calls the "monolithic and seriously inappropriate" design put forward three years ago, you will realise just how much has been achieved. **See the latest plans, which will be on display at the public meeting.**

Regretfully the impact on Blackburn's amenity by development pressures has continued apace.

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One of the most influential designer/builders in Blackburn was Algernon J. Elmore who by 1916 had established his home and workshop in Blackburn. He was a proponent of the '*Arts and Crafts*' and '*Fresh Air*' movements of early twentieth century. He was one of the pioneers of Victorian Hardwood construction, including weatherboards, flooring and interior joinery in his Blackburn bungalows.

Ron Grainger (founding committee member) recently passed on some paper clippings relating to Elmore's homes. We have added the information to the BVRG web site, under the History tab. Angela Taylor (also founding committee) wrote a comprehensive article for the journal *Historic Environment* in 1986 - '*Craftsman Bungalows in Blackburn*' which is also featured

Also included is a brief description of the early history of Blackburn.

The Bigger Picture

Box Hill Master Plan - C175 Planning Amendment

The City of Whitehorse has proposed an amendment to the planning scheme for the central area of Box Hill. A planning Panel reviewed the amendment in the first week of August 2017.

BVRG's interest in the amendment is that Box Hill for many decades has been an important retail, medical, educational and service centre for residents living at Blackburn some 2.5km east. Over recent years the amenity of Box Hill has declined, the shopping centre and market are now difficult to access because of traffic and parking congestion, the railway station and bus terminus are poorly designed and moving around the centre on foot is less than inspiring. Negotiating with a mobility device, pram or bicycle is a challenge.

Our primary concern is the future amenity at street level - the human or pedestrian scale referred to in the amendment that, on our analysis was not adequately addressed in the C175 amendment.

BVRG presented its submission raising inadequate setbacks, excessive site coverage, pedestrian amenity, inadequate sustainability provisions and the need for better active transport connectivity – walking, cycling and accessibility. The Panel report is due by mid October 2017.

State Reforms to Residential Zones.

In late March 2017 the state government introduced reforms to residential zones across Victoria. The reforms change allowable heights, number of dwellings permitted and garden area provisions for new dwellings. Areas without SLO protection could be impacted, particularly residential growth zones (RGZ). We have summarised the changes and uploaded the document onto our web site. The linked document can be found under News or <https://bvrg.org/news/>

Local Planning Issues.

21 Laurel Grove, Blackburn – The proposal was to replace a single dwelling on this site with 2 large dwellings with the resulting loss of many significant trees. Many residents and BVRG objected. Council rejected the application and the applicant appealed to VCAT with the case to be heard in August 2017. The hearing however was cancelled when the developer withdrew the application. Residents anticipate another application will follow.

Nearby residents concerned with the gradual erosion of SLO values through recent planning approvals have formed an action group (Blackburn Residents Action Group - BRAG) to take their case to VCAT and continue to watch.

22-24 Blackburn Road, Blackburn (the old Caltex site) - After many years of groundwater contamination remediation, clearance from EPA allowed a development application for 3 levels with retail at ground level and upper apartments to be approved by Council in 2015. In the 2 years since 'off the plan' apartments have been advertised and the site sold to another developer. The new owner now seeks to amend the planning application to 4 levels (20 to 31 apartments in the upper 3 levels), the ground level retail and below ground parking. Dispensation is being sought for a number of conditions including setbacks, height and parking allocation not in accord with the planning scheme. BVRG has objected and Council have scheduled a forum for 12th October where objectors and the applicant meet to raise and discuss issues.

9 Frankcom Street, BLACKBURN - A planning application for an apartment development more suitable to the Box Hill major activity centre has been referred to VCAT with a compulsory conference on 28th November and a 3 day hearing commencing 29 January 2018.

The proposed construction consists of a residential apartment building comprising 43 dwellings in 5 storeys plus a two level basement car park. Part of the site is Melbourne Water floodway and a significant number of trees are also slated for removal. The site is at the end of a short dead end street. The development if approved will add a considerable amount of traffic and parking issues to an already congested street. The proposal is a response to an earlier less dense development rejected by Council.

20 Downing Street – Council is still considering an application for a four storey, 19 unit residential apartment building on a single residential site. The area is zoned residential growth zone (RGZ) however the site has significant trees and backs on to Melbourne Water retarding basin. BVRG has joined with residents to object to the excesses of the application. A Forum was held on 27th June.

199 Canterbury Road, Blackburn – In 2015 VCAT rejected a proposed large child care centre on this site. The site was subsequently sold and the new owner lodged a planning application early 2017 to build a slightly modified child care centre on the site. The site is in an SLO area and a large number of objections were lodged. Residents' concerns remain unchanged from the 2015 application. The development will impact on many trees on the site. The site backs onto the Masons Road retarding Basin. The applicant has been under discussions with Council since April 2017 and a revised plan will shortly be advertised for community comment.

Shared Use Path Blackburn to Laburnum. - On 24th August 2017, after more than 2 years of consideration, VicRoads announced its revised plans. Residents were given 1 week to comment before VicRoads took their proposal to Council. There has been no word on the outcome.

The proposal raised a number of safety concerns for the community including blending bicycles with traffic in Laburnum Street, unexplained management of traffic/bicycle conflicts at the Laburnum underpass and on the footpath in front of shops in Main Street. Loss of open space in Laburnum Park is still proposed though the Elmore Walk option has been removed from consideration.

Do you have a view on accessibility of Blackburn Station now that the works are complete? A Melbourne University Architecture student is gathering data for a Masters' thesis on transportation accessibility. To find out more go to: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MelStation>

Do you have a planning issue in your area?

Encourage neighbours to join BVRG to ensure that the community retains its voice.

Committee Members

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