



BLACKBURN VILLAGE RESIDENTS GROUP

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BULLETIN No 25

JULY 1997

NEW PLANNING SCHEME ON EXHIBITION

The proposed Scheme is now on display in the Blackburn Library. You should take the opportunity to study it and make your submission to Council before the closing date of 17 September.

In a special supplement we comment on the Scheme and on the importance of recording your personal views. We also invite you to attend the Planning Scheme Workshop on Saturday 9 August.

CAN YOU LIVE WITH THIS NEW SCHEME ?

Will it affect your amenity? How should you respond ?

The Workshop will provide an ideal opportunity to learn more about the Scheme and by exchanging views with others, help you decide how it might affect you - and what you should do about it.

Arranged jointly with the Blackburn Tree Preservation Society it will be held from 1.30 pm. to 4.30 pm. at the Victorian Field Naturalists Hall, 1 Gardenia Street on **Saturday 9 August 1997**. No registration or admission fee but a small donation welcomed.

BVRG SURVEY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As part of our planning reform exercise a resident survey was conducted over part of central Blackburn in order to elicit resident attitudes to local character. Some 40 % of households responded - a significant percentage in social research terms. Well over 80% of respondents saw local character as very important and 98% agreed that there should be controls on new development if there was to be any chance of retaining those features which lend to local character. Our special thanks to members who assisted.

The results of the survey were submitted to Council in May, together with recommendations :-

- i) that the new Planning Scheme include specific controls on development within the surveyed area, and
- ii) that complementary measures aimed at preserving and enhancing distinctive heritage characteristics be applied throughout central Blackburn.

NEW MEMBERS AND OLD

We extend a warm welcome to new members who have joined us this year, some as a result of the recent survey. It is gratifying to know that, despite increasing pressures, there are a number of Blackburn people who retain a common interest in their local environment and the future of their neighbourhood. Our thanks to both long term and new members who go out of their way to provide support and assistance.

In thanking new members for their financial contribution we remind others that it is now time to do likewise (unless you are one of those who have already made your 1997/8 payment). Please complete, detach and return the reply slip at the end of this Bulletin.

SINGLE DWELLING DEVELOPMENTS - VIC CODE 1

The Minister has now released the report of the Advisory Committee into Vic Code 1 (Single Dwellings/Subdivisions). Their recommendations include proposals for rewriting the Code along the lines of - or possibly in combination with - The Good Design Guide. This, among other things, would emphasise the need for all new development to be compatible with the neighbouring environment. They also recommend that a permit be required for single dwelling development on lots up to 450m² (presently 300m²).

These and other recommendations go some way to acknowledging the concerns about development in established suburbs such as ours, especially on infill blocks, which were made in the BVRG submission. The Minister has invited further advice and comment before making a formal response.

THE END OF THE BEGINNING OR BEGINNING OF THE END ?

By Friday, 21 November, how close will Council be to having the new Planning scheme ready for adoption ? This is anybody's guess. But we can give you a progress report by then, hopefully at our End of Year Dinner which is tentatively booked for that evening. Please make a diary note now!

BLACKBURN VILLAGE RESIDENTS GROUP

To: Hon. Treasurer, BVRG, 3 Railway Road, Blackburn 3130

I/we attach my/our 1997/98 contribution to the BVRG.

Name/s.....Address.....

.....Postcode.....Phone(H).....(Bus).....

Please attach cheque (single or family \$10/ concession \$5) made payable to BVRG, and cross "Not Negotiable"

WHITEHORSE PLANNING SCHEME 1997

You should have received a newsletter from Council which outlines the proposed Scheme and invites your comments. This describes the proposed changes as largely administrative and unlikely to affect the majority of properties. In a sense this is a valid assessment. **But it does not point out that the changes also have the potential to adversely affect you.**

If you are later faced with some intrusive development which has been validated and encouraged by this new Scheme you might well regret not having done something about it earlier. **We therefore cannot stress enough how important it is for you register your personal views on any matters which you see as affecting your amenity, the future shape of Blackburn or community wellbeing.**

Once approved by the Minister no substantive change is likely for a further three years - so have your say now !

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO ?

Take some time to study the documents on exhibition at Whitehorse Civic Centre or the copy in Blackburn Library and, if possible, attend the Workshop on **Saturday 9 August**.

WHAT'S ON DISPLAY ?

Apart from the *State Planning Policy* and *Provisions* common to all planning schemes those documents with specific *Local* content are :-

- The ***Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS)*** : The overarching document which provides the rationale for the Scheme. It is an important document which sets out land use directions for the next five to ten years. It should be recognised that it covers general strategic policy and not specific provisions. (Ask for a free copy).
- The ***Zones and Overlays*** : These are the documents which contain specific and legally binding conditions. The coloured Maps show those areas (identified by colour and code) incorporated in each *Zone*.

The codes shown on the black and white *Overlay* maps identify those Schedules to standard *Overlays* which set out the particular conditions applying to an area.

- ***Incorporated Documents*** : Those various State and Local Codes, Guidelines etc. included on the *List of Incorporated Documents* are proposed as a statutory part of the Scheme. While not bound together with the above documents they should be available for inspection. They include several recently adopted Local Guidelines.

see over =>

HOW SHOULD YOU RESPOND ?

We believe that there are good reasons why some of Council's proposals require a clear indication of your support or opposition. We suggest just a few of these:-

- ***The Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS)***

While Council should be **commended** for recognising the value of local character by encouraging more appropriate medium density housing , less intrusive non-residential use and protection of areas of special environmental or heritage significance (4.2 & 4.3) it should be **censured** for simultaneously encouraging areas of high density development (4.4).

It is indicated (4.7) that Council recognises the essential difference between neighbourhood and regional centres and will curb needless expansion of the Blackburn retail area while endeavouring to improve its appeal and accessibility. You should make it clear to Council that you **support** revitalisation but **not** redevelopment or expansion inappropriate to the Blackburn' environment.

- ***The Zones and Overlays***

It is proposed that in *Special Residential Zone 5* substantially the same conditions will apply in the form of two Overlays, Design and Development (DDO1) and Vegetation Protection (VPO1). While you should satisfy yourselves about these changes it is also important that you inform Council of your continued **support** for the objectives of the Special Zone.

- ***Incorporated Documents***

One of the *Local Guidelines* recently adopted is for *Medium Density Housing*: Although Guidelines remain open to subjective interpretation Council should be **commended** for this attempt to curb the worst features of medium density development, especially on infill sites. However, if Council is serious about enhancing residential character (MSS 4.2) they should be **encouraged** to seek the preferred 1:400m² as a Local Variation to the Good Design Guide. Ministerial approval is unlikely without evidence of strong community support.

Your comments on these or other issues need only be brief, provided they clearly convey your views and preferably includes cross references to documents or maps. Keep a record of your submission (we would appreciate a copy) and ensure that you lodge your *Planning Scheme Comments* with Whitehorse City Council (Locked Bag 2, Eastern Mail Centre, Nunawading 3131) no later than **17 September 1997**.