

April 2012

WERA Newsletter

West of Elgar Residents' Association Inc.

Elizabeth Meredith

It is with great regret but very understandable, that Elizabeth has retired from front line committee work. She is a foundation member of WERA and served the committee over 15 years. Her willingness to listen to local residents and act on their needs when developments were likely to significantly impact upon their living has been non-stop. Given that many residents are over-whelmed by the broad policy areas considered in planning matters her encouragement and direct support is without precedent in Surrey Hills.

Her contacts; local knowledge and overall contribution have been invaluable to the on-going work of WERA. Whether it be a Council meeting; public gathering; VCAT submission or lobbying a local MP it was always observed that Elizabeth is courteous and reasoned in making her points for the well being of residents.

It was very befitting that on Australia Day this year Whitehorse Council recognised her contribution with a community service award. Our congratulations and thanks to Elizabeth whom we know will continue to stay in touch with WERA.

Review of Victoria's Planning System

We still await an announcement from the Minister for Planning on what recommendations have been made by Advisory Committee reviewing the planning system and specifically what amendments the Government will be making to the Planning and Environment Act 1987 and any subsequent changes to the State policy provisions in local government planning schemes.

Boisdale St, Surrey Hills

The residents of Boisdale Street and neighbouring area were at VCAT for 3 days in December and for a further 2 days in March. We anticipate that the VCAT decision will be announced shortly on the proposal for 32 dwellings comprised of a three 3-storey building blocks overlooking the park and three-2 storey buildings across the front of the site.

The developer, a Chinese consortium called Ever Bright, has already advertised the development in Kuala Lumpur and been offered access to the Australian Government first home owners grant. WERA supports the local resident concerns about this proposal as its design is poor, and its mass, height and bulk are excessive for a Natural Change Area of Whitehorse. It also fails to support the prevailing neighbourhood character of the area. In addition WERA identified energy efficiency and sustainability problems with 18 of the 32 proposed units, as the rooms and open space of these units faced south and lacked access to direct sunlight. While the average dwelling size in this area of Surrey Hills is 500 m², the average for these units is only 85 m², some having only 55 m² – little bigger than a double garage.

17-19 Renown Street, Burwood

The residents of this short street are under siege. Whilst dealing with an application for 9 units at nos. 17-19, an application for 5 units at No. 11 has been lodged.

The first application has been before VCAT, where the tribunal member issued an interim order allowing the applicant to return with a modified plan for consideration. Some of the proposed modifications appeared to favour the objectors. At the time of writing, the outcome of this hearing is not finalised. WERA lodged an objection to the proposal for No.11, but, to date has heard nothing.

764 Canterbury Road, Surrey Hills

This is an Edwardian home that was used for some years as a nursing home, but had been unused for some time. When local WERA members approached us in September 2010, it had become dilapidated. Our members were concerned that there was an application for a lease to use the property for crisis accommodation for dependent people. WERA lodged an objection to the lease on the basis of the car waiver, and on the current state of the building being insufficient to meet health and safety standards. We were also concerned that the kitchen, bathroom and leisure areas were inadequate.

At that time Council approved the application on the casting vote of the mayor; but stringent conditions were applied. Some neighbours were unhappy with this outcome and took the matter to VCAT. Although they were not able to reverse the decision, they were able to gain some advantages, including the reduction in the number of permitted residents.

At the time of writing, some 18 months later, there have been some minimal improvements at the property, but it appears to be vacant.

4 Albany Crescent Surrey Hills

This early 1900s home of the Rubira family was sold recently. It has a heritage overlay and the new owner has put in an application for modifications to the exterior areas. These include a pool, tennis court, extended car parking and a gym. WERA, together with members of local history associations, has expressed its concern at the extent of the proposed alterations and their effect on the heritage value and aspect of the home and its surrounds.

President Geoff White, 9898 8205; Secretary Judy Sharples, 9890 8038.

Membership Renewal

Please note that ***your annual membership renewal*** notice is attached to this newsletter. Your continued membership and support is most appreciated and critical to our on-going operation. *Enquiries: June Kavanagh 9836 5970*

WEST OF ELGAR RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION, INC. A0031410U

RENEWAL OF SUBSCRIPTION TO 31st March, 2013

Per Household \$10.00

Pensioner Health Card Holders \$5.00

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West of Elgar Residents' Association Inc.

W E R A

A.N.:A0031410U

Notice of Annual General Meeting

All members are invited to attend the AGM

Date: Wednesday 23 May 2012

Time: 7.30pm

Place: 19 St Johns Avenue, Mont Albert
