

West of Elgar Residents' Association Inc.

W E R A A.N.:A0031410U

President's report

May 2014

This is my 7th annual report; a report on what has been the busiest of those years.

Over the past 12 months the WERA committee has been pre-occupied with Whitehorse Council's Housing Study and Neighbourhood Character review plus the Neighbourhood Activity Centre Urban Design Guidelines which culminated on 28 April 2014 with Council finalizing new residential planning zones. We await the Minister for Planning decision to amend the Planning Scheme.

The key changes to residential zones West of Elgar Road are summarized in the attached tables. One small bush suburban NRZ1 zone at the north-west tip of Mont Albert North has significantly decreased site coverage; presently 60%, proposed to be 40%; and increased site permeability – presently 20%, proposed 40%. WERA through its submissions pushed for similar improvements in protection of the traditional garden suburban NRZ (Neighbourhood Residential Zone) and GRZ (General Residential Zones) areas located west of Elgar.

We acknowledge that Council has taken some decisions that are positive in protecting the highly valued garden setting. Site coverage; presently 60%, proposed to be 50%; and site permeability – presently 20%, proposed 30%. Set back distances and private open space requirements are unchanged from the present ResCode standards. However two (2) canopy trees have been specified and applicants for sub-division have to include detail of any trees removed in the previous 3 years (presently only 1 year).

It is regarded as unlikely that either Department officers recommend or the Minister will require changes before these standards are implemented as of 1 July 2014. However thereafter WERA considers that the threats to consistency in application of these standards will come from the following:

- 1) Single dwelling applications not requiring a planning permit and private building surveyors *stretching* standards contrary to building permit conditions.
- 2) Potential for more than 2 dwellings per lot in NRZ if title is separated after an initial minimal sub-division; i.e. 1000 m² split for a minimum lot of 320m² but the larger residual land being split again in a subsequent year.
- 3) Lots within walkability distances of 800m train; 600m tram & 400m bus being subject to applications for more compact siting by aggressive developers.
- 4) Sloping sites; i.e. 2.5 degrees over distance of 8 metres and permits a 1 metre addition to building height; 9m becomes 10m which tempts 3-storey development.

WERA is also disappointed that on the north side Riversdale Road GRZ with 9m discretionary height and sloping sites could progressively obscure views to and from Wattle Park.

Council conducted 3 consultations for the Housing Study and Neighbourhood Character review over almost 18 months and WERA also participated on an external reference group. In reflecting on the process the significant limitations of the consultations were:

- 1) Council did not send a letter to every ratepayer about the review but relied on advertising and website.
- 2) The External Reference Group discussion was limited to discussion of the intended documents rather than broader discussion about what residents wanted in the new planning arrangements or information about the data and methodology on which the planning consultancy relied for its draft proposals.
- 3) Critically important detailed Schedule standards released Feb 2014 Phase 3 consultation (*4 weeks*) should have been released Sept 2013 for Phase 2 consultation (*6 weeks*).
- 4) Councillors were not free to express their views other than at Council meetings.

WERA is uncertain as to the extent of future development as the Whitehorse Housing Strategy document has not quantified the additional housing capacity created by the changes in each zone and neighbourhood activity centre. The Whitehorse Housing Strategy has a requirement for an additional 8000 dwellings by 2031 yet there are over 500 residences planned on the former St Leo's School, Canterbury Rd; Box Hill; over 400 apartments planned for the 34 storey Station St; Box Hill and the former brickworks site in Burwood which is zoned for RGZ with significant residential capacity.

The Neighbourhood Activity Centres design guidelines will permit 4-storey developments. This cannot be supported for centres of 3 or 4 shops surrounded by detached houses and not on a public transport route.

Over the past year WERA made a submission to the State Government on Review of Local Government and await the final report. We also attended the Ministers briefing on Plan Melbourne which sets strategy for the way Melbourne's population of 4.3 million now can grow to 7.7 million by 2051 and be sustainable!

WERA is supporting Everton Grove, Surrey Hills neighbours and the Council in opposing 4 townhouses (each 2-storey) and a 26 apartment 3-storey block at a VCAT hearing starting 16 July 2014. Prior to the current application objectors were successful at VCAT that a hearing proceeding with 68 changes to plans was refused. Council supported this initiative by the objectors at VCAT.

Neighbourhood character; existing and proposed, and also the provisions of the new neighbourhood zones in respect to apartment blocks will be tested in the Everton hearing. There is the possibility of other hearings arising later this year in regard to proposed apartments in Park Road; Surrey Hills (3-storey 14 apartments) and Louise Avenue; Mont Albert 2-storey 10 apartments) where applicant appeal has just been notified.

Thank you to members for renewing subscriptions and your donations to restore reserves.

Thank you committee and members assisting with letter box drops during consultation periods for the new zones.



Whitehorse Planning Zones: SCHEDULE SUMMARY @ April 2014

NRZ5 includes Surrey Hills; Mont Albert and part Mont Albert North.

GRZ1 is Burwood south of Wattle Park

GRZ4 all northern part of Mont Albert North and extends on the southeast (Elgar Rd) side to the residential areas around the TAFE

ResCode Standards “A” relate to single dwelling on a site; Standards “B” relate to two or more dwellings on a site

Provisions	unit	Present Planning Scheme	New NRZ 5	New GRZ1 & GRZ 4
Lot size minimum	m^2	300	320	320
Number of dwellings on lot	#	2 or more	2	2 or more
Building height	m	Standard A4 (9 m) B7 (9 m)	9m maximum	9m discretionary
Site coverage	%	Standard A5 (60%) B8 (60%)	50	50
Site permeability	%	Standard A6 (20%) B9 (20%)	30	30
Front setback	m	Standard A3 and B6 9m or average of adjoining sites	9m <i>or average of adjoining sites</i>	9m <i>or average of adjoining sites</i>
Side set-backs	m	Standard A10 and B17	1m + 1m	1m + 1m
Rear Set	m	Standard A10 and B17	1m + 1m	1m + 1m
Wall on boundary	?	Standard A11	Standard A11 <i>Only for carport or garage</i>	Standard A11
Gap between dwellings on site	m		<i>decision guideline planting</i>	<i>decision guideline planting</i>
Front fence height maximum	m	Standard A20 and B32	1.2 <i>or 1.8m & 20% transparency</i>	1.2
Canopy Trees	#	Standard A8	2 (8m height)	2 (8m height)
Private open space	m^2	Standard A17 & B28 <i>40 in total (25 min dimension 3m)</i>	35 (<i>min. dimension 5m</i>)	35 (<i>min. dimension 5m</i>)

BS1 includes all northwest part of Mont Albert North; i.e. NW of Belmore Road.

WHPS SCHEDULE 2 VEGETATION PROTECTION OVERLAY (planning scheme map as VPO2)
SIGNIFICANT EXOTIC, NATIVE AND INDIGENOUS TREES – MONT ALBERT NORTH (NORTH OF BELMORE ROAD)

ResCode Standards “A” relate to single dwelling on a site; Standards “B” relate to two or more dwellings on a site

Provision	unit	Present Planning Scheme	New NRZ1
Lot size minimum	<i>m²</i>	300	500
Building height	<i>m</i>	Standard A4 (9 m) B7 (9 m)	8 mandatory heights
Site coverage	%	Standard A5 (60%) B8 (60%)	40
Site permeability	%	Standard A6 (20%) B9 (20%)	40
Front setback	<i>m</i>	Standard A3 and B6 9m or average of adjoining sites	9m <i>or average of adjoining sites</i>
Side set-backs	<i>m</i>	Standard A10 and B17	1m + 1m
Rear Set	<i>m</i>	Standard A10 and B17	1m + 1m
Wall on boundary	?	Standard A11	NO
Front fence height maximum	<i>m</i>	Standard A20 and B32	1.0
Canopy Trees	#	Standard A8	2 (12m height)
Private open space		Standard A17 and B28	35 (min. dimension 5m)