



## BLACKBURN VILLAGE RESIDENTS GROUP

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### BLACKBURN VILLAGE RESIDENTS NEWSLETTER No. 3

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THE BLACKBURN SHOPPING CENTRE PROPOSAL IS ON EXHIBITION  
IN THE BLACKBURN LIBRARY

# NOW

IS THE TIME TO STUDY IT AND TELL THE MINISTER, MR KENNAN

# WHAT YOU THINK

Some changes have been made to earlier plans, particularly by reducing the height and varying the finish of the facades . . . BUT THE MAIN CONCEPT HAS NOT CHANGED

It is still —

- **DOMINATING** the landscape of Blackburn Village despite the lowering of walls: a concrete enclosure — in the latest, but not necessarily final version, with watch towers. It still pens in an enormous amount of land, much of it now an open community facility. Go to the southern boundary of No. 18 Gardenia Street and see for yourself how much land it will occupy.
- **IGNORING** residents' arguments that the shopping centre can be revitalised and made successful by enhancing rather than by changing the village character of Blackburn.
- **HOPING** that Metrail and the Road Traffic Authority will solve the traffic problems by turning old-established business in the vicinity of the rail crossing into roadway. Nunawading Council opposes the Metrail stabling yards partly on the grounds of "traffic chaos". Why is it not worried about the traffic problems generated by this large shopping centre?
- **TREATING** nearby residents with contempt: the supermarket loading bay, the waste disposal unit and the roof carpark are directly outside the windows of adjoining houses in Main Street.
- **MISLEADING** local shopkeepers at the western end of South Parade and shoppers who approach from Main Street into the belief that efforts to integrate are adequate. There is no public above-ground parking off Main Street for these shops.

In its 'Community Update' pamphlet, Nunawading Council gives the impression that revitalisation is assured and that "as a result" of resident groups' submissions, Stock Constructions has modified its proposal to "accommodate (their) comments". There is no "revitalisation". Height, and changes in the fabric are the only major variations. This Group's principal objections have been ignored or sidestepped. The overall size remains the same; the building is enclosed; the basic building material is concrete.

### BLACKBURN — A LOW OPPORTUNITY BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

This is one expert's assessment of the commercial viability of the proposal:

DO NOT ASSUME THAT DEVELOPERS ARE ALWAYS EXPERT AND EXPERIENCED ENOUGH TO GET THEIR SUMS RIGHT. THE WARRINGAL SHOPPING CENTRE IN HEIDELBERG, OPENED ONLY THIS YEAR, IS THE LATEST IN A DISMAL LIST OF SHOPPING CENTRES PUT IN THE HANDS OF RECEIVERS.

Do the figures in the consultant's report add up to a successful shopping centre of the kind proposed? Or do they suggest something altogether different? Something along the lines we are advocating.

If you like 'satirical humour', read the cautionary tale on what can go wrong with a shopping development in the property section of 'The Age' 28 October 1987, page 36: 'Doomstown denizens paint a dark picture'. A few extracts appear below.

*The project turned out to be a lemon. It was badly designed, badly built, and in the end badly leased. It became a stomping ground for yobs and ignored not only the sacred Aboriginal site in the car park but the flight path of the near-extinct lower crested shrikes. The gutters of the shopping centre's atrium were soon filled with dead white birds . . .*

*. . . No one took responsibility for the mess. The councillor blamed the developer, the developer blamed the young chap who produced the second, more optimistic feasibility study. The union official blamed the project manager and the project manager blamed the architect. The property manager said he wasn't consulted early enough . . . Mr McCash said the conservationists who wanted to save the shrikes spoke a lot of "dribble" and proceeded with an atrium despite his promise at the appeal hearing that the shopping centre design would take the birds' flight path into account.*

### What improvements in facilities will there be?

Think carefully about the kind of shopping facilities you would like and what you will get under this proposal. Apart from a large supermarket you are not likely to get very much.

Even at the size proposed, you will not get the opportunity for exciting comparison shopping which allows you to pick and choose among the goods and prices offered by competing traders. You will still have to go to the large centres for this kind of shopping. What you are likely to get will be very ordinary shops which will open up and close down with dreary inevitability as they find their uncompetitive prices, high rents and high charges an impossible combination. You see this happening all the time even in a centre the size of Forest Hill. In Blackburn it can only be worse.

Foodstuffs apart, you are unlikely to find that what are called 'specialty shops' on the plans will offer anything very 'special' at all. You are unlikely to find them significantly widening your choice. Maybe a downmarket shoe shop, a chain toy shop, a small sportsgoods shop, and so on. You will probably NOT get a hardware shop in this complex.

**BVRG believes the Blackburn Catchment Area is not big enough to support intensive comparison shopping.**

The developer seems to be trying to create a demand for shops that is not there. Ultimately, we as shoppers and residents will have to pay in increased costs and poor quality traders. The amenity of the area will suffer.

**This is a major point you can make when you write to the Ministry.**

Why trade off community land to a private developer? Why reduce the amenity of Blackburn when it will bring no clear benefit?

\* \* \*

Blackburn can only support a small "convenience" shopping centre — enough for the everyday needs of the local residents. It cannot support a centre of the size proposed.

**The BVRG favours a concept which:**

- **LIMITS** the overall size to acceptable dimensions
- **ABOLISHES** the underground car-park, providing sufficient ground-level parking space in a garden setting
- **RENDERS UNNECESSARY** long, high walls and roofed-in structures, which are expensive to build and maintain
- **PROVIDES** all the extra retail space (including a comprehensive supermarket) that is needed for neighbourhood convenience shopping
- **ENHANCES** the character of Blackburn while revitalising its commercial prospects.

**WHY PERSIST WITH A LARGE SHOPPING CENTRE OUT OF CHARACTER WITH ITS SURROUNDINGS AND WHICH SHOWS EVERY PROSPECT OF FAILING, WHEN ONE CAN BUILD A SMALLER, MODESTLY SUCCESSFUL ONE THAT ENHANCES OUR ENVIRONMENT?**

**How to read the plans and documents on exhibition**

Take care when you study the plans and drawings on exhibition. Developers and architects have many ways of presenting visual images whose correspondence with what appears on the ground is quite tenuous. If you are unaware of these things and have ever built a house or an extension, you will have experienced some of the differences between the plans or perspective drawings on paper and the reality. **More importantly, the plans on exhibition DO NOT commit the developer to building a centre illustrated by the plans.**

Look at a copy of the proposed Amendment No. 500 (a printed sheet set out in three columns) which you will find at the exhibition. **IT MAKES NO MENTION OF PLANS OR DESIGNS** — only the overall land area the building will occupy, leasable floor area, car parking spaces, and streets and lanes to be closed.

For the purposes of the rezoning application the plans exhibited only illustrate what **MIGHT** be built on the site. The developer is quite free to make any changes he likes to the proposal, and submit these to Council.

**UNDER CLAUSE 22AA YOU WILL NOT GET A CHANCE TO EXPRESS YOUR VIEWS ON THE FINAL PLANS THEMSELVES IN THE USUAL WAY. ONLY COUNCIL WILL HAVE THIS RIGHT. THE REZONING APPLICATION GIVES YOU YOUR ONLY OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS YOUR VIEWS ON THE PROPOSAL.**

The only moderately safe assumptions you can make about the building itself concern the floor plan, including the underground carpark. You can also probably assume, as we have, that the building will be an enclosed concrete one (perhaps with some kind of rendering). You cannot assume slate roofs — the plans do not even make it clear where these are. Nor is the roofline clear in the controversial area where the Main Street and South Parade facades meet.

**THEREFORE YOU SHOULD TAKE THE ELEVATIONS (WHICH ARE VERY VAGUE IN THESE RESPECTS) AND THE PERSPECTIVE DRAWINGS WITH A LARGE GRAIN OF SALT. CONCENTRATE ON THE QUESTIONS OF PRINCIPLE. DO YOU WANT A SHOPPING CENTRE OF THIS SCALE?**

The plans are now on exhibition at:

The Ground Floor Information Centre, 477 Collins Street, Melbourne.  
City of Nunawading Municipal Offices, Whitehorse Road, Nunawading.  
Blackburn Branch Library.

**It is vital that you register your views on the proposal.**

**Make your submission in writing and lodge it (in duplicate) with the Secretary for Planning and Environment, Box 2240T, Melbourne 3001 before 22 December.**

**PUBLIC MEETING**

The Blackburn Village Residents Group will hold a public meeting at:

**8 p.m. on Wednesday 18th November, 1987 at  
"The Pines", Senior Citizens' Centre, Central Road, Blackburn.**

If you are concerned by the proposal, this is your opportunity to express that concern.

If you cannot attend, but wish to record your support  
telephone Mrs. A. Taylor 877 4074, Mrs. M. Harrison 877 4351, or Mr. R. Grainger 877 3348  
or write to us c/o 64 Laburnum Street, Blackburn 3130.