



BLACKBURN VILLAGE RESIDENTS GROUP

25 Main Street, Blackburn 3130

R. Grainger
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PANEL DECISION ON BLACKBURN OFFICE ZONE

The Panel has rejected the office zone (Amendment L26) in the form proposed by Council.

Serious concerns about the proposal--lack of economic justification, loss of amenity (including disruption of local retail and community facilities), need for retaining residential land--led the BVRG to oppose it and urge that alternatives be considered. The Panel evidently shared many of our concerns. In particular, it noted a lack of "absolute need". It observed that protracted office development on the scale proposed would be out of balance with the Blackburn community. And it held that most of the area should remain residential, with improved amenity and higher density.

However, the Panel did not recommend abandoning the amendment. Instead, *"taking into account the council's desire to fortify its rate base"* (our emphasis), it recommended office development confined to Whitehorse Road and the area between Chapel and Albert Streets, with buildings up to 4 storeys along the former and up to 3 storeys in the latter. It also recommended an extra 1000 square metres and a 3rd storey for the Blue Moon site; a landscape/streetscape strategy; and a traffic management strategy including a new shared carpark. (The BVRG recommended off-street carparking in the area over a year ago.)

We welcome the general thrust of the Panel's conclusions. They indicate that future redevelopment proposals must provide clear evidence of nett community benefit.

We have reservations about some recommendations. But piecemeal development previously allowed by Council has prevented an ideal solution for the area's problems; and before the Panel report was issued, we said we would accept it because we hold vital the principle of referring such matters to independent assessment, free from local political pressures. We will re-enter the fray if Council proposes substantial variances.

Council favours adoption of the Blue Moon site proposal. Council officers are examining the recommendations for the office zone and are expected to report in September. We will examine Council's decision with interest.

Copies of the BVRG submission on the office zone are available for \$10--contact the Secretary, Ron Grainger.

NEW PLANS FOR SOUTH PARADE RETAIL AREA

Since houses were removed from Gardenia Street 5 years ago, the vacant land has been a glaring example of planning blight and of the profligate development projects of the 80s--and an indictment of a previous Council administration. Now local developer Trevor Hoyle is considering building houses on part of the land, leaving the rest for possible retail development of human scale.

We see no objection in principle to this idea. We believe that increased residency is crucial both socially and economically. We remain committed to seeing that retail development fits with the community and helps to revitalize existing shops. Mr. Hoyle apparently shares our view that grandiose retail projects in the area are neither viable nor desirable. We await the next step.

YOUR ROLE IN BLACKBURN'S FUTURE--A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The past 5 years' hard struggles have persuaded us that the BVRG needs to continue if residents are to have any real voice in local planning.

Too often, Council has restricted options for discussion and has substituted "information sessions" for genuine community consultation. Now, new proposals to give more unilateral planning power to councils (by amending the Planning and Environment Act) increase the need for vigilance. Individual voices are not enough. Group action is necessary.

But the BVRG cannot operate in a vacuum. It needs to be able to demonstrate the nature and extent of community concerns. It needs continuing input. And it needs concrete support.

Please take two minutes NOW to do the attached questionnaire.

Sincerely, Ray Nichols

BVRG SUPPORTERS' SURVEY
August 1992

NAME(S):

ADDRESS:

TELEPHONE: (H) (W)

(1) I/we attach a contribution of \$ _____
(suggested \$10 family, \$5 pensioner or student; please help as much as you can)

(2) I/we can assist if required with the following skills/resources:

(3) I/we are prepared to nominate for service on committees:
YES/NO

(4) I/we are interested in attending a general meeting of the group: YES/NO

(5) Major issues of concern:

(6) Other comments, suggestions:

PLEASE POST OR DELIVER TO ONE OF:

--M Anderson, 3 Railway Road, Blackburn 3130

--N. Barter, 5 Walsham Road, Blackburn 3130

--R. Nichols, 41 Main Street, Blackburn 3130

A SECOND COPY OF THIS SURVEY IS ATTACHED, FOR YOU TO HAND ON TO SOMEONE ELSE WHO MAY BE INTERESTED IN SUPPORTING THE GROUP.