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UPDATE: Out of the Bag - Developer's Option 1 for Port Phillip Woollen Mill Site is to yield 816 Dwellings 2000 people

Friday, 19 October 2012

Back in 2009, an outrageous proposal came to Hobsons Bay Council for 412 dwellings in high rise high density towers up to 50 meters high - the proposal was on land in the Government Survey Heritage area of Williamstown which had strict heritage controls and a 3 storey limit. There followed extensive public consultation in the Minister's Port Phillip Woollen Mill Advisory Committee which made an important note about the safety of the site

Zoning of the land

The Committee notes that while many submissions have opposed the rezoning of the land to Residential 1 (preferring a Mixed Use Zone), it is clear that its Terms of Reference specify that this is not part of its tasks. However, the findings of the Committee on the issues of risk, safety and interface as discussed in this report logically raise doubts as to the zoning of the land.

The Committee notes that one of the most defining elements in its consideration is the WorkSafe Advisory Note which was only issued in September 2010, about five months after the decision to rezone the land to residential. Armed with that advice, and mindful of its other

recommendations, it seems to the Committee that an alternative outcome might have been for a 'skin' of lower intensity commercial premises facing onto Kanowna Street and possibly parts of Nelson Place adjacent to the Titanic theatre restaurant. These premises could include some small retail, community, commercial or health related facilities.

The Committee appreciates that these observations are outside its Terms of Reference but it brings them to the attention of the Minister for Planning in light of the numerous submissions on this issue and on the change in circumstances since the land was rezoned.

Evolve Development owned by Ron Walker and Ashley Williams seems to have totally ignored the context of this site with heritage, safety and infrastructure constraints which should all be taken into account. They have not modified and delimited their plans to reflect these important constraints, but have now nearly doubled the number of dwellings and the number of people who will reside here.

The developer has refused to participate in a Master Plan process with Hobsons Bay Council for the whole site and is now seeking 17 individual applications in what should have been a single consolidated planning application as referred to in the Design and Development Overlay of C86.

Hobsons Bay Council website Greenlight now has a number of planning applications relating to the site with the developer seeking piecemeal development in 2 demolitions plans, a display suite application to convert the heritage Britannia Hotel and 3 of 14 building lots plans. The 2 demolitions, the hotel conversion and the first 3 building lots are already in Council's pipeline with 60 days before the developer can send the applications to VCAT. The demolition of the Former Port Phillip Woollen Mill buildings and the Britannia Hotel alterations both refused by Hobsons Bay Council have already been taken by Urbis to VCAT.

The required Emergency Evacuation Plan for the area has not been provided even though it will clearly inform decision makers how many people should be accommodated on this vulnerable peninsula. The UK Health and Safety Executive which provides the research basis for Worksafe decisions in Australia has specifically set out criteria for residential densities and occupational by vulnerable people up to 400m from the Major Hazard Facilities bunding walls as an outer safety zone.
ie SAFETY CONSTRAINTS FOR ALL THE SITE EXCEPT THAT FACING ANN STREET.....

HOWEVER the Developer has sent the Construction Management Plan to Council. This document accompanies all the 3 building lot applications and it reveals the enormity of the total application. A total of 765 apartments and 51 townhouses.

Appendix 1 - Site Layout (Option 1 list of dwellings)

Lot 1 - 7 Townhouses

Lot 2 - 80 Apartments

Lot 3 - 50 Apartments

Lot 4 - 60 Apartments

Lot 5 - 50 Apartments

(partly in the Worksafe MHF advisory buffer)

Lot 6 - 112 Apartments & 8 Townhouses

Lot 7 - 112 Apartments & 8 Townhouses

Lot 8 - 104 Apartments

(partly in the Worksafe MHF advisory buffer)

Lot 9 - 36 Apartments

(In the Worksafe MHF advisory buffer)

Lot 10 - 15 Townhouses

Lot 11 - 104 Apartments & 10 Townhouses

(partly in the Worksafe MHF advisory buffer)

Lot 12 - 43 Apartments & 3 Townhouses

(In the Worksafe MHF advisory buffer)

Lot 13 - Britannia Hotel - display suite for off-the-plan sales

(In the Worksafe MHF advisory buffer)

Lot 14 - 14 Apartments

350 of these dwellings (highlighted in red) are in lots subject to the Worksafe Advisory Zone - a further 379 ie a total of 729 dwellings would be included in the 400m OUTER ZONE of the UK Health and Safety Executive advisory safety area. According to UK HSE and Worksafe, ability of persons to evacuate such a zone is crucial. If Mobil's safety criteria of 10 x the tank size were to apply then a 400m buffer zone would also include lots 3, 4, 6, 7, 10 and 14. In fact only lots 1 and 2 are outside the 400m zone which interestingly was the only part of the site which was identified in the Industrial Land Management Strategy Precinct 20 as suitable for residential development.....

[Industrial_Land_Management_Strategy240608.pdf](#)

What about the new residents with disabilities, young babies, school age children, elderly seeking lower maintenance housing (one of the potential customers highlighted by the developer).... What temperatures would a fire/explosion on a ship at Pt Gellibrand generate and how would people know what to do? AND what about the 3000 existing residents and workers in the peninsula.

The Ports and Environs Advisory Committee recommended that Pt Gellibrand Williamstown be a Port Zone (page 155) which would have provided protection for port industries from new residential encroachment BUT Minister Matthew Guy rejected this part (page 1/5) of the Advisory Committee report issuing Ministerial Direction 14 with a map of Port of Melbourne facilities which had the legend totally obscuring Williamstown Pt Gellibrand (see last page Melbourne Precincts). The minister's comment was that safety on the peninsula was already included in his planning scheme amendment C86.

The Environmental Significance Overlay will apply over areas within the environs of the ports identified by the Committee except for the Port Gellibrand precinct (as per 11), which currently has a Design and Development Overlay applying to the land.

Well Mr Guy we don't think the developer has taken any notice of protecting the port if 729 dwellings and about 1800 new residents are going to be living within the safety buffer zones of a Major Hazard Facility and fuel importation by ship.

There are other issues too with the developer's proposals:

- Parking will be less than one car spot per dwelling and parking will be below the water table. BUT there are 1500 workers at BAE Systems requiring parking, there are major events at Seaworks requiring parking; there are the visitors to the Heritage town of Williamstown who are the lifeblood of our restaurant and tourist facilities, nearly all the residential streets in the peninsula have restricted 2 hour parking BUT this developer wants to encroach on what little street parking exists.
- The Heritage Oriental Hotel is to be demolished which the National Trust has an interest in as it represents a 19th century example of a 3 storey corner pub in the Government Survey Heritage area.
- The impact on schools and infrastructure of 2000 new residents will be enormous on a suburb which already has postcode plus street name criteria for enrolment.

See current applications on Hobsons Bay Council website:

Greenlight <https://greenlight.e-vis.com.au/hbcc/public/main.aspx?>

[frm=uc_search_Completed_Open_Applications.ascx&appTypeId=1&mlId=103](https://greenlight.e-vis.com.au/hbcc/public/main.aspx?frm=uc_search_Completed_Open_Applications.ascx&appTypeId=1&mlId=103)

and search for Williamstown 3-39 Nelson PI

Application Nos

PA1124005 Demolition Former Port Phillip Woollen Mill Site - refused by

Council and subject to VCAT review

PA1224762 Modify Britannia Hotel - refused by Council

PA1225139 Demolition works and a fence

PA1225060 LOT 3 Buildings and works - 46m up Nelson Place from Ann St

PA1225059 LOT 3 (Alternative) Buildings and works - ditto

PA1225056 LOT 2 Buildings and works includes demolition of Oriental Hotel

PA1225057 LOT 1 Buildings and works adjacent to Telegraph Hotel

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