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NEWSLETTER OF THE CASTLECRAG PROGRESS

ASSOCIATION

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CASTLECRAG SHOPPING COMPLEX --- LATEST NEWS

The Castlecrag Progress Association again went into bat for the residents at the Local Government Appeals Tribunal. The Board of the Tribunal heard a further two days of evidence on May 9 & 10, then after some deliberation the Chairman of the Board issued a statement outlining the view of the Board.

Thus the situation so far is:

Willoughby Council passed the development application under threat from the Developer to take the matter to the Local Government Appeals Tribunal. It attached to its approval a number of conditions, which the Developer did not initially accept and had the matter listed for hearing. Only a few days before the hearing the Developer attempted to withdraw, but Council insisted on the hearing, with the Castlecrag Progress Association being given the opportunity to present its views.

While the Association was not successful in preventing this development, it must be said that it is an unfortunate state of affairs when a Residents' Group must spend several thousand dollars of residents' donations to attempt to achieve what the residents' elected Council failed to do.

The plans approved by Willoughby Council were shown in the Tribunal hearing to be very inferior in many design and aesthetic matters, and it was the Association's evidence (the only evidence presented against the glowing praise issued by the Developer's witnesses) which caused the Tribunal to insist on very major changes.

In fact, the Association's endeavours before the Tribunal have led to several rulings which may well be used as legal precedent in future fights against undesirable developments.

The Chairman of the Board stated that "the Board is of the opinion that existing planning guidelines, such as the extent and nature of the zoning, the uses permissable with consent, as well as the extent of development permissable with consent within such zonings, have to be balanced with the said expectations of the residents of the locality.

On the matter of vehicular access and parking, the Association with assistance from the eminent traffic engineer Professor Blunden clearly demonstrated to the Tribunal that the ramp to the underneath car park was narrow and dangerous and that parking space was insufficient. As a result the Tribunal required dramatic alteration to the ramp and ruled that "in the circumstances where shopping centres are adjacent to residential zones, special care and design is necessary to promote the use of such off-street parking. In this regard, parking should not only be adequate but above the normalized has accepted that the normalized here fore that in the circumstances parking should be in excess of the norm."

To achieve this has brought about a dramatic reduction in the retail floor space, which in turn somewhat reduces the obnoxious effects on neighbouring residential properties and requires further landscaping on the street frontage.

The publicity and comment provoked by the Association forced MacDonald's out of the development, and finally caused the Developer to state before the Tribunal that they would not be interested in a Hamburger or Pizza or similar establishment.

Other points raised by the Association included that the loading dock facilities were woefully inadequate for all the shops except the supermarket, with Board then obtaining the Developer's agreement to an additional dock, and the Board ruled that the proposed butcher shop (the third in this suburb!) was not to be serviced from Edinburgh Road.

The Board ruled that amended plans covering all the required changes were to be submitted to it for final judgement. A copy of the plans were to go to the Council for their comments, and even though the Board did not require a copy to be given to the Progress Association, Council acted on legal advice and decided at its last meeting to make a copy available to us for comment.

The new plans have already been drawn up (only two weeks after their requirement being made known by the Board!) and the Association's Committee are examining them now. We accept that so far we have not been able to prevent this development, so we are now doing our best to ensure that this shopping complex is of a superior design in keeping with our suburb and the expectations of our residents.

The situation with this development often changes almost daily, and we'll be in a position to give a comprehensive report at our next Castlecrag Progress Association General Meeting; Tuesday evening, 6th June, 8pm, at the Community Centre off The Postern, down from the squash courts.

Bob Ronai --- Secretary

HISTORY - BEFORE "CASTLECRAG"

Although the lower North Shore and Middle Harbour were visited by Governor Phillip and carefully surveyed by land and sea within a few months of the landing of the first Fleet in 1788, the pressing need for survival of the Colony did not encourage expansion into our inhospitable slopes. It was not until 1856 that the first Land Grants were made on the peninsula which is now Castlecrag. More than half of these, plus a large part of North-bridge were made to a James William Bligh, who may or may not have been related to Captain Bligh of Mutiny fame. James Bligh was later the first Chairman (or Mayor) of the Municipalit of North Willoughby. Incidentally, this was the first Municipality to be proclaimed on the North Shore, in 1865, as a direct result of a petition signed by 67 of the 400 inhabitants within the Municipality's boundaries.

A rough track along the windswept, rocky ridge which is now Edinburgh Road, existed at that time, and the parcels of land were allocated on either side of it. Other land grants on the peninsula (then known as Est Willoughby) were to Alfred Bradford, John Stapleton, W.G. Sprijas. Yates, Robert Phenna, J.A. Hunter, E.M. Stephen and G.R. Brown. (If any reader knows the whereabouts of their descendants it would be interesting to contact them.)

Horse-drawn buses and the branch railway in 1890 gradually opened up Willoughby and Chatswood, but the peninsula remained bushland, subdivided into estates but virtually undeveloped. By 1920 we had the Sunnyside Estate on the north, Torquay Estate on Sugarloaf Point and Farmer & Co's radio transmitter 2FC somewhere along Edinburgh Road (could some older resident of Castlecrag please let me know exactly where?). Cows from Warner's dairy grazed on what is now Eastern Valley Way and Chinese market gardens lined the road to Northbridge. The southern side of Edinburgh Road was bought by the North Sydney Investment and Tramway Co. Ltd. and then by the Association of North Sydney Debenture Holders. In 1921 Walter Burley Griffin and the Greater Sydney Development Association purchased 90 acres of these southern slopes and Castlecrag was born.

Addie Saltis

Our COMMUNITY AFFAIR on April 29 was a resounding success, raising just on \$2000 towards our legal expenses in the development fight. Auctioneer Philip Wright did a magnificent job and certainly entertained the crowd who bid for many a bargain. The youngsters ran white elephant and bookstalls, and it was really wonderful to see so many of our small community working together. Our most sincere thanks go to all those ladies who helped organise the day, the youngsters on the stalls, the shopkeepers who donated items, and the many, many people who donated so many goods for auction.

PROGRESS ASSOCIATION GENERAL MEETING -- TUESDAY, 6th 1. F. 8pm Castlecrag Community Centre, off The Postern.
Refreshments served after the meeting.