

THE CRAG

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NEWSLETTER OF THE
CASTLECRAG PROGRESS ASSOCIATION.

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MAY/JUNE 1978

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 permissible with consent, as well as the extent of development permissible 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 norm. The Board has accepted that the norm here should be the Council's code. It considers therefore 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.

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