



Warrandyte Community Association

INC. A0042350W
PO Box 75, Warrandyte 3113

SUBMISSION BY: WARRANDYTE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION INC.

IN RELATION TO: 44-46 Yarra Street, Warrandyte 3113

APPLICATION NO: PL 12/022587

1. PROPOSAL

To demolish the existing service station building and dwelling, use and development of the land for a service station with associated earthworks, tree removal, erection and display of advertising signage, and altering access to a road in a Road Zone – Category 1 and variation to the provisions of Clause 52, 12 Service Station.

2. INTRODUCTION

This submission is made on behalf of the Warrandyte Community Association Inc (WCA).

WCA has a mandate from its membership of residents of Warrandyte and North Warrandyte to:

- Promote all aspects of community life in Warrandyte
- Defend the character and heritage of the Township
- Protect the environment and encourage restoration and regeneration of native flora and fauna
- Protect the Green Wedge (Non-urban areas)
- Promote sporting, educational, recreational and cultural activities
- Defend and enhance community assets.

This proposal has caused great anxiety amongst residents and aroused a great deal of discussion, not just from WCA members but also from across a wide cross section of the community. The proposal is considered by most to be an overdevelopment of the site with a size and bulk that is out of character with the township. Others have expressed their concerns about traffic and bushfire issues and changes to the road network. While many residents are in favour of a fuel supplier in the town the impact of this particular proposal has caused disquiet. Such a proposal is considered more in keeping with a location in a business zone rather than in a residential area of heritage value.

3. OVERVIEW

Warrandyte has a strong historical and topographical basis for its development. It features linear development along the river valley, steep treed hillsides, narrow roads, poor soils and steep wooded river banks. Residents value the township's older buildings in its centre and houses of individuality nestled in the bush. In past years they worked to retain Green Wedges, defend historic values, resist overdevelopment and protect the Yarra River and the environment. Following action opposing the introduction of dual occupancy in the late 1980s a Design and Development Overlay (DDO3) was placed over the Residential RZ1 zone restricting development to one dwelling per lot and this has continued to the present time.

4. THE SITE

The site is located within an area of mostly single storey homes and is located close to a sharp bend in Yarra Street opposite the Stiggants Street Reserve and comprises two sloping lots 2081 sq.m. in size. The Planning Zone covering the site is Residential 1 Zone (R1Z) and there are a number of overlays; Wildfire Management Overlay (WMO), Design and Development Overlay (DD03), Heritage Overlay (HO191), and Significant Landscape Overlays (SLO2 & SLO3)).

Lot 1 (No 44) features a single storey house which appears as Number 12 on Council's List of Contributory Places within the Warrandyte Township Heritage Precinct. It is a timber cottage with a foundation level of Warrandyte stone and is thought to date from the post WW11 period. It is said to be in poor condition and not to have been used for some years.

Lot 2 is the location of a reasonably modest 'country town' style garage. This comprises a collection of buildings showing a mix of building styles and forms, colour schemes and advertising. This operated as

'Riverview Motors' for several decades. However fuel ceased to be supplied over a decade ago and WCA is of the understanding that there is no claim of previous use rights. An automotive business has continued to operate in the buildings with seemingly little impact on the streetscape and surrounding area.

5. COMMENT

This proposal appears to be for a standard United Service Station that would not be out of place on a major road in urban environments. Similar examples can be found in Eltham (a flat corner site on a roundabout in the business area, Quickshop and Subway) and Donvale (a site on a divided 4-lane road adjacent to the Pines Shopping Centre, Quickshop and Domino's Pizza). However in a residential area, located on a two lane road in a heritage listed location opposite a riverside reserve in Warrandyte it would appear to be out of place in its size and design particularly an area covered by a number of significant overlays. The introduction of a shop and yet another restaurant would also appear misplaced. WCA considers only token efforts (such as the choice of some materials) appear to have been made to recognise the special historic and environmental qualities of this historic township in the design for this site.

With the proposal for eight bowzers, ten parking spaces, a Quickshop, a retail/restaurant space and an overarching canopy of nearly eight metres high at the front edge, its impact appears out of proportion to its surroundings. Add to that the requirement to excavate two thirds of the site, provide stone lined retaining walls which reach 6 metres at the rear of the property and changes to the road to allow for access and egress to the site and a cumulative adverse effect can be surmised.

6. SPECIFIC COMMENTS

6.1. DDO3

WCA considers that none of the admirable design objectives of DDO3 are met by this development. It does not contribute to the low density and bushland character of Warrandyte. Rather it is a major development with a canopy that looms over the site. It dominates the view from the riverside reserve opposite. It is not sympathetic to the existing built form and style. As the block appears to be practically entirely covered by buildings or hard standing, the requirement that land retain areas of pervious vegetation does not appear to be met either

6.2. Heritage Issues

The site falls within the Warrandyte Township Heritage Precinct (Site HO191) and thus under the Warrandyte Township Heritage Guidelines (an incorporated document see Schedule to Clause 8.1.01). WCA worked extensively with Council on these guidelines in order to preserve the essence of this historic place.

It is unclear how the Guidelines have been interpreted. Apart from some concessions such as using Warrandyte stone for the retaining walls, given the size and scope of the development, change to the topography and proposed demolition of a house listed as a contributory place it would seem that the guidelines have been ineffective.

The proposal does not respect the topography as the design requires excavating a large portion of the site. The building and canopy also appear as straight lined dominant features rather than being articulated into smaller parts to break up the mass and flat lines and by providing more than one roof form with acoustic qualities for the canopy.

Warrandyte township was laid out in 1856 by District Surveyor Clement Hodgkinson (notable naturalist and surveyor) and while some older buildings have been lost to bushfire nevertheless Council saw fit to protect the remaining streetscape in the Warrandyte Township Heritage Precinct. While there is a varied streetscape along Yarra Street it is mostly a residential landscape with early cottages and later housing which nevertheless provides a cohesive whole. Even the garage located on Lot 46 has been an accepted part of this streetscape for many decades. It is difficult to see how this proposal to insert a modern development requiring such wholesale changes not only to the current buildings but also the topography, vegetation, usage and main road layout can be consistent with the requirements of Council's Cultural Heritage Policy or the Heritage Guidelines.

6.3. SLO2 Yarra Valley Backdrop & SLO3 Environmental Residential Significant Landscape Areas

The development does not fit well within any of the objectives of these overlays. Vegetation will be removed, it subjects nearby parkland to visual intrusion, the character and appearance of the area is not

protected and it is not clear if adjoining parkland and its flora and fauna will be protected from drainage and effluent wastes. They require all the special characteristics of the area to be protected and it's difficult to see how this is being achieved.

6.3 Signage, noise, lights and hours of use

Two signs are proposed for the development one on each side boundary. These will be single sided illuminated United signs 4.2 metres high and again it is difficult to understand how these fit into the Heritage Guidelines Part 7 - Signage Guidelines for Commercial and Public Areas or indeed Council's own Outdoor Advertising Signs Policy. While they are single sided to prevent excessive light spill nevertheless under Council's policy (Clause 22.07) such signs should be discouraged as the area has identified landscape and environmental values. Excessive lighting in this area opposite a riverside reserve introduces a new light source detrimental to the bushland surroundings. Any canopy design should come with an acoustic plan to ensure it would suppress not channel noise and a lighting plan should indicate how night time lighting can be minimised and directional to eliminate light spill. Local residents have expressed dismay over the hours proposed for operation 6am to midnight. Worry over noise and rubbish are foremost amongst their concerns.

6.4. Road access

Many residents have expressed concern over road and traffic issues given the sharp blind bend in Yarra Street to the east of the site. Yarra Street has become increasingly busy particularly at peak times over past years.

WCA understands there is plan for modified access treatment which would allow for road widening of Yarra Street outside the proposed development which involves an additional 3m of pavement width to allow for storage of three right turning vehicles. Such a road change will also add to the impact of the proposed development introducing more urban elements into what has been essentially a rural road. The road sides here are extensively used during events at Stiggants Reserve such as the market and festival and the proposed road widening may impact on this. WCA notes that VicRoads is a referral authority.

6.5. On site parking

Parking requirements under Clause 52.12 this development requires provision of fifteen parking spaces, ten for the convenience store and five for the restaurant. However only ten are being proposed (two of these are for staff and one is designated disabled use). WCA is concerned this is insufficient for the size of the development and may lead to undesirable roadside parking leading to more inconvenience for local residents.

6.6. On site water retention, bushfire issues

WCA could see no information regarding on site water retention given so much of the site will be hard standing or any management for contaminated runoff (a problem in the past). It noted provision of an underground tank for fire fighting purposes but it is not clear if this tank serves also for water retention). WCA understands the proposal has sent the CFA as a referral authority.

7 CONCLUSION

WCA has gathered together a great many comments from its members as well as others in the community. There is little doubt that the function, ie the selling of motor fuel is supported by a lot of residents, with many expressing their disappointment that there has not been an outlet in Warrandyte for some years. However it is the form and location of the proposed development that has caused the concern. WCA objects to the intensification of use, the increased size and scale of the development, the extent of the excavation, road and heritage changes and vegetation removal. It is difficult to see how removing a contributory building, altering the topography and inserting a very modern urban service station which does not follow the Heritage Guidelines in a residential area adds to the heritage streetscape.

While not grounds for refusal, locating a new store and restaurant in this area has also raised concerns. Council has long encouraged commercial development in Warrandyte to be confined to the three zoned business areas with service shops at the west end of the town and more tourist oriented shops in the centre and east end. This strategy has served the town well. Providing an isolated shop in between these centres will draw away business from the established shops which are already struggling in today's difficult financial environment. WCA considers it is not in the best interest of Warrandyte as a whole that dispersed shops be encouraged.

3. RECOMMENDATION

Given all of the above WCA recommends Council **refuse** the application in its current form.



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