

South Hobart residents very unhappy with

IS South Hobart to be the first test case for achieving the Hobart Interim Planning Scheme's objectives of homogeneity and mediocrity at the expense of amenity, heritage, public benefit and the qualities that make a community such as South Hobart unique?

Hobart City Council's planning committee is scheduled today to consider a planning application for 24 identical, two-storey, high-density residential units on the historic former Blundstone tannery site between Weld and Wynyard streets, South Hobart.

The 6709 square metre site

Traffic congestion just one objection to be raised today, warns Rosemary Sandford

is in a residential zone of historic and small family dwellings and narrow streets sandwiched between Hobart Rivulet and Macquarie St.

While the community is supportive of the site being developed, the scale, bulk, density and design of the

proposal are considered inappropriate for this location.

The proposed density, although allowable under the planning scheme, is twice as dense as that in the surrounding area. Two 110m-long, continuous walls of 24 identical units, set back less than 3m from neighbouring historic weatherboard, single detached dwellings and which generate substantial volumes of traffic, are not considered to be in keeping with the existing historic character of the South Hobart village and would dominate, rather than improve, existing character.

All traffic to and from the units by the occupants, utility

and trade vehicles and visitors will be via Wynyard St and will feed into Macquarie St near the busy South Hobart village and the exit from the Salad Bowl carpark.

Weld St suffers from traffic congestion and parking problems created by a Lady Gowrie child care centre and the South Hobart Primary School in that street, while Wynyard St is a narrow cul-de-sac where children play, and walk to and from Hobart Rivulet and the primary school.

This development would be the second high-traffic volume proposal in the South Hobart village approved by the Hobart council in the past two

years. The other was another Lady Gowrie child care centre in the middle of the South Hobart village with all the attendant traffic and parking problems that were predicted by local residents.

A development of the density proposed will obviously bring with it traffic and parking issues, including the loss of parking for residents in the row of colonial cottages on Macquarie St opposite Wynyard St, none of which have any off-street parking capacity. And the local bakery will lose its only parking space for offloading supplies and for customers.

Other safety issues include:

smaller garbage trucks are required in Wynyard St, so their number will have to increase to cater for the volume of waste from the 24 units; emergency vehicles such as Tasmanian Fire Service trucks and ambulances will have difficulty accessing the units down narrow Wynyard St; and the 50km/h speed limit in Macquarie St poses a real danger as traffic slows and stops behind queued vehicles waiting to turn into Wynyard St. These safety issues are not addressed in the application.

Geotechnical questions need to be answered about the integrity of the site itself. First, its vulnerability to major

plan for ex-Blundstone site

MERE01Z01MA - V1/

flooding from Hobart Rivulet as occurred in 1872, 1960 and again in 2016; second, the presence of water courses flowing under the site and down the slope to the rivulet as recorded in historical documents and known locally; and third, the need for a guarantee that contaminants from the former tannery were removed from the site rather than being crushed, scattered and covered with topsoil.

Will council ensure all necessary geotechnical and public health standards are met before it approves any construction on the site?

Industrial heritage values, including a heritage-listed wall

and Mill Race, are virtually ignored and construction plans do not make sufficient provisions for their protection.

The developer proposes a three-stage construction schedule, at his convenience, with no start or finish date, no indication of how large trucks will manage in narrow Wynyard St, nor how long residents will have to put up with traffic, noise, emissions, dirt and disruption caused by the construction.

This development fails every conceivable public benefit test.

For Weld St residents whose homes back on the tannery site, their north-facing windows and gardens will be overlooked and overshadowed by two-storey units whose windows will look down into the gardens and homes.

Overshadowing will cause Weld St residents to lose light and sun, a scarce commodity in South Hobart in winter. For Weld St residents, loss of privacy and amenity are major concerns. Solar panels on

some houses will also be adversely affected.

It is clear this development fails every conceivable public benefit test.

Will Hobart council place private gain ahead of public benefit?

If council approves this, despite its inability to demonstrate public benefit while creating significant loss of amenity, safety and potentially health risks, it will have failed its civic duty of care to represent, respect and protect citizens' interests.

Dr Rosemary Sandford is president of the South Hobart Progress Association.