



Notting Hill Community Association

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Current & Future Liveability



AN INFORMATION KIT About the Planning & Development Issues in Notting Hill and M2030 Implementation Ramifications

The residents of Notting Hill are challenged with the potential loss of open space and other liveability issues caused by the current implementation of Melbourne 2030 (M2030).

The community, in principle, supports the sustainability goals of M2030. However they are concerned that a lack of community involvement, government infrastructure support and detailed planning governance is putting M2030 implementation in the neighbourhood at risk, and exposing the suburb to the ad hoc plans and economic needs of state government departments and private developers.

The key concern of many, is the loss of two state schools now designated for public sale and highly likely for infill redevelopment. The community will be robbed of the opportunity to access open space within the area.

Senior M2030 program directors will fail to achieve social and environment sustainability at the cost of achieving economic benefits that have short term value, and that only fulfil State Government performance and political agendas in the short-term.

The effects of the loss will hit hard on both current and future generations of residents and surrounding workforce communities and can never be rectified.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES IN NOTTING HILL

Introduction

Notting Hill is one of the smaller suburbs of Melbourne situated in the Monash City Council area. The residential part of the suburb is near the Clayton Monash University campus. It is often confused with Clayton.

The suburb includes a distinct residential area of 700 dwellings. This distinct area of housing and streets is encircled or surrounded by major traffic arteries on three sides. The residential estate is bounded by Blackburn Road, Ferntree Gully Road and the Monash Motorway. These are among the largest multi land traffic arteries in Melbourne. It was planned in the sense that shops and schools were within walking distance without crossing major roads, and traffic flow was limited. The suburb has only two entry and exit streets and cannot be exited without crossing or entering the six lanes of Blackburn Road or Ferntree Gully Road.

On the other edge of the suburb is an industrial area and the rapidly expanding Monash science park/business park (along Blackburn Road and including the new Australian Synchrotron). This is a major area of expanding employment - the result of planned structural change.

The development of the Notting Hill suburb is also perhaps unique. The residential estate was built in the 1950's and 1960's by A V Jennings as the first planned suburb in Melbourne.



THE ISSUES

Unfortunately when finished the “planned” suburb failed to include any parkland or open recreational space for residents.

As the suburb filled up a primary school and a secondary college were built along with a kindergarten/preschool. (Monash Primary School, Monash Secondary College and Westerfield Pre School)

The playgrounds and an oval of these schools became the recreational spaces of residents as well as their children.

In recent years the community has lost its kindergarten/preschool, primary school and secondary school (the primary school in 2004 and the secondary college in 2006). On 7 August the Monash Council agreed to rezone the Monash Primary School and its open space for high-density housing.

The school closures were justified in terms of declining school attendance numbers and an aging population despite vigorous objection from local residents that the demographics in the suburb were changing quickly again to young families. Now as the Government moves to cash in on the land value of the school the Education Department is still attempting to justify its decision by using the same population figures that are a decade old and were disputed even then.

In 2007 residents conducted their own survey of households in Notting Hill and accessed the latest census data. This research demonstrated an increasing number of children of school age in need of a school and a turnover in occupancy in the suburb with more families moving in. An increasing density of residential use was also noted with suburban in fill and unit development.

The result has also been an increase in car travel as children are driven daily to schools several kilometres way.

The Monash Secondary College faces the same fate as the Primary School. It has been declared surplus to requirements and is being allowed to decay into dereliction. This includes a theatre built at the Secondary College by community support and public fund raising. The local cricket club has been banned from using the school oval for the local cricket competition.

The kindergarten (a Monash Council venture) was last used as pre school in May 2007 and is now a Neighbourhood Centre supported by Monash Council.

These have all occurred while:

- Occupancy change and suburban infill has lead to increased population density in Notting Hill and increased number of children of school age.
- Increasing congestion of the highways that grid-in Notting Hill
- Forced increase in car use out of Notting Hill as children are transported out for schooling
- Loss of publicly owned spaces used for recreation by a community with no dedicated parks or recreational areas

- From the edge of the Notting Hill housing area high-density accommodation is encroaching into the suburb. Several hundred units have been built by private developers between the suburban streets and Blackburn Road as part of a speculation into the market for accommodation for overseas tertiary students. This is to be the ultimate fate of the land where the Monash Primary School used to provide its public services.
- Transport and other amenities are to be put under further pressure by a massive increase in employment in the business park area adjoining Notting Hill. Recently Telstra announced it was moving 6000 employees into this area. Until the loss of state government services these employees could have walked from their place of work to a pre-school, a primary school and a secondary college.

It is clear that liveability in Notting Hill is secondary to short-term speculative development. The disappointing aspect is that the sale of the primary school (and potentially the secondary school) will help destroy the very principles that uphold the M2030 strategy for achieving balanced social, environment and economic sustainability and become the evident model of M2030 failure. This coming loss of public space through the school closures will never be rectified if unresolved.

SEEKING YOUR SUPPORT

The Notting Hill Community Association, on behalf of the local residents, seeks your support for the retention of the school land for public use, for the benefit of both the residential and workforce communities of Notting Hill, now and into the future.