

From: Melinda
Sent: 15 Nov 2020 10:53:31 +1100
To: Planning @ Meander Valley Council
Subject: Blackstone Heights "Neptune Dr" development
Attachments: Re Blackstone Heights development Nov2020.docx
Importance: High

Hi Jo,

Please see attached my submission against the Tasland plans for my street and my area.

Can you please send confirmation of receiving this email.

Regards,

Melinda Slade

Re Blackstone Heights development - Draft Amendment 3/2020 - 10 and 12 Neptune Drive, Blackstone Heights

The closing date for representations is Tuesday 17 November 2020. Representations may be lodged in person, by post to PO Box 102, Westbury 7303 or by email to planning@mvc.tas.gov.au

This may be not very well constructed, however due to the secrecy of this project, and the very short timeframe to put in a submission I had to just get it down in writing in whatever way I could.

I moved to Glover Avenue, Blackstone Heights over 20 years ago, the main reason being for the very quiet environment ie low density housing, large housing blocks, few neighbours, open spaces, beautifully scenic bush views, wildlife, flora and fauna, privacy, birdsong etc - all things that define Blackstone Heights. I bought a house with fantastic bush views, hills, trees, even a view towards Ben Lomond /Mt Barrow/Mt Arthur areas.

I was told by the Meander Valley Council that my bush views would remain, and this would stay a low density, non-developed bush suburb. Surely one greedy developer cannot overpower the MVC and change the whole character of this place for all of us who bought/moved here for very similar reasons to myself. (This was discussed in 2 recent meetings with Blackstone Heights locals, who are against development – especially the huge cluster development that Tasland wants to spring on us against our will, and in many phone calls/messages between current residents).

Infrastructure is not good here; we waited 20 years to even get a footpath along a very small section of Panorama Rd. So, for we who live past the very beginning of Panorama Rd, there are no walking paths / footpaths and traffic is dangerous when trying to walk along Panorama Road. Road surfaces are not good, having garbage removal only fortnightly is not good. Bushfire risk is a great concern also with only one road in/out However 20 years ago there was a lot less traffic compared to now. I can only imagine how congested it will be if more development happens here. I walk a lot around the area and there is constant traffic along from Pitcher Parade through to Blackstone entry. It is very busy, often during peak times, school times, and weekends. Cheap road areas were built, with few if any proper drains, and no proper road edges, and dangerous culverts.

This area is zoned low density – this was why I moved here. I will lose my beautiful bush views if this new development goes ahead, as will many others. That is only one of my many concerns with it.

The noise around Glover Avenue and the opposite paddocks that will be taken over, this particular area echoes a lot and that will make the noise pollution very bad compared to the quietness in general now. Whilst building the proposed new development, this will be a very big problem, as it is to us even with the small development off Panorama Rd near the water treatment plant entry road. This has been going on for at least 2 years, with blasting, rock-breaking etc, and machinery operation, and this is only minute compared to the size of his development. Plus, the Tasland development is all around our houses, the other one is not very close to many houses.

Mr Harrison himself at the meetings said (at meeting 1) that the end of Canopus Drive will probably not be started for another 5 or so years. At the 2nd meeting Mr Harrison re-stated 5-8 years, as Glover Avenue area is the first stage. This means he is stating that we will have unbearable building noise for at least 5-8 years. Mr Harrison stated that he can further tweak his plans, which he already has, as plans he tabled at these meetings were not the same as the ones on the MVC webpage. How much further can he 'tweak' and add extra clusters of housing to his development?! Or make the lots smaller, or make other adjustments that the current residents are unaware with or unhappy with?

In the Planning Application document: it states re Node one extension to Glover Ave: the planned density is

similar to that of existing Glover Avenue lots. This is not correct, being most are approx. 1000m², nothing similar to 600m² blocks and smaller, as all of his proposed development lots are.

The Meander Valley Interim Planning Scheme states that each lot in Blackstone Heights must have a minimum area lot of 1600m². This includes sufficient useable area to allow for on-site parking and manoeuvrability, adequate private open space and reasonable vehicular access from the carriageway of the road, and most importantly: DEVELOPMENT THAT WOULD NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE AMENITY OF, OR BE OUT OF CHARACTER WITH, SURROUNDING DEVELOPMENT AND THE STREETScape, AND states (although not specifying Blackstone Heights):

ADDITIONAL LOTS MUST NOT BE LOCATED WITHIN THE LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL ZONES.

Thus, a total of 0% of all the lots Tasland want to develop here meet with the 1600m² block size. How can you just override the current residents' wishes to retain the bush character of their area?

I believe the Tas Planning Commission will not let this happen either.

Even in the current land development called 1 Panorama Rd (but not no.1) the MVC has managed to get the developer to adhere to deliver a lot of large block sizes amongst the smaller ones.

But here where our views across East will totally be ruined, that will mean more people will join the fight against the so-called Neptune Dr development.

After surrounding this upcoming plan in secrecy, no doubt that was another tactic to pretend that Tasland was developing one lot in the far end of Neptune Dr, next to his huge property with his great bush views and peace and quiet. So even when people did actually get their letter from MVC (which most did not, and we got several extra peoples letters sent all to our address. I have to wonder if that was done deliberately so that people did not know what was going on in time to send in a submission against this). It seems none of the many from Canopus Dr actually received any such letter. Only a few people attended the second meeting in November, as they had not had any notification whatsoever, and it was only when others spoke about it on Blackstone Facebook pages that they even had any idea. They were very angry as their traffic issues will be incredibly worse than they are, and no doubt they will be talking to others in Pitcher Parade to inform them of this secret land development.

I'm sure the people living in Country Club Avenue and Casino Rise would in the majority, feel the same.

There is a lot of elderly people living in those streets, and no doubt quite a number of them would not like the resulting large increase of traffic around them.

People here at the two meetings at the Christian Centre met their neighbours and talked, some if not most, for the first time with each other. If nothing else, we have formed more of a community minded approach, which will no doubt lead to continued joining together to fight the destruction of our community.

Why would you allow Blackstone Heights' character to be so totally spoiled by this proposed development?

It would totally change the whole character and just become another overly densely populated suburb.

The 2015 Prospect Vale – Blackstone Heights Structure Plan specifies demands on open space. This includes:

The Vision for Prospect Vale and Blackstone Heights is:

“known for the quality of the natural environment, a distinctive lifestyle” etc. The natural environment and quality, quiet lifestyle is what we have at the moment, or what we did have until more building has started along Panorama Rd. However, this is not nearly on the scale of what Tasland want to squeeze in here.

I do not want the natural environment taken away or substantially changed, as this proposed development will do.

Prospect Vale and Blackstone Heights are totally different suburbs. It seems disingenuous that you specify them together, so that population numbers etc don't show the vast difference and that Blackstone Heights has not had much population growth in the past 20 years, whereas Prospect Vale has had a huge amount. The former is and has for many decades been, built up with a lot of people I know buying there for the

shops, frequent buses, schools, cafes, much quicker access to Launceston city, and it suits their busy family lifestyles. It has always had a much, much larger population in close proximity, and in my view is nothing like our own suburb. They want to be near facilities etc for these reasons. I did not choose Prospect Vale for those reasons. I, and everyone I know in Blackstone Heights, chose this area for the low-density, quiet bush suburb that it is.

Meander Valley Council must surely address the single access in/out. It is in years old MVC literature that this would be done, probably through to join at the end of Mt Leslie Road. Blackstone height is a bushfire risk area, or in case of a car accident on Pitcher Parade (and a lot of the roads here) it would be impossible to get past.

Same with fire trucks, ambulances, and even bus access. It is already tricky for them in some streets, and in an emergency, it could make a big difference – to people's lives even!

I believe that in the Regional Land Use Strategy documents it discourages the use of cul-de-sacs as it makes it harder for these vehicles. I also see that the Tasland plan / MVC plans show many of such, and not proper through-roads. That will take much more time and cause more chaos in the case of an emergency, when a large number of people are all trying to evacuate at the same time.

Also, from your own Traffic Impact Assessment / Road Safety Review report: it notes:

From road safety review the following issues were identified: Panorama Road

- The sight distance for Neptune Drive left along Panorama Road is marginally less than required.
- The culvert headwall and steep drop off opposite the Blackstone Road / Panorama Road junction is a roadside hazard. Treatment of this issue is a Meander Valley Council responsibility as the road authority.
- The Country Club Avenue / Casino Rise junction layout for the right turn into Casino Rise is deficient for the current level of traffic activity.

I don't believe Tasland plan is addressing or fixing these problems.

This area also has risk of land slip and some poor land stability. We have had some large landslip problems in Blackstone Road areas. I presume if people were allowed to build on this proposed development site that the MVC would be at legal risk if this happened. We have all heard of Councils being sued in such cases.

Looking at when the MVC facilitated the traffic count along Pitcher Parade, on 3rd January 2019 – most people were on holidays, and away, and it was only done for a very short time. A 20-minute period during the quietest time of the year in summer holidays cannot be a reliable count!! A large number of workplaces were and are shut at this time, so a large amount of people would not be returning home from work at that time of the afternoon. A huge number of Government Departments, Councils, Banks, Lawyers, Trades / Builders and other workers are still not even back at work. And it's obviously school holidays, and a lot of people go away for Christmas/ January before school goes back. One has to wonder about the validity of this 'study'.

Also, it is not adding all the huge volume of traffic that would increase. Stating about numbers of residents travelling in and out daily, but ignoring the vast amounts of extra traffic there will be, including a lot of people just looking around our streets (as there already is) and the large numbers of people that would then be looking at the new development, looking at housing blocks, meeting with real estate companies, people working on actually building the new development for years and years. And then all the visitors that would be visiting these people in the hundreds and hundreds of new houses. It will dramatically increase traffic.

As per the study of wildlife that was done in winter – when birds and a lot of native habitat are hibernating. Again, one would wonder why this was done only at this time of the year. And similar re fauna – not many species are flowering in winter. One wonders why this was done then, and the traffic count in early January!!

I and people I walk with here have counted many, many more cars passing than that – so it is obviously not a reliable figure to base findings from. Site distances for people entering/exiting their streets is not very far, and with a lot more traffic this will present another risk.

As people from Pitcher Parade (and in fact, most of Blackstone Heights) were NOT told about this development, nor given any clear information. And even then, it just a specified lot number in Neptune Drive, no mention of Glover Ave, Canopus Dr, Neptune Dr etc. I can advise that there was a lot of anger about this when some of them attended the second meeting (which they only found out about, as did many, from a Facebook post on a private page).

There is too much wildlife being killed here on our local roads as it is, even with lower speed limits in recent times. This is the case especially along Pitcher Parade into Blackstone, with so much constant traffic. I used to see many more wallabies, rabbits, native hens and even Tasmanian devils along there, not so now, and it will no doubt be much worse with more traffic.

This is threatening to our much-loved local native species of fauna and flora. We sometimes see wedge tailed eagles above the paddock opposite us. Frequently we see eastern barred bandicoots, families of southern brown bandicoots, many wallabies, skinks, blue tongues lizards, owls including the Tasmanian masked owl, tawny frogmouths, butcher birds, wrens, kookaburras, robins, silvereyes, Tasmanian yellow tailed black cockatoos, swans, eastern spinebills, parrots, magpies, new holland honeyeaters, amongst other birds. Even occasionally still: quolls and Tasmanian devils. These I believe are a threatened species and must be protected, not scared or moved out of their safe habitat to squash in a huge number of houses on tiny blocks. There are currawongs nesting in the trees in the paddock, and I see them fly over from there to my garden. Most of these forementioned species appear in my garden, not just over the road in bushland. I do not want this to change, nor does anyone else I've spoken to in the area. We all moved here for the fantastic bushland vistas and views, and to see much wildlife that you don't get to see in the built-up suburbs.

In MVC documents it states about low-density residential zones (LDRZ). It is mentioned about the 1600m² minimum block size – how can this then be drastically reduced for one developer to put huge clusters of small houses on small blocks and totally wreck the suburb for most of us who moved here for that very reason. It is a bush lifestyle here, not an over-populated dense population suburb.

At one of the Blackstone residents' meetings (that Ross Harrison attended) in November 2020 he spoke of shops and similar, which not many of us thought necessary. He mentioned we can all go and get takeaway from the café/restaurant – which makes for a lot of extra traffic especially around peak times.

He mentioned a wine bar – however no-one spoke in support of that at the meetings.

The Prospect Vale shops and Casino etc are only a few minutes' drive away. The consensus was: that's enough.

Mr Harrison had also been asked if local residents (who's properties adjoin this new unwanted development) whether they can buy the block nearest to their own property so at least they aren't totally overwhelmed / overlooked at close range – Mr Harrison told people from Glover Avenue that no, he would not allow that. It is his plan and he wants it totally his own way and was not at all willing to negotiate in any way. Not a good attitude for getting the locals onside. That was an option I was desperately thinking of as a last resort, if this crammed in subdivision ever did happen.

I directly asked Mr Harrison at the second meeting, about what the height of the houses would be. He said they'd all be single storey. I believe he is saying this as part of his sales pitch. It is quite common from what I've been told for developers to promise anything to placate the residents and then change their mind. He has already changed his plans from what the MVC have on file, to what he brought along to the meetings in

November 2020.

How can we trust him, and the MVC to keep him honest?

Sewerage could be an issue too, we had many, many years of bad odour from the settling ponds along Pitcher Parade. It's not as bad recently as it was for so long, but it's not great and no-one lives very near that area, however they may do so here. How will Tasland really manage the sewerage in the new development. Will it be a continuous bad odour as the settling ponds were for many years?

There is very little public transport here, we see very few buses throughout the day, and the main ones are only at school times, collecting school children. For everyone else very little is available. Older people are more likely to buy in Prospect Vale, where they are near to bus stops that are much more frequently used, near to Doctors, and other shops, but also closer to the city hospitals and specialists. There is not even a bus shelter here.

On your Planning-Applications page, the proposed developer even states:

Strategic Direction G2.3 (a) "Promote the important role of local character on the economy and the sense of place"

Comment: Blackstone Heights is a unique low density residential suburb located in close proximity to services and amenities in Prospect and the Launceston CBD whilst enjoying a rural outlook and unique vista" etc

"Blackstone Heights is unique amongst other Launceston suburbs and it is important to maintain the existing character" etc.

The proposed development does not adhere to this strategic direction, and I would argue it actually goes against it in a catastrophic way for all those who enjoy our low density, semi-rural bush suburb just the way it is!

The MVC Prospect Vale – Blackstone Heights Structure Plan says:

Protect and leverage the area's environmental qualities

New residents to Prospect Vale and Blackstone Heights are attracted by environmental values in the area – including gorges, hills, open space, and water access. Protecting, enhancing and creating better linkages to environmental assets will benefit the community and differentiate housing development in the context of Greater Launceston.

Strategies

- Maximise connections between urban areas and environmental assets such as Lake Trevallyn, the South Esk River and Cataract Gorge.
- Maximise vistas to natural assets such as waterways and hills.
- Consider the prominence, profile, and vegetation values when exploring potential development on hills in the area.
- Maintain predominately low-density housing in Blackstone Heights.

What Ross Harrison aims to do goes against our wishes and your own document.

Most of the growth in this abovementioned area is in Prospect Vale, NOT in Blackstone Heights. Our population has hardly grown in many years, and we do not want it to. It will ruin our suburb.

I believe that the MVC would be very negligent if they even considered this development going ahead in any way. Certainly, the squashed in tiny lot set-up /plan as it is, it is the worst way for Blackstone Heights to be over-developed against the current lifestyle that we enjoy here.

Melinda Slade