

Objection to zoning proposal for Old Ocean Grove, in respect to

Objective 5 – To protect, strengthen and promote the declared area’s post-colonial historic heritage values.

The listed strategies to implement this objective will be negated by the proposed rezoning of the heritage areas of Old Ocean Grove defined as the Methodist Ministers Street Name Precinct. In particular,

5.1 *Ensure that significant historic heritage places ... are identified and protected ...* (p.51).

As argued below, no heritage survey has been conducted for Ocean Grove which would allow this strategy to be implemented effectively.

5.2 *Minimize the visual impacts of buildings and works on heritage places ...* (p.51).

The rezoning proposal supports the construction of large two and three story buildings in Old Ocean Grove which will severely change streetscapes and obliterate the current historic character of the area.

5.3 ... *providing interpretative signage* (p.51).

Indeed, if this planning strategy is implemented, within 50 years signage is all that can be done to honour memories of historic Ocean Grove, except of course the Covenant placed in the 1880s prohibiting the consumption and manufacture of alcohol which still covers this area.

5.4 *Ensure historic heritage values are considered ...* (p.51).

As above, the historic values of Old Ocean Grove cannot be protected in the next 50 years as they have not been identified and evaluated.

Recommendation

That implementation of the Increased Housing Diversity – substantial change zone in the area surrounding Ocean Grove Town Centre be delayed until a Heritage Survey has been conducted of ‘Old Ocean Grove’ defined as the Methodist Ministers Street Name Precinct.

That on completion of this survey, consideration be given to changing the re-zoning of this area to Minimal Change and identifying it as a heritage precinct.

This recommendation is based on the following critique:

- Historic Heritage as presented in the Vision Statement (p.21) demonstrates an outdated concept of heritage which reflects a colonial (pre-1900) and architectural/aesthetic understanding rather than a modern understanding of historical cultural significance. [Australia ICOMOS - Cultural significance means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations.¹]
- The historical knowledge of the Bellarine expressed in the Statement of Planning (p. 42) is extremely rudimentary. There is no recognition of the unique circumstances behind the establishment of Ocean Grove in the 1880s as the only Temperance settlement in Australia, nor of its role supporting migrant resettlement in the Post-World-War- 11 period, nor of the working-class residents who moved to the area at this time.² Input from a reputable local historian such as Susie Zada would have

¹ Meredith Walker and Peter Marquis-Kyle, *The Illustrated Burra Charter: Good Practice for Heritage Places*, Burwood, 2004, p. 11.

² R.G. Edwards, *The History of Ocean Grove*, Edwina Press, 1952, pp. 11-14; Gil McKeown, *The Grove That Grew: The History of Ocean Grove*, Bellarine on-Line, 1998, pp.10-11; Susie Zada, *The Ocean Grove History Murals*, Bellarine Historical Society Inc., Panels 1b, 1c, 5b.

provided recognition of the unique historic social context of Ocean Grove and, I believe, would have resulted in a different strategic outcome for Ocean Grove.

- This document appears to be heavily based on heritage studies and listings undertaken by the City of Greater Geelong. While not disparaging the quality of the work they have done nor the reputation of their consultants, it should be acknowledged that this work is incomplete. The Bellarine Heritage Study 1996 identified heritage places to be included in the C.O.G.G. Planning Scheme. In the intervening twenty-five years many older structures the extant have now been demolished. The remaining structures are now rare examples of their type. The Outer Areas Heritage Study 1998-2000 does not cover the Bellarine Peninsula east of the Barwon River and thus Ocean Grove. Barwon Heads has significantly more recognised heritage places and two Heritage Areas as a consequence of this Study, although its history is closely connected to that of Ocean Grove. There is no mention of Ocean Grove in the Action Plans in their Heritage Strategy 2017-2021. The deficiencies in the work by the City of Greater Geelong is reflected in this Strategy which fails to provide a framework on which future City planning should be based.

The Heritage List for the City of Greater Geelong includes 27 heritage places (with some double counting) of which six are residences. Eleven sites including five houses are noted in the set of heritage overlays in the Township Assessment Report accompanying this Statement of Planning Policy. These are all worthy of preservation but simply represent the top tier of heritage places in 'Old Ocean Grove'. In addition, there are many structures built by early residents in the pre- and post-World War 11 period which should at least be considered for conservation before development approvals are given allowing them to be demolished. These historic homes were not just 'beach shacks' as referred to in your background papers, but family homes built by local working-class residents attracted by the affordability of the area before the 1980s. For stories about this period, I refer you to the Oral Histories available on the Rotary Club of Ocean Grove website, www.rotaryoceangrove.org.au.

The older parts of Ocean Grove have undergone significant redevelopment in recent years and large, modern two-story homes now dominate these streetscapes. Between the new, a few older structures dating to the pre-1980 period remain. These sites will be prime targets for purchase, demolition, and new construction if this Statement of Planning Policy is implemented without a new heritage study being undertaken. By limiting outward development beyond the proposed town boundaries and directing new developments towards the existing town centre, simple economics will accelerate the destruction of remaining remnants of this phase of our town's history. The demand for prime blocks will increase their value encouraging many owners to sell. The others will be forced out as rising land valuations make it difficult for lower-income people to pay the higher rates. Thus, the need for a heritage survey of precincts of historic cultural value such as Old Ocean Grove before the planned rezoning is implemented so that Objective 5 can be applied to protect heritage places. This is not to argue that no demolition or renovation of these older properties is warranted. Certainly, not all will be evaluated as worthy of preservation, and many will need alteration to bring them to modern residential standard. However, it is essential that proper evaluation of their heritage value is undertaken before demolition is approved and that heritage features are preserved within such renovations. There are many

examples of this type of renovation in the heritage areas of Geelong. I give below four examples of structures worthy of preservation in Old Ocean Grove, as defined above, which are not included on the Heritage Lists of the City of Greater Geelong or the Victorian Heritage Listing.

1. 107 The Terrace, Ocean Grove – This beautiful home was built in 1900 according to one source. It is now worth between \$1 M. and \$2 M. so that should ensure its protection from demolition in the short term. However, without heritage overlay protection will it last the next 50 years given that it is in the stated substantial change area?

2. Napona Restaurant, 24 Hodgson Street, Ocean Grove – This structure was originally the Maternal and Child Health Centre. This facility was built in Ocean Grove due to the efforts of the Ocean Grove Primary School Mothers Club, a formidable social force in early post-war society. It was a major milestone in the historical narrative of Ocean Grove women at a time when there were few community facilities in this little town. The 150-year-old tree in front of it is recognised as significant but will this building survive the next 50 years without protection when it is zoned into the substantial change area?

3. It is part of Ocean Grove folklore that, in the 1930s, boathouses were moved from Barwon Heads, where they were considered an eyesore, to Ocean Grove which welcomed the families that owned them. They were distributed around Old Ocean Grove.³ Overtime, the original structures was extended into larger houses, but the boathouse was still an integral and distinguishable part of the building's fabric. Very few of these dwellings remain. A quick review of boathouses identified in Cheryl Timbury and Lesley Shipley, *Historic Ocean Grove: A Walking Tour*, 1997-1999 identified only one possible example.⁴ Any remaining boathouse structures must be identified urgently. None of them are protected. As they deteriorate, they will be prime targets for redevelopment in the next 50 years. This important reminder of the welcoming community spirit which still prevails in Ocean Grove will disappear. 129 Dare Street was built around a boathouse owned by the father of Lindsay Hassell, Captain of the Australian Cricket Team in the 1950s.⁵ It appears to have been redeveloped into an attractive modern home but retained the boathouse facade. If so, this is a prime example of how heritage can be retained within modern housing standards.

4. Main Street. Most of the old shops and residents in this street have been demolished, including the boathouses at 62 The Terrace. Skinners Store has heritage protection. However, the remaining structures do no. Home Hardware occupies the building built by Menzies, an old Ocean Grove family. The original façade should be protected. Coles supermarket occupies the original Tuckerbag Supermarket. The Ocean Grove History Murals are attached to its outer walls and were commissioned by the building's owners.⁶ The fabric of this building should be protected, if only because soon the murals may be the only memories that we have left of Old Ocean Grove.

³ Susie Zada, *The Ocean Grove History Murals*, Panel 5a, Bellarine Historical Society Inc., 1999.

⁴ Cheryl Timbury and Lesley Shipley, *Historic Ocean Grove: A Walking Tour*, Vol. 1, Vol.2, Ocean Grove, 1997-1999.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol.2, p. 20.

⁶ Zada, 'About the History Murals', *History Murals*.

There are many other older buildings in Ocean Grove which have stories to tell. Many are identified in Cheryl Timbury and Lesley Shipley, *Historic Ocean Grove: A Walking Tour, 1997-1999*. How many of these buildings are still standing? A heritage survey is required to identify them and assess their heritage value and conservation needs before all are lost.

I implore you to take these ideas seriously and delay implementation of the rezoning of Old Ocean Grove until an adequate heritage survey has been completed. *You don't know what you've missed until it's gone.*

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