

Council offers compromise on Ch9 site

by Dale McKay

Council has offered a compromise for the 28,000sq Channel 9 redevelopment and is proposing to the Department of Planning to halve the number of planned residential dwellings.

The Channel 9 Part 3A concept plan, currently on public exhibition until May 17, proposes up to 600 dwellings made up of apartments and townhouses, including an 18-storey tower that will dominate the local skyline. That concept plan was not significantly different to what Nine Network Australia presented in November (*Nov 2012 Gazette, P1*).

Willoughby Mayor Pat Reilly said: "We are very concerned about the impact that such a large development will have on local residents and



Proposed Ch9 redevelopment ... multi-storey concern/Nine Network

the surrounding neighbourhoods of Willoughby, Naremburn and Artarmon. The addition of more than 1,000 people to this neighbourhood will result in increased infrastructure, traffic and transport issues.

"The suburbs of Artarmon and Willoughby are largely residential neighbourhoods made up of houses, and the supporting infrastructure has been designed to meet this demand, not that of a high rise development.

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Crime explodes in Artarmon

by Eva Wiland, Gazette editor

Artarmon has become the crime capital of Willoughby. Between September and March, the crimes committed in Artarmon soared to 77 – up by 23 or 46%. Compared with other Willoughby suburbs, Artarmon's crime list was the longest.

Most of the crimes occurred in Artarmon's residential west. Hampden Rd was the most violent, recording nine incidents, including one assault; followed by Barton Rd, six; Pacific Hwy, five; Broughton Rd, four; and Tindale Rd, three. There was also a jump in crime in the east residential area, mainly stealing from cars.

North Shore LAC's SC Jaqueline Rollison told the Gazette Artarmon bucked the north shore trend where crime had come down considerably.

"Unfortunately, in Hampden Rd, there are some empty shopfronts and bad lighting at night ... that attracts crime," she said.

Crimes such as stealing from cars, when they occurred in the same street usually indicated they were carried out by the same offender.

Two sexual assaults listed in the Artarmon industrial area were committed by the same person and involved a couple known to each other. The offender has been charged.

In all, nine assaults – four common, five causing bodily harm – took place in Artarmon in the March quarter. Most of them happened in Artarmon's west residential area, two of them in Barton Rd.

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“The Artarmon and Willoughby Rd intersection has already reached maximum capacity at peak hour, while the Willoughby Rd bus service can barely cope as it is. The local schools are also nearing maximum capacity and will not be able to accommodate the additional families likely to move into the development.”

Nine Network’s concept plan contrasts with the neighbouring medium density property, Castle Vale at 2 Artarmon Rd, that has about half that density at a floor space ratio of 1:1. The high-rise section in West Artarmon, between Francis and Broughton roads, is of similar or lower density but well located to transport, shopping and access roads, while the Channel 9 site is serviced

by an overcrowded bus stop, shops that are kilometers away and limited access.

The Nine proposal also included up to 1,500sq m commercial space compared with less than 600sq m for a “corner type shop” proposed in November, potentially generating additional traffic and parking demand throughout the day, which is not dealt with in the environmental impact statement and could lead to a significant loss of neighbourhood amenity.

At the community consultation sessions in April, there was a strong demand to restrict the commercial space. Council officers have met with Nine and planning department director general (DG) Sam Haddad

to communicate council and key community concerns.

Condition 20 of the DG’s requirements for the development outlines “appropriate and justified level of consultation” with council, state government departments and interested community groups. The community’s view is that has not happened.

A Willoughby South Progress Association community petition for more community consultation has received more than 2,700 signatures.

The EA can be viewed on the department’s website (majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au) or on Willoughby Council’s website at www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au/Development/Major-Part-3A-Projects. ■