

VCAT Application P1035/2020

Red Hill Community Association - Statement of Grounds

Attachment 1

1. Introduction

Red Hill Community Association (RHCA) first became aware of this application when VCAT notices were posted at the property in November 2020. There was no prior Mornington Peninsula Shire (MPS) Permit Application Notice period.

The application incorrectly states that there have been no changes to the subject site or its surrounding circumstances. Over the lengthy period which has elapsed since the original permit was granted there have been changes on the subject site and on the adjoining land which we believe have impact on various aspects of the application.

Our specific objections to the application are as follows:

2. Changes to the subject site:

The subject site now includes three existing licensed premises with an increased number of permitted patrons.

Red Hill Epicurean Centre	120 patrons	(7.00am-11.00pm)
Food on the Hill	55 patrons	(12.00 noon-9pm)
Red Hill Larder (Many Little)	200 patrons	(7.00am-1.00am following morning)

This is in addition to the hairdresser, day spa, estate agent and clothing shop.

This impacts adversely on the parking requirements and patrons often spill out into the surrounding area, frequently parking unsafely and illegally.

3. Changes to the surrounding circumstances:

There is increased use of the other Red Hill South commercial area to the west across Point Leo Road. This area now includes a further limited licensed café premises (Cellar and Pantry with 50 permitted patrons) attached to the supermarket.

There is also much more Post Office traffic due to the increase in on-line shopping as in this rural area almost all on-line purchases are delivered to the Post Office rather than residences and general parcel post is also delivered to the Post Office for collection.

Following the upgrade of the Red Hill - Merricks Rail Trail (walking/equestrian track) there has been an increase in the number of walkers, cyclists and horse riders using this area to park cars and horse-floats.

The area to the west of the subject site, which is shown as a pine tree grove on the application plans, has been cleared and a war memorial, children's playpark, picnic shelters and barbeque area now occupy this site. The area to the east of the subject site has been developed as a bike skills park which is used by adults and children from a wide surrounding area.

Tourist traffic has greatly increased. The 2019 Mornington Peninsula Visitor Journeys Report conducted by MPS indicate that since 2012 there has been a 50% growth in visitor numbers to the hinterland which surrounds Red Hill.

The hinterland received 19% (1,197 million) of the Peninsula's 6.3 million visitors in 2018. It is now the number one day-tripper's destination on the Peninsula, with eating out at restaurants and wineries the top activity (59%).

4. Parking stress

All of these changes have resulted in a dramatic increase in the parking capacity required in the area surrounding the subject site:

for parents bringing children to the playpark, cyclists arriving at the bike skills park and for people using the barbeque facilities,
for increased day tourist numbers, and
for increased residents' requirements at the adjoining commercial area

It should be noted that there is no public transport in the area and the rural nature of the area means that practically no one arrives at this area by foot or by cycle – everyone arrives by motor vehicle and needs parking.

The number of cars using the existing parking on the subject site and the surrounding area has significantly increased in the last ten years.

The recent **One Mile Grid Traffic Management Plan Study** commissioned MPS (July 2018) noted in relation to Red Hill South that:

“each parking area is operating at close to capacity at peak times on a typical Saturday” and

*“over the summer months visitation is expected to increase. With parking surveys indicating limited capacity, it can be expected that parking areas would **exceed capacity** during busier periods and on-street parking would occur”*.

and the Study recommended:

“To ensure that further parking issues are not created by future development in the area, consideration should be given to ensure that future planning permit applications do not result in the generation of additional demand for parking in the area.”

Note that this Study took place outside the heavy peak summer periods.

All Red Hill residents know that at busy times parking is already insufficient on the subject site and in the area surrounding the subject site. The overflow from the subject site spills out onto Shoreham Road and Arthurs Seat Road with frequent unsafe and illegal parking resulting in danger to pedestrians and other traffic. Parked cars block sightlines from residential driveway exits and pedestrians resort to walking on the road. This occurs frequently from December through to Easter particularly over the school holiday period and on public holiday weekends.

In the proposal the design of the undercover parking and the restricted size and location of individual car spaces is likely to mean that its full theoretical capacity may not be reached as patrons will be discouraged from using it and will seek “easier” parking spots off-site. The addition of the occupants of the apartments (some of which have two or three bedrooms) will place an unbearable strain on the surrounding area.

Added traffic and parking pressure will create safety hazards on the surrounding roads as patrons park on the unsealed road shoulder and roadside verge. Parking on the road shoulder means that those exiting the right-hand side of the vehicle step onto the bitumen into the path of vehicles approaching from behind.

Additionally, the traffic pressure brings about the dangerous situations of drivers who are desperate to find a place to park then carrying out dangerous manoeuvres such as U-turns across oncoming traffic.

When Centrepoint patrons use the carpark in the adjoining commercial area at Point Leo Road they prevent the access required by residents to the supermarket, Post Office, pharmacy and baker. (All of these have opening hours on weekends, with the supermarket's trading hours being 7.00am till 7.00pm on all days including public holidays.)

Parking during the construction phase of the development when on-site parking would be greatly reduced would be completely unmanageable.

5. Drainage

A further consequence of the removal of the pine trees from the area to the west of the subject site has been increased pressure on the storm water drainage system in this area. Run off from this area flows to an open drain along Shoreham Road (which also drains Point Leo Road) and into an underground drain which flows under Shoreham Road directly in front of the subject site. Storm water from the subject site also flows into this drain. In periods of heavy rain, this system frequently becomes blocked and floods the road creating a very dangerous traffic hazard.

The proposal to concrete the whole of the parking area on the subject site would create a larger hard surface area which would only increase the volume of storm-water run-off and greatly exacerbate the current situation.

6. Visual Impact

The removal of the pine trees to the west of the subject site has created an open vista across this whole area. This means that the visual impact on the landscape of the proposed development (particularly in its new architectural form) will be much greater than previously.

Visually the project will overlook and dominate the recently constructed War Memorial.

7. Wastewater System

It is proposed that wastewater from the development be transported off-site using the existing system whereby all wastewater is treated on-site and then transferred by pipeline to a nearby property on Arthurs Seat Road. Due to the increased number of patrons using the licensed premises this current system struggles to cope with the existing use.

There are frequently bad odours emitted during peak periods indicating that the treatment plant is not capable of handling the existing wastewater volume. We are therefore concerned that any further overload may cause poorly treated water to be transferred and in greater volume causing seepage directly into the Stony Creek catchment area.

8. Community Concern

The local community has concerns over the development.

The recent **Mornington Peninsula Neighbourhood Character Study Background Report** commissioned by Mornington Peninsula Shire Council (September 2019) identified two of the top concerns of Red Hill and Red Hill South residents as:

- "new development that is inconsistent with the predominant character of the area" and

- “the threat of overdevelopment”

9.Conclusion

For all of the above reasons we oppose this application.