

A Statement of Concern

The Esplanade Hotel, St Kilda

Over the coming months Melbourne's planning authorities face a series of major decisions regarding the St Kilda foreshore, and the nature and quality of its development.

Because the St Kilda foreshore is a priceless local and national asset, local and state governments, developers, local residents, all Melburnians should be involved in the debate over the future of this area. The decisions that are made will have a far-reaching impact on the style of this city, the shape of planning in Melbourne, and the continuing evolution of our urban culture.

The Esplanade Hotel, the historic icon of the St Kilda Esplanade, is currently the subject of a Concept Development Plan submitted to the City of Port Phillip by the Becton development group.

Becton proposes to retain the front portion of the Hotel and is seeking permission to:

- ◆ **build a 125m tall tower (38 storeys), thus breaking the current 18m height limit (6 storeys)**
- ◆ **demolish "A" graded heritage buildings including Baymor Court and parts of the Hotel**
- ◆ **rezone the land to Mixed Use with retail floor areas of up to 800sqm**

The Plan is currently on public exhibition, and will go to Council on 15 December 1998.

A 38-storey tower, with its massive bulk and scale, is completely inappropriate in this location. A building of this size is unknown outside the CBD. Approximately the same height and scale as the Crown Hotel Tower, it will dominate the St Kilda skyline, and forever change how we perceive the foreshore. Apart from the towers that dominate the Queensland Gold Coast, it will be by far the tallest building on any foreshore in Australia.

This skyscraper would become the first major building to breach the current six-storey foreshore height control, but it may not be the last. Becton's plan comes at a time when the current height controls are being reviewed; there is a possibility that all existing height controls along the foreshore could be removed by the end of this year. Approving the tower will send a clear signal to other developers that St Kilda's skies are open for business.

Surrounding the 120 year old Esplanade Hotel with a skyscraper will radically diminish the existing building's stature and historic presence. Becton says that the site needs a landmark building; well, it already has one – the Esplanade Hotel.

We urge the planning authorities to reject outright the Becton plan, and we urge all Melburnians to object to this inappropriate and precedent-setting proposal.

**Supporters
of the
Statement of Concern
The Esplanade Hotel
St Kilda**

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