

Just how important is the Espy issue?

St. Kilda height controls are under threat following a recent report by the State Government Planning Panel. If Becton's application succeeds, it will set a crucial precedent and further encourage high-rise developments.

The looming battle with Becton, and perhaps with the State Government, will be a watershed, not just for the Espy but for the heart and soul of St. Kilda.

The Esplanade Alliance: who are we?

The Esplanade Alliance was formed by St. Kilda residents, traders, musicians and artists nearly one year ago, to help preserve the character, heritage and future of a vital part of Melbourne: the St. Kilda foreshore and its neighbouring environment.

There are tremendous opportunities for imaginative developments to meet a range of cultural, residential, commercial and environmental needs. Our view is that grandiose plans, such as those for the Sea Baths and Godzilla-at-the-Espy, are insensitive and represent inappropriate developments that will ultimately damage rather than enhance the fabric of our community and the unique character of St. Kilda.

STOP PRESS:

PROPOSED PLANS ON PUBLIC EXHIBITION

from 8.10.98 to 20.11.98 at the St Kilda and Sth Melbourne Town Halls, St Kilda Library and the Esplanade Hotel. This period is the public's **ONE** and **ONLY** chance to comment!!

Yes, I am concerned about St. Kilda developments such as the Espy. I would like to support the Esplanade Alliance's campaigns.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Fax _____

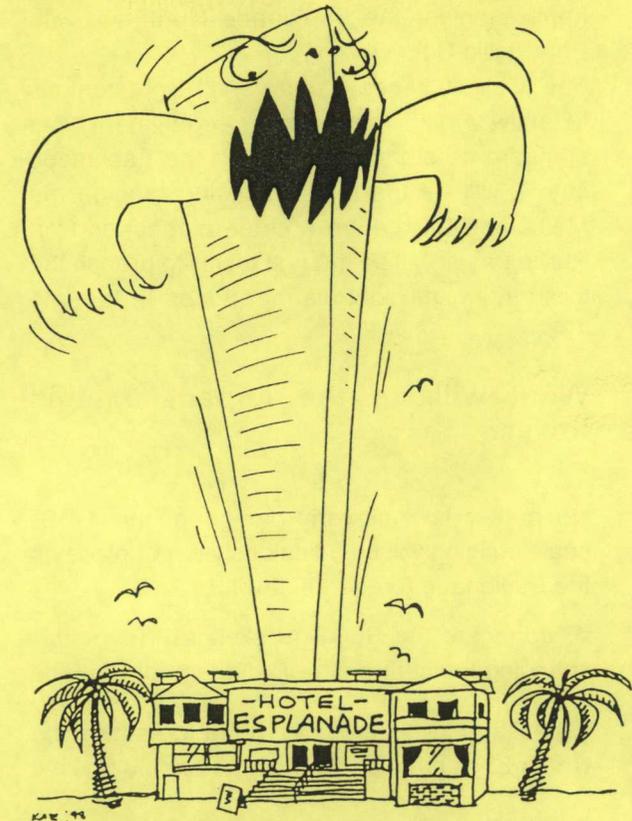
e-mail _____

I can assist with (please tick)

- street information stalls
- mail outs
- submissions
- fund raising

Cut out and post to

Esplanade Alliance, PO Box 1099
St. Kilda South, 3182
email: espyalliance@yahoo.com



From Becton, with Love!

Questions and Answers about The Esplanade Hotel

The Esplanade Alliance
Guarding the heart and soul of
St. Kilda

What is happening?

Becton Corporation has lodged a development application for the Esplanade Hotel site with Port Phillip Council.

The application seeks to amend height controls to allow a 125 metre tower (equivalent to a standard 40-storey building) on the Esplanade site. It will be the tallest building outside the Melbourne City centre and the biggest on Port Phillip Bay. It will be the first tower to breach the 6-storey height controls introduced in the late 1980s.

What will be the impact of this tower?

No matter how cleverly designed, this CBD-scale building will be ridiculously out of place on the Esplanade foreshore. It will:

- # dominate the St. Kilda skyline, irrevocably changing the central physical image of St. Kilda
- # cast shadows across St. Kilda foreshore, the Upper Esplanade and nearby parks and houses
- # alter the delicate balance of our community, confirming that St. Kilda is fast becoming an exclusive playground, affordable only by one section of the community
- # send a clear signal to other developers that St. Kilda's skies are open for business
- # degrade one of the few places left in Melbourne where one can strongly feel the pull of the past. Not all historical sites need a glass pyramid!

Is a skyscraper more elegant than a low-rise building, as Becton claims?

Every building exists in an urban context and has certain responsibilities to it. Attempts at architectural "sculpture" or "art" should not be used as an excuse to ignore the problems that a 40-storey tower will create. In terms of good design - well, we would expect nothing less than the best on such a prominent site. Surely, Becton's talented architect, Nonda Katsalidis, can design a wonderful building of a more appropriate scale for the Espy site. Why does art have to be tall?

The Espy site is a significant one. Does it not deserve a landmark building?

The site already has a landmark building: the 120 year old Espy hotel, which would be overwhelmed and trivialised by the Becton proposal.

The high-rise buildings flanking the Espy, also considered landmarks in their time, are testimony to an earlier era of woefully inadequate planning controls. However, Becton wants to turn back the clock and use them as benchmarks for another over-sized project.

How does the Becton tower fit with local planning guidelines?

It doesn't. Becton bought the site last year, fully aware that it has a 18 metre (6-storey) height limit. The proposed development is seven (7) times that limit. Becton's application is an arrogant dismissal of local planning controls.

Weren't the plans developed following community consultation?

Becton claims it recently conducted an opinion poll of 100 people. The result of this poll is yet to be released.

Although Becton says its plans are a result of community opinion, it has ignored public demand for the building to be heritage listed. Have *you* been consulted?

What does Becton propose to do with the Espy?

Becton has made a public commitment to preserve the front part of the Espy and to maintain the pub's famous music and comedy culture.

So, if we object to the tower, do we lose the Espy?

According to Becton, this is a possibility. The company's promotional material says: *"As long as Becton receives the necessary approval for its development, the Espy will remain as it is today. If Becton's proposed development is not approved, Becton may chose to either sell the property or pursue a different development for the site. A new owner may or may not choose to keep the hotel as part of its development"*.

But why wouldn't a new owner keep the Espy?

Indeed! The community has strongly indicated that it wants to retain the Espy. It's profitable. It's a Melbourne icon. Which developer would want to be remembered for demolishing the Espy?