Lend Lease off to VCAT

Rebecca Thistleton

Lend Lease has filed an appeal in the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal to be allowed to proceed with a $200 million development in Armadale, after Stonnington Council knocked back its development application last month.

The proposal, for 18 terraces in three sections and 457 apartments across 16 buildings, is for a 2.5 hectare site at 590 Orrong Road, adjacent to Toorak train station in the city’s south-east.

Two of the buildings are 12 storeys high and the tallest point tips 40 metres.

Lend Lease general manager of apartments Ben Coughlan described the project as one of Melbourne’s greenest and said he was confident the independent VCAT panel would approve the project on its merits.

Lend Lease has engaged law firm Rigby Cook for the case, which is set to be heard over 15 days in May and June.

The council rejected the application at a January 30 meeting attended by more than 200 residents on the grounds it was overdeveloped for the rest of the neighbourhood.

Mayor John Chandler, who is an architect, said it was unsurprising Lend Lease had appealed the council decision but he was confident the council’s verdict would be upheld.

“The plan has already been judged to be out of scale with the surrounds,” he said. “It’s just too big.”

“But more often than not, VCAT ends up being the planning authority, rather than the council.”

Residents have campaigned against the project under the banner “Fight the towers”.

The group amassed more than 600 objections in the lead-up to council decision and is now vowing to rejoin the fight against Lend Lease at VCAT.

Lend Lease had an original proposal for 350 to 400 dwellings on the site rejected in 2010. Stonnington Council is awaiting Planning Minister Matthew Guy’s decision on imposing a 17-metre height limit and 250-unit limit for the site.

Industry super fund runs its own project

Rebecca Thistleton

Melbourne’s western growth corridor will have another 500 residential properties after a $110 million project was announced for Truganina yesterday.

Fund managers Industry Superannuation Property Trust said the new development, Forsyth Park, would eventually be home to more than 1200 people.

Forsyth Park will be the first residential land project ISPT has developed independently.

ISPT chief executive Daryl Browning said the company had been involved in development joint ventures over the past five years and there was now enough internal expertise and experience to develop a project in their own right.

“This doesn’t mean we won’t be entering into other joint ventures, not at all, but this is the chance for us to put our own stamp on a project,” he said.

ISPT has existing landholdings in Cranbourne South and Werribee, which were developed through joint ventures.

Mr Browning said joint venture projects bankrolled by ISPT were branded by the joint venture partner.

“This is an opportunity for a project to be branded ISPT and raise our profile, our members will be noticing where their funds are being invested.”

The development would include a range of block sizes to cater for varying house sizes.

“It appears the days of huge backyards are over. At 500 lots Forsyth Park is a good size, it’s not monstrous but will allow us to test our own processes and refine how we do things.”

The project forms part of the trust’s $7 billion portfolio, owned by 24 industry super funds.

ISPT manages superannuation funds for about 40 per cent of Australian workers.

Forsyth Park will be marketed by the Oliver Hume Real Estate Group.