

Over the last five or so years, in the, previously, spacious and undisturbed precinct of Rosebery, residents have been threatened by the uncontrolled and regulated development of suburban housing.

The history of this suburb reveals an evolution from mixed, light industrial to an increasingly residential environment. Of late this evolution has become exponential, as people move into the suburb to enjoy its proximity and easy access to the city, its broad streets and good sized blocks as an alternative to apartment living. The community has, however, been forced to become accustomed to this new, vertical village.

The suburb has been protected historically from overdevelopment and changes to its nature by the Covenant etched onto the deed of properties in the precinct. While some parts of the suburb have been altered with only the fundamental codes of the Covenant being maintained, on the whole it has been policed well by the Council and those who live within the boundaries of the suburb.

In recent times there have been issues that have impacted on the serenity, look and feel of the suburb. Regardless of the small sections of "erosion" the overwhelming desire of the people who live here is that the foundation of the building style be shored up to avoid further losses. While the temporary exclusion of the Rosebery housing estate from the Housing Code will assist in this, it would be hoped to make the exclusion more permanent.

As a long term resident of this suburb (more than 30 years) along with the majority of people who live in this area we are not anti-development but rather would prefer the Council to once more take control of what is built and how it is built in the area of "special character". A good many blocks have undergone alterations that have included second story living areas while maintaining the Californian Bungalow appearance in accordance with the Covenant. The numerous "Block Houses" that have surfaced belong somewhere else. Despite the residents, through the actions of the Rosebery Residents Action Committee, having established the legitimacy of the Covenant it remains to be applied in an inconsistent fashion. I am certain greater consistency would be the outcome if private certifiers were removed from the equation. Better policing of the Covenant by the landholders would be possible if neighbours of property developers had some knowledge provided by certifiers of what was being built. Yes, I know they are obliged to provide this information but what authority enforces this obligation?

The introduction by the State government of building legislation that led to the Compliant Development Code has allowed those who seem to prefer being house owners rather than neighbours, to bypass the standard checks and balances that are usually provided and policed by local residents and council in the form of Building and Development applications. Under the CDC the role of council and its planning and inspection function have been delivered into the hands of private certifiers. The actions and unregulated controls of these certifiers seem to be more and more in question as builders "shop" for a certifier who will tick all the boxes on behalf of their client.

It is imperative that these tactics are halted before it is too late to maintain what we all hold dear.