

Movies ready to roll

by FAYE MICHELSON

AGREEMENT has been reached for a 14-screen, 3800-seat, state-of-the-art movie complex at the Eastland Shopping Centre.

The Queensland Investment Corporation, which owns the centre, and Hoyts finalised the agreement last week.

QIC, which bought Eastland in 1996, also recently acquired the 2.5 ha Ringwood Market site and in December purchased the Midway Arcade property fronting the Maroondah Highway in Ringwood.

A spokesman for QIC said the proposed Eastland development would include more specialty retail outlets, a supermarket and total parking for more than 4000 cars.

Deal for 14-screen complex

"Current indications are that development work will start this year, or early in 1999, and be completed within about 12 months," the spokesman said.

He said the provision of cinemas had been a long-running issue in the Maroondah area.

"A year ago, Victorian State Planning Minister Rob Maclellan approved the introduction of cinemas at Eastland under his delegated authority," he said.

"Council subsequently ratified this approval, subject to some minor amendments to plans, and since gaining this ministerial and council approval, QIC has undertaken extensive consul-

tations with key stakeholders and proposed major tenants at Eastland," the spokesman said.

QIC, a major shopping centre investor, is owned by the Queensland State Government. It invests and manages funds on behalf of Queensland public servants and a number of government organisations. It owns shopping centres in Melbourne, Canberra, Sydney, Brisbane and Toowoomba.

The spokesman said the company planned to retain Ringwood Market's existing retail form and had purchased the Midway Arcade with the long-range possibility of creating "a stronger future link between Eastland and this major traffic artery".

Hoyts' general manager — property, Wayne Smith, said the planned Eastland complex would have 14 auditoriums featuring digital surround sound, 19-metre, wall-to-wall and floor-to-floor screens, seating in stadium configuration for uninterrupted viewing and extra-wide chairs with adjustable backs and arm-rests.

The president of the Ringwood Chamber of Commerce and Industry Louis Blank welcomed the announcement.

"The community has been waiting for these cinemas for many years," Mr Blank said.

"Ringwood is a designated centre with an entertainment core with nightclubs and restaurants; cinemas are a vital cog in rounding off the entertainment core."

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More cinemas less shops for Eastland

EXPANSION plans for Eastland shopping centre have been modified to include a significant increase in cinemas in the \$30 million entertainment and retail development.

Maroondah Council approved the modified plans last week, which will see 17, not 10 cine-

mas built at Eastland and a decrease in planned retail floorspace of over 9000 square metres.

Council labelled the modified plans as "generally a scaling down of the original proposal", including a decrease of entertainment floorspace of 65 square metres and 943 less parking spaces.

The number of cinema seats planned for the expansion, however, will increase from 2766 to 4185.

Council integrated planning manager, Phillip Turner, said the modifications show a smaller scale building with less visual impact from Warrandyte Rd and

Ringwood Bypass.

He said the plans are considered satisfactory, subject to the following modifications:

- An appropriate pedestrian entrance along Warrandyte Rd.
- A more active frontage along Plaza Centreway.
- Appropriate urban design treatment along Warrandyte Rd, and
- Deletion of 12 carparking spaces adjacent Maroondah Hwy.

The 17 cinema Eastland development is expected to be operated by Hoyts, which last year purchased Ringwood Market shopping centre - a move which effectively prevented Palace Entertainment from developing a \$20 million cinema complex at that site.

Eastland centre manager, Andrew Lannen, said estimated attendance at the entertainment complex was about 700,000 people a year.

He predicted the Eastland expansion would provide 865 full-time construction jobs and 815 retailing jobs when completed.

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Chamber's solution to complex problem

by LEONORA ELLIOTT-BRUCE

THE Ringwood Chamber of Commerce and Industry wants planning permits granted for cinemas at the Ringwood Market and Eastland to end the development stand-off, but the move has provoked outrage from another business group.

Chamber vice president Paul Morris said the "fiasco" over Ringwood cinemas had gone on for long enough and it was time to let the market forces decide which complex succeeded.

He called on Maroondah Council to grant permits for both sites. Mr Morris said the competition would be healthy for the area.

"The way we are going we may not get theatres at all in Ringwood or if we do it may be some years down the track and we are for the development of Ringwood," Mr Morris said.

An eight-cinema complex is planned by Ringwood Multiplex Cinemas at the Ringwood Market and Coles/Myer wants to build 10 cinemas at Eastland. Ringwood Multiplex, which is a subsidiary of Palace Entertainment, is expected to start building in three months, while a panel hearing is examining a proposed amendment to the city's planning scheme which will allow Coles/Myer's

cinemas at Eastland to go ahead.

Ringwood Market Traders Committee spokesman Brian Tridgell said he was angered and shocked by the comments made by Mr Morris.

"I can't understand why on earth he or the chamber would say such a thing," he said.

"It's a matter of commonsense that there needs to be some controls somewhere in the market place in respect to how many shopping centres we have and what they contain. Retailers are finding it really tough at the moment and an extension of Eastland — including cinemas — would destroy many Ringwood businesses.

"The chamber has failed to represent the traders."

More than 3000 Ringwood traders and shoppers have signed a petition calling for cinemas to be built at the Ringwood Market. Mr Tridgell said the market's survival was dependent on the cinema construction. "I am very disappointed and very angry at what Mr Morris and the chamber has said, it should do some research before making public statements like that," Mr Tridgell said.

"Nobody has come down and talked to us about what two cinema complexes would do to the area and I can tell you now the people I have talked to

are like me and are totally opposed to the idea."

Mr Tridgell said there would not be enough customers to sustain two cinema complexes.

"Someone will end up getting hurt and it won't be the large corporation," he said.

LM Project Consulting spokesman for Ringwood Multiplex Cinemas, Luke Middleton, said the idea was totally unfair.

"Is this Mr Morris or the chamber aware of the litigation that Coles/Myer instigated to try to stop the Ringwood Market cinemas proposal?" Mr Middleton said. "The comments are unfounded and I don't think the issue has been fully understood.

"It's not a fiasco; it has been corporate bullyship which is effectively jeopardising the viability of the market centre. And there would be no competition, because both complexes would show identical films."

Coles/Myer was planning to take Palace Entertainment to the Supreme Court to stop the market cinemas but settled out of court just days before a hearing was scheduled. Coles/Myer opposed the market cinemas on planning grounds. A spokesman was unavailable for comment when *The Mail* went to press.

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New blow to cinemas

by CHARISSE WOOLCOCK

COLES Myer has struck another blow to the Ringwood Multiplex Cinemas by appealing again to the Supreme Court to halt the development.

In what is becoming a drawn out legal battle to build more cinemas at Ringwood, Coles Myer has taken out its fourth appeal against the development.

The move followed a favorable ruling by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal for the Ringwood Multiplex Cinemas' development at the Ringwood Market site in Bond St.

Coles Myer objected to the eight-cinema complex last year, saying it would have a negative impact on car parking for customers at its nearby Target and Coles supermarket stores.

The tribunal took six months to make its decision and eventually found there were no planning reasons why the development should not proceed.

It was thought that its decision would end the long-running battle, but the new appeal to the Supreme Court has again set back the development.

Coles Myer's strategy and property director, Andrew Scott, said the company appealed to the

Supreme Court because it believed Eastland businesses were being disadvantaged by the AAT decision.

"We want that (the disadvantage to businesses) to be better recognised and included in the decision," he said.

Ringwood Multiplex Cinemas spokesman Luke Middleton said the latest appeal was "rampant self-interest on the part of Coles Myer".

"Coles Myer is frustrating our development while it tries to alter the Ringwood Planning Scheme to allow a cinema complex at Eastland," he said.

Coles Myer is seeking planning permission to

build its own cinemas as part of further extensions at Eastland shopping centre.

Mr Middleton said the Ringwood Market complex would have been completed by now if Coles Myer had not continued legal proceedings. "Coles Myer is using its financial muscle to try to block a development that will be of great benefit to the Ringwood District Centre and the people of Ringwood," he said.

He said the Multiplex Cinema development embraced the Ringwood district centre structure plan. "It will be the catalyst to bring life back into the Ringwood district centre, providing a much-needed boost to the area," he said.

CINEMAS SEQUEL WINS

AAT in favor of \$20m complex

by LEONORA ELLIOTT-BRUCE

A \$20 million cinema complex, with eight cinemas and seating for more than 2000 people, is set to be built at the Ringwood Market.

Work on the complex, by Ringwood Multiplex Cinemas, a subsidiary of Palace Entertainment, is expected to begin in March next year and be completed by November.

The Administrative Appeals Tribunal has ruled in favor of the project for the second time, rejecting retail giant Coles/Myer's objections to the complex.

In its report, the AAT stated the development complied with planning policy. There would be adequate off-street parking and the development would support the provisions of the Ringwood District Centre - entertainment zone, the report said.

The former Ringwood Council adopted the RDC structure plan in 1988, with its main function being to "encourage a wide range of commercial, professional, cultural, leisure, entertainment, community activities and facilities to serve local and regional needs".

But Coles/Myer objected to the development on the grounds it would affect car parking to customers at its nearby Target and Coles supermarket stores.

Coles/Myer has wanted to build 10 cinemas at Eastland, attempting several times to alter the Ringwood Planning Scheme to allow the development.

The latest Coles/Myer attempt, amendment L45, is on exhibition at the Maroondah Council offices. Submissions must be lodged by November 27.

Coles/Myer director of strategy and property Andrew Scott said the AAT decision was disappointing.

"We are considering our position at the moment," he said. "We don't mind cinemas going there, but when it interferes with car parking for our customers, we do object."

Ringwood Multiplex Cinema spokesman Luke Middleton was pleased with the AAT decision and said the design merits of the complex had shone through.

The building would blend with the existing environment and be flanked by a tree-lined facade, Mr Middleton said.

The complex has been designed by architects Hames Sharley Pty Ltd, who also designed the Como cinema complex in South Yarra.

The idea for the Ringwood cinemas was first mooted two years ago. Mr Middleton said the cinemas would have now been completed if Coles/Myer had not objected.

He said there had been no other objectors to the development, and the Coles/Myer appeals had cost the company more than \$250,000.

He said the second town planning application for the development was required to try to stop Coles/Myer's appeal in the Supreme Court.

(The second application set out design changes including amended car parking and a building move to the north of the site.)

Coles/Myer has appealed, on points of law, to the Supreme Court over the AAT's decision on Ringwood Multiplex Cinemas' first town planning application.

The Supreme Court action was adjourned pending the AAT's decision on this latest town planning application. It will lapse because the first application is no longer valid.

Coles/Myer has 28 days to appeal the AAT's latest decision.

Mr Middleton said the location for the cinemas was perfect.

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Panel to decide on cinemas issue

by LEONORA ELLIOTT-BRUCE

THE decision to build cinemas at Eastland could be decided by an independent panel appointed by Planning Minister Rob Maclellan.

A three-person panel will hear submissions into Coles Myer proposal, amendment L45, which if approved would allow the completion of the fourth stage of the Eastland development.

Amendment L45 proposes to remove the ban on amusement parlors and cinemas from the Ringwood District Centre — regional retail focus zone.

It also paves the way for an increase in retail floor space at Eastland and Safeway from 65,000 to 72,000 square metres. Land at the south-west corner of Warrandyte Rd and the Ringwood bypass reservation would also be rezoned from proposed public open space to Ringwood District Centre — regional retail focus zone if the amendment is approved.

The Administrative Appeals Tribunal approved last year a proposal by Ringwood Multiplex Cinemas Pty Ltd to build an eight cinema complex at the Ringwood Market. Coles Myer objected to the proposal because of

the negative impact the development would have on car parking for customers at its nearby Target and Coles supermarket stores.

Coles Myer director of strategy and property Andrew Scott said at least 10 cinemas were planned at Eastland.

But Ringwood traders are against the plan and want the cinemas built at the Ringwood Market.

More than 3000 traders and shoppers have petitioned Mr Maclellan calling for cinemas to be built at the market.

Ringwood Market Traders Committee spokesman Brian Tridgell said the Ringwood Market's survival was dependent on the construction of cinemas at the market.

"If Coles Myer gets its way and builds cinemas at Eastland, it will cause nothing more than massive traffic congestion and it will centralise the main shopping district, taking valuable shopping dollars from the market traders — it will kill business," Mr Tridgell said.

He said traders did not want Coles Myer to monopolise the Ringwood shopping trade.

The panel hearings into amendment L45 which could alter the zone, will begin April 17, 9.30am at the Maroondah City Council offices and continue April 18, 19, 23, 24, 26 and 30 and May 1, 2, 3 and 6.

THE MAIL May 18, 1994

NEWS watch

Hoyts jumps in on new cinemas

HOYTS has jumped the gun on moves to lift the ban on cinemas at Eastland, announcing last week it would build a massive 10-cinema complex adjoining the centre.

The giant movie chain released plans last week for the development which would include a restaurant, bar and amusement parlor on the Ringwood Bowling Club site next to the shopping centre.

The announcement comes three months after *The Mail* first reported a Coles Myer bid for 12 cinemas at Eastland.

The Hoyts plans compete with Palace Entertainment Corporation Pty Ltd which has applied to Ringwood Council for a permit to build eight cinemas at the Ringwood Market.

Hoyts general manager (property division), Mr Wayne Smith said negotiations with Coles Myer had been going on for about a year. Hoyts had identified Ringwood as "underscreened" and the shopping centre was an ideal location for a cinema complex.

He said the plans included seating for 2590 people, 10 cinemas, a casual restaurant, bar and sweet shop.

Clifton Project Management's Mr Jeff Clifton, for Coles Myer, said an amendment to the Ringwood planning scheme, L30, which would remove a ban on cinemas and amusement parlors, was yet to be finalised.

A hearing at the council offices is scheduled for June 6, before a one-person panel, Ms Gaye McKenzie.

If the amendment was passed, Mr Clifton said, a town planning permit would be sought from Ringwood Council. He was hopeful of a successful hearing.

"Ringwood as a district centre does need cinemas," Mr Clifton said. "The closest are at Forest Hill or Knox so there appears to be a fairly large demand for cinemas at Eastland.

"We believe it is not only beneficial to Eastland but to all of Ringwood."

Mr Clifton said there was no certainty the bid by Palace Entertainment would go ahead.

"A free-standing cinema complex is not going to be as

by LEONORA ELLIOTT-BRUCE

commercially viable as one attached to a regional shopping centre."

A Palace Entertainment spokesman would not comment.

Ringwood city manager Mr John Paech said the council had endorsed the proposed amendment.

He said the council was aware Coles Myer had been negotiating with Hoyts and that the Ringwood Bowling Club site could be the future cinema site.

The council had recently bought the Norwood primary school site to which the bowling club would be relocated, Mr Paech said.

Ringwood Chamber of Commerce president, Mr Mark Dobson, said businesses could suffer financially if the cinema complex was built.

He said many traders had set up shop in the Ringwood entertainment precinct (which includes Timezone and Jooce Nightclub).

While Eastland was the obvious place for a cinema complex, the entertainment precinct had been established for that purpose.

"The complex could be of detriment to the area because many businesses have opened believing they were operating in the entertainment precinct," he said.

Croydon Twin Cinema operator, Mr Peter Nikolakakas, said he was not worried about the development and that competition was healthy.

Extensions to his Hewish Rd complex were about to begin increasing cinemas from two to four. Initially the Ringwood complex would attract people but they would return to Croydon.

"I have had a lot of people ringing up and pledging their support when *The Mail* wrote that earlier story about the 12 cinemas. It was amazing how many people rang up pledging their support."

Mr Nikolakakas said the Croydon Twin had a reputation as a community-spirited organisation.

"We do a lot of community work — community screenings for different groups, charity and fundraising work, we have a great community following," he said.

Cinema go-ahead

WORK on a new multiplex cinema at Ringwood Market could begin in as little as six months, following Ringwood Council's approval of a town planning application for the cinema last week.

Palace Entertainment's proposal for a multi-million dollar, eight cinema complex to be built over the existing Ringwood Market car park.

Plans for the cinema provide for 2132 seats and include two cafe/restaurants which could be linked to Ringwood Market, to complement both developments.

Council received seven objections to the proposal, including traffic and noise increase, loss of park land, insufficient car parking and lack of public transport in the area. But at last week's council meeting Cr Ann Fraser said objections' concerns could be addressed by the Traffic Working Group.

"I think this is ideal and I think

it is time this development got underway," Cr Fraser said.

Clifton Project Management representing Coles/Myer, which recently unveiled plans for a ten cinema complex on the current Ringwood Bowling Club site next to Eastland, also objected to the application.

It requested council defer a decision on the application, claiming it was premature and would prejudice proper consideration of their proposal for Eastland. However, council could not defer making a decision due to statutory obligations.

Jeff Clifton from Clifton Project Management would not comment this week on whether his company would appeal council's decision.

Ringwood Council which owns the Bowling Club site has already had preliminary discussion with Coles Myer over the site's sale.

Cinema plan

Hoyts has unveiled plans for a new multi-million dollar ten screen cinema complex to be incorporated into the next stage of Eastland Shopping Centre in Ringwood.

The 2,500 seat complex would be located near the corner of Warrandyte Rd and Miles Ave and is scheduled to be completed in 1996 if council approves plans.

Coles Myer would build the new centre with Hoyts leasing and fitting out the building at a total cost of more than \$10 million. Plans for Hoyts 10 Eastland include a restaurant, liquor bar, candy bar, serve yourself candy house and an electronic games and amusement centre.

Hoyts property division general manager Wayne Smith said

the Ringwood area was "under screened".

"We've got every confidence council will support the scheme," Mr Smith said.

In December last year Clifton Project Management on behalf of Coles Myer requested council to amend the local section of Ringwood Planning Scheme to allow cinemas in the area.

In March council requested Planning Minister Rob MacLellan to appoint a panel to prepare a report on the proposal. The panel hearing is scheduled for June 6 with a report due back to council about a month later. Council has also received an application for an eight cinema complex on the Ringwood Market site.

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Traders want cinemas at Ringwood Market

by LEONORA ELLIOTT-BRUCE

MORE than 3000 Ringwood traders and shoppers have petitioned Planning Minister Rob Maclellan calling for cinemas to be built at the Ringwood Market.

Ringwood Market Traders Committee spokesman Brian Tridgell said the petition was sent to Mr Maclellan two weeks ago.

Coles Myer has objected to plans by Ringwood Multiplex Cinemas Pty Ltd to build an eight-cinema complex at the Ringwood Market, saying it would impact on car parking for customers at its nearby Target and Coles stores.

Coles Myer has its own plan to build 10 cinemas at Eastland and has applied to the Maroondah

City Council to change its planning scheme to allow the cinemas.

An independent panel was appointed last week to hear the application after the council received 30 objections to the proposal.

Mr Tridgell said the Ringwood Market's survival was dependent on the construction of cinemas.

He said traders and shopkeepers were unanimous — the cinemas had to be built at the market.

"If Coles Myer gets its way and builds cinemas at Eastland, it will cause nothing more than massive traffic congestion and it will centralise the main shopping district, taking valuable shopping dollars from the market traders — it will kill business," Mr Tridgell said.

He said traders did not want Coles Myer to

monopolise the Ringwood shopping trade. "The other thing is that the Ringwood Market site is zoned correctly and is within the council's entertainment precinct, whereas Eastland is not zoned to take cinemas," Mr Tridgell said.

A spokesman for Mr Maclellan said the petition was being considered.

Last year, the Administrative Appeals Tribunal ruled in favor of Ringwood Multiplex Cinemas to build the eight-cinema complex at the market.

In its ruling, the AAT said it could find no reason why the development should not proceed and that Coles Myer had failed to make out grounds for appeal.

Coles Myer has since appealed the decision to the Supreme Court.

Coles Myer strategy and property director Andrew Scott said the trend was for cinemas to be located at major shopping centres such as Eastland.

The Coles Myer town planning amendment, L45, calls for an increase in the retail floor space of Eastland and Safeway from 65,000 to 72,000 square metres and the removal of amusement parlor and cinema from the prohibited uses section of the Ringwood District Centre, Regional Retail Focus Zone.

It also applies to rezone land at the south-west corner of Warrandyte Rd and the Ringwood Bypass reservation site from proposed public open space to the Ringwood District Centre Regional Retail Focus Zone.

19-12-93
Mail p3

Bitter cinema deadlock

by CHARISSE WOOLCOCK

RINGWOOD residents are "fed up" with Coles Myer moves to halt cinemas at the Ringwood Market and develop their own at Eastland.

Coles Myer and Ringwood Market are embroiled in a bitter battle at the Supreme Court over the eight-cinema market complex in Bond St.

Ringwood Market has twice been given a permit to develop cinemas by Maroondah Council and the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

Coles Myer has made four appeals against it to the AAT and Supreme Court on planning issues.

It made its latest appeal to the Supreme

Court to halt the development last month. And last week Maroondah Council voted to allow an independent panel to decide on a proposal to build cinemas at Eastland.

Heathmont resident Graham Hayes said many residents were fed up with Coles Myer using their "money muscle" to stop the market cinemas.

"They did the same thing at Stud Park. They stopped Safeway opening for 12 months. I think Coles Myer should be shown up in the true light," he said.

"I think that the umpire has ruled several times against (Coles Myer) and I think they are using their money muscle against Ringwood Market."

"We want competition and that's what we won't get if Coles Myer gets the cinemas."

Mr Hayes said a cinema complex development was just what the market needed to bring more life to the centre.

He said he decided to speak out about Coles Myer "on behalf of so many of the silent majority" of people who were against Coles Myer's tactics.

He said Eastland was trying to cut competition out of Ringwood. "But I think Eastland is big enough," he said.

In its proposal, Coles Myer wants to:

- increase Eastland's floor space from 65,000 square metres to 72,000 square metres;
- change the Ringwood District Centre Regional Retail Focus Zone to allow amusement parlours and cinemas;
- rezone land at the south-west corner of the Warrandyte Rd and Ringwood bypass

reservation from Proposed Open Space to Ringwood District Centre Regional Retail Focus zone; and

— make a site specific amendment to allow stage four of the Eastland redevelopment to go ahead.

In its decision to appoint an independent panel, Maroondah Council noted that Ringwood Market had a permit to build cinemas.

In a report to the council last week city development manager Nick Easy said:

"The Ringwood Market site is located in the Entertainment zone and is considered to be an ideal location, however given the status of current planning policy and the experience gained from other planning issues of this scale it is considered that an independent panel is the best option for council to pursue."

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CINEMA POSER

by JEFF JONES

THE entertainment conglomerate Hoyts Corporation is believed to have bought the Ringwood Market as a site for a major cinema complex.

The bid, if successful, would snatch control of the site from Palace Entertainment, which had planned a similar development there.

It's believed Palace Entertainment was about to finalise a purchase agreement with mortgagee in possession, Challenge Bank.

Palace Entertainment had been locked in an intense battle with Coles Myer to develop Ringwood's first cinema complex for the past few years.

A subsidiary company of Palace Entertainment, Ringwood Multiplex, sought permits to erect an eight-cinema complex on the Ringwood Market site, and Coles Myer planned to build 10 cinemas at Eastland.

In June 1995, the Administrative Appeals Tribunal gave Ringwood Multiplex the green light to build on the Bond St site.

Coles Myer planned to take Palace Entertainment to the Supreme Court to stop the market cinemas but settled out of court just days before a hearing was scheduled earlier this year.

Spokesmen from Hoyts Corporation, Coles/Myer, Ringwood Market, Challenge Bank and Palace Entertainment were not prepared to comment last week, but other sources have confirmed the Hoyts deal has been signed.

The latest speculation has sent shockwaves through the market place.

The *Mail* spoke to several tenants last week who were worried about their future prospects.

"There is a lot of money invested by people in the market who operate family businesses, it's our liveli-

hood," one trader said. "We stand to lose a lot if the market doesn't continue, and there is great concern that it may not - it all depends on who has purchased the site."

The possible move by Hoyts to buy the Ringwood Market comes in the wake of an announcement by Planning Minister Rob Maclellan which effectively sets the guidelines for cinema developments.

Mr Maclellan recently ruled against a proposed 25-screen development at East Burwood, accepting an advisory committee's recommendation that cinemas should be located within or at the edge of established activity centres.

For the major cinema companies to expand further in the suburban areas, they will need to be attached to major shopping centres.

A statement from Palace Entertainment was expected this week.

MYER CINEMA

Hoyts moves on market site

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COUP

by JEFF JONES

RINGWOOD Market may lose the planned cinema complex after a bold eleventh-hour move which has seen Hoyts Corporation take control of the site last week.

The entertainment giant is now negotiating with Coles Myer to build cinemas at Eastland.

It could bring to a close a protracted two-year battle between Coles Myer and Palace Entertainment which saw the proposal for eight cinemas at the market go before Maroondah Council, the Administrative Appeals Tribunal and the Supreme Court. Palace finally won approval for the complex earlier this year.

But last week, the Hoyts move on the market site was confirmed by Palace Entertainment boss Sam Di Pietro and consultant Luke Middleton of LM Consulting.

Mr Di Pietro would not reveal the sale price nor would he elaborate on whether Hoyts Corporation purchased the site or the subsidiary company, Ringwood Multiplex, that Palace Entertainment had set up to manage the market.

Coles Myer strategy and property director Andrew Scott last week confirmed the company was having discussions with Hoyts over an Eastland cinema complex.

"Obviously any discussions are commercially confidential," he said.

"Also we have not finalised the issues of development approval and building approval and until both of those things are finalised it's very difficult to finalise any deal between parties."

According to Luke Middleton of LM Consulting, the cinemas will be built at Eastland.

"It is my understanding that they (Hoyts) won't be building the cinemas there (at the market) because they already have an agreement to go into Eastland," he said.

The sale of the Ringwood

Market follows a panel decision on planning scheme amendment L45, released in July. The panel recommended that cinemas not be allowed at Eastland until December 31, 1997, "after which date they shall become discretionary at that site".

The panel's report was presented to Maroondah Council last night.

Ringwood Market manager Don Stevenson was unable to comment on the cinemas.

But he did say Hoyts Corporation bought the market as an "income-producing investment".

"Hoyts are positive about the future of the Ringwood Market and they are looking at a series of options to ensure the site's long-term future," he said.

Mr Middleton said his group would have had cinemas open (at Ringwood Market) by the middle of next year if Hoyts Corporation had not purchased the site.

"We were disappointed because we had top quality cinemas ready to go to tender," he said.

"I am also extremely disappointed that the town planning process has taken away the certainty of development.

"Town planning is meant to create certainty and the site we looked at and pursued for over two and a half years was a site that had an as-of-right use for cinemas," he said.

Evidence presented by Coles Myer at the L45 panel hearing in May stated that an estimated 700-800,000 people per year in 1998 would attend cinemas in Ringwood.

"The average multiplex needs over 550,000 people just to make it viable," Mr Middleton said.

"Based on this, it is extremely hard to understand the panel's logic in granting Coles Myer the right to develop their cinemas alongside the proposed Palace cinemas.

Hoyts Corporation was unavailable for comment.

NEWS WATCH

Mail
4-7-95
p3

Win for cinema group

RETAIL giant Coles Myer has failed to convince the Administrative Appeals Tribunal to halt a Ringwood cinema complex development.

The AAT has ruled in favor of Ringwood Multiplex Cinemas Pty Ltd which can now go ahead with plans to build an eight-cinema complex at the Ringwood Market site in Bond St.

Coles Myer objected because of the negative impact the development would have on car parking for customers at its nearby Target and Coles supermarket stores.

Parties to the dispute have been waiting for the AAT ruling since February.

by LEONORA ELLIOTT-BRUCE

Coles Myer has not ruled out plans to build its own cinema complex of between six and 10 cinemas at Eastland shopping centre.

But Coles Myer spokesman Mr Andrew Scott said the company's cinema plans had nothing to do with its objection to the Ringwood Multiplex Cinemas development.

Response

He said there was a growing trend over the past 10 years for cinemas to be located at major shopping centres, such as Eastland.

He said Coles Myer cinema plans were in response to customer demand.

Coles Myer was still reviewing the AAT decision, Mr Scott said.

The AAT found there were no planning reasons why the development should not proceed. It also found Coles Myer had failed to make out the grounds of appeal.

Eight cinemas with seating for 2000 people and more than 500 car parks are planned on the site which falls within the Maroondah City Council entertainment zone.

LM Project Consulting spokesman, Luke Middleton, for Ringwood Multiplex Cinemas Pty Ltd, said the AAT decision was pleasing.

He said it had been a long haul since plans first went to the former Ringwood Council, but the AAT decision had been worth the wait.

"It was good to see the planning merits of the case were seen by the people at the AAT," he said.

Plans for the cinema complex were first lodged with the former Ringwood Council in mid-1994.

The council decided to grant a permit for the development on June 6 last year but Coles Myer appealed 21 days later.

Committed

The case was heard at the AAT over several days in October, November and December last year and in February this year.

Mr Middleton said Ringwood Multiplex Cinemas was committed to building the cinemas and the development was ready to go.

mail 29-3-97

Ringwood set to be cinema oasis

RINGWOOD is moving from being a cinema desertland to an oasis.

by TRICIA QUIRK

For years there has been no major cinema complex in the area and residents have had to travel to neighboring suburbs to see movies.

Now two separate plans are germinating. Coles Myer Ltd plans to build a 12-cinema complex at Eastland if a proposed amendment to the Ringwood Council planning scheme goes ahead.

And Palace Entertainment Corporation Pty Ltd, through Frank Perry from architects Hames Sharley Australia, has lodged an application to build an eight-cinema complex next to the market.

At its meeting last week, Ringwood Council supported the Coles Myer scheme by asking the Planning and Development Minister to appoint an independent panel to review the application for a planning amendment.

The proposed amendment, L30, would remove a ban on cinemas and amusement parlors in Eastland, a retail zone.

A council spokesperson said the process would take at least two months and then a planning permit to build the complex would have to be lodged.

Clifton Project Management director,

Mr Jeff Clifton — acting on behalf of Coles Myer — said an application would be lodged as soon as possible.

He said Coles Myer would not go ahead if Palace's scheme was up and running first.

"But the fact that people apply for a permit doesn't mean they're going to proceed," Mr Clifton said. "We hope to work through it and ensure that we've got cinemas at Eastland."

The plan by Palace Entertainment, the third biggest cinema operators in Australia, is for land already within the council's entertainment zone.

A spokesman for Hames Sharley said the eight cinemas would seat nearly 2000 people and there would be underground parking for about 380 cars.

The plans for the complex are due to be advertised shortly.

Hames Sharley lodged one of two objections to the planning amendment that would facilitate the Coles Myer plan.

Peter Wetherby from estate agents Fitzroys, representing the market owner, said the application for the eight-cinema complex was in the "very early days".