

Plan to wheel skate park to foreshore

BY DENISE MOONEY

THE fight for a skate park in St Kilda has taken another twist with a new proposal for a temporary skate park on the disused Palace site.

The Esplanade Alliance is lobbying Port Phillip Council for the installation of a skate park, based on a similar model at the Queen Victoria hospital site before construction started in 2000.

The council has said it will not consider a temporary skate park.

But Esplanade Alliance spokeswoman Helen Halliday said the council should reconsider its position because the proposed Albert Park site has been locked in conflict between the council and protesters for so long.

The controversial site on Albert Park reserve at the corner of Lakeside Drive and Fitzroy Street will go to the

state planning tribunal for the second time on November 10 after opponents of the proposal successfully argued that all objections to the plan should be heard.

Previously, the council has argued it could hear objections on heritage issues only, because it was land manager of the site.

Ms Halliday said the triangle site was accessible for local youths and would send a healthier message than the container nightclub sponsored by Southern Comfort, which was temporarily located at the former Palace site last summer.

St Kilda resident and skate park supporter Keith Millar said he appreciated the concern and support shown by the Esplanade Alliance.

"But it certainly doesn't take our energy off the original proposal," Mr Millar said.

"We want outcomes that are beneficial for the community overall."

Lobby group Save Our Park, which opposes the site at Albert Park reserve, has previously lobbied the council for the skate park to be located on the foreshore.

The Esplanade Alliance is opposed to the plan for the St Kilda triangle by Citta Property Limited because it says the planned development is too retail-heavy and would ruin view-lines from the Upper Esplanade.

Ms Halliday said the final plan did not conform with the conditions imposed by the council in February, describing it as a "further betrayal of public goodwill".

Port Phillip mayor Janet Cribbes said the council would not consider an alternate site for the skate park but would abide by the upcoming VCAT decision in November.