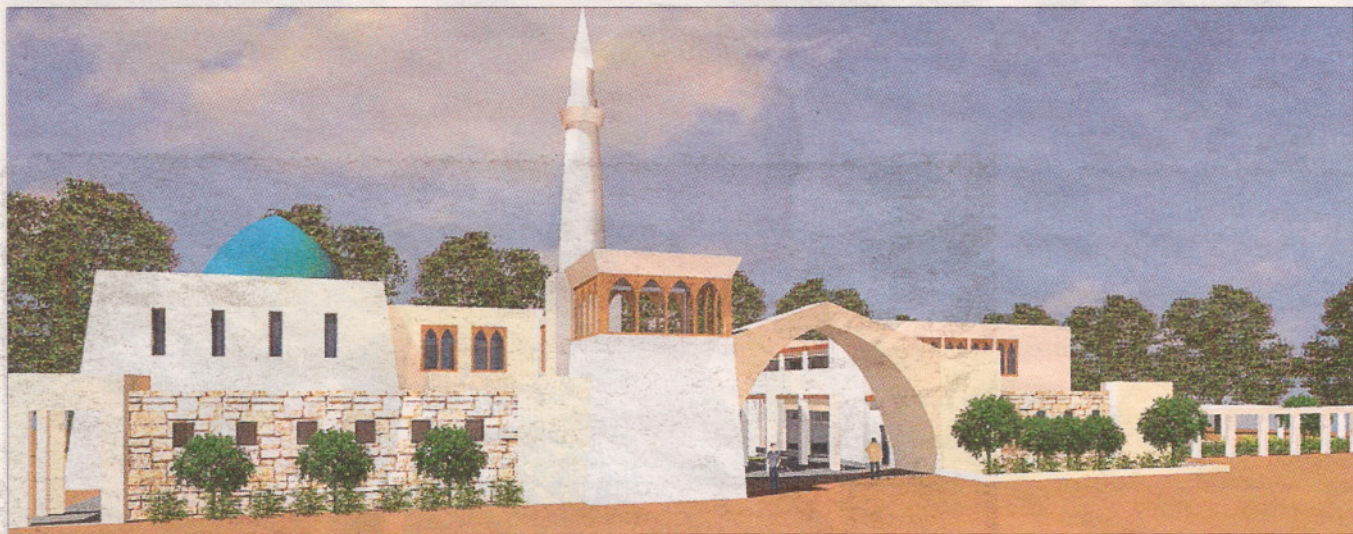


An artist's impression of the mosque proposed for the corner of Benara Road and Smallbrook Retreat.

Advocate, Weds, Jan 9th 2008 p.3.



Valley group opposes Caversham mosque

“The Swan Valley is not about religion

— Rod Henderson

THE SWAN Valley Progress Association is petitioning against the construction of a mosque proposed for the corner of Benara Road and Smallbrook Retreat in Caversham.

The mosque could be built on a 9405sqm block at lot 21 Smallbrook Retreat and is set to include several buildings totalling 1277sqm, linked by several enclosed courtyards.

Plans obtained from The City of Swan show the mosque would also include a 19m high minaret and 85 car parking bays, not 47 bays as has previously been reported.

Swan Valley Progress Association chairman Rod Henderson said the proposal was the latest plan for unsuitable development in the valley.

“You have to ask, what is the Swan Valley all about?” he said.

“It is not about religion or industry, it is about tourism and we want to preserve what we have.”

Mr Henderson said the proposal was clearly contrary to the objectives of the Swan Valley Planning Act.

The Advocate visited several Smallbrook Retreat residents and all expressed concern about the increased traffic on the street and the capacity of the car park to accommodate mosque users. None of the residents wanted to be named for fear of being portrayed as racist or anti-Muslim.

The City of Swan’s letter to residents stated up to 350 worshippers could visit the mosque at one time, with a ratio of one car to every four people used to determine the number of parking bays.

City of Swan acting chief ex-

ecutive Scott Hollingworth said the city would accept public submissions until Friday, January 11.

Spokesman for proponents, the Bosnian Islamic Society, is Sajit Smajic.

“The project will make the area nicer than before because the block has nothing on it apart from powerlines,” he said.

“Any resident would be proud to have this structure near their house. We are very progressive and positive people and there will be no worries for residents. About 80 per cent of Perth’s Bosnian people live in the area around Beechboro and Caversham and there is no Islamic facility in the area.”

He said the maximum capacity would be 349 people, on Fridays from 1-2pm only.

Christian Wilkinson