

Residents in bid for cottage

By Fiona O'Doherty

EAST Melbourne residents have called on Melbourne Council to hand over for community use a Yarra Park cottage used by the Richmond Football Club.

The club leased the council-owned cottage in Yarra Park for several years to house offices until a \$4 million redevelopment of the adjacent Punt Rd site was completed last year.

The lease expired in December.

East Melbourne Group president Margaret Wood said the cottage, known as Yarra Lodge, should now be set aside for community use.

"There are a number of community groups that are particularly interested in parks and gardens and there is also a community group that looks after the Jolimont area and this would be a convenient place to meet," she said.

Mrs Wood said she wrote to Lord Mayor John So in December to request the cottage be turned over to the community but was yet to receive a reply.

Cr Kate Redwood said last week she supported allowing the cottage to be used by community groups.

"My thought would be that it would be a wonderful place to have as a children's facility with perhaps a vegetable garden, swings and slides and perhaps opened to the historical society



East Melbourne Group president Margaret Wood outside Park Lodge last week.

Picture: ANDREW HENSHAW N35ME108

from East Melbourne," Cr Redwood said.

She said the council had not begun any formal process to lease the cottage to another group and she was unaware of

any commercial interest in the property.

But club spokesman Paul Maley said the footy club had a few ideas of its own for the use of the cottage including a cafe,

sports physiotherapist and childcare centre.

"But I think the council is a long way from being able to make a decision about that," he said.

"The club continues to discuss with the Melbourne City Council how we could come up with a solution for that space that would benefit the local community and as a viable

business prospect for the Richmond Football Club."

The weatherboard cottage was built about 1915 and was the Yarra Park warden's home for many years.