

Cork Trust Seniors Living Village

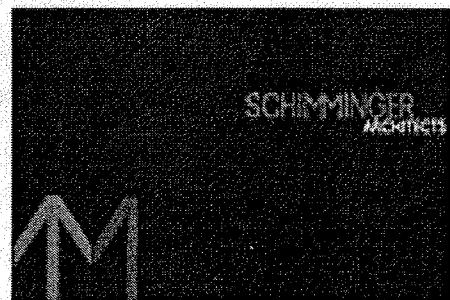
Site Comparison Study

Prepared for the George and Annie Memorial Trust

by



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Executive Summary

Through the exploration of site attributes; accessibility; strategic advantages; and planning instruments, it has become clear as can be seen in the Site Score Card that the Railway Street Site is far more suitable to being developed as a seniors housing development than the site at Kurrajong Street.

A development on the Railway Street site would require little in terms of infrastructure and would have a minimum impact on the environment. Although the report notes an issue in terms of conflicting development in association with the light industry, there is an opportunity to mitigate all issues that may arise.

The Railway Street site shows great opportunity for community integration and the potential to provide many public benefits while preserving and enhancing one of the most scenic riverfront areas in the Dorriggo township.

The Kurrajong Street site has many issues associated with this sort of development. Primarily, and fundamental to the success of a seniors housing development is the requirement for site accessibility. Unfortunately the Kurrajong Street site fails to meet the guidelines in the State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing for Seniors or People with a Disability) 2004 and would have difficulty satisfying the requirements in relation to Australian Standards 1428.1 due to the steep nature of the majority of the site.

Other major issues with trying to develop this land for the purpose of Seniors Housing would include the significant cost associated with constructing a new sewer main to the sewerage treatment works; the distance and gradient to town; and the likely hood of the views being built out.

This study clearly illustrates the unsuitable nature of the Kurrajong Street site for a Seniors Living development while contrastingly giving an insight into the suitability and community potential of a seniors Living development on the Railway Street site.

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The following score card assessment is based on the research in this report, the highest final score represents the most suitable site of the two and is based on a score out of a maximum 105. The numbered values represent as follows:

- 1 Not Practical
- 2 Serious Associated Issues
- 3 Acceptable with work
- 4 Good
- 5 Ideal

Score Card Assessment	Railway	Kurrajong
Site		
Accessibility		
- Site	5	1
-Town	5	1
Services		
-Sewer	4	2
-Power	5	5
-Water	5	5
-Telephone/Communications	5	5
Solar Access	5	5
Views	4	2
Adjoining Properties / conflict of Development		
-North	3	3
-South	5	4
-East	5	3
-West	5	5
Noise Level	3	5
Flooding	4	5
Transport		
-Motor Vehicles / Parking	5	4
-Electric Scooters	5	1
-Walking	5	1
Strategic Analysis		
-Zoning	3	4
-Availability	5	2
-Green Zones	5	3
-Availability	5	1
Total	96	67

1. 0 Introduction

1.1 General

Schimminger Architects / Dan Stevens Design Studio were commissioned by the George and Annie Cork Memorial Trust hereon in referred to as the "Trust" to undertake a comparison study of two possible development sites for a seniors residential village project. The study also takes into consideration the relevant planning instruments and puts forward possible solutions to architectural and planning issues that arise.

1.2 Scope and Objectives

The task of finding a suitable site in Dorriggo for a seniors residential village that satisfies the majority if not all of the preferred criteria listed in the State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing for Seniors or People with a Disability) 2004 is difficult. There are very few undeveloped sites of a suitable size with good access to services and with a gradient suitable for this kind of development.

The Cork Trust has identified a site on Railway Street which is on the edge of a quite under developed industrial area which borders on Residential land. The trust has subsequently purchased the two vacant adjacent lots (which have been on the market for a number of years) with the view to have the vacant lots re-zoned and developed for the purpose of seniors residential village.

The second site is in Kurrajong Street. This piece of Crown Land was leased by Bellingen Council for the purpose of investigating the potential for Aged Care and Affordable Housing development.

The prime objective of this study is to provide Bellingen Shire Council and Councillors' with a basic understanding of the benefits and problems associated with each of these sites. The report will focus on the basic requirements for all developments under the State Environmental Planning Policy (Houses for Seniors or People with a Disability 2004).

1.3 Study Structure

This study looks into the inherit benefits and problems associated with each of the sites through the exploration of detail in the various sections.

Section 2- Explores the sites attributes from a physical perspective.

Section 3- Explores the accessibility, transport options and strategic advantages of each of the sites.

Section 4- Explores the background information including council documents and planning instruments.

2.0 Site Analysis

2.1 Site contours

The contour analysis reveals two north east facing blocks with the Bielsdown River to the eastern boundary of the Railway Street Property and a un-named creek to the eastern portion of the Kurrajong Street property. Figure 1 below clearly shows the slope differences, Railway street with an average fall of 1m in every 22m and Kurrajong Street with an average fall of 1m in every 6m.

The Sepp (Housing for Seniors or People with a Disability)2004, (Clause 41.1.2(b)) Notes that if more than 50% of a site has a gradient of greater than 1:10 (1: 6 is a greater gradient, 1:22 is a lesser gradient) then development for the purpose of Seniors Housing is unlikely to meet the requirements for wheel chair accessibility.

The Kurrajong Street property would require an engineered solution for accessibility in relation to the above mentioned clause and AS 1428.1 This would require use of lifts and ramps throughout the development, the significant associated costs may prove prohibitive.

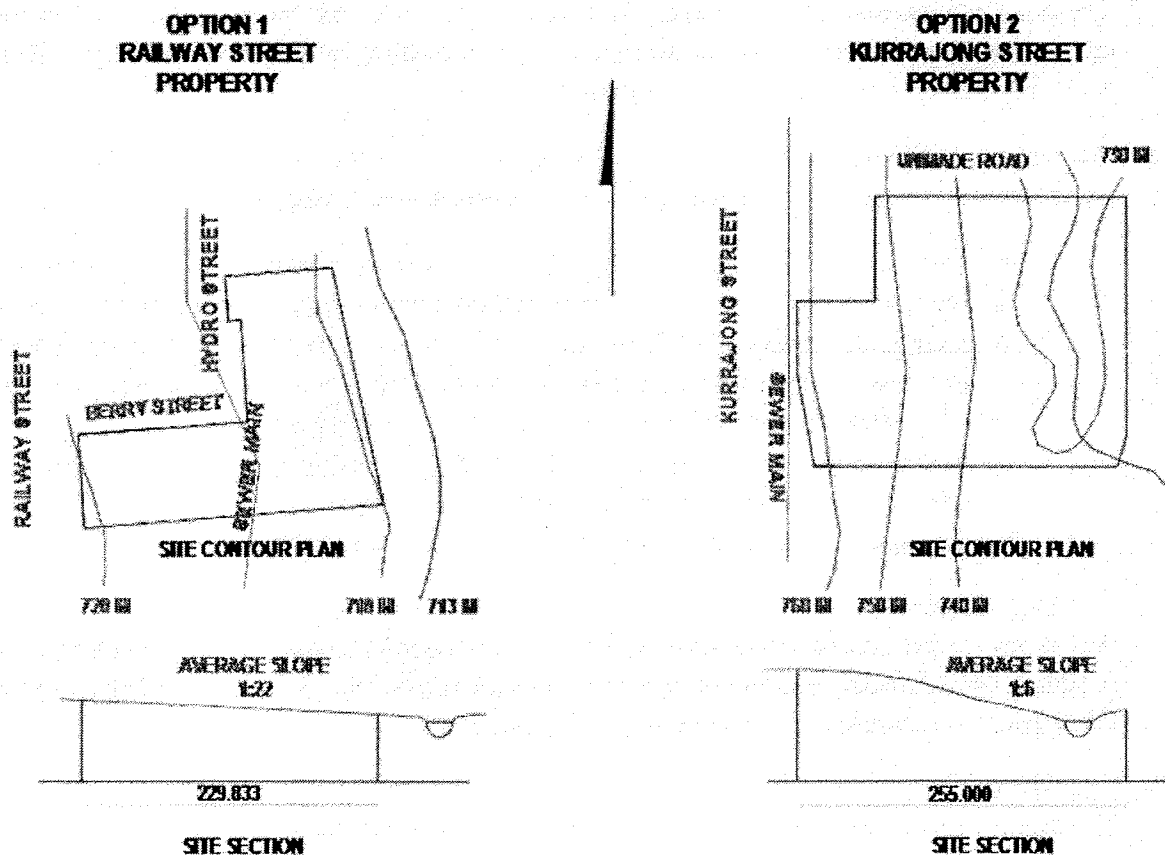


Figure 1 Site Contours and sections

2.2 Services Infrastructure

2.2.1 Sewer

Sewer connection is possible on both sites, however the contours of the site need to be viewed in relation to the existing sewer mains in order to ascertain whether a gravity fed connection can be made and to what portion of the property. Other issues may arise from the size of the mains in relation to the development (that is beyond the scope of this report). see Figure 1 Site Contours and sections this shows the existing sewer mains position on each block.

2.2.1.1 The Railway street Property

The Railway Street Property has the existing sewer main running through the approximate centre of the development at a depth of 1.2m, this will allow for a gravity feed connection to the existing sewer main from approximately 70% of the property (2m of fill over the remainder would increase this to 90+%).

2.2.1.1 The Kurrajong Street Property

The Kurrajong Street Property has the existing sewer main running along the foot path to the western side of the block at a depth of approximately 1.2m, given the steeper slope of the land access to this main will be limited to approximately 6m to the east of the line unless the land is built up. This equates to less than 10% of the site having existing sewer serviceability (note: a detailed site survey would be required to get an exact area of serviceability).

The solution for development at Kurrajong Street would be to run a new main to the sewerage works. This option has been explored and has the following issues associated with it:

- The sewerage works are at a level only 10m below the eastern boundary, this would require a main to be constructed 800m in length with a deviance of less than 2m over its length to achieve a 1:100 required fall. To achieve this the new main would have to run along the contour and cross up to 5 properties. This would require easements to be granted which could potentially generate problems with individual building envelopes.
- This major sewer development would require a large number of pits to achieve the grade along the contour and major excavation on relatively steep land.
- The cost associated with this sewer development would be significant.

2.2.2 Electricity

Three phase electricity connections are available to both sites. A engineers review of the amount of current available would need to be conducted on each of the sites to determine if any upgrading would be required (this is beyond the scope of this report).

2.2.3 Water

Both blocks have town water connection and access to hydrants along the boundaries.

2.2.4 Telephone/Communications

Both blocks have access to telephone/communication facilities.

2.3 Solar Access and Views

2.3.1 Solar Access

Both Properties run proportionately east-west and enjoy a north easterly aspect and would potentially be able to satisfy the SEPP in terms of solar access.

2.3.2 Views

Both properties have good views to the South-East; East and North East. Views to the North and West in both cases are un-remarkable.

2.3.2.1 Railway Street Property

The most distinguished view from the Railway Street Property is the Bielsdown River and Bielsdown Park which both run along the long eastern boundary see Figure 2

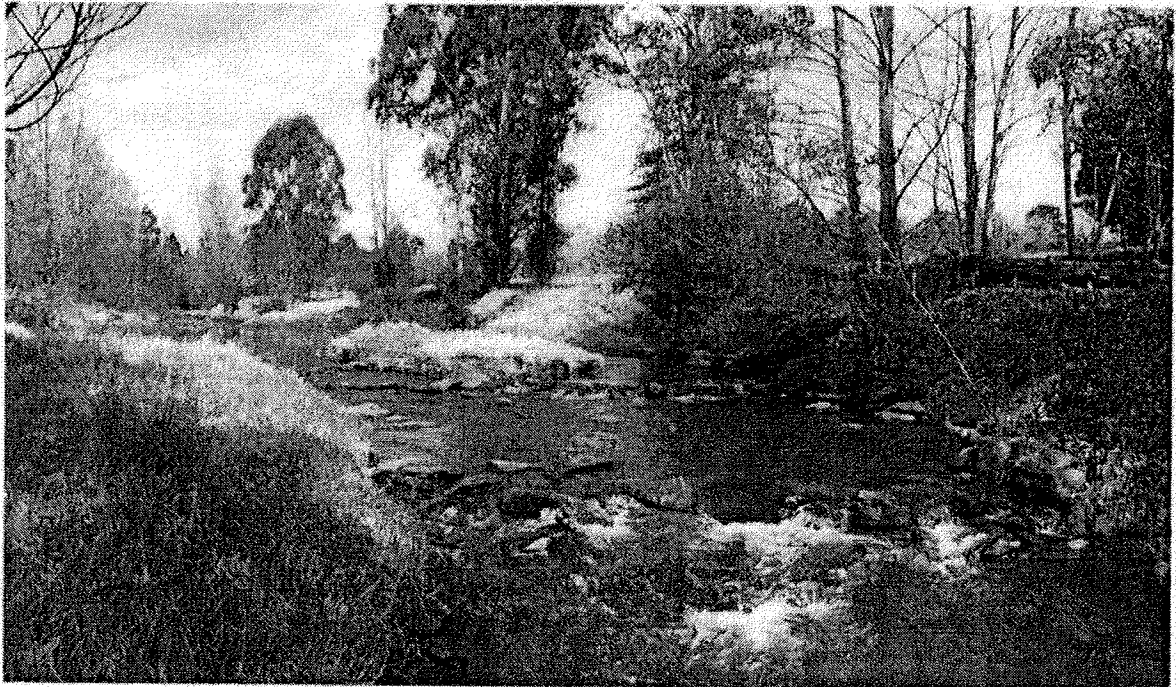


Figure 2 Bielsdown River at Eastern Boundary

2.3.2.2 Kurrajong Street Property

The most distinguished view from the Kurrajong Street Property is the rural views to the east; South-East and North-East, unfortunately this land which looks directly back onto the Kurrajong Street site is to be rezoned to R5 Large Lot Residential in the new LEP see Figure 3. It is likely that these views will eventually be built out. The views to the south are over land which we understand is under Native Title Claim.

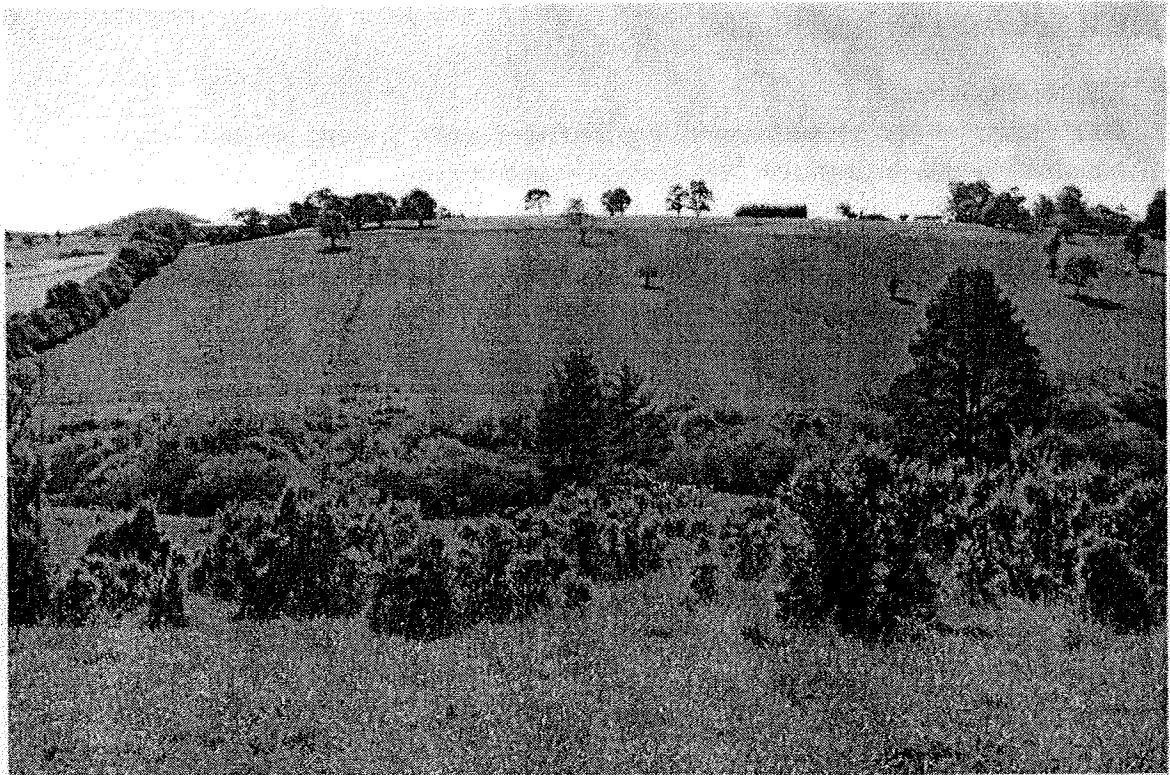


Figure 3 Kurrajong Street View over R5 Zoned Land

2.4 Adjoining Properties and Conflicting Development

2.4.1 Adjoining Properties

2.4.1.1 *Railway Street Property*

The Railway Street property is located on the edge of one of the industrial areas with light Industry to the North, residential properties to the South, the showground and Railway Museum to the West and the Bielsdown Park and Bielsdown River to the East.

The closest buildings to the site see Figure 4 are the SES head quarters and the new Fire Brigade shed which have both been built on the Berry Street road reserve forming, in combination with the private residence a reasonable buffer zone with the remaining industry to the North-West. The Potato storage area on Hydro Street shows little use; to the North the vacant lot and batching plant; and to the south residential dwellings.

2.4.2.1 *Kurrajong Street Property*

The Kurrajong Street Property is located on the edge of the R 1 zoning to the North East of the Township. The closest buildings are the Ex Nurses Quarters to the North West corner of the property see Figure 4 and the residential dwellings to the West of Kurrajong Street. The land directly to the North has been recently sold as 7 individual building lots to various people and will likely be developed in the near future. The land immediately to the East and East / South East is to be re-zoned R5 (Large Lot Residential Subdivision) and is also likely to be developed. The land to the South which we understand is under Aboriginal Land Claim may be developed for the purpose of Aboriginal Housing should the Land Claim be successful.

2.4.2 Conflicting Development

2.4.2.1 Kurrajong Street Property

The Kurrajong Street Site is not likely to effect the development of any of the immediate surrounding properties in terms of zoning, however the land claim on the land to the immediate south and any future development there should be taken into account. The land to the east which is now to be re-zoned R5 is likely to effect the visual amenity of the Kurrajong Street Site and likewise the Kurrajong Street Site will affect the visual amenity of the R5 site as they form either side of a relatively steep gully.

2.4.2.2 Railway Street Property

The Railway Street Site is adjoining the light industry area and as such a Seniors Living Development would generally be considered to be a conflicting development, however with the exception of the batching plant (which operates one morning per week or by appointment) there is no noticeable industrial noise and other existing residential zones are equally affected by the occasional noise that does arise as is shown by the circles in Figure 4. The inner circle in dark blue represents the distance that noise must travel from the batching plant to reach the first existing residence across the gully and Bielsdown River, the second outer light blue circle represents the number of existing residential dwellings that are within the same distance as the entire Railway Street Property. The industrial area is in general decline with a number of premises now being used only for storage, this decline may be a reflection of the decline in the general population of Dorriggo which is generally reflected in the service industry¹. We would submit that the Dorriggo industrial area creates less noise than the commercial centre of Dorriggo.

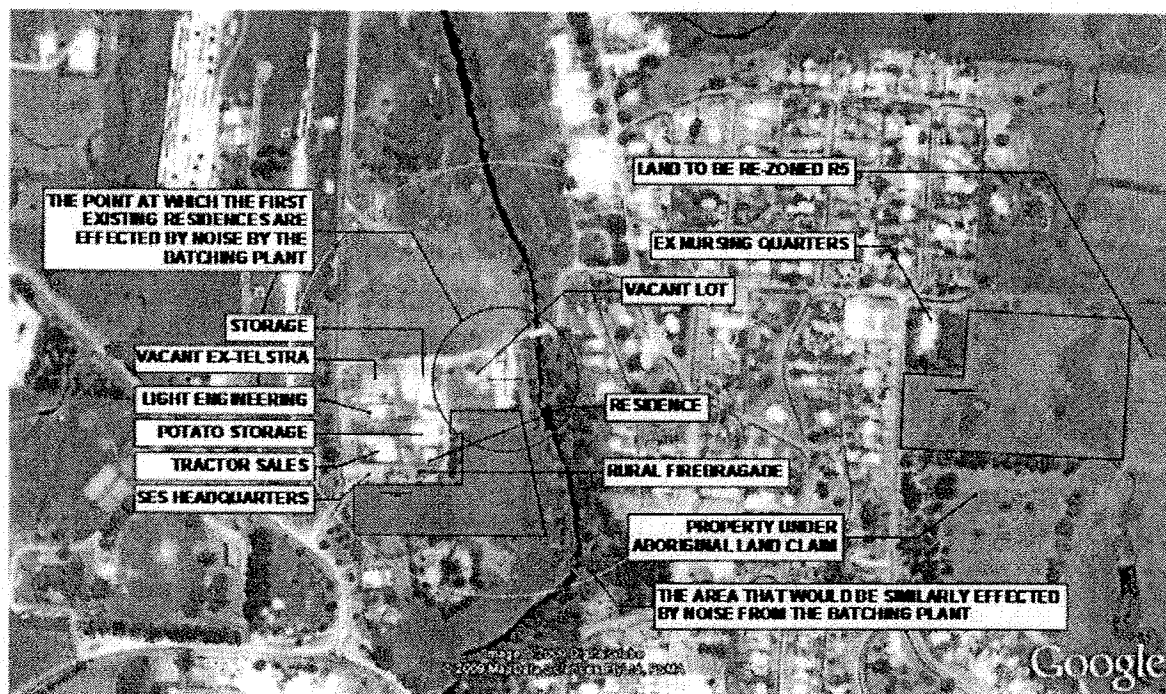


Figure 4 Adjoining Properties and Noise

¹ Bellingen Shire Industrial Land Strategy, 2003, Edge Land Planning and SGS Economics and Planning

2.5 Flooding

2.5.1 Railway street Property

The Eastern most portion of the Railway Street property is subject to a 1% EAP flood event. The line of flooding expected is close to the boundary and not within the proposed building envelope. It is expected that architectural planning and landscaping would mitigate any threat from flooding.

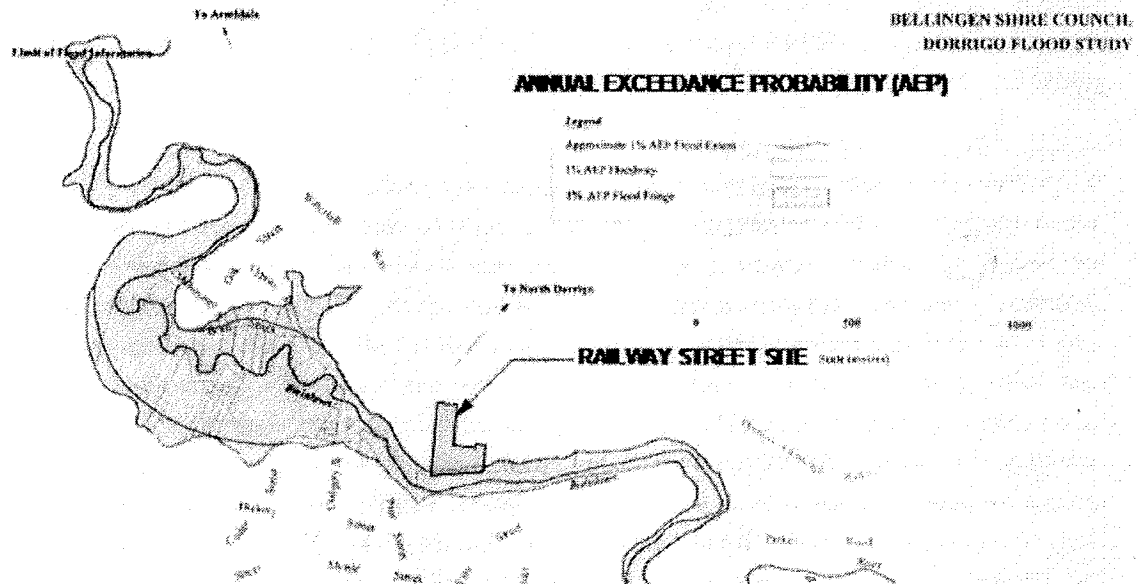


Figure 5 Bellingen Shire council Dorrigo Flood Study, August 2007

2.5.1 Kurrajong Street Property

The Kurrajong Street Property is not on the Bellingen Shire Council Flood Study, it is not expected that the site would be inundated at building level given the steep nature of the site.

3.0 Accessibility, Transport and Strategic Advantages

3.1 Accessibility

3.1.1 Access to Services

One of the key requirements for Seniors Living Developments under the SEPP is the location and access to facilities². The residents must have access to:

- Shops
- Bank, credit union or building society
- Other Retail and commercial Services
- Community Services and Recreational Facilities
- The Practice of a General Medical Practitioner

This accessibility must conform to strict requirements in terms of:

² SEPP (Housing for Seniors and People with a Disability) 2004, Part 2 Section 26

- Distance, not more than 400m
- Gradients, average of no more than 1:14

3.1.1 Kurrajong Street Property

The Kurrajong Street property fails to satisfy both the SEPP distance and gradient requirements for walking to services and as such, in the absence of public transport a twice daily bus service to the CBD would be required. While the CBD is within 400m of the Kurrajong site the actual shortest walking route is 670m to the edge of the CBD see Figure 6. The gradients at the Eastern end of Cudgery Street near the hospital is greater than an average 1:14. The black circles in Figure 6 refers to a 400m radius around each of the properties closest point to town.

3.1.1.2 Railway Street Property

The Railway Street property (with the construction of a foot bridge over the Bielsdown River into Bielsdown Park) satisfies all requirements for accessibility under the SEPP with the exception of the "Practice of a General Medical Practitioner". All other services are available with a maximum walking distance of 400m at a grade of no more than 1:14. The Library and the beginning of the CBD in Hickory Street is a mere 180m with a similar distance to the Bowling Club and Hickory House.

The development would be required to provide rooms for a medical practitioner on the site in order to satisfy fully the requirements of the SEPP in terms of accessibility.

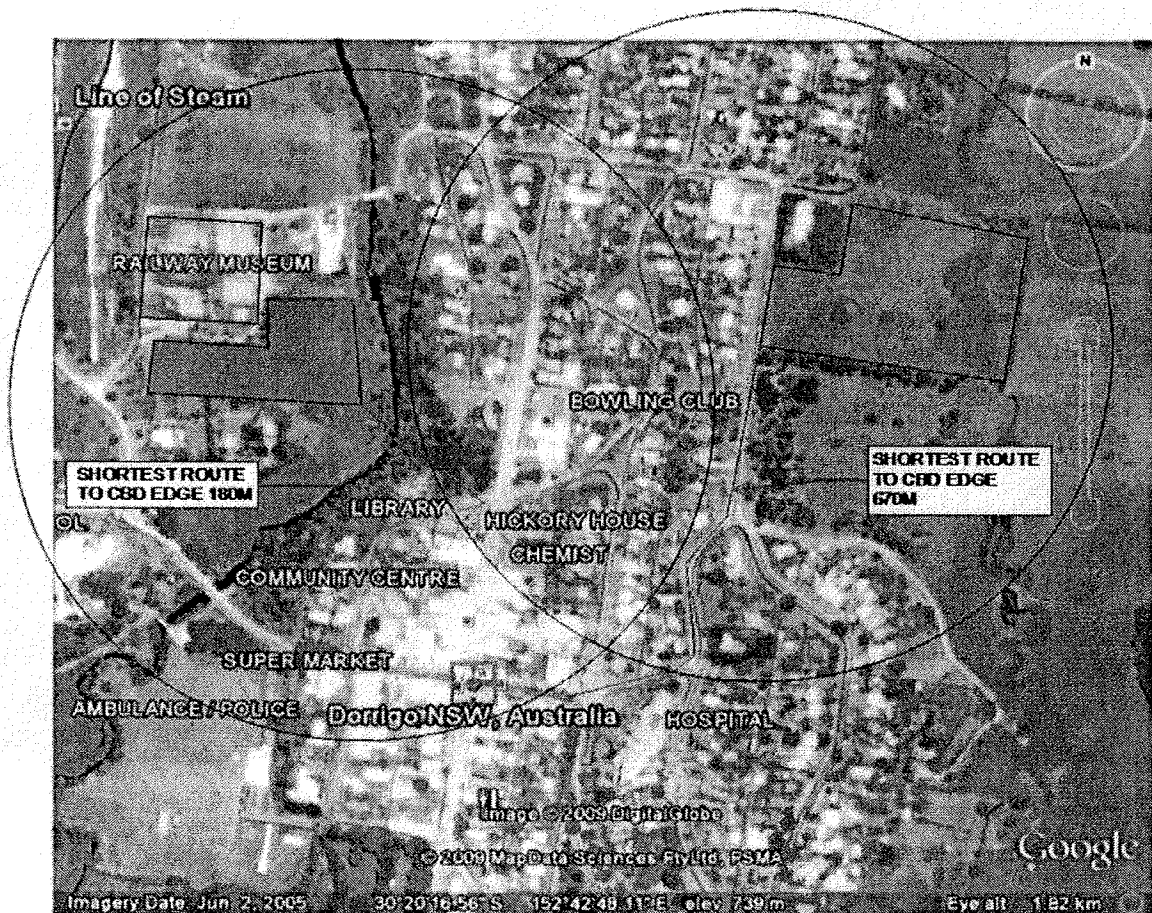


Figure 6 Shortest Route to CBD and 400m Radius

3.2 Transport

3.2.1 Taxis

There is no taxi service available in Dorrig. A maxi taxi type vehicle would benefit the residents of a development on both sites, although a larger vehicle would also be required on the Kurrajong Street site.

3.2.1.2 Bus Service

There is no public bus service available in Dorrig. There is a school bus company that may be able to offer a service. There is a Council funded community bus that is available for hire to community groups, this is managed by the management committee based at the Dorrig Support Centre .

3.2.1.3 Electric Scooters

Electric scooters are a transport option for both sites.

3.2.1.3.1 Railway Street Property

The Railway Street site would be suitable for electric scooter transport options if the existing Bielsdown Park pathways were upgraded as is the intention in the Bellingen Shire Councils Pedestrian Accessibility and Mobility Plan and Bicycle Plan 2006 (PAMP)³ . It is suggested that this could be achieved using the section 94 contributions from the development.



Figure 7 Bielsdown Park with the Railway Street Property across the Bielsdown River

³ Bellingen Shire Council, Pedestrian Accessibility and Mobility Plan and Bicycle Plan, 2006, GHD

3.2.1.3.1 Kurrajong Street Property

The distance and gradient referred to earlier would likely be a major obstacle for the residents proposing to traverse to town by electric scooter from any development on the Kurrajong Street property, as would the state of the roads and foot paths which would need to be up graded.

3.2.1.3 Walking

Walking is the preferred option for travelling to the town centre. This would be cheaper than providing a twice daily bus service; would be less polluting; would give the residents more independents and encourage community interaction.

3.2.1.3.1 Kurrajong Street

The option of walking to the CBD would not be possible for the majority if not all of the residents of any seniors development at the Kurrajong street site, the development could essentially become a closed gate community that would lack the transport independence associated with walking.

3.2.1.3.2 Railway Street Property

The upgrading of the pedestrian network through the Bielsdown Park see Figure 7 and a possible link to the Railway Museum and Show Ground would not only provide access to town for the residents, it would create a major link through a "green zone" to public facilities which would encourage towns people and tourists to "interact" with the development. This would be in keeping with the Bellingen Shire Councils (PAMP and Bicycle Plan)⁴ goal of "creating a safe and attractive environment for walking and cycling" while promoting "walking for transport, recreation and health".

3.3 Strategic advantages

3.3.1 Pedestrian Accessibility and Mobility Plan and Bicycle Plan (PAMP and Bicycle Plan)

In October 2006 Bellingen Shire Council adopted the final report for its (PAMP and Bicycle Plan) which it commissioned from GHD . Among the stated objectives of the PAMP and Bicycle Plan are:

- Increase the number of pedestrian networks
- Reduce the number of missing links and severance with the pedestrian network
- Provide pedestrian facilities which cater for the needs of all pedestrians including, people with a disability, commuters, children , seniors and walkers
- Compliment existing and planned pedestrian ways
- Increase use of bicycles within the community
- Encourage alternative methods of transport

Among the findings of the report were:

- The lack of adequate public transport in the Bellingen Shire and particularly Dorriggo
- Insufficient paved walkways and cycle tracks in residential and scenic areas
- Inadequate lighting in Dorriggo for pedestrians
- The "Topography on the eastern side of the valley (Dorriggo) limits the potential for pedestrian and cycling trips"

⁴ Bellingen Shire Council, Pedestrian Accessibility and Mobility Plan and Bicycle Plan, 2006, GHD

One of the strategic advantage of a development for Seniors Living at the Railway street site is the potential to address the above issues in the PAMP and Bicycle Plan, with funding coming directly from the development to the community for mutual benefit.

It is suggested that Section 94 contributions could be used for the construction of new, and upgrading of old pedestrian and bicycle paths from the town centre through the Bielsdown Park and across the Bielsdown River to the Show Ground and Railway Museum this would create a link forming a pedestrian/bicycle path circuit with the upgraded path to the High School and showground. A path running north from the development could reach the Polo Cross Field and link back into the Bielsdown Park network of paths see Figure 8.

The alternative to this community upgrading is a diesel bus service twice daily from the Kurrajong Street site that would benefit only the residents of the development.

3.3.2 Green Zones

Dorrigo has a number of "green zones" within the town, the largest and most used of these being the Recreation Ground near the High School North through to the Bielsdown Park and Polo Cross field and West to the Showground.

3.3.2.1 Railway Street Property

The Railway Street Property sits strategically in the centre of these areas and has the opportunity to become a pedestrian/bicycle network hub see Figure 8. With a sympathetic and environmentally responsive design the property could maintain its parklike nature and remain part of the green zone.

3.3.2.2 Kurrajong Street Property

The Kurrajong Street property is also situated in a "green zone", however all of the surrounding land (with the exception of the two blocks to the south, is zoned for residential development which will eventually eliminate the "green zone" see Figure 8.



Figure 8 Green Zones and Pathways

3.3.3 Community Interaction

One of the key design principles for the contemporary Seniors Housing is community involvement and interaction. Closed gate communities are being replaced with open social villages that attract a inter-generational balance though day care centres; internet cafes; bars and shopping facilities. The benefits to residents of this inter-generational approach are:

- A sense of vitality
- Mental stimulation
- Community involvement
- De-institutionalisation
- A sense of normality

3.3.3.1 Kurrajong Street Property

It is difficult to find a solution to the isolation of the Kurrajong Street Property. This isolation would most likely inhibit community interaction leading to what would essentially be a closed gate community. It is suggested that the residents of these closed gate type communities are less likely to be involved socially and gradually become lonely and isolated, tending to go out less with a resultant drop in health and possibly life expectancy.

3.3.3.2 Railway Street Property

There exists a real opportunity at the Railway Street Site for the development that can complement and interact with the town. The key to this interaction at an inter-generational level lies within the accessibility to the town centre; its strategic placement between the town centre; the Showground and Railway Museum; its proximity to the existing pedestrian and bicycle network and the potential to dramatically upgrade and extend the pedestrian and bicycle network within the green zones of Dorrigo see Figure 8. We further submit that with this suggested upgrading of the community pedestrian and bicycle network would come benefits of non-reliance on transport systems and private vehicles.

4.0 Strategic Analysis

4.1 Dorrigo Population and the Need for Seniors Housing / Aged Care

While it is beyond the scope of this report to go into the detail of the need for seniors housing and socio demographics the following information from Council's own reports shows that the need for seniors housing / aged care is increasing while the need for industrial land (which is based on population as well as infrastructure) is not. In fact Bellingen Shire Industrial Land Strategy 2003⁵ states that "There is no demand for traditional industrial developments" and that "they (industry) are locating to the larger more accessible centres of Coffs Harbour and Nambucca."

According to Bellingen Shire Council's Growth Management Strategy 2006-2026 prepared by GHD Dorrigo is expecting a modest increase in population of a maximum of 156 people over the next 17 years taking the population to around 1125 by 2026. The DUAP Standard Ratio⁶ of 3.2 Hectares per 1000 people would translate as an industrial area of 3.6 hectares by 2026

According to Bellingen Shire Council's Community Profile 2008 there are 509 people receiving the Aged Pension or Disability Support Pension on the Dorrigo Plateau, this equates to over 50% of the population of Dorrigo. The community profile also remarks on the 47% rise in the "frail aged people over the age of 75 (207 people)".

4.2 Zoning and Availability

The Railway Street Site is currently zoned Industrial. It is a "green field site" having never been developed for industry or other. The property is owned outright by the Cork Trust and is un-encumbered by lease or claim. The property is available for immediate development if zoning is amended to residential.

The implementation of the new LEP would be a prime opportunity for council to re-zone the Railway Street site. Justification for this would be based on the site being surplus to Dorrigo's Industrial lands requirements over the period of councils Growth Management period 2006-2026.⁷

⁵ Bellingen Shire Industrial Land Strategy, 2003, Edge Land Planning and SGS Economics and Planning

⁶ Bellingen Shire Industrial Land Strategy, 2003, Edge Land Planning and SGS Economics and Planning

⁷ Bellingen Shire Growth Management Strategy, 2006-2026. GHD

The Kurrajong Street Site is *within* a residential zoned area and is also a "green field site". This site is Crown Land and as such would require rezoning to residential status. It is understood that Council's lease on the land expired in November 09. This site would need to be purchased by the Trust from the government (if it is for sale).

4.3 Surplus Industrial Land in Dorrig

According to Bellingen Shire Councils Growth Management Strategy 2006-2026 prepared by GHD the original 2 hectare industrial site consists "mainly of storage and light industry" the report acknowledges that the industrial areas "have not been fully developed".

The Bellingen Shire Industrial Land Strategy prepared in 2003 stated that "there was no apparent need to rezone additional land for service or light industry, although having no effective supply could stifle ad hoc investment in the local economy". The Strategy therefore recommended "that an additional maximum 1 ha of land is required for Dorrig with land identified at the former Abattoir site considered suitable for redevelopment"⁸.

The Bellingen Shire Industrial Land Strategy calculations are based on the state wide DUAP standard ratio of 3.2 Hectares per 1000 people. With the modest growth expected in Dorrig⁹ the DUAP forecasted requirement for industrial land is a total area of 3.6 hectares by 2026. Despite the recommendations in the Industrial Land Strategy that Council rezone an additional 1 hectare of land at the Abattoir site Council rezoned an additional area of approximately 8.6 hectares including the site at Railway street see Figure 90.

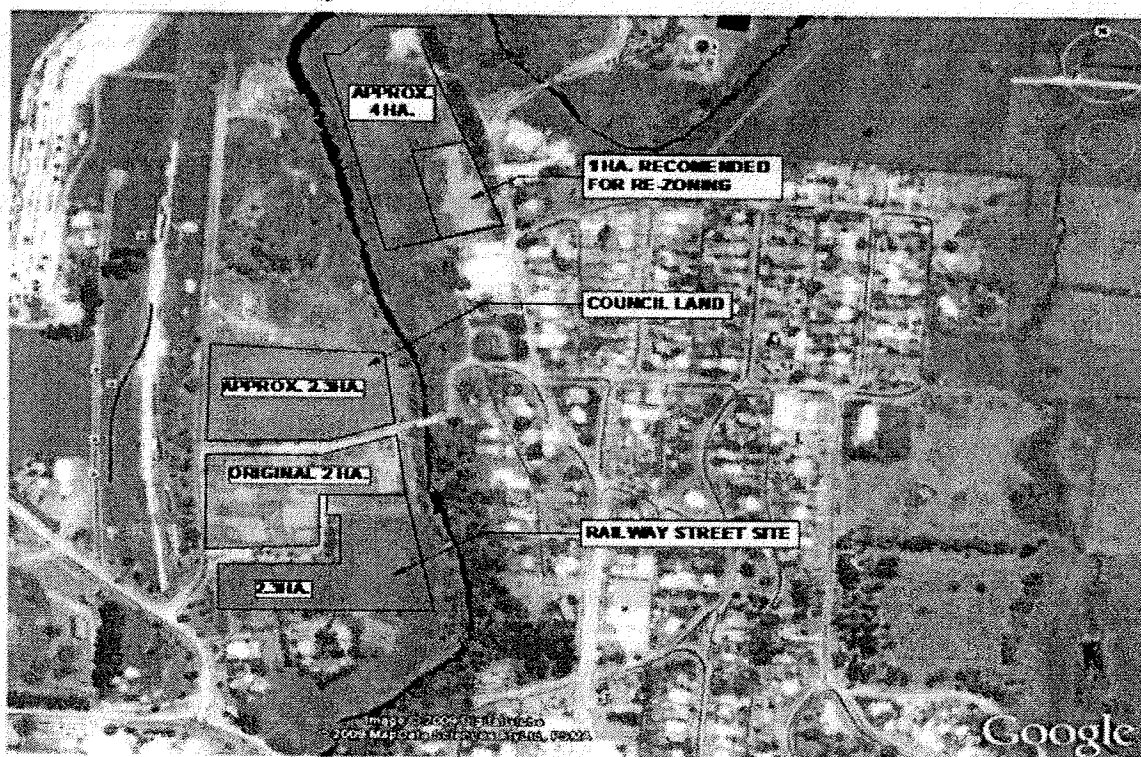


Figure 9 Land Re-Zoned after the 2003 Industrial Land strategy

⁸ Bellingen Shire Industrial Land Strategy, 2003, Edge Land Planning and SGS Economics and Planning

⁹ Bellingen Shire Growth Management Strategy, 2006-2026. GHD

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 The Kurrajong Street property

The Kurrajong Street property has access to all services to some degree. However, it is unlikely to meet the accessibility guidelines in the SEPP (Housing for Seniors and People with a Disability) and will have difficulty complying with AS 1428.1 (Design for Access and Mobility) the associated costs of an engineered solution for accessibility could be prohibitive. The required sewer infrastructure may likewise prove too expensive to justify and would also have a significant impact on the environment and the properties in between the site and the sewerage works. There could be issues with purchasing the property and enquiries will need to be made into whether the property could actually be purchased. Additional issues arising with no real solution available are the isolation from the town centre despite the "as the crow flies" distance to the CBD; and the fact that the views which are the sites only real asset will eventually be built out.

5.2 The Railway Street property

The Railway Street property has suitable access to all services without any major works being required; it also has the 'potential' to meet all the guidelines and requirements of the SEPP. This would require re-zoning the parcel of land and linking the site to the CBD via a pedestrian bridge over the Bielsdown River and through the Bielsdown Park see Figure 8. It would appear an opportune time for council to rezone the land in the new LEP, it is obvious that there is a surplus of industrial land and there are no real *existing* "conflicting developments" in that the existing noise level in the Industrial area is likely lower than that of the CBD; there are no other pollutants to deal with; and the majority of industry is storage. In terms of future development the abattoir site (which has been on the market for 12 months) is remote enough and big enough to more than cater for the forecasted growth and any heavy industry. The opportunity for integration into the community is the sites biggest asset; the "green zone hub" concept could have benefits not only for the development, but for the community at large, preserving one of the most scenic and picturesque areas in the township while promoting a healthy lifestyle.

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