

Submissions Report

Community Consultation on the Planning Proposal for the former Oatley Bowling Club site (November 2016 – February 2017)

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Georges River Council

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1 Introduction

This report provides a summary of all individual submissions received throughout the public consultation period for the former Oatley Bowling Club site at Oatley.

The public consultation program was delivered from November 2016 – February 2017. During this period the community were invited to submit their comments to the Georges River Council via the Council's website or in writing.

Fifty two submissions were received in both email and letter format. Two of these submissions were attached to the community survey.

This report is an addition to the Outcomes Report on the Community Consultation on the Planning Proposal for the former Oatley Bowling Club site prepared by Elton Consulting in February 2017 (the Outcomes Report). Please refer to the Outcomes Report for additional details on the consultation methods used and outcomes of feedback.

2 Context of the project

2.1 History of the site

The Oatley Bowling Club was located on several parcels of land purchased by Hurstville City Council in 1945, and adjacent lots resumed by Council in 1960 to 'improve and embellish the area'.

The site is adjacent to, but not part of, the Myles Dunphy Reserve.

The Oatley Bowling Club, formed in 1959, raised community money to build the clubhouse and greens on the site. Council leased the land to the Bowling Club until 2006 when the Club was closed.

After standing vacant for five years, Council demolished the building in 2011 due to public health and safety concerns.

Following closure of the former Oatley Bowling Club site in 2006, Council has been investigating options for its re-development to meet the current and future needs of the community. Since 2009 a series of proposals have been canvassed with the community. Several feasibility studies have also been conducted to assess the opportunities and constraints relating to development of the site.

Having been built on and developed, the site does not qualify as 'natural area' which is why it was not included in the Myles Dunphy Reserve and Wetland Plan of Management (2013).

The site is classified for 'Community Uses' under s36 (4) of the Local Government Act 1993.

2.2 Previous Planning Proposal

In 2010, the former Hurstville Council resolved to submit a Planning Proposal to rezone and reclassify the site for seniors and community uses. Funds from the lease were to be used to repay the loan for upgrades of Jubilee Park, Mortdale and the construction of Mortdale Community Centre.

2.3 Current situation

On Monday 7 November 2016, Georges River Council resolved not to proceed with the former Hurstville City Council proposal for a seven-to-nine-storey mixed residential and seniors housing to be built on the former Oatley Bowling Club site. (*Note: On 12 May 2016 the Minister for Local Government, Paul Toole, announced the newly formed Georges River Council, a merging of the former Hurstville and Kogarah Councils*).

Council has instead decided to undertake community consultation on a Planning Proposal for only half of the site to be rezoned, and to limit any development to a smaller-scale, three-to-five-storey, aged care facility.

The other half of the former Bowling Club site will be converted to usable public recreation space, complimentary to the adjacent Myles Dunphy Reserve. This community space may include enhanced facilities including recreational areas, barbeque amenities, community gardens, and walking and bicycle tracks.

The Planning Proposal seeks to amend the 2012 Hurstville Local Environmental Plan (LEP) to:

- > Reclassify approximately 51% of the site from *community land* to *operational land*

- > Rezone the site from *RE1 Public Recreation* to *SP2 Infrastructure*
- > The site will have a designated land use of seniors housing and community facilities.

Council is committed to ongoing community consultation on the Planning Proposal for the site.

An independent review of the outcomes of consultation and the Planning Proposal will be undertaken before the proposal is finalised.

The final decision about the Planning Proposal will be made by the new Georges River Council after it is elected in September 2017.

2.4 Community Consultation

A public consultation program to exhibit the revised Planning Proposal was delivered during November 2016 to February 2017. During this time the following methods of engagement with the public were undertaken:

- » Three Community Information and Feedback sessions (CIFs) held on Wednesday 23rd November (one session) and Saturday 26th November 2016 (two sessions).
- » A community survey available on the council website and in hard copy at the CIFs. A total of 146 surveys were completed.
- » A phone survey replicating the online and hard copy versions was held in December 2016 and January 2017. 501 residents were randomly selected from across the Georges River Council local government area.

Community members were also invited to make a submission to council about the merits of the Planning Proposal. A total of **52 submissions were received**.

3 Submissions

The following section provides an analysis of the content of the 52 submissions received. Feedback has been grouped according to the key themes raised in submissions.

3.1 General comments

- » Thirteen percent of submissions expressed a view that the community survey was skewed towards supporting the planning proposal.
- » Like the findings outlined in the Outcomes Report (February 2017):
 - > Thirty eight percent of the submissions had concerns about the public consultation process
 - > Six percent had trouble understanding the plans for the site and found them difficult to interpret.
- » Four percent expressed concerns about existing and potential graffiti in the park.

3.2 Site location

- » Six percent of submissions suggested that the site be located close to Oatley.
 - > One respondent explained if the site were to meet all criteria they would like to see a *“Retirement Cluster’ of small single story dwelling as seen on Oatley Parade and run by Uniting Care. This is situated close to Oatley villages and the train stations. Any dwelling over 2 stories would be a socially isolating experience for elderly people and the idea of public parkland attached would not work here.”*
 - > Another expressed that the site is isolated and would not be an ideal location for an aged care facility as it is not near services and amenity.
“The former Oatley Bowling Club site is an isolated location for seniors to be able to access doctors, shops and community facilities as a pedestrian.”

3.3 Scale and impact of development

- » Seventy one percent of submissions were opposed to commercial development on the site. A key criticism reflected in submissions is the rezoning and privatisation of what was seen to be community intended land.
- » Reoccurring themes in submissions in opposition to the scale and scope of the planning proposal include:
 - > Public land should be kept as public land and not sold and rezoned into private land.
“I do not want any commercially driven, revenue raising residential development at all on the old Oatley Bowling Club Site.”
 - “I strongly object to land that is community owned being considered for sale for the development of a private enterprise. Community land should be kept for use by the community*

for use for the community. Once it is sold it will never be returned back to the community. Enough of selling of the assets owned by the rate payer."

- > The community enjoy the current character of the area and do not support a perceived 'over development' of Oatley. The proposed rezoning was not considered by many making submission to be in keeping with the character of Oatley as a suburb.

"There are many issues that make this site inappropriate for development these include the fact that the site is bordered by the Myles Dunphy Reserve, an important cultural and environmental open space; the site is in a bushfire danger zones; access to and from the site will be hazardous to traffic and cause congestion around the train station on Mulga Road and such a development will have a significant negative impact on the Oatley environment – simply put, we the people of Oatley do not want it."

"We live in Oatley and want to ensure the area is not over developed."

- > Several submissions advocate that the site should be maintained as is, noting that it is a vital element to the character of Oatley and is an area for everyone to enjoy.
- » Two submissions expressed support for the proposed reduction in heights.

"We would support this proposal, especially if the structure was limited to four levels and with the same footprint as indicated in the diagram."

"I appreciate that the council is not going to proceed with its plan for a nine storey development."
- » Another stated that anything more than two storeys would be isolating for aged care and anything above that would be considered high rise in Oatley.

"Any building over two stories is termed high rise in Oatley."

3.4 Environmental concerns

- » Thirty seven percent of submissions objected to the rezoning and advocate that the site be persevered for native fauna and flora.

"I hope Council will protect this critical piece of public land for the future."

"...as every bit of Sydney bushland and open space is so precious. Any development there would negatively impact on the Miles Dunphy Bushland Reserve, of which it is currently a part."

- » Thirty seven percent of submissions also voiced concern for the loss of the native flora due to development. Many of the submissions strongly advocated that areas like the Oatley Bowling Club site be protected and preserved.

"the former Oatley Bowling Club site is not suitable for Seniors Housing due to the bushfire prone area and limited access without damaging the fragile ecosystem of the Sydney Turpentine Iron Bark Forest Endangered Ecological Community."

- » Some submissions articulated concerns that the planning proposal would negatively impact on the natural environment surrounding the site and have a negative impact on the Miles Dunphy Bushland Reserve.
- » One submission commented that a high rise development would not be in keeping with Oatley; will negatively impact the visual landscape for residents; and the impact and risk on the native flora and fauna in Myles Dunphy Reserve.

"I believe a modern age care facility would spoil the natural environment and building on such a scale would play havoc with that environment. We are fortunate in Oatley to have this bushland – please don't spoil it by chipping it away."

- » Eight per cent of submissions reference the *2014 Travers Bushfire and Ecology* report and/or the bushfire hazard for the site. They indicated the current proposal does not meet the proposed recommendations in the report and believe the limited access would pose an access hazard in the event of an emergency.

3.5 Community facilities

- » There was mixed support for the development of a structured recreational space to be included on the site:
 - > Ten percent think the areas should be maintained in its native state as a parkland.
 - > Ten percent believe recreational development should be included on the site with proposed bike/pedestrian paths, signs, public amenities and facilities.

“In relation to the Oatley bowling club site, we feel this area should include recreational areas with shade, an amenities block, native trees, walking and bike tracks”

“The establishing of parkland is not a priority for Oatley as we are well serviced with Oatley memorial park adjacent to the Oatley village on the east side and Oatley park on the west side where cars are able to drive at low speed, bikes and people walk, swim use play equipment and picnic. To the south we have the Oatley to Como walkway where pedestrian and bikes co habit. Pleasure grounds sit at Como for all to enjoy. Myles Dunphy Reserve could be a walking experience for people to take in the natural flora and fauna.”
- » A small number (6%) of people suggest native habitats need to be protected from people walking/using the reserve.
 - > One person suggested there should be no inclusion of any hard paths or parking into Myles Dunphy bushland reserve.
 - > Another suggests a walkway as part of the reserve walk be built, but located away from the natural habitats of the birds and animals that reside there.

3.6 Traffic and parking

- » Nineteen percent of submissions expressed concern about the impact on the traffic and parking on the existing road networks.
- » Specifically, people expressed concern about access from Mulga Road to the site for visitors and service vehicles.
- » There is also concern that the development will impact on the congestions and traffic around the train station with commuters seeking to use the site for parking.
- » Several submissions called for a more detailed analysis of traffic and parking issues.

4 Summary and next steps

4.1 Summary

The submission process was an opportunity for the community to provide further detailed comments on the planning proposal.

The fifty two submissions received addressed in detail a number of issues for the community. These issues can be summarised as:

- » The site location
- » The scale of the development and setting a precedent for the area
- » Preserving the character of Oatley's built environment
- » Privatisation of public land
- » Concern for the preservation of flora and fauna
- » Mixed views on whether the site should be preserved for open space or structured recreational spaces
- » Road access to the site and parking for the site.

There are no additional key findings in the submissions that were not previously mentioned or addressed in the Outcomes Report (February 2017).

The feedback through the submission process is largely consistent with the findings of feedback from the Community Information and Feedback Sessions and the community survey – that is they generally expressed more concerns about the proposal when compared to those who participated in the phone survey.

4.2 Next steps

Georges River Council will review the outcomes of community consultation and the draft Planning Proposal prior to making a decision about the former Oatley Bowling Club site.

The final decision will be made following the election of a new Council in September 2017.

Through the submissions received, community members have expressed a clear desire for ongoing consultation about the future of this site and eagerly seek opportunities to contribute to any future plans.

Council has committed to continue to work with the community regarding plans for the site.

Council is developing a renewed process for communications and engagement that will underpin all future consultation programs. This will ensure ongoing dialogue with interested residents and the broader community about this project. Detailed planning for the site will commence once a decision is made by Council following the September 2017 elections.

As was the recommendation in the Outcomes Report (February 2017), it is recommended that until any decision is made by Council on the future of the site, communication with the community about

the site should continue to be clear and concise. Communication should highlight the stages in any future detailed planning of the site and the opportunity for community participation.

It is important that ongoing consultation recognises and builds on the feedback outlined in this report, for the continuation and development of positive working relationships with the local community regarding the future of the former Oatley Bowling Club site.



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