

Oaks Estate News

Oaks Estate Progress Association

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OEPA News Brief

- **Oaks Estate Master Plan:** Planners recognize Oaks Estate's broader cultural landscape heritage boundary.
- **Exhibition of new Master Plan design options delayed:** ESDD team unlikely to get back to the public about the revised design plans before early 2013.
- **Railway land rezoning:** Queanbeyan City Council agreed to the rezoning of some of the railway land along the ACT/ NSW border fronting Oaks Estate from special purposes to light industrial.
- **Railway Street truck parking:** rising concern over road safety, infrastructure and the future development of light industry on railway land.
- **School bus fares:** Unaffordable hike for Oaks Estate children using Deanes bus services.

Oaks Estate Master Plan Update

ACT planners (ESDD) have received the increase in budget needed to hire a 'cultural landscape heritage expert' in support of their existing built heritage consultant – something the OEPA has argued for from day one.

Because the hiring process takes time and the level of heritage investigation has been considerably expanded to reflect the heritage citations being considered by the ACT Heritage Council, the Master Plan project time frame has been revised back to early 2013.

ACT planners say that they aim to distribute a newsletter telling people what is happening, including an updated public engagement analysis report, sometime before the ACT election.

See later in this newsletter and our website www.oaksestateact.org for a summary of OEPA Master Plan activity.

Railway Street truck parking

The TAMS Roads team are currently talking to the ACT planners (ESDD) to see what control measures need to be put in place to deal with the inadequate provision for truck parking and access to and from businesses on railway land fronting Oaks Estate.

Please call Canberra Connect on 13 22 81 and report dangerous road incidents that involve inappropriate truck parking and access, and keep a log of incidents, time and date so that we can keep the problem prominent in the minds of those making planning decisions, on both sides of the border.

Queanbeyan Local Environment Plan: rezoning of railway land to light industry (the background to the Railway Street truck parking issue)

OEPA views the proposed rezoning and redevelopment of some of the railway land along the ACT/NSW border fronting Oaks Estate as both posing a serious threat to the continued safety and amenity of the residents of Oaks Estate and as undermining the rationale, objectives and priority actions detailed in the Memorandum of Understanding between ACT and NSW Governments.

Queanbeyan City Council recently adopted the draft Queanbeyan LEP and, in so doing, has agreed to the rezoning of land between the railway line and Railway Street from special purposes to light industrial. That LEP is, however, still subject to approval by the NSW Minister for Planning and Infrastructure. OEPA think that this situation requires direct discussion between the ACT Government and the NSW Government.

The ACT Government strongly argued for the importance of adequate cross-border buffering between industrial and residential zoning between the proposed Tralee development and Hume.

That principle should be applied here also, and with added emphasis, given that the only “buffering” that is available is the width of a roadway.

OEPA have already flagged our concerns about these issues in its submission to Queanbeyan City Council’s draft LEP. We have now also written to the Chief Minister Katy Gallagher. OEPA will seek to have input into any Development Control Plans being devised by Queanbeyan Planners.

Oaks Estate School Bus Service

There has been an unaffordable hike in fees now payable to Deanes Buslines for a NSW service to ACT feeder schools especially effecting Oaks Estate pensioners. All other pensioners’ children in the ACT get the school bus service for free.

There is also a lack of fare subsidies to bring the cost of Deane's term passes back down to the ACTION norm for those who aren't eligible for the STP.

OEPA are working in collaboration with a number of Oaks Estate residents on this issue.

From the OEPA website:

www.oaksestateact.org

News from the River: Platypus Sighting

It isn't often that platypus are seen along our part of the Molonglo. We have a confirmed sighting today (19 August) of a platypus swimming on the surface, more or less below the cable for the old flying fox. Let us know if you see a platypus in the rivers around Oaks Estate, and tell us where, when and how many. We'll pass the info along to the local platypus watch. Also, keep an eye out for water rats swimming near the junction. (Email <oeпа@hotmail.com.au>)

River rehabilitation project

No more news on the remaining parts of the river clean-up. We've been told by TAMS that work should start when they've finished the planning and stakeholder consultation stages. (The machinery you've seen operating recently on the other side of the river is just finishing up some work that was outstanding from last year. Please be patient, folks!!)

Queanbeyan City Council has begun work on cleaning up dead willows and flood debris from the river corridor between Morrisett Street low-level bridge and the NSW border to compliment the work being done at Oaks Estate.

OEPA Master Plan Actions

Our participation in the Master Plan process has been extensive. This newsletter is the short version of events to date. For more detail on those actions please visit the OEPA website or contact a committee member.

11 May – OEPA Reference Group representatives Michel Starling & Karen Williams met with Petra Oswald and Cindy Lee (ESDD). Peter O’Dea was not present. A robust 3 hour meeting ensued. Karen’s letter to Ben Ponton (ESDD Deputy Director General Planning Policy), 24 May (below) resulted from the meeting.

22 May – Ms Caroline Le Couteur, Greens MLA for Molonglo, was given an introductory tour of Oaks Estate. Karen explained that a blanket infill policy for land release blocks may not be appropriate in the case of Oaks Estate. The OEPA is not opposed to infill –we just want infill to be appropriate to Oaks Estate's peri-urban circumstances – maintaining enough open space to provide buffering around cultural heritage features, between residential and industrial zonings; and between urban development and river corridor

24 May –Letter to Ben Ponton (ESDD) triggered partly by dissatisfaction with the outcome of the meeting on 11 May, regarding the OEPA concerns about the Oaks Estate master plan process: absence of heritage consultant, managerial interference in consultation process, and failure to review public housing stock. A letter in response from Ben Ponton, dated 31 May, was received.

*# 31 May– ESDD meeting with Oaks Estate business people re master planning, attended by Alex and Judith Saeck for OEPA committee. Petra (ESDD) stated that Oaks Estate is not a rural village – that it is a suburb. The design consultant stated that the first house in Oaks Estate was a duplex. Petra tabled a different draft planning option from that presented at the earlier Design Workshops, with reduced density of development on Hazel St, and business as usual along McEwan Av and Railway St. Petra commented that OEPA’s article (facilitated through our membership of Inner South Canberra Community Council) in the *City Chronicle* was not useful – she regarded it as interference in the process.*

To see the official recommendations of that meeting refer to: *Outcomes: Business and lessees meeting Oaks Estate master plan* on ESDD Oaks Estate master plan website address or contact a OEPA committee member. The *City Chronicle* article can be viewed on the OEPA website)

8 June – Karen, John Bruggeman and Michel met with Daniel Walters, Director, ACT Environment Protection Authority. Walters advocated recognition of buffers between residential and industrial development, between urban development and the river corridor, and protection of the Oaks Estate drainage basin. He advised that Oaks Estate currently does not have regulations governing drainage into the river corridor and that situation should be corrected through the Master Plan and not deferred till the Development Application stage of the planning process where the issue can be lost in details.

The OEPA recognizes that environmental protection is an important planning issue because the drainage basin surrounding the junction of the Molonglo and Queanbeyan Rivers, in which Oaks Estate nestles, is part of a conservation catchment between Molonglo Gorge and the Jerrabomberra Wetlands.

12 June – Karen and Michel met with David Papps (ESDD, Director-General), Ben Ponton (ESDD) and Petra Oswald (ESDD). Karen reported that the meeting repaired ground. It demonstrated that the OEPA is serious about having a good Master Plan. The Environment Management Plan, used in previous planning reviews, was again tabled in this current process. The rural blocks surrounding Oaks Estate (left out of the Eastern Broadacre study) were brought into the discussion. The argument was put that the paddocks do not just have visual value, that they are part of the Oaks Estate drainage basin – that there is an environmental logic which overlaps with the boundaries of the Oaks Estate cultural landscape heritage citation. The Molonglo Catchment Group and the ACT Environment Protection Authority were nominated as stakeholders, recognized by ESDD and Petra agreed to meet with them.

29 June – Karen (local heritage expert) and Ewan Maidment (OEPA observer) met with Heritage Consultants David Hobbs & Alanna King (Philip Leeson P/L), Nigel Featherstone (ACT Heritage Unit), Petra Oswald, Cindy Lee, Meryl Hinge (ESDD). The meeting recognized the boundary created by the natural drainage basin of Oaks Estate and accepted the importance of our broader cultural landscape. It was agreed that an assessment of the cultural landscape is required in addition to built heritage, and additional funds will be allocated to do so. It was also confirmed that an indigenous heritage assessment would be required.

Petra also confirmed that the land opposite Gillespie Park – across from the Railway Station – will be protected from development.

ESDD officials assured the meeting that the heritage assessment and nominations to the Heritage Council would all be completed for finalization as part of the Master Plan.

(OEPA notes of the meeting are available OEPA website www.oaksestateact.org.)

OEPA Records

There has been concern expressed by a member of our community over the loss of OEPA records dating from the 1980s which were stored in the Oaks Estate Hall.

They probably went missing in mid 2011 when Southside Community Services renovated the small meeting room in the Hall. In 2011 Peter O’Dea, then OEPA President, wrote to SCC reporting the loss, but received no reply.

It is a major loss. Since then, the OEPA has consolidated its remaining records, dating from 1994 to 2009. We have also been given permission to make digital copies of other records relating to the OEPA held in private hands dating from the 1950s.

Rest assured that there were never any historical photographs or original historical documents stored with OEPA records at the Hall.

Photographs taken as part of a community project in which public housing tenants participated are safe.

OEPA documents are also on Commonwealth and the ACT government correspondence files.

There is a solid record of the history of community activism of Oaks Estate residents safely lodged and catalogued in the ACT Heritage Library. It is based on Karen’s research in the National Archives of Australia where she accessed previously unopened government files dated from the 1920s and earlier and up to 1950s.

Karen transcribed the most significant chains of correspondence between the community and the government in, *Oaks Estate - No Man's land*, which she supplemented with oral history and family photographs contributed by the community members who lived through the events.

Oaks Estate - No Man's Land is still available for sale from Karen - \$25 or \$20 concession.

Also available on CD, *Oaks Estate - A portrait*: slides of historical photographs and oral history excerpts - \$10 - all proceeds from the sale of the CD go to OEPA.

Community Notice Board

Please utilise the Community Notice Board to promote matters that may be of interest to the local residents and visitors to our community. OEPA places cuttings of newspaper articles relevant to Oaks Estate and a copy of the OEPA newsletter on the board from time to time. It's located on the front of the Foodlane Store (corner of Railway St and McEwan Ave).

Other Oaks Estate Websites

ACT Government, Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate, website for Oaks Estate master planning:

http://www.actpla.act.gov.au/topics/significant_projects/planning_studies/oaks_estate_master_plan/

Peter O'Dea is communicating information on the bus and other Oaks Estate issues at his *Village Voice* wiki website.

OEPA Committee Members

President: Karen Williams

Treasurer: Judith Saeck

Secretary: Ewan Maidment

General Committee Members:

John Bruggeman

Bernadette Fitzgerald

Francis Lethbridge

Alex Saeck

Nick Saeck

Michael Starling

Public Officer: Ewan Maidment

Web Master: Terry Williams

Heritage Partnership Symposium

Karen Williams gave a talk on the dialogue between Planning and Heritage, at the annual Heritage Partnership Symposium in July. The theme of the symposium was *Valuing Heritage: Advocating for community attachment in planning*. The symposium the result of a collaboration of Australia ICOMOS, Canberra and District Historical Society, Donald Horne Institute for Cultural Heritage University of Canberra, Institute of Professional Practice in Heritage and the Arts ANU, and National Trust of Australia (ACT) and Canberra Archaeological Society. It was attended by professionals, community and government representatives.

The symposium served as a good opportunity to put Oaks Estate's case forward in front of some key heritage decision makers.

With a focus on 21st Century heritage values and using Oaks Estate as a case study, Karen's paper illustrated how the ACT planners' current aspiration of heritage-inspired development and redevelopment suffer from an inherent conflict of interest. The current Oaks Estate planning process has been going on for 21 years. What started as a review of the Territory Plan as it related to Oaks Estate 21 years ago has now become a Master Plan process. She asked if the planners are now listening to the community and their consultants – and in the final planning processes will they act on what they hear?

(From: <http://www.m2cms.com.au/uploaded/18/Symposium-2012-summary-for-web.pdf>.)



Walking along the river in mid-winter. (Photo by Bernadette.)