



Oatley Flora & Fauna Conservation Society Inc.

Protecting the local environment since 1955

Georges River Council

26 October 2017

Dear Councillor

Please don't proceed with the Planning Proposal for site of former Oatley Bowling Club

Oatley Flora & Fauna Conservation Society congratulates you on your election to Georges River Council. You have an opportunity to make a fresh start in local governance by making the wellbeing of residents the primary consideration in all your decisions.

Former Oatley Bowling Club (OBC) Site at River Road, Oatley - Georges River Council webpage:

<http://www.georgesriver.nsw.gov.au/Council/Major-Projects/Former-Oatley-Bowling-Club>

states that IHAP on 18th May 2017 recommended that the Planning Proposal for the former Oatley Bowling Club site be forwarded to The Greater Sydney Commission for a Gateway Determination. But on 7 November 2016, Georges River Council resolved that any plan-making (re-zoning and reclassification) necessary for the proposal would require the prior approval of the Council elected in September 2017.

Oatley Flora & Fauna Conservation Society urges you not to proceed with reclassification from 'community' land to 'operational', or re-zoning of the site to SP2 Infrastructure, and not to forward any planning proposal to the Greater Sydney Commission that would materially alter usage of the site. Our grounds for this request are:

1. The land was originally bought by Council for use as a park, not for residential purposes. It is zoned RE1 – Public Recreation and currently classified as “Community” land under the Local Government Act 1993¹ - see footnote on following page
2. It is public land, usable by the whole community. It should not be sold or even leased to the private sector (for the benefit of relatively few) because that would exclude residents of Georges River LGA from much of the site.
3. Georges River LGA, particularly Hurstville and Kogarah, is experiencing an unprecedented rate of high-density residential development, leaving very little open space.
4. Residents in apartments will need, and deserve, more open space recreation land, not less.
5. Oatley Bowling Club site can provide this space; its proximity to Oatley Railway Station (with lift) makes it very suitable for visits by residents who don't have local parks or private transport.
6. Proximity to greenspace (such as that available at the OBC site) has been associated with improved mental health, including lower levels of stress, depression and anxiety.
7. Increased population will increase school enrolments and drive construction on school sites, reducing schoolyard open space. Students will need access to public spaces beyond school boundaries for recreation and sport. Growth and re-development of Penshurst School just when open space in Penshurst Park is being appropriated for organised sport demonstrates alarming lack of foresight.
8. We recognize a large aged population necessitates provision for specialist housing, but there are other more suitable and more spacious locations such as Penshurst Bowling Club site. Seniors housing should be acquired by developers purchasing private land, not by sacrificing public land. Ferndale Gardens at Mortdale is an example of successful seniors housing that did not sacrifice public land.

9. The site of the former Oatley Bowling Club is not suitable for seniors housing for a number of reasons:

Half of the site is within bushfire-prone land (former Hurstville Council's Bushfire Prone Land Map). Risks associated with developing this land as residences for people over the age of 55, and for people with disabilities, are too great and cannot be justified.

There is only one access point for pedestrians and vehicles entering and leaving the site. Provision of adequate access and manoeuvrability for emergency and service vehicles such as fire engines, ambulances and garbage trucks cannot be ensured.

Creation of the recommended bushfire asset protection zone would require destruction of valuable old irreplaceable trees including STIF species (see below).

Confining an aged care building to less than 50% of the site because of these restrictions, means it would not be a viable commercial prospect with the current height restrictions. We are totally opposed to a height of 7-9 stories as proposed by the previous Hurstville Council.

There are additional environmental issues:

The greatly increased level of urban traffic and noise will have a significant detrimental impact on the amenity of the neighbouring residences as well as on the adjacent natural bushland component of the Reserve.

Increased stormwater runoff will carry more sediment and other pollutants into the creek and wetlands, which members of OFF have worked hard over many years to improve through volunteer programs including Bushcare, Streamwatch and Clean Up Australia.

There will be a considerable increase in the volume of effluent entering the local sewer. The local sewerage system is already overloaded and overflows frequently; this is a potential threat to aged residents with compromised health.

The site of the former bowling club should be retained as public open space to serve as a buffer zone for the Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Forest (STIF) in the neighbouring bushland section of the Reserve. STIF is an Endangered Ecological Community; this is the only remnant in the Georges River LGA that is of good quality, retaining a tree canopy, understory and ground cover of native species.

Two threatened species of fauna use the Reserve – the Grey-headed Flying Fox and the Powerful Owl. Both are listed as Vulnerable in the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995. The Act provides for “biodiversity consideration at the early strategic stage of land-use planning and integration with development control processes”. We believe the proposed DA will negatively impact on the well-being of these species.

Oatley Flora & Fauna Conservation Society has over 300 members. Our members with young families recognize most clearly the importance of retaining public open space in perpetuity for passive recreation. They want their children to have the freedom to explore and enjoy unstructured play in large public spaces. And they want to share it with the increasing numbers of families in nearby suburbs who don't have the benefit of bushland and parkland because of the proliferation of high rise units.

Please consider our arguments carefully and don't make an unwise decision about our precious and scarce public land that future generations will condemn.

Yours sincerely



Elizabeth Cameron

Secretary, Oatley Flora & Fauna Conservation Society Inc

¹ The blocks of land that make up this reserve were acquired in 1944-45 by council for a park - council minute 680 of 16/11/44. This minute states quite clearly that the land was purchased for a park, lists the blocks bought, and includes all of the blocks on which the Oatley Bowling Club was built. Note also that the council received a grant from the Department of Local Government for these purchases (minute 884). (Minutes of Ordinary Meeting of Hurstville Municipal Council 16th November 1944).

Facsimiles of these minutes are attached.