

Dear Sir,

I live in Park Rd St Leonards (the East side of Park Rd). I'm writing to submit my view of the planning proposal for the St Leonards South Residential Precinct. I am directly effected by the proposed LEP as my home is included in the proposed LEP.

I support the South St Leonards Masterplan December 2014 also referred to as the 'Annand' plan. The masterplan was a result of a series of Lane Cove Council (LCC) workshops with residents. The LCC councillors and staff spent considerable time, effort and money on co-ordinating and organising the workshops and the documented outcomes.

I attended the LCC July 2015 council meeting which resolved to implement the St Leonards Masterplan and extend rezoning to Park Rd East. Extending to Park Rd East provided an important East-West road corridor which provides two vehicle outlets to Pacific Hwy in North and River Rd in South thus easing the congestion of any development East of Park Rd. I supported the LCC resolution at the July 2015 council meeting.

I don't agree with proposed LEP. This submission will first analyse one issue with proposed LEP and then propose an alternate solution to that issue.

The proposed new park in Park/Berry Rds was a 'surprise' in the proposed LEP as there was no park of that size and location in the St Leonards South Masterplan. There was an open space of roughly the same size located on Park Rd West directly adjacent to the heritage buildings<sup>1</sup>. The 'Annand' plan lists the weaknesses of this concept as;

- Major park on significant slope. Slope makes a flat area to play in an unlikely outcome.
- Large land acquisition will be expensive.
- It is evident that the creation of further large parks will be difficult to fund and require acquisition over time of many houses.

These weaknesses apply to the proposed new park.

The new park is approximately 3,500 sqm and requires the compulsory acquisition of ten homes. Likely cost of acquisition will vary from thirty million dollars (LCC estimate) to fifty million (based on recent, adjacent house sales). It can be expected the land acquisition will be lengthy as there are ten owners who do not accept the LCC current land value.

An Australian Financial Review article Feb 29<sup>th</sup> 2016 extract below pre-dates LCC May 2016 submission to Gateway.

***"China mega-developer Poly Group debuts in St Leonards with \$80 million***

*Chinese conglomerate and property heavyweight China Poly Group Corporation has joined the stampede of developers rushing into Sydney's St Leonards South residential precinct when it snapped up another coveted development site for just under \$80 million.*

*The massive 7414-sq-m site between Berry and Park Roads in Sydney's lower north shore is an amalgamation of 19 houses sold in one-line."*

NOTE; The acquisition did not and will not eventuate.

The proposed new park takes up 10 houses of the 7414 sq m site referred to above. Is this a coincidence or did the article influence the LCC decision on the location and size of proposed new park? What complicates this now is all 10 houses are still owned by individuals not a developer. This means there will be no developer contribution from this site.

The proposed LEP was submitted to Gateway in May 2016, the 'St Leonards South Landscape Master Plan Report' is dated September 2017. So how did LCC decide on the new park location and size? There appears to be no study or report in the documents presented to Gateway relating to the new park. The new park size and location was decided before a landscape master plan was completed.

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1 St Leonards South Masterplan P. 44 Fig 5.6 'Consolidated Open Space'

- How did the council/other determine the size and position of the proposed new park?
- What pre-May 2016 study of possible future density and demographics lead to the proposed open space.
- What usage is proposed for the open space especially given the slope of the site?

As the 'St Leonards South Landscape Master Plan Report' predates the decision for the new park it can be determined the landscape plan is only dealing with the proposed LEP as it was presented to Gateway and is not an endorsement of the validity of the new park location and size.

It is a pity the LCC did not employ Oculus Landscape Architecture and Urban Design during the pre-Gateway process as there would have been a much better integration of open space with the rezoning plan.

#### An Alternate solution:

There is a better open space solution where approximately 5,500 sqm is realised without the need for land acquisition.

Approximately the top two-thirds of the Park Rd East frontage has 10 metre setback and the bottom third a 4 metre set back. There is a 20 metre wide series of green spines<sup>2</sup> running North-South approximately located where the existing Berry Lane is. The alternate solution is to have a 17 metre setback running the length of Park Rd East, approximately 288 metres, this equals 4,896 sqm, adding the East-West path component adds another approximately 700 sqm making a total of 5,500 sqm, 2,000 sqm greater area than proposed new park.

This concept is very similar to the proposed Linear Park on the Southern end of Lithgow ST<sup>3</sup> the main difference being the slope of Park Rd from the Pacific Highway to River Rd.

I consulted with both a Landscape Architect and a Town Planner<sup>4</sup> about the viability of this concept. Both stated it is a better solution than the proposed new park. The 17 metre width is suitable for a park as it has room for two rows of trees and has enough width for a play areas. The slope can be managed by terraces creating a series of intimate and separated spaces. If landscaped appropriately can recreate elements of the pre-subdivision landscape typical of the Sydney Harbour North Shore. Some elements of this landscape still exist, notably the sandstone cliff at the River Rd end of Berry Rd and Holdsworth Ave.

The 17 metre set back can be a contribution from developers and does not need to be a land acquisition. This has the advantage of avoiding legal proceedings by LCC to acquire the land and the uncertainty of how successfully and timely such proceedings may be.

Another advantage is the construction of the linear park can occur at the same time as the construction of adjacent development. It is unlikely this would be the case of the new park as land acquisition will occur at a longer time frame than the developers.

This submission seeks to make the point that it appreciates the large amount of work, time and expense conducted by LCC and staff. It is recognised that the LCC and its staff work to NSW state planning legislation and practise. Due to resource within councils the size of LCC it is difficult for strategic planning to take a wholistic approach and integrate Landscape Architecture into the proposed LEP.

<sup>2</sup> Consultation with Landscape Architect revealed issues with the Green Spines. They are not good landscape planning

<sup>3</sup> P.38 Section 6.2 "ST LEONARDS CROWS NEST DRAFT GREEN PLAN Prepared for the Department of Planning & Environment October 2018"

<sup>4</sup> Extracts from Town Planner's written opinion are provided in Appendix ?

Appendix Extract from Town Planner's written opinion

- 'Concept plan proposes a wider landscaped corridor running along the western frontage of the subject site fronting Park Rd. This wide landscaped corridor will provide a very attractive landscape setting as a border around the proposed future development of the subject site. The alternative plans prepared by the Planning Consultants for the Council and the JBA propose a narrow corridor of landscaping, which I consider to be far less desirable than the much wider landscaping corridor fronting Park Rd.'
- 'Proposed landscape corridor fronting Park Rd will also provide a positive interface between the future development on the subject side and the adjoining Heritage Items on the western side of Park Rd. Where there are adjoining Heritage Items, one should provide a sensitive interface. Concept plan provides a sensitive interface by providing a wide landscape corridor along Park Rd.'

Appendix – Diagram of Linear Park along Park Rd

