



Hawkesbury City Council

special meeting business paper

date of meeting: 6 May 2003

location: Council Chambers

time: 7.00pm

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reports
for determination

ITEM: 66 **Pitt Town Local Environmental Study**

FILE NUMBER: 79347/LEP3/00/EVD/ORE06SBX.V02

PREVIOUS ITEM: 154, Special (12.12.2002)

REPORT:

Background

Council at its Special Meeting of 12 December 2002 considered a report on the Pitt Town draft Local Environmental Study. This report addressed the history of the Pitt Town Investigation Area, the findings of the Pitt Town Steering Committee and the proposed development scenarios. At its meeting of 11 February 2003 Council resolved as follows:

1. *Dr Vipond and the members of the Pitt Town Steering Committee be thanked for their participation and assistance in this process.*
2. *Connell Wagner be invited to finalise the draft Local Environmental Study based on the submissions received.*
3. *The LES give consideration to an option of generating a maximum of 700 (seven hundred) to 750 (seven hundred and fifty) lots in the parts of the investigation area closest to the existing village, and leaving the remaining land in its current zoning.*
4. *This draft Local Environmental Study be then reported to Council.*

Connell Wagner were subsequently invited to finalise the draft Local Environmental Study (LES) and submitted the final document on 11 April 2003. The final LES contains a number of development scenarios and the purpose of this report is to advise Council of these options.

One of the essential tasks in completing the LES was the consideration of the submissions received from the exhibition period of the LES as well as the consideration of the issues raised by the various government agencies. It should be noted that should Council decide to proceed with some form of development at Pitt Town, further consultation under Section 62 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 will be required.

Consideration of submissions - public exhibition of draft Local Environmental Study

The draft LES was placed on public exhibition from 28 August 2002 to 25 October 2003 and approximately 110 (one hundred and ten) submissions were received. The major issues raised in the submissions are indicated below and are categorised into the case "for" development and "against" development.

Against development:*Character*

- Spoil country/rural atmosphere
- Increase in crime
- Spoil friendly school
- Change in social mix
- Lack of space on small lots for gardens, backyards and children
- Cannot retain existing character with proposed roads
- Bought land to escape urban sprawl
- 2 (two) storey homes on small lots unsuitable
- Major change in residential/rural balance

Flooding

- Pressure on volunteers
- Pitt Town is an island during flood
- Extra burden and danger of residents evacuating
- Inability to evacuate existing and proposed population

Roads

- Limited transport network
- Danger for school students walking
- Proposed 4 (four) lanes at McGraths Hill will add to existing problems
- Upgrading of roads will impact on individual properties
- Roads already in poor state and at capacity

Agriculture

- Loss of good agricultural land forever
- Alternative crops should be investigated
- Topoclimate should be investigated
- Agriculture contributes to character

Services

- Upgrading of water infrastructure is expensive
- Existing problems with water pressure
- Extra load on stretched hospital
- School and pre-school unable to cope with increase population
- Sewer, telephone and electricity at capacity
- Small businesses will be threatened by larger traders
- Sewer carriers mains will drain through property

Heritage

- Macquarie Town - study underestimates significance
- Detrimental impact on existing heritage items (traffic, roadworks)
- Original land portions should not be able to be subdivided

- Insufficient funds allocated to prepare comprehensive report
- Heritage component does not conform to Heritage Office guidelines
- Reduction in curtilage will destroy historical value

Bushland/biodiversity

- Removal of significant vegetation
- Fauna study lacks credibility
- Remnant vegetation should be protected
- Insufficient information on threatened species

Water

- Detrimental impact on Pitt Town Lagoon, Hortons Creek, Long Neck Lagoon, local catchments and Hawkesbury River

Public Transport

- Present Government Policy does not encourage or support future development that will adversely affect air quality in NW sector
- LES does not convey the implications of 90% car usage
- Pitt Town car based community
- Infrequent bus service
- Nearest rail link too far and only accessed by car
- Tourism
- Tourists find village interesting
- Historical place to visit
- Additional housing will destroy village and therefore tourism
- Tourism can only be maintained if development not allowed.

Policy Issues

- Inconsistent with Sydney Regional Environmental Plan No. 20.
- Inconsistent with SEPP 1
- Inconsistent with Shaping Western Sydney
- Contrary to objectives of Action for Air

Air Pollution

- Air pollution already too high
- Increased air pollution from increased traffic flow

Additional work

- Hydrological study required re flooding
- Compilation of all water bores
- Contamination study
- Agriculture study for alternate crop usage
- Complete aboriginal and archaeological investigation

- Salinity
- Surface water quality
- Bushfire risk

Other submissions

- No justification for rezoning
- Housing needs met in Rouse Hill
- LES incomplete
- Does not satisfy ESD principles
- Infill only scenario
- Draft LES does not establish unequivocal agency agreement
- Local demand is only 15 (fifteen) houses
- Uncertainty about impact therefore should not proceed
- Supportive of 1-5 acres lots
- Twice refused by the DOP for the Urban Development Program

Support for development:*Housing needed*

- Provision of affordable housing
- Housing choice
- Housing on flood free land
- Attract young people back
- Good social mix
- Great place for children to grow up
- Additional housing options for RAAF personnel

Improved Services

- Better facilities at school
- Will keep school and post office from closing
- Provision of flood free access
- Better water, sewer and electricity
- Impetus for better public transport (bus)
- Employment
- Provide employment to local community
- Boost local traders

Agriculture not viable

- Poor soil quality
- Increased running costs
- Income has to be supplemented - cannot rely on agriculture
- Urban encroachment
- Cannot compete on open market

- No longer enough to close to Sydney markets (transport)
- Niche markets succumb to large operations
- Conflicts with existing residential development

Other

- Request for inclusion in Study Area (Mitchell Road)
- Studies too conservative (flooding and bushland)

Comments

It is clear the community remains divided on the issue of development land for residential purposes at Pitt Town. Connell Wagner addressed each of the issues raised by the public throughout the LES. It is acknowledged that some issues are matters for the Masterplan process to consider should Council resolved to proceed with development in Pitt Town.

Request for inclusion in Investigation Area

An additional submission was received from McKinlay Morgan and Associates on behalf of Mr B J Ghantous, the owner of 30 Mitchell Road, Pitt Town. The submission requests that the subject land be included within the Pitt Town Investigation Area as the land has been filled under a subdivision approval issued in August 1996. The approval provides for the filling of the lots to levels existing prior to the site being sand mined. The submission indicates that the height of the land ranges from 20.3m AHD to 21.5m AHD.

The subject land has an area of approximately 7.9 hectares and is currently zoned Rural 1© under the provisions of Hawkesbury Local Environmental Plan 1989. The southern part of the site is already contained within the Investigation Area as it is located above the 20m contour (flood of record). The proposed inclusion of the subject land is considered reasonable in that the site is located above the 20m contour and forms a logical edge or boundary to the Investigation Area in this locality.

Should Council proceed to the preparation of a Masterplan and Local Environmental Plan, the development scenarios applied to the southern part of the site should be applied to the remainder of the subject site.

Consideration of submissions on draft LES - Government authorities

Prior to the preparation of the draft LES Connell Wagner held a Planning Focus Meeting with key government authorities to discuss the draft LES. The matters raised by the authorities were then addressed in the draft LES.

Upon completion of the LES the plan was referred to several government authorities for comment. The issues raised by the authorities are discussed below. No response was received from the Deerubbin Local Aboriginal Land Council, Wentworth Area Health, Rural Fire Service, Telstra, Integral Energy and the Department of Education.

A summary of the issues raised by the various agencies in response to the draft LES follow. The submissions were then forwarded to Connell Wagner following Council's resolution of 11 February 2003 to address in the final LES and results of this process are discussed elsewhere in this report.

Department of Land and Water Conservation

The Department of Land and Water Conservation (DLWC) were represented on the Steering Committee and raised concerns relating to the regional planning of Sydney.

The Department advised that it was "uncomfortable lending support" to what appears to be a fragmented approach for the locality to cater for substantial regional growth as the land is not on the Metropolitan Development Program. DLWC were very clear on this matter and advised that *"the proposed development is not an efficient use of government infrastructure given the servicing that is required compared to other more strategic areas"*.

This debate is addressed further in the Report of the Steering Committee where the Chairperson notes that DLWC and the Department of Planning are in ongoing negotiations concerning this argument (not just for the Pitt Town proposal). This is a matter for these two State Government Departments to resolve.

In advising Council as to how to proceed with the investigation of Pitt Town, the Department of Planning advised that any development would be seen as providing local housing demand and not contributing to regional housing supply. In more recent advice from the Department of Planning, this position was reiterated, that is, any development would be considered in satisfying local demand.

Notwithstanding the above, DLWC provided comments for improvement of the draft LES contingent upon the Government revisiting the strategic context of Pitt Town:

Flooding:

- Levels of study area based on topographic information only and therefore a detailed survey should be carried out.
- Building Designs should be consistent with best practice flood compatible building materials (up to the Probable Maximum Flood)
- Subdivision design should consider flood evacuation.

Stormwater drainage systems:

- Systems should be designed to ensure they do not have an adverse impact on upstream and downstream flood behaviour, natural riverine environments or occupiers of the floodplain over the full range of potential floods.
- Works should preserve or enhance flow streamlines in order to eliminate adverse flood impacts and avoided erosion.
- The Department is unlikely to support any stormwater basin located "on-line" and recommends such structures be required to be located "off line" and outside of riparian land setback.

Provision of Utilities:

- Little detail has been given to the impact of flooding on utility services and related consequences.
- Critical utility outages may preclude the early return of evacuees and as result substantial costs and social implications.
- There will be costs involved in meeting specific locational, structural, design or maintenance requirements arising from a flood risk management approach to asset location to facilitate restoration of essential services following flooding.
- The impact of flooding on high voltage transmission lines as a result of their location/relocation on flood prone land should be addressed.

Flood evacuation

- The recommendation of the SES to build a community hall or similar facility is supported and should be capable of operating for several days after Pitt Town is isolated by floodwaters.
- The issues of local drainage and the associated upstream and downstream impacts needs to be considered in conjunction with minimum road levels to meet SES flood evacuation requirements for the growth scenarios.
- The Study area becomes an island during extreme flooding in the Hawkesbury River in excess of RL 16m.

Protection and Enhancement of Watercourses and wetlands:

- Development should enhance watercourses, wetlands and riparian zones.
- DLWC does not support piping, channelisation, widening, straightening or relocation of streams; the construction of on-line water quality treatment structures and flood detention basins; or the filling and draining of wetlands. Sufficient land needs to be provided to prevent such activities conflicting or compromising natural resource outcomes.
- Provision of adequate riparian zones adjacent to watercourses and wetlands.
- A watercourse attribute and opportunity mapping exercise should be undertaken to consider adequate to consider adequate riparian zones between new residential development and watercourses.
- Remnant vegetation should be conserved along watercourses.
- The management of flood flows should not compromise the long term viability of watercourses and riparian land.

Protection of groundwater

- Groundwater monitoring should be initiated at an early stage.
- The number of groundwater monitoring installations should be clearly identified.
- Water supplies for new development are to be sourced from Sydney Water. Groundwater may be contaminated from past agricultural activities. This issues should be emphasized more.

Protection and Enhancement of Native Vegetation

- Remnant vegetation should be enhanced and not fragmented.
- Linkages should be provided between riparian vegetation and other remnant vegetation.
- Adequate buffers to be retained between the edge of remnant vegetation and areas zoned for future development

Salinity:

- Any development which involves the clearing of vegetation, or modification of the landform could cause a salinity impact, either on or off site. A salinity assessment should be carried out for the subject land prior to any release.
- All recommendations of the salinity assessment should be incorporated throughout the LES.
- Watercycle management should be assessed so that conflicting issues such as encouraging infiltration and controlling groundwater rise are solved prior to the need for expensive retro fitting.
- Cut and fill should be minimised at both the house and suburb scale.

Sydney Regional Environmental Plan No. 20 - Hawkesbury Nepean River:

- Consideration of this plan.

Transport NSW

As Council is aware, Transport NSW were invited to form part of the Steering Committee however declined due to "insufficient resources to become involved in urban matters outside the Metropolitan Development Program". A submission was received and advised Council that the following issues should be covered in the LES:

- Extension and/or improvement of public transport serving the area, especially bus services; and
- Provision within the development areas of appropriate routes and facilities to encourage and promote public transport and cycle use and walking.

Transport NSW also raised concerns about the relative remote location of the development, encouraging car reliance and not reducing the Government's stated priority of reducing total vehicle travelled. The Department consequently believes that the key issues of timing of public transport improvements and funding arrangements for local road upgrades should be addressed prior to the matter proceeding further.

Environment Protection Authority

The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) concerns include air and water quality and the potential for site contamination:

- *Air Quality*
Whilst the EPA acknowledges the associated increase in traffic volume with development in Pitt Town are not regionally significant, it prefers development of population centres in close proximity to public transport. The EPA is therefore concerned over the high growth scenarios for Pitt Town in the absence of a sustainable transport solution.
- *Water Quality and flow -*
 - Any further development would have an impact on water quality of the Pitt Town and Longneck Lagoons and the Hawkesbury River. The EPA suggest this of particular concern given that the land is flood prone, has seasonally high water tables and the sewerage systems and treatment works are at capacity.
 - The draft LES gives little information about the potential for salinity at the site.

- Objectives for new development should be consistent with the water quality and river flow objectives recommended by the Healthy River Commission Inquiry into the Hawkesbury Nepean and agreed by Government, as well as those for the Stormwater Management Plan for the sub-catchment.
- Best practice management stormwater practices should be implemented to minimise the impact of development.
- Integrated water cycle management practice, such as water supply management, use of rainwater tanks and possible recycling of greywater through toilet should be considered.

Other matters:

- The long history of orcharding may have led to soil contamination. This should be investigated consistent with the requirements of State Environmental Plan 55 - Remediation of land and the 1998 EPA/DUAP - Managing Land Contamination Planning Guidelines.

National Parks and Wildlife Service

The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) addressed the Steering Committee at its meeting on 15 November 2002 and advised on the comments made in their submission. The following issues/comments were raised:

- Some species may have missed in the flora surveys and more detailed fauna and flora surveys are required at the Development Application stage.
- The impact assessment should address areas outside the study area which may be affected by the proposal such as Pitt Town and Longneck Lagoons and the Scheyville National Park.
- The Recovery Plan for Cumberland Plain Endangered Ecological Communities states that the desired outcome across the Cumberland Plain is not net loss of any Endangered Ecological Communities.
- The draft Recovery Plan maps show the remnant vegetation between Johnston Street and Bootles Lane has been classified as "Support for Core", the second highest conservation category.
- Conservation zone for remnant vegetation on the above mentioned land, including appropriate buffers.
- Strategic approach to Aboriginal heritage and assessment to assist in identifying development constraints in the area.

NSW Agriculture

NSW Agriculture highlights the importance of maintaining quality agricultural land in close proximity to Sydney and raises concern over the loss of this land. The submission suggests that poor planning practices has led to a number of problems, including conflicts between residential and agricultural uses. The submission also suggests that there is good potential for agricultural investment to utilise the agricultural resources of in Pitt Town with few constraints.

NSW Heritage

NSW Heritage advised that in 2000 a Heritage Council Study "Colonial Landscapes of the Cumberland Plain and Camden" identified Pitt Town as a cultural landscape of national significance. The study further identified the whole landscape unit comprising Pitt Town Bottoms, the village of Pitt Town and the escarpment and this inter-relationship and visual connections of these as being significant and one of the

five extent Macquarie Towns. It was recommended in this study that the entire valley be listed on the State Heritage Register and that the entire valley be zoned Environmental Protection

NSW Heritage recommended that prior to any formal decision in relation to the draft LES Council undertake further work, specifically in relation to the development potential of Bona Vista and Fernadell. This additional work should also give consideration to the extension to the existing Bona Vista curtilage so that it reflects the significance of the property.

State Emergency Service

The State Emergency Service was in attendance at the Steering Committee Meeting of 15 November 2002. It has been suggested that the numbers concerning evacuation may be revised as a result of a change in methodology.

Sydney Water

Sydney Water have advised that the proposed development at Pitt Town would trigger an expensive (developer to pay upfront) upgrade of bulk water supply and the construction of new mains to service the Pitt Town area. The main infrastructure would be:

1. The construction of a new water main from the adjacent water supply zone to the North Richmond water supply zone; and
2. The construction of a new water main from South Windsor Reservoir to Pitt Town.

Sydney Water has also recommended that Council adopted water conservation standards, including AAA rated water efficient shower heads, water tap outlets, dual flush systems, front loading washing machines and AAA rated dishwashers. Sydney Water recommends that the draft LES take into account water sensitive urban design principles to improve the environmental sustainability of the water cycle in the study area.

Roads and Traffic Authority

The Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) is generally supportive of the LES and has requested some minor corrections. The RTA notes and supports Council's recommendation for the preparation of a Traffic Impact Assessment that assesses the capacity of the existing road network and likely demand generated by the preferred land use strategy. The RTA notes and supports that the study will incorporate requirements for local and regional road upgrading as well as intersection improvements. The package of required roadworks should be at the full cost to the developer.

The RTA also supports Council's intention to prepare a Section 94 Plan for road/intersection upgrades including roadworks off Windsor Road. The submission encourages Council to consider the provision of public transport services that provide pedestrian, cycle and bus facilities and services to reduce private vehicular trips to the Pitt Town area.

Comment:

As a result of the submissions from the Government agencies it was clear that there are four clear issues to be addressed:

1. Heritage
2. Infrastructure
3. Protection of the Environment
4. Design Issues

There were also several "hard" constraints that will influence the future development of Pitt Town including:

1. The development is not to exceed 1000 (one thousand) lots (Planning NSW)
2. Up to 1,000 lots does not require the upgrade of the Flood Evacuation Route (SES)
3. No additional on-site effluent disposal (EPA and DLWC)
4. Stormwater and drainage systems to have no adverse impact on upstream and downstream flood behaviour, natural riverine environment and preserve or enhance flow streamlines.
5. Protection of the vegetation on Bona Vista
6. Satisfactory curtilage around Bona Vista

Connell Wagner was also requested to consider the submissions from the government agencies and to this end attended meetings with NSW Heritage and the National Parks and Wildlife Service. A planning focus meeting was also held with the Planning NSW, NSW Heritage and the State Emergency Service in attempt to understand any unresolved issues. The following matters by these agencies were raised during this process.

National Parks and Wildlife Service

As a result of the consultation with the National Parks and Wildlife Service (The Service) and the release of the new vegetation mapping for Western Sydney in April 2003, further vegetation survey work was undertaken by Connell Wagner. This work was necessary to validate the new National Parks and Wildlife Service Western Sydney Vegetation Mapping with the work that Connell Wagner had previously carried out. The Service provided the methodology and advice for this additional work and the validation process.

A further meeting was held with Council staff and officers from The Service on 30 April 2003. At this meeting the officers from The Service advised that based on the information presented to them, they understand how the ecologist has come to the conclusions concerning the conservation significance of the site.

Council is now in receipt of a report (1 May 2003) prepared by Dr AnneMarie Clements on behalf of the Johnson Property Group. Dr Clements recommends:

“For the intact vegetation in the south-east of the Site, it is recommended that:

- *it be carefully bush regenerated and*

- *a 20m wide buffer adjoining the retained bushland be replanted with local native species and maintained as managed bushland buffer.*

The recommendations of the current report are consistent with the management strategies recommended by Connell Wagner (2001) with:

- *Shale-Gravel Transition Forest to the south - a reserve and*
- *Shale-Gravel Transition Forest to the north - sympathetic development as:*
 - *the understorey is largely exotic, highly disturbed and contains few native species and*
 - *a sympathetic development will enable retention of native trees and large shrubs.”*

The Connell Wagner 2001 report is Appendix C in the draft LES which concludes that the Shale-Gravel Transition forest in the northern part of the site is suited to sympathetic development and access to the forest should be restricted to pedestrians only. In Appendix C in the 2003 LES, Figure 2.7 shows areas of land unhatched which may be capable of sympathetic development. This area has been included in the growth options for vegetation conservation. The LES concludes that this area's dominant role is vegetation preservation however, can include some development. It is concluded that the LES and the report of Dr Clements come to the same conclusion.

Should Council proceed with one of the development scenarios, formal consultation with The Service will be required under sections 34A and 62 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

State Emergency Services

A revised report from the State Emergency Service (SES) was received on 17 April 2003. The report states that proposed Growth Scenarios 1, 2 and 3 can be accommodated with the existing evacuation route construction and within the acceptable limits of increased demand on SES personnel. Raising of the road is not required until the development reaches 1000 new lots.

NSW Heritage

Connell Wagner and Council officers met with officers from NSW Heritage following Council's resolution to finalise the LES. Additional advice was received following the completion of the final LES and appears that the consultants preparing the advice for Connell Wagner have fulfilled the requirements of NSW Heritage.

Again, should Council resolve to proceed with one of the development scenarios, further consultation will be required with NSW Heritage and they have advised that are prepared to assist in the preparation of the local environmental plan.

Development Scenarios

Following consideration of the submissions, baseline and environmental analysis and the identified site constraints and opportunities, Connell Wagner have developed 4 development scenarios. The LES states that the findings of the site and planning investigations have indicated that:

- *"A range of planning and physical constraints exist which will dictate the form and extent of any future development should development proceed. Section 3.0 has outlined the implications these have for development and the Growth Scenarios have been shaped by these considerations.*
- *Although the area has been utilised for many years as farmland, the ability for sustainable agriculture to continue is severely impeded.*
- *Past land use has led to vegetation clearing. While vegetation on the site cannot be considered pristine, there are areas that do possess ecological and habitat value which should be protected.*
- *Any development of that does occur will require additional community services and facilities to cater to the demands of future residents.*
- *Upgrading of transport networks and infrastructure facilities will be required.*
- *There are areas with significant heritage conservation value which should be conserved and protected.*
- *The site offers potential for sustainable residential development subject to the implementation of appropriate environmental controls."*

The three growth scenarios were developed on the basis of different degrees of emphasis on landscape and environmental conservation versus potential/demand for various land uses and the ability to service the different portions of the study area.

A fourth option was also developed as result of Council resolution on 12 December 2002 which states:

"That the LES give consideration to an option of generating a maximum of 700 (seven hundred) to 750 (seven hundred and fifty) lots in the parts of the investigation area closest to the existing village, and leaving the remaining land in its current zoning"

The development scenarios are summarised in the following table and are displayed at this meeting.

Scenario	Number of Dwellings	Population
Low Growth Scenario (Option 1)		
Rural Village (1)	280	780
Rural Urban Fringe (2)	215	533
Total	495	1,238
Medium Growth Scenario (Option 2)		
Rural Village	280	700
Rural Urban Fringe	450	1,125
Total	730	1,825
Alternate Medium Growth Scenario (Option 3)		
Rural Village	650	1,625
Rural Urban Fringe	60	150
Total	710	1,775
High Growth Scenario (Option 4)		
Rural Village	1,140	2,850
Rural Urban Fringe	265	663
Total	1,405	3,513

1. Rural village lot sizes vary from 400-600 sqm to 600-800 sqm
2. Rural Urban Fringe lot sizes vary from 2000 to 3000 sqm to 5,000 sqm to 1 hectare
3. Dwelling occupancy rates assumed to be 2.5 persons per dwelling average

In all the development scenarios, locations have been nominated as Heritage/environmental conservation areas. These include:

- The property known as Bona Vista which has significant local/state heritage value. This property is listed on the Hawkesbury LEP heritage register and the NSW Heritage Office has indicated that there is potential significant state heritage value in this property. This site also contains remnant

native bushland that the NPWS has indicated has significant conservation value. It has been determined that Rural Urban Fringe style development densities (5,000 to 6,000 sqm) would be the most appropriate form of development around the main curtilage to maintain and enhance heritage and environmental values of this area. Alternatively, a Community Title development that maintains the open rural character around Bona Vista and retains the significant vegetation would be acceptable.

- The area to the west of Bathurst Street which contains numerous individual heritage items and heritage landscapes. Development in these areas should similarly be restricted to ensure heritage values are maintained and enhanced.
- The escarpment area along the northern perimeter of the study area. This is an important heritage landscape and the NSW Heritage Office has indicated this warrants protection. Again, development of minimal impact is recommended.
- The area known as Vermont which was developed as a secondary village in the 1880's.

The type of development that is considered compatible with the heritage significance of these areas varies, however, the over-riding principle is the protection and enhancement of heritage values.

Each of the Growth Scenarios would be supported by a range of sustainable environmental and development controls to minimise identified impacts.

Low Growth Scenario: Option 1

This development scenario involves additional rural residential development with minor urban additions to the Pitt Town village on its northern periphery.

The main principles of this scenario are:

- Areas contiguous with the Pitt Town village form logical extensions to the village zone to maintain the relatively compact nature of the town and permit efficient use of infrastructure. These areas are nominated as 'Rural Village'. This includes land adjacent to the existing primary school which could provide a focus for a small "town green" area. Higher densities are proposed closer to the school (a mix of lot sizes in the range 400-600 sqm to 600-800 sqm) graduating to a more traditional "urban" density with lot sizes in the range 600-800 sqm with a buffer to the Bona Vista property along Bootles Lane. The village extensions include land on the 'Fernadell' property which has heritage landscape values which would be conserved and incorporated into future development design (eg appropriate open space/vegetation buffers).
- The Bona Vista property is developed with Rural Urban Fringe style development densities (5,000 to 6,000 sqm) around the main curtilage to maintain and enhance heritage values of this area. A small area of traditional 600-800 sqm lots are proposed along Bootles Road to provide a transition between more urban development to the south. A small area of larger lots (800-1000 sqm) is located at the interface between the vegetation and Rural Urban Fringe properties to the west.

Alternatively, the latter area could be developed as a Community Title development that maintains the open rural character with the significant vegetation making up the common area of the community title land.

- Areas north of Johnston Street are nominated as Rural Urban Fringe. These contain three main development densities that decrease with distance from the existing village. The densities are 4 (four) dwellings per hectare (2,000 sqm lots), 2 (two) dwellings per hectare (4,000 sqm lots) and 1 dwelling per hectare (1 hectare lots). Those properties fronting Bathurst Street, Amelia Grove and Hawkesbury Street would retain their existing densities of 2,000 sqm and 4,000 sqm blocks. The rest of the Rural Urban Fringe Area would contain a density of 1(one) dwelling per hectare. The buffer to Bona Vista continues into this area.

For the Rural Village areas, the yield is calculated by dividing the area capable for development by 10 (ten) and 15 (fifteen) dwellings per hectare, minus the number of existing lots. A nominal 20% of total land is provided for open space and infrastructure provision. For the Rural Urban Fringe areas, the yield is calculated by dividing the area capable for development by 1, 2 and 4 dwellings per hectare minus the number of existing lots. A nominal amount of land is provided for roads, open space and infrastructure provision.

It is calculated that this scenario would yield approximately 495 (four hundred and ninety five) dwellings that would result in an additional population of 1,238 (one thousand two hundred and thirty eight) persons.

Comments:

There are several advantages and disadvantages associated with each development scenario.

Advantages:

- Provision of additional housing.
- Additional population for the school and commercial centre.
- Reinforces the village with the residential development adjacent to the existing village.
- Housing concentrated next to the existing village.
- Northern part of the investigation contains lower densities, maintaining a "rural character".
- Protection of the vegetation on Bona Vista property.
- Protection of the curtilage around the Bona Vista Homestead.

Disadvantages

- Servicing costs higher per allotment.
- Inefficient subdivision of rural urban fringe lots, where it would be difficult to allow for further subdivision should a higher density be required in the future.
- A major change to the character of the area.
- A large increase in the population of the area.

Should Council resolve to proceed in this manner, it would be appropriate to provide for density controls in the northern part of the Investigation Area, rather than allow straight minimum allotment sizes subdivision. This would create a cluster of rural residential development, which the advantage of being more efficient for servicing of the lots and allow other land uses such as agriculture to remain on the larger lots.

To facilitate this type of development, the use of Transferable Development Rights is appropriate. That is, lots located in the Cattai Road locality will be transferred to the Wells Street locality, allowing the orcharding and poultry farming to remain. This would be a matter for the Masterplan to consider.

Medium Growth Scenario: Option 2

The main principles of this scenario are:

- Areas contiguous with the Pitt Town village are treated as per Low Growth Scenario.
- Bona Vista is treated as per Option 1.
- A "Rural-Urban Fringe" area would be in the remainder of the study area containing densities of 4 (four) dwellings per hectare (2,500 sqm lots) that will be situated generally within the area east of Bathurst Street and south of Hall Street. The area to the north of Hall Street and in the eastern portion of the study area will be a density of 2 (two) dwellings per hectare (5,000 sqm lots). This would allow a gradual decline in densities towards the north of the study area which would be commensurate with heritage and environmental constraints.

It is anticipated that this scenario would yield approximately 730 (seven hundred and thirty) dwellings which would result in an additional population of 1,825 (one thousand eight hundred and twenty five) persons.

Advantages:

- Decreased servicing costs per allotment.
- More variety in housing choice.
- Additional population for the school and commercial centre.
- Reinforces the village with the residential development adjacent to the existing village.
- Housing concentrated next to the existing village.
- Northern part of the investigation contains lower densities, maintaining a "rural character".
- Protection of the vegetation on Bona Vista property.
- Protection of the curtilage around the Bona Vista Homestead.

Disadvantages

- Alters the existing character.
- Major change to the character of the area.
- A larger increase to the population of the area.
- Inefficient subdivision of rural urban fringe lots, where it would be difficult to allow for further subdivision should a higher density be required in the future.

Again, clustering of the lots proposed in the Rural Urban Fringe (to the North of the Investigation Area) is appropriate. This would be achieved through the use of density controls rather than a straight minimum area subdivision.

Alternate Medium Growth Scenario: Option 3

The Alternate Medium Growth Scenario is based on the Council's December 12 resolution which was to generate between 700 (seven hundred) and 750 (seven hundred and fifty) lots closest to the existing village.

The main principles of this scenario are:

- Areas contiguous with the Pitt Town village are treated as per Low Growth Scenario.
- Bona Vista is treated as per Option 1.
- The area east of the Vermont area and bounded by Johnston Street in the south, Hall Street in the north and the former mined area to the east. This would be developed in a more traditional "urban" density with lot sizes in the range 600-1000 sqm with a buffer to the Vermont Area which would be conserved and incorporated into future development design (eg appropriate open space/vegetation buffers).
- The remainder of the study area would be retained within the existing zoning controls (ie Environmental Protection - Scenic 7(d1) and Rural 1(c).

It is anticipated that this scenario would yield approximately 710 (seven hundred and ten) dwellings which would result in an additional population of 1,775 persons.

Advantages:

- Decreased servicing costs per allotment.
- Provides some variety in housing densities.
- Retention of existing zones along Amelia Grove, Hawkesbury Streets, Cattai Road locality and north of Hall Street.
- Reinforces the village with the residential development adjacent to the existing village.
- Housing concentrated next to the existing village.
- Northern part of the investigation contains lower densities, maintaining a "rural character".
- Protection of the vegetation on Bona Vista property.
- Protection of the curtilage around the Bona Vista Homestead.
- Majority of large lots left unsubdivided.

Disadvantages

- Less efficient use of land adjacent to the existing village.
- Less housing choice.
- Major change to the character of the area.
- Large population increase.
- Uncertainty regarding some land remaining in its current zone.

High Growth Scenario: Option 4

The High Growth Scenario is outlined in Table 4.1 and depicted in Figure 4.4. This scenario represents a likely maximum sustainable development scenario and involves more widespread Rural Village development.

The main principles of this scenario are:

- Areas contiguous with the Pitt Town village are treated as extensions to the village (as per other scenarios).
- Bona Vista is treated as per Option 1.
- The development of a secondary town focus with higher densities north of Johnston Street. As there will effectively be another village in this area, a small retail focus is proposed around a number of small shops to provide for immediate local convenience needs. It would be surrounded by a zone of higher density (eg 8-10 dwellings per hectare) housing to provide a more urban focus
- Rural Urban Fringe development is permitted throughout most of the study area.

It is anticipated that this scenario would yield approximately 1,405 dwellings which would result in an additional population of 3,513 persons.

Comments:

This option has been dismissed by the Department of Urban and Transport Planning who have stated that the development should not exceed 1000 lots. Furthermore, the SES Report states that upgrading of the evacuation routes would be required should the development exceed 1000 lots.

Infill Development Potential

Should no rezoning occur, there remains some potential to subdivide larger parcels to the minimum lot size in each land use zone.

There are currently no vacant residential lots within the existing Pitt Town village, however there are approximately 40 lots that are greater than 900 sqm in area. If these lots were to be further subdivided to the minimum lot size (450sqm) this would result in additional 40 dwellings in the village.

The rural areas within the study area boundary includes land zoned Rural 1(c) and the Environmental Protection (Scenic) 7(d1). The LEP allows with consent the subdivision to 2 hectares in the Rural 1(c) and to 10 hectares in the Environmental Protection (Scenic) 7(d1) zones.

Land zoned 1(c) has limited development potential as most of the lots are under 4 hectares in area, which prohibits further subdivision of this land. There are approximately 3 lots greater than 4 hectares within which could be subdivided to create lots sized 2 hectares.

Land zoned 7(d1) also has limited development potential as most of these lots are under 20 hectares in area, which prohibits further subdivision of this land. There are approximately 5 (five) lots greater than 20 hectares within which could be subdivided to create lots sized 10 hectares.

Thus, the total remaining potential within the study area is approximately 48 (forty eight) lots which would equate to an additional 168 persons.

Advantages:

- Maintains status quo.
- Maintains existing character

Disadvantages

- Lack of housing choice.
- Not an efficient use of largely unconstrained land.

Consideration of options

The Report of the Independent Chairperson (Dr Vipond) of the Pitt Town Steering Committee considered that options for the development (or not) of Pitt Town and reported as follows:

"If Council chooses to continue with the preparation of an LEP the positive implications include:

- *The population of Hawkesbury City Council will have a supply of new housing in Pitt Town in the near future.*
- *The development will be welcomed by members of the community, including landowners and the proponent developer, who want the additional housing and services that will be developed and who find agricultural land use non-viable.*

If Council chooses not to continue with the preparation of the LEP the positive implications are:

- *The decision will be welcomed by members of the community who wish to retain the rural character of the area.*
- *The decision will be welcomed by those who see current land-use zonings as the best means of protecting the heritage and the natural environment of the area as well as the agricultural use of the land*

Of course, each choice has its negative implications. People who would welcome development would not be pleased with the maintenance of current zonings, etc."

Council continues to have several options available and these are discussed below:

Option 1:

Council may resolve to end this process, that is, cease the preparation of a draft local environmental plan. This would require a resolution to cease work and the Department of Planning would be notified accordingly.

Option 2:

Council may resolve to proceed with the preparation of a draft local environmental plan to allow residential development at Pitt Town. Based on the information contained with the LES and as discussed above, it is considered that the most appropriate form of development is the Medium Growth Scenario (Option 2).

This option provides Council with the greatest flexibility in the provision of housing choice within the City. It provides a range in densities as well as protecting the significant heritage issues on Bona Vista, Hawkesbury and Hall Streets and the escarpment area. This scenario also provides for the protection and conservation of the vegetation on Bona Vista.

In choosing this option is also considered appropriate to provide for density controls in the northern part of the Investigation Area, rather than allow straight minimum allotment sizes subdivision. As mentioned above this would allow for the creation of clustered development which the advantage of being more efficient for servicing of the lots and allow other land uses such as agriculture to remain on the larger lots.

To facilitate this type of development, the use of Transferable Development Rights is appropriate. That is, lots located in the Cattai Road locality will be transferred to the Wells Street locality, allowing the orcharding and other agricultural land uses to remain. This would be a matter for the Masterplan to consider.

A number of steps would be involved should Council resolve to proceed in this manner:-

a) Preparation of plans

A Masterplan showing a detailed layout of development at Pitt Town would need to be prepared as well as a Section 94 Plan (Developers Contributions). The master plan would be the basis of the Development Control Plan for the area. Whilst the LES suggests that a separate Land Use and Conservation Management Plan and Masterplan be prepared, it is considered a better use of resources to combine these two documents as a Masterplan. This Masterplan will address the following issues:

- ESD and design principles.
- Phasing of development.
- Distribution of land uses, including public open space and environmental protection areas.
- Subdivision pattern.
- Building envelopes and built form controls.
- Heritage conservation, including both Aboriginal and European heritage.
- Infrastructure provision.
- Remediation of the site.
- Pedestrian, cycle and road access and circulation network, with particular regard to public.

- Transport servicing.
- Parking provision.
- Provision of community services and facilities.
- Improvements to the public domain.
- Provision of open space, its function and landscaping.
- Conservation of native flora and fauna habitat on the site, including any threatened species, populations or ecological communities.

It is envisaged that the Masterplan will achieve the following objectives:

- An overall subdivision, road layout and open space plan based upon the constraints and opportunities identified in the LES.
- A high quality urban design outcome
- Compliance with a maximum number of dwellings set for the site
- Compliance with the objectives and controls for environmental management
- Consistency with the relevant provisions of SREP 20 and any other relevant environmental planning instruments.

Upon completion of these plans, formal Section 62 Consultation will be carried out with the government authorities prior to the preparation of the draft Local Environmental Plan (LEP). Following the preparation of the draft Local Environmental Plan, the Department of Urban and Transport Planning will be requested to issue a Section 65 Certificate to allow public exhibition of the draft LEP.

b) Exhibition of draft local environmental plan

Should the Department of Urban and Transport Planning issue a certificate the draft LEP would be placed on public exhibition. The exhibition should also include Masterplan and Section 94 plan would all be exhibited concurrently.

c) Steering Committee

In view of the successful operation of the Steering Committee, chaired by Dr Joan Vipond, Council may wish to continue with a similar process to deal with the steps outlined above. It is therefore recommended that the Pitt Town Steering Committee continue as an advisory group committee to assist Council.

Conclusions

It is clear that there are a number of constraints to further urban development within the Hawkesbury City as a whole. Council is faced with the dilemma of providing additional housing options for residents into the future, to do this Council must decide where the most appropriate location for this development to occur, in line with the relevant State government policies.

There is a need to provide a variety of housing within the City of Hawkesbury to cater for the varying household compositions, lifestyles and incomes. Housing options need to cater for low-income earners, single parent families, students and older persons living alone. For example, the proportion of lone person households in the City has increased from 4% in 1986 to 6% in 1996 and 6.9% in 2001. This is an important consideration in determining how residential development should proceed.

In 2001 there were 22,173 private dwellings in the Hawkesbury. The average number of persons living in occupied dwellings within the City was 2.7 persons, which decreased from 2.9 persons in 1991 and 3.2 in 1986. This generally follows the trend for the rest of Sydney as outlined above and means that more dwellings are required for the same population.

Pitt Town provides one option for future urban development on largely unconstrained land. The LES and Dr Vipond's report suggests that there is no information to indicate that some form of development cannot take place.

Under the recommended Medium Growth Scenario, Option 2, the population increase will be approximately 1,825 (one thousand eight hundred and twenty five) people (approximately one quarter of the size of Bligh Park). Dr Vipond has indicated in her report that the impact of "change" on the community is something that cannot be estimated. The community itself appears to be divided on whether this change would be positive or negative.

The land is physically capable of development subject to the issues outlined above. Any proposed subdivision would have to use leading edge technology and be designed to meet the environmental issues however, these do not appear to be insurmountable.

It is considered that the process outlined in the body of this report would keep the community informed as it proceeds if Council resolves to continue. It should be noted that Council can stop the process at any time up to the Minister making a new draft plan.

The process outlined would involve Council in considerable costs, which can be recovered via a contribution plan, however if the development does not proceed these funds are not recoverable.

If Council considers that level of change is unacceptable then the process can be stopped now. If the Council however considers the amount of change is acceptable, subject to limitations outlined previously, then the process should continue. It may be that some of the impacts of change can be managed by the detailed design process.

RECOMMENDATION:

That:

1. The Pitt Town Local Environmental Study be adopted.
2. A Masterplan and Local Environmental Plan be prepared based upon the Medium Growth Scenario, Option 2 yielding approximately 730 (seven hundred and thirty) lots with the Pitt Town Investigation Area.
3. The Pitt Town Steering Committee continue as an advisory committee to assist Council on the preparation of the Masterplan and draft local environmental plan for development of Pitt Town.

4. The remainder of land at 30 Mitchell Place, Pitt Town located above 20 metres Australian Height Datum be included with the Pitt Town Urban Investigation area.
5. A further report be prepared on:
 - a) A consultation, communication and involvement strategy which would address the structure and functionality of the Steering Committee, as well as the preparation of the next stage of the rezoning process; and
 - b) budget implications.

ATTACHMENTS:

There are no supporting documents for this report.

oooO END OF ITEM 66 Oooo



special
meeting

end of paper