

Suggestions for Old School Farm, George Street, Cygnet

Preamble

Huon Valley Council has requested development suggestions for a parcel of land in central Cygnet bordered by Frederick, Donohoe, and George Streets and Golden Valley Road.

The total area for potential development, excluding the easement owned by the Department of State Growth but including the Council depot in the south-west corner, is approximately 3.7 hectares. Given that the easement, originally proposed as a Cygnet by-pass, is now very unlikely to be developed as a by-pass or road the total area could be 4.2 hectares, ten acres.

A large part of the land has mature trees growing on it and is affected by water runoff and areas prone to water saturation. The land is gently sloping, forming a shallow valley from Donohoe and Frederick Streets and Golden Valley Road down to the eastern border (George Street).

Discussions with local people clearly indicate that a suburban development in which the land is filled with houses, such as Lourdes Rise or Ranelagh, is not desired and will be strongly opposed. Neither is any development that will cover the land with man-made structures.

Suggestions have been proposed to develop the area as parkland. However, it is recognised that there is opposition to this proposal, citing the existence of Loongana Park and Burton's Reserve, although these have been described in a previous report as inadequate.

Although a number of suggestions have been proposed, they are not necessarily mutually exclusive; with creativity and planning, these can coexist to the benefit of Cygnet as a whole and the community that would form in the new development.

Suggestions

- That action is taken, as soon as practicable, following this latest survey. There have been a number of surveys, planning schemes, concepts, proposals, etc over several decades (2010, 2009, 2003 and earlier). The residents of the Cygnet area want foreseeable and concrete actions.

Rationale:

Consensus is an unlikely scenario in a democracy. Calls for it are too often an excuse for inaction, inertia.

Similarly, requests for interim planning schemes, concept designs, etc are also excuses to be seen to be doing something whilst delaying any real action for a future date.

- Independent living housing/units for retired people. These could be a mix of 1, 2 or 3 bedroom independent living apartments, serviced apartments and studios.
- Housing units for retired people as above including a small development for higher needs retirees as per Huon Eldercare, Franklin.

Rationale:

Previous consultations with Cygnet area residents have shown a strong demand for retirement living within the area for locals.

There is a growing and increasingly urgent need for retirement facilities for people in the local area. A COTA representative has stated that there is a waiting list for retirement accommodation.

Many of the aging population do not want to move from the area but are, and will increasingly be, unable to care for their current, often large, blocks of land.

Older people have strong ties to family and friends in the immediate area, and moving outside to aged care facilities in Franklin, Kingston or Hobart will, quite rapidly, lead to a loss of contact with most if not all family and friends.

Being able to 'retire' in the local area will make the decision to sell their properties and move out easier thus freeing up land for new residents and possible subdivision for new developments and families.

Many of the residences of the older population are high maintenance and not necessarily energy efficient.

Moving in to new, smaller, energy efficient properties within central Cygnet will allow older residents to remain independent in their own properties longer and make home care a more practical and cheaper mode of support.

Providing needed housing for retirees will not require the creation of new jobs for the retirees but will create some opportunities for those looking for work in the area, both at the Old School Farm and during the transition phase as retirees move from their previous properties to the Old School Farm. Further work may be possible with the development of older properties.

- Room for expansion of the existing medical centre on George Street to cater for the expected growth in the number of older retirees.
- Each dwelling must have its own outdoor space.

Rationale:

People used to having their own property, especially if they have owned farms or large blocks will require a degree of outdoor privacy for their mental well-being.

- Most dwellings to have a carport.

Rationale:

Older people will often have a vehicle and will prefer to be self-sufficient for as long as possible. Public transport is very limited.

Carports can also be used as outside drying areas, reducing the need for clothes dryers (energy).

- All dwellings must be built to the maximum energy efficiency rating and include solar hot water or hot water heat pumps, solar energy panels and batteries. Heating for dwellings can be done by using solar or heat pumps to generate hydronic heating.

Rationale:

Rising energy costs from conventional systems (wood, coal, gas, hydro) is constantly rising and contributing to living-costs stress. Minimising the need for these systems will allow retirees to enjoy the basic requirements of heating, light, and electricity without the constant worry of cost cutting.

- All dwellings to be connected to NBN.
- All dwellings to be connected to an emergency contact.
- All dwellings to have a harmonized design consistent with each other and their location.
- One dwelling to be allocated to a residential maintenance officer. This person to be responsible for the good order and maintenance of the Old Farm.
- Public lighting on The Old School Farm to be solar.
- Consideration to be given to CCTV to be attached to the solar lighting and monitored by residents.
- Flow off from The Old School Farm to be stored for use on the property at times of water shortage; i.e. a self-sufficient, solar-powered irrigation system installed.
- Maintain a large amount of open space: at least fifty percent. This still allows a large number of individual dwellings to be constructed. (100 - 180)
- Maintain, as much as possible, the existing trees and natural watercourses. (Majority of mature trees are on the road easement.)
- Maintain, as much as possible, the 'nature' of the existing landscape. That is: do not bulldoze the land to create large, flat areas.
- Maintain the main, natural watercourse as a native/recreational open space.
- Make provision for practical purposes such as a community garden and permaculture in the form of fruit trees and shrubs.
- Develop most of the open space for active and passive recreation, i.e. walking tracks, small sitting and/or meeting areas, native vegetation, community garden. This open space to be for the benefit of the residents of the development and the greater Cygnet community.
- Do not develop isolated blocks of open ground. The open areas should be connected allowing for recreational purposes such as walking. Some of these pathways could be developed alongside one-way access roads for garbage collection and residents' own vehicles.
- Maintain the current four access points (this includes the current council depot site). These points to allow vehicular access to the development: garbage collection, emergency services vehicles, residents' transport.

- Minimise the construction of ‘solid’ fences such as closeboard or edge fencing. Private areas may need to have ‘open’ or ‘low visibility’ fencing to allow residents to keep pets. Open or low visibility fencing allows for the penetration of light and air in to small, enclosed areas. Low growing hedges may also be an alternative to fences.

Rationale:

Avoid the claustrophobic, isolating tone or character of most modern residential developments whilst maintaining a degree of privacy and village character.

.....

The slope of the land may permit the development of some two storey townhouses without obstructing the views of current residents.

Low/medium density housing, Sandy Bay, 2-storey.

Area: 3300m² 10 townhouses each with carport or parking space and private yard includes driveways

Number of dwellings possible per hectares = 30



Medium/high density dwellings single storey two/three bedroom carport driveway
Cygnet

Area: 1431m² 3 villas each with carport and private yard includes driveway

Number of dwellings possible per hectares = 21



high density dwellings single storey one/two bedroom
Cygnet

Area: 2226m² 8 dwellings each with car space and very small private yard includes driveway

Number of dwellings possible per hectares = 35

