

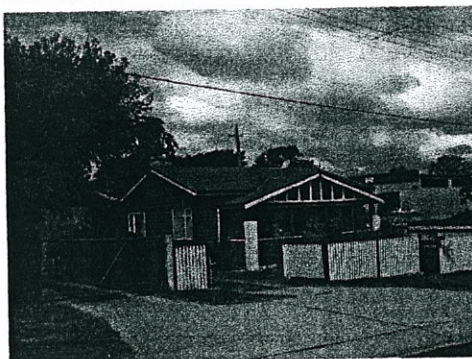
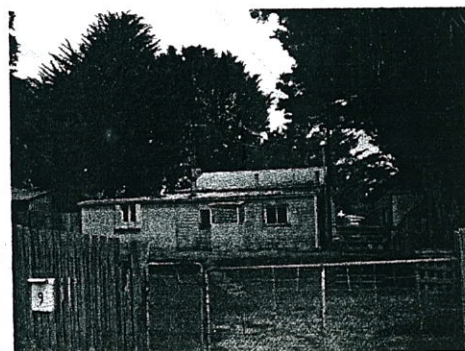
EMA

ERIC MARTIN AND ASSOCIATES
ARCHITECTS

FINAL DRAFT

Oaks Estate

Assessment of Significance and Draft Nominations to the ACT Interim Heritage Places Register



Photographs by EMA 2002

Prepared by

Eric Martin & Associates

For

**Environment ACT
Heritage Unit**

EMA

ERIC MARTIN AND ASSOCIATES
ARCHITECTS

10/68 Jardine Street
KINGSTON ACT 2604
Ph: 02 6260 6395 Fax: 02 6260 6413
Email: emaa@emaa.com.au

01E7
July 2002

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	i
1.0 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background.....	1
1.2 Project Aims.....	1
1.3 Site Location	1
1.4 Current Heritage Status	1
1.5 Authorship.....	3
1.6 Methodology	3
1.7 Limitations.....	3
1.8 Oaks Estate Environmental Action Plan.....	3
2.0 HISTORICAL EVIDENCE	5
2.1 Pre European History	5
2.2 European Settlement.....	8
3.0 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE	19
3.1 Description of the Place.....	19
3.2 Description of the Place – Indigenous	19
3.3 Description of the Place – Built Environment	28
3.4 Description of the Place – Landscape	39
4.0 THE CHARACTER OF OAKS ESTATE	44
4.1 Community values	44
5.0 ANALYSIS OF SIGNIFICANCE	46
5.1 Significance Assessment.....	46
5.2 Comparative Analysis.....	52
5.3 Statement of Significance	53
6.0 FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS	56
6.1 Findings of the Study	56
6.2 Recommendations	56

APPENDICES

A	Aboriginal Heritage Assessment
B	Landscape Heritage Assessment
C	Places on Existing Heritage Registers
D	Reference List

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Eric Martin & Associates were commissioned by the ACT Heritage Unit to undertake an assessment of the significance of Oaks Estate under the *Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991* to determine the heritage values of individual places, any precinct values and Aboriginal heritage values and their draft nominations to the ACT Interim Heritage Register.

The project aims as set out in the Brief are:

- (i) To identify and record the Aboriginal and historical cultural heritage values of Oaks Estate in sufficient detail to facilitate an accurate assessment of the cultural significance of individual places.
- (ii) To assess whether the heritage values of Oaks Estate are of such significance as to be registered as a heritage precinct or, if not, whether individual places are sufficiently significant to be registered. To assess the cultural significance of Oaks Estate against the criteria in Schedule 2 of the *Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991*.
- (iii) Draft an interim Heritage Places Register for any Precinct/place.

Historical Evidence

The study area includes land associated with the Ngunnawal and Kamberri tribes. Historically it was known as an area providing excellent hunting grounds with wildlife and birdlife plentiful as well as the fish provided by the adjacent rivers. Numerous studies and site surveys have been conducted into aboriginal activity in the area but most have been outside of the immediate study area. The earlier studies have indicated that up until the early 1900s there was aboriginal activity in the area and there is potential to find evidence of this activity within the present study area.

The first European occupation of the study area was in the mid 1820s when Timothy Beard illegally established a squat near the confluence of the Molonglo and Queanbeyan Rivers.

The first permanent structure in the area was "The Oaks" erected by Robert Campbell on the southern reach of his Duntroon Estate. Originally constructed as a residence it served its early years as an inn and has seen a number of use changes over time. The area around "The Oaks" remained solely rural use until the creating of "The Oaks Subdivision" in 1887. The subdivision into 600 lots was prompted by the imminent arrival of the railway to Queanbeyan (1887) which was located on the south boundary of the subdivision.

The subdivision became known as Oaks Estate and its growth was slow until the first decades of the 20th century when the area became popular for housing for workers engaged in the construction of the Federal Capital.

A number of small industries developed in Oaks Estate in the late 1900s and early 20th century, but most of these have now ceased operation.

Following World War II most Oaks Estate residents were employed in Canberra. Post war building materials shortages saw innovative approaches taken to construction of buildings. This flexibility was possible in Oaks Estate until 1974 as the land was under freehold title. In 1974 the last freehold blocks were transferred to leasehold. Following this streets were sealed, kerbed and guttered and formal lines of trees planted on the verges.

During the 1970s, the first multi level flat buildings were erected in the village which, along with the street enhancements, urbanised the rural character of the village.

Physical Evidence

Oaks Estate as defined by the study area encompasses the open pasture lands around the abattoir and sewerage works as well as the more intimate setting of the village itself (refer Fig 1). The study site is bordered to the north by the serpentine line of the Molonglo River. The river corridor and associated tree plantings creates a distinct visual definition and edge to the site.

The study area includes a variety of landscape and built character zones which are described in more detail later in this section. From the open rural pasturelands of the western half of the site through to tree lined streets, gardens and river flats, Oaks Estate is a landscape of diversity.

The strong industrial focus of the past has gone and most of the associated physical structures have been removed. The linkage and relationship with the railway has been eroded and the character of the village is now very much one of an urban village, adjoining rural lands.

The streets of the village are lined with a variety of tree species. Older hand-built homes are interspersed with modern brick or prefabricated homes. Garden developments on the individual blocks speak of the history of the village and its residents.

From the village streets, vistas to the railway precinct and Queanbeyan to the South and distant hills across river flats to the north are framed by the street trees. The river itself is only visible as a line of mature trees. Only from the south end of William Street can any water views be enjoyed (of Queanbeyan River) looking southward along the north-south street, the vista is to the railway and the northern residential (flat Developments) areas of Queanbeyan.

Statement of Significance

The following statement is an overview of the area.

Indigenous

The Aboriginal sites and artefacts located within the study area demonstrate a distinctive, traditional way of life that is no longer practised. Scatter sites are generally of low archaeological significance at local and regional level. The flaking floor within CA5 is of moderate local significance containing evidence of stone knapping that is not common within the archaeological record.

The individual artefact types and features recorded within the study area are assessed as of low significance. However the sites as a collection are of moderate local significance

The Oaks Estate study area is significant as a site of research and educational potential relating to the Aboriginal usage of the area. A more detailed survey of the area is required to confirm the level of significance.

Built Fabric

There are two elements of the built heritage which are individually of high significance. These are No 9 Hazel Street (House and grounds) and 'The Oaks' (house and hedge).

No 9 Hazel Street is a rare example in the ACT urban areas of vernacular construction and maintains a high degree of integrity. It represents a distinctive way of life during the establishment and growth of the Federal Capital. The house has strong historic and social association with the growth of Oaks Estate and Queanbeyan. The grounds of No 9 Hazel Street contain mature landscape elements of trees, shrubs and remnant fruit trees which reflect the historic development of the place.

"The Oaks" and its physical proximity to the railway to the south and Molonglo River to the north along with the open visual relationship overlooking the river show evidence of the historical phases of development of the place (Oaks Estate) and the district, and has association with the pioneering Campbell family of Duntroon. Along with other nineteenth century sites in the region, "The Oaks" has potential to demonstrate the settlement of the Queanbeyan/Canberra Region. It is considered to be the oldest substantial dwelling in the Queanbeyan area.

"The Oaks" homestead is a rare example in the region of an Old Georgian Colonial style homestead and provides evidence of a distinctive way of life of the early settlers.

Oaks Estate precinct contains a number of buildings and elements which individually are not of high significance but collectively in their setting, contribute to its cultural landscape of a random and diverse urban streetscape character with buildings set in a predominantly open landscape setting. It is this character that is valued by the community.

Oaks Estate precinct contains elements of built and landscape form which reflect its historic development since the 1830s. The place contains elements, which are rare or uncommon within the ACT. These include:

- A mix of building materials of construction such as block, timber, brick, fibro, kero tins and varying building setbacks present on one street frontage.
- Small-scale building of low-density ratio of building to open space on residential blocks.
- Front and side fences with a variety of design and materials such as wire, brick and timber some of which are reflective of the historic need to keep out droving cattle.
- Informal street verges.
- Garages and driveways not prominent elements in the streetscape.

Although these elements are typical of a rural village, they stand in dramatic contrast to the planned order of the suburbs of Canberra established post 1913.

Oaks Estate precinct has historic associations with the early settlement of the Queanbeyan/Canberra area. It contains the oldest surviving substantial building in Queanbeyan's history ("The Oaks") and the sites of two of the earliest industries in the area (Former Woolscur on present Hazelbrook Nursery site and former Roller Flour Mill in Railway Street). The variety of ages of residential buildings within the place is reflective of the historic development of the village which occurred (until 1974) in a largely unregulated manner. However, historic development of the village as illustrated by its buildings of the 20th century can also be related to the growth of the Federal Capital. In that there are buildings which reflect the hardship of acquiring building materials (9 Hazel Street, the concrete block houses) and a number of buildings relocated from other parts of Canberra once no longer required (Oaks Estate Hall).

Landscape

The rural landscapes and Molonglo/Queanbeyan River corridors which encompass Oaks Estate to the north, east and west are strongly valued by the community as contributing to its rural character, sense of community and social significance. These include the views into the village from surrounding high points. The treed river corridor is a strong visual marker for the village.

The individual landscapes which demonstrate the early development phases of the village are:

- "The Oaks" gardens and perimeter hedge which demonstrates a need for privacy and protection from stock being driven to the railway yards.
- The mature landscape elements of mature pine trees, remnant fruit trees, fences
- The Molonglo River flats are representative of the agricultural past of the former river village and their former use as market gardens. Remnant plantings (asparagus fern) and furrow lines.
- The mature pine trees around the house at Hazelbrook are reflective of its early history.
- Remnant mature shade trees and orchard trees on Block 4, Section 5.

The formalisation of the village areas of Oaks Estate which has occurred in the form of kerbing and guttering and street tree plantings has detracted from the historic randomness of the place, its setting and visual integrity.

Findings of the Study

The study has found within the terms of the brief, and the limitations outlined in Section 1.7 of this report that Oaks Estate:

- Is a place of historic and social significance in the ACT and the study site contains items and precincts worthy of inclusion in the ACT Heritage Places Register. (Refer 6.2).
- Is a place containing sites of indigenous archaeological significance. (Refer 6.2.1).
- Contains some elements of built heritage, which are individually worthy of consideration to an Interim Heritage Places Register. (Refer 6.2.2).
- Has precincts and individual landscape elements which contribute to (or are intrinsic to) the significance of the place. (Refer 6.2.3 a).
- Has two known additional indigenous sites worthy of nomination. (Refer 6.2.1 point 1 and Map 1 Items 10 & 11)
- Has a few sites previously identified as intrinsic to the significance of the place which are considered not so. (Refer 6.2.2d)
- Primary significance rests in its social significance and to a lesser extent its Indigenous and European historic values.
- Needs essential planning controls to protect the character of the area. (Refer 6.2.2d and 6.2.3).

Recommendations

A number of recommendations were developed for the future management and protection of the archaeological, building and landscape sites identified in the findings of the report. These are outlined in section 6.2 of the report.

The items identified as of individual or collective significance and addressed in the draft nomination to the ACT Heritage Places Register are identified on figure 29 below.

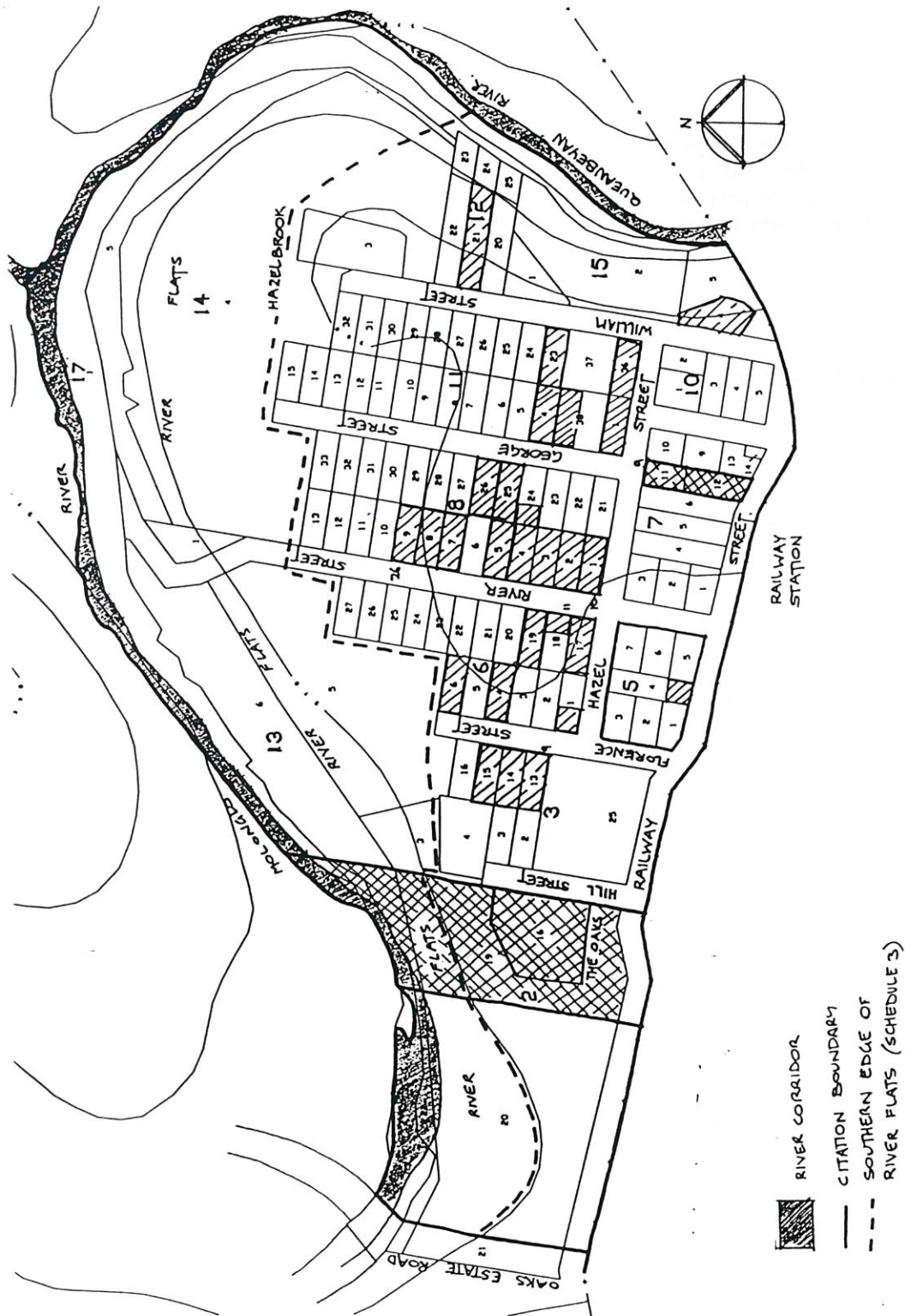


Figure 29 – Area for Nomination

6.0 FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Findings of the Study

6.1.1 GENERAL

The study has found within the terms of the brief, and the limitations outlined in Section 1.7 of this report that Oaks Estate:

- Is a place of historic and social significance in the ACT and the study site contains items and precincts worthy of inclusion in the ACT Heritage Places Register. (Refer 6.2).
- Is a place containing sites of indigenous archaeological significance. (Refer 6.2.1).
- Contains some elements of built heritage, which are individually worthy of consideration to an Interim Heritage Places Register. (Refer 6.2.2).
- Has precincts and individual landscape elements which contribute to (or are intrinsic to) the significance of the place. (Refer 6.2.3 a).
- Has two known additional indigenous sites worthy of nomination. (Refer 6.2.1 point 1 and Map 1 Items 10 & 11)
- Has a few sites previously identified as intrinsic to the significance of the place which are considered not so. (Refer 6.2.2d)
- Primary significance rests in its social significance and to a lesser extent its Indigenous and European historic values.
- Needs essential planning controls to protect the character of the area. (Refer 6.2.2d and 6.2.3).

6.2 Recommendations

6.2.1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

It is recommended that the contents of this report are noted and:

6. All existing nominations to the ACT Heritage Places Register should remain.
7. Sites located within and adjacent to the Queanbeyan Sewerage Treatments Works (contained within block 2087 items 10 & 11 on Map 1) should be recorded in detail, including a detailed inspection of the surrounding area, for inclusion on the Interim Heritage Items Register;
8. Consideration should be given to conducting a full and systematic archaeological survey of the study area including rural leases and all open ground;
9. Ascertain the extent of on-going earthworks carried out within the Queanbeyan Sewerage Treatment Works and Queanbeyan City Council Nursery, particularly that relating to the disturbance of areas that have not been previously excavated and monitor future works to ensure that any items of heritage value are adequately protected;

10. Collection of artefacts from known sites in situations where development or future land use may negatively impact on the integrity of the sites should be undertaken in the short term (6-12 months).

6.2.2 BUILDINGS

We recommend that a new nomination to the ACT HPR be prepared for the whole of the area identified in Figure 29. This nomination to include all the findings of the report as detailed in 6.1.

We further recommend that:

- (a) The existing nominations to the ACT HPR be for the following sites be considered by the ACT Heritage Council
 - The Oaks (Blocks 16 & 19 Section 2)
 - No 9 Hazel Street (Blocks 11 & 12 Section 7)
- (b) That further assessment for individual nomination to an ACT HPR be considered for:
 - The slab shed on No 7 George Street
 - Former Captain's Flat Cottage at No 11 River Street
- (c) That the following items do not meet the threshold of nomination in their own right but should be listed as features intrinsic to the significance of Oaks Estate in its nomination and enhancement.
 - N^os 9, 10, 11, 13, 18, 22, 24 & 26 River Street. As a group they contribute to the character of the place.
 - N^os 12, 14 & 16 River Street. As a streetscape group they contribute to the character of the place.
 - N^os 9 & 11 George Street. As a streetscape group they contribute to the character of the place.
 - The duplex at N^o 2 Hazel Street surviving building from early historic development. (Local historic significance).
 - N^os 6 & 8 George Street. As a group they contribute to the character of the place.

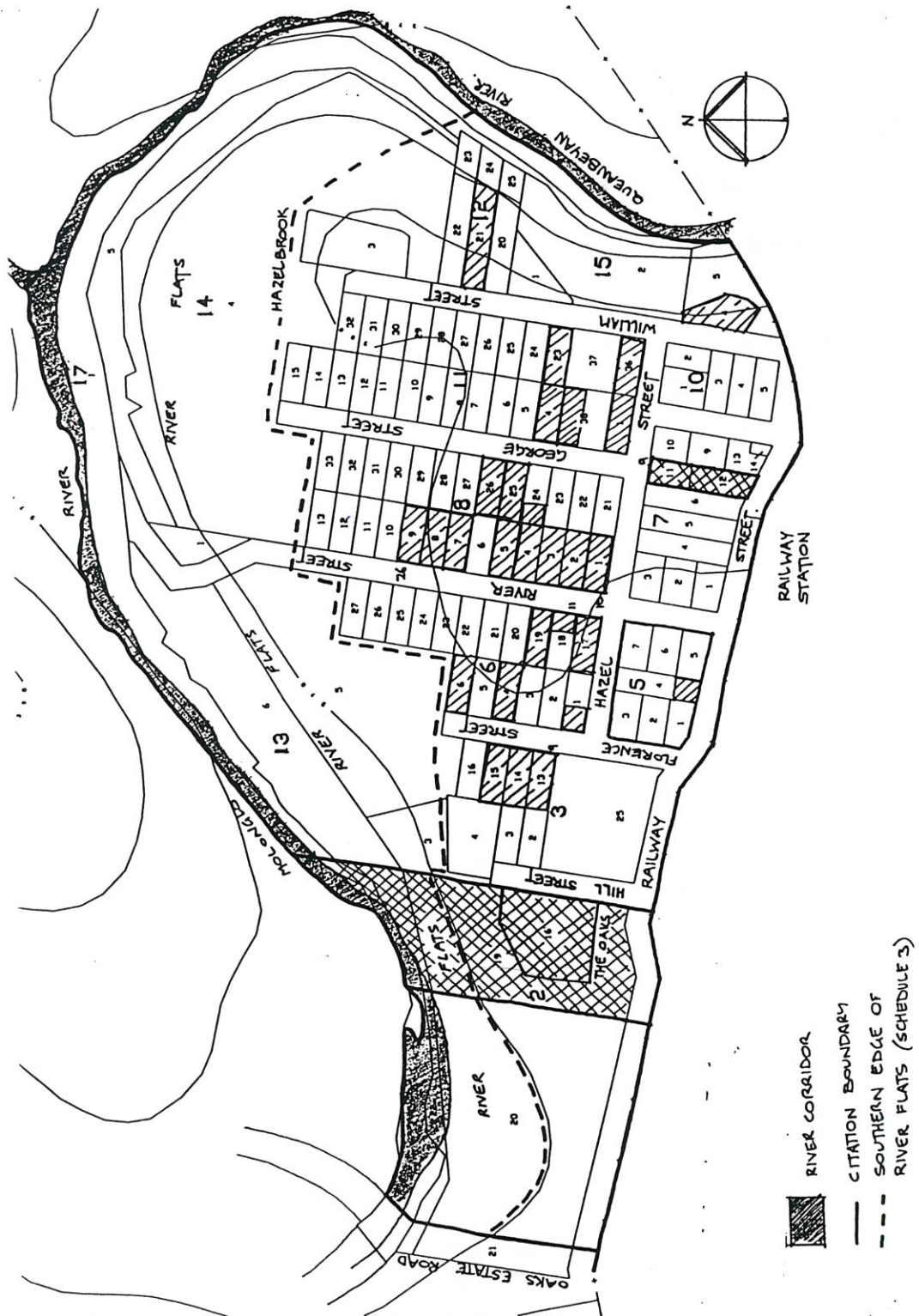


Figure 29 – Area for Nomination

- The Hudson redicut house at No10 River Street (only one in Oaks Estate and possibly the ACT)
- War Service Home at No17 William Street (Block 23 Section 11)
- Weatherboard house at No 10 William Street (Block 21 Section 12)
- Blocks 3, 5 & 6 Section 13 (open area representative of early market garden usage)
- Blocks 1 & (part) 2 Section 14 (former Hazelbrook tannery and market garden sites)
- Blocks 1, 3, 4 & 5 of Section 14 (Hazelbrook)
- Old Water Supply tanks (representative of life before reticulated water supply)
- Railway Bridge over Queanbeyan River (It is in NSW but representative with connection between the development of Oaks Estate and the railway)
- Section 2087 – "Riverview" and former Mountain and Nimrod Road development (contain physical and archaeological relics of early historic development but sites substantially altered).
- Section 35 (round paddock, former oval).

These items generally reflect the pre 1940s development of the village and will require the preparation of a Development Control Plan for the sites and precincts to ensure protection of the historic character of the place.

- (d) That the following items previously nominated should not be identified on any nomination as an item of intrinsic to the significance of the place.

Blocks 1 – 3 Section 5 (No significance has been established for the site)

- (e) The items and precincts within the study area recommended for nomination to the ACT HPR will have controls for their protection established within the "specific requirements" section of the nomination. In the case of the Nomination for the Oaks Estate Village, this will include some more specific requirements for the individual sites identified as intrinsic to the significance of Oaks Estate (6.2.2 b).

In addition to the protection and controls established under the nomination, there will be a need for planning controls to be established to manage the development of the study area without destroying the qualities intrinsic to its character.

We recommend that the following planning policies be addressed within the study area:

- That the river flats be retained as rural/agricultural (or market garden) land zoning.
- That dual occupancy and subdivision of existing residential blocks not be permitted.
- That developments be capped at two storey height limit.
- That the lease purpose variations for commercial sites in Oaks Estate recommended by the Monaro Consultants and

Burnham Planning Oaks Estate Planning Study be implemented.

- That a development control plan be developed for new buildings in Oaks Estate to:
- Define appropriate building massings, siting and roof forms and external materials to continue the existing historic character.
- To encourage a mix of construction materials to continue to be used.
- Ensure retention of the strong character of well spaced buildings in landscape settings.
- That industrial/commercial uses be limited to Section 7, Section 10, Section 2 Block 20 (Agriculture and Horticulture only), Block 4 Section 14 (Agriculture and Horticulture only)
- That further industrial development of the sites on Underwood Road and the Abattoir site (as defined below) are possible provided that a detailed assessment of the flora and fauna values of the area is first undertaken and recommendations for managing these values and the recommendations of (6.2.3) are implemented. The Abattoir site as defined under this point is the fenced area containing the Abattoir buildings and driveway. It does not include the land west of the buildings between the top edge of the hill through to the river bank, or the holding paddocks to the north.
- The existing pastoral lands in the study area west of Oaks Estate Road be retained as rural agricultural use.
- That the development of the Queanbeyan City Council Sewerage Treatment Works and Nursery be limited to the land area defined by view zone 3 (Figure 6).

6.2.3 LANDSCAPE

(a) Landscapes of Significance

Within the village there are three locations that are distinctive, historically representative and sufficiently intact to contribute to the understanding of the different landscapes. These are "The Oaks", Number 9 Hazel Street and the Molonglo River flats.

(b) Issues relating to Conservation of the Landscapes

- Land Uses and Territory Plan – retention of rural zoning but with specific restriction to conserve the landscape qualities that are important to the place.
- Ownership and Land Management - lease arrangements and public open space maintenance that addresses landscape and recreational amenity, historic interpretation and weed control.
- Weeds - The alignment of the river is marked not by the sight of water but the dense line of exotic trees, predominantly Willows that line both sides of the channel. A Management Plan for control of the willows is required.

The Oaks Estate Environment Management Plan (EMP) (2001) presents a well-researched assessment of the environmental issues affecting the study site. It also contains a well-structured strategy for implementing remediation of the environment. Whilst the study covers an area greater than this report's study area the issues are applicable. We recommend that the ACT Government should adopt the EMP as the basis for management of the study area and work with the local Landcare groups to develop and implement a programmed action plan. In hand with this there will need to be a commitment from the government to find a source alternative (grant) funding for the implementation phases a series of annual budgets.

The study area has a number of landscapes that are different from the other areas within the ACT, however they do not meet the criteria for ACT heritage significance. They are worthy of further understanding and possibly protection from substantial change if so desired by the local community. Therefore the following section identifies those places that are important for further planning actions.

The Village

The streetscapes of the village of Oaks Estate are distinctive; however as a whole urban precinct (neighbourhood), or as individual streetscapes, do not meet the criteria for heritage significance. There are also a number of old and aesthetically pleasing plants within the village however there are no individuals, or collections of plants that are of heritage significance.

The mature eucalypts, willow, poplins, pines and fruit trees on Block 4 Sectio 5 have some local historic association as they were planted by the Gillespie family who lived on the site for many years until the late 1990s when their house was demolished.

Mature tree plantings (Pines) around Hazelbrook house have local historic association with the development of the Hazelbrook woolscour and now nursery.

Planning tools such as a Neighbourhood Plan that identifies the distinctive and special qualities of the place and enunciates a Community Value Statement would assist to retain that which is important to the local community. It is expected that this will be an outcome of the current PALM Oaks Estate Planning Study.

One of the key features that distinguish Oaks Estate from other neighbourhoods in the ACT is that is substantially bounded by a bend in the Molonglo River with views out over the adjacent rural riverfront lands.

The industrial buildings associated with the intensive plant based rural industries, have highly modified the landscape and the views in the village in some locations. This form of rural land use is not usually close by a residential area. Planning guidelines specific to this place may be desired to control the visual impact of these industries on the village and the river flat areas.

The Remnant Yellow Box/Red Gum Woodland

Across the ACT the animal and plant community identified with the Yellow Box, *Eucalyptus melliodora*, is regarded as endangered, therefore all substantial occurrences of this community are investigated for their potential natural heritage values.

The woodland that surrounds the Abattoir is highly modified due to the use of this area as holding paddocks. There is little native shrub layer, and the ground layer is mostly exotic species. The lack of diversity and habitat means that the area is not considered of natural heritage significance. However the landscape has value in providing upper canopy vegetation in an otherwise largely cleared area of the ACT. It is also known to be the habitat for a wide variety of native birds.

6.2.4 GENERAL

The Oaks Estate Environmental Action Plan should be adopted and the recommendations implemented as part of the management of Oaks Estate.