



RS/BG

16 September 2015

The Department of Planning & Environment
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Attention: Housing Land Release

Dear Sir or Madam

**DRAFT PLAN FOR RIVERSTONE EAST
6 OAK STREET, SCHOFIELDS**

This submission has been prepared by JBA Planning on behalf of Mr and Mrs Hong, the owners of 6 Oak Street, Schofields (the site), in relation to the Draft Plan for Riverstone East. The submission provides the following:

- a review of the site and its context, in particular considering opportunities and constraints;
- a review the strategic planning context of the site;
- based on the above, consideration as to why the site should be able accommodate some form of development other than its current green space designation; and
- an indicative potential urban design outcome for the site.

1.0 THE SITE

The site is located at 6 Oak Street, Schofields, which is within Stage 1 of the Riverstone East Precinct. The site currently contains a single detached dwelling house, a number of ancillary outbuildings and several stands of vegetation. The location of the site is shown at Figure 1, with an aerial photo at Figure 2.

More broadly, the site is located between the future Gordon Street/Clarke Road intersection and the future Cudgegong Railway Station. This intersection will likely funnel cyclists and pedestrians travelling to the station from the significant residential area to the west to a point adjacent to the site.

The site is located within the Stage 1 of the Riverstone East Precinct, and the relevant Draft Indicative Layout Plan is provided at Figure 3.

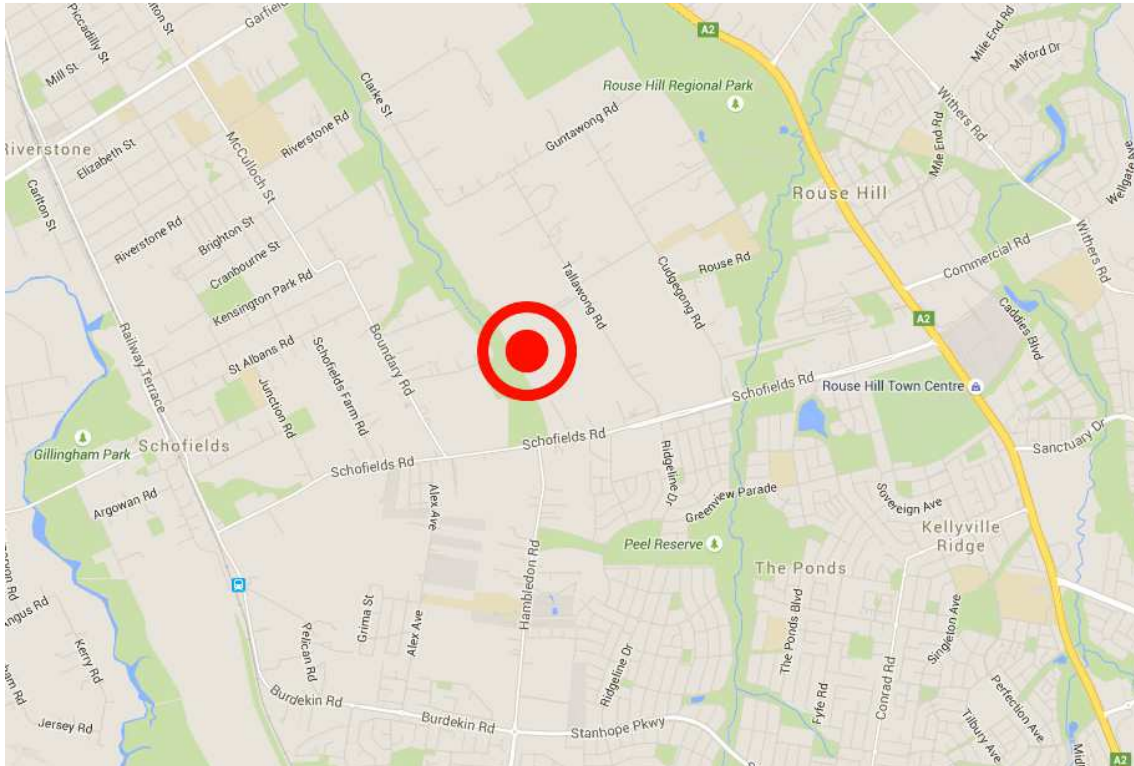


Figure 1 – Site location
Source: Google Maps



Figure 2 – Aerial photo (site shown in red)
Source: NearMap

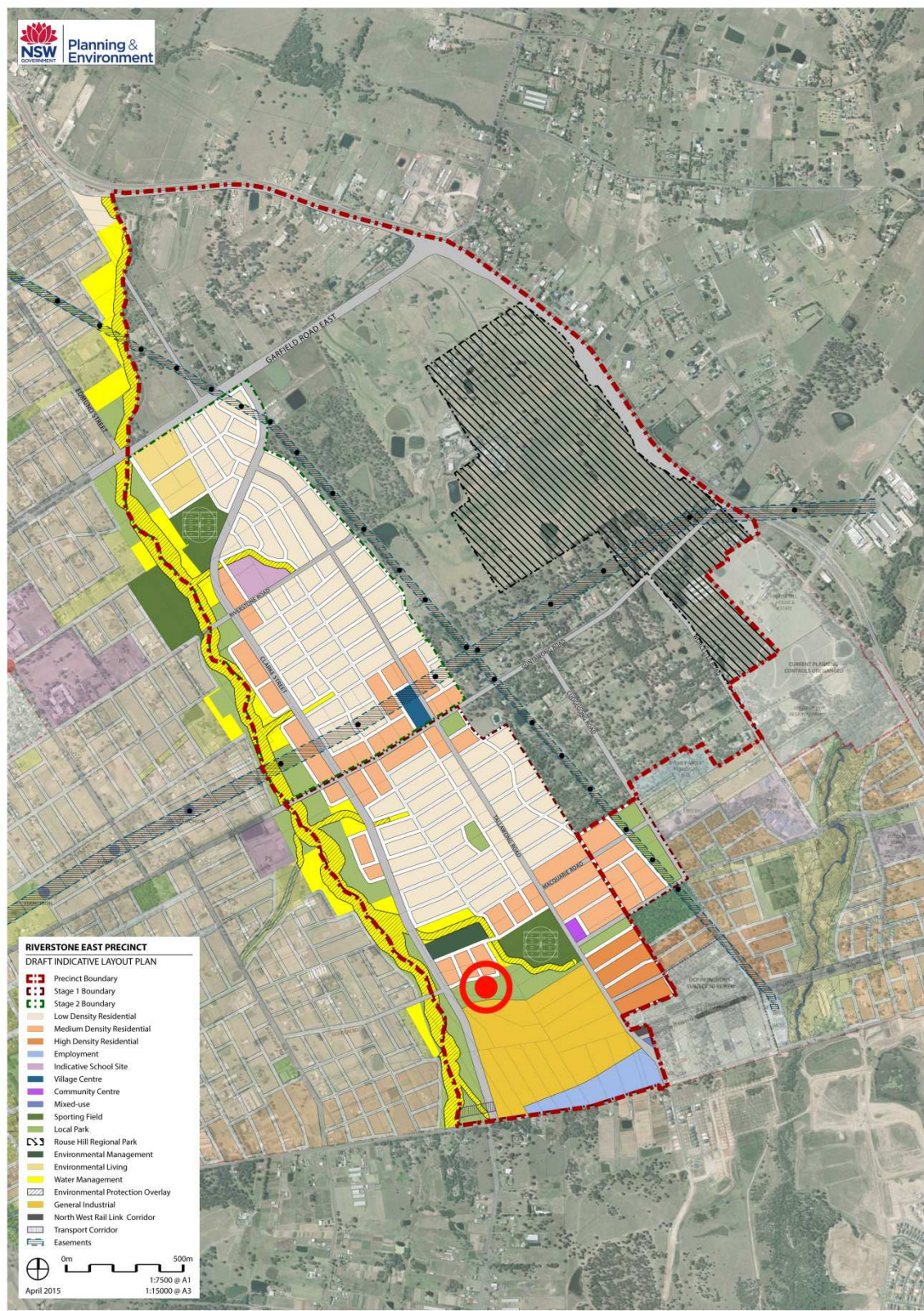


Figure 3 – Riverstone East Stage 1 Draft Indicative Layout Plan
Source: Department of Planning & Environment

To the south of the site is the Tallawong Road Rapid Transit Rail Facility (train stabling yard), which is currently under construction. The layout of this yard is shown in Figure 4 below. Of relevance to the site is the fact that the stabling yard itself is located well away from the site. Workshop and store buildings, internal roads and a detention pond all act as a buffer to the primary source of noise. This buffer in relation to the site can be seen in the photomontage of the facility at Figure 5.

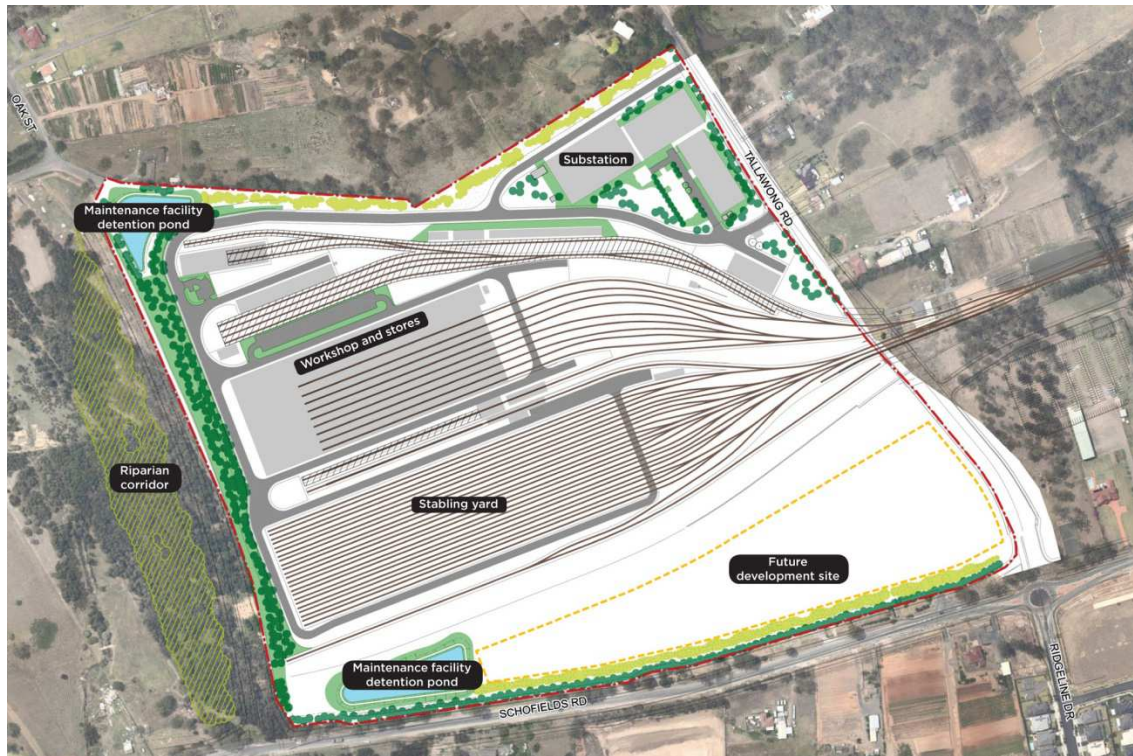


Figure 4 – Layout of Tallawong Road Rapid Transit Rail Facility
Source: Transport for NSW



Figure 5 – Photomontage of the Rail Facility, with the site shown in red
Source: Transport for NSW

The draft SEPP Maps currently on exhibition clearly map the environmental constraints that apply to the precinct. These show that the site is not impacted by any of the following:

- flood prone land;
- items of environmental heritage; or
- riparian protection areas.

There is a small area of 'existing native vegetation area' along the eastern and part of the southern boundary of the site, as shown in Figure 6.

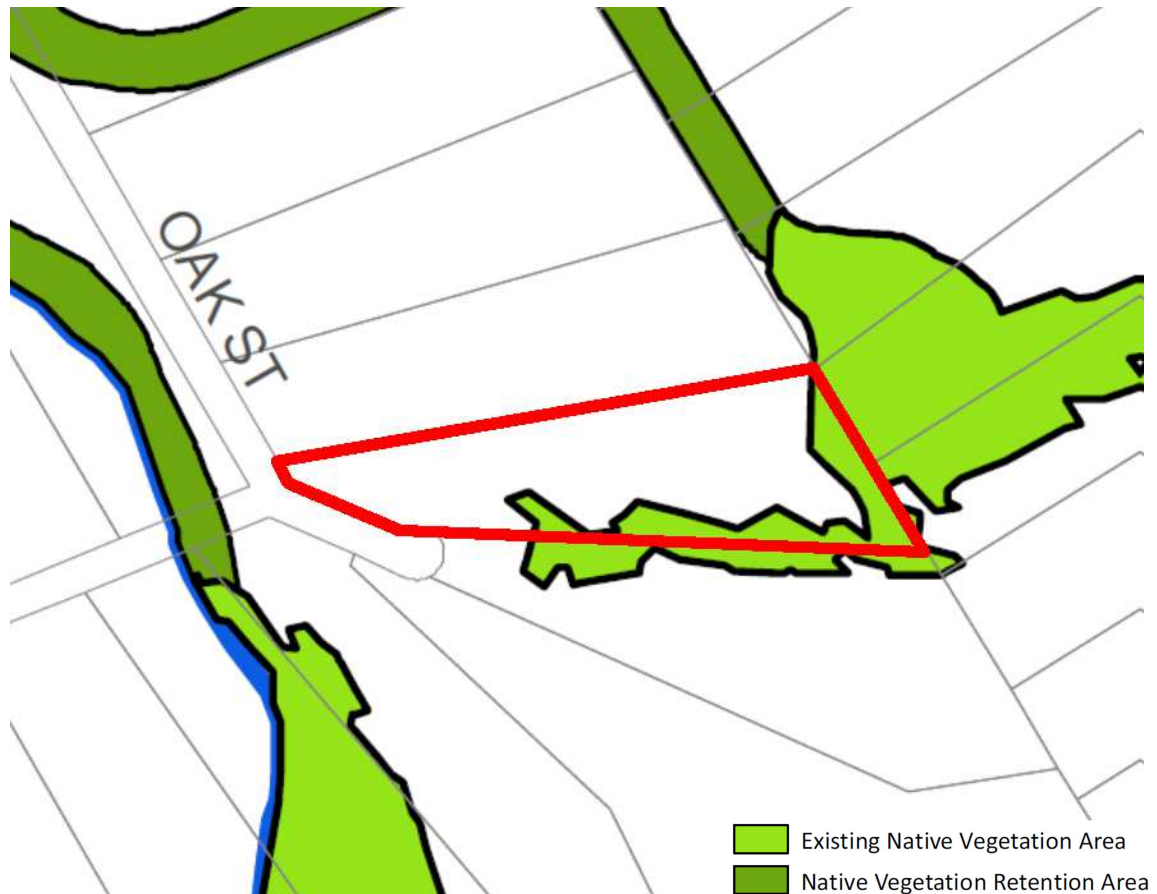


Figure 6 – Extract of draft SEPP Native Vegetation Protection Map, with site shown in red

Source: Department of Planning & Environment

2.0 STRATEGIC PLANNING CONTEXT

2.1 North West Growth Centre

The site is located within the North West Growth Centre under *State Environmental Planning Policy (Sydney Region Growth Centres) 2006* (SEPP SRGC). Within the North West Growth Centre, the site is located within the Riverstone East Precinct.

The Riverstone East Precinct was released by the Minister for Planning on 16 March 2013. Technical studies were subsequently prepared by expert consultants to determine the physical constraints, social and environmental infrastructure requirements and economic opportunities, to name a few, in order to inform the development of a Precinct Plan for the Release Area. It is this proposed Precinct Plan (being the draft SEPP amendment), and the accompanying technical studies and draft Indicative Layout Plan, which are currently on exhibition.

In addition to an amendment to the SEPP SRGC, the Blacktown Growth Centres Development Control Plan 2006 is also proposed to be updated to provide more specific development controls in association with the future use of the land.

Together, when adopted, the SEPP SRGC and DCP will establish the permissibility for future land uses within the Release Area, and establish a framework for the assessment of future development applications.

2.2 A Plan for Growing Sydney

A Plan for Growing Sydney, released in December 2014, establishes the underlying principles for growth within the Sydney region. *Action 2.4.1 – Deliver greenfield housing supply in the North West and South West Growth Centres* contains the following directive: 'update structure plans for the North West and South West Growth Centres to realise the full potential of investment in new infrastructure.'

In this regard, the site is located within 800 metres of the new railway station. The zoning of land to the north of the site for medium density housing appropriately reflects the need to increase densities around railway stations and support new infrastructure.

Whilst the need to provide public open space is recognised, the provision of public open space on unconstrained land in close proximity to a new railway station is considered to be inconsistent with the Plan for Growing Sydney.

Public open space is required to be provided for the locality, however, the provision of public open space at the southern end of the catchment and detached from the majority of the future population, in an area highly suitable for housing provision, is questioned.

2.3 Precinct Planning

As discussed above, technical studies have informed the development of the draft SEPP amendment for the Riverstone East Release Area. As previously demonstrated, the land is largely free of constraints, with the exception of a small area of land along the southern boundary which has been defined as an 'existing native vegetation area.' This is considered to be a minor constraint to the development of the remainder of the land.

The Social Infrastructure Assessment for the Riverstone East Precinct, prepared by Elton Consulting, establishes the requirements for open space, community facilities and other social infrastructure required to support the future population. This Study also determines, at the precinct planning stage, the net quantum of land to be set aside for social infrastructure. In terms of open space provision, the Study found the following:

In terms of local and district open space and recreation facilities, the study has identified a need for:

- *About 86 ha of public open space, including 57.76 ha of passive open space*
- *Local parks to meet Council requirements in relation to size, embellishment and distribution and one neighbourhood level park*
- *At least 16 playing fields, to be provided as double playing fields or larger clusters*
- *Provision of 9 outdoor netball courts in an off-site complex and 7 tennis courts either provided on-site as a 4 court facility or co-located with other courts off-site to contribute to the provision of a larger training and competition venue*
- *Green passive open space along the creek corridors to provide walking and cycle trails that provide recreation opportunities and linkages to key destinations.*

The future Riverstone East population will rely on existing or proposed open space and recreation facilities in the wider district for access to regional open space and sporting facilities and aquatic facilities. Rouse Hill Regional Park, once fully developed, will provide a locally accessible resource for the new communities. The precincts will contribute to demand for redevelopment of the Riverstone Swimming Centre, and to demand for other types of facilities such as regional sporting complexes, indoor sports facilities, city-wide parks and youth recreation facilities. There is a need for further planning for district and regional sport and recreation facilities to ensure that these types of facilities are not overlooked in the precinct planning process.'

Passive open space has been generally provided along the creek corridor within the Precinct and the ILP, as currently drafted, will contribute to the satisfaction of this net requirement of public open space.

The intent to create an east-west connection from First Ponds Creek to Second Ponds Creek is appreciated as it will enable the linking of green spaces within the North West Growth Centres and the creation of passive open space corridors. However, the corridor is already maintained to the north of the site, through the nominated riparian and environment conservation lands. In any case, the site is also capable of providing a smaller ribbon of open space connectivity, which will:

- Enable the retention of the native vegetation area;
- Provide east-west connectivity;
- Allow for additional resident population in close proximity to the train station; and
- Ensure developable, unconstrained land is zoned for its highest and best use.

The provision of a large expanse of open space at this location is not considered appropriate in a strategic context as it is not well connected to the population that it is intended for, being located between the stabling yard and a small pocket of residential land. While it does create a buffer between the residential land uses and the stabling yard, the Precinct Planning of the surrounding area indicates that a buffer significant buffer zone is not required as the land opposite the stabling yard on Tallawong Road has been zoned for low rise apartments.

There is a need to balance the requirements for social infrastructure and the provision of housing, however in the strategic context, the provision of open space in close proximity to a proposed train station on unconstrained land is considered to be inconsistent with existing planning policy.

3.0 SITE CONSTRAINTS

The relevant Land Use and Infrastructure Delivery Report provided a vision, objectives and planning principles to guide the development of planning controls for the precinct. These include objectives that relate to the provision of public domain areas and to protect the natural environment, including the following:

- *Local and neighbourhood parks take advantage of and retain the key environmental features of the Precinct, including high points, views to surrounding areas, creeks and areas of existing vegetation.*
- *First Ponds Creek will be integrated with the drainage and open space network to create a spine with passive recreation and connectivity opportunities. These corridors will be publicly owned and managed.*
- *Areas of biodiversity value are protected within the riparian corridor and flood prone land, mostly through a Public Recreation or Special Use zone.*

To allow these objectives to be applied to the precinct, specialist investigations were undertaken to underpin a constraints map. This map was presented to the community in 2014, and is generally consistent with the Draft SEPP mapping, with the exception that it did not indicate any native vegetation on the site. An extract of constraint map is provided at Figure 7 below.

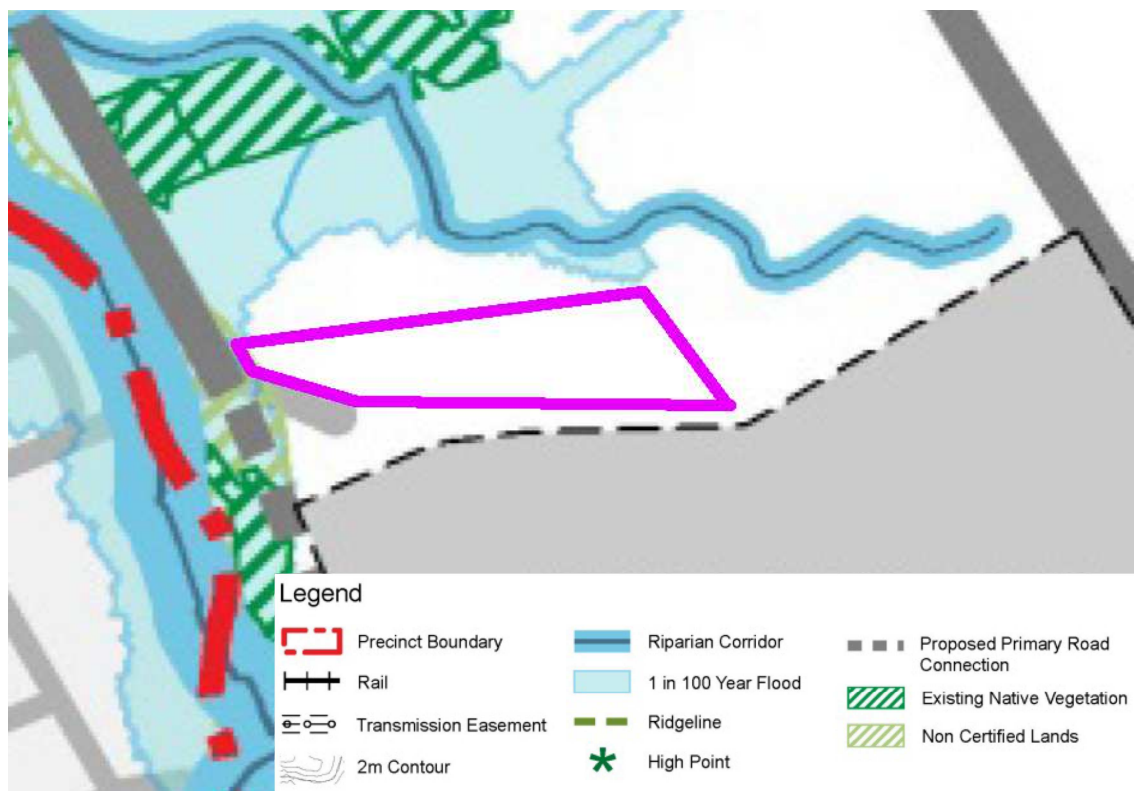


Figure 7 – Extract of Site Constraints and Opportunities Map from Riverstone East Discussion Paper, with site shown in purple

Source: Department of Planning & Environment and Blacktown City Council

Given that no constraints were identified on the site, it should have followed that the land was suitable to assist the overall vision of the precinct, being to provide housing to meet the needs of the community. There are no constraints on the site that suggest it should be reserved for a public park.

The land in the vicinity of the site that is constrained, by riparian and flood prone land, is more suited to be delivered as a local park. This approach would be consistent with the objectives provided by the Land Use and Infrastructure Delivery Report.

4.0 DRAFT PLAN

Despite the lack of constraints identified on the site, the Riverstone East Draft Plan and associated Draft SEPP maps nominate that the majority of the site is to be zoned RE1 Public Recreation for a 'local park', as shown in Figure 8 below. This park provides a link between water management land and sporting fields to the east, and Clarke Street to the west. The park is also located between the train stabling yards to the south and land nominated as town houses or terraces to the north.

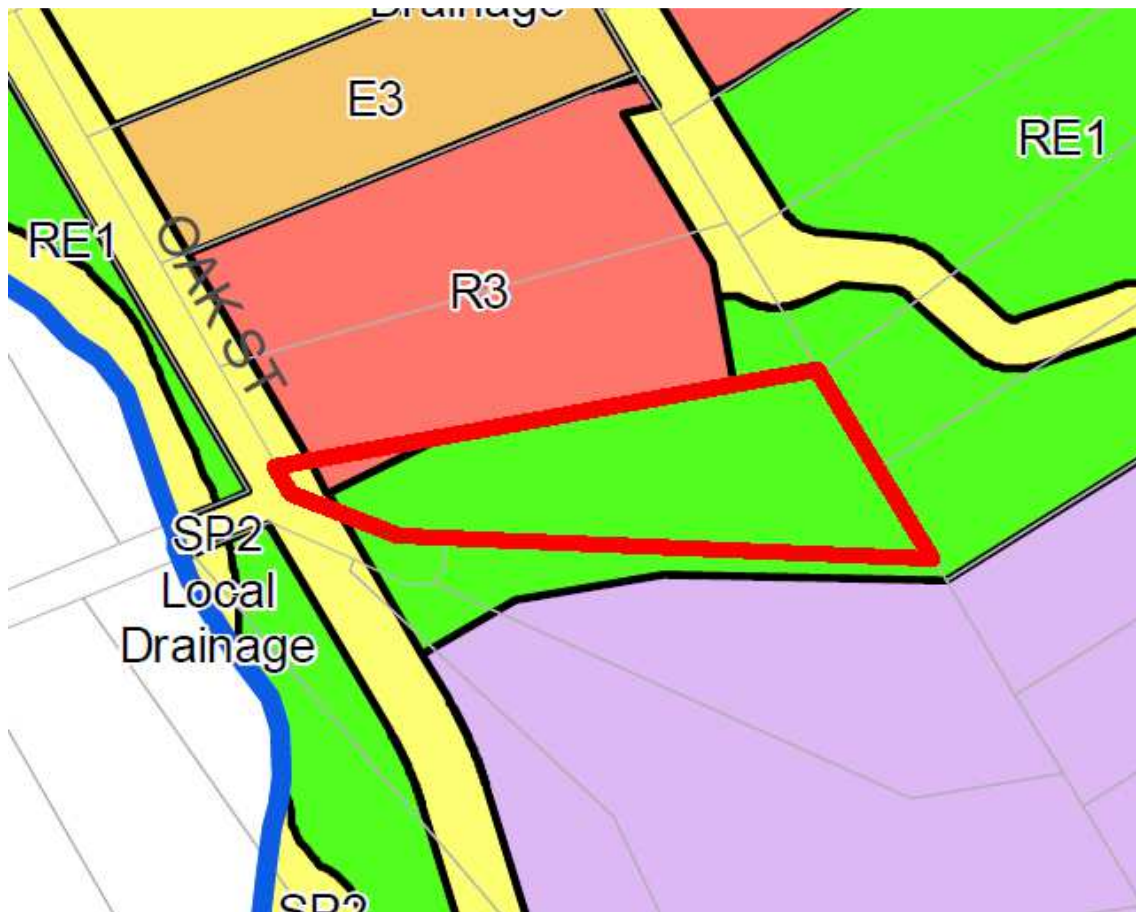


Figure 8 – Extract of draft SEPP Land Zoning Map, with site shown in red
Source: Department of Planning & Environment

The land to the north of the site, previously identified as being constrained as flood prone land and supporting a riparian corridor, is nominated as R3 residential. This zoning is intended to support townhouse and terrace development.

It should be nothing that the park proposed on the site is not required to complete a green corridor between First Ponds Creek and Second Ponds Creek. The corridor is already maintained to the north of the site, through the nominated riparian and environment conservation lands.

5.0 FUTURE USE OF THE SITE

Given that it has been demonstrated that there are no constraints on the site requiring it to be reserved as a local park, an appropriate future use for the site has been undertaken. Based on the principles expressed in the Land Use and Infrastructure Delivery Report, land this distance from the railway station is nominated for townhouse and terrace style development (with an associated R3 zone). As with the neighbouring residential land, the extension of the R3 zone to the south would also see an extension of the neighbouring height and dwelling density controls, being 12 metres and 25 dwellings per hectare respectively.

In terms of potential impacts from the stabling yards, as previously discussed the layout of the yards is such that a buffer is provided to the site. Furthermore, it is noted that the land to the immediate east of the stabling yards, across Tallawong Road, is nominated for residential uses. This demonstrates that it is appropriate for these land uses to exist near each other.

It is appropriate to retain a through site link across the site between Cudgegong Station and the residential development to the west (which will be funnelled by the Gordon/Clarke intersection). This link could utilise the native vegetation identified in the Draft SEPP maps¹. The adjoining residential dwellings would ensure appropriate casual surveillance of this link, providing safety and security to pedestrians and cyclists.

6.0 INDICATIVE POTENTIAL URBAN DESIGN OUTCOME

Based on the principles expressed above, an indicative potential urban design has been prepared and is shown in Figures 9 and 10 below. An amended draft land zoning map, consistent with this indicative proposal, is provided at Figure 11.



Figure 9 – Indicative potential urban design
Source: Department of Planning & Environment and JBA

¹ The status of this mapped vegetation should be confirmed, given it was not identified during the constraints mapping exercise.

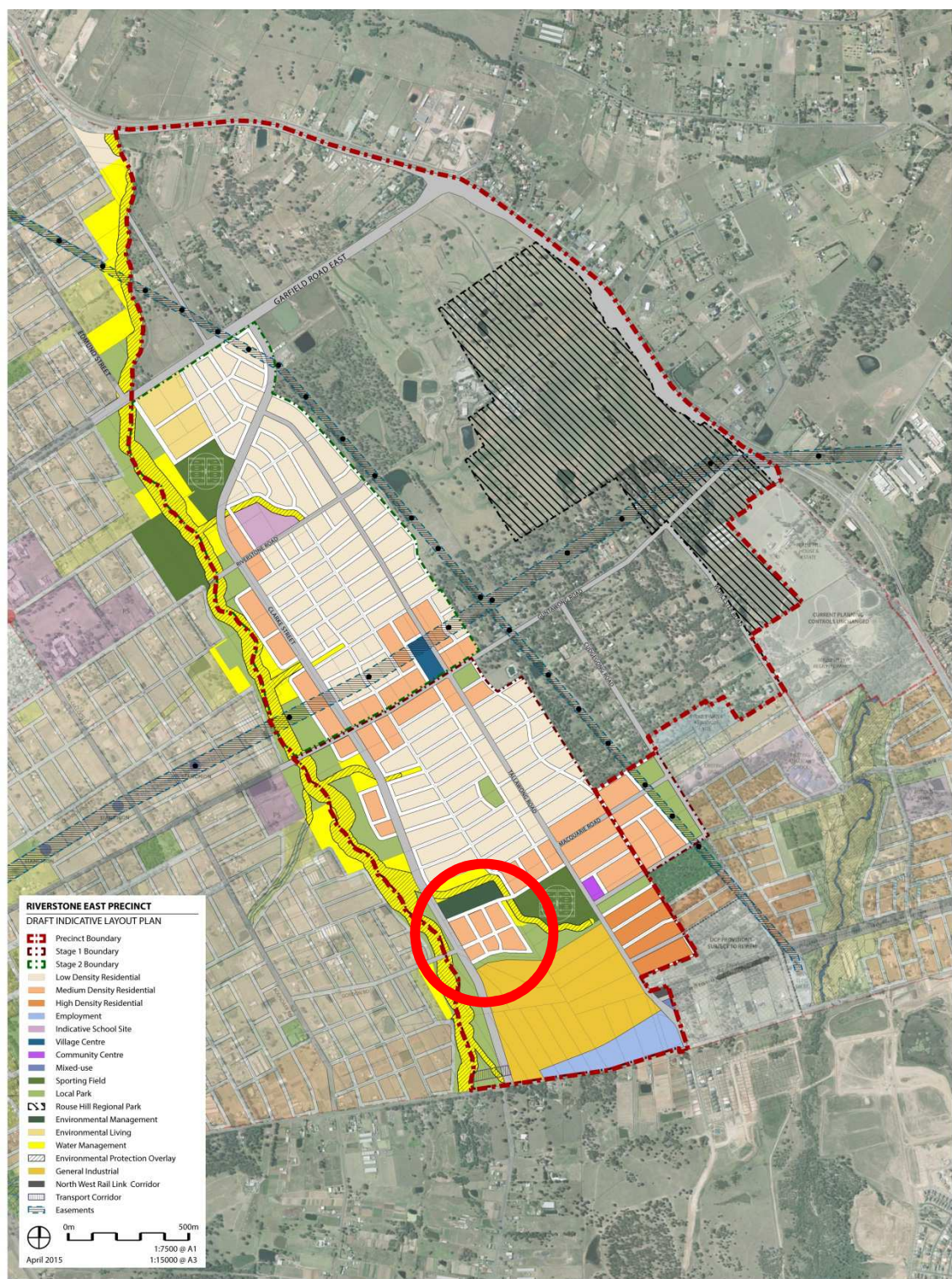


Figure 10 – Potential amended draft indicative layout plan
Source: Department of Planning & Environment and JBA

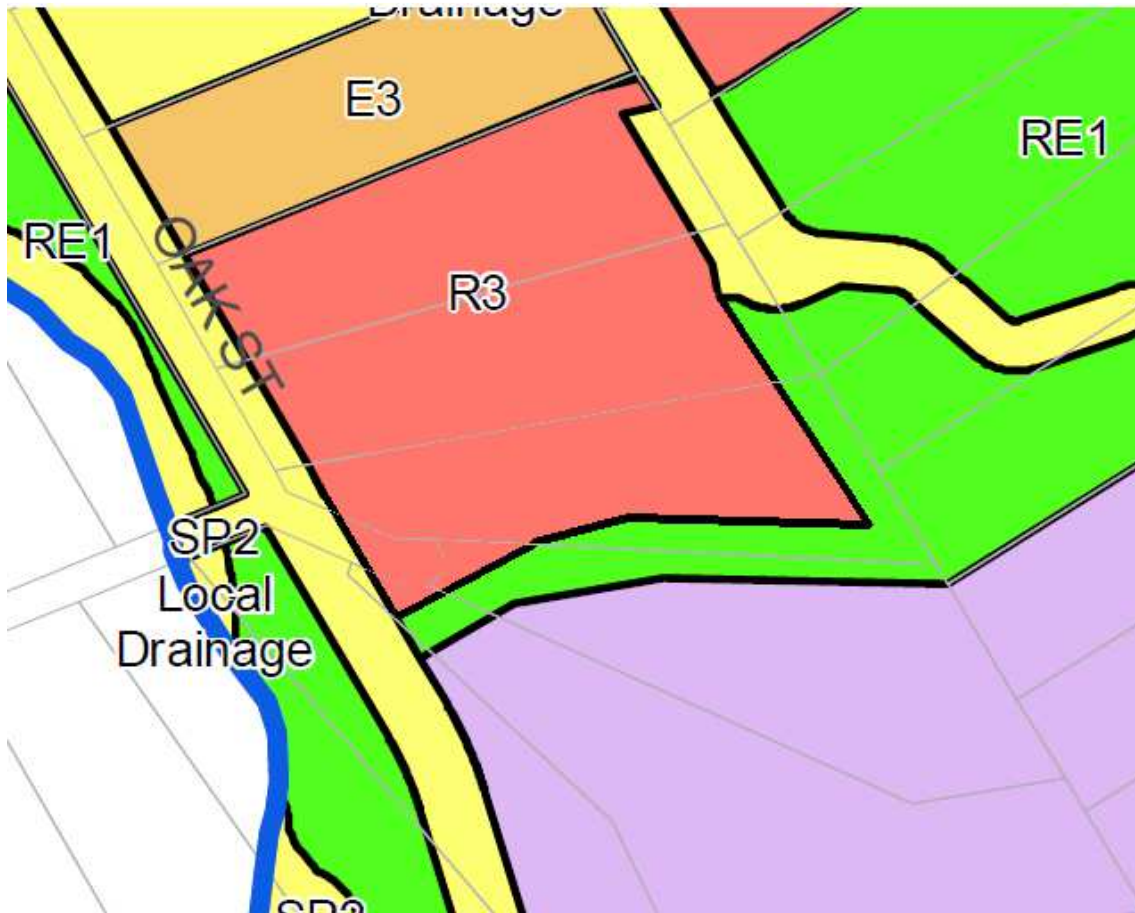


Figure 11 – Indicative amended draft SEPP zoning map
Source: Department of Planning & Environment and JBA

7.0 CONCLUSION

This submission has outlined the context of the site and highlighted the previously identified constraints in the locality, none of which apply to the site. The relevant guiding documentation sets out that open space planning is to be based on these constraints, and therefore the site is not required to be retained for open space purposes.

Given that a local park is not a suitable use, consideration was given to determining a suitable use. It is considered that given the context of the site, it should be zoned R3 to allow townhouse and terrace style development. The sites location suggests that a through site link should be maintained, facilitating access to the station. Opportunities to provide convenience retailing to pedestrians and cyclists travelling to the railway station should also be considered.

Should you have any queries about this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me on 9956 6962 or rstark@jbaurban.com.au.

Yours faithfully


Robert Stark
Principal Planner