



BOB: There's a lot going on in Orange at this time Amanda, what are people talking about in the circles where you mix.

AMANDA: One issue is our Heritage Review. Council is currently seeking community comment on this.

A review of the planning guidelines which protect heritage buildings and zones in Orange is recommending:

- an expansion of the city's existing heritage zones
- the creation of three new heritage zones in areas which weren't listed before
- adding an extra thirty-six individual places to be added to list of the local heritage-listed places.

The proposed heritage conservation areas to be re-named and expanded would be:

- Dalton – the former central conservation area,
- East Orange heritage conservation area,
- Bowen – the former southern portion of the East Orange Area,
- an expanded Glenroi Duration Cottages heritage conservation area, and
- new heritage conservation areas for Newman Park, Blackmans Swamp and Bletchington.

BOB: Heritage issues can cause conflict and we've all seen that at times. What's your take on this?

AMANDA: I have worked at councils where proposals to add individual houses to a heritage register caused anger and anxiety amongst the owners of those properties because of fears of restrictions on what they could do with their own property. This review adds 36 properties to the local heritage lists and there does not seem to be much concern being expressed publicly and that may be because the review is open for comment until 31st July. <https://www.orange.nsw.gov.au/new-proposal-to-expand-oranges-heritage-zones/> As we know, beauty is in the eye of the beholder and the value of heritage is also subjective. When I first came to live in Australia 20 years ago I was a bit of a philistine where Australian Colonial heritage was concerned as I had been living close to an 11th Century castle and a 12th Century Cathedral in Lincoln in England! I do, of course, recognise that the local community values different things as heritage in different places.

Orange City Council has written to 1800 residents and has a Podcast on the topic of the Heritage Review. The Podcast explains that the proposals aim to get the best of the old and new combined as time does not stand still and appropriate development of heritage items is needed for modern living and aspirations. It is made clear that developers should

understand the local culture in Orange before making development proposals.

BOB: But what does this mean for the local community and property owners?

AMANDA: I don't think that the implications are made very clear by Council of what it means for the community and property owners within the new Heritage Conservation Areas.

The Council's media release says:

Once the exhibition period has concluded and all the received submissions have been considered, a final report will be considered by Council. Once adopted, the recommendations within the heritage study review report will then be the subject of a planning proposal to amend the Local Environmental Plan 2011 to legislate the changes.

This means adding new Heritage Conservation Areas to **part 5.10 Heritage Conservation** of the Orange Local Environmental Plan and the following explains what that means for Heritage Conservation Areas:

Objectives include to conserve the heritage significance of heritage items and heritage conservation areas including associated fabric, settings and views.

This then affects how proposals in Heritage Conservation Areas are dealt with including that consent is required for many things including erecting a building on land that is within a heritage conservation area. In considering a development proposal Council must consider the effect of the proposed development on the heritage significance of the area. Before granting consent, Council may require a heritage management document to be prepared that assesses the extent to which the carrying out of the proposed development would affect the heritage significance of the heritage conservation area concerned.

The Council may require, after considering the heritage significance of a heritage item and the extent of change proposed to it, the submission of a heritage conservation management plan before granting consent.

When people decide to settle in a particular area, they are keen to have an understanding of the extent of changes that may happen in the future, as they are buying because they like the current situation. It is strange that the Council adds that guidelines and controls will come later.

The Council's media release on the topic -

The review also considered the topic of guidelines and controls for development in heritage areas. It was recommended that this matter

requires updating in line with the general changes instituted by other Councils in NSW and that this should be a topic for a follow on study.

BOB: Is anything that is proposed very controversial?

AMANDA: Many of the proposals regarding Heritage Conservation Areas have been around since 2012, but there is development pressure as we know, particularly for housing. The Orange Local Housing Strategy is also on exhibition for community comment at the same time. It includes the Housing Vision that 'respects and enhances our heritage, unique local features and character.'

Certainly, the character and lifestyle of Orange are significant in attracting new residents and tourists.

I am aware that one of the new proposed Heritage Conservation Areas has been the subject of a previous very controversial development proposal for 3 two-storey Boarding Houses at 194A March Street that was recommended for refusal and was refused by Council in 2018. Part of the reasoning for refusal was 'the site layout and building design are incompatible with the character of the surrounding area and heritage setting.'

I see that there is a Development Application currently being considered by Council for 194A March Street which is in the middle of the proposed Newman Park Heritage Conservation Area.

The DA proposal involves two stages, the first being the construction of 7 new two-storey dwelling houses, each with three-bedrooms and attached single garage ('multi-dwelling housing'); and the second stage involving subdivision of the land to create 8 Community Title Lots (1 community parcel and 7 residential lots) so that each dwelling is on its own lot. The proposal also involves the provision of 5 visitor car parking spaces, a new sealed driveway, and landscaping.

The exhibition for this DA closed some time ago and I am aware there were objections. It is not clear when it will come to Council for decision, but it will clearly be controversial given that it is in a new Heritage Conservation Area and has many similar planning issues to the previous DA including two-storey buildings.

It will be interesting to see what eventuates.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Amanda welcomes feedback or enquiries about issues raised in City Watch. You can contact her at aes@amandaspaldingconsulting.com



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