

16. STYX RIVER ESPLANADE RESERVE – RADCLIFFE ROAD TO MARSHLAND ROAD

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The purpose of this report is to provide information on the land purchase and landswap at 303 Radcliffe Road and to obtain approval in principle for a landscape proposal for the area of land acquired by council.

BACKGROUND

On the 26 October 2000, the Council gave approval for the purchase of the 13.2 hectare property at 303 Radcliffe Road with the understanding that it would be subdivided into three allotments. The allotment alongside the Styx River to be retained, while one would be swapped for an area adjacent to the Styx River further downstream and the remaining allotment sold. Since then the council has negotiated with the adjacent landowner, and these outcomes are being achieved. It is anticipated that the landswap will be finalised during April 2002. Please refer to the attached location map and survey plan. (Appendices one and two). The previous landowner is continuing to harvest the fruit from the orchard at 303 Radcliffe Road.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY

The land that the council is acquiring consists of part of the original property at 303 Radcliffe Road and another area that has been swapped with the adjacent landowner. This area is shown on the survey plan as Lot 3 (Appendix Two) and has a total area of 8 hectares. The Styx River forms its south-eastern boundary and has an approximate length of 700 metres. Kaputone Stream forms its northern boundary and has an approximate length of 250 metres. The confluence of the Kaputone Stream and the Styx River forms the property's eastern boundary. Radcliffe Road Drain flows along its southern boundary between the property and Radcliffe Road and has an approximate length of 120 metres.

The Styx River in this location is approximately 15 metres wide and has a good base flow. The banks are lined with willow trees.

The property at 303 Radcliffe Road contains a house built prior to 1917 as well as farm buildings and an apple orchard. Prior to the orchard, the land was used for dairying.

The area of the landswap is covered in pasture. Large glasshouses are being built adjacent to this part of the new reserve.

CONTEXT

The council has adopted five interrelated long term visions for the Styx River and its environs that have evolved from community consultation and research. They are:

- To achieve a viable springfed river ecosystem.
- To create a source to sea experience.
- To develop a living laboratory.
- To establish the Styx as a place to be.
- To foster partnerships.

The future development and management of this land needs to maximise the sites opportunities in accordance with one or more of these five visions.

PROPOSAL

The proposal consists of three parts:

1. The area bounded by Radcliffe Road, the poplar windrow, and the Styx River. This area contains part of the orchard and all the old buildings (Appendix five).
2. Naturalisation of Radcliffe Road drain and Mundy's drain. This area also includes that area protected by esplanade strips on adjacent properties (Appendix four).
3. Revegetation of the rest of the newly acquired property that extends through to Marshland Road (Appendix three).

Please refer to the plans in Appendices three, four and five.

Part A – Appendix Five

The proposal for the first part highlights the early dairying and horticulture activities that took place in this locality through the retention of some or parts of the features associated with these activities that still occur on site. Part of the orchard will be retained and maintained either by the community or/and by trainee apprentices from the botanical gardens. Farm sheds will serve a multiple of purposes including interpretation, shade for a seating area, storage and as a main entrance into the site from the car park. The cottage will be restored to provide future generations with an appreciation of how many early settlers lived in this area. Public toilets will also be incorporated into this building. Radcliffe Road Drain, a boxed timber lined drain located between Radcliffe Road and the property, will be naturalised and taken through the site. A jetty providing boat access to the water will be developed along the Styx River bank.

Part B – Appendix Four

Naturalisation of Radcliffe Road Drain and Mundy's Drain, including a stretch on adjacent properties.

Part C – Appendix Three

This area will contain wetland and bush habitat and a walkway from Radcliffe Road through to Marshland Road. This walkway will link up with Janet Stewart Reserve and in the long term with another walkway along Kaputone Stream.

Anticipated Outcomes

- Another link in the Source to Sea Experience.
- Highlighting of the stories of the land.
- Improving habitat within this area through the naturalisation of Radcliffe Road and Mundy's Drain and native bush planting.

COSTS AND FUNDING

The costs are as follows:

- Cottage, farm buildings and associated site works within historical area \$140,000
bounded by Radcliffe Road, poplar windrow, and Styx River
- Naturalisation of Radcliffe Road Drain and Mundy's Drain \$150,000
- Revegetation \$60,000

There is funding in next years budget for the naturalisation of part of the Radcliffe Road Drain. A limited amount of funding has been set aside for the next and subsequent years for interpretation and reserve development. The construction of the jetty, waterway restoration and modifications to the farm buildings and the orchard will therefore need to be staged. The Council will also actively seek alternative sources of funding.

CONSULTATION

Although we have obtained limited input from people who have a family association with the land, the concept still needs to be circulated for comment amongst the wider local community. A community workshop is planned for March to discuss with local landowners the issues associated with the naturalisation of Radcliffe Road Drain and Mundy's Drain.

Recommendation: That the Shirley Community Board approve the concept plan for the Radcliffe Road property in principle, subject to further consultation with the local community.

Chairperson's

Recommendation: That the officer's recommendation be adopted.