

Reimagining Ercildoune Estate



CARAVAN
Conversation

Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
COMMUNITY FEEDBACK	2
SITE CONSIDERATIONS	6
SITE UNDERSTANDING	7
IDEAS TO INCORPORATE	8



Reimagining Ercildoune Estate Phase 1 Summary Report

INTRODUCTION

Conversation Caravan were engaged by City of Casey to carry out community engagement to understand the needs, interests and concerns around Ercildoune Estate.

The City of Casey is committed to restoring the Ercildoune Court Homestead and Reserve, through balancing the use and activation of this space with its heritage protection.

While Ercildoune Estate needs to be restored in keeping with heritage and local land use requirements, the community were invited to share their ideas around how the community could use the facility and surrounding land.

METHODOLOGY

The first phase of engagement (Phase 1) was open from 29 July 2019 to 31 August 2019, the engagement methods included online engagement through Casey Conversations and a pop-up onsite. The purpose of Phase 1 was to understand the community's ideas regarding the use and activation of the homestead and reserve.

PARTICIPATION

Approximately 60 people participated in the Phase 1 engagement process; as the identity of participants is unknown there is potential that participation maybe double counted.

Age	Allarah Estate & Adjoining Properties	Casey	Lives outside the area	Interested in local history	Total
Under 17		3			3
18 - 34	5 13			2	20
35 - 50	9 7	2	1	2	21
51 - 65	4 4			1	9
66 - 74	3 2				5
75+		1	1		2
Total	47	6	2	5	60

Pop Up Participation

Online Participation

Feedback from the Community

IDEAS TO REINVIGORATE THE SITE

Analysis of community feedback on the reinvigoration of the Ercildoune Homestead offered key concepts to be considered in the site's revitalisation. These ideas overlap in application and meld to create a vision for the design team.

PRESERVES GREEN SPACE

Keeping a dedicated amount of green space and open land is of great importance to the community. This space allows for a break in the housing estate whilst also encouraging outdoor activity for the local families, inspiring local connections and blooming foliage.

Direct community suggestions:

- Fairy lights and lighting trees
- Improved landscaping and pathways
- Avenue of trees to create a windbreak and protection from Hall Road.



Feedback from the Community

REFLECTS THE HERITAGE

The history of the property is tremendously important to the development of the area and to the people who have a connection to those who've lived and prospered in the area. Honouring this is an absolute necessity. Many responses suggested either preserving or referencing the history of the homestead in their responses.

Direct community suggestions:

- Reinstatement of the homestead
- Historical information related to the culture and heritage
- No commercial instalments.



Feedback from the Community

PLACES FOR CONNECTION

The community has a desire to see the space used as place for locals to connect. A space that "everyone can enjoy" equally and fairly. Described as a multicultural suburb, an area for different cultures to converse and exchange idea, thoughts and skills would be of great benefit to the area.

Direct community suggestions:

- Picnic Space
- Croquet
- Seating
- Playground (as previously promised).



Feedback from the Community

OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING

Ercildoune in its a history was a place for farming innovation, using methods to increase yield and quality of milk as well as care for their cattle. Through the consultation, there was a desire to connect with other members of the community through learning.

Direct community suggestions:

- Learning more about living sustainably (community garden and fruit trees)
- Learning about living on the land, making preserves, growing veggies and baking bread.
- Learning skills from another generation bookbinding, crafts and repairing items.



Community Considerations

IDEAS NOT SUITABLE ON SITE

It is important to note that whilst encouraging community activity and engagement is at the forefront of our minds, the community as has also raised concerns in regards to this.

COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY WITHOUT COMMUNITY BENEFIT

Omitting retail opportunities for the site minimises the need for parking spaces, allowing more surface area to remain grassed and is a deterrent for "hooning" in the area which is an already prevalent issue brought up by the community. The community has concerns of noise pollution from the area. Keeping this in mind by utilising day time activities and smaller facilities allows for personal connections for a concise community and not a wide reaching and overused area.

Direct community concerns:

- After hours commercial activity
- Noisy activities
- Commercial business that require additional parking
- Increased traffic and congestion.

INTEREST IN WORKING WITH COUNCIL

Online participants were asked about their interest in working with Council to bring Ercildoune Court Reserve and Homestead back to life. Of the 31 participants, 14 were interested in working with Council to either:

- Volunteer in a working bee.
- Governance of the site.
- Volunteering or running a course.

Seven were not interested at this stage and 10 were unsure, requiring additional information.

DIFFERENCE THIS WOULD MAKE TO THE COMMUNITY

Online participants were asked what difference the reinvigoration of Ercildoune Estate and Homestead would make to them. Summarised below are the key responses:

A recreational parkland area that can provide space for walking, playing, and outdoor experiences is at the forefront of the local community's feedback. They wish to see the Ercildoune estate reinvigorated, invigorated and enlivened into the local parkland they were promised.

Responses included many times over the importance of creating a space where local families, and specifically children, can run and play to their heart's extent. A place where local members of the community can interact with each other in a peaceful environment built for them. In this way the estate can continue to foster future generations of the local area, whilst also passing on the history of the estate. The residents hope to see Ercildoune homesteads past honoured and expressed as part of its recreation so that its legacy is not lost in the redevelopment of the farmland the area previously used to be.

The Residents of Allarah Estate were promised a parkland space they could interact and rejoice in. They desire to see this promise fulfilled sooner rather than later, so they may fully enjoy the revitalised suburb they call home.

Our understanding of the site

A site visit to the Ercildoune homestead provided insight and clarification on the site's layout, which will need to be considered in the design outcome.

Of the four boundaries to the site, the north and south sides are of the most concern. To the north, Hall road presents a noise pollution and unsightly presence for the site. Mitigating the presence of this major road through a feature wall or dense foliage would provide a much calmer and safer atmosphere. On the south side, the property is currently utilised by the overlooking houses as a backyard space. Aiming only to enrich this current experience with a play space would be the ideal outcome.



The geometry of the site declines steadily towards Hall road with some areas being uneven and difficult to traverse. As suggested by the community feedback, pathways and steps around the site would be of benefit for traversal around the area. Providing wastage disposal solutions will also keep the site fresh and inviting. It was also apparent that water drainage to the shallow areas of the site was creating potential slip hazards and bogs. Incorporating drainage and evening out the area through landscaping should amend this issue.



The feature trees at the north side of the homestead can be viewed as a part of the building itself. Maintaining and complimenting their presence with additional foliage will continue to honour the picturesque view of the homestead. Creating the primary entrance to the site at the small court on the end of Ercildoune Court will further encapsulate this view as people enter the property as well as utilising the walkways along Hall road as a thoroughfare into the area.



Ideas to Incorporate

Based on the feedback from the community and our understanding of the site, proceeding are some ideas to test further for inclusion within the site.

HISTORY WALL/PLAQUE/PARK SIGNPOSTS

By inserting a physical representation of the areas history into the site we can simultaneously educate its visitors and respect the cultural heritage of the site.

A history wall could be used as part of a sound break to restrict noise pollution from the nearby Hall Road.



MAIZE(CORN) PLANTS

Maize is of cultural significance to the site as it is referenced heavily as a main crop grown on the local farmlands, also used heavily to feed the cattle. Planting this crop on the grounds in some capacity would pay homage to the history of the area.



SMALL WALKWAYS AND IMBEDDED SEPARATED STEPS

Use of the ground is currently non directional and free. In order to preserve the grassland as best as possible we could apply small dirt/gravel walkways around the preserve to encourage traffic flow and keep unnecessary footwork on the grass at a minimum.

Embedded steps allow for less grass area to be removed whilst also implying a route of transition without being too harsh on the eye and ground.



Ideas to Incorporate

COMMUNITY GARDEN/VEGETABLE PATCH

A garden space allows for a community space that brings people together without detracting from the overall green aspect of the site.

Gardening will encourage people to return and continue to utilise the space as vegetables and plants mature and are tended to.



PERGOLA

Another community centric idea would be to utilise a pergola as a sitting and preparation area for local lunches and picnics. This idea goes hand in hand with the community garden with the harvested crops as well as being a potential link for the heritage aspect/pathway.



NATURE PLAY AREA

Since the estate's creation, local community were promised a play space. Consider ways to incorporate playful elements within the space that are discreet and allow families and children to experience the site.





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