

PIONEER PARK LANDSCAPE MASTER PLAN
FEEDBACK RECEIVED DURING THE 1 AUGUST – 31 AUGUST 2024 COMMUNITY
CONSULTATION PERIOD

Response by Leon Lange, Lange Design, 3rd December 2024

General response to the feedback to date:

We are encouraged by the level of feedback from those community members that have made the effort. The feedback is thoughtful and passionate, and we believe the development of Pioneer Park will be widely accepted and enjoyed for many generations to come.

Below we have provided a response to the feedback, with a focus on addressing the current phase being the master planning phase. We acknowledge the enthusiasm, thoughts and advice from the community, and have responded with the understanding that there is a long and strategic design process ahead that Northern Midlands Council will undertake to address the subjects raised below.

A general comment:

Pioneer Park presents a wonderful opportunity to create something rather special for a special heritage village in Northern Midlands. As such, Pioneer Park should not be 'just another park.' The master plan should start with a vision of what it will become and then strategically staging its development. It may take 50 years to achieve all aspects of the vision but 'blessed are these who plant trees under whose shade they will never sit.'

Pioneer Park is a very unique park due to its direct link to the Evandale's historic Russel Street precinct, and the presence of the historical pioneer cemetery within the park.

The preliminary Master Plan has made suggestions for potential enhancements to the park, to assist the community to make decisions, and make further suggestions. The potential enhancements are based upon the basic principles of parkland design including protection of historical and community valued assets, pedestrian circulation, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), future population demographics, and enjoyability for the community and visitors.

The preliminary plan to my reading places some emphasis on children's playgrounds and picnic facilities. This is fine and such facilities may be needed in time. However, such should not be an inclusion in early work when there is limited financial resources. Some quick statistics demonstrate why I say this: only 8.5% of the town's population is aged under 9 years – 107 children; whilst over 65% of the town's population is aged over 40 years – 822 people. So any early works – such as paths and access - should be directed towards the older demographic, rather than facilities for children.

It is evident in the statistics that the population of Evandale is aging, with limited increase in young families choosing to reside in the village. Council's aim is to provide infrastructure to attract such demographics to ensure current childcare, schooling, and sporting facilities are retained. The current play space is approaching its end of life, as well as not catering for all age groups or all abilities.

A new playspace will not only provide a central play area within Evandale, but also attract families from the wider area. People that stay longer due to attractions are more likely to spend money in local shops. Playgrounds are considered a major attraction for young families, especially in unique places like Evandale.

Staging of potential works within the park does play a major element for achieving the master plan for Pioneer Park, and will be thoroughly investigated and determined by Council.

Also included in first activities should be the basic utilities for the park eg. irrigation and heritage lighting. Once the subsurface work is done, the trees, given the time needed for them to mature, should be next, and the flower beds and shrubs planned. Given the nature of Evandale's Georgian and Victorian heritage, I would contend that the bulk of plantings be conifers, deciduous and blossom trees. Launceston's City Park and Hobart's Botanical Gardens provide suitable role models.

The master plan for Pioneer Park focuses on the big picture. Once this has been endorsed, it is typical for the major components of the park to be further developed as targeted projects with accompanying strategies. These strategies will require further detailed consultation with stakeholders and will focus on specific elements such as signage, interpretation, irrigation, planting and furniture.

I know my proposal sounds expensive, and Council resources are limited. However, I believe that the project can be staged over a significant time period and can be paid for by various grants, community funding and volunteer contributions eg. I have already received offers from community members to pot and nurture trees and other plants. We could also expect tree donations from individuals with recorded registration in an online register.

Site/issue specific comments:

Park entrances

Russell street entrance

- Agree with the establishment of low gardens; why completely remove the fence?
There are two different styles of fencing currently, with an additional lattice style of fencing from the adjoining residential property. The street address of this primary entry is cluttered and uninviting.

Removing the fence allows people to quickly survey the area beyond the boundary, allowing them to perceive the entry as safe to enter.

- Rather than remove the fence, establish Victorian wrought iron gates (left open except for events in the park) with more ornate posts.
There is great potential for ornate gate posts, and should be investigated during the detailed design phase for this area of the park.

- (One view) No need for a circular garden in front of the recently renovated toilet block. (Another view) The circular garden is a sound idea. Should include small trees or shrubs to block view of the toilets. Toilets shouldn't be the first thing one sees on entering the park.

The toilets are the only public toilets off Russell Street, therefore it is of great importance that the toilets are visible from the street.

A low circular garden will provide a low garden fronting the toilets to improve the ambience of the toilet area.

- Wisteria arbour looks great but wouldn't it need to be heavily engineered? – galvanised steel - would be costly and high maintenance
The initial cost of a structurally sound arbor will outweigh future maintenance requirements.
- The giant arbour is an excellent idea

Rodgers Lane entrance

- Way-finding and interpretive signage is always good – but why only at this entrance?
It is envisaged that wayfinding signage will be provide at each entry point. This will be provided in a detailed wayfinding and interpretation signage strategy for the overall park.

Seating and picnic facilities

- Why put a picnic shelter at location 4? There is a table and chairs already
A picnic shelter provides all weather access for all seasons of the year. Visitors may only get one chance to visit the park as they journey around Tasmania. A shelter will allow them to spend time in Pioneer Park and enjoy the atmosphere, even when it's raining or during a hot sunny day.
- The picnic shelter at location 4 is a reasonable idea but could be just tables and chairs.
- Location 6 – central seating area – would require large expanses of gravel to create path and would be at the intersection of several paths – wouldn't be a relaxing place to sit
The seating is not specifically designed to be a relaxing spot, although there are members of the community which enjoy such a place to sit and observe the goings-on in the park. By providing seating in these central locations, people may wish to take a short break or rest while waiting for others to catch up.
- Location 6 – I don't think a central seating area at the confluence of three paths is a good idea. Too much pedestrian or cycle traffic. Perhaps seating can be located adjacent to the 'history points' being developed the History Society.
- BBQ areas should have wheelchair accessible paths and electric BBQs
The development of the park will be as inclusive as possible.
- If the existing picnic facilities at location 13 are going to be removed – can they be repurposed eg. as a potting shed in the proposed community garden .
This is a great idea and will need to be considered by Council during the specific design phase for that area.
- Location 11 – the current picnic shelter is underutilised by locals because of the exposure to the wind. Any new shelter needs to have windows to let in light on the northern and western sides, or there needs to be effective wind block from trees on these sides. A cob over in a shelter for community use would be a great idea.
This is a great idea and will need to be considered by Council during the specific design phase for that area.

Gardens

- Donadio garden location 7. This hasn't been maintained – virtually non-existent and I cannot find information on the family's connection to Evandale
An in-depth investigation is required to find out exactly who this person is and their significance to Pioneer Park.
- Little is known of the gentleman who used to tend the Donadio garden – maybe this is a place for a QR code if we can find more of his story.
Refer above

- There is very little information about plantings in the garden beds, tree species etc... Suggest priority should be biodiversity enhancement through incorporating Tasmanian natives, particularly endemic species eg. South Esk Pine, Banksia marginata. [These are great ideas and will need to be considered by Council during the specific design phase for the planting strategy for the whole park.](#)

Playground

- An interactive, nature-based playground would be great. Large nearby blue gum tree would require regular inspections to ensure limbs don't drop onto the playground [Council currently perform such tasks.](#)
- Has any survey, observational and/or public opinion been undertaken to assess the level of use of the playground, or support for an upgrade? I rarely see it being used. There is neither the interest in, or demand for, costly upgrades. Today's children have been captured by the allure of entertainment via Smart Phone and other technologies to their detriment as evidenced by increasing mental health problems in preteen and teenage years. The money would be better spent improving other areas of the park [A new playspace will not only provide a central play area within Evandale, but also attract families from the wider area. People that stay longer due to attractions are more likely to spend money in local shops. Playgrounds are considered a major attraction for young families, especially in unique places like Evandale.](#)

[It is always intended to create exciting and inspirational playspaces to detract kids from smart devices.](#)

- I've heard villagers saying the current play area should be retained. The central area is too exposed to winds and hot sun (and shade trees would take a while to grow). Playground works should be delayed until young children's demographics warrant such a development. [The centralised position offers greater visual surveillance and proximity to future community events being held in the park. Climatic aspects are always considered during the detailed design phase.](#)

Pathways

- Location 8: the pathways around this central area need to be sealed as they are currently unusable in the wet and a dust bowl in the summer – especially detrimental to this year's village fair. [This is a great idea and will need to be considered by Council during the specific design phase for that area.](#)
- Location 12: realignment of path is good idea – must accommodate vehicle access to open area from hall car park as this area is used for campervan parking during events.

- Locations 15 and 17: loop pathway is good idea – has to still allow wheelchair access to the medical centre: bench seating would be needed along this looped pathway.
- Location 17: The current connection is on land owned by the medical centre and it is likely that this access will have to remain with the medical centre. Whilst the current access to the medical centre is from the hall grounds, any future sale of this land by Council will have to have appropriate access. Therefore whilst the proposed pathway is acceptable for now, it may not be so in the future.
[The parcel of land is currently owned by Council, with a land tenure of local government.](#)
- Location 18: the formalisation of this pathway from Barclay Street into Pioneer Park is definitely needed
- Location 18: To connect this pathway to the park would require subdivision and re-titling of land through the Memorial Hall grounds.
[The parcel of land is currently owned by Council, with a land tenure of local government.](#)
- Location 20: this is a high use pathway. Needs to be redesigned where it meets Murray Street so pedestrians have a good line of sight to Arthur Street before crossing Murray Street
- Location 23: (one view) this connection is an important one – it needs to align with the existing avenue of small trees. (Another view) this new track is unnecessary as there are already plenty of track access to the various areas – save some money and put it towards sealing the existing tracks – they all need a total upgrade. (Another view) this pathway is required and the existing trees can be utilised to enhance additional plantings onto the path.
[The exact alignment of the pathway will need to be considered by Council during the specific design phase for that area.](#)

Open spaces

- Location 8: must be retained as an informal play space and for stalls during town events. This area needs levelling, and watering in summer.
- Location 8: could have a signature tree planted in the middle. There needs to be space between the maple trees to allow erection of stalls for events.
[This idea will need to be considered by Council during the specific design phase for that area.](#)
- Location 16: after levelling this area, it needs to be reseeded with a hardier grass that will cope with summer better – as watering it would seem too costly
[This idea will need to be considered by Council during the specific design phase for that area.](#)

- Location 21: I understand this area contains the graves of convicts. Ground penetrating radar should be able to confirm this. If this is the case, there should be interpretation installed re Evandale's convict history, including that Ned Kelly's father was stationed in the Village
[This idea will need to be considered by Council during the specific design phase for that area.](#)
- Location 21: some of this area contains unmarked graves. Head stones were bulldozed into an open crypt many years ago and there are stories of unmarked convict graves as well.
- Location 24: if this block of land belongs to Council it should be sold so a small house or unit can be built on it.
[This idea will be considered by Council during the specific design phase for that area.](#)
- Location 24: this land belongs to the Police Department and I believe it will be sold.

Other facilities

- The proposed community garden with compost bins at location 5 is an appealing inclusion however it would need to be well managed and resourced by Council
- The community garden sounds good but I am not sure it would get much use as most potential users will already have access to gardening areas on their properties.
- No need for another toilet block at location 14
[Yes, for when the hall is locked.](#)
- Location 14: not an immediate priority. Any toilet block would need access from both the Memorial Hall and park.
- Build more independent living units behind location 19
- Location 19: This fencing is not a priority until the adjacent land is developed. Depending on who develops the land, the cost could be shared with the developer. The proposed gardens here is excellent.
[The parcel of land is currently owned by Council, with a land tenure of local government.](#)
- Location 22: it is unclear as to whether the proposed car park is on the road or intruding into the park. It definitely should not intrude into the park. There need to be 'no parking on the grass' signs here as this is happening most weekends and is damaging the area close to the grave sites significantly. Why is a concrete path required here?
[On-street parking will be contained within the road reserve and will not impact on existing trees.](#)

[A pathway is required to provide all weather access from the car park to the park and beyond.](#)
- Location 22: the existing verge should not be converted to parking spaces. This proposal has already been submitted to Council and there were several objections from the

community. There will be compaction issues for existing and new trees and therefore parking should be restricted to the road.

Compaction under existing trees arise due to undefined parking areas. By providing clearly defined parking bays, there is no need to park under trees.

- Please include a drinking water fountain somewhere handy – the type with a lower bowl for dogs.
This is a great idea and will be considered by Council during the specific design phase for that area.
- I would like to see a dry stone wall or an apparent such wall with a concreted centre as the fence separating the hall and the park. Eg. such walls at Oatlands.
This is a great idea and will be considered by Council during the specific design phase for the park.
- The plan needs to consider potential future fencing around the medical centre and potential loss of some of this area. Consideration should be given to an alternative tree lined path around the back of the medical centre and also a tree lined path across the central area.
Fencing around the medical centre is not necessary as the land is owned by Council.

Interpretation

- There needs to be acknowledgement of palawa history and connection to the country on which Evandale is situated. Given that Evandale is located at the intersection of 3 palawa nations, it is likely to have been a significant meeting place (evidence at Honeysuckle Banks and Native Point)
It is envisaged that a detailed interpretation signage strategy will be developed for the overall park.
- There needs to be interpretation about the origin of the town's name. It was named in honour of the first Surveyor-General of Van Diemen's Land - George William Evans. He was one of the pioneers of Australian exploration and his work was pivotal in the early years of both Tasmania and NSW. There are statues of Evans in Bathurst, Melbourne, Adelaide and the Mitchell Library Sydney. His, and his second wife Lucy's, headstone is in the nearby St Andrews Church grounds.
It is envisaged that a detailed interpretation signage strategy will be developed for the overall park.
- The final plan should be done in concert with Evandale History Society. The Society will soon install a plaque in the park designating the site of the first Church of England and church school. The Society has also been collecting stories of pioneers which will be displayed throughout the park via QR codes or a phone app which will provide an interactive experience for park users.

Some of these will be site specific eg. a particular grave; some will just be entertaining stories that are relevant to certain people – early settlers, First Australians, convicts,

soldiers – or historic events – capture of bushrangers, recorded earthquakes, crimes and punishment.

It is envisaged that a detailed interpretation signage strategy will be developed for the overall park.