

THE PARISH PROPERTY AT GREYSTANES – report to parishioners and three proposals for feedback – August 2024

This presentation is about planning now and ahead for our parish property's maintenance, development and renewal. It is being shared with you on behalf of the Parish Finance Committee, Priests and Parish Team. There'll be updates at each next stage of planning - and questions and comments will be welcome at each stage, starting now. As well, there'll be opportunities for parishioners who are keen to go into more detail. For the three proposals being shared in this presentation, you'll see a survey form in the church foyer throughout August. Individual and wider parish feedback will then be given by the end of September when the actions ahead will be determined.

The first thing to say is that this presentation IS partly about parish funds but is NOT asking for any money. The second thing to say is that some parishioners may not realise that your parish property is 18 acres - or 7.3 hectares in size. Have a look on the aerial photo. It's all parish land.

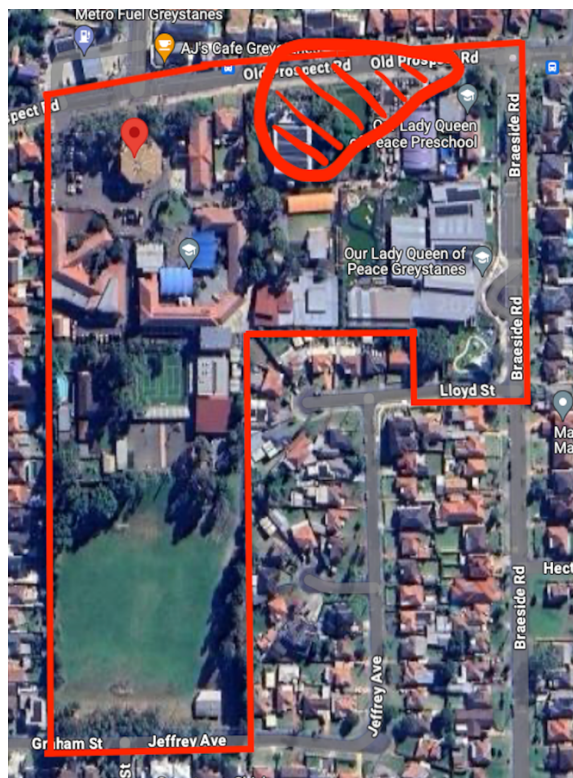


Where does our funding come from?

With school fees and today's levels of government funding for education, our schools cover the costs that occur for school buildings and under the school footprint of land – but unlike the more recent Catholic Schools of our diocese, all of the land belongs to the parish here at Greystanes. A commonly held view is that the Bishop or diocese gives our parish some funding. That's NOT the case and in fact it's the other way around. The parishes support the large mission works of the diocese – and the parishes themselves, are their own funding sources. Like every parish, parishioners here at OLQP can be very grateful for each other. It is only due to parishioners that our parish exists; its church and buildings, its staffing, all of its operating costs, its outreach works and its ministries. These are all key to enabling us to be a community of faith making a difference for God's glory in the world.

Parish land re-purposed for good uses – and at a cost to the parish

Until the 1990s, the parish had houses available for rent, and spare land to use on the property, down along our Old Prospect Rd boundary (in that red shaded area on the aerial shot – which is along the current front boundary shown on the photo).



The houses were demolished and the parish made the land available so that now, along that boundary, our St Paul's College has a big hall – the primary school has extra play space – and the teachers have the lower car park.



Great outcomes and Parish generosity

So, some great outcomes for the schools were created by parish generosity to re-purpose that rental land and spare land. The generosity was ongoing, as the rental income that would have served other parish needs through until

now was sacrificed. Back then, the parish also owned the land that is now Genista nursing home down the road. That land was sold to do renovations on the church and office - and to make a further cash contribution to the building of the hall. These decisions of the past contributed greatly to the life of the parish and its activities – especially our schools. And since then, parishioners’ faithful giving has continued to enable all of the parish’s operating costs as well as its large funding for many works of God’s blessing and care in the wider community and world.

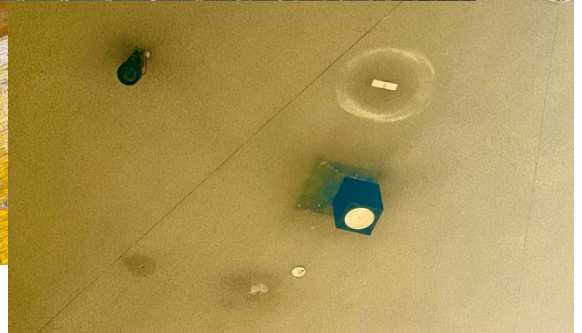
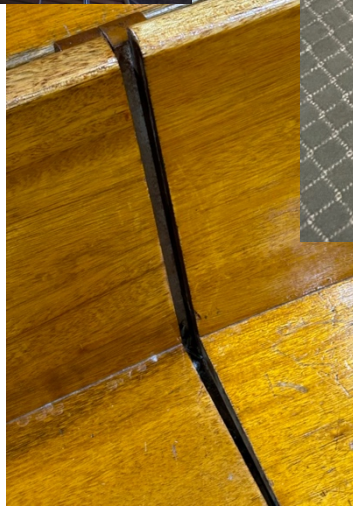
Long term maintenance and development story

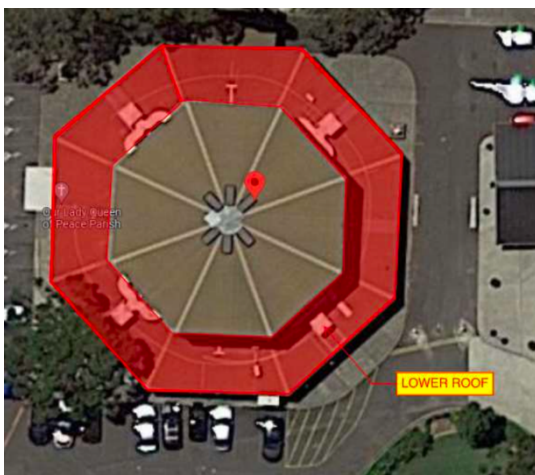
The sacrifice of long term rent and the re-purposing of land summarised above - has added to a long term caution regarding significant maintenance and improvement work on our land and buildings. Thanks be to God a small crew of property volunteers have saved the parish tens of thousands of dollars by their humble and relentless care of assets, gardens and grounds.

The challenge though, is that major maintenance can’t continue to remain on hold for more years ahead

The church building turns 50 years of age next year and it’s almost 30 years since major work has occurred. Below are some snap shots of obvious issues. Current assessments and engineering reports are giving us information about how to proceed with needed maintenance work on the church, especially in terms of the windows, floor and roof structures – plus hopeful air conditioning. At this stage we know the lower roof of the church will need replacing.









Directions ahead

The pictures look a bit scary but we're determined and positive about focussing good attention ahead and getting things right. We'll consult the parish by early new year with a church plan to take us faithfully beyond the upcoming 50 year milestone for our sacred home here on the hill at Greystanes. **For now though, here's some really positive and practical news and proposals.** First, some ways of creating income streams for our parish works, including one firm proposal. And then, two immediate project proposals to begin this year.

Alternative income streams for the works of our parish

The parish finance committee has been examining ways to use our parish property – to try to replace the income sources that stopped when the parish gave over that land and rental income in the past. Our parishioners are generously continuing to make the parish's operation and mission possible – but income supplements are crucial for us to maintain our next chapter of

parish presence and mission here at OLQP. These income supplements will aim to ensure the care of our land, church and buildings.

Two key ways to do this?

We've put a lot of time into looking at extra child and family services – or other income earning possibilities - on the north eastern corner of the property where our two storey former convent building currently sits.



We have a partnership already with 'Ambrose' – which is part of a Catholic child services company that was formed to serve the diocese. Expanding that partnership is a favoured possibility. One plan that we researched and worked through with 'Ambrose' proved to have some development blocks, but we're back to the drawing board with them and some good options are being tested. There are real complexities involved, so it's pretty painstaking, but we know a lot more than we did two years ago and will keep working towards answers. **What we can say is that some form of parish income from that part of the property is a strong and determined goal.**

Project Proposal 1: LAND TO DEVELOP - through a D.A. with Council

An income stream proposal for our decision is to apply to create five or six housing lots along the very rear section of the property, at the back end of the oval on Jeffery Ave. The oval would still be preserved. See the pink box in the aerial photos where the arrows are pointing – then see the photos of that section of our property looking along Graham St and Jeffery Ave.



Some combination of building, selling, parish residential or commercial renting looks possible according to very favourable Town Planning assessments done so far. To proceed now towards a development application with the Council though requires our commissioning of pricey reports - and so we want to raise this with the parish. We invite any questions

or comments during these weeks of August via the survey forms and box in the foyer of the church. We'll study those and respond during September – then feed back again to the parish before taking any further steps. In a nutshell though, if this development did occur, a long term financial benefit would be created for the parish.

TWO PROJECTS TO GET OUR PARISH PROPERTY RENEWAL UNDER WAY

So, that's some of the bigger picture and longer term planning priorities. But we've been budgeting for two improvement projects that can proceed very soon, for which we invite feedback or questions. One is about the George Preca Centre and the other is out the front of the church to the Old Prospect Road footpath. Parishioner tradespersons will be able to tender for various tasks – or some may wish to contribute some time or materials. But in any case, the scope of these projects will be limited and controlled so as not to require any bank loan or repayments. Estimates have been assessed, so that none of this proposing is blind. We can do it. But the budget will be reported to the parish once finally planned and priced, before proceeding.

Project Proposal 2: PARISH SPACE TO GATHER – INDOOR/OUTDOOR **A proposal to refresh the George Preca Centre**

In George Preca, many know that there are two main spaces with a large wall and kitchen cupboards dividing them. The following is the favoured option of the parishioners and parish team who currently run the main activities in the centre – and the aim would also be to enable more activities there, including things like movie days/nights and special interests. We've done structural inspections and the proposal now is to remove the wall and create a fresh looking, larger space, with a hospitality kitchen at the near end (north) of the area. With attention to paint, flooring, audio visual, signage and general presentation, this could be a really inviting and well used facility.





Council zoning doesn't allow it to be a function centre for wider community hire or a midnight venue etc. But this proposal would turn it into a very pleasant, small hall for parish activities of 100 or so people - and some weekend parish family gatherings too. Last year we worked on a State Government community grant application to set up outdoor shade, gardens and social space in the fenced courtyard outside the George Preca Centre.



The good news from our State Member Hugh McDermott is that we've just been awarded \$27,000 for this purpose. So it's exciting that we could do something with both the outside space - and the inside space - of the George Preca Centre, to create a nicely connected facility. Parishioners are being asked for comments as follow, **via the questions on the survey form available in the church.**

Comment 1: In a renewal set up of the large outdoor courtyard of the George Preca Centre, what would you like to see included there?

Comment 2: What kind of parish activity would you like to see occurring in a refreshed indoor hall space that could comfortably take up to 100 people?

Comment 3: Welcome to add any comment or ask a question about ideas for the George Preca Centre.

Project Proposal 3: BEAUTIFYING OUT THE FRONT OF THE CHURCH

A proposal to renovate the area between the church and footpath

You might have noticed that we've had to do some cement grinding due to tripping accidents. And two of those large brick planter structures have just been removed, as the cracked walls were very close to falling. The frequently visited outdoor Mary statue is filled with crack repairs and basically the whole well-worn front space between the church and the footpath is inviting some creative thinking.



What can you imagine in that large space? Currently there's a garden on the bottom half down to the carpark entrance, well cared for by three parishioners. It's surrounded by what seems more like a pool fence and is separated from the top half of the frontage that extends to the parish office.



A parishioner recently volunteered to recreate the grass area in front of the office and has looked after it since. How might the rest of our spiritual home's frontage enhance our spirit of welcome, faith and community?



Would you like to see more of a link across the whole frontage? Would you like to see paving or some softer surfaces, an extended environmentally friendly appearance, some spiritual focuses or some seating?



Before a design is done and presented to the parish, parishioners are being asked to consider some priorities they'd love to see included – and hence help towards a firm plan. On the survey form available in the church foyer throughout August, there's a chance to give some feedback. And on that same survey form, you're welcome to include your comments and feedback about the St George Preca Centre proposal – and the rear of property land proposal to work towards a development application to Council.

CONCLUSION

Trusting this report has given our parishioners some helpful background - plus an interesting and hope-filled sense of where we are - in terms of our parish assets and property. This document is prepared with thanks to God for the faith and commitment of OLQP parishioners as they continue to care about the very significant part this parish has played – and can continue to play – in God's mission of mercy, love and salvation in and for the world. May our steps forward reflect an ongoing discernment in God's will.

Please find a survey form in the foyer of the church – as has been mentioned a number of times in this report. These can be placed in the marked box in the foyer throughout August. They will all be reviewed - responded to where needed - and become contributions to – the current planning by the Parish Team and Parish Finance Committee (and its Special Works Sub Committee). A report back to the Parish will then occur in late September before any definite further actions are taken.

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