

ELLENBROOK

The New Town in the Swan Valley

UDIA Case Study

The Project

The Swan Valley new town of Ellenbrook was developed by The Ellenbrook Joint Venture, an agreement between the Department of Housing and Works and private syndicate, Morella Pty Ltd. The project is expected to be complete by 2020, consisting of 10,200 dwellings on an area of land 1200 hectares in size with an estimated population of 30,000 people.

The Swan Valley is situated 26 kilometres from the City of Perth and given this distance, Ellenbrook has been developed as a self-sustainable community on the urban fringe. Ellenbrook set the benchmark for new community developments in Western Australia when construction began in 1994. The developer's innovative approach to elements such as sense of place, natural landscaping and community planning involving the introduction and funding of initiatives that are now standard in many new developments around Australia.

Facts at a Glance

Developer:	The Ellenbrook Joint Venture (Department of Housing and Works and Morella Pty Ltd)
Type of development:	Residential
Location:	Swan Valley
Distance from Perth:	26 kilometres
Development commenced:	1994
Estimated completion:	2012
Number of dwellings when complete:	10,200
Estimated population when complete:	30,000
Awards:	UDIA National Awards – 2003 Residential Subdivision; 2001 Masterplanned Development.



Special Features

- The successful planning and creation of a community on the urban fringe;
- The transformation of an old sand quarry into a unique focal point for the first village – “Woodlake”;
- The range of housing options that are affordable, appealing and appropriate to the needs of a diverse community;
- The traditional village design focusing on central facilities – which means residents can comfortably walk or cycle to their local shops, businesses and community facilities;
- The inclusion of connected cycle paths and walkways as part of the design;
- The use of works of public art to enhance the landscape and give the new community its own sense of identity and character;
- The developing of a comprehensive community plan in 1993, with subsequent continual revision and the development of a trust fund to meet the requirements of a range of community development, facilities and programs. Thus facilitating the early provision of community infrastructure.
- The development of a strong cultural life through the Ellenbrook Cultural Foundation;
- Sustainable landscaping of parklands, and free Waterwise garden and solar efficient design advice for new residents;
- The *Flora for Fauna* program, which encourages local fauna to feed, breed and shelter in the area following the re-introduction of native fauna;
- Additional security provided for residents - Woodlake Village, Ellenbrook's first village was one of the first areas in Perth to introduce a 24 hour security service; now extended to all areas of Ellenbrook
- The manner in which building waste is recycled back into the development on a weekly basis;
- An agreement forged between the Joint Venture, City of Swan and the State Government to link Ellenbrook to the major highway network;
- The decision to invest \$100,000 in a regular bus service for the first year of development; and
- The implementation of a successful pilot for the School in Houses concept, since replicated as School in Offices.



ELLENBROOK

The New Town in the Swan Valley

Project Address

Swan Valley, Western Australia

Developer

Name: Ellenbrook Joint Venture (Department of Housing and Works & Morella Pty Ltd)
Address: 34 Main St, Ellenbrook, WA, 6069
Contact Person: Danny Murphy
Ph: 08 9297 9900
Fax: 08 9296 9000
Email: ellenbrook@lwpproperty.com.au
Web address: www.ellenbrook.net



Consultant Team

Town Planner: *Roberts Day*

Engineers: *Cossill & Webley*

Surveyors: *Whelans*

Landscape Architects: *Peter Cala & Associates, Plan E*

Environmental Management: *RPS Bowman Bishaw Gorham*

Drainage & Groundwater: *JDA Consultant Hydrologists*

Cultural Advisor and public Artist: *Philippa O'Brien*

Civil Contractor: *Georgiou Group*

Marketing and Sales:303

Project Context

When the town's development partners began the project, they realised that as they were creating a whole new town on the urban fringe, they would also have to create a self-sustainable community.

Since then, these plans to build a vibrant town with an old fashioned sense of community – through community consultation and support, innovative planning and by offering a range of housing options – have set the benchmark for new masterplanned developments.

Woodlake Village, the first of seven villages at Ellenbrook, set the character for this new community. Construction began in 1994 on a former sand quarry and transformed a barren landscape into a village with its own unique character.



The Bridges, Coolamon, Morgan Fields and Charlottes Vineyard villages were the next phases of Ellenbrook's development - all designed with their own distinct themes. By 2020, Ellenbrook's seven villages will be completed, all surrounding a vibrant town centre.

As the first of the villages to be built, Woodlake Village established a strong sense of what Ellenbrook as a whole community aspires to be – with an “old fashioned sense of community”, enhanced natural landscapes and detailed community planning.

Woodlake Village was built on the site of a former sand quarry. Stripped of any natural landform and vegetation, the site presented many challenges, but the pit and subsequent high points in the landscape left by the mining also provided an opportunity for innovative landscape design.

ELLENBROOK

The New Town in the Swan Valley

Project Context continued...

The lowest point of the open cut mine became the central lake and feature parkland, and the high points of the mine were set aside for the area that is now known as Woodlake Rise.

The social needs of residents were considered even before construction commenced, with a community plan drawn up in 1993. This put a structure in place for the timely provision of the facilities and services the community would need, well before there was a population in the area that could sustain them.



Feeding into this plan, the *Community Trust Fund*, a partnership between the Ellenbrook Joint Venture and the City of Swan, sets aside funds for each home site sold into a community account. This money has been used to build infrastructure such as a community centre, recreation centre and tennis courts. It also provides a Youth Activities Officer, and a full-time Community Development Officer who work with residents to establish opportunities such as playgroups, toy libraries and sporting and community clubs.

Another innovative move by the developers involved the establishment, in 2002, of the Ellenbrook Cultural Foundation to encourage and support the cultural life of Ellenbrook. The Foundation broke new ground for developers in Western Australia and, through funding from the Community Trust Fund and other outside sources; the Foundation is able to promote culture and the arts for the benefit of all residents of Ellenbrook.

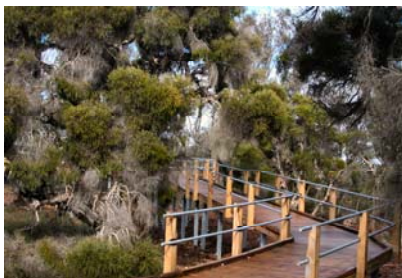
Ellenbrook's urban form picks up the key features of New Urbanism developments to further promote interaction between members of the community. The streets and housing have been designed to maximise social interaction and make pedestrian and cycle movements easy. Design elements include varied setbacks for homesites, the reintroduction of laneways and street tree planting, to encourage an active street life and ready interaction between residents.

From the original degraded landscape, mature parklands have been developed and offer a mix of rolling landscapes and large green spaces for sport and other activities.

The Site

Location

The Swan Valley, located 26 kilometres from Perth, is an area well known for its burgeoning wine and tourism industry. Ellenbrook is situated within the Swan Valley at the foot of the Swan Hills, south of the Vines Resort and world class golf course.



Natural Features

Conservation category wetlands are situated within Ellenbrook. Over 300 hectares to the north were ceded for conservation prior to the commencement of the development. Wetlands have also been incorporated into public open space in the Charlotte's Vineyard village so that they are protected from any negative impacts of urban development. Further sensitive wetland areas will be protected in future villages.

Access

The site is developed away from the existing urban development front in Perth, so to provide ease of access, an investment of \$3 million was made by the developers to construct the balance of two major roads that provide Ellenbrook residents access to the major highway network to Perth and Midland.

The developers also subsidised a regular public bus service into Midland and Morley for the first year of development. This service quickly became popular and was well utilised until the introduction of regular Transperth services.

Within the villages themselves, transit corridors provide easy access for both pedestrians and cyclists to move between community facilities and recreation areas.

ELLENBROOK

The New Town in the Swan Valley

Design

Urban Design

Innovative community design principles are applied in all Ellenbrook villages to achieve distinctive themes for each village and impart a strong sense of community identity.

A gradation of lot sizes is accommodated throughout all of the Ellenbrook villages. This includes large allotments of 2000-4000m² along the boundary of Morgan Fields to provide a transition between rural properties and the urban environment of cottage homesites (10/12/13m frontages) located in the village centre. These cottage lots provide suitable accommodation options for smaller families, singles and older residents seeking low maintenance properties – contributing to an integrated and diverse community.

There is also a ratio of 1:12 public housing inconspicuously integrated within private housing.

Public Open Space

Parks are evenly distributed throughout the villages to allow convenient access for all residents. Extensive lake systems are the primary feature of many parks in Ellenbrook, including waterfalls and other points of interest that create destinations for people using the parks.



Environmental Considerations

As a part of developing attractive public open space, particular care was taken to:

- Sink landscaped areas to reduce wind-borne evaporation during summer months
- Hydrozone planted areas to conserve water
- Improve soil and mulch well
- Select species to suit location
- Manage irrigation

Also, as mentioned previously, 300 hectares was ceded for Conservation Category Wetlands, mainly at the northern end of the site.



Drainage and Storm Water

An outcome of the environmental approval process was the creation of a Drainage and Nutrient Management Programme (DNMP). The southern DNMP manages storm water events and provides a process to strip nutrients so that the water quality leaving Ellenbrook post development is at least as good as the water quality prior to construction.

The northern DNMP will use the latest technology to not only manage water quality and quantity but also to ensure that the maximum water is collected and reused within the development.

ELLENBROOK

The New Town in the Swan Valley

Project and Development History

- The sites were acquired by the respective owners in the 1980's as rural land. They had commenced informal rezoning discussions by 1989.
- Given the challenges associated with rezoning and servicing, the owners formed the joint venture in November 1991 (ie the need for critical mass was recognised).
- The environmental approval involved a Public Environmental Review (PER) process.
- The site was rezoned to Urban Deferred in December 1992 and to urban in December 1993.
- Given its location adjacent to the Gnangara Water Mound, the Swan Valley and its distance from existing services, the rezoning was extremely challenging.
- Structure planning occurred in detail during 1993, to facilitate receipt of planning approval in 1994.
- The scale of the project demanded extensive consultation with all service providers, the local community groups and significant market research.
- The Environmental approvals, including drainage and nutrient management, together with provision of water and sewer services, represented the major challenges.
- Over \$2m was expended by the owners in meeting the requirements of the rezoning process.
- Approximately 300ha of land (25% of the site) was set aside for conservation.



Key Innovations

Mix of Housing

- Range of lots from Group Housing to Country Lots greater than 1,000m².
- Over 40% of lots are less than 500m²
- 1:12 public housing
- 10% group housing component
- 45% first home buyers.

Recycling

- In a first for any Western Australian project, a recycling initiative was introduced in conjunction with home builders. Building sites are cleared up weekly and all waste collected. More than 50% of the waste is recycled within the development primarily as a sub base for roads and crossovers.

Education

- In another first, the State's first *School in Houses* project was established in Ellenbrook in partnership with private investors and the Education Department. *Schools in Houses* involved four homes being funded in conjunction with private investors and leased by the Education Department for use as a school. Opening in 1996 in the properties that would later be converted back to homes, initial enrolments were 33 and grew to 240. The success of the Ellenbrook concept has been replicated many times throughout the State. Residents had a primary school available in the first year and full utilisation by xxxx enabled the Department to construct Ellenbrook Primary School.

Local Employment

- Another totally unique structure has been created to grow locally based employment opportunities – The Ellenbrook Community Resource Centre. This initiated the Ellenbrook Employment Resource Centre (EERC). The centre brings together employment with the local potential workforce; it is a conduit for people looking for work in the Ellenbrook and broader Swan Valley area.

ELLENBROOK

The New Town in the Swan Valley

Finance

The respective joint venturers provided funding separately for their share of development funds. Approximately \$20m was expended prior to settlement of the first lot.

Marketing

The marketing of Ellenbrook is multifaceted, involving advertising, promotional events, signage, trade displays, community bulletins and general public relations.

Particular features of on-site marketing to date have included:

- On-site Sales Centres and themed entry statements;
- The launch of unique products in Perth, the cottage homesite in 1994 and country homesites in 2000;
- Ongoing research into the development of a continuing stream of affordable product; and
- Home display centres featuring cottage, traditional and country housing product.

Sales Success

Despite its lack of maturity and considerable distance from existing suburbs, Ellenbrook has from the outset, established itself as one of the fastest selling projects in Western Australia with sales activity over the first five years being twice as great as any other project in Western Australia.



Experience Gained and Lessons Learned

- Establish a clear vision and adhere to that vision (be a 'vision keeper').
- Think long term. *A key risk for large scale projects is that development practices/products can become outdated. It is important to understand trends.*
- Ensure a conservative long term financial plan. *Given the volatile nature of the housing market, allow for the unexpected in the early years of the project.*
- Fix servicing arrangements. *As people change, ensure all servicing arrangements are documented.*

On occasions, short term thinking has been adopted in response to immediate commercial circumstances (eg design guidelines compromised, 'sub-standard' enhancements constructed, price discounted). These practices produce negative outcomes in the medium term.

ELLENBROOK

The New Town in the Swan Valley

Project Data Summary

Land Use Information		
Site Area (hectares) 1066		
Land Use Plan	Area (Hectares)	Percentage of Site
Residential	529	50%
Retail	47	4%
Commercial	37	3%
Community	4	1%
Public Open Space	118	11%
Regional Open Space/Conservation Areas	-	-
Other	331	31%
Total	1066	100%
Development Schedule	Date	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussions with Council• Planning Commenced• Rezoning application• Subdivision application• Construction Commenced		