

LEX LOCI'S TRAVELS

24 MARCH 2022

An ad-hoc one-pager from The Public Land Consultancy

Lex Mourns Neighbours and considers the Cul-de-Sac



Lex is disappointed. Ramsay Street is about to disappear into history.

Well, not entirely, because its *alter ego* will survive, in the form of Pin Oak Court, Vermont.

Some fictional places, like Coronation Street or Gotham City, are caricatures of real-world counterparts: London's East End, or Manhattan. Others exist only for believers, like Platform 9¾ at Kings Cross Station. Yet others are quite deliberately identifiable: Frank Hardy's Carringbush is of course Collingwood.

The creators of Neighbours, back in 1985, chose not to reproduce suburbia as some studio-based fantasy-land. They didn't need to: Melbourne already had Pin Oak Court, Vermont, Nunawading.

It's about as cream-brick quarter-acre as you can get. And just to complete the ambience, it's a *cul-de-sac*.

Anyway, over the years the thought of the *cul-de-sac* has entertained various Courts of Law.

In medieval England, a public highway had to lead from one town to another town. *Cul-de-sacs* lead nowhere. So is our Lex actually allowed to enter?

Back in 1932, Chief Justice Gavan Duffy spelled out the circumstances in which a *cul-de-sac* could become a public highway. Can it really be both dedicated and accepted if it leads to a dead end? What if there's a fence or a gate? A revenge-strip reserve?

In later cases the courts addressed dead-end roads on Crown land, and strips of freehold land shown not as roads, but as carriageway easements. As recently as 2019 the Supreme Court ruled on whether the entire road reserve becomes a public highway, or just that part trafficked by the public.

Lex would much rather be watching Neighbours. He can't, so he'll read a book instead. What about *The Hobbit*? The Author, Professor J.R.R. Tolkien, didn't like us drifting off into French, so Bilbo Baggins dwells at *Bag-End*. ♦



Pin Oak Court is in
Wurundjeri country

See you there! Lex Loci