

Memorandum

To: Lindsay Dyce - Manager Planning & Assessment,
Cc: Tija Stagni, Liza Cordoba, Matt Hansen
From: Mark Beharrell
Date: 14/12/12
Subject: Initial Comments Bushfire Assessment - Rezoning application R0001/12 120
Mona Vale

Background

These comments are based on the bushfire assessments included with the information provided by the applicant for rezoning application R0001/12 120 Mona Vale. There are 2 bushfire assessments these are from Building Code Hazard Solutions (2005) and Advanced Bushfire Performance Solutions (2012).

The site is bounded the north by Mona Vale Road and Katandra Wildlife Reserve, to the West by vacant crown land bushland and to the South by Ingleside Chase bushland reserve. The site has a significant bushfire history and is also sited within the vegetated escarpment that defines the landscape of the lower section of Pittwater.

The site is classed as bushfire prone land with the current certified Bushfire Prone Land Mapping (2004) and will remain Bushfire Prone Land when Council new mapping is certified. Being a rezoning for the purposes of residential subdivision the proposal will need to be assessed as per the requirements of a bushfire safety authority, particularly the following sections of the *Rural Fires Act 1997*.

100B Bush fire safety authorities

(1) The Commissioner may issue a bush fire safety authority for:

(a) a subdivision of bush fire prone land that could lawfully be used for residential or rural residential purposes, or

(b) development of bush fire prone land for a special fire protection purpose.

(2) A bush fire safety authority authorises development for a purpose referred to in subsection (1) to the extent that it complies with standards regarding setbacks, provision of water supply and other matters considered by the Commissioner to be necessary to protect persons, property or the environment from danger that may arise from a bush fire.

(3) A person must obtain such a bush fire safety authority before developing bush fire prone land for a purpose referred to in subsection (1).

(4) Application for a bush fire safety authority is to be made to the Commissioner in accordance with the regulations.

This review has been based on the proposals compliance with Planning for Bushfire Protection 2006, and based discussions with the Warringah Pittwater Office of the NSW Rural Fire Service. There are several areas where the assessment is non-compliant with Planning

with Bushfire Protection (2006) and consequently may put life, property and the environment at risk.

Asset Protection Zones

Vegetation classifications are used to assess the vegetation on a site and along with slope are used to develop asset protection zones and setbacks. The assessment describes the vegetation classification for the several aspects East, North, South and South-East as rainforest, Table 4.5.2.1 Advanced Bushfire Performance Solutions (2012). However, the definitions from Keith (2004) and Planning for Bushfire Protection (2006) would indicate the South and South-East locations are more predominately Wet Sclerophyll. This is also the classification that Council and the local office of the NSW Rural Fire Service use in fire management in this location. The North and East aspects are generally Forest as also described in the Building Code Hazard Solutions (2005).

Additionally, much of the asset protection zone in the south west corner of the site is on land greater than 18 degrees (also stated in the previous assessment by Building Code Hazard Solutions (2005) and within the riparian corridor. The upshot being with the slope to the south west corner of the site is greater than that used in the modelling. The use of differing vegetation classification and slope for the South West would clearly affect the model used to determine the proposed setbacks and asset protection zones on this portion of the site. Additionally, the removal of vegetation below the top of bank would impact on the headwaters of mullet creek and the current use of the area as a wildlife corridor.

In the southern section of the site the provision of asset protection zones within the proposal is located on the adjacent property 3 Boundary St, where these do not currently exist. It would appear that the Asset protections zones are being offset onto 5 Boundary Rd.

Perimeter Rd

Council within all its strategic planning for the Warriewood/Ingleside Land Release has development bushfire management based on use of a perimeter road a major factor in ensure life and property are protected from bushfire. This is also the focus of Planning for Bushfire Protection (2006) which is specific in section where a perimeter road is the preferred to separate hazards from development. It further states that alternatives will only be considered in exceptional circumstances, which in this case have not been provided.

There is only one egress point for well in excess of 200m to the westerns section of the proposed layout. This does not provide adequate or safe access for fire-fighters across this portion of the site. If there is no access to Mona Vale Rd then there are no through connections with dead end sections for the roads west of Boundary St road in the development greater than 100m. It is unclear how the current proposal overcomes these issues

