



Submission on rezoning proposal for 15 Mona Street Mona Vale

26 October 2022

Pittwater Natural Heritage Association would like to make the following comments on Application PEX2022/0002, the proposal to rezone 15 Mona Street from SP2 to R2 residential.

We submit that a zoning of R2 residential is completely inappropriate to a site with hazards and environmental assets such as this site has.

Most of the site supports Estuarine Swamp Oak Forest, a form of endangered ecological community listed under the NSW State Biodiversity Conservation Act and Federal Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act. This is an environmental asset which should be protected and enhanced instead of over half of it being cleared for residential development. There is no guarantee that the remnant remaining on the site will be protected, in spite of assurances in the Preliminary Biodiversity Assessment, which we believe should be discounted.

This site is an important link in a chain of vegetated sites which form an informal corridor linking nearby Bangalow Park, the reserve adjacent to the canal running from Darley Street and the vegetation in the riparian zone in Flying Fox Park. The proposed dwellings which would be allowed in an R2 zone would hamper or prevent movement of bandicoots and other fauna between these habitat sites.

The site contributes to the tree canopy of the Northern Beaches Local Government area, which Northern Beaches Council has committed to protect.

A number of species of fauna are identified in the Preliminary Biodiversity Assessment as using the site as a foraging resource, including Long-nosed Bandicoots which are also believed to breed there. This should be grounds for preserving and enhancing the Swamp Oak Forest. In fact, we believe that over time tree hollows will develop, providing breeding sites for a number of native species.

The Preliminary Biodiversity Assessment acknowledges that clearing a substantial amount of vegetation on the site would disturb, and /or remove fauna habitat. This also should be grounds for refusing the rezoning proposal. Further, the fact that the site is weedy is not an acceptable reason to destroy a large section of it, as suggested in the Preliminary Biodiversity Assessment. Instead, as a responsible owner Sydney Water should institute a targeted bush regeneration program to restore it. Such a program may be supported by students of Pittwater High School and the local community as has happened in other Parts of Pittwater Ward.

The major hazard affecting this site is low and medium flood risk, which in our view is another factor that mitigates against it being suitable for residential development. This risk has been established using current criteria, but we request that the effects of climate change (which are already being experienced on the Northern Beaches) are taken into account as this will cause the risk of serious flooding to increase over time.

We are opposed to the rezoning proposal and submit that the site is a Sydney Water environmental asset which should be retained and properly maintained by them, in keeping with their commitment to “protecting, restoring and enhancing our natural and heritage assets” (Sydney Water Environmental Policy issued 28/10/2021)

David Palmer

Secretary, Pittwater Natural Heritage Association