

Rezoning Application – R0002/12 – 120 & 122 Mona Vale Road, 4A Boundary Street and 10 Jubilee Avenue

Natural Resource Assessment Comments:

The property is located in a prominent position on the Ingleside/Warriewood escarpment with Ingleside Chase Reserve to the south and Katandra Bushland Sanctuary to the north. The property itself contains a landscape which has been modified following the 1994 fires, when Council adopted the following from a Council meeting of February 7th 1994:

“That Council clearly advise members of the public and landowners within the Ingleside/Warriewood area that the determination of land use classifications and future rezonings will be based on environmental characteristics of the area, including vegetation, which were in existence prior to January 1994 as determined by the Environmental Studies carried out by Council for the Ingleside/Warriewood Land Release Project.”

The majority of the site has remained in a cleared state since this time by being grazed. A portion of existing bushland extends onto the southern and western margins of the 120-122 Mona Vale Road property from the adjoining Ingleside Chase Reserve, as well as a vegetated creekline which runs through the northern section of the property.

The proposed works involve a Planning Proposal to rezone the properties which are currently zoned 1(b) Non-Urban to 2(a) Residential, to permit urban development as indicated on the Masterplan (GM Urban Designs & Architects dated September 2012) provided. The Masterplan proposes subdivision of 120-122 Mona Vale Road and 4 Boundary Street with a varying of allotments and lot sizes, as well as presenting two options to which this site can be accessed via Mona Vale Road and/or Boundary Street, and another via 10 Jubilee Avenue and 4 Boundary Street. The Masterplan includes a Landscape Masterplan and also provides a number of supporting reports including an Ecological Site Analysis.

The Ecological Site Analysis (Footprint Green Pty Ltd 13th July 2011) involved a number of site surveys that were conducted between the 3rd May and 10th June 2011. The report describes the 120-122 Mona Vale Road property as having three key habitat components scattered throughout – Open Forest Habitat, Disturbed Woodland and Scrubland Areas, and Open Paddocks and Infrastructure Areas. The Open Forest Habitat generally occurs along the embankments of the Narrabeen Creek along the steep southern boundary area of the site. This habitat contains a full structure consisting of a number of native canopy trees, shrubs and ground covers. The Disturbed Woodland and Scrubland Areas occur in isolated patches across the site and along the northern central drainage line, and contain some canopy trees and little to no understorey except for bracken fern. The Open Paddocks and Infrastructure Areas are generally cleared and are grazed by stock, however some isolated remnant trees are present in the northern paddocks. The Open Forest Habitat is considered to provide very good fauna habitat and a number of fauna species were observed as listed in the report. The Disturbed Woodland and Scrubland Areas provide refuge habitat for more common species, and contain a large senescing Angophora tree which has a number of hollows currently used by diurnal parrots and Kookaburras. The site surveys showed evidence of use of the site by Swamp Wallabies and Long-nosed Bandicoots.

No listed threatened species or endangered ecological communities were recorded from the site visits, however four (4) threatened flora species and fourteen (14) threatened fauna species have the potential to be present or use the site periodically, as identified in the report on Pages 28 to 32. However, the report states on Page 35 "Whilst no subdivision master plan has been prepared, further consideration will be required for (these) species". Therefore, Assessments of Significance (7-Part Tests) have not yet been undertaken and are required to be undertaken before the application can be further assessed.

The report recommends the following in terms of minimising impacts on threatened species, the local ecology and to comply with the requirements of the NSW Office of Water guidelines (2011):

- Retain the vegetation and habitats in the riparian areas (30m from top of bank) along Narrabeen Creek;
- Maximise the retention of vegetation and habitats within the Open Forest area;
- Maximise the retention of vegetation and habitats in the lower gully line in the Disturbed Woodland and Scrubland;
- Maximise the retention of other areas in the Disturbed Woodland and Scrubland;
- Maximise the retention of indigenous trees in the Open Paddocks & Infrastructure areas of the site.

These recommendations are supported in principle, however as no arboricultural assessment has been provided for 120-122 Mona Vale Road, at this stage it is difficult to assess the potential impact of the future development on individual trees, particularly as no indicative building envelopes have been provided as part of the subdivision plans, and no final access arrangement has been decided. In addition, the proposed interior road crosses the existing drainage line where large and significant canopy trees are currently located and does not appear to be located with retention of these trees in mind, and the impact of the proposed road on existing trees has not been assessed and is currently unknown.

Although much of the site is cleared, it is located on the escarpment and bordered by Ingleside Chase Reserve to the south and west, and this area is known to support a large (although declining) Swamp Wallaby population, as well as Sugar Gliders, Long-nosed Bandicoots (and possibly the threatened Southern Brown Bandicoot), Brushtail and Ringtail Possums, the threatened Eastern Pygmy Possum, and possibly the Spotted-tailed Quoll. Any of these species could potentially move through the subject site and use it as a corridor. Barriers to the movement of these ground mammals include fences and roads, with a larger number of proposed allotments creating more potential fence barriers. A smaller number of lots with larger lot sizes is preferred and should be a major consideration within the Masterplan, and all fences will be conditioned to be passable to wildlife. In addition, if development is approved, the keeping of domestic pets such as dogs, cats, rabbits and ferrets should be prohibited and regularly enforced.

The current Masterplan indicates provision of 38 allotments of 500 m² or less in Lot 5, and either a further 3 or 5 allotments of 500 m² or less in Lot 2 (depending on which option is preferred). These small allotments allow for high density development, however they are not sympathetic to creation of wildlife habitat and corridors. Recent experience in other parts of Warriewood Valley has shown that these smaller lot sizes generally do not support large canopy trees due to lack of sufficient space. The

planting of canopy trees is critical to maintaining the habitat and passage of arboreal wildlife, therefore consideration to provision of larger lot sizes throughout the majority of the site is required. The recently conducted Strategic Review process has assessed the recommended maximum amount of allotments on the property to be 20 allotments. The current rezoning requests 71 allotments. If the total number of allotments did not exceed 20 as recommended, the lot sizes would be adequately sized to satisfy the requirement for habitat and corridor enhancement, as well as providing the required asset protection zone setbacks.

Deficiencies of the Application/Additional Information Required:

- Assessments of Significance (7-Part Tests) have not been undertaken and are therefore required for four (4) threatened flora and fourteen (14) threatened fauna species;
- No arboricultural impact assessment has been undertaken at this stage for the main property of 120-122 Mona Vale Road and therefore an arborist report is required to assess the potential impact of the proposed development upon individual trees across the site and provide the number of trees recommended/required to be removed as part of the works. Indicative building envelopes are to be nominated which can be done on advice of an arborist in order to retain the significant trees on the site;
- A preferred site access option has not been selected, therefore the full extent of impact on trees and vegetation is unknown;
- Asset Protection Zone setback distances also need to be factored into the ecological/arboricultural impact assessment;
- NEE staff are in the process of gathering statistics of fauna roadkill along Mona Vale Road from a local expert. This will give an indication of numbers of fauna using the site to attempt to cross Mona Vale Road and will indicate the need for consideration of a solution e.g wallaby-proof fencing to be installed along Mona Vale Road and/or a wildlife crossing solution to be accommodated within the Masterplan.
- Provision of larger lot sizes throughout the majority of the site is required, in order to allow for the planting of canopy trees which is critical to maintaining the habitat and passage of arboreal wildlife.

Additional Comment in relation to Access Option 2 (via 10 Jubilee Avenue and 4 Boundary Street):

A previous development application (N0052/11) for this proposed road included an arboricultural assessment (Footprint Green Pty Ltd 21st January 2010), however the current application does not include this, or any, arboricultural assessment. It is unclear if or how the proposed road design has changed from the previous DA and what impacts this may have on trees and vegetation in the vicinity.

The previous arborist report recommended removal of 85 trees, many of which were determined to be Significant or High in landscape significance. The loss of 85 protected trees from the area is considered to be a significant impact, particularly with the high proportion of trees of either Significant or High landscape significance. It

is envisaged that the current proposal would require removal of a similar number of trees; however the final figure is at this stage unknown.

In terms of visual impact, the proposal is considered to cause a highly detrimental visual impact with a long straight swathe of vegetation and tall canopy trees removed. This combined with the required cut to attain the necessary road gradient will leave a massive empty corridor with high steep embankments which cannot be effectively screened and this will be prominent from a landscape perspective particularly when viewed from Jubilee Avenue.