

10th June 2016

RE: DA for 34 Coasters Retreat – Response to questions relating to Ecological Assessment

Following is a response from the ecologist regarding the neighbors' concerns.

Neighbors' concerns are in italics and ecologist response is in normal font.

- *A landscape plan was not submitted as part of the DA despite various reports undertaking significant plantings and landscaping, and inconsistent details on plans regarding which existing plantings will be retained.*

The site is proposed to retain native vegetation including native grasses and other species currently present. The density of these will be in accordance with the asset protection zone requirements. No formal landscaping is proposed and from an ecological perspective the best outcome is to work with the native plants on-site and regenerate these where ever practical. Protection and maintenance of native plans in-perpetuity is mentioned in the landscaping section in the Ecological Report (Dalby-Ball, 2016).

- *Inconsistent and inaccurate information provided in the Ecology Report and Aboricultural Assessment and Report, including misrepresentation of tree species on site, inaccuracies as to which trees are to be removed, and inconsistencies on whether there are 2 or 3 trees proposed for removal. There is also no reference to extensive planting of exotic trees by the current owner throughout the site ie 20-25 trees, some of which are contrary to the Pittwater Council Tree Preservation Order and against NPWS guidelines to sensitive areas adjacent to a national park, eg fruit trees, jacaranda and Illawarra flame trees.*

Tree Species

Questions of misrepresentation cannot be sustained in the absence of evidence to the contrary. The location of the Red Cedar (whether on the site or neighbouring site) has not influenced the ecological conclusions of this report".

2 or 3 trees to be removed

Yes it is uncertain as to whether 2 or 3 trees would be removed as part of this proposed development. With the available information it is most likely to be two trees as the third tree can be worked around (only impact in the root zone is piers which typically can be placed away from major roots and require only low-level root exposure during works).

A preliminary root mapping exercise was not done as this requires exposing roots, including the fine roots, for the purpose of locating roots and determining if and where a pier could be place that would not damage roots. This can be conducted – at the time of pier placement – rather than twice. Worst case scenario is that there will be no suitable location for a support pier that wouldn't compromise the structural integrity of the tree. If this was the case the tree would have to be removed. This outcome is unlikely as experience with many similar projects has shown there are locations for piers among roots of large trees such that no significant damage need be done to

structural roots. The possibility of tree removal was flagged in the ecology report in the unlikely event that it may need to be removed. This was done because there are often development applications that assume trees will be retained, and then they cannot be, and no assessment of impact is done based on the trees removal. This ecology report assumes the tree may be removed and assesses the significance of impact in general, and on threatened species, based on that assumption.

Reference to planting of exotic trees

The trees referred to do not form part of the Development Application and are a mixture of plantings undertaken before it and relocations of plants present on the block at time of purchase. The owner has noted comments made in submissions and acted on them where appropriate. The Illawarra Flame Tree and the Jacaranda are to be removed from the site.

Reference in the Ecology Report to many commonly found and regularly visible fauna

- *There is no reference in the Ecology Report to many commonly found and regularly visible fauna on the site, eg lyre birds, echidna, pythons and feathertail gliders amongst others.*

"The author of the ecology report is a long-term local resident and is aware of the diversity of fauna on the western foreshores, including Lyrebirds and Echidnas and more rarely Gliders and Pygmy Possums. The species list provided in the body of the report were confined to those species recorded during the surveys – as is common practice - and this does not assume that other species are not present. There is always the assumption made that other species are present (especially the possibility of rare and threatened species and locally significant such as the gliders)".

The Appendix in the Ecology Report has the Bionet Records (10x10km around the site) this has a full list of what has been recorded (and submitted to NPWS) for the Bionet register (NB marine animals such as whales have been omitted).

The owner has indicated he is willing to report sightings of additional flora and fauna to:

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/wildlifeatlas/about.htm#contribute>. Neighbours are encouraged to the same: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/wildlifeatlas/about.htm#contribute>

If you have any questions about this please contact me.

Mia Dalby-Ball



Director

