

REFERRAL RESPONSE – TREES & LANDSCAPING

FILE NO: DA 283/2010/1

ADDRESS: 37 Darling Point Road DARLING POINT 2027

PROPOSAL: Demolition of existing buildings & removal of selected trees

FROM: David Grey - Tree & Landscape Officer

TO: Mrs L Holbert

I refer to the following documents received for this report:

- Statement of Environmental Effects, prepared by Tanner Architects, dated June 2010
- Survey Plan No. 51448, drafted by Hill & Blume, dated 2 July 2009
- Architectural Drawing No. AR.DA.01 to AR.DA. 03, drawn by Tanner Architects, dated May 2010
- Landscape Assessment Report, prepared by Taylor Brammer Landscape Architects, dated 27 November 2009

A site inspection was carried out on the following day: 3 August 2010.

ISSUES

- Proposed removal of sustainable trees

COMMENTS

This proposal calls for the removal of 34 trees from the site with 11 trees retained. Four of the retained trees are proposed to be transplanted. The supplied Taylor Brammer Landscape report notes that many of the trees proposed for removal are of little horticultural value and have been allowed to develop as a result of a low level of landscape maintenance. My site inspection confirmed this observation. There are a number of large specimens of *Ailanthus altissima* **Tree of Heaven** and *Olea europea* var. *africana* **African Olive** on the site. These species are not protected by the Council's Tree Preservation Order (TPO)

During my site inspection I noted a number of errors in the tabulated information of the supplied drawings AR.DA.01 and AR.DA.02. Tree 19 has been identified as a *Glochidion ferdinandii* **Cheese tree** where it is in fact a *Ligustrum lucidum* **Large-leaved Privet**. This is not an important error as the Privet is of low value and not protected by the Councils Tree Preservation Order.

Of greater concern is two of a group of trees all identified as Tree 24 **African Olive** on the rear eastern boundary. I found the tree adjacent to the south east corner of the swimming pool not to be an **African Olive** as indicated but in fact a valuable **Cheese Tree**. A second tree

adjacent to the north east corner of the Tennis Court identified as an **African Olive** is in fact a valuable *Brachychiton acerifolius* **Illawarra Flame tree**. Tree 29 has been identified as a *Syzygium australe* **Brush Cherry Lillypilly** where it is in fact an **African Olive**.

A good specimen of *Ficus rubiginosa* **Port Jackson Fig** Tree 32 stands on the rear north boundary of the site. Although this tree appears to stand on an unobtrusive and sustainable location it is proposed for removal.

I also noted an unusual variety of Banksia tree standing adjacent to the rear north east corner of the building 'Duntrim'. I am not familiar with this particular species, but it is a good specimen. A group of native Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos were feeding on the cones in this tree at the time of my inspection. The tree is not listed in the tabulation but is shown for removal. Its value as a food source to native fauna is demonstrated.

The two existing garden beds to the left and right of the main entry steps to Duntrim contain an eclectic mix of plants. These beds are proposed for complete removal. Some of the specimens within these beds are not protected by the Council's Tree Preservation Order. In particular is a specimen of *Schefflera actinophylla* **Umbrella tree**. This tree should be afforded protection because of its size, its form and its age. Mr Taylor has described a *Phoenix canariensis* **Canary Island Date palm** standing in this bed as a weed species. This is not correct. This is a good specimen that is protected by the TPO. It is proposed for removal. My assessment is that the cumulative amenity value of these garden beds is high and not readily reproduced.

I find the errors and omissions contained in this submission of concern. I can not recommend the removal of a number of valuable trees and landscape elements from this site where there is no proposed construction for the site that necessitates removals and no compensatory landscape is offered to the community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Council's Tree and Landscape Officer has determined that the proposal is not satisfactory in its current form. Refusal of this application is recommended for the following reasons;

- Thirty four trees are proposed for removal without any design detail that illustrates the necessity of these removals.
- No landscape details have been provided that show how the community will be compensated for the loss of the existing landscape amenity.



David Grey
Tree Officer