

Comments on proposal to develop 80 Boronia St Lugarno "Glenlee" (Lot 1, DP 10359) for housing – DA 2021/0181

Opening remarks

The proposal to build more than 30 houses on this site has been made without any consideration to its natural and cultural heritage values, its position on the foreshores of the Georges River, or its contribution to the naturally vegetated view shed as seen from Oatley Park, nor its contribution to the forested corridor from Oatley through Oatley Park and Lugarno to the Georges River National Park. It has not made a competent assessment of the impact that will occur on threatened flora and fauna through the removal and destruction of their habitat nor to the damage that will be caused to terrestrial and estuarine ecosystems that are on and immediately adjacent to the property. It has not undertaken a cultural heritage assessment of features of Aboriginal and European heritage significance despite the site being listed by the National Trust and features of both Aboriginal cultural significance and European cultural significance being known on the site. It has not properly assessed the impacts on the local community.

Current Situation

1. The property at 80 Boronia St Lugarno known as "Glenlee", here after referred to as the property, is a large property over 2.5 hectares in size on the shore of Boggywell Creek (Lime Kiln Bay) on the Georges River.
2. The property falls within the current and proposed Foreshore Scenic Protection Zone in the Georges River draft LEP.
3. The property has been listed on the National Trust Register by the National Trust for its significance to early settler history and Aboriginal cultural heritage.
4. The property includes a significant amount of remnant native vegetation including mature Smooth-barked Apple-Blackbutt-Red Bloodwood open forest which also includes Grey Gum and Sydney Peppermint. A number of these eucalypts are very large with very large crowns and would provide significant resources of nectar, foliage, seed and insects for native birds and mammals, including threatened species. Blackbutt, Grey Gum and Sydney Peppermint are also known Koala food trees.
5. The property is on the shores of the Georges River and is immediately adjacent to mangrove forest and intertidal mudflats which are the habitat of migratory and threatened shorebirds.
6. The property is part of a forested foreshore corridor that extends from Oatley through Oatley Park to Lugarno and Saltpan Creek to the Georges River National Park.
7. The property is part of the natural vistas viewed from lookouts and walking tracks in Oatley Park and Peakurst.
8. A wide diversity of native fauna, including many threatened species, are recorded in the Lugarno region (Bionet Atlas) and may be present at times on the property. See Table 1 in the accompanying spreadsheet.

Impacts of the proposed development on biodiversity and habitats.

1. The loss of a significant and possibly all of the area of native vegetation (PCT 1789 – Smooth-barked Apple-Blackbutt- Red Bloodwood open forest in enriched sandstone soils of the Woronora Plateau) which is the habitat of many species of native birds, mammals, reptiles

and amphibians, including threatened species and their prey. There are several records of the threatened Powerful Owl near the property and the Powerful Owl is known to breed in Oatley Park in Lime Kiln Bay immediately opposite and on the Lugarno peninsula. Powerful Owls have home ranges up to 800 hectares and this property would likely fall within the foraging territories of these breeding Powerful Owls. Prey species, such as the Common Ringtail Possum, Common Brushtail Possum, Grey-headed Flying Fox, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Currawong and others, are likely to be present on the site or use it for foraging. The loss of the majority of the tree canopy will result in a loss of prey resources for the Powerful Owl.

2. The threatened Square-tailed Kite hunts for small birds flying low over the tree canopy. It has been recorded at Illawong, Jewfish Point and Oatley Park and would also be likely to forage across the forests on the Lugarno peninsula. The loss of large mature eucalypt canopies would remove potential foraging habitat of the Square-tailed Kite.
3. The threatened Varied Sittella hunts for insects along the limbs and trunks of large eucalypts and has been recorded in the Georges River National Park. It may at times be present in the Blackbutt forests of the Lugarno peninsula and the loss of large mature Blackbutt would be a loss of foraging resources for the Varied Sittella.
4. The threatened Grey-headed Flying Fox has a camp of thousands of individuals in Myles Dunphy Reserve Oatley at the head of Gungah Bay. The loss of eucalypt canopy and large native Rusty Figs will result in the loss of nectar and fruit resources for the Grey-headed Flying Fox.
5. The threatened Eastern Osprey regularly roosts and has built nests in the mature Blackbutt trees on Gertrude Point on the Lugarno peninsula a short distance from the property. Eastern Osprey regularly forages over Lime Kiln Bay. The mature eucalypt foreshore forests provide important roosting and nesting habitat for the Eastern Osprey.
6. The threatened White-bellied Sea-Eagle also forages around Jewfish, Hurstville and Lime Kiln Bays and regularly roosts in large eucalypts around these bays. The loss of mature eucalypts in foreshore forests is a potential loss of roosting and future nesting sites of the White-bellied Sea-Eagle.
7. Twenty species of microbat including eight threatened species have been recorded in the Lugarno region (Table 1, accompanying spreadsheet) and may at times be present on the property. The majority of microbats and five of the threatened microbats, the Yellow-bellied Sheath-tail-bat, Eastern Coastal Free-tailed Bat, Eastern False Pipistrelle, Southern Myotis and Greater Broad-nosed Bat (present), use hollows, cracks and crevices in eucalypts and other large trees for roosting. The loss of large trees and tree stags with existing hollows will result in an immediate loss of roosting habitat for microbats and the loss of large mature trees, yet to develop hollows will be loss of the future hollow resource within the next one hundred years. Blackbutt eucalypts are known to take over one hundred years to grow large enough to form tree hollows.
8. The threatened nectar feeding parrots, the critically endangered Swift Parrot and threatened Little Lorikeet are recorded in the region and the loss of large eucalypt canopies will result in a loss of significant nectar resources for these species.
9. The threatened Red-crowned Toadlet is recorded in Oatley Park and Mill Creek in the Georges River National Park. The Biodiversity Assessment does not mention the Red-crowned Toadlet. The Red-crowned Toadlet is a winter calling species and is less likely to be

recorded outside this period. The freshwater stream and drip lines along rock shelves provide potential habitat for the Red-crowned Toadlet and its occurrence in the nearby Oatley Park means it should be considered in the assessment. Disturbance to the stream volumes and water quality and impact on driplines would likely impact on the habitat of the Red-crowned Toadlet.

10. The native vegetation on this property forms part of a forested corridor along the Georges River foreshore between Oatley, Oatley Park, Lugarno, Saltpan Creek and the Georges River National Park. Tree canopies do have to be contiguous in order for native vegetation to form an effective corridor. The threatened Koala was historically known to occur in Oatley and they are still recorded regularly on the southern shores of the Georges River. At times of drought and severe bushfire species such as the Koala may use these forested foreshore river corridors for movement and to find refuge habitats. That species such as the Swamp Wallaby are regularly recorded in Oatley Park and also on the Lugarno peninsula, including "Glenlee" (M. Argent *pers. com.*), is evidence of the effectiveness of these foreshore forest corridors. Many birds, including those on migration, are also likely to use these forested river corridors as well as possums, wallabies, echidnas, reptiles and frogs. Currently hundreds to thousands of migrating Yellow-faced and White-naped Honeyeaters are flying along and foraging in the foreshore forests of the Lugarno peninsula. Several hundred were observed to alight in the mature Blackbutt canopies of "Glenlee" and adjacent Heinrich Reserve and others were observed foraging on blossom in flowering Blackbutt along the foreshore. The development of over 30 houses with infrastructure will totally sever the forest foreshore corridor. The Biodiversity Assessment dismissed this impact.
11. The assessment has not considered the dramatic increase in the number of domestic pets from 30 additional houses as potential predators of native fauna such as Swamp Wallabies, echidnas, reptiles and frogs and their impact on the effectiveness of the foreshore forest corridor.

Impacts on adjacent habitats

1. The property immediately borders the mangrove forest and intertidal mudflats of the Georges River which are the habitat of several threatened shorebirds and waterbirds. The development of over 30 houses with associated road infrastructure and drainage to the local creek line along with the removal of almost all native vegetation is likely have severe impacts on stream flows, resulting in massive flows during storms with consequent erosion impacts on mangrove forests and intertidal flats. The intertidal flats are the habitat of the threatened Bar-tailed Godwit and Pied Oystercatcher and the Critically Endangered Eastern Curlew which are regularly recorded on the intertidal flats at the mouth of Lime Kiln Bay. Erosion and pollution impacts from urban runoff will potentially impact on the feeding habitat of these threatened species. The biodiversity assessment failed to consider these impacts.
2. The threatened Black Bittern is recorded from Mill Creek in the Georges River National Park and is potentially present in mangrove forests bordering the property. Mangrove forests form part of the habitat of the Black Bittern and erosion, sedimentation and pollution impacts on the survival of mangrove forests should be considered as part of the assessment of the impacts on the habitat of the Black Bittern.

Cultural impacts

The assessment of the proposal has not assessed the impact on Aboriginal and European cultural heritage despite the property comprising the major part of a National Heritage listing (Lugarno Early Settler Cultural Landscape) for early European Settlement and Aboriginal cultural heritage with features of Aboriginal and European cultural heritage known to be present.

Landscape impacts

1. The assessment t has not adequately assessed the impacts of erosion, sedimentation, pollution and weed invasion on the creek, seepage lines, the native vegetation on the property and the estuarine habitats of adjacent mangrove forests and intertidal flats.
2. The removal of almost all large trees and other native vegetation will impact on the natural vegetated view shed from Oatley Park and residents of Peakhurst Heights.

Social impacts

1. The proposal has not adequately assessed the impact of dramatic increase in traffic and requirements for street parking.
2. The proposed lot size of 550 sq m is not what has been recommended in the draft Georges River LEP for the Foreshore Scenic Protection Area of 700 sq m.
3. Loss of identity, connection and sense of place and respect for our Aboriginal Elders and community and impact on the elderly community with radical irreversible change to a highly significant natural and cultural landscape.

Concluding recommendations

1. This proposal should be completely rejected due to it failing to address environmental, cultural and community concerns.
2. The land should be acquired by Council for inclusion in the Heinrich Reserve along with the restoration of native vegetation and restoration and protection of features of Aboriginal and European cultural heritage.
3. Council should give consideration to enabling a river foreshore walkway connecting to Oatley Park and possibly the old Lugarno ferry crossing.
4. Council should identify and protect important forested river foreshore corridors.

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