

7 December 2017

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JDH Architects  
4 Little Oxford Street Darlinghurst NSW 2010

**Attention: Alison Cox**

Dear Alison

## **Biodiversity Assessment Fairvale High School**

### **1 Introduction**

SLR Consulting was engaged by JDH Architects to undertake a biodiversity assessment to identify potential ecological constraints at Fairvale High School, Thorney Road, Fairfield West. The site currently supports buildings and maintained grounds with planted gardens and rows of trees within and surrounding the periphery of the areas of the site.

### **2 Existing Biodiversity Values**

#### **2.1 Vegetation Communities**

Vegetation on the site has been identified as Urban Native and Exotic Cover (refer to **Attachment A**) in the broad-scale vegetation mapping for the Sydney Metropolitan Area undertaken by the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH 2013). This vegetation type identified on site (OEH 2013) is not a recognised plant community type (PCT) and on this basis, is not likely to provide any important biodiversity values or ecological constraints.

Some of the planted trees are part of local threatened ecological communities such as Castlereagh Shale-Gravel Transition Forest in the Sydney Basin Bioregion, which is listed under the NSW *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (BC Act) and Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). This community has been mapped adjacent to the site at Avery Park (refer to **Attachment A**).

Planted trees species include the local native species Forest Red Gum (*Eucalyptus tereticornis*), Narrow-leaved Ironbark (*Eucalyptus crebra*), Mugga Ironbark (*Eucalyptus sideroxylon*), Broad-leaved Paperbark (*Melaleuca quinquenervia*) and Broad-leaved Apple (*Angophora subvelutina*), and non-indigenous native species such as Tallowwood (*Eucalyptus microcorys*), Brush Box (*Lophostemon confertus*), Lemon-scented Gum (*Corymbia citriodora*) and Argyle Apple (*Eucalyptus cinerea*). Exotic tree species are also present in low abundance including Elm (*Ulmus sp.*) and Camphor Laurel (*Cinnamomum camphora*).

Overall, the vegetation on site is unlikely to pose a substantial constraint to future development considering the highly modified nature of the site with substantial areas of landscaping, hard stand and buildings. There is no evidence of remnant vegetation present on the site, with all trees and shrubs comprising native and exotic planted vegetation.

## **2.2 Threatened species**

One tree species on the northern boundary is the threatened tree species Narrow-leaved Black Peppermint (*Eucalyptus nicholii*), which is indigenous to the New England Tablelands and is commonly used in landscaping throughout the Sydney region. Considering this species is not within natural habitats as part of a viable population in the locality, the presence on site is unlikely to be a substantial ecological constraint. This tree is unlikely to be impacted from the proposed development. Moreover, the site is unlikely to support viable populations of threatened flora species considering the highly modified nature of the habitats.

Threatened fauna species with the greatest potential to utilise the site are highly mobile species including bat and bird species. Microbat species could also potentially forage on site and potentially utilise cavities within existing buildings, culverts and pipes in the locality. Other threatened species likely to forage on site include the Grey-headed Flying-fox, Powerful Owl, Swift Parrot and Dusky Woodswallow. The absence of aquatic habitats excludes the presence of wetland birds and habitat for threatened amphibian species such as the Green and Golden Bell Frog.

## **3 Legislative Requirements**

### **3.1 Biodiversity Assessment Method**

The Biodiversity Assessment Method (BAM) requires a Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR) to be prepared for areas identified on the NSW Biodiversity Values Map (BV Map). The BV Map identifies land with high biodiversity value where the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme applies to all local developments, major projects or the clearing of native vegetation. The vegetation at Fairvale High School has not been identified in the BV Map.

For areas not identified as having 'high biodiversity value' by the NSW BV Map, where clearing of native vegetation is required, area clearing thresholds are identified in the BAM for the application of a small area development. The local land zoning in Fairfield West has a minimum lot size of less than one hectare, which has a maximum area clearing limit of less than or equal to one hectare for application of the small area development module. Considering the planted and landscaped nature of the habitats on the site with a lack of remnant trees and locally indigenous flora species, there will be no removal of any remnant vegetation, with impacts being limited to several planted trees. Therefore there is no requirement for a BDAR for the proposed development.

### **3.2 Trees**

As noted above, trees have been planted throughout the site. Any future development application pertaining to the site will need to consider potential impacts on existing trees, in accordance with applicable legislation and local environmental planning instruments. At the time of writing, new legislation has recently been enacted in NSW with regard to tree protection in "non-rural" areas. Tree clearing in urban areas that is not part of a development application is now regulated under *State Environmental Planning Policy (Vegetation in Non-rural Areas) 2017*. For tree clearing proposed as part of any future development application, Council's development control plan (DCP) should be considered for specific tree impact assessment requirements.

An arboricultural assessment of all trees has been prepared for the proposed development.

### 3.3 Weeds

Several noxious and environmental weeds were recorded in low abundance on the site and these should be appropriately managed to avoid spreading these species throughout the site and wider local area. Priority and environmental weed species observed on the site comprise:

- Cat's Claw Creeper (*Dolichandra unguis-cati*) a vine species recorded growing on the northern boundary fence. This species is a Weed on National Significance which has Regional Recommended Measure for land managers to mitigate the risk of new weeds being introduced to their land, and mitigate the spread of weeds from their land.
- Fireweed (*Senecio madagascariensis*) intermittently spread throughout grassland areas of the site in low abundance. This species is a Weed on National Significance which has a prohibition on dealings and must not be imported into NSW or sold.
- Camphor Laurel (*Cinnamomum camphora*) comprising one larger individual east of the school office.

## 4 Recommendations

The following should be considered for any future redevelopment of the site:

- Priority and environmental weeds present in several locations and should be managed according to latest recommended control methods.
- Any future development application pertaining to the site will need to consider potential impacts on existing trees, in accordance with the arboricultural assessment.

## 5 Conclusion

In conclusion the proposed development is not constrained by the presence of threatened biodiversity, and provided the mitigation measures above are implemented, ecological impacts are likely to be minimal. Additionally, preparation of a BDAR is not recommended for the proposed development due to the following:

- No areas within the site are mapped as having 'high biodiversity value' as identified on the NSW Biodiversity Values Map.
- Vegetation clearing on the site will not exceed the native vegetation clearing thresholds identified in the Biodiversity Assessment Method.
- The proposed development activity is unlikely to have a 'significant impact' on any threatened species, threatened populations or endangered ecological communities listed under the NSW *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* or the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

## 6 References

OEH 2013. The Native Vegetation of the Sydney Metropolitan Area. Office of Environment and Heritage, Sydney.

Please get in touch if you would like further clarification on any of the information presented in this assessment.

Yours sincerely



GILBERT WHYTE  
SLR Associate - Ecology  
(Call at any time on 0409 664 616)

**Attachment A – Vegetation Mapping (OEH 2013)**

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


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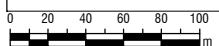
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**LEGEND**

-  Narrow-leaved Black Peppermint (*Eucalyptus nicholii*)
- Vegetation - Sydney Metro v3 2016**
- Dry Sclerophyll Forests**
-  S\_DSF02 Castlereagh Shale-Gravel Transition Forest (NSW PCT No 724)
- Forested Wetlands**
-  S\_FOW06 Cumberland Riverflat Forest (NSW PCT No 835)
- Other**
-  URE/N Urban Native and Exotic Cover
- NSW EPBC Vegetation - Sydney Basin Bioregion**
-  Cumberland Plain Woodland/ Shale Gravel Forest (possible)
-  Subject Site



Scale: 1:4,000  
GDA 1994 MGA Zone 56

07/12/2017  
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