

LODGED BY:

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SUBMISSION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, INDUSTRY AND
DEVELOPMENT RE SSD-10321

OBJECTIONS TO THE APPROVAL OF DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION
FOR SITE DESIGNATED 87-89 JOHN WHITEWAY DRIVE, GOSFORD

1. PRIMARY OBJECTIONS

1.1 THE BULLDOZING, AND “CUT AND TEAR” EXCAVATION WORK PROPOSED BY THE APPLICANT OF SOME 3m OR MORE OF SOLID SANDSTONE, ARE A SERIOUS DANGER TO THE STABILITY OF THE 30 m CLIFF FACES OF NEIGHBOURING PROPERTIES WHICH ARE ALREADY KNOWN TO BE FRAGILE AND WITH NUMEROUS WEDGES AND IN ADDITION THERE ARE LOCATIONS WITH LOOSE SHALE BANKS OF SOME HEIGHT.

1.2 ANY CLIFF FAILURES/SLIPS THAT FALL ON EXISTING PARKING AREAS AND BUILDINGS WILL BE A DANGER TO PEOPLES LIVES AND DO MILLIONS OF DOLLARS OF PROPERTY DAMAGE TO VEHICLES AND STRUCTURES.

1.3 TO MITIGATE RISK EFFECTIVELY, ALL BUILDINGS SHOULD BE CONSTRUCTED ON TOP OF THE EXISTING SANDSTONE WITHIN THE BUILDABLE AREA AND BASEMENT EXCAVATION TOTALLY BANNED.

These primary objections are based on experience of the fragility of the very high sandstone cliffs and of the high and steep shale banks.

In 2001/2 soon after Mariners View (Lots 4 & 5) was occupied, the Council, in recognition of falling rock dangers, issued a written edict to the Body Corporate that fenced garden areas at the base of the cliffs were to be kept locked to prevent resident access.

In 2005 the Council took geotechnical advice on its shale banks, in a Bush Reserve Lot which is part of the Precinct, that were a danger to the Mariners View property and spent \$100,000 on remediation and risk mitigation.

In 2009 a comparatively small sandstone wedge at the top of the 30m cliff was examined by the same geotechnical advisors as utilized by the Council. The advisors recommended to the Body Corporate for safety reasons that the wedge be broken up and removed. Experienced contractors engaged by the advisors used an elevated platform from which to operate pneumatic machinery and the moment the vibration from the machinery was applied to the wedge, the whole wedge SLIPPED. I stress that this outcome had not been foreseen by the geotechnical advisors and it identifies the fragility and risks that exist.

Such risks were foreseen when a master plan and a subdivision plan for the Precinct and recorded on land titles and in a special Development Control Plan No. 57 which has been carried forward in consolidated DCPs up to the present.

The John Whiteway Drive Precinct land titles and DCP have specific geotechnical requirements when addressing proposed developments. There is lengthy section regarding Buildable Areas in the documentation and briefly and specifically a development in BUILDABLE AREAS for all existing and proposed developments must be supported “comprehensively” by, I quote:

- A geotechnical survey
- An assessment of the stability risks
- An assessment of measures for minimization of risk

The Geotechnical report does NOT meet these comprehensive requirements.

Mariners View knows of NO surveys of the cliffs on its property by the Engineers, much less the required assessments of “Cut and Tear” vibration risks to the cliffs.

The JK Geotechnics report on exhibition give no confidence that that firm is adequately experienced.

Unsubstantiated assertions are made:

“Given the relative distance of the proposed development from neighbouring properties we do not expect the vibrations generated by rock breaking and pneumatic equipment to be of concern. “

Yet that part of the report goes on to significantly qualify those assertions.

For example:

“If during excavation with the hydraulic impact hammers, vibrations are found to be excessive or there is concern, then alternative lower vibration emitting equipment, such as rock saws, rock grinders or smaller hammers may need to be used. The use of a rotary grinder or rock sawing in conjunction with excavator ripping presents an alternative low vibration excavation technique, however, productivity is likely to be slower.”

These alternative excavation methodologies should be tested NOW and the vibration level recorded BEFORE this development application is considered.

2. FURTHER OBJECTIONS

2.1 OBJECTION IS MADE TO ANY PROPOSALS FOR REMODELLING THE RIDGE LINE IN NON-BUILDABLE AREAS.

The property owners need to provide written confirmation that the ridge line will be preserved and the bush cover enhanced, rather than destroyed.

Such outcrops and the related bush cover are a natural feature of the Brisbane Water ridgeline and the Precinct rules and the land title make it plain that the ridgeline must be left inviolate.

Lodged by Robert Allen, Strata Committee member of SP 64085, after many years of experience in Western NSW mining.

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