

Submission on Development Application 930839, Lot 1 on RP157839, Parish of Oxley, 154 Horizon Drive, Westlake, 4074

**Response from Centenary and District Environmental Action Incorporated
(formerly the Centenary Riverfront Advisory Committee Incorporated)**

18 March 2006

To: The Chief Executive Officer
Brisbane City Council
G P O Box 1434,
Brisbane, QLD 4001

From: Shealagh Savage, President, on behalf of Centenary and District Environmental Action Incorporated (formerly Centenary Riverfront Advisory Committee Incorporated)
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The Centenary and District Environmental Action Incorporated (CDEA) is a community environmental group which focuses on protection of the natural environment, public parkland and recreational areas and the mitigation of urban development impacts within the Centenary and adjoining suburbs.

It was formerly the Centenary Riverfront Advisory Committee and was formed in 1996 as an advisory committee to the local councillor.

Community Use

The block of land is currently designated as Community Use. If the owners no longer feel there is a need for a school there, they need to investigate other community uses and consult fully with the local community. The only request for expressions of interest was a very small advert in the back of a local newspaper which the majority of local residents would not have seen.

CDEA submits that, as continuing Community Use, the land be a community Bushland Park for the following reasons:

- It is the only area of native bushland left in the district other than limited riverside bushland.
- When the Centenary suburbs were laid out originally, only 4% was allowed as parkland instead of the minimum 10% now required by BCC. This is a golden opportunity to help to bring the percentage of parkland up to the required minimum area.
- The bushland is located opposite the Peter Lightfoot Oval. These playing fields are heavily used by sporting and non-sporting organisations and individuals.
- A bushland component would be a welcome addition to this public open space, both for community use and as wildlife habitat.
- Walking is the most popular recreational exercise in SE Queensland and with the current population overweight problem, there is a need for recreational pathways for walking, jogging and cycling. A recreational pathway through the site would be both popular and of community benefit.
- The sporting park provides a geographical and open space connection from the bushland covered Catholic School Site, across the McLeod Golf Course, to the bushland next to the Brisbane River. Thus it is connected to the larger ecosystem of the Brisbane River corridor.
- The Catholic School Site bushland is still a place where smaller wildlife manages to hold out in the suburbs. Until very recently there was a mob of wallabies that lived there. It is also used by male Koalas who go searching for mates around October. Previously, it had Koalas.
- There are still Wallabies in the bushland next to the river. Also in that bushland are Echidnas, Water Rats, Bandicoots, Ringtail and Brushtail Possums, Flying Foxes, Bats, Goannas, Water and Bearded Dragons, Carpet Pythons, other snakes and reptiles, and approximately 90 bird species. It is likely that some or all of these occur in the Catholic School Site bushland. Platypus are regularly seen in the waterways of the golf course.

Protected Vegetation Area

Vegetation Protection Order

The site is protected by a Vegetation Protection Order – All Vegetation (VPO-VE)

Natural Assets Local Law

Under the NALL the site is designated as Significant Native Vegetation.

CDEA submits that as a protected vegetation area, BCC should support its own vegetation designation and legislation and continue to protect this site for the future.

Significant Remnant Urban Bushland Asset

Remnant Urban Bushland

The fact that the Catholic School Site carries a piece of Remnant Urban Bushland makes it significant in itself. These remnants are vital in that they support mobile and arboreal species of wildlife as well as supporting the diversity and integrity of local native vegetation.

The bushland is remarkably free of weeds which makes it even more significant.

The area is in fact, a ready-made bushland park requiring minimal cleaning up and minimal ongoing maintenance, surely a big bonus with the high costs of landscape construction and the uncertain water supply.

CDEA submits that this area of Remnant Urban Bushland is a valuable community and environmental asset and should be retained as such, not cleared for development.

Eucalypts as Habitat

It is not possible to have Eucalypts near houses because of the species' survival habit of self-pruning and dropping large branches. However, Eucalypts are vital to local wildlife as a source of food and also for the provision of hollows for breeding. The hollows are particularly important as they are the make or break factor in the survival of many species which cannot breed without them and die out when there are none.

Most of the Eucalypts in the surrounding area have been already cleared, making those remaining in this remnant crucial to the ongoing existence of the colourful parrots that give the Centenary suburbs so much of their character.

CDEA submits that the Eucalypts be protected for the sustainability of local wildlife.

Residential Development

The proposed residential development is extremely dense with 90 units and their access roads planned for the site. The bulk earthworks plan shows that almost the entire site will have earthworks over it including a large part of the area designated for open space on the south side.

This means that every bit of vegetation in this large area will be completely cleared.

CDEA suggests that the developers' elevational drawings of houses showing backdrops of tall Eucalypt trees is misleading. There may be some trees on neighbouring properties on the SW boundary of the site and a few in the southern portion of the site, but that's all. There will be no space for any medium to large trees to be planted in the future between the units in the proposed development as the blocks are very small and the density of units very high.

The area the developers propose to keep as open land with retained vegetation, is located in the southern area of the site where there is the least amount of trees. Some years ago there was a major flooding problem of water flowing from the Catholic School Site onto the residential estate to the south. Council built a bund along the southern boundary of the site which entailed clearing some of the original vegetation.

The rear areas of large lots in the neighbouring development of 'Sandringham' were required in their development conditions to be retained as bushland for fauna habitat on the strength of being connected to the bushland on the Catholic School Site. However, the corridor retained under this development application is totally inadequate both in width and the presence of large trees as it has been previously cleared for flood mitigation measures by BCC.

CDEA submits:

- that the open space retained in the proposed development will not reflect the biological diversity of the site and is inadequate;
- that in view of the large number of people planned to live in the estate and the minimal size of the house lots, the amount of open space provided is totally inadequate; and
- that the large number of people living on the site will exacerbate the lack of open space in the suburb and put even more pressure on the already heavily used parkland in the district.
- that the corridor connecting the VPO protected land in 'Sandringham' to the golf course and riverside bushland is totally inadequate in terms of both corridor size and the density and quality of the vegetation.

Sustainability

Development assessment of this application comes under the Integrated Planning Act 1997 which seeks "to achieve ecological sustainability by ...managing the process by which development occurs and ... managing the effects of development".

CDEA submits that the development does not achieve ecological sustainability, in fact it destroys the ecological values of the site and seriously impacts on the ecological sustainability of the district.

Water Restrictions

Water supply

CDEA submits that Brisbane cannot support the population it has already. How will it support the construction, establishment and ongoing demands for water by this development and its future inhabitants?

Local Plant Species

The site contains some plant species ideal for local garden use. With the prospect of ongoing droughts and water restrictions, people could use the bushland to learn of other attractive plant species suitable for garden use. Some of the more unusual shrubs and flowering plants growing and thriving on the site include Plectranthus, Twiggy Myrtle, Branched Wire Grass, Blue Trumpet, Yellow Buttons, Goodenia, Wild May, Crinkle Bush, Wire Lily, Dogwood, Love Flower, Bootlace Bark, Grass Trees and Sago Flower.

CDEA submits that the community should be learning from the bushland on to how to have sustainable and attractive gardens with the added bonus of providing appropriate wildlife habitat.

Conclusion

CDEA submits that, for all the reasons noted above, the development application no. 930839 should be rejected.

Thank you for the opportunity of making this submission.
Yours sincerely,

Shealagh Savage,
President, Centenary and District Environment Action Incorporated (CDEA)