

From: Architect Gerard Siero [mailto:siero.architect@telstra.com]
Sent: Monday, 12 March 2012 10:44 PM
To: Craig Pursey
Cc: Priscilla Broadbent; Ian Weir, PhD, BArch UWA, BA (Ind Des) CUT; Daniela Simon, RAIA; Nathan McQuoid
Subject: DA 108 Magpie Rise, Short Beach, Bremer Bay - Jerramungup Reference: A100834, P11/005 - qualified objection to building height

20120312

Attention Mr Craig Pursey, Planning Officer

The CEO
Shire of Jerramungup
Via Email

Dear Craig,

DA 108 Magpie Rise, Short Beach, Bremer Bay - qualified objection

Further to my correspondence of some years ago to Council regarding Lot 30 Ridgeview Drive and the debacle of the heights above natural ground there, I object to this project on a similar basis of not complying with the intent of the subdivision plan to protect the landscape integrity of the site and the visual impact of the development occasioned by its height.

The objections and reservations I have are not about this proposal's architecture, per se, but its height vis a vis the "Natural Ground Levels".

I have previously inquired in writing to Council as to whether the project at Lot 30 Ridgeway could and/or would set precedents that could or would enable proponents of future projects, or Council itself, to circumvent the intentions of the Short Beach subdivision approval regarding limiting the heights of buildings in this "protected landscape" to approximately the height of the Agonis Woodland tree canopy. The height protection aspect of the subdivision plan is critical if the place is not to be just another beach side rural residential development, visually dominated by buildings.

That fact that most previously built houses at Short Beach seem to have made a habit of breaching this rule, either from the start or by not building precisely to the approved plans in no way justifies continuing this dishonest and subversive practice which corrupts the planning intent of the approved estate.

Though it has been several years, I have as yet received no reasoned or argued or indeed any real response at all to that correspondence, which, I understood, had been referred to the Shire's planning consultants of the time for comment. Not a particularly satisfactory outcome, considering that this **question of building heights in the Short Beach estate is critical to protecting landscape values** that are being ongoingly eroded, it seems, by a thousand cuts, with almost every project that gets built.

The questions I ask Council to consider in reviewing the Lot 108 proposal include:

1 I understand that **the "recommended" height in the approved Short Beach subdivision policy is actually 5.5 metres**, not 5 m as stated in your letter dated 20120221.

2 What are/were the **original contours** of this part of the the site? **Only these constitute natural ground.**

3 The contours on drawing A2 1023-01 show a mound at the building location, though no contour interval is shown.

This omission makes the drawing difficult if not impossible to interpret properly as one cannot determine the actual gradients or heights.

If what the drawing shows is a man-made mound, then the contour plan does NOT show "Natural Ground", and therefore may not be used for this application.

4 All structures on the site ought comply with the height limit, especially the large shed.

5 To resolve these issues, and given the relatively small size of the mound, would it not be reasonable to cut the top off this mound in order to lower the proposed building to within or closer to the the correct levels above "Natural Ground" for landscape protection purposes? This could lower the overall height of the building by 3 or 4 or more of the unspecified contours on the above cited drawing, depending on where natural ground is proven to be, but need not spell loss of views. Views are, of course, the most common reason people have for wanting to raise building heights in the hope of increasing their enjoyment of views and raising possible future resale values as views are, no doubt, the most valued aspects of these properties.

6 The Subdivision guide plan showed broad contours for the overall site. On lot 108 it indicated a widening of the contour at the envelope. It is possible that a slight mound existed here in the building envelope - but one wonders if it would be as high as the undimensioned contour plan could suggest? Such small, localised high points have been observed elsewhere in the estate.

7 Before this application proceeds, useable information regarding the landform contours and the original contours of the land ought be obtained and provided for the information of Council and neighbours in assessing/commenting on the proposal.

8 Next the proponents' drawings - especially the elevations - ought be modified to reflect what the actual original "NATURAL GROUND" contours are found to be, and to accurately portray the scale and height of the building above NATURAL GROUND.

9 Given the slope of the site, it would be a simple matter to lower the building to reflect something close to the 5.5 m roof heights above NATURAL GROUND/tree canopy height. The roof heights shown on drawing A2 1023-05 South East Elevation 3, show about 7.6 m between the basement and the roof peak, cumulatively, while dimensions from roof to actual ground do not seem to be indicated.

Landscape Values:

In most places where development happens, the landscape is eventually buried under our buildings and roads, modified almost beyond recognition. The Short Beach estate was established in an area of beautiful and visually sensitive landscape. Recognising that, the proponents sought to apply a principle of limiting roof heights to the tree canopy, so that the natural beauty of the place could for once take precedence over human wants.

To want a good view from one's house is a reasonable ambition. To obtain it by breaching the landscape canopy protection intentionally designed into this subdivision is simply not a valid way to achieve it. To capture views is part of the challenge for the architect. It is difficult, often very. Sometimes it is almost impossible - if one does not think outside the square. (Perhaps a roof terrace or roof garden would compensate for main levels views of this house being a just a little lower? There are no privacy and overlooking issues.)

With each house for which the Shire of Jerramungup receives an application, and for each building that is built at Short Beach, whether in accord with approved drawings, or in breach of them as some are, the Shire of Jerramungup and the Community is choosing the end quality of the landscape of Short Beach/Point Henry, either as a place where people come to experience **a landscape reflective of the natural wonder of the Fitzgerald Biosphere, or as just another beach-side town** where, between bits of nature, a headland here, a copse there, there sits just another vista of houses, not so much a place to retreat to an experience of nature, as of **suburban sprawl reaching out its tentacles to Bremer Bay, Short Beach and our world heritage Biosphere.**

I, for one, want to see the balance here at Short Beach shift to favour the landscape and nature over individual human's projects. People constantly seek to dominate their little part the landscape for personal pleasure or monetary advantage, which effectively condemns the natural landscape to death by a thousand cuts.

In summary:

- 1 The drawings show an overall height of 7.6 metres not 5.5 as implied in the letter. (Elev. 3, South East) This is too high.
- 2 Natural ground level has not been established or shown.
- 3 This is further compounded by the building being built upon what appears to be a mound, not natural ground.
- 4 We request Council ensure that natural ground level is preserved.
- 5 We request that Council ensure that the approved design is built in accordance with the approved documents and that construction or design creep does not occur in its realisation.

6 In a landscape protection zone, landscape and ecological values ought outweigh all other considerations.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and for your consideration of the issues raised herein.

Gerard

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