

Barry & Yolanda Seach
62 Guntawong Rd
Rouse Hill NSW 2155
30th April 2013

To the NSW Growth centres Commission
and the NSW Planning Department

plan_comment@planning.nsw.gov.au

Dear Sirs,

Submission on: **Cudgegong Road Station Draft Structure Plan**

My wife and I have lived at the above address since January 2002 and we are concerned that decisions are about to be made, under pressure from the Historic Houses Trust of NSW, regarding subdivision and development for housing in the Cudgegong Road area and in the Riverstone East planning precinct, such as restricting any subdivision near the Rouse Estate to just 2,000m² (half acre) blocks. This would rob us of the value of our land in future sub-division.

I object to the Historic Houses Trust being able to impose any conditions whatsoever on our land at the above address on at least the following grounds.

- My father was an Aboriginal man descended from the Darug nation and my mother's ancestry was from English and German immigrants. My only still living aunty, my father's youngest sister, is a proud Aboriginal woman.
- When my father, my aunty and their siblings were children, they were subject to weekly inspection by the "government man" (from the Aboriginal Protection Board?) who would steal the children from my part Aboriginal grandmother if there was no food in my grandmother's house when he came. So even though my grandmother was very poor, the children could never eat the last food in the house, in case the government man came and took the children away.
- I claim my Aboriginal heritage from that of my father and I identify myself a Darug man in recognition of my father and his father and so on. I do that so that my children and grandchildren will be aware of their own Aboriginal heritage and remember that our Aboriginal ancestors lived sustainably in their country, this land we call Australia for over 40,000 years.
- When I was a child, my father would often take me with him on short work trips in his red flat-bed truck on weekends and during school holidays. Those trips were special to me and many were to the Rouse Hill / Vineyard area, Windsor and Richmond, where my father would point out important landmarks, like the Windsor Road "Half-Way House" (now the Mean Fiddler Pub) and the Rouse family farm areas, and others, and of course the Vineyard weighbridge where he got his truck weighed for jobs.
- On our trips my father would teach me about staying safe in the Australian bush, which he loved. He told me of his dislike of people who did not keep the bush cleared of fire hazards, like Aboriginals had done since the beginning. My father liked the way the Rouse farm areas and most other farms we saw were kept clear of scrub and too many trees.
- My father was especially scathing of the so called "National Parks" which, because the scrub was not cleared, were allowed to burn with great ferocity every few years, proving (in his words) "the 'National Parks mob' had no idea how to care for the bush properly, or keep it safe for animals or people."
- I know my father knew first hand the dangers of fire in the bush, because I remember he would go with the other men in summer to fight bushfires near our holiday home and as he also told me, he had helped fight bushfires before I was born.
- History Professor Bill Gammage from ANU in his multi-prize winning 2012 book, "The Greatest Estate on Earth" explains how Aborigines used fire to keep the land mostly

cleared of scrub and trees and particularly, fire safe for their families and productive for food. Professor Gammage's thesis is not new to me, I learned it from my father.

- I cannot but presume that Richard Rouse chose to take up his land grant in this area where he did, because it was 'good grazing land', largely cleared of trees and scrub when he found it. Just like the land chosen by Arthur Phillip for Government House in Parramatta. 'Rose Hill' as he called it, had been repeatedly cleared with firing every few years by the Burramuttagal, as was the common practice of the Darug and most other Aboriginal people, over many thousands of years.
- I believe that the land granted to Richard Rouse was taken from the family groups of Darug Aboriginal people who lived in the area. Therefore, celebrating what Rouse built here, is celebrating the dispossession of my Darug ancestors.
- The appearance of the present 'so called' Cumberland Plain Woodland in Rouse Hill is deceptive, because most of the trees date from around the period of major subdivision and are only about 50 years old or less. There are very few old trees in the whole of Rouse Hill which would predate the First Fleet.
- Use of the recent photographs I have seen on the Planning Department website to explain the vistas from the Rouse Hill farm is also deceptive, because they show the way it is now after many decades of neglect and do not show the land as my Aboriginal ancestors kept it for thousands of years.
- The numbers of visitors to the Rouse Hill House and Farm property are mostly quite small, I drive past their car park often including at weekends and their car park usually has only a few cars or the place is shut. It must lose a lot of money.
- Most other NSW historic houses, apart from the Parramatta Government House, have to just put up with what has been built around them. They do not have to preserve a "vista". Why should the Rouse Hill Estate get special treatment at the expense of its neighbours, unless the NSW Government pays for that, by buying surrounding properties at proper prices, on the open market.
- Remember, the Historic Houses Trust has decided not to restore the Rouse Hill House to original condition, this leaves the building in an increasingly decrepit condition. And for example, the public are not allowed upstairs, as the upper floor timbers are too weak.
- As an engineer with many years experience in the building industry, I am sure that the Rouse Hill House will in time self destruct, as have so many other neglected buildings, from the usual structural degradation mechanisms, like rusted out nails, extreme drying of timber, crumbling rubble walls after earth tremors, ultra-violet damage, weathering, water leakage, etc.

My Aboriginal brothers and sisters of times past were driven away from their traditional land in the Rouse Hill area by a well armed foreign power, the English, and their land given to others.

Therefore at least for the reasons given above, if the NSW Government imposes such conditions upon my land, my ancestry as a Darug man would make me feel doubly cheated, by a Government that was never invited to come to this place by its original owners and has imposed upon them.

My wife Yolanda Seach of the above address, supports this objection.

Yours sincerely,

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