



**SYDNEY  
LIVING  
MUSEUMS**

2 November 2015

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Dear Sir / Madam

## **RE: GREATER MACARTHUR LAND RELEASE INVESTIGATION**

Sydney Living Museums (SLM) is a statutory authority of the NSW government, operating under the Historic Houses Act 1980. SLM Endangered Houses Fund owns 'Beulah', 767 Appin Road, Gilead. This property is within the area being considered by the Greater Macarthur Land Release Investigation (GMLR).

SLM provide the following comments after a review of the Greater Macarthur Land Release Investigation. The comments are intended to assist the Department of Planning and Environment in its investigations into potential for urban development of the Menangle Park and Mt Gilead area.

### **PRINCIPAL ISSUES**

Beulah and other historic local rural holdings are significant sites that present real opportunities as place makers and to build character of the new residential areas. These assets have the potential to become local identifiers for the community.

The agricultural zoning surrounding these historic places should be retained to maintain rural landscape breaks between future residential areas. Existing agricultural properties, including Beulah, Meadowvale and Mt Gilead provide this opportunity. A better outcome would be achieved by creating larger lots near historic rural properties, with smaller lot sizes and denser housing developments occurring further away.

We note that the preliminary strategy indicates a proposed Village Centre and Bus Priority Corridor at Gilead located on the Beulah property. This is too close to the significant historic building clusters of Beulah, Meadowvale and Mt Gilead properties.

Furthermore, the creation of the proposed infrastructure in this location would require the removal of significant areas of remnant bushland trees from the Beulah property.

### **AREAS REQUIRING PROTECTION**

It is understood that the GMLR will consider amendments to the SEPP (Sydney Region Growth Centres) 2006. Our recommendations are that any amendments to the SEPP should not enable developments (including, residential subdivision, infrastructure development or change of land use) on any areas that contain or are associated with:

- Aboriginal heritage;
- areas and items of historical significance (including consideration of locally, state wide and national significance);
- areas and items of significance listed on the State Heritage Register;

- Ecologically Endangered Community (fauna and or flora);
- areas of biodiversity;
- wildlife corridors and conservation lands; and
- Biobanking sites.

The Greater Macarthur area generally retains its rural landscape. The planning of residential development and associated infrastructure has the potential to diminish the rural character and permanently change the local land use. The loss of the rural context will inhibit an understanding of the significance that this area played in the early rural activities that supported the development of greater Sydney.

We suggest that layout and design of future residential development should:

- Enable the retention of key views and vistas to and from local rural holdings, including 'Beulah', 'Mt Gilead' and 'Camden Park'. For example maintain views of the Menangle Valley from the ridgeline to the west of the Beulah farmhouse; and
- Retain a landscape buffer zone around historic properties, where development is precluded, to prevent residential development encroaching on curtilage and maintain an understanding of rural functions and setting of these places.

### **SUGGESTED CONSIDERATIONS**

The vision for the GMLR acknowledges that facilitating the delivery of new homes must protect the environment and natural resources. To achieve these objectives, it is suggested that the following considerations inform the development and implementation of the housing strategy:

- Proposed residential and infrastructure development must be carefully integrated to minimise impact on the landscape. This would include precluding residential development from ridgelines, creek lines and fauna corridors. These places could be utilised as open space within residential development to maintain some 'green' area within new residential releases;
- Proposed 'developable land' should not be assigned to any areas of ecological, cultural or heritage significance; and
- Proposed development should not encroach on the Upper Canal, which is an important water supply source for greater Sydney; and
- Proposed development should not impact on or increase stormwater flowing into Woodhouse Creek, which has struggled to cope with existing storm water discharge during recent storm events. This may include precluding development from a designated riparian zone around creek lines.

We suggest that the following considerations inform the development of any future strategy:

- Retain significant areas of the agricultural land in the Greater Macarthur area, to enable a clear understanding of the land uses in the area that supported the development of greater Sydney. The retention of the agricultural land uses also ensures that the historical landscape character, amenity and ecological values are maintained;
- Retain the current open space/agricultural zoning of areas that adjoin 'Beulah' and other rural properties;
- Retain areas with buffer zones that are designated as 'High Constraint Biodiversity' and 'Ecologically Endangered Community';
- Retain and protect existing bushland and reserve areas with adequate buffer zones which contribute to the local landscape and wildlife corridors; and
- Retain the Scenic Hills preserve and extend the green belt through to the Mt Gilead Hills, ensuring that the hills screen suburban development and maintain district views towards landscaped open space.



## **SUGGESTED STRATEGIES**

We suggest that the following actions be undertaken as part of any future strategy:

- Undertake a review of zoning to facilitate the retention and integrity of historic places, historic building, surviving colonial rural properties, curtilage to the properties and fauna corridors;
- Undertake a detailed study of all heritage items and their settings;
- Undertake an assessment of the impact of proposed development on the curtilage to any of all local heritage items. This may include the provision of an appropriate buffer (where development would be precluded) between new development and curtilage boundaries;
- Undertake an assessment of proposed bus priority corridor and town centres and their potential adverse potential impact on views and landscape character and the fauna corridor that it crosses;
- Undertake an assessment of the proposed upgrade of Appin Road, considering the impact on the historical alignment and significant trees that adjoin the road;
- Undertake flood studies to ensure that future residential areas do not generate runoff volumes that cannot be accommodated by existing stormwater infrastructure and local waterways;
- Identify significant view corridors to/from historic items/places and seek to have these areas protected from residential development e.g. the view from Camden Park to the Mt Gilead windmill;
- Identify existing and potential wildlife corridors and seek to have these areas protected from residential development, particularly the corridor used by koalas between the Georges and Nepean Rivers, which crosses Beulah and Mt Gilead along Woodhouse Creek; and
- Consider areas of greater housing density in some areas to allow lower density and retention of the agricultural landscape and open space around historical rural holdings, along ridgelines creek lines and fauna corridors.

SLM welcome any opportunities to work with the Department of Planning and Environment on the strategy and action plan for the Greater Macarthur area.

Please contact the undersigned or Elisha Long, Head of Heritage if you have any questions regarding this submission.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ian Innes', followed by the date '4.11.2015'.

Ian Innes  
**Director Heritage & Collections**  
**Sydney Living Museums**