



The General Manager
Parramatta City Council

Dear Sir

DA 498/2019 for 36 Orchard Rd Beecroft. - Demolition of existing structures, tree removal and construction of a double storey 60 place child care centre.

The Beecroft Cheltenham Civic Trust has been approached by a number of Beecroft residents to lodge an objection to this proposed development. The Trust objects to the proposed development for a child care centre on Orchard Road Beecroft on the following grounds.

The large Sydney Blue Gum located on the adjoining property.

Tree No 8 has been identified in the arborist report as a healthy and significant Sydney Blue Gum. This tree is on the adjoining property and must be protected. The arborist report states the proposed building for the child care centre impacts 77.58 sqm or 16.49% of the tree's APZ. The Trust must assume that to obtain such a degree of accuracy, the calculation is taken from the architect's building footprint. The Trust must also assume, without carrying out the calculations that the building footprint quoted is for the larger basement area as well. However excavation for the building footprint will extend past the building by at least another 0.4 metres so the total excavated area in the tree's APZ is expected to increase the total area of excavation to just under 20% of the APZ. This is becoming a significant percentage, especially on a sloping site where strong root protection is important.

The arborist report also states a condition, namely, *Remaining areas of the tree's TPZ within the site will need to be retained at existing soil levels and protected during work.* Because the proposed site has a substantial slope there will need to be modifications carried out to the natural surface of the children's outdoor play area. The APZ of the Blue Gum covers approximately 30% of the outdoor area. The architectural and landscape plans show the landscaped with various playground items. The plans do not appear to indicate terracing but this has to be clarified. The impact of the proposed soft and hard landscaping will likely to have an additional adverse impact on the tree's APZ. As a result, up to 40% or even 50% of the tree's APZ could be affected. Therefore there is a serious potential conflict between the long term health of the tree 8 and the proposed development.

Another problem that has not been addressed is related to the nature of the Blue Gum with its propensity to drop branches. This is a serious safety issue that the arborist report alluded to but did not elaborate on. Even if protective coverings are installed to counter this risk there will always be a risk, whether real or perceived that will not go away. Also if the tree is placed under stress over time the likelihood of more branches falling is increased.

The tree must be protected as it is a Blue Gum. The tree also belongs to the adjoining owner which means the childcare centre has no absolute control over the tree. Therefore there will always be a unsatisfactory conflict. The Trust has experienced this conflict before with the child care centre in Wongala Crescent adjacent to the Beecroft shopping centre. A large Blue was conditioned to remain as part of the consent, but within 5 years the tree was removed due to safety concerns. Young children and Blue Gums do not mix well.

The slope of the overall location in Orchard Road

There is a substantial slope across the site. While it may not be a major problem having a sloping outdoor area is not ideal for young children to run around. There is likely to pressure on the child care centre to terrace the rear outdoor area over time, which will be detrimental to the health of the Blue Gum.

Road safety

The slope of the area means that Orchard Road is not level and has an inconvenient grade that will create difficulty for parents getting young children in and out of vehicles if they park out the front in the street. There is a high probability that many parents will park in the street as there are only 7 car spaces available on site, parents are often in a hurry and they are likely to difficulty seeing inside the underground carpark to check if there are any spaces available as they enter the driveway. So many parents will simply park in the street.

The volume of traffic on Orchard Rd is not so much an issue but what will be a potential road safety problem will be vehicles parking on both sides of the road to drop off or pick up their children. Also the grade of the road is a factor that influences speed, with vehicles south bound turning into Orchard from Murray Farm gathering speed coming down the hill. Also, often the pickup periods are more concentrated then the morning drop offs because there is often a function on in the afternoon but also it often takes longer to pick children than it takes to drop them off.

Therefore it is a combination of road safety factors that combine to create poor road safety situation.

In summary, the Trust seriously questions the suitability of this site as a child care centre.

Overall, child safety is the governing factor. Therefore the Trust does not support this development proposal and request refusal, as it is clearly not in the public interest for the reasons given above.

Yours sincerely,

Ross Walker OAM
President
Beecroft Cheltenham Civic Trust

4 September 2019