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Our Ref: Preliminary Assessment - 350 & 354 Fig Tree Pocket Road

28 March 2007

Graeme Bews
Town Planning Manager
Jones Flint & Pike Pty Ltd
PO Box 3634
South Brisbane QLD 4101

Dear Graeme,

RE: Fauna Assessment – 350-354 Fig Tree Pocket Road, Fig Tree Pocket

As a result of my preliminary desktop and field investigations, I provide a set of briefing notes in relation to the site and the proposed development plan.

Property Description

- 350 Fig Tree Pocket Road, Fig Tree Pocket – Lot 7 on RP3434; and
- 354 Fig Tree Pocket Road, Fig Tree Pocket – Lot 8 on RP3434

Terminology

- *Subject site* refers to the land subject to the development application described above.
- *Endangered, Regionally Vulnerable, Vulnerable, Rare, Culturally Significant or Common* refers to the conservation status of a species in accordance with the provisions of the Queensland *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (NC Act) and its regulations and amendments, and/or the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).
- *Species of city-wide significance* refers to those taxa regarded as significant at a City-wide level and listed under the *Natural Assets Planning Scheme Policy of the Brisbane City Plan (2000)*.

Preliminary Desktop Assessments

This comprised a review of the following:

- JF&P Proposal Plans B2796-02 (1 December 2006) and B2796-02D (19 March 2007).
- MapView QDRM&E 2002 aerial photography and Google Earth imagery.
- *Brisbane City Plan 2000*, specifically: the Natural Assets Planning Scheme Policy; Biodiversity Code; and Waterways and Wetlands Codes.
- Brisbane City Council Natural Assets Local Law on-line search for protected vegetation status.

Site Inspection

An inspection of the *subject site* was undertaken on two occasions, the 17th and 23rd of January 2007. The primary aims of this field work were to gain a level of field data sufficient to draw conclusions about the general patterns of fauna use throughout the *subject site*, and undertake a preliminary assessment of: the type, condition and extent of fauna habitats; their potential suitability

as habitat to support rare and threatened species; and their potential habitat significance in a local area context. Following initial assessment, a further site inspection was undertaken on 19 February to address issues including lot configuration and BLE locations.

Site Context

The *subject site* is bounded by nodes of urban residential development to the north and west. The *subject site* forms part of an arc of bushland which extends north from the Brisbane River (to the south of *subject site*) to the *subject site*, then trending in a north-westerly direction where it ends just short of a connection with riparian habitats of Cubberla Creek. This area of bushland and remnant tree cover is of local significance and is significant in the context of the wider natural area network of City-wide significance.

Fauna Habitat Extent, Condition and value to biodiversity

The *subject site* supports two dwellings, both situated close to the frontage on Fig Tree Pocket Road. The eastern remainder of the *subject site* does not support any built structures, though there is a relatively large area of which has been cleared of vegetation within the eastern part of the *subject site*. The southern end of Ruth Miller Close coincides with the centre of the northern boundary of the *subject site*.

Coinciding with the dwellings are several large eucalypts, i.e. Spotted Gum *Corymbia citriodora* subsp. *variegata* and Grey Ironbark *E. siderophloia*. None of these support limb or trunk hollows. Exotic plant taxa are abundant around the dwellings and extending within close environs downslope (to the east). The habitat extending downslope to the gully mainly supports younger native tree regrowth, with Brush Box *Lophostemon confertus* being the most common species (though also present are several large *E. siderophloia*). None of these trees support trunk or limb hollows. Koalas scats were located under the canopy of one large Grey Ironbark. The understorey on this part of the *subject site* has been largely cleared and is presently grassed. Exotic taxa are present, though not abundant.

Adjacent and to the east of the main gully, Grey Gums *Eucalyptus propinqua* are more common and numerous trees exhibit signs of Koala usage. None of these trees support trunk or limb hollows. In this area, native understorey vegetation is present, though sparse. The density of the understorey, especially ground covers is likely to be linked to a combination of prolonged, dry ground conditions and relatively poor soils. None the less, this contrasts with the lack of such vegetation on the western side of the gully (Fig Tree Pocket Road side).

Further east, on the higher ground and slopes descending to the north-east corner and eastern boundary of the *subject site*, native tree cover is largely cleared. This area supports short grass cover and isolated regrowth trees (coinciding with the proposed Lots 1 and 2, part of Lot 3 and the cul de sac). In this area, the main habitat value appears to be linked with the presence of a small number of Grey Gums *Eucalyptus propinqua*, most of which support signs of Koala usage (i.e. proposed Lot 2).

Land associated with the south-east corner and along the southern boundary supports higher habitat values. This is linked to a more diverse understorey stratum and the presence of a wider variety of native canopy trees (many supporting signs of Koala usage). Habitat characteristics in this part of the *subject site* are similar to that which exists adjacent and extending to the south of the *subject site*. Within this part of the *subject site*, evidence of macropod presence was located (as was evidence near the central gully on the proposed Lots 5 and 6).

The primary habitat values of the *subject site* relate to the value of native canopy trees in respect to flying-foxes, microbats, koalas, possums, insectivorous and insectivorous birds, i.e. species that are highly mobile. The greater understorey structure of habitat within the southern and south-eastern parts is likely to support a wider variety of native fauna species. The increase in faunal diversity would be mainly linked to ground dwelling taxa.

Habitat Suitability for Species of Conservation Significance

It is apparent from the field investigations that Koalas *Phascolarctos cinereus* occur on the *subject site* on a regular/semi-regular basis. The Koala is listed as *Regionally Vulnerable* under the NC Act. The *subject site* forms part of an arc of bushland which extends north from the Brisbane River.

This area of supports a variety of known koala habitat tree species (as does the *subject site*) and is of significance with respect to the local Koala population.

Also noted from field investigations was evidence of macropod occurrence. The scats found suggest the presence of Swamp Wallaby *Wallabia bicolor*, though Red-necked Wallaby *Macropus rufogriseus* are also known to occur locally. Both macropod species are under considerable pressure locally (and throughout other remaining bushland habitats across the City). Both are regarded as *species of city-wide significance* by BCC.

Both experience with similar habitat types and the context of the *subject site* implies that, at this preliminary level of investigation, a number of species of conservation significance should be considered in regards to potential occurrence on the *subject site*. Species include:

- Species listed as *Rare* under the NC Act - Grey Goshawk *Accipiter novaehollandiae*.
- Species listed as *Vulnerable* under the EPBC Act - Grey-headed Flying-fox *Pteropus poliocephalus*.
- Species listed by BCC as a *species of city-wide significance* - Brown Goshawk *Accipiter fasciatus* and Squirrel Glider *Petaurus norfolcensis*.

None of these species could be regarded as resident on the *subject site*, though may use the resources and conditions provided by the canopy tree cover as part of a larger habitat area which includes the *subject site*.

Proposed Development

In broad terms, the development of the proposed Lots 10, 11 and 12 appear the least constrained. BLEs on these lots will need to be placed to avoid loss of any of the large Spotted Gums *Corymbia citriodora* subsp. *variegata* and Grey Ironbarks *E. siderophloia* present in this part of the *subject site*. When referring to "loss", my meaning is loss of such vegetation as a result of construction of a dwelling or ancillary structures, or loss at a future date arising from requests for removal due proximity of the specimen to a dwelling and a perceived or real threat posed to property. Thus potential for the latter situation to arise must be considered in determining the position of the BLE.

Potential constraints in relation to the adjoining lots (i.e. Lots 7, 8 and 9) in the original plan have largely been overcome with the consideration of the revised location and extent of BLEs and access easement. Further minor refinements may be required after assessment of pegged BLE and easement locations.

The revised plan also reduces the predicted and potential for habitat loss on Lots to the east of the watercourse. All BLE's now appear to be located outside the waterway corridor designations. Again, further minor refinements may be required after assessment of pegged BLE and easement locations.

The revised plan now represents a comparatively better outcome in regards to the retention of the higher fauna habitat values of the *subject site*. The objectives of maximising habitat retention along the southern sector, exclusion of development within waterway corridors, and retaining the largest trees on the *subject site* (associated with the western Fig Tree Pocket Road sector) have now been achieved.

I hope these preliminary comments are sufficient for your purposes at present.

Yours faithfully,
Lindsay Agnew



Director
ECTServe
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