

Issues and Conclusions

Defence Housing Requirements

- 3.1 The Defence Housing Forecast (DHF) for Brisbane is 1,215 properties, whilst managed stock currently comprises 1088 properties, resulting in a shortfall of 127 properties.¹
- 3.2 The indicated shortfall means that DHA must rely on the rental market to supply approximately 24 percent of its housing requirement.²

Site Selection

- 3.3 In February 2003, DHA acquired 946 Rode Road, McDowall. During the purchase process owners of adjacent sites expressed interest in sale of their respective properties. Subsequent negotiations resulted in the purchase of three adjoining sites. The four sites provide a combined area of 43,210 square metres.³
- 3.4 The Senior Representative of Defence Families of Australia (DFA) supported the selection of the Rode Road site stating that:

1 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, p.2

2 ib id

3 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, paragraph 2.3

“From a defence families perspective there are two key benefits offered by the proposed Rode Road development. The first is location within an established community, and the second is close proximity to work.”⁴

Environmental Considerations

Contamination Issues

- 3.5 DHA’s main submission states a site investigation revealed that there is a very low probability of encountering significant areas of gross contamination at the site.⁵ The Committee sought some history of the site and confirmation that DHA would remediate or decontaminate areas should it be required.
- 3.6 DHA informed the Committee that the site had previously been a residential site with no history of industrial usage.⁶
- 3.7 DHA confirmed that, should the proposal be approved, geotechnical surveys would be continued to ensure that there are no contaminants on the site. Should contaminants be discovered and remediation or decontamination required, DHA would undertake this task prior to persons moving on to the site.⁷

Biofiltration System

- 3.8 In reviewing the layout of the development, the Committee requested some further information on the biofiltration systems to be used at the site and how the systems would be maintained.
- 3.9 In response, DHA explained that the purpose of the biofiltration system would be to make use of the creek channel and remove sediments and pollutants on site before they enter waterways. The Brisbane City Council (BCC) would be responsible with maintaining the channels, and DHA anticipates that there would be a need to rechannel and replant the areas after 10-15 years.⁸

4 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, p. 18

5 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, paragraph 4.2.1

6 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, p. 2

7 *ib id*

8 *ib id*, p. 11

- 3.10 The Committee were also concerned about any biofiltration outflow difficulties, as the surrounding areas do not incorporate such filtration technology and systems. DHA responded that there is a 1,200 millimetre downpipe near the junction of Rode Road and Ifield Street and:

“We [DHA] do not pass water past that point. We hold the postdevelopment flow and we release it at the predevelopment level, which means we do not inundate the downstream”.⁹

Water Usage

- 3.11 The Committee highlighted the importance of efficient water usage and inquired as to how DHA would address water usage issues within the proposal.¹⁰
- 3.12 DHA stated that it was aware of the importance water usage issues highlighting DHA houses at a different site that were collecting rainwater and recycling it through the sewerage system. DHA also stated that all water fittings will be AAA-rated.¹¹
- 3.13 In oral evidence to the Committee, DHA stated that in the design of houses it had tried to incorporate:
- “...best practice water-sensitive urban design principles, so we [DHA] maximise the amount of stormwater infiltration and water polishing that occurs within the development.”¹²
- 3.14 Centre median swales are proposed to be used in the two divided local access roads. The Committee was interested in the hydraulics of the swale and any special plantings to be used for the swales.
- 3.15 DHA responded that within the Planting Schedule included in its main submission there is a list of street and park trees. The six species of trees to be used for these areas have been chosen for their stability and history in Brisbane of being appropriate street trees.¹³ The planting of appropriate trees on the swales would also provide improved ground water absorption.
- 3.16 DHA also intends to minimise water usage at the site through landscaping design that will require minimal irrigation.¹⁴

9 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, p. 11

10 ib id, p. 6

11 ib id

12 ib id, p. 5

13 ib id, p. 10

14 ib id, p. 7

Trees and Shrubs

- 3.17 The Committee wished to know how DHA would ensure that landscaping is appropriate to the climatic conditions and minimises the use of water.¹⁵
- 3.18 DHA replied that only native landscaping would be used, such as native plants and shrubs.¹⁶ Further, the planting schedule within DHA's main submission includes bushland site indigenous vegetation, representative of plants already on the site.¹⁷

Transient Koalas

- 3.19 DHA's main submission detailed that scattered trees across the site provided minor habitat for some local wildlife including transient koalas. The Committee raised this issue with DHA at the public hearing.
- 3.20 DHA stated that the likelihood of koala movement through the area has decreased with urbanisation. Where possible, landscape development will maximise the retention of large eucalypt trees and other vegetation of importance to wildlife.¹⁸

Consultation

- 3.21 DHA's main submission outlined community consultation as well as consultation with other relevant parties. These consultations included public notifications and information evenings. The Committee was interested to know the outcome of the consultative process.¹⁹

Brisbane City Council

- 3.22 DHA stated at the public hearing that the BCC supported the development and had been involved in the design process for the McDowall site.²⁰
- 3.23 The BCC expressed its satisfaction with the consultation undertaken with both the Council and local residents.²¹

15 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, p. 11

16 ib id, p. 7

17 ib id, p. 9

18 ib id

19 ib id, p. 11

20 ib id

Community

- 3.24 At the public hearing DHA stated that the project was generally well received by the local community. DHA added that it had attempted, wherever possible, to address any concerns expressed during consultation in the project design.²²
- 3.25 Subsequent to the hearing, the Committee received correspondence from local residents outlining several concerns in relation to the proposed development. A copy of this correspondence was forwarded to the DHA for its attention.

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that the Defence Housing Authority continue to engage in close consultation with owners of neighbouring properties and the wider McDowall community.

Nature of Development

Layout

- 3.26 DHA's main submission describes the proposed McDowall development for the site as low density detached housing comprising at 50 lots, of which 40 will be conventional lots, 10 small lots and 2 park lots. At the public hearing Committee sought more detail regarding the proposed housing type.²³
- 3.27 DHA replied that a survey of Defence Force families based in the Brisbane region had indicated a preference for detached housing. DHA explained that the proposed 50 houses at the McDowall site would be four bedroom detached dwellings, as preferred by DHA clients.²⁴
- 3.28 At the site inspection, DHA indicated to the Committee that there would be a variety of housing on the site. Committee members noted that a

21 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, p. 25

22 ib id, p. 12

23 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, paragraph 3.1

24 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, p. 3

schematic layout, provided in DHA's main submission²⁵, had shown many of the houses to have the same design and layout.

- 3.29 DHA explained that the plan layout included in its main submission was a standard indication of a house on a block, and did not represent how houses would actually be situated. DHA further stated that:

“... there are seven different house types on site. Those seven house types would then be further differentiated by elevation and different colour schemes and finishes externally, which would be complimented by different colour schemes internally”²⁶

House Design

- 3.30 The Committee wished to know whether the design of the houses met national solar and energy conservation principles or had taken these principles into consideration.
- 3.31 DHA's architect explained that all DHA houses to be built on the site will have a four to five star energy rating, which extends into the design of the subdivision. Houses will use solar passive design techniques such as siting blocks appropriately and maximising use of overhanging eaves.²⁷ DHA added that the design proposed for McDowall had been designed specifically for the Brisbane climate.
- 3.32 Committee members also inquired if the proposed plan for the McDowall site was in keeping with past and future developments in the area. DHA confirmed that, whilst trying to bring some uniqueness to design, much of the architecture in the McDowall proposal incorporates the existing architecture of the surrounding suburbs.²⁸

Gas Supply

- 3.33 According to DHA's main submission, the local utilities provider had stated that gas is not available in close proximity to the site, and for that reason the site would not be serviced by gas.²⁹ Committee members sought clarification as to whether the McDowall site was suitable for gas connection.

25 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, Supplementary Information, p.7

26 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, p. 31

27 ib id, p. 5

28 ib id, p. 12

29 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, paragraph 12.3

- 3.34 At the public hearing a witness for Origin Energy Asset Management Ltd stated that, in regard to gas connectivity to the McDowall site, they had:
- “...provided some incorrect information to their [DHA] consultants when they inquired about gas availability... In fact we can provide gas infrastructure – that is gas mains, gas service inlets and gas meters – to each of the homes at the site”³⁰
- 3.35 The Committee requested information as to whether DHA encouraged alternative and competitive use of energy such as gas in its developments. DHA responded that, as a general national policy, gas is the preferred source of heating and hot water for its developments. DHA undertook to hold further discussions with Origin Energy regarding the extension of gas reticulation to the McDowall site.³¹

Integration into Community

- 3.36 The Committee was interested to know if the density of the proposed development was a concern for DHA and prospective tenants of the development, particularly given that the majority, if not all, tenants would be Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel.
- 3.37 DHA had not consulted with prospective tenants on the specific matter of the density of the McDowall site, however the witness from DFA stated that more than 50 houses on a site the size of McDowall may reduce some amenity such as access to schools and private hospitals.³²
- 3.38 The witness from DFA also stated that the majority of ADF personnel living in close proximity on a DHA development:
- “...like to live together where they are supported and you have something in common with your neighbours straightaway, so you can form friendships quite quickly and easily. I think the vast majority of families would feel like that.”³³

30 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, p. 16

31 ib id, p. 6

32 ib id, p. 20

33 ib id, p. 19

Traffic Management

- 3.39 DHA's main submission indicated that the McDowall site would be connected to the existing road network at Keona Road and Trouts Road. DHA stated that:

“...proposed connections to the external network ensure that development traffic is not concentrated to the extent that deficiencies are created in the surrounding road network.”³⁴

Divided Local Access Roads

- 3.40 DHA's main submission described the use of two non-standard examples of divided local access roads. Committee members expressed concern, given the size of the lots and roads, that the swales in the middle of the divided access roads would need to be used as parking for residents.
- 3.41 At the public hearing DHA explained that the proposed dwellings would have double garages, with enough room on the verges for some parking should it be required. DHA continued that the divided local access roads tended to slow down traffic, which would increase the road safety of the suburb.³⁵

Widening of Rode Road

- 3.42 Committee members sought clarification regarding the widening of Rode Road. DHA confirmed that its Development Application mandates the capacity for expansion of Rode Road; namely a 4.226 metre resumption of land to allow for future widening.³⁶
- 3.43 DHA reported that it was currently conducting discussions with BCC regarding a signalled intersection at Rode Road and Ifield Street. DHA added that the development of an intersection may assist in the utilisation of parkland and connections to amenities such as Flockton Plaza.³⁷

34 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, paragraph 8.2.3

35 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, p. 9

36 *ib id*, p. 13

37 *ib id*

Traffic Speed

- 3.44 A safety concern of the Committee was the speed of traffic on the Keona Road entrance. A large bend in the on Keona Road may cause visibility issues for some drivers at the intersection.
- 3.45 During the site inspection carried out by the Committee, DHA assured members that there would be some development of the Keona Road entrance, so as to achieve greater visibility and safety.³⁸

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that the proposed development of Defence housing for the Defence Housing Authority at McDowall, Brisbane, Queensland, proceed at the estimated cost of \$17.5 million.

Hon Judi Moylan MP
Chair
25 May 2005

