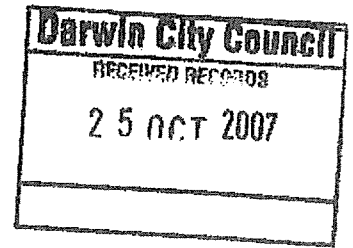


JB-CS-10

PLan: the Planning Action Network Incorporated

PLan

GPO Box 2513, Darwin 0801
Telephone (08) 89271999
email: margaret.clinch@bigpond.com



23.10.2007
Mr Gary Lambert,
Lord Mayor of Darwin
PO Box 84,
Darwin, NT 0801

STELLA MARIS SITE FOR COMMUNITY PURPOSES

Dear Lord Mayor Lambert,

We are writing to ask Council's support for our aim to retain the Stella Maris site in public ownership, for community purposes.

Recently the lease of the Stella Maris site below the Esplanade and Harry Chan Avenue was relinquished to the NT Government. Our organisation wishes its tenure as public space, particularly by continuing its use for community purposes.

This area is very close to the Civic Centre. Council owns the Road Reserve. We are unsure whether Council owns Travellers Walk. However, it has beautified the entrance to (the alternate) Travellers Walk for the public in recent years.

Planning for Community
Website: <http://www.plan-inc.org>

The Planning Minister has recently given public assurances that there are currently no plans for the development of the site. For this we are most grateful, as the 'green spaces' at this part of the Esplanade have in recent years been relentlessly developed despite community objection.

The site is one of the few remaining green open spaces at this eastern end of the Esplanade. Lot 5260, Darwin is a quiet lawn and garden corner, reached by pedestrians via Travellers Walk (Lot 6597, Darwin). Vehicular access is very limited. The land is well maintained.

The NT Government last week put live-in experienced and practical caretakers in place for two years. There are three buildings - a heritage listed railway house, a building with basic accommodation for four, and the Stella Maris 'clubhouse'.

The Friends of the Adelaide River Railway group, led by Mr Trevor Horman aims to use the railway house on site. They initiated its recent listing on the NT Heritage Register. It stands on an administrative lot within Lot 5260, Darwin. We understand that a Heritage Grant of \$10,000 was given to the previous lessees, but has not yet been used.

Both of the modern buildings could also continue to be useful, perhaps one subsidising the other, and/or providing accommodation for community centre managers. Stella Maris has good tropical

design, with stainless steel kitchen and bar facilities. It is airconditioned.

It is too early to recommend a specific ongoing use for the site. Suggestions so far include ongoing use for 'small ships' seamen based near Darwin, as against East Arm; a youth activities centre; a general community centre with a timetabled activities; a managed social club for local residents, as an alternative to nightclub life for young people, or a clubhouse for harbour related sports, eg. Dragon Boaters.

We have thought that perhaps it might be a useful resource as a Council managed Community Centre, perhaps with an emphasis on young adults. The work of the centre could be subsidised by a leased family café, as there will be strong passing pedestrian traffic once the Convention Centre and the Wave Pool are open.

In spite of intense densification of this 'edge part' of Darwin, there are no new parks or facilities for people to get out for recreation at moderate cost.

So far we have been two public meetings about the future of the site. There is a strong wish that the site remain in public hands, and continue to be used for community purposes.

We have recommended to the Planning Minister that:

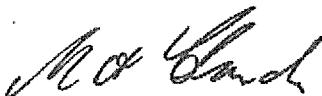
- (a) The old Stella Maris site (Lot 5260, Darwin) now be reserved

for ongoing community use

- (b) The old Stella Maris site (Lot 5260, Darwin) now be rezoned to Community Purpose (CP) to protect it for this purpose.
- (c) Travellers Walk (Lot 6597, Darwin) also now be rezoned to Community Purposes (CP)
- (d) Land tenure remain permanently leasehold, and not alienated as freehold.

Please acknowledge this letter and let us know the responses of yourself as Lord Mayor, and of the Aldermen to these ideas. We think they are important to the people of Darwin.

Yours sincerely,



M A CLINCH

Convener