

Aileen's story ... 131 Fifth Avenue Balmoral

I first learned of the impending destruction of my peaceful surroundings in the first half of 1999.

By August 1999, the first two developers had began demolishing a 1937 house, and destroying an eighty year old mango tree, and several other old large trees. The original 1/4 acre block was pegged out for 2 x 2 storey houses and the objections myself and all my neighbours had by this time lodged were falling on deaf ears at City Hall.

The preface to my personal objection was as follows

"I moved to Brisbane and have lived in the Balmoral area for the past 5 years. The reason I chose this area over all others shown to me was the "olde world" appearance and "feel" of the area. The majority of the residents seemed to have lived here since World War 11 and still retained that era's friendliness. The area itself was endowed with a charm and peaceful tranquillity so lacking in so many more trendy and up-market suburbs. All residents took pride in retaining the old trees and encouraging the native fauna that took refuge in them. In the entire length of Fifth Avenue there are only 2 brick houses. Even these were designed to blend with their surrounds. The rest of the houses are lowset, chamfer board, or weatherboard. This alone indicates the age and (so far) the preservation of the area. It is with these reasons in mind, that I felt compelled to lodge my objection to structures I feel will do nothing for this beautiful area."



Once the house and the old trees were gone, the original "developers" had no trouble selling the land off to another 2 "developers" who appeared to have a much too cosy relationship with the Council. Both my, and my neighbours petitions fell on deaf ears. The only reply we ever received was - "they are within the guidelines." My house is on the lower side of this property, whose side boundary runs parallel to my back fence. As my back yard is only 3M wide, when the new 2 storey house was built, the structure was only 4M (approx. 12') from my kitchen window. Even worse than that, as it was 2 storey, and I was below it, if I went into any part of my backyard

the large verandah on the new house was directly above me. It was like being in a goldfish bowl. I (and my neighbour who was in a similar position) complained bitterly about the total loss of our privacy, and were again told "they are within the guidelines". However, after many protestations the Council did send a representative out. Even he could not fail to appreciate the plight of both myself and my neighbour. The solution, a few slats across the windows and verandah.

They did absolutely NOTHING to restore our privacy!

Eventually both myself and my neighbour gave up. I had to spend just on \$10,000 to have a 10m pergola made and installed which almost effectively "roofed" my back yard, and my neighbour spent \$5000 on a similar structure to give her a little privacy.



It was a 2 year period in my life that I do not ever want to go through again. When I see and hear of other people who have had their privacy and tranquillity destroyed, I count myself among the lucky ones who could at least afford to ameliorate my problems. There are a lot of people who couldn't.

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