DA Application
The Shire of Cocos Keeling Islands

Cover Letter

Proposed Development for Oceania House Hotel

Oceania House is a historic heritage listed building and an integral part of the Cocos Keeling Islands history and its identity. Built in 1893, by George Clunies-Ross, with local timber and bricks imported from Glasgow, this building stands majestically on the southern corner of Home Island, protected by trees on 1.25 hectares of land.

The history of the "Big House" as the locals refer to it, is fascinating in itself. The house has played an important role in the development of the island, including the school building which was built many years later, John Cecil himself and his wife Daphne, were both teachers. The Clunies-Ross family also hosted many new year's eve parties and other gatherings in the Ballroom, remembered fondly, especially by the elders.

For outsiders and guests, Oceania House, is a source of fascination and intrigue, many visitors making the journey to Home Island just to see the house. Unfortunately for the past several years the house has been inaccessible to the public and left in a run-down condition.

Now under new management, we propose to make the house accessible to both the local Cocos Malay community and to tourists. This will be done through tours (once a week) and by appointment.

The main use of the site will be as tourist accommodation.

There are six rooms, which will be available for bookings via the Tourist Association website. Each room has its own features and rates will vary accordingly. Other than the availability of accommodation we are not applying for any other services and therefore no other licences are required (such as commercial kitchen or tour operation). As mentioned this is a heritage listed building and we intend to maintain the historical 'feel' to the rooms to give guests a special 'historical' experience.

It is our intention to bring the building back to life and make it a viable tourist accommodation site, generating economy for the island and providing employment opportunities for the local Cocos Malay.

Food will not be prepared on the premises. However, it will be outsourced to local Cocos Malays to provide breakfast and dinner by request.

We intend to maintain the aims of the provision of the Local Planning Strategy and there will be no new changes to the existing use of premises. We also plan to maintain the compatibility of use within this setting. Gardens and existing pathways will be maintained

and all indigenous flora will be diligently preserved. Access to the public will also be allowed.

The building has smoke detectors in each room and in other common areas such as the ballroom, kitchen and throughout the building, there are fire extinguishers located around the building including exits and kitchen areas as well as upstairs. The electrical works have been updated in 2020 and are at present day standards, all plumbing works are operational.

There will be more updates needed over the next few years varnish and painting, fly screens, renovations to bathrooms, as well as some repairs to the exterior, however, the building has been deep cleaned and is ready for accepting guests.

Prior to the Covid 19 pandemic and the former owner's illness, the venue was operating as tourist accommodation, and we intend to continue in the same vain as before.

I look forward to a new era for Oceania House, Home Island and for Cocos in general.

Yours sincerely,

Seyfi Seyit
General Manager