

Heritage cottage future in doubt

A heritage cottage which has been the subject of a vigorous community campaign to save it from demolition is at crisis point at the time of writing this article. The developer of 44-48 Oxford Street Epping, Pirasta P/L, is proposing to demolish the heritage listed cottage at 48 Oxford Street if they obtain approval from the Government's Sydney Central City Planning Panel (SCCPP) on 7 February 2018.

In response to the public campaign, Parramatta Council organised a 'Conciliation Conference' on 24 January to provide an opportunity for community members to discuss issues with the developer. The meeting was very well attended by concerned community members, including many from the Trust.

The future of the heritage cottage quickly became the central issue of discussion. The developer tried to defend the decision to demolish the cottage but failed to provide convincing arguments. They had commissioned two reports from heritage consultancies that claimed the cottage had little heritage value due to changes since it was built in 1896. These reports were not tabled at the meeting and the developer failed to bring their consultants to the meeting.

The case supporting the demolition of the cottage was challenged by community participants, with a particularly strong case for retaining the cottage provided by the Trust member, Eve Lee. Our local State Member of Parliament, Damien Tudehope, also weighed-in, accusing the



▲ Heritage listed cottage at 48 Oxford Street

developer of treating the community participants with contempt by not bringing along their heritage consultants to the meeting.

Parramatta Councillors, Donna Davis and Bill Tyrrell, expressed strong support for the retention of the cottage and indicated that although they now have no power to influence staff recommendations on development applications, they will pursue avenues available to them to support the community's case that the heritage cottage be retained.

The Council staff representatives at the meeting would have been in no doubt that the community wants the cottage retained, and that if the Council recommends its demolition, they will be petitioning the SCCPP to defer a decision on this development when they meet on 7 February.

New website update

The re-vamped Trust website continues to progress, but at a much slower pace than expected. A preliminary version was reviewed by the committee in November, with feedback provided to the developer. Some issues are still to be resolved.

It is envisaged that when the website goes live, the Trust will undertake most of the routine maintenance itself. This will minimise ongoing expenditure and enable timely updates to the content on the site. The new website is based on the Wordpress framework, and we are actively evaluating options for hosting the new site.

▲ A first draft preview of our new website

New Fencing Forest Park to Essex Street pathway

The Trust was instrumental in getting a better standard of fencing included in the development approval for a property alongside the Forest Park to Essex Street pathway. However, the builder decided otherwise and built the basic standard paling fence.

The non-compliance was drawn to the Private Certifier's attention and to his credit, he had the fence replaced. The amenity of the pathway has been greatly enhanced by the new fencing.

There are three more undeveloped properties alongside this pathway with paling fences. Trust members will need to be vigilant and ensure that the new fencing standard is included in any future approvals for these properties.



EPPING CIVIC TRUST

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Representing the community since 1971

Newsletter

February 2018

NEXT MEETING: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING and ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING of the Epping Civic Trust will be held on TUESDAY, 20 FEBRUARY 2018 in the Church of Christ Hall, 31 Bridge Street, Epping at 7.30pm. **Kindly note that only financial members are eligible to vote.**

- AGENDA:** ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
1. Confirmation of Minutes of Annual General Meeting of 21 February 2017
 2. Receive and adopt the President's Annual Report for 2017
 3. Receive and adopt the Treasurer's Audited Annual Report for 2017
 4. Elect Office Bearers for the positions of President; Vice President (2); Treasurer; Assistant Treasurer; Secretary; Minutes Secretary; Publicity Officer; Newsletter Editor and Committee Members
 5. Appoint an Auditor for 2018

- AGENDA:** ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING
1. Confirm Ordinary General Meeting dates for 2018
 2. Epping Planning Review and Traffic Study
 3. Report on Austino development proposal at Forest Park
 4. Report on the status of development proposals and applications
 5. Heritage Cottage at 48 Oxford Street, Epping
 6. General Business

Happy New Year to all members!

From the President, Graham Lovell

Welcome to the February edition of the newsletter. This is the 47th year of the Epping Civic Trust - a constant and dedicated voice of our community, genuinely caring about our local environment and maintaining the essence of our wonderful suburb and its surrounds.

The workload of the Trust has certainly increased in recent years with the influx of development due to the Urban Activation of Epping. In September 2017, it was reported that Epping was the Sydney suburb with the most crane activity, with a total of 16 cranes! This will only continue.

Once again, I call upon our members to take a more active role within the Trust to assist us with managing the number of submissions and dealing with planning matters.

The development community with their strong government support tend to dominate over the resident community, and local government to some extent, without a voice being raised for moderation. The recent Conciliation meeting in January, organised by the Council in response to community objections about the proposal to demolish the heritage cottage at 48 Oxford Street, is a good example of how the community and the Council can work together to influence development proposals.

In 2018, our focus for the Trust is renewal. Our Executive Committee members are devoted to the objectives of the Trust and I thank them for their valued contribution over the last year. Some have served the Trust for many years. At the January Executive Committee meeting, three members advised that they will not be seeking re-election at the Annual General Meeting.

The positions of Vice President, Newsletter Editor and Minutes Secretary are crucial roles within the committee and vital for the operation of the Trust. I also, have made the difficult decision to step down as president in 2018. So please also consider whether you can contribute in a leadership capacity.

I urge each one of you to consider offering your service in one of these positions. If you would like to find out more about what is involved, please make contact before the meeting on 20 February.

Additionally, we need a member to open and close the Church Hall and hold the key for each meeting. The hall is alarmed, and the member will also need to be responsible for the access code. Ideally this task would suit someone living nearby.

I encourage you all to attend our Annual General Meeting and become a more active participant in shaping the community we live in.



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- **VICE PRESIDENT** - Graham Medhurst Phone: 0434 356 361
- **TREASURER/ MEMBERSHIP** - Alan Swales, PO Box 2509, Carlingford Court 2118 Phone: 9869 1954

Proposed Ordinary General Meeting Dates for 2018:

Tuesday, 20 February

Tuesday, 15 May

Tuesday, 21 August

Tuesday, 20 November

Church of Christ Hall,
31 Bridge Street, Epping
at 7.30pm

Epping Town Centre - Development Report

The major development projects underway in the Epping Town Centre are now having a major impact on residents and those using the transport hub. Access to our roads and footpaths are being blocked, with dust and litter causing havoc. Even the development blocks that are yet to be developed are often derelict and have unkempt verges. Residents with concerns about intrusions on public space, pollution or aggressive behaviour by developers and their contractors should contact their local ward councillors or the local Member of Parliament (contact details below).

Since our last newsletter, the Trust lodged a formal objection to the amended Development Application (DA) at **24-36 Langston Place** (one 27 storey tower). Our concerns were with traffic, excess height, wind effects, shadowing and poor building design. We were also concerned about the absence of any integrated planning for the Langston Place/Pembroke Street/Chambers Court precinct. Following assessment by Council, this development will be determined by the Sydney Central City Planning Panel (SCCPP).

The amended development at **30-42 Oxford Street** (two 17 story towers) has been approved. Excavation works are now underway and are causing major disruptions in Oxford Street.

An amended DA has been lodged for **44-48 Oxford Street** (two towers 15 and 18 storeys). The amended application still includes the demolition of a heritage cottage, but the building design has improved. Following objections from the Trust and the community to the demolition of the heritage cottage, Council arranged a conciliation meeting with the developer (see report on page 4). Following assessment by Council, this development will be determined by the SCCPP on 7 February 2018.

An amended DA has been lodged for **37-41 Oxford Street**. The applicant is now proposing to delete one tower and have only one tower of 30 storeys. The new proposal has revised setbacks, a public forecourt, additional commercial space and deep soil planting areas. This development is on public exhibition until 13 February 2018. Following assessment by Council, this development will be determined by the SCCPP.



▲ Construction dust control

◀ Construction dust

The Department of Education has lodged a DA for **Epping Public School in Pembroke Street**. The proposal is for the removal of demountable classrooms and the construction of a three-storey building to cater for an increase in student numbers from 414 to 736. The Trust, together with Save Epping's Forest Park and local councillor Bill Tyrell, have had discussions with the Department on issues of concern. See separate report in this newsletter on the Department's response to our representations. Following assessment by Council, this development will be determined by the SCCPP.

Two planning proposals in **Rawson Street** (40+ storey) are still waiting for the outcome of Council's traffic study.

The Department of Planning and Environment has changed its mind again on who will determine the 'Forest Park' planning proposal at **2-18 Epping Road, 2-4 Forest Grove and 725 Blaxland Road**. It is now being dealt with by the SCCPP and not Parramatta Council. See separate report in this newsletter.

Planning Proposal Update - Austino Property Group

2-18 Epping Road, 2-4 Forest Grove and 725 Blaxland Road

By Save Epping's Forest Park Group

The Austino Property Group has successfully lobbied the Department of Planning and Environment (DP&E) to change the Relevant Planning Authority (RPA) for the Austino Planning Proposal on the development site to the north of Forest Park, Epping. This means that the City of Parramatta Council (Council) has been replaced by the Sydney Central City Planning Panel (SCCPP) as the RPA. The SCCPP are under the DP&E and are no longer part of the Greater Sydney Commission (GSC) or chaired by the GSC District Commissioners. The Planning Panel, as the RPA, will be determining the rezoning and development of the site. We have been advised it is most unusual for the Council to lose its RPA role and the change presents the risk that the Planning Proposal can now be fast-tracked through the DP&E's Accelerated Rezoning Team.

It appears that with this change, the DP&E has become responsible for assessing the SCCPP (instead of the Council) and presenting it to the Planning Panel for consideration. However, it is understood that in its assessment the DP&E will be consulting with the Council and using its knowledge and information. They will also

be consulting with state agencies such as Transport for NSW and the Department of Roads and Maritime Services. The DP&E has told us they will be considering the traffic implications, but they anticipate the Planning Proposal and the Epping Traffic Study will be put on exhibition around the same time.

A public meeting will most likely be held at the time of the exhibitions to inform the community of their impact and encourage people to make submissions. The SEFP will seek the support of the Epping Civic Trust to organise such an event. The exhibition dates are unknown at this stage. The Bowling Club site - The City of Parramatta Council has advised that if Council seeks the retention of the RE1 Public Recreation zoning of the former Epping Bowling Club site (owned by Austino) there would be an obligation by Council to purchase the land (at market value). However, SEFP has recently sought legal advice and found the circumstances under which this could occur are not relevant in this situation.

SEFP asks that Trust members please write to the Member for Epping, Parramatta City Council, the Minister for Planning, the DP&E and other relevant parties to express support for retaining the RE1 zoning on the former Epping Bowling Club site and restricting the height zoning for the Austino site to minimise overshadowing of Forest Park. We hold the view that it will be too late to force changes on this Planning Proposal when it is on exhibition.



◀ Artist's impression of Austino project

Epping Public School Redevelopment

In October 2017, Trust members, Margaret McCartney, Emma Bush and Graham Medhurst, together with Parramatta Councillor Bill Tyrell, attended a meeting with the Epping Public School principal and representatives of the Department of Education. The purpose was to discuss issues with the Department's proposal to redevelop Epping Public School. Some matters raised were traffic, parking and the capacity of the school to accommodate the increase in students as the redevelopment of the Epping Town Centre progresses.

Trust member, Margaret McCartney, later followed up with a letter to the Department drawing attention to the Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Parramatta Council and the Department of Education to cooperate in the community use of school grounds.

It was obvious from discussions at the meeting with the Department that they had been caught out by the Government's accelerated housing development proposals and now had a huge backlog of schools to upgrade, with only



▲ Demountable classrooms at Epping public School

enough money to build classrooms. Their lack of ability to work collaboratively with community was confirmed in a letter from the Department to Margaret McCartney dated 19 December 2017 when they stated:

"We acknowledge your suggestion that this development should be viewed as a collaborative project considering the infrastructure needs of Epping, but our position has not changed, and the development application will proceed as a school upgrade."

It appears that the Greater Sydney Commission's plan for the shared use of land and collaboration doesn't apply to the Department of Education.

Useful Contacts

Members who have concerns about issues in Epping are always free to contact the Trust through our email or website. However, if you have issues that you would prefer to discuss with our elected representatives, here is a list of their contact details:

Councillor Lorraine Wearne
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