

Strathfield Homebush District Historical Society

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Submission – Objection against DA2019/026

55-57 Abbotsford Road Homebush

I am writing on behalf of the Strathfield-Homebush District Historical Society to strongly object to the application to develop and build a 29 room boarding house at 55-57 Abbotsford Road Homebush. The proposed development of the existing dwelling and erection of new, unsympathetic and oversized rear building will have an adverse impact on the character of the local built environment, including the heritage significance of a number of dwellings identified as items of heritage on and in the vicinity of the site and on the Abbotsford Road conservation area generally.

This property is a heritage item on Strathfield Council's Local Environmental Plan and located in the Abbotsford Road Heritage Conservation Area. The planning proposal and building works are not compatible with either the heritage item or the character of the Abbotsford Road Heritage Conservation Area and the objectives of Strathfield Council's planning instruments in relation to heritage conservation and residential development.

The site is zoned R2 Low Density Residential pursuant to Strathfield Local Environment Plan 2012 (LEP 2012). The objectives of the R2 zone are:

- To provide for the housing needs of the community within a low density residential environment.
- To enable other land uses that provide facilities or services to meet the day to day needs of residents.
- **To ensure that development of housing does not adversely impact the heritage significance of adjacent heritage items and conservation areas.**

In relation to the above clauses, the Society contends that the proposal will have an adverse impact on the heritage significance of 55-57 Abbotsford Road Homebush which is identified as an item of heritage, other items in the vicinity and the Abbotsford Road Heritage Conservation Area in general.

The house at 55-57 Abbotsford Rd is described on the heritage inventory sheet as:

"A single storey face brick Federation house with an asymmetrical façade. A slate roof has terra cotta ridge capping and finials, gables rendered with half timbering and a ridge gablet. Other elements include oiel de boeuf windows, gable over a side entry, rendered chimneys and verandah posts. The fence is beautifully detailed with shaped timber pickets and gate. Verandah infill to the east detracts from the house. The front fence, gates, lawn, gravel driveway and plantings (note rose garden and picking garden to side and rear of the property) are all in reasonable order. This Federation house is in fair condition, is of local significance for its retention of its setting and architectural detail from the early twentieth century."

The history of the property and even the name of the house is not consistent in various related development documentation. At times, the house is called Bagdelly House, which is not the name of the house in the LEP schedule, rather partly the name of 53 Abbotsford Road. The association with the Johns family which is often raised relate to 53 Abbotsford and 59-61 Abbotsford, not 55-57 Abbotsford Rd.

Historical research indicates that 'Goongirwarrie' was approved for building in May 1916 for its owner Alfred Stimpson Bayley Cobb, of Broughton Road Strathfield at an estimated value of £1200. The builder was A W Dunkley, Beresford Road Strathfield.

Cobb was the grandson of pastoralist and former convict Barnard Stimpson MLA. Stimpson was the Member for Carcoar from 1864 to 1869 and the first Mayor of Carcoar in 1879. Cobb's father, J.L.Cobb married Stimpson's daughter.

A S B Cobb was a grazier by profession. In 1897, he married Mary Platt of Carcoar. Her family home in Carcoar was named 'Goongirwarrie', which obviously influenced the naming of the Abbotsford Road house. The Cobb family resided at 'Goongirwarrie' from 1916 to c.1927. The house was rented from c.1928 to 1930 by John Morgan.

In 1930, Cobb sold the house to Amy Gertrude Luscombe, wife of Walter Foster Luscombe, Abbotsford Road Homebush for £2150. The property description in 1930 was a brick house of 6 rooms and garage with paling fencing. The Luscombe family continued to occupy this house for at least another forty years.

The relevant objectives of the heritage conservation clause of LEP 2012 are:

- (a) to conserve the environmental heritage of Strathfield,
- (b) to conserve the heritage significance of heritage items and heritage conservation areas, including associated fabric, settings and views

The site is listed as an item of heritage in Schedule 5 of LEP 2012, as Item 19 "Goongirwarrie" – Federation house, garden and front fence. This house is sited in the Abbotsford Road Heritage Conservation Area, which covers the entire street as well as houses in Rochester St and Meredith Street. "Goongirwarrie" is located in the section of Abbotsford Road between Meredith Street and Rochester Street. Most of the houses on the north side of the street are Federation styled, like 55-57 Abbotsford Rd. Within this section of Abbotsford Road, there are a number of heritage items which are In the vicinity of the proposed development which includes Federation houses at 33 and 35 Abbotsford Road, item 16, "Florenceville"—Victorian Italianate terrace, 44 Abbotsford Road, item 17 and "Badgelly"—Federation house - 53 Abbotsford Road, item 18 and "Strathayne" and "Gowan Brae"—Victorian villas - 60 and 62 Abbotsford Road, item 110.

The effect of proposed development on the heritage significance of the heritage item, nearby heritage items and on the conservation area must be considered under planning instruments. In the view of the Society, the proposal is an overdevelopment and incompatible with the heritage item and area. The proposed new building is a 2 storey flat roof rendered and painted addition, which has no design elements that are compatible or respectful of the heritage item at 55-57 Abbotsford Road or other heritage properties in Abbotsford Road. This addition will overshadow the heritage item, which is single storied and with a brick finish, while the addition will be significantly higher (2 storey), painted in colours such as black and grey and is highly visible from the street.

Despite claims and illustrations in the development proposal and associated documents that the addition will be hidden by landscaping including artists impression of non-existent trees and images of birds flying past the building, potential tree plantings do not satisfactorily address the unsympathetic design, heights, bulk, materials and colours and trees will not block the dominant visibility of this building from the front, sides or rear views. The Society also objects to the use of illustrated tree sketches in many parts of the development proposal, which obscures the visibility of the proposed development. While planting of trees is supported, trees take many years to reach maturity, if they are planted or ever reach maturity.

Approval of the proposal would set a planning precedent which in turn would cause significant harm to heritage conservation in the Strathfield Council area and in particular to the Abbotsford Road Heritage Conservation Area.

Yours faithfully

Michael Nicholls
PRESIDENT

24 July 2019