

## **Submission to the Independent Planning Commission NSW re**

### **The Blue Gum Community School (SSD 10444)**

**From Hornsby Shire Historical Society prepared by Elizabeth Roberts on their behalf.**

The submission contains the background information to my address to you on Wednesday 10 February 2021

The main issues I raised in my verbal submission were changes to the heritage listed front garden and use of the front garden detrimental to its heritage listing.

My submission is supported by a circa 1910 photograph of Mt Errington showing the front garden. The historical society has held the panoramic framed photograph for over 40 years and the framers label on the back of the photograph gives the clue to the date it was taken.

A copy of the panoramic photo taken from the far front corner of garden was sent to IPCN before Wed 10 and the two photographs needed to roughly copy the panorama are inserted below. It clearly shows what the garden was like and why it is now heritage listed



The top photo graph shows many of the plantings that still exist and are scheduled for removed under the current school plans of widening the driveway. If the change of use is to be permitted there must be a change in plan to the driveway to protect the heritage plantings T111 and T112 in the tree list, a 100 plus

year old Cabbage Tree palm and 100 plus year old planting of the giant white Bird of Paradise plantings. The Giant White Bird of Paradise is a clumping plant and although individual plants have a life of 30 to 50 years the clump keeps propagating itself, so the planting as clearly shown in the photo is well over 100 old.

On the opposite side of the driveway is a newly planted approximately 10 year old Lemon Scented Gum that is proposed to be retained whilst the heritage listed Cabbage Tree Palm and Giant White Bird of Paradise clump is removed. Computer research show Cabbage Tree palms are very slow growing, whilst on the other hand Lemon Scented gums grow at the rate of 2 meters per year and the tree report states the Lemon Scented Gum is 20 meters tall thus about 10 years old. From my several visits to this house dating from the early 1980s it is certainly a fairly new planting and postdates the heritage listing of the garden.

We believe if the school is to be permitted to go ahead it would be much better to sacrifice the Lemon Scented Gum than the heritage listed 100 year plus planting the Cabbage Tree Palm and Giant White Bird of Paradise as shown in the circa 1910 photograph.

The photo also shows a well-established Bunya Pine in the street and stag-horn's still to be found in the garden. The photograph also shows the gate and the fence and the fact the while most of the front garden was then lawn the area where the cabbage Palm and Giant White Bird of Paradise grew was a planted wilderness in the making.

The school plans show the front garden is to be used for school excursions. This is a major concern especially as the tennis court is to be used for parking and the pre-school and the primary school years K to 2 children are to have separated small playgrounds in the back garden.

As a long term parent activist I can see the primary parents pressuring the school to allow the older children to spend lunch time and the morning or afternoon break and before or after school in the front garden in the guise of excursions. If consent is given to the school to go ahead there needs to be an added clause to protect the heritage listed garden along the lines of

*"The front garden can only be used as a passive learning area during class times and must not be used for free play especially during lunch times, morning and/or afternoon break/s or before and after school hours.*

*The front garden must not be used for fetes, weddings or garden parties; conducted tours and supervised working bees are permitted."*

Over time the heritage listed garden has evolved and now there is much less lawn than originally and many more areas given over to plantings. In a walk through the garden with the owner it was observed that there are many plantings that do not exist in modern gardens, ginger, stag-horns and native orchards to name just a few.

The jacaranda trees in the garden are also of heritage significance, Annie Roberts, Mrs Oscar Garibaldi Roberts (the wife of the original owner of the house and Fairfax and Roberts the jewellers of Sydney) was very fond of Jacarandas and gave each new resident as they moved into their new house a jacaranda tree she had grown. Many may still be seen in the garden and street plantings in Rosemead Rd and Williams Street. One of the deceased members of the Historical Society was the recipient of one of these trees when as new bride she moved into a Williams Street home.