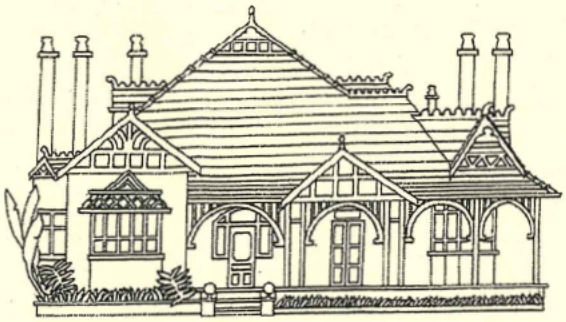
9/2/2021



**Belmont c1898**
[redacted] Peats Ferry Rd HORNSBY 2077
Max Lowery [redacted]
Lorraine Lowery [redacted]
phone [redacted]
[redacted]

DEAR COUNCILLORS

RE "Mt ERRINGTON" HORNSBY
ADAPTIVE RE-USE

HEREWITH

INFO RE CLOSE-BY COMPARABLE — OUR HOME + EARLY LEARNING CENTRE SITUATED AT THE NORTHERN EXTREMITY OF THE Mt ERRINGTON ESTATE. (WAS ALSO CALLED Mt ERRINGTON!)

ALSO BEFORE + AFTER PHOTOS
+ EXAMPLES of OUR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

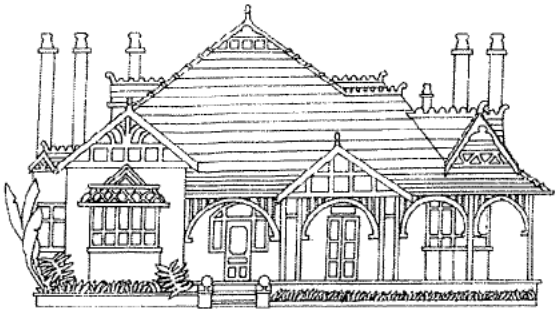
PLUS AN INVITATION TO SEE FOR YOURSELVES HOW AN IMPORTANT HERITAGE ITEM WAS SAVED — IF YOU LIKE, OUR HERITAGE SPECIALIST ARCHITECT, JENNIFER HILL COULD BE PRESENT. HOPE TO HEAR FROM YOU.

YOURS SINCERELY

MAX + LORRAINE LOWERY

[redacted]

Belmont c1898



Fri Feb 5 2021

ATTN Commissioners Peter Duncan
and Adrian Pilton

C/- Independent Planning Commission

Re MT ERRINGTON HOUSE
ROSEMEAD RD HORNSBY NSW

Max Lowery [redacted]
Lorraine Lowery [redacted]
Home phone [redacted]
[redacted] Peats Ferry Rd, Hornsby 2077
[redacted]

Dear Sirs

We totally support the adaptive re-use of this important heritage item. We know it very well & once considered purchasing it. We also know two of its previous owners. We also obtained a contract to purchase Mt Wilga from Australand P/L as a residence / pre-school / diploma training college but did not proceed owing to bushfire, BCA & fire regulatory constraints. Having purchased "*Belmont*" at 241 Peats Ferry rd Hornsby about 20 years ago & restored it we feel that it is a close, direct & valid comparable to Mt Errington & that we are in a unique & relevant position to comment & offer support even though it is in competition to our own preschool development at "*Belmont*".

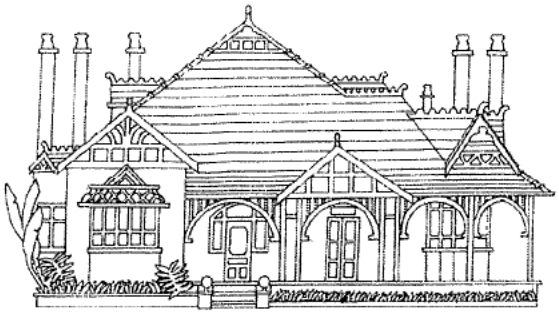
ADAPTIVE RE-USE is not only the best way to preserve a heritage estate – IT IS THE ONLY WAY!

"*Belmont*" was built around the same time as Mt Errington, however it is larger than Mt Errington & had a tribe of servants to look after it. Mt Errington is in far better condition than "*Belmont*" was in fact it took us four years to fully restore it & this cost us well over twice the purchased price. Leading heritage architects (well known to Hornsby Council) supervised this work & "lost-art" craftsman (often from interstate) were sought (see info herewith). We are not developers but have restored old buildings, commercial & residential, in the past using the same architects.

Old homes do not have today's creature comforts or layouts – they are an obsolete & impractical galaxy of unrelated spaces, often dark & often with a small kitchen tucked on the rear – (smells & fires were a hazard then). They don't comply with the B.C.A & current fire regs. Compromise is necessary to preserve them.

Belmont c1898

Fri Feb 5 2021



Max Lowery [redacted]
Lorraine Lowery [redacted]
Home phone [redacted]
[redacted]Peats Ferry Rd, Hornsby 2077
[redacted]

With most old estates, the question most frequently asked is "does the area justify the renovation costs?" So the trick is finding the right buyer who appreciates & understands what heritage is all about, has deep pockets & does not want to strip out original heritage fabric & turn the interiors into contemporary aseptic open plan living areas. Most 'buyers' flooding into Hornsby from e.g. India & China etc see little value in maintaining heritage interiors or gardens – it is not in their culture. Having re-visited India, China & Cairo in recent years we can speak from experience.

I think Hornsby Shire Council & '*Belmont*' were extremely lucky they found us! When we purchased it, there were 13 shabby offices & a bouncer lived upstairs. They had shifted the original staircase & installed partitions & vanities everywhere. Where does one start!?

The point we are making is that finding the right buyer for Mt Errington is of prime importance. Most "buyers" do not fall within this category & over time inappropriate changes occur often off the radar & the public have no access.

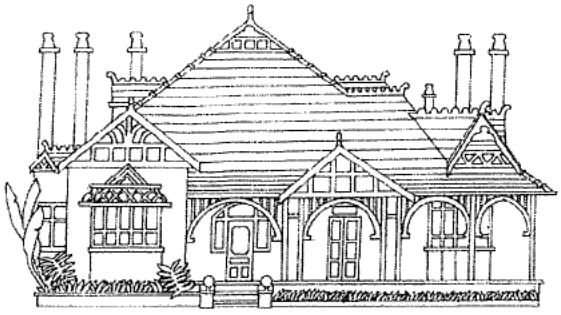
We are of the opinion Mt Errington has found the perfect buyers who love heritage & history. They are known to us through education & a close relative (Marika, McLachlan) was instrumental in organizing world famous concert pianist Roger Woodward from the USA to perform at a classical music concert here at our home in 2016 (see herewith).

Re the trees. The giant Strelitzia is a clumping plant like bamboo & will quickly regenerate itself – we had the same problem. There are probably more trees in the Mt Errington estate than when Garibaldi developed it & the surrounding tree canopy is one of the highest in Sydney.

A matter like this attracts nimbys – but are their objections informed, relevant & valid? We of course had the same problem but found many objectors were ring-ins, not locals.

Belmont c1898

Fri Feb 5 2021



Max Lowery [redacted]
Lorraine Lowery [redacted]
Home phone [redacted]
[redacted] Peats Ferry Rd, Hornsby 2077
[redacted]

Our architects exposed them. The council eventually supported us but with onerous conditions of consent.

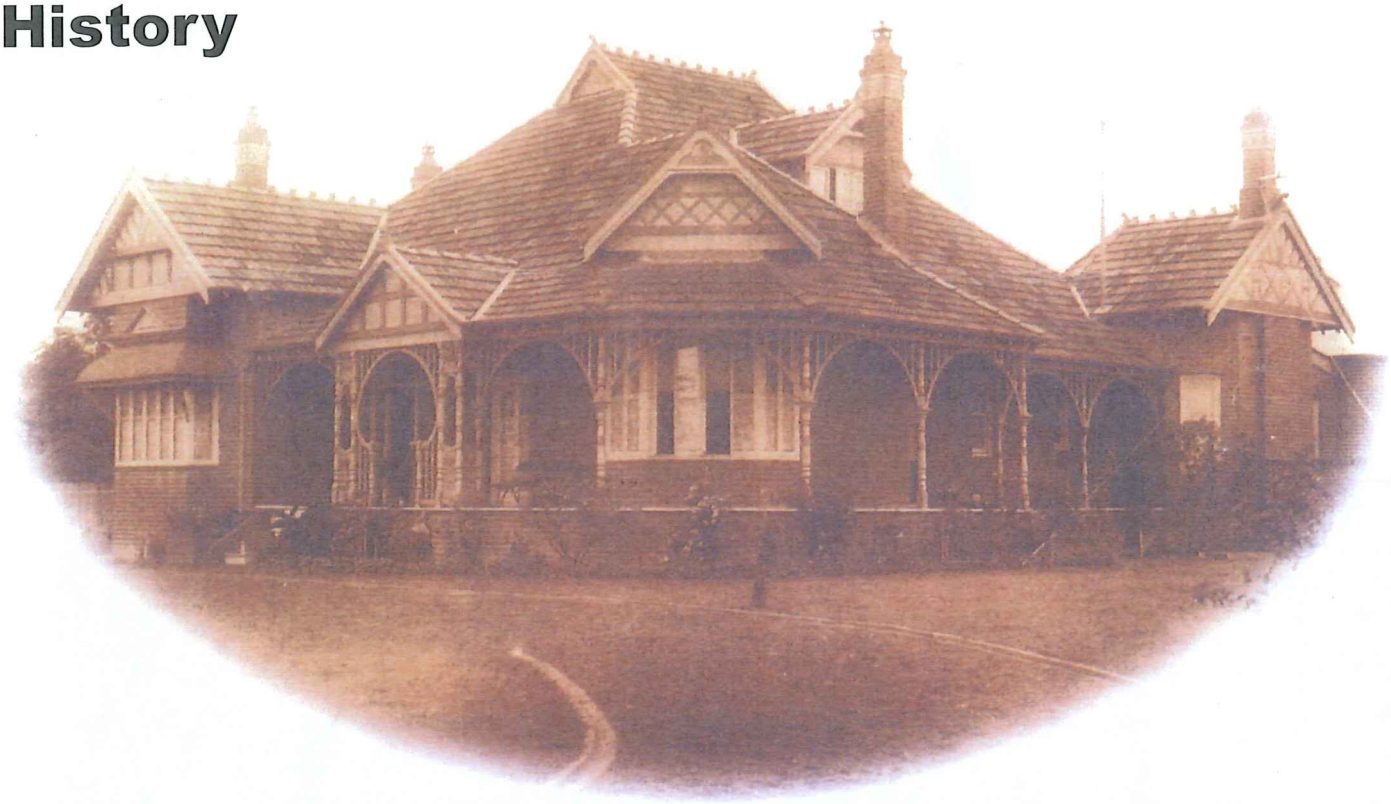
Perhaps the old Mt Errington will find its best use yet! It will now resonate with the musical chatter & laughter of children. A beautiful place to live, work & play – especially as most similar services are now housed in sterile concrete & plastic "unit factories for kids" without gardens – ah, but they comply with the regs! & are cheaper. Our motto was "putting some past in your child's future"!

In summary the old house & its gardens, the children & community will benefit from this proposal. We cannot think of a better outcome to preserve it & we understand the owners will allow access to the public on special occasions.

We extend an offer to your team & consultants to visit us anytime as this is a direct comparable with a similar age & land size. Educators, architectural students, restoration hopefuls etc visit us constantly as an example of heritage adaptive re-use. Just don't go to your bank manager with romantic ideas like this! We predict that in the future, council will boast that it is one of their success stories!

Yours faithfully,
Max & Lorraine Lowery
[redacted]
Ph: [redacted]

# History



**'BELMONT' c1898**
241 Old Pacific Highway, Hornsby

**MT ERRINGTON EARLY LEARNING CENTRE**

**Touch the Tradition**

**IT BEGAN WITH A VISION – AND A COMMITMENT**. This historic home was built around 1898 by William Mutch in a classical Queen Anne style and was designed to show off his skill as a builder. He incorporated specially produced glass panels in hallway doors showing aspects of houses he had built. He also incorporated eight carved marble decorative fireplaces, fanlights and stained glass bullseye windows, plus other grandiose flourishes common to that era. Originally on about 12 acres, it shared a rear boundary with Marcus Clark's Mt Wilga.

Of course the old estate has since changed hands many times, being used as a boarding house for 30 years and more recently, as a wedding reception centre. Today it is a residence and child care centre owned by Max and Lorraine Lowery. At the time of our acquisition in 2004 it contained around a dozen shabby office suites and a bouncer lived upstairs. Other uses over the years have included Medical Suites, a Rehabilitation Centre, French Consular offices, a restaurant and architects and surveyors offices. Apart from a massive clean up, our first task was to remove dozens of office partitions, ramps and inappropriate plumbing and electrical fittings. Basically the structure was sound and in good original and reasonably unmolested condition – with NO ADDITIONS!

Construction is of triple tuck pointed brick and Marseilles tiles. Perched on around ½ an acre, the location is the highest point in Sydney. The majestic old heritage home comprises some 23 rooms including 4 bathrooms, huge self-contained upstairs flat, attics, lofty ceilings (some in original superbly patterned pressed metal) and is only 6 minutes level walk from Hornsby Station and Westfields. There was garaging for 6 cars – now concert and craft rooms for the pre-school.

Our instructions to our architect, Jennifer Hill, and our builder, David Lee, was to work with the council and community and achieve as close as possible, a restoration in keeping with how it originally would have presented – we certainly feel they have achieved this and herewith would like to again record our thanks. Of course, this restoration work is ongoing, particularly the gardens and huge upstairs spaces, so perhaps, shortly, you will see our vision completed.

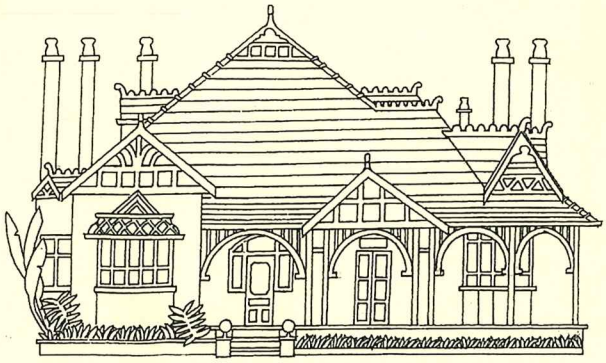
There are many myths and legends surrounding the old estate. Who knows, by living here, our own lives may become a legend! Are you aware of any of its history? We would love to hear from you.

Belmont is opened every year by both the National Trust and the Historic Homes Trust. Recently it was open as part of the Hornsby Shire Garden competition. It also plays host to many educational, cultural and charity events throughout the year.

***Developing Tomorrows Achievers***

***Max and Lorraine Lowery***

**MT ERRINGTON EARLY LEARNING CENTRE**
241 Pacific Highway Hornsby NSW 2077



**Belmont c 1898**

## HOORAY, we won ! - *BEST CHILDCARE CENTRE 2010*

## PUTTING SOME PAST IN YOUR CHILD'S FUTURE

In many parts of the world, especially in Europe, Childcare centres are often located in old disused monasteries, Convents or other heritage buildings amongst old gardens. They are much more involved with the local community and grandparents in particular are encouraged to visit and spend time with the children.

All this is in part, the "REGGIO EMELIA" philosophy which Lorraine aspires to. Hence the adaptive re-use and restoration of this old estate and its gardens – A beautiful place to live work and play! Children learn from the past – A gentleness and grace heedless of todays Fashions and whims! However, like a sprightly grandmother, our centre is abrim with modern touches.

## HERITAGE AT RISK. BARRIERS TO BUSINESS

Sadly, most new childcare services are now located in concrete and plastic 'Unit Factories for kids without gardens'. This is largely because local councils and other multiple layers of bureaucracy are not supportive of 'romantic' philosophies such as ours and just keep putting regulatory, compliance obstacles in our way. Heritage buildings such as this can never completely comply with the new 'Perfect world' building and fire codes and controls. Councils use these new laws retrospectively to strip away original, essential, heritage fabric and in some cases force closure. Councils need to seriously re-think their policies. Adaptive re-use is not only the best way of preserving old heritage buildings – it is the ONLY WAY ! Mt Errington is truly one of a kind and perhaps, sadly, the last of it's kind.

## SPRING HAS SPRUNG. The leafy Tracery of Green

Many children nowadays do not experience the four seasons because they live in apartments or on bushy allotments amidst native gardens. Our gardens were professionally designed and laid out to be drought proof, to be safe for children, and to have non-obstructive sight lines and to showcase the four seasons – again children learn from this and assist with our plantings.

A special thanks to all our families and staff for their enthusiastic loyalty and support.

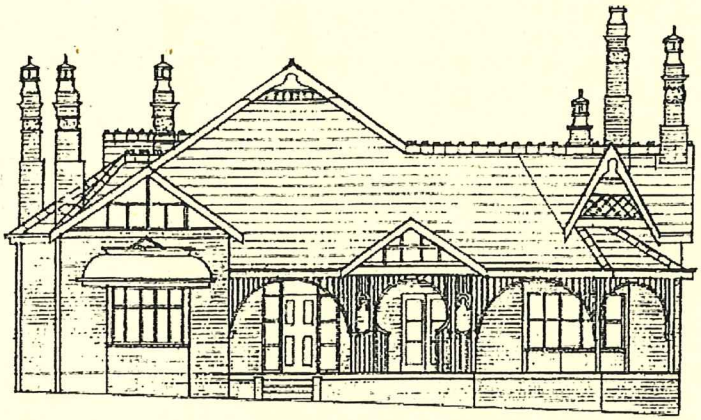
Lorraine & Max Lowery
October 2010

***Developing Tomorrows Achievers***

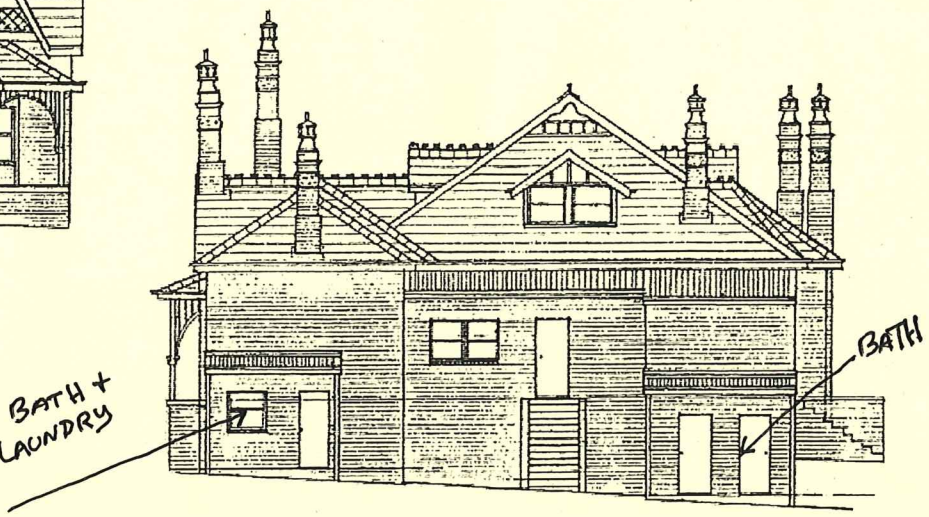
Resident Owner/Director…Lorraine Lowery…Dip Teach E.C.E.CCC
Ph: (02) 9477 1986 Fax: (02) 9477 2166 ABN 27 109 670 215
Freecall 1800 858891 E-mail: mterringtonelc@bigpond.com

ORIGINAL LAYOUT

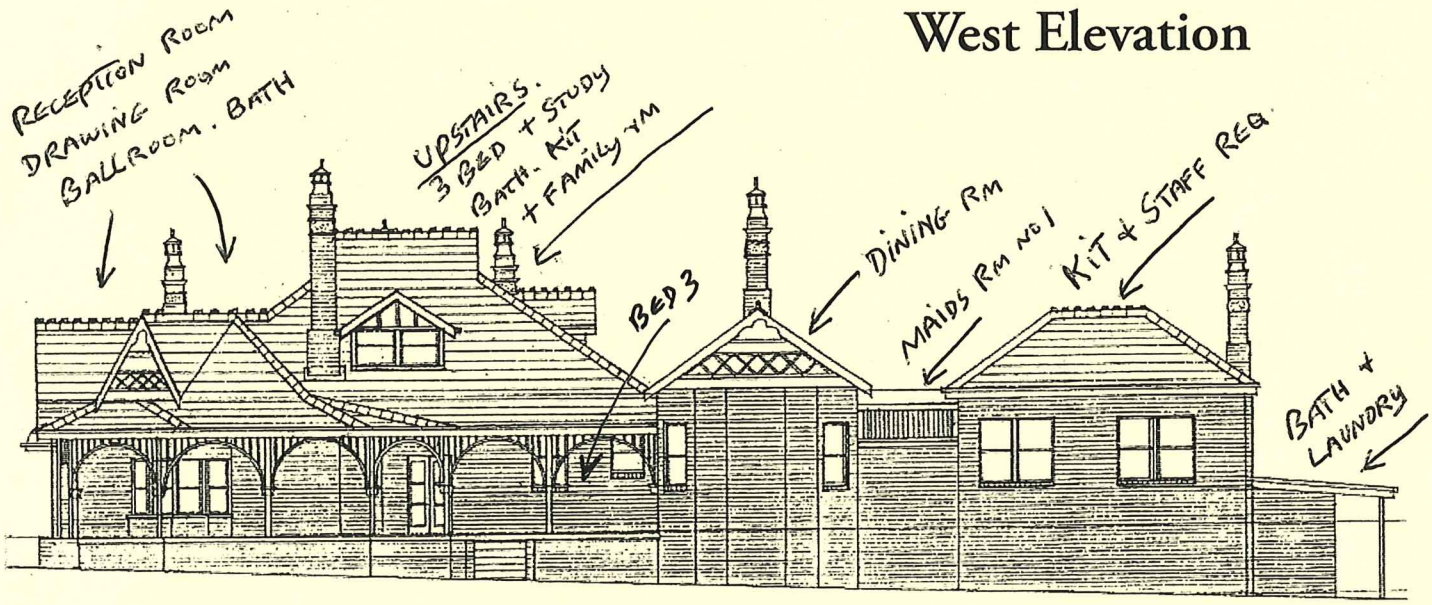
# "Belmont"



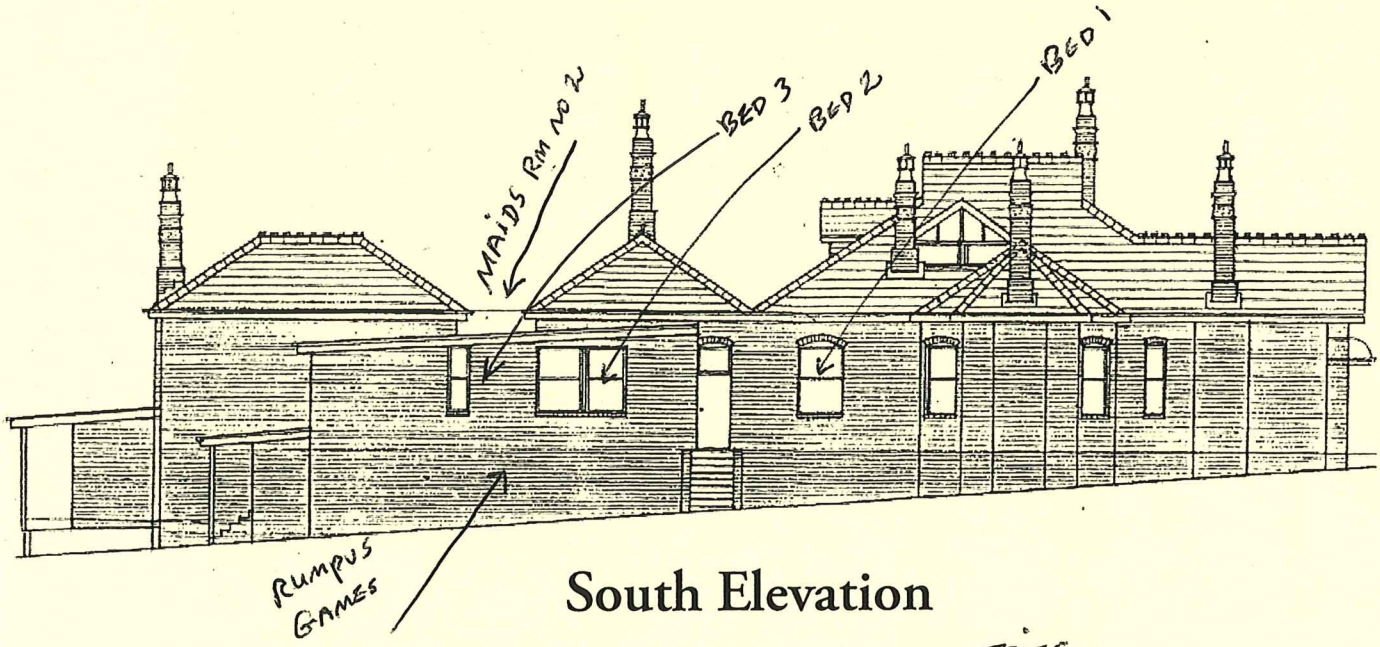
East Elevation




West Elevation




North Elevation




South Elevation

5 ENTRIES

NB NO ADDITIONS

ORIGINAL ARCHITECTS PLANS

NOT SHOWN — STABLES

2004 AFTER WE CLEANED IT UP!

2016

2021

LORAAINE & SENIOR STAFF 2018 (THEY ARE ALL STILL WITH US! 2/2021)

2010

BALL ROOM

BALL ROOM

RECEPTION / DRAWING ROOM

Mt Errington Early Learning Centre

COPY

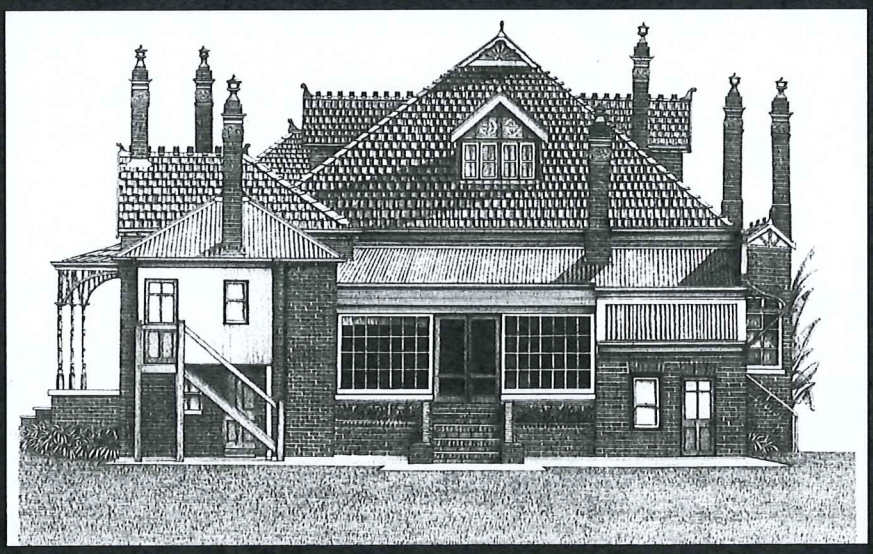
'Belmont' 241 Pacific Highway, Hornsby 2077

## *"A Home Which Shapes A Family's Memories*

***An age old tradition returns - and it's even better***

*The sunsets are the same... People will still come and go as they have for generations... Still intact is a collective memory that says yes, this is how it feels, this is the way it should be...*

***Be Part Of It – Then Pass It On"***



It is with pleasure that Max and Lorraine Lowery invites pre-school parents, staff and friends to an informal gathering at their home, 241 Pacific Highway Hornsby on Sunday March 11th from 3 - 6pm.

# THIS IS A NATIONAL TRUST HERITAGE WEEK EVENT

To showcase adaptive use of a heritage item as a Teaching Pre-school

Originally part of the historic Mt Errington Estate, Belmont is a rambling 23 room Queen Anne style mansion in amazing, original, unmolested condition and winner of the Hornsby Shire 2006 Centenary Heritage Award. Restoration work is ongoing and our architect, Jennifer Hill will be on hand to discuss and elaborate. There will be an exhibition of house portraits (as seen above) by acclaimed artist David Oberdorf and off street parking for around 20 cars, plus bar facilities. This is an adults only event! On-site parking will be for vintage cars only.

***Admission Free*** - however, Hornsby Hospital will be in attendance seeking your generous donation towards the purchase of a Neo-Natal 'Resuscitaire' (resuscitation equipment) for their new Obstets/Paediatric facility – an ongoing commitment by the Mt Errington Pre-School Community.

***RSVP by March 5th***
***Lorraine Lowery 9477 1986***

2016

# A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

# *House Concert*

## Sunday July 3rd, 2016

## 2-5 pm

**Max and Lorraine Lowery are hosting internationally acclaimed concert pianist Roger Woodward, visiting from San Francisco for a concert in our Historic music room which will hopefully recreate listening conditions approximating those envisaged by composers before the appearance of large public concert halls. Roger is amongst the finest musicians Australia has ever produced, so we are incredibly privileged to host this unique and perhaps once in a lifetime event.**

The extraordinary range and sensitivity of Roger will be highlighted during an afternoon of Bach, Debussy, Beethoven and of course Chopin of which he is regarded as a world expert.

Intense and scholarly but never dessicated, his interpretations are always engaged, whether it's the emotionally precise Adagio of Bach's Keyboard Concerto in D Minor, or the modernist whirl of Schoenberg's Piano Concerto Op. 42. Roger's playing brings together faultless technique, bravura power, fiery and sometimes wickedly playful qualities. He shows daring and pushes the expressive envelope wider than most pianists.

Roger was born and grew up on Sydney's North Shore and is currently a Professor at California State University in San Francisco. He is a recipient of many distinguished honours and awards including France's Chevalier de l'ordre des artes et des lettres, Order of the British Empire, Companion of Australia and a designated National living treasure.

Roger will be introduced by our special guest, Dr Ralph Schureck, curator of the Schureck Historic Keyboard Collection and host to regular house concerts featuring rare and irreplaceable instruments at his home on Sydney's upper North Shore.

**Roger will be performing on a restored mid 1800's German Ernst Kapps grand piano (the old Burns Family / King's School Piano).**

Drinks and nibbles will be served during a half hour interval.
We hope you can come along! It is an easy 10 minute level walk from Hornsby Station.
There is off street parking for around 20 cars plus ample street parking.

***This is not a fund-raiser, however there will be a $40 PP entry fee to help towards Rogers travel expenses.***

**Please book early as entry is limited by virtue of space restrictions.**

**'Belmont'** 241 Peats Ferry Road Hornsby 2077 Phone: **9477 1986**
Mobile: **0418 66 80 87** Email: mterringtonelc@bigpond.com

# ROGER WOODWARD HOUSE CONCERT AT MT ERRINGTON EARLY LEARNING CENTRE

*Many old mansions around the North Shore boast that Dame Nellie Melba once sang in their drawing room.*

**Max and Lorraine Lowery** of the grand old mansion Mt Errington Early Learning Centre Hornsby, can go one better!

World famous concert pianist **Roger Woodward** graced the noble halls of their house and childcare centre with an afternoon of Bach, Beethoven and of course Chopin of which he is the renowned world expert.

You may not be aware, but Roger was a 'local'! He was born and educated on the North Shore and is currently a professor at California State University, San Francisco.

Special guests included Roger's wife **Trish**, manager **Marika McLachlan** and master of ceremonies **Dr Ralph Schureck** of Berowra Heights.

Playing on an antique German grand piano, Roger Woodward displayed flawless technique, fiery power and wickedly playful qualities leaving the audience of 70 speechless.

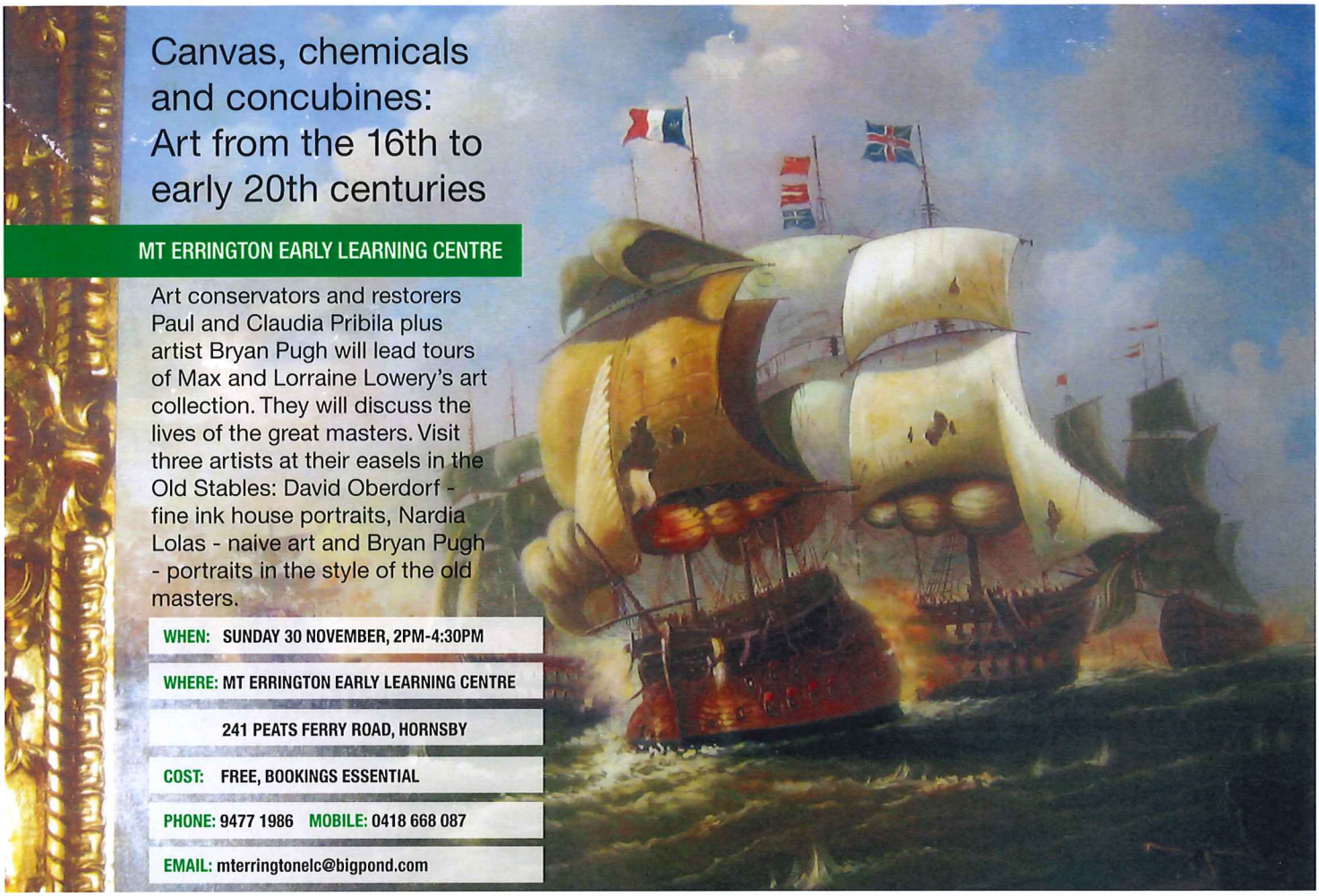
"This was a unique and once in a lifetime event and a milestone in the cultural fabric of Hornsby Shire," said Max Lowery.

"He is perhaps the finest musician Australia has ever produced."

**Photo: from left to right:** Roger Woodward, Max and Lorraine Lowery, Marika McLachlan.

COPY NORTH SHORE TIMES JULY 2016

# A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY



## Canvas, chemicals and concubines: Art from the 16th to early 20th centuries

**MT ERRINGTON EARLY LEARNING CENTRE**

Art conservators and restorers Paul and Claudia Pribila plus artist Bryan Pugh will lead tours of Max and Lorraine Lowery's art collection. They will discuss the lives of the great masters. Visit three artists at their easels in the Old Stables: David Oberdorf - fine ink house portraits, Nardia Lolas - naive art and Bryan Pugh - portraits in the style of the old masters.

**WHEN:** SUNDAY 30 NOVEMBER, 2PM-4:30PM

**WHERE:** MT ERRINGTON EARLY LEARNING CENTRE

241 PEATS FERRY ROAD, HORNSBY

**COST:** FREE, BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL

**PHONE:** 9477 1986 **MOBILE:** 0418 668 087

**EMAIL:** mterringtonelc@bigpond.com

**FREE EVENT**
**BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL**
**PH: 9477 1986**

HORNSBY SHIRE
FOTA
FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS

Belmont C 1898

## SUNDAY 30 NOVEMBER, 2PM - 4:30PM

**MT ERRINGTON EARLY LEARNING CENTRE**
**241 PEATS FERRY ROAD, HORNSBY**

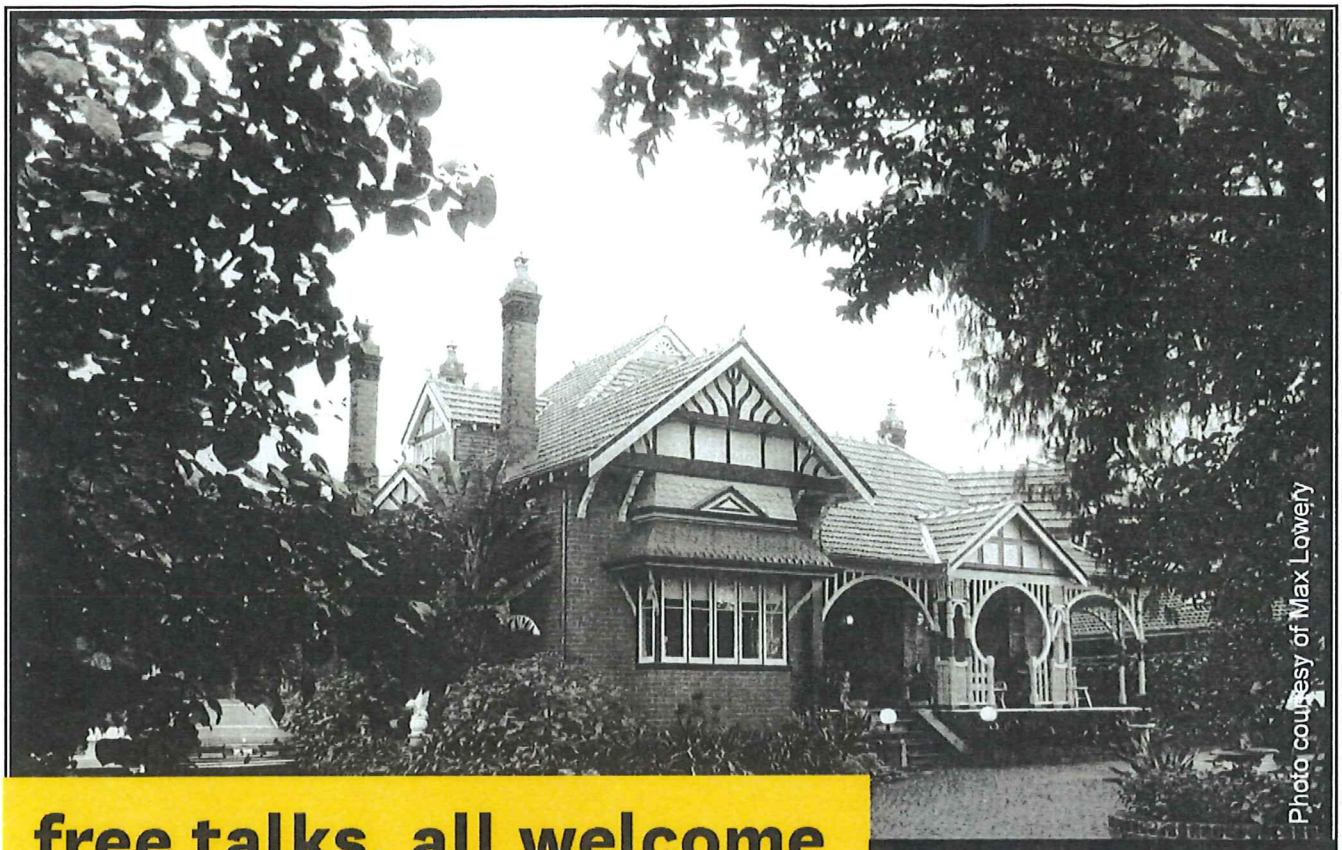


Photo courtesy of Max Lowery

# free talks, all welcome

## Heritage restoration – walk and talk

Join architect Jennifer Hill for a talk and tour explaining the transformation of the heritage listed, *Belmont*, to a home and place of business. Architect led tours will explain the challenges of working on a heritage site.

Free event, bookings essential, call **9477 1986** to register.

AOS **architecture on show**

**Venue**

**Mt Errington Early Learning Centre**

**241 Peats Ferry Road, Hornsby**

**Sunday**

**26 October**

**2.30pm-4.30pm**

**Presented by:**

Mt Errington Early Learning Centre

Australian Institute of Architects

HORNSBY SHIRE FOTA FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS

HORNSBY SHIRE COUNCIL