

2015/2016 Presidents Report

This is my second year as President of the Association and it is my pleasure to report on the activities in the year ending 30th June 2016. We have continued to take a balanced and positive position on a wide range of issues affecting Surrey Hills and have maintained close working relationships with Jane Addis, the Councillor for the Maling Ward, the City of Boroondara and its officers in the pursuit of our aims.

We have organised the Anzac Day Dawn Service at the Shrine in Surrey Gardens; responded to a number of planning applications, both commercial and residential, and proposed planning scheme amendments; funded improvements to Surrey Gardens; organised a community forum on heritage overlays; organised working bees and offered help and advice to a residents action group opposed to a 3 storey development in Whitehorse Road.

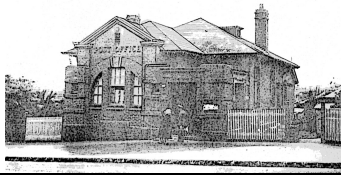
A major disappointment in the year was the decision of the Minister of Planning, Richard Wynne, to reverse a previously approved position on mandatory height limits for Commercial Corridors, including Canterbury Road, in the City of Boroondara via Amendment C255.

To review the activities of the Association in more detail I have divided the projects into two categories, Community and Planning.

Community

ANZAC Day Dawn Service

There is no doubt that the most important community project was the organisation of the Dawn Service on Anzac Day 2016 at the Shrine in Surrey Gardens. Following the first dawn service in 2015, organised by the Association and held at the Shrine in Surrey Gardens, and a detailed debrief after that first



event, changes were made to the program to improve the Service and presentations.

The weather was kind to us on the day, the attendance was substantial (up to 1000) and a number of guests attended, including Josh Freidenberg, Federal Member for Kooyong and the Minister for the Environment and Energy, Graeme Watt, State Member for Burwood, John Pesutto, State Member for Hawthorn, Jim Parke, Mayor of the City of Boroondara and Jane Addis, Councillor for the Maling Ward.

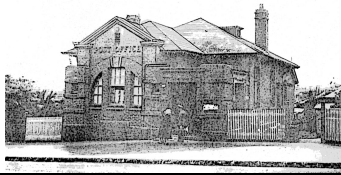
The significant work of the organising committee was evident in a near perfect service, including all the proscribed traditional elements and the involvement of local schools honouring Charles Hogg, Harry Victor Legg and Beatrice Mawson. The success of the event, its planning and structure was a testament to the work put in by the committee and the significant personal involvement of Greg Buchanan, Lynette Giddings and Damien Gardiner. We also acknowledge the involvement of the City of Boroondara.

A Certificate of Appreciation was received from the City of Boroondara for the valuable contribution Surrey Hills Progress Association made to the Gallipoli and Beyond 2015 program of commemorative activities.

Surrey Gardens

During the year, in conjunction with the City of Boroondara, a number of improvements were made or advanced in Surrey Gardens and the Shrine . A new demountable flagpole was installed at the Shrine, prior to the Dawn Service.

New heritage lighting was installed by Council throughout the gardens which significantly improved the appearance of the gardens and increased safety after dark.



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A new more substantial sundial was installed as a replacement for one vandalised last year. Funds for the project were supplied by an incentive payment of \$1000 from the Bendigo Bank, donated to the Association by Justin and Melissa Begg. The Maternal and Child Health Centre building recently recognised as a contributory building to the heritage of Surrey Gardens, has relocated the operations of the Clinic to Verdun Street. The existing building is planned to be restored in early 2017 and negotiations with the City of Boroondara has resulted in the Association being granted access to use the building in the future.

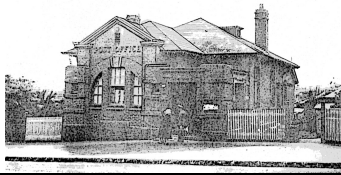
Meetings

At the last AGM held in November 2015 the manager of Strategic Planning for the City of Boroondara, Zoran Jovanovski, and his staff gave a presentation of heritage overlays in Surrey Hills and the details of the proposed heritage amendment to apply to the Surrey Hills South Residential Precinct Heritage Study, including the English Counties Estate, Redvers and Kennealy streets and the southern part of Union Road from Canterbury Road. The meeting was well attended and gave rise to a lively and robust discussion relating to the value and appropriateness of heritage overlays.

Robert Clark, State Government Member for Box Hill, and a resident of Surrey Hills attended a meeting to discuss the issue of grade separation at the Union Road railway crossing, and the need to prioritise this crossing within the current State Government listings for crossing removals.

Working Bee

During the year the Association held a garden cleanup at the Salvation Army Hall in Guildford Road to show our appreciation to the Salvation Army branch for making the hall available for our monthly meetings. We also ran a sausage



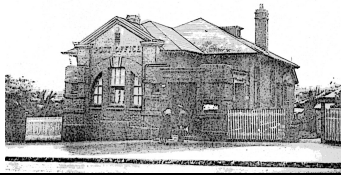
sizzle at the Surrey Hills Family Fun Day organised by the Salvation Army branch in December 2015.

Planning

During the year the Association made submissions to the Minister for Planning in relation to Amendment C255, which sought to remove the mandatory height limits on developments in the Canterbury Road Commercial Corridor and replacing them with preferred height limits, opening the way for taller buildings along that corridor.

We also made submissions to the City of Boroondara in relation to Heritage Overlay C177; the Coles planning permit application, specifically regarding traffic issues; a planning permit application for the demolition of an existing building and replacing it with a two storey house, the design of which is not in keeping with the neighbourhood character of the precinct: proposed changes (Amendment C222) to rezone the large Medlow property in Warrigal Road from Neighbourhood Residential Zone to General Residential Zone. We also presented submissions to Plan Panels Victoria on Amendment C177 and C222.

During the year following VCAT decisions last year to refuse planning permits for developments at 352-358 Canterbury Road (West of Red Rooster and 298 Canterbury Road (including 1A Middlesex Road), new applications were lodged with Council for developments with substantially reduced heights and improved residential amenity, which conform to the recently approved Design and Development Overlay DDO16. Also the proposed development at 352-358 Canterbury Road was a complete revamp of the design, with a reduction from 54 one and two bedroom apartments to 29 dwellings consisting of 17 three storey town houses and 12 one and two bedroom apartments. Both planning permits are a significant improvement on the originals and are currently (as at Oct 17) awaiting a decision by Council.



In November 2015 the Association provided help and guidance to the resident's action group mounting an objection to a planning permit application for a three storey development at 474 Whitehorse Road (cnr. James Street) Surrey Hills. That application was rejected by Council and a subsequent appeal referred to VCAT, the result of which is due in 6-8 weeks time (Dec. 2016).

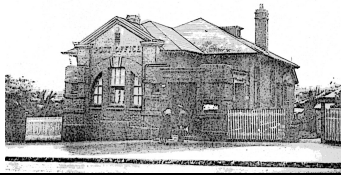
We continue to press the Council on improvements to the weak schedules for residential buildings not covered by the planning process. Our Association believes that the building controls must be amended to ensure that new houses are more proportionate to the size of their allotment and comply with specific standards consistent with respecting the existing elements of neighbourhood character. We believe the key things that need addressing are side and rear setbacks, site coverage and private open space.

Looking Forward

“We still have to face the fact that we live in an area which is now considered to be in the inner ring of Melbourne suburbs, which places it firmly in the sights of the developers. It is also substantially an old area ripe for urban renewal. This means that the Association in the future needs to be vigilant in reviewing and assessing any proposals or planning permit applications and actively defend its turf in order to protect what makes Surrey Hills one of the areas premier suburbs.”

This was one of the opening comments from last year's Presidents Report, and it is truer today than it was a year ago, and the Minister for Planning is pursuing what we believe is a process to limit public debate on the matter of changes to the Boroondara Planning Scheme. (see P1 para 3).

SHPA also has a great concern about the process which lacks transparency and appears to be designed to limit public debate about a significant policy change.



We consider that the proposed changes have the potential to detrimentally impact on the character of the municipality and the amenity of many residents. Limiting consultation is inappropriate and raises concerns of procedural fairness and natural justice.

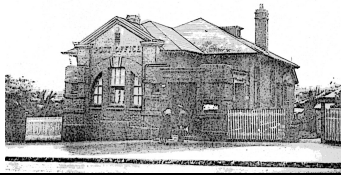
Despite our objections and those of other interested parties' including the City of Boroondara, the Amendment was incorporated into the Boroondara Planning Scheme earlier this year.

In the future there will be more pressure brought to bear on inner ring suburbs for more dense developments and if we are to have a credible voice in support of our community, we need to increase our reach into the Surrey Hills community. Our future plans need to address this issue while continuing our community activities.

Acknowledgements

Community based organisations will only ever achieve their objectives with the active involvement of members and supporters. The Surrey Hills Progress Association is a small group of genuinely dedicated residents and I offer my sincere thanks to everyone who has been involved in the last year.

To achieve a working relationship with the City of Boroondara Council is essential to properly represent the interests of the residents of Surrey Hills and I would like to offer the Association's thanks to Cr Jane Addis, the councillor for the Maling Ward, for all her active help and co-operation covering a wide range of projects and topics in the past year and the involvement of many Council officers. Their support has been essential for the achievement of good outcomes.



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Our thanks also go to the Salvation Army for the use of their facilities and we look forward to a continuing mutually beneficial alliance in the future.

Finally, my sincere personal thanks go to the members of the SHPA for entrusting me with the position of President over the past two years. It has been a genuine privilege to be involved with this organisation.

Cliff Williams

10th November 2016.