

13 November 2018

Mr Jorge Van Den Berge
Planning Officer
Independent Planning Commission
Level 3
201 Elizabeth Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000



Dear Mr Van Den Berge

**ST ANDREWS ROAD, VARROVILLE
POTENTIAL SHR BOUNDARY REVISION
EXPERT SUBMISSION**

This letter has been prepared in support of the Catholic Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust (CMCT) application to establish the Macarthur Memorial Park cemetery on part of the large property currently known as *Varroville*, in St Andrews Road, Varroville.

I have been engaged by CMCT to undertake an independent Peer Review of the research and analysis of the heritage characteristics and significance of the overall *Varroville* undertaken by Dr Sue Rosen and URBIS Heritage. Their research has been prepared in the context of the CMCT proposal to establish a new cemetery on that part of the land beyond the current State Heritage Register listed land that surrounds the historic *Varroville* House.

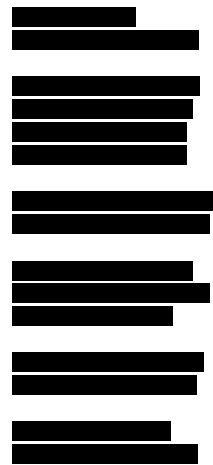
Most importantly, these expert consultants, and other members of the design team, have been charged with formulating a design for the proposed cemetery that respects, protects and enhances the presentation and interpretation of the heritage values of the entire historic estate.

I have an honours degree in Architecture, a Masters Degree in Heritage Conservation and have worked in the field of heritage conservation in Australia and internationally since the mid 1970s. I am a member of Australia ICOMOS, the National Trust of Australia (NSW) and *AusHeritage*. I was the President of the ICOMOS International Cultural Tourism Committee between 2001 and 2011 and currently sit on the Senior Advisory panel of the Global Heritage Fund.

Over the last 40 years I have inspected over 300 World Heritage Sites to assess their visitor management and heritage interpretation programmes. Several of these projects have been on behalf of the UNESCO World Heritage Office or the UN World Tourism Organisation.

I have provided heritage consultancy services to CMCT in regard to their cemeteries at Rookwood and Liverpool, including contributing to the preparation of the Landscape Master Plan of the entire Rookwood Necropolis and Cemetery. On behalf of CMCT, I was the Chair of the Varroville Design Committee that recommended the selection of FJMT Architects for the design of all the funerary and visitor services buildings at *Varroville*.

I have undertaken a detailed inspection of the overall site and also reviewed the URBIS *Conservation Management Plan* for the property. Some time ago I reviewed several public submissions prepared on behalf of the owners of *Varroville* house.



In preparing this submission, I take note of the following conclusions in the reports prepared by Dr Rosen and URBIS:

Dr Rosen, in her correspondence to the Commission, dated 12 November 2018 concluded:

I consider the proposal to be an extremely positive outcome in terms of heritage conservation and that it should be welcomed for the rare opportunity it provides to the community and the state.

An extension of the curtilage of Varroville house will compromise the viability of the project and the generous overall plan providing for the landscaped setting which factors in the impact of the proposal on Varroville homestead and views to and from it. Integral to the proposal is a respect for the cultural heritage of the site and a desire to draw that out through interpretation of the site. Further, under the proposal, the general public will have access to the property for the first time since 1810, and the opportunity to understand the nature of early development in the area in an expansive setting.

Section 7, Conclusion and Recommendations of the URBIS *Heritage Impact Statement*, dated October 2017 concluded:

The Macarthur Memorial Park proposal is underpinned by a strong understanding of the heritage values and significance of the place (including natural and scenic values, built form, the cultural landscape, views and vistas, European and Indigenous archaeology etc). This has informed every aspect of the proposal, from the treatment of the landscape, the location and development of different types of memorialisation, tree and shrub plantings (species and siting), siting of roads and infrastructure, siting and architectural design of new buildings, the conservation and adaptive reuse of the outbuildings precinct, WSUD and treatment of the dams, conservation and reinterpretation of significant landscape elements, provision for public art, and regeneration of CPW/ MSW.

The result is a highly considered proposal that not only retains and conserves but also celebrates the heritage aspects of the place.

CONCLUSIONS

- The current physical nature of the Varroville estate has evolved over some 200 years of agricultural use and natural environmental forces such that claims of retained original or early 19th century authenticity regarding the water management system of creeks and dams, are considered to be unsustainable.
- The complex process of design and design development of the proposed Macarthur Memorial Park is being undertaken by a highly qualified and fully informed consultant team who are exercising the greatest respect for the nature of the existing cultural landscape and its heritage values.
- The project will provide unique and well managed public access to the land, including a series of excellent heritage interpretation experiences and opportunities.
- There are appropriate provisions with the existing Heritage Management Framework for the relevant consent authorities to have absolute confidence in the long term protection and management of the heritage significance of the overall site, including *Varroville House*
- The recommended extension of the State Heritage Register listing outwards from Varroville (SHR 00737) over the adjoining and surrounding land, which is the subject of the proposed cemetery, has the potential to constrain aspects of the proposal by subjecting parts of the subject land to inappropriate and unnecessary restrictions in gaining consent for the proposed use.

RECOMMENDATION

After considering the expert opinions and capability of CMCT to deliver this strategically important cemetery in a highly responsible manner, this submission recommends that the Independent Planning Commission, in exercising its duties under s34(1A) of the *Heritage Act 1977*, should advise the Minister that an extension of SHR 00737 curtilage, as presently proposed, is not necessary, desirable or required for the long term conservation of *Varroville House*.

Yours faithfully

[Redacted signature block]





GRAHAM BROOKS

Managing Director, GBA Heritage Pty Ltd

Positions Held

Managing Director, GBA Heritage Pty Ltd, 2015 -
Managing Director, Graham Brooks & Associates Pty Ltd, 1996 – 2015
Director, Schwager Brooks and Associates Pty Ltd, 1984 – 1996
Associate Director, Travis Partners, 1977 – 1984
Architect, Pollard Thomas & Edwards, London, 1975 – 1977
Architect, Commonwealth Department of Works, 1972 – 1975

Professional Qualifications

Bachelor of Architecture (Hons), Sydney University, 1972
Master of the Built Environment (B Cons) UNSW 1984
Australian Institute of Architects, 1974
Associate Royal Institute of British Architects, 1975
Registered Architect, New South Wales
Member, Australia ICOMOS

Professional Associations

President ICOMOS International Committee on Cultural Tourism, 2001 – 2011
Chairman, AusHeritage Ltd, 1999-2001
Chairman, National Trust (NSW) Historic Buildings Committee, 1996-1999
Former Heritage Adviser, Liverpool City Council c1995-2005
Member, Senior Advisory Panel, Global Heritage Fund 2010-
Member, National Trust of Australia (NSW) 1973-
Member Australia ICOMOS, 1980-
UNESCO Monitoring Mission to World Heritage Site of Borobudur, 2003, 2006, 2007
World Heritage Centre Monitoring Mission to Ajanta & Ellora Caves, India, 2004-2010
Visiting Professor, Institute of Tourism Studies, Macao, 2006
Former Executive Committee Member, Australia ICOMOS, 1990-1992
Former Member Heritage Council Technical Advisory Committee on Materials Conservation, RAI Heritage Committee & RAHS Historic Buildings Committee

CAREER SUMMARY

I have worked in the fields of Architectural Design, Heritage Conservation and Cultural Tourism Management for some 40 years, in Australia, the United Kingdom and more recently for UNESCO in Asia. During that period I have conducted heritage assessments and developed heritage management protocols for hundreds of historic buildings and places. My office has conducted hundreds more under my supervision.

I have lectured widely to business, heritage, professional and student groups on heritage assessments, heritage management, conservation practice, preparing heritage sites for cultural tourism and the methodologies of heritage asset management. I have participated in many appeals before the Land & Environment Court, acting on behalf of both Respondents and Applicants, and have also acted as a Court Appointed Heritage Expert.