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13th November 2018

Prof Mary O'Kane, AC
Chair, Independent Planning Commission
Level 3, 201 Elizabeth Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Re: Varroville: Proposed listing on State Heritage Register. AO 92 /18 SHR 00737

I write to support the Catholic Cemeteries Board's application to establish a cemetery at Varroville. Following a design competition, our practice, fjmt studio, was appointed as architects for the project.

fjmt are dedicated to design excellence and the enhancement of the public domain. Our most significant projects have been community, cultural and public buildings designed with great sensitivity and care. These projects have received the highest National and International awards including the World Architecture Building of the Year award.

The Macarthur Memorial Park design is amongst the most important commissions we have undertaken as it will set a new standard for the integration of memorial landscape and architecture; uniquely Australian and comparable to the very finest international precedents.

It has been designed with great care and sensitivity to the natural landscape, heritage and topography of this site. Landscape and built form are integrated and brought into harmony, with outdoor rooms, courtyards, gardens, terraces and water, framed with an architecture that grows from the ground and hovers over sensitive landscape.

The series of related building structures are carefully positioned as pavilions nestled into the landscape. A key design element to all the buildings are the light and organic curvilinear roof forms that purposefully draw inspiration from the surrounding topography and help to intentionally soften the forms against the landscape. In particular, the chapel roof has been developed and represented as a series of contoured surfaces reminiscent of the undulating ground surface.

Natural and lasting materials sustainably sourced Australian timbers, rammed earth, and bronze frames will create a sympathy with the landscape and a unique Australian identity.

Directors

Richard Francis-Jones
Jeff Morehen

Principals

Elizabeth Carpenter
Geoff Croker
David Haseler
Christine Kwong
Johnathan Redman
Sean McPhee
Adrian Yap
Simon Barr
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Louise Goodman
William Fritchard
Michelle Ho
Ailsa Jones
David Moody
Katherine Tracey



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Together these interlocking elements of architectural form, geometry and landscape will create a remarkable memorial park experience. An experience of peace, permanence and harmony that is, inviting to visitors and unique to this place. A moving experience that through it's essential nature is timeless, lasting and assuring.

This is a very worthy and potentially important cultural project that will set a new standard for the design of memorial parks sensitively integrated into the landscape and that can truly be called Australian. I recommend and support the project in the highest terms.

The premature and insensitive curtilage extension presently proposed jeopardizes the potential of the project to succeed that allows for the uniquely Australian integration of memorial landscape and architecture and should not be supported by the Independent Planning Commission.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Richard Francis-Jones'.

Richard Francis-Jones
Design Director