

CAMBERWELL HISTORY

RECORDING THE HISTORY OF CAMBERWELL
AND DISTRICT

Camberwell Historical Society



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Principal Patron: Professor Emeritus Geoffrey Blainey, AC
Patron: Her Worship the Mayor of Boroondara, Cr Sophie Torney

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

George Fernando

We are faced with an unprecedented attack on our heritage buildings and local culture and environment by the State Government's Activity Centres legislation. Recently I attended Parliament to see David Davis MP present a petition calling on the Government to listen to the people who wish to keep a voice in what is planned for their suburb and for Melbourne as a whole. Our recent talk by Emeritus Professor Michael Buxton addressed this issue. A report of what he said can be found in this newsletter.

ST JOHN'S CAMBERWELL - 70 YEARS AFTER THE FIRE



The original Church of England at Camberwell Junction was built in 1862, with the first service held in 1863. Due to the size of the congregation, two more bays were added in 1868. The Bell Tower was added in 1924.

On 18 March 1955 an arsonist set fire to the church, which was destroyed, although the Bell Tower and Parish Hall survived. Within a week of the fire the Reverend Tom Thomas launched an appeal to rebuild St John's.

An article from The Argus dated April 22, 1955, recorded the fire was started by John Thomas McPhee, who told police he lit fires because of the thrill of seeing the firecars. Mr McPhee was responsible for burning down three churches and two other buildings, causing £122,160 in total damages, with St John's suffering £100,000 of that amount.

Ms Carter, who has been a parishioner of St John's for over 80 years, said the church community had

immediately decided to rebuild, setting up the hall as a temporary worship space by the following Sunday. She said parishioners cleaned approximately 30,000 bricks from the rubble to reuse in the foundation of the new church. Many also pledged to donate money for the next three years to pay for the construction of the new church building. The rebuilt church, designed by renowned architect Louis Williams, was completed in November 1957, just two years after the fire.

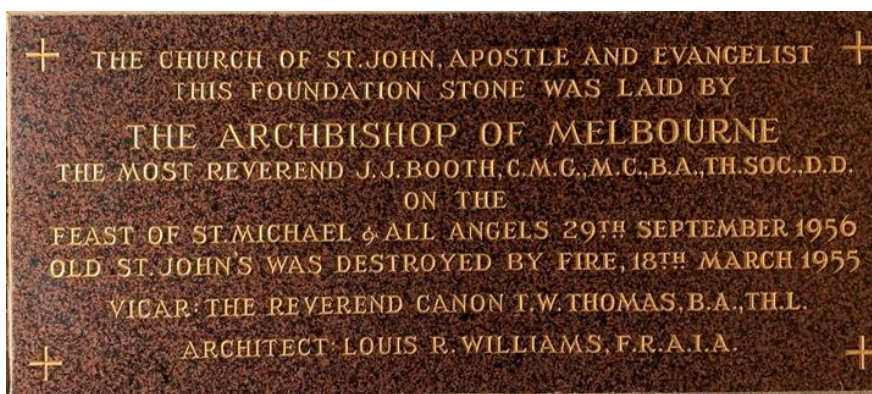
Parishioner, Helen Howells said, “The fire in 1955 was a crisis for us. We had planned to be married in January 1956 but by then the fire had occurred. The people of the parish rallied around to help clean up the mess. The first response had been to consider going to St Mark’s further up Burke Road for religious events, but our Vicar Tom Thomas called on us to keep our parish life at St John’s going in the church hall which had not been burnt down. This would be a way of maintaining the life of our parish. We were married in the Parish Hall.



Marg Anderson, parishioner, said, “The fire that burned down the church in 1955 was truly devastating for all. I remember working parties consisting of parishioners and other locals cleaning the bricks of the ruins. Services were held in the Parish Hall while the new church was being built. My first child, Richard, was baptised in the old church, my second child, Christopher, was baptised in the surviving ‘Stump’ of the Belltower after the fire and my youngest child, Jane was baptised in the new church,”

Left: Cover of St John's reconstruction appeal, featuring vicar the Reverend Tom Thomas in the remains of the church.

Below: Memorial plaque in St John's Camberwell.



A commemorative service was held at 10am on March 16 at St John’s Church, 552 Burke Rd, Camberwell.

Information and photographs supplied by Kent Fisk, parish archivist, St John’s Camberwell.

A Message From Your Vicar

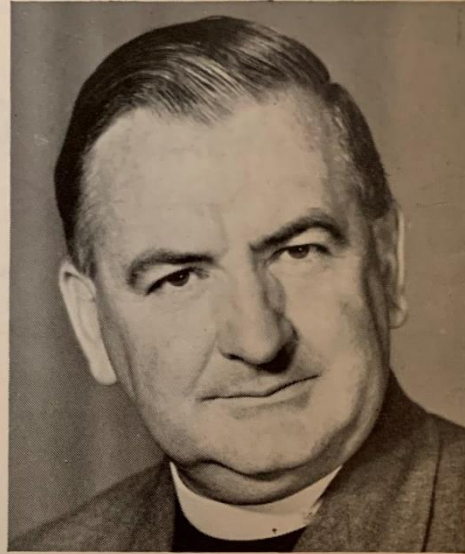
Dear Parishioners and Friends of St. John's,

No one of us, I am sure, had the faintest notion as we went to bed on March 17th that we would wake up in the morning to find our beloved Church gone, virtually destroyed by fire. But that is what happened, as we all know only too well, and it is a grim and sad fact which has to be faced, as real Christians have always faced their troubles, boldly, courageously, and with the help of Almighty God.

It is in order to face this fact that your Vestry has empowered a strong and able Committee to launch the St. John's Reconstruction Appeal for £70,000, which represents the amount needed over and above our insurance to rebuild St. John's. St. John's is so much a part of the cities of Camberwell and Hawthorn, and its influence for the holy things of Christ's religion has touched so many lives over the last ninety years, that there are bound to be many outside the ranks of our worshippers who will want to help. But there can be no doubt that the responsibility for the bulk of the money required will fall upon us who are actually St. John's, Camberwell.

This presents a tremendous challenge to us all and we will need to be sacrificial, bold, and realistic in our giving. As I said on the first Sunday after the fire, this for which we are being asked to give is no trivial thing, no lesser object of second-rate importance. It is our Church itself, the place in which we and our children worship, where the Sacraments are administered, where marriages are celebrated, to which so many of our dead are taken for prayers, and from which, above all, there goes out without ceasing, witness and influence for the things of Christ in a needy world. If we do not meet the challenge of the Appeal, we will be without our Church which stands for all this. But I, personally, have no doubt whatever of the outcome.

A large band of the men of St. John's has volunteered to call on everyone on the parish roll to lay our needs before them and to seek their help. The basis of the Appeal is that our members and friends are asked to pledge themselves to give a stated sum each week for 156 weeks (3 years). Most of us would find it extremely difficult to give a substantial capital sum, but there are few who, for so splendid and essential a cause, cannot give a substantial amount in weekly instalments. No



soliciting will be done indirectly or by mail. The basis of it all is face-to-face, personal solicitation, and the man who asks for your pledge on behalf of St. John's will have first made his own 156-week pledge. We are very anxious to preserve the 156-week pledge principle and only in the case of very large gifts do we desire to receive a lump sum. The 156-week basis of the scheme does not mean that it will be three years before we have our new Church.

Only one pledge is to be made public and that is your Vicar's. Mrs. Thomas and I have pledged ourselves to give 156 weekly amounts of £2. This will not be possible without real sacrifice, but I have no doubt that this enterprise is infinitely worth all the sacrifice and "going without" we can put into it.

Will you sacrifice also for this splendid cause? I have no doubt whatever that you will, and that in doing this thing together we ourselves shall reap the reward, for it is one of the oldest of all Christian principles that when we give sacrificially we grow spiritually.

There is nothing which is so truly ours forever as that which we give to God.

God bless you all. May He go with each one of us in this great enterprise.

Sincerely,

T. H. Thomas

Vicar.

FROM CAMBERWELL TO SHETLAND IN SEARCH OF MY FAMILY'S STORY

Steve Foley

All my life I had been conscious of an ancestral connection to Shetland, but like many Australians of my generation, I had only a few fragments to assemble the jigsaw that was my Scottish heritage.

I knew that my great-grandfather, William Pole Williamson, had been born in Lerwick in 1854; that he and his older brother had relocated with their father to Edinburgh where, I was told, they shortened their surname to Williams.



Left: Lerwick, Scotland's most northerly and easterly town.

CREDIT: ISTOCK

The family 'archive' – mostly oral history passed from my grandfather, Roy Williams, to my mother Mildred, known all her life as Billee, and a scattering of faded photographs – were the only threads in a story that had been lost.

Professionally I'd dug into other people's lives; in retirement I had the time to probe my own.

My starting point was only a 10 minute stroll from where I live in the leafy suburb of Camberwell: the house of my great-grandfather, a 10 roomed, double-storey Victorian property named Eelundie, commissioned in 1884 when Will, as he was known, was 30.

It's still standing regally, framed by intricate cast-iron lacework made at a foundry in Edinburgh, a fitting status symbol for a man known to his peers as a 'tremendous grafter'.

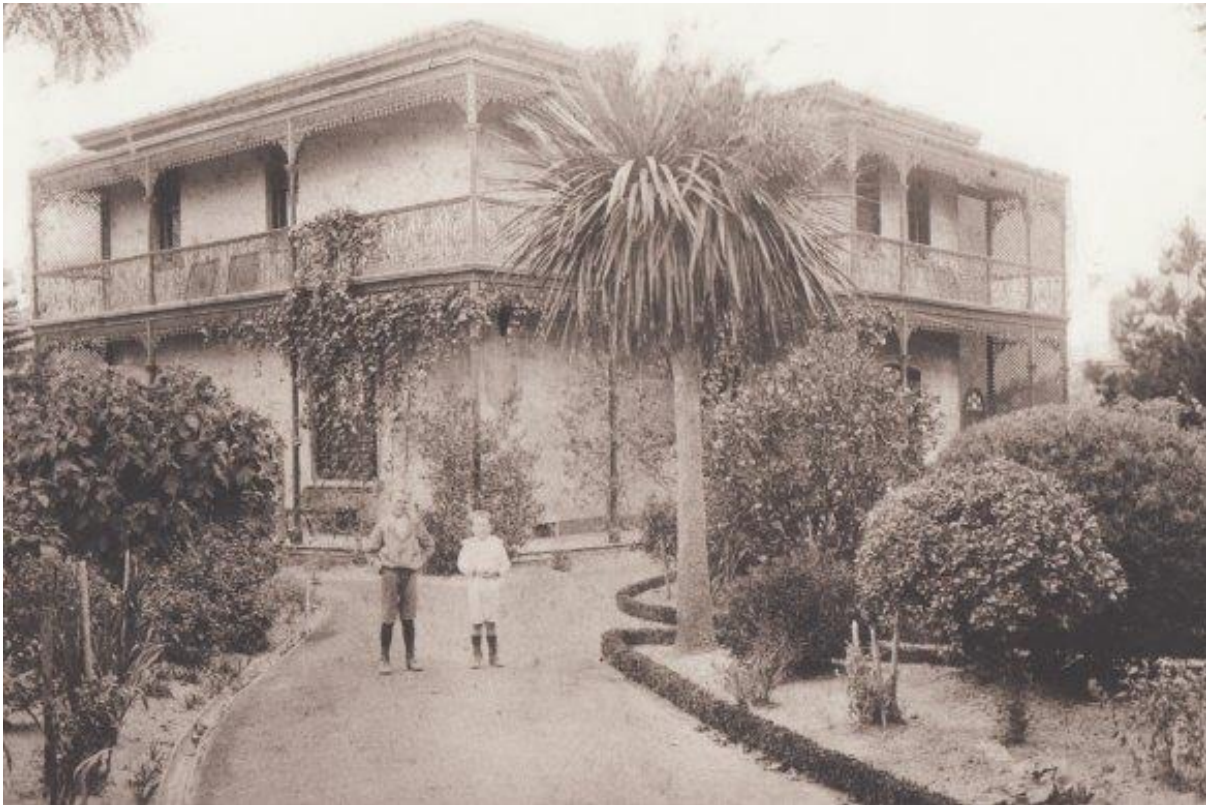
Emigrating from Scotland, Will became a commercial traveller, a so-called 'knight of the road', venturing by rail and horse and buggy as far as Western Australia, north Queensland and Tasmania, selling tea and other essentials.

To his employer, fellow Scot, James Service, head of one of the most respected mercantile firms in Australia, my great-grandfather was 'Ten Ton' Williams on account of the vast volumes he shifted.

Success as a salesman provided the funds to buy Eelundie, set on a double allotment in one of the new 'land boom' subdivisions, far removed from the ills of the inner city.

Once established, and only then, did he ask permission to wed his sweetheart, Gertrude Adams, whose father was a pillar of the Primitive Methodist Church and an avowed teetotaler. Will was 32 when they married; together they made Eelundie their haven – an idyllic white-picket paradise to raise six children (a seventh died at 20 days).

With a prodigious work ethic and a family to support (his wife's sister and their father also lived with them), Will was unstinting. 'He never spared himself where business was to be done,' his employers later noted.



Above: Steve Foley's grandfather Roy Williams (right) with his brother Bert at William Pole Williams' house in Camberwell, called 'Eelundie'.



Left: Steve Foley's great-grandfather William Pole Williams, a commercial traveller, setting off from home.

A treasured photo shows him setting off on one of his journeys: he always took a leather suitcase for his clothes and a Gladstone bag filled with samples; he would don a greatcoat buttoned to the collar, and wear a Homburg as popularised by the Prince of Wales (later Edward VII), but for added warmth he slung a green tartan rug over his shoulder that would become a family heirloom.

When Will's son, my grandfather Roy, was wounded at the Battle of Passchendaele in 1917, he was evacuated to England. He returned home at war's end with a 20-year-old English bride to live with his parents at Eelundie, where soon a third generation began.

In 1922 my mother was born under the same roof. She never knew her grandfather but told me Will had shown unfailing kindness to her young mother so far from her

home.

The last link with our Scottish homeland was severed when Will died, aged 66. For much of the last century, Shetland remained almost mythical to us. Without names, addresses or photos there was no way to connect the two worlds.

Our Shetland story might have ended there, but my wife and I decided to take a bucket-list cruise from Bergen to London in the northern summer of 2019. On Day 10 we were scheduled to stop in Lerwick.

This prodigal Shetlander was hoping to learn more about the isles where the roots of the Williamson and Pole clans are deeply planted.



Left: Bressay Lighthouse south of Lerwick.

CREDIT: HAJOTTHU VIA WIKIPEDIA

Days before I left Australia my cousin, historian Dr Katti Williams, provided a critical lead. She discovered that our great-great-grandmother, Janet Pole Williamson, was buried in the Knab Road Cemetery.

Janet lived with husband James, a draper-tailor, in 1851, and No. 1 Pilot Lane in 1866, the year Janet died. Two professional guides I tried to engage were fully booked but referred me to the Shetland Family History Society.

While sailing through Norwegian waters I made contact with their chairwoman, Susan Cooper. We only had a window of four hours before the Viking Sea sailed. Could the society help me locate my ancestor's grave and the two addresses in The Lanes of Lerwick? Susan's response was overwhelming.

On Saturday July 27, in glorious sunshine, Elizabeth Angus, a SFHS stalwart, greeted us under the 'Welcome to Shetland' sign at the top of Victoria Pier.



From the first glimpse of Bressay Lighthouse, shimmering white in the early sun, to the stone houses that rise out of Lerwick harbour, I had a deepening sense of coming 'home'. Elizabeth took us the short distance to the two addresses we had provided: both in steep, narrow lanes that are part of the fabric of Lerwick.

Left: The lanes of Lerwick.

CREDIT: @LANES LERWICK/FACEBOOK

One at a time we squeezed along Pilot Lane and climbed to the top of what was Thatch Lane, now called Back Charlotte Street, looking for the house in which Will was born.

The buildings that line the lanes have been conserved but in the 1850s and '60s, with hundreds of occupants crammed into the same quarters, living conditions were grim.

A picture was emerging. Eelundie, with its sun-drenched orchard and a verdant garden filled with exotic plants Will gathered on his travels to the Outback and tropics, was the antithesis of all this.

Elizabeth walked us up the hill to the old cemetery.

I asked her: 'Do you know where my great-great-grandmother is buried?'

'Oh, yes,' she replied reassuringly in a gentle, lilting voice.



Left: Steve Foley at the grave of his great-great-grandmother, Janet Pole Williamson, in the Knab Road Cemetery, Lerwick, Shetland.

CREDIT: ANNE FOLEY

As she pushed open the gate, I realised how fortunate we were. In the time we had, we would never have found the grave without assistance.

Elizabeth took us straight to Janet's final resting place, shaded by a tree on a grassy slope facing the sea; the headstone propped up by a wooden frame to stop it crumbling.

As I touched the weathered stone I felt an overpowering surge of emotion: I was, to my knowledge, the first Australian descendant in 153 years to stand on this ground. The words 'Janet Pole Williamson' were faintly discernible, but the remainder of the transcription was illegible. Yet Elizabeth had painstakingly transcribed the entire text:

*"Erected by JAMES WILLIAMSON in memory of his dearly beloved wife and four children
JANET POLE died 2 Octr 1866 aged 53 years ANN ELDER died 8 Sept 1855 aged 9 years
BRUCE POLE died 6 Sept 1852 aged 1 year & 9 months Also two infant sons These lovely
flowers here withered lies has gone to bloom in paradise"*

Four of Will's seven siblings died prematurely. They were buried with their mother. I never knew this.

Back at Elizabeth's home she handed over a dossier, one of those momentous reveals you see in the TV series *Who Do You Think You Are?* Jasmine Moncrieff, the SFHS' researcher, had diligently woven together the lives of the Pole-Williamson clans, reaching back generations to the 1600s.

To know the identities of each of the Williamson children and their lineage was a revelation - but another secret was unlocked that day. Janet had been one of eight Pole children born in Shetland, three of whom emigrated to Australia and New Zealand. Two of her brothers – Will's uncles – were in business in Melbourne. Suddenly another dimension was added, another trail to explore.

Steve Foley was editor of *The Sunday Age* from 1999 to 2002. This article originally appeared in *Coontin Kin*, the quarterly journal of the Shetland Family History Society.

NEWS FROM BOROONDARA HERITAGE GROUP FOR ADVOCACY AND PROTECTION - BHGAP

**Update on new densification planning zones:
Long term conservation of Boroondara's
protected heritage places is at risk**

BHGAP together with the newly formed Boroondara Community Group (BCG), is working to understand the State Government's proposed planning reforms that BHGAP believes will have an enormous impact on future generations, community, liveability and amenity. Across Melbourne the Government has

gazetted changes to densify suburban streets close to busy activity centres like Camberwell Junction and transport links including Kew Junction, Ashburton and Riversdale stations. Unless disallowed by the Legislative Council by 13 May 2025 these changes will become effective.



BHGAP believes that heritage homes and buildings are under threat. Whilst the heritage overlay will remain it will be less effective in protecting heritage values of streetscapes and individually significant places. Streets in the new catchment (see map) are being rezoned. The new zone (the Housing Choice and Transport Zone) aims to offer greater housing diversity and a transition of density between 12 storeys at Camberwell Junction and the 1-2 storey neighbourhood residential homes outside the new zone. Closer to the activity centre (HCTZ 1 on map) places are rezoned for 4-6 storey apartments. Streets in HCTZ 2 are being rezoned for 3-4 storeys.

BHGAP believes there is a serious risk that over time heritage protected streets in the catchment will lose their historic streetscape character and have their cultural significance degraded. BHGAP is also concerned that over time we could see streets of heritage houses removed from precincts should their intactness and historic character be significantly degraded.

The Royal Historical Society of Victoria is also concerned and is asking each historical society and its members to write to the Minister for Planning Sonya Kilkenny to object. See RHSV letter below.

BHGAP encourages all CHS members to write to both Upper and Lower House MPs as well as the Minister for Planning to express your concerns. Names and contact details are available at www.borocogroup.org

BCG shared an update on recent announcements for Activity Centres with its Members. It has kindly agreed for BHGAP to include it below. For further updates you can join its Facebook Group at [Boroondaracommunitygroup](https://www.facebook.com/BoroondaraCommunityGroup) - catchments and skyscrapers won't deliver or sign up via its website at www.borocogroup.org

Summary from Boroondara Community Group – Activity Centre Program as at 9 March 2025

1. **Camberwell Junction Activity Centre & Catchment final plan** - the Government has released the final map for the Camberwell Junction Activity Centre. The catchment has been slightly reduced. However, many of the streets removed may be caught in catchments around train stations at Glenferrie, Auburn, Riversdale and Willison stations.

The concept of “inner” and “outer” catchments has been introduced. It is now proposed that “inner catchment” areas have a height limit of 4 storeys, but up to 6 storeys on large sites (over 1000m² and with a 20-metre frontage). The “outer catchment” areas can be up to 3 storeys, but up to 4 storeys on these larger sites. The original proposal was 4-6 storeys throughout the catchment.

The concept of an 800m catchment zone has been rebranded a “10-minute walkable” zone. Officially the new zone is the “Housing Choice Transport Zone” (HCTZ – dubbed “the ham and cheese toastie”). The purpose of the Toastie is density and housing diversity. Most of the catchment is currently zoned for 1-2 storey dwellings and retention of character and heritage. The removal of character and heritage will provide developers with much greater latitude on design.

The Housing Choice Transport Zone (HCTZ) has been signed off by the Minister for Planning as amendment VC257 to the Boroondara Planning Scheme. The Minister tabled it in Parliament on 4 March 2025. It can be disallowed by a majority in the Upper House within 10 Sitting Days (13/14 May).

The area designated as the “core” (so-called busy activity) part of the Activity Centre has not changed. Council is working through the new planning rules for the heights/mass/setbacks etc of what can be built in the core.

2. 25 more train and tram activity centres across Melbourne – the Government has announced 4 more activity centres in Boroondara, at Kew Junction (tram zone) and Riversdale, Willison and Ashburton Stations on the Alamein line. This brings the total number of Activity Centres in Boroondara to 8. In neighbouring Stonnington, new activity centres at East Malvern and Holmesglen stations will impact the southern areas of Boroondara. Activity Centres in Stonnington that already affect the southern parts of Boroondara are at Tooronga, Gardiner, Glen Iris and Darling stations.

The Government says the activity centres on the Alamein line will be smaller neighbourhood activity centres to accommodate “modest growth” due to the reduced capacity of the train service. There is no indication how far the catchment zones associated with these activity centres will extend (ie 800 metres or less?) nor proposed height. The “core” could be either the train stations themselves or the shops at Middle Camberwell. Presumably, heights will be below those proposed for Camberwell, ie 12 storeys. The Government says consultation on the first tranche of 25 Activity Centres including, Hawthorn, Glenferrie and Auburn stations will begin in April. Consultation on the more recent announcements will start later. The intention is for the new plans to be in place by the end of 2025.

3. Myth Busting: Heritage homes are under threat – no concessions have been made by the State Government to protect heritage homes in the catchment or core. The Government says, “heritage overlays will remain”. This is disingenuous as the new HCTZ’s focus on density and diversity will mean heritage will be a consideration that can be trumped by the new zone. This was confirmed by State Planning Officials at the recent Hawthorn Town Hall Information Forum.

Approximately 4500 heritage properties in the Camberwell Junction catchment alone remain under threat. The figure will be substantially higher for all of Boroondara – see map below.

4. Townhouse Development & 3 storey apartment/ Rescode reforms – the State Government has announced a new “deemed to comply” planning process for townhouse and apartments developments up to 3 storeys. If the proposal meets the “deemed to comply” checklist there will be **no right to appeal to VCAT except on heritage grounds for places in the heritage overlay**. The changes will mean reduced boundary setbacks (9m to 6m) at the front and

6m to 3m at the side except to the south boundary, increased site coverage, reduced open space, reduced tree canopy and reduced protection from overshadowing and overlooking. The Government is developing a new code for buildings between 4 and 6 storeys but there is no time frame set out as yet.

5. **Housing Targets – “bully boy” tactics** - the State Government has slightly reduced Boroondara’s new housing target from 67,000 to 65,500 new homes by 2051. However, the Premier, Jacinta Allan, has threatened all local councils that their power to make planning decisions will be removed if housing targets are not met and planning applications are not approved. Boroondara approves more than 90% of applications.

6. **Plan for Victoria/ Car parking at apartment blocks reduced** - the State Government has released its Plan for Victoria which outlines a state-wide vision for how Victoria will grow. The Plan replaces the existing metropolitan strategy *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050* and regional growth plans. Under the Plan, car parking requirements for apartments built near transport connections will be eased.

7. **Single Dwelling Covenants** - BCG is liaising with Boroondara Council to better understand the impact of rezoning on homes with Single Dwelling Covenants.

8. **Future Homes** - Four 3 storey apartments template designs are already available to developers for \$150. These State Government “cookie cutter” designs will be fast-tracked for approval in the new HCTZ and any land already zoned General Residential if that land is less than 800m from an Activity Centre. For the purpose of Future Homes activity centres include smaller centres known as “neighbourhood activity centres”. Residents will have reduced rights to object and challenge at VCAT for Future Home development.

BCG will continue to provide the community with information and advocate for a better way to address housing affordability in Victoria that retains Boroondara’s character, heritage, liveability and amenity. Alternative models, including those outlined by Boroondara Council have not been considered by the Government.

For more information:

www.borocogroup.org – sign up for updates

FaceBook: Boroondara Community Group – catchments & skyscrapers won’t deliver

www.boroondara.vic.gov.au for information from Council. Sign up for updates & view Statements from the Mayor Sophie Torney

Instagram - BoroondaraCommunityGroup



25 November 2024

To all RHSV members and historical societies,

Dear Friends,

I am writing to ask you to take action in the face of recently announced government plans to facilitate intense development across Victoria while giving short shrift to heritage.

The proposed changes would place much of Melbourne and many regional centres under the Activity Centre zone, extended by a new 'Walkable Catchment Zone', in which six-storey or higher development will be encouraged in every way possible and in which heritage and neighbourhood character will take the back seat.

In these areas, the 'Walkable Catchment Zone' will replace the existing Neighbourhood Residential Zone, which has strict height controls in line with the conservation objectives of the Heritage Overlay and whose stated objectives include heritage and neighbourhood character. These are omitted from the new Zone! That will allow the objectives of the Heritage Overlay to be challenged at every turn in favour of any project that provides more housing. We explain the risks in the article for the December issue of *History News* (Attachment 1).

Yes, let's support more housing in places where people want to live. But places will become far less sought after if we forget what makes them desirable in the first place. If we destroy heritage to build housing, Melbourne will become 'Hong Kong without the view', a collection of soulless high-rise buildings. Heritage makes Melbourne marvellous and makes our regional towns and cities attractive as tourist beacons and signposts to our history. Heritage enhances a neighbourhood's soul and character, and provides focal points and historical perspectives. We need housing **and** heritage, housing that preserves, respects and is integrated with heritage.

Planning reform should ensure development that not only adds housing but also gives people neighbourhoods that include heritage, neighbourhoods where people want to live. That will mean adapting heritage housing and building new housing that exists in harmony with and draws charm and focus from existing heritage. The National Trust has made this point in a blog entitled 'TIMBY: Thoughtfully in my back yard' (<https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/blog/timby-thoughtfully-in-my-back-yard-a-case-for-more-thoughtful-development/>). Charter 29, a group of highly respected planners, has just issued a thorough report on the plan (Attachment 2), which you can consult for further information.

We urge you and your local historical society to take action. Contact your local council to ascertain the effects on your area of the proposed changes. Write to your local MP and to the Minister for Planning. To help in this, we provide a pro forma letter (Addendum below) that you can use or, better yet, adapt and send.

The Minister plans to have this radical new planning system in place by Christmas so we need to move swiftly to persuade the government to make heritage a planning priority.

Best wishes,

Charles Sowerwine, Chair,
Heritage Committee, RHSV

Attachment 1: “‘Hong Kong without the View’? Victoria after the Planning Revolution’ (forthcoming in December *History News*)

Attachment 2: ‘Plan for Victoria and the Planning System Reforms: A Charter 29 Report November 2024’

Addendum: Pro forma letter to Planning Minister Sonya Kilkenney - text below.

Pro forma letter to Planning Minister Sonya Kilkenney:

The Hon Sonya Kilkenney MP
Minister for Planning
Minister for the Suburbs
Email: sonya.kilkenney@parliament.vic.gov.au

Member for Carrum
622 Nepean Highway
Carrum 3197
Ph: 9773-2727

Dear Minister,

I/we write to express concern about your proposed planning changes. We support your efforts to build more housing, but we believe that new housing development must preserve the heritage of the subject areas in order to be attractive. We note that the proposals for more Activity Centres and for their extension via the new Walkable Catchment Zone do not include heritage conservation as one of the aims.

Some of our best heritage precincts are around railway stations and Activity Centres. These are precincts that contribute in a significant way to what makes Melbourne and Victoria’s regional towns and cities distinctive and liveable, giving them unique character and appeal.

At present the conservation of most of these precincts is supported by the Neighbourhood Residential Zone, which has strict height controls, in line with the conservation objectives of the Heritage Overlay. You are proposing fifty new Activity Centres. Around the new and existing Activity Centres, you propose to replace the Neighbourhood Residential Zone with the new Walkable Catchment Zone, which will be primarily designed to prioritise and facilitate development, with no provisions requiring the successful integration of heritage assets.

This would allow the objectives of the Heritage Overlay to be challenged in these areas in favour of any project that provides more housing.

We support more housing in places where people want to live. But places will become far less sought after if we forget what makes them desirable in the first place.

We ask you to ensure that

- 1) heritage conservation is included as one of the purposes of the Walkable Catchment Zone;
- 2) the Walkable Catchment Zone includes mechanisms to conciliate development with heritage covered under the Heritage Overlay;

3) the new zones incorporate heritage protection into shaping the new developments so that each area's unique character is maintained and enhanced.

Yours sincerely,

rosemary.cameron@historyvictoria.org.au
+ 61 3 9326 9288

Royal Historical Society of Victoria
239 A'Beckett Street, Melbourne VIC 3000, Australia

BHGAP ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES

Christina Branagan and Nerida Muirden

508-510 Burke Road Camberwell



BHGAP recently attended a Planning Panel Victoria hearing for the Christopher Cowper designed house at 508-10 Burke Road Camberwell. It was built in 1920 and is also known as Barrabool.

This is the next stage in the heritage protection process which allowed all interested parties and the community to make submissions and be heard at an independent panel.

Barrabool was designed by eminent architect Christopher Cowper who strongly influenced Boroondara's character from the 1890's to the late 1920's. He was as a resident of Boroondara, residing in Linda Crescent Hawthorn and later in Studley Park Road Kew. Cowper was best known for his extensive residential development of the Queen Anne homes in the garden suburb environs of Grace Park, Hawthorn where he designed 33 houses.

In his later residential work however at 508-510 Burke Road, Cowper favoured the Attic Bungalow. The heritage report states that one of the reasons Barrabool is so important to conserve is because the house illustrates the later part of Cowper's oeuvre and provides the "missing link" in Cowper's work between late Federation era Attic Bungalows and full-fledged interwar bungalows of the late 1920s by his practice.

A heritage study on the house was done as a result of Boroondara Council's Community Nomination Process. Members of the community can make a nomination using the link below:

[Nominate a heritage place
boroondara.vic.gov.au](https://boroondara.vic.gov.au)

REPORT OF MEETINGS 2025

12 February 2025 Supreme Court of Victoria Library Tour



1850s: Establishment of the Supreme Court

In 1851, the District of Port Phillip separated from New South Wales and the Colony of Victoria was established. One of the colony's earliest legislative acts was to establish the Supreme Court with William a'Beckett becoming the first Chief Justice. He and the other judge appointed to the Court, Redmond Barry,

took their seats on the Bench for the first time on 10 February 1852.

The discovery of gold in 1851 and the colony's population growth led to a rapid increase in the business of the Court. A third judge, Justice Edward Eyre Williams, was appointed in 1852 and another, Justice Robert Molesworth, in 1854. The most significant trials during this period were the treason trials of 13 of the men captured after the Eureka Stockade in 1854, all of whom were acquitted. The prosecutor in these trials, William Foster Stawell, later replaced William a'Beckett as Chief Justice in 1857.

1874-1884: The new law courts

By the end of the 1850s, Melbourne's growth had rendered the La Trobe Street courts inadequate. However, it was not until 1874 that work began on a new building at the corner of William and Lonsdale Streets. It was the largest and most expensive project in nineteenth century Australia, and marred by controversies, scandal, and budget blowouts.

The building opened in 1884 and was occupied by the Supreme and County Courts. By this time, the number of judges had increased to five, with a sixth judge appointed in 1886.

The most famous trial during this period, that of bushranger Ned Kelly, took place in 1880 in the La Trobe Street building – before the new courthouse was completed.

Members and friends of the Camberwell Historical Society toured the Supreme Court of Victoria Library. We started with a short welcome by Alissa Duke and a talk on the history of the building, then a guided exploration of the Library on the ground and first floors.

25 February 2025 Emeritus Professor Michael Buxton

Implications of the New Planning Amendments

The latest planning announcements are confusing. The government narrative is the result of strategists and manipulators. It is a publicity campaign.

Last year the government released structure plans for 10 activity centres and almost immediately released another 25, with a target of 50 centres. The backlash has been enormous.

They want 2.24 million extra people in Melbourne and therefore have set housing targets for all municipalities in the state.

1. The core of the plan is around railway stations and shopping centres. In the core 12 -20 storey development – a mini-Box Hill. It is not mandatory to stop at 20 storeys.
2. 800m radius – 6 storey development eg Barcelona

This is rebuilding on a monumental scale. Nothing like this has been seen in the western world in recent times. The 50 centres will link up, they are already allowed on rail lines and tram lines.

3. Everything outside the new res code will be medium density housing.

The new res code is not as strict. New buildings currently have to meet neighbourhood residential codes and heritage overlays. The new code has no residential rights. Residents do not get a say in new buildings if they are deemed to comply with the new code. They are passed for redevelopment.



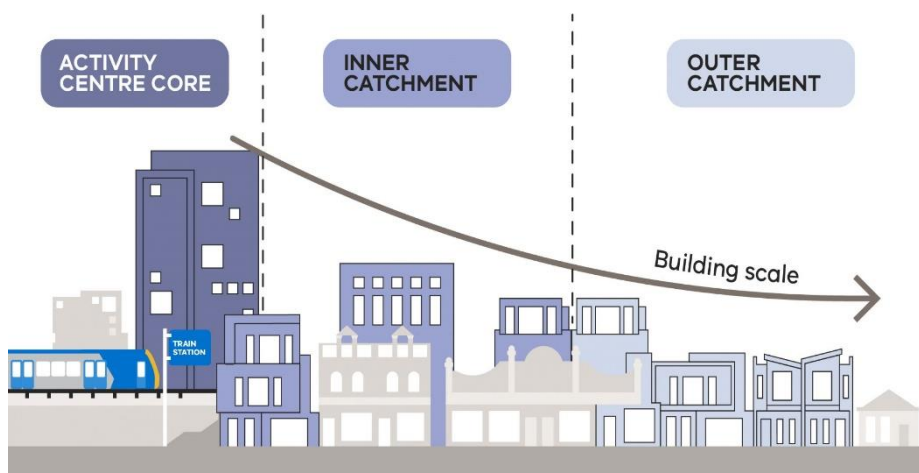
Walkable Catchment Zone

This has deleted heritage objectives. Higher density and more houses are the desired outcome.

Housing Choice and Transport Zone

Identical to the Walkable Catchment Zone but repackaged – nothing changed

6 storey height for the catchment – inner down from 6 to 4, outer down from 4 to 3 but over properties of 1000 sq m or more, the original heights apply and existing heritage buildings can be knocked down.



The Edwardian, Art Deco and Californian bungalows will all be lost. Many of the new houses will be in the middle ring of suburbs but no new infrastructure or transport is planned, no schools, hospitals or roads to cope with increased traffic.

Government rhetoric

Housing Supply - Affordable Housing – 30% of average income on rent

Even if all our heritage properties were replaced, they will not be replaced by affordable housing due to the cost of land, materials and labour.

The new regulations will not speed up the delays in building approvals. The delays are not a local council problem, VCAT is not adequately resourced.

Currently redevelopments in residential zones create expensive apartments \$2 – 3.5 million and this is unlikely to change. This is not affordable. The developers know this and so does the government even though their rhetoric says otherwise.

The American model mandates 20-25% to be affordable housing. Social Housing is a different model where the government owns the housing. The government refuses to mandate affordable housing. The property council is opposed to the mandated 20-25% affordable housing. Currently 10% of housing development is supposed to be affordable but developers can pay 3% of development as a fee to avoid creating the affordable housing. The housing crisis is going to get worse over the next 20 years.

Outer Urban development scandal – lack of transport, jobs and infrastructure. An increasing population in the outer suburbs have to drive everywhere.

Since 2005 more housing approvals have been made than houses have been built. There has been an increasing backlog of houses never built. Some of the problems are with labour costs, materials costs and supply. People want to be located in good, worthwhile and attractive places

What we need is a lot-by-lot analysis, a built in consultative and collaborative process between residents, local governments, state government and developers.

Principle: Maintain heritage – there is an economic benefit which attracts investment

There are false narratives being inflicted on the community.

This process with the Activity Centres is not democratic, not right.

The opposition is trying to push an alternative. It must be turned into a political issue.

The suburban rail link should have benefits for housing although the numbers keep changing and there is no modelling. Possibly 2 million new dwellings in the suburban rail loop - Cheltenham to Box Hill. Current cost \$35 billion with no stops along the way. Not much has been built yet.

The current government is the most autocratic government that we have ever had. Very few people are making the decisions.

Critics of the government have come up with alternatives. **Charter 29** has listed alternatives using a proper planning approach.

High rise is costly to build, maintain and run. People are cut off from the green environment. High rises are visually intrusive. Shopping strips could be kept and the back areas facing the lanes could be developed. Currently there are no height controls in shopping strips. Out-of-centre retail (big stand-alone shops) has made people more reliant on cars.

The current process started back in 2005 when the State and Federal Governments set up the Development Assessment forum with the property industry to create a better practice model. Planning departments have increasingly identified with developers like the Forestry Department has identified with the forestry industry.

One of the big assumptions is consumerism or a constantly increasing demand for goods and services. We have a shrinking birthrate and net migration is currently 500,000 per year, mostly to Sydney and Melbourne.

This is the test to make voices heard. To keep democracy. Otherwise, we will lose our city. Boroondara Council has done a good job of informing the community. They need to campaign with the community and with other local councils.

DATES FOR MEETINGS 2025

Meetings are held at 25 Inglesby Road, Camberwell

Sunday 23 March 2025 11am	Brig-Gen Harold ‘Pompey’ Elliott Memorial Ceremony at Burwood Cemetery conducted by Friends of 15th Brigade
Tuesday 25 March 2025 7.30pm	Prof Richard Broome. Laneways of Melbourne
Tuesday 29 April 2025 7.30pm	Vince Lazzaro. Family History research
Hawthorn Historical Society	27 April 11 am Glenferrie Heritage Trail
Hawthorn Historical Society	18 May 2pm Brilliant Brass – Hawthorn City Band

CAMBERWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY DONATIONS TO THE COLLECTION

Camberwell Historical Society welcomes donations of the following items relating to the former City of Camberwell: photographs and prints, documents, letters, diaries, maps, plans, books, pamphlets, and reminiscences of former residents and people who worked in the area.

Contributions to *Camberwell History* contain the opinions of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of Camberwell Historical Society, its committee, or members.

CAMBERWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY SUBSCRIPTION RENEWALS 2024 - 25

Camberwell Historical Society's financial year operates from 1 July to 30 June. Subscriptions for the 2024 – 2025 financial year were due and payable from 1 July 2024. Single \$30, Family \$40. Camberwell Historical Society, BSB 633 000 Account No 142260678 Cheques to Camberwell Historical Society, PO Box 1274, CAMBERWELL 3124.

CAMBERWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC

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