

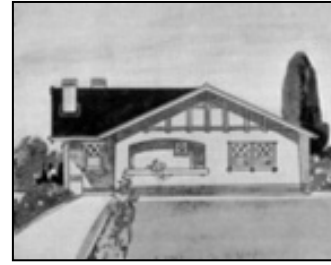
# **Appendix D**

## **Heritage Impact Statement**

# APPENDIX D

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7 June 23

## HERITAGE IMPACT STATEMENT RE PLANNING PROPOSAL – ROHINI VILLAGE – 51-53 ROHINI STREET, TURRAMURRA

(LOT 21, DP533032; LOT 26, DP585038; LOT 2, DP302942)

This Heritage Impact Statement has been written to support a Planning Proposal for the redevelopment of the Rohini Village site by Anglicare for new aged-care accommodation. This report has been amended in April 2023 to address issues raised by Ku-ring-gai Council, and in response to amendments to the Planning proposal.

Rohini Village is currently a 2-3 storey complex of 110 aged care units in buildings built in the 1970s. The Planning Proposal envisages a new aged care complex of 110 larger units in buildings of 4-6 storeys.

### SITE LOCATION

The site at 51-53 Rohini Street is located on the north-eastern side of the northern dead-end of Rohini Street, as shown in Figures 1-3 below.

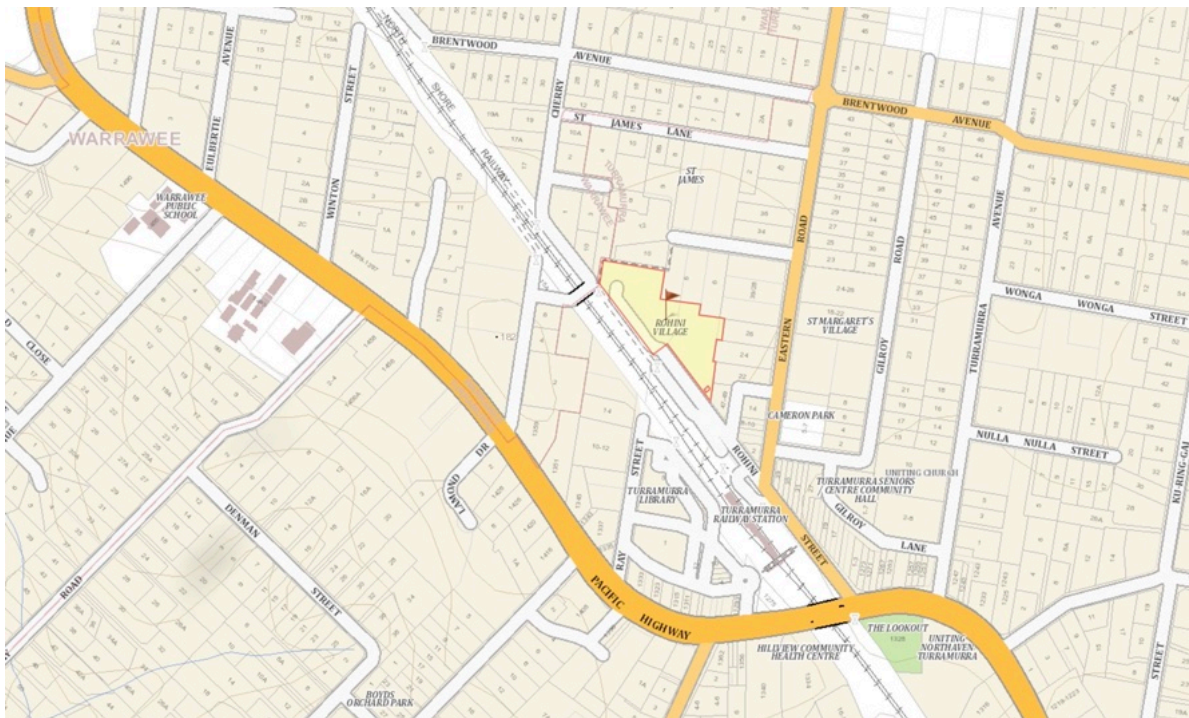


Figure 1: Location map showing the Rohini Village site (shaded yellow, outlined in red) Source: NSW Land & Property Information Six Maps



Figure 2: (Left) Recent satellite view of the Rohini Village site (shaded yellow, outlined in red) showing the 1970s aged care residential units currently on the site. Note the pedestrian paths which separate the northern end of the site from the Heritage Conservation Area Source: NSW Land & Property Information Six Maps



Figure 3: (Left) 1943 aerial view of the Rohini Village site (shaded yellow, outlined in red). This shows that at that time the site included a large house, a tennis court and to the southern end several outbuildings. Source: NSW Land & Property Information Six Maps

## HERITAGE STATUS OF THE SITE

Rohini Village is located adjacent to the southern part of the C5 King Street/Laurel Avenue Heritage Conservation Area, as shown in Figure 4 below. Rohini Village is also in the vicinity of a heritage item No. I138, "Bellwood", 12 King Street, Turramurra, which is a large 2-storey residence circa 1900-1915. The house "Bellwood" is approximately 57m to the north of the Rohini Village boundary, and visually separated from Rohini Village by the site at 10 King Street, however a small portion of the "Bellwood" site is on the opposite side of the St. James pedestrian path to the north of Rohini Village, approximately 7m to the north of the Rohini Village boundary. As can be seen from Figure 4 below, the heritage listed Turramurra Railway Station (Item I1111) and the Rohini House gates (Item I161) are also shown in the vicinity of the site. Regarding the location of the listed Rohini House gates (Item I161) it appears that these have been shown incorrectly on the LEP heritage map, as there are three sets of gates to the subject site, two of which appear to contain original sandstone.

Heritage planning controls contained in Section 5.10 of the Ku-ring-gai LEP 2015 and require that a Statement of Heritage Impact be submitted to the Council regarding the affect that proposed work



may have on the heritage significance of heritage items in the vicinity and on the HCA in the vicinity as part of any Development Application.

The heritage significance of the C5 King Street/Laurel Avenue Heritage Conservation Area and the heritage items in the vicinity have been considered in this report in relation to possible heritage impacts arising from the Planning Proposal for Rohini Village.

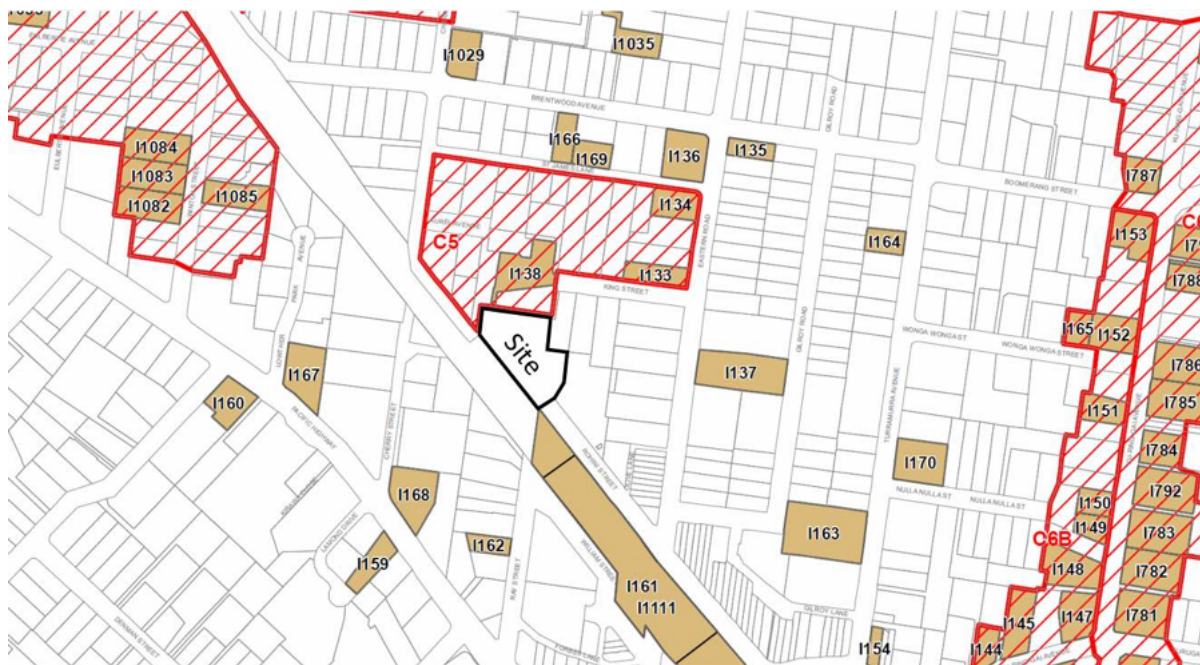


Figure 4: The site (outlined in black) in relation to the C5 King Street/Laurel Avenue Heritage Conservation Area (outlined in red, to the north of the site) and the heritage item in the vicinity (Item No. I138)

## HISTORY OF THE ROHINI VILLAGE SITE

The history of the site has been comprehensively researched by professional historian John Johnson (see Attachment 1 to this report).

In summary:

- The existing retirement village was constructed between 1969-1975. No architect's name is associated with the retirement village.
- Prior to the construction of the existing retirement village, the site was occupied by a house constructed between 1892 and 1895 by then owner Francis Gerard, which appears on an 1895 subdivision map.
- By 1896 Gerard had purchased adjoining land to enlarge his land holding.
- In 1899 Gerard sold the block containing the house to Miss Emmaline Mary Doherty Woolley May 1899. Miss Woolley was the sister of Blanche Mary Elizabeth Du Faur (nee Woolley) second wife of Frederick Eccleston Du Faur. Eccleston Du Faur was a former business partner of Gerard and lived with his family in a Horbury Hunt-designed house called "Pibrac", nearby in Warrawee. Francis Gerard retained ownership of Lots 12, 13 and 14 of Cherry's Orchard Subdivision.

- In May 1901 Miss Woolley onsold the house to Henry Yule Braddon who named the house "Rohini" (the name of a Hindu goddess, the favourite consort of Chandra, the moon god).
- In July 1908 Henry Braddon purchased the portion of Cherry Street adjacent to Lots 12, 13 and 14 from John Booth Jones. He closed this part of Cherry Street, added it to his landholdings, and was issued a new title over the resulting one and a half acres in November 1908. The total block was now over two and a half acres. Railway lands bordered the block to the south and the only street frontage was to the closed end of Cherry Street.
- In August 1916 Henry Braddon sold the amalgamated block and "Rohini" to building contractor John Symonds. In 1918 John Symonds was appointed Manager of the Commonwealth Portland Cement Company at Portland
- Symonds died in February 1962, and in May 1966 the estate at Turramurra was subdivided into 4 lots, and Rohini Street was extended to provide access to the lots in July 1966.
- By March 1969 construction was underway on a retirement village on a portion of the former "Rohini" property, which was in the ownership of the Anglican Church. The house "Rohini" and its tennis court remained at this time.
- In 1974 construction was underway on Cowper Close, an extension of Rohini retirement village, which replaced the house "Rohini" and remaining outbuildings relating to the house. Cowper Close was officially opened by Australian Governor General Sir John Kerr in April 1975.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE ROHINI VILLAGE SITE

The site was developed 1969-1975 with 110 aged care accommodation units in buildings of 2-3 storeys in height, predominantly of blonde brickwork, within landscaped courtyards and boundary setbacks with perimeter plantings. At three locations along the site boundaries (Rohini Street driveway, the pedestrian entry to the north-west, and the St James path link gate) there remain sandstone gate posts (see Figures below). The left gatepost to Rohini Street includes the carved letters "Rohini". These gateposts, which date from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, after 1908 when the property became known as "Rohini", are the only remaining evidence of the previous dwelling on the site.

The photos below show the property and its context as it is now.



Figure 5: (Left) View of Rohini Village from Rohini Street, Turrumurra



Figure 6: Another view of Rohini Village from Rohini Street with adjacent residential flat buildings at right





Figure 7: View of existing 1970s units and landscaping within Rohini Village



Figure 8: View of existing 1970s units and landscaping within Rohini Village



Figure 9: (Left) View of 1970s 3-storey unit building at Rohini Village



Figure 10: View towards rear (northern) boundary with adjacent unit blocks in the background





Figure 11: View towards rear (northern) boundary with 3-storey units within Rohini Village at right



Figure 12: View of Rohini Village buildings towards to the western boundary of the site.





Figure 13: View of the western boundary of the site with Rohini Village buildings at left



Figure 14: View of Rohini Village buildings and landscaping adjacent to the western boundary





Figure 15: View to the rear (north) across pedestrian pathway towards house at 10 King St within the C5 King Street/Laurel Avenue Heritage Conservation Area.



Figure 16: View south down the pedestrian pathway to the north of the site with the house at 10 King St at right. The sandstone gate posts at left is an entry/exit point from the site to the pedestrian pathway. Rohini Village buildings are visible at left.





Figure 17: View of heritage item at 12 King Street at left across the rear yard of 10 King Street (house at right), taken from the pedestrian pathway to the north of Rohini Village. Both of these houses are within the C5 King Street/Laurel Avenue Heritage Conservation Area.



Figure 18: View of heritage item at 12 King Street from the western end of King Street, within the C5 King Street/Laurel Avenue Heritage Conservation Area





Figure 19: View of pedestrian path adjacent to the railway line to the south of Rohini Village, with Rohini Village buildings at left.



Figure 20: Sandstone gate posts at Rohini Street driveway, Gate 3 on Figure 23 below. Note the word “Rohini” on the gatepost to the left.



Figure 21: (Left) sandstone gate posts and metal gate to Gate 1 onto St. James pedestrian path to the north of the site



Figure 22: Sandstone gate posts and metal gate to the north-west pedestrian entry – Gate 2

## THE ROHINI VILLAGE GATES

There are three sets of gates to the Rohini Village, at locations as shown in Figure 23 below. The three sets of gateposts date from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century after 1908, when the property was first named "Rohini".

The gateposts at Location 1 (north-west corner) appear to be in their original position, as this was a historical entry point onto the property, however, may have been reconstructed in recent years.

The gateposts at Location 2 (onto the pedestrian path to the north) may have also been relocated in the period 1969-1975 when the existing retirement village was under construction or may be in their original location (there is no historical evidence to determine which is the case), however the gate posts appear to be early 20<sup>th</sup> century.



The gateposts on Rohini Street (Location 3 on Figure 23) have been reduced in height in the period 1969-1975 when the retirement village was built, and have also been relocated, however the left gatepost at this location include the word "Rohini" carved into it (see Figure 24 below).

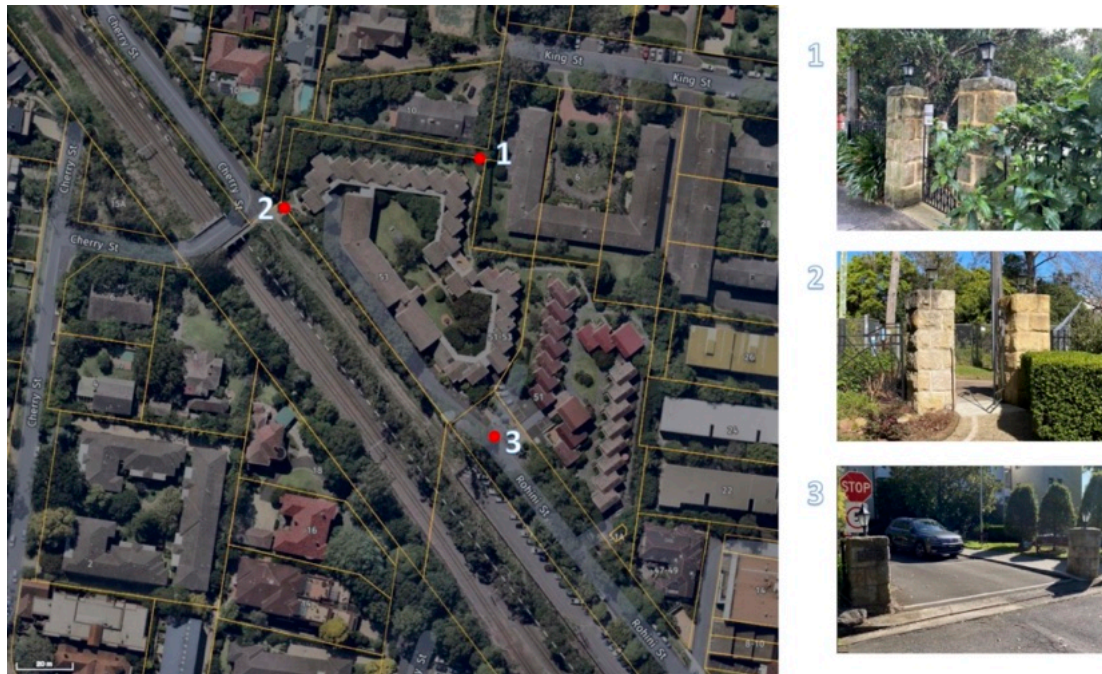


Figure 23: The locations of the three sets of sandstone gateposts to Rohini Village.



Figure 24: (Left) Detail of the left gatepost on Rohini Street at Gate 3 on the map at Figure 23 above, showing the word "Rohini" carved into the gate post. These gate posts, while modified (lowered in height) and relocated, date from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, 1908-1930s after the site was known as "Rohini".

## HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The Rohini Village site itself has no identified heritage significance. The historical research (see Attachment 1 to this report), has established that the retirement village was constructed 1969-1975, and there is no architect's name associated with the construction of the retirement village. The existing house, outbuildings etc. which were on the site were demolished in 1974 for the construction of the extension to the retirement village, with the only remaining elements of heritage significance being three sets of sandstone gate posts (see Figure 23 above) which date from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, after 1908 when the site was first known as "Rohini".

However:

- The gateposts at Location 1 appear to be in their original location (as this was a historical entry point to the property) however may have been reconstructed in recent years;
- The gateposts at Location 2 appear early 20<sup>th</sup> century but it is not known if these have been relocated in the period 1969-1975 when the retirement village was under construction;
- the gate posts at Location 3 on Rohini Street appear early 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, have been relocated and reduced in height in the period 1969-1975 when the retirement village was constructed.

The significance of the adjacent C5 Laurel Avenue/King Street Heritage Conservation Area is defined as follows in the Ku-ring-gai North Heritage Conservation Area Study:

The Laurel Avenue/King Street Heritage Conservation Area is a small distinct area which contains a collection of Federation, Inter-war period and mid to late twentieth century buildings, some of high aesthetic and historical significance. These buildings illustrate the complex subdivision history of the area following the opening of the railway in 1890 and the intensification of suburban development in the Inter-war period. Laurel Avenue contains a collection of Inter-war Georgian Revival style housing, including two houses designed by the architect Leith McCredie. St. James Anglican Church at 5 King Street is of social, historical, and aesthetic significance.

The significance of "Bellwood" at 12 King Street, the heritage item in the vicinity of the site has not been defined in the State Heritage Inventory, however the item is listed in the Ku-ring-gai LEP 2015 as being of local heritage significance.

## SIGNIFICANCE ANALYSIS OF THE SANDSTONE ROHINI GATEPOSTS

### 4.2. CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The NSW Heritage Manual (1996, amended 2001) sets out the basis for assessment of the heritage significance of an item, place, or site by evaluating its significance in reference to specific criteria. These criteria can be applied at national, state, or local levels of significance.

Table 1: Criterion for assessing significance.

Criterion (a) Historical significance	An item is important in the course, or pattern, of NSW or the local area's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area);
Criterion (b) Historical significance (association)	An item has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in NSW or the local area's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area);
Criterion (c) Aesthetic or technical significance	An item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in NSW or the local area;
Criterion (d) Social significance	An item has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in NSW or the local area for social, cultural, or spiritual reasons;
Criterion (e) Research potential	An item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of NSW's cultural or natural history, or the cultural or natural history of the local area;
Criterion (f) Rarity	An item possesses uncommon, rare, or endangered aspects of NSW's or the local area's cultural or natural history
Criterion (g) Representativeness	An item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSW or the local areas. cultural or natural places; or cultural or natural environments.

## ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE – ROHINI SANDSTONE GATE POSTS

The following detailed assessment of significance relates to the sandstone gate posts shown on Figure 23 of this report.

### CRITERION (A) HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The early 20<sup>th</sup> century gate posts (constructed after 1908 when the property was first named "Rohini") are of local historical significance as the last physical indicators of the location of the "Rohini" estate, after which Rohini Street is named.

### CRITERION (B) HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (ASSOCIATION)

The sandstone gate posts have local historical association with the Rohini estate and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century owners of the estate, Henry Braddon & John Symonds.

### CRITERION (C) AESTHETIC/TECHNICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The sandstone gate posts have local aesthetic significance as early 20<sup>th</sup> century gate posts which marked the entry points to the "Rohini" property, noting the left gate post at Location 3 includes the carved name "Rohini" facing Rohini Street.

### CRITERION (D) SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

Not relevant

### CRITERION (E) RESEARCH POTENTIAL

Not relevant



#### CRITERION (F) RARITY

The sandstone gate posts are typical of late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century gate posts at the entry points to large estates and are not rare.

#### CRITERION (G) REPRESENTATIVENESS

The sandstone gate posts are typical representative examples of late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century gate posts at the entry points to large gentleman's estates.

#### INTEGRITY

The sandstone gate posts at Location 3 have been relocated from their original positions during the period 1969-1975 when the Rohini retirement village was constructed, and lowered in height, however, are significant as the name "Rohini" is carved into the left gate post at this location. The gateposts at Location 2 (north-west corner), are in their original location (as this is a historic entry point to the property) however are likely to have been reconstructed in recent years. It is not known whether the gate posts at Location 1 (onto the pedestrian pathway to the north) are in their original location or not.

#### SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE ROHINI SANDSTONE GATE POSTS

The early 20<sup>th</sup> century gate posts (constructed after 1908 when the property was first named "Rohini") are of local historical significance as the last physical indicators of the location of the "Rohini" estate, after which Rohini Street is named. The sandstone gate posts have local historical association with the Rohini estate and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century owners of the estate, Henry Braddon & John Symonds. The sandstone gate posts have local aesthetic significance as early 20<sup>th</sup> century gate posts which marked the entry points to the "Rohini" property, and the left gate post at Location 3 includes the carved name "Rohini" facing Rohini Street. The sandstone gate posts are typical representative examples of late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century gate posts at the entry points to large gentleman's estates. The sandstone gate posts at Location 3 to Rohini Street have been relocated from their original positions during the period 1969-1975 when the Rohini retirement village was constructed, and lowered in height, however, remain significant as the name "Rohini" is carved into the left gate post at this location. The sandstone gate posts at Location 2, appear to be in their original location marking a historical entry point to the property, though these gate posts may have been reconstructed in recent years.

## THE PROPOSAL

The Planning Proposal is set out in the following documents:

- Plans prepared by Plus Architecture
- Arboricultural Assessment by Arterra
- Tree Retention Plan by Arterra

The Planning Proposal is to redevelop the site with new aged care accommodation containing 110 residential units, however with the units being larger and appropriate to modern aged care resident's expectations. The Planning Proposal envisages taller buildings within landscaped boundary setbacks. The majority of trees along the boundaries of the site will be retained, with additional plantings including of substantial tree species, planned (refer to Landscape plan for detail). The sandstone posts and metal gates shown in Figures 20 to 22 of this report will be retained.

The site is already well screened by vegetation to the northern (rear) boundary which is separated from the C5 King Street/Laurel Avenue Heritage Conservation Area by a pedestrian pathway. The Planning Proposal envisages the retention and enhancement of screening plantings along this boundary.

The Planning Proposal is also designed to locate taller buildings away from this northern boundary to reduce potential impacts on the Heritage Conservation Area.

As the Heritage Conservation Area is to the north of Rohini Village, overshadowing impacts resulting from the proposed increased in the height of buildings on the Rohini Village site are considered to be minimal. There are no visual or shadowing impacts to the heritage item "Bellwood" or the C5 Heritage Conservation Area.

## HERITAGE ASSESSMENT OF THE PLANNING PROPOSAL

The Planning proposal envisages a redevelopment of the subject site - currently occupied by 2-3 storey aged care residential buildings constructed 1969-1975 – with multi storey aged care accommodation buildings concentrated towards the centre and southern end of the site.

The Planning Proposal envisages the location of the tallest buildings towards Rohini Street facing the railway, away from the rear northern boundary of the site, which is adjacent to the C5 Heritage Conservation Area, and proposes the buildings within a landscaped setting including substantial landscaping within boundary setbacks, retaining the majority of existing boundary plantings.

The Planning Proposal is supported by detailed Arborist's and Landscaping reports which envisage retention of the majority of trees along the site boundaries and planting of substantial new trees which will soften the transition between the development on the site and the adjacent Heritage Conservation Area.

The pedestrian path network along the northern boundary of the site, which includes substantial trees, also assists in visually separating the site from the adjacent heritage conservation area and the nearby heritage item (see Figures 16-18 above).

The heritage item in the vicinity is not adjacent to the site and is substantially screened from the site by trees including trees associated with the pedestrian pathways north of the site, as demonstrated in the photographs at Figures 16-18 above.

For these reasons, the proposal will have little heritage impact on the adjacent heritage conservation area or the nearby heritage item.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made to retain elements of heritage significance associated with the site:

- The three sets of sandstone gate posts shown on Figure 23 should be retained on the site boundaries, with gate posts at Locations 1 and 2 retained in their current locations.
- The gate posts at Location 3 (Rohini Street) can be relocated, as these are not in their original location.
- The sandstone gateposts should be protected during future construction activity on the site.
- The history of the site and the sandstone gate posts should be interpreted in a publicly accessible manner as part of the redevelopment of the site.

## CONCLUSION

The Planning Proposal is recommended for approval by the Consent Authority as the proposal does not adversely impact on the heritage significance of the adjacent C5 Laurel Avenue/King Street Heritage Conservation Area (HCA) or the heritage item in the vicinity due to both the existing visual separation of the site from the HCA and the heritage item and due to:

- The Planning Proposal envisaging the retention of landscaped boundary setbacks within the site including retention of existing trees and planting of substantial new trees. The buildings proposed will be set back from the northern boundary.
- The visual separation at the northern end of the site from the C5 Laurel/King Street Heritage Conservation Area due to the adjacent pedestrian pathway network which includes substantial trees which screen the HCA and the heritage item in the vicinity from the subject site.
- The visual separation from "Bellwood" house (heritage item in the vicinity), which is 57m to the north of the site and visually separated from the site by the site at No. 10 King Street.
- The design of the Planning Proposal locating taller new buildings away from the northern boundary adjacent to the Heritage Conservation Area.



Chery Kemp,  
Principal Partner/Heritage Specialist  
Kemp & Johnson Heritage Consultants

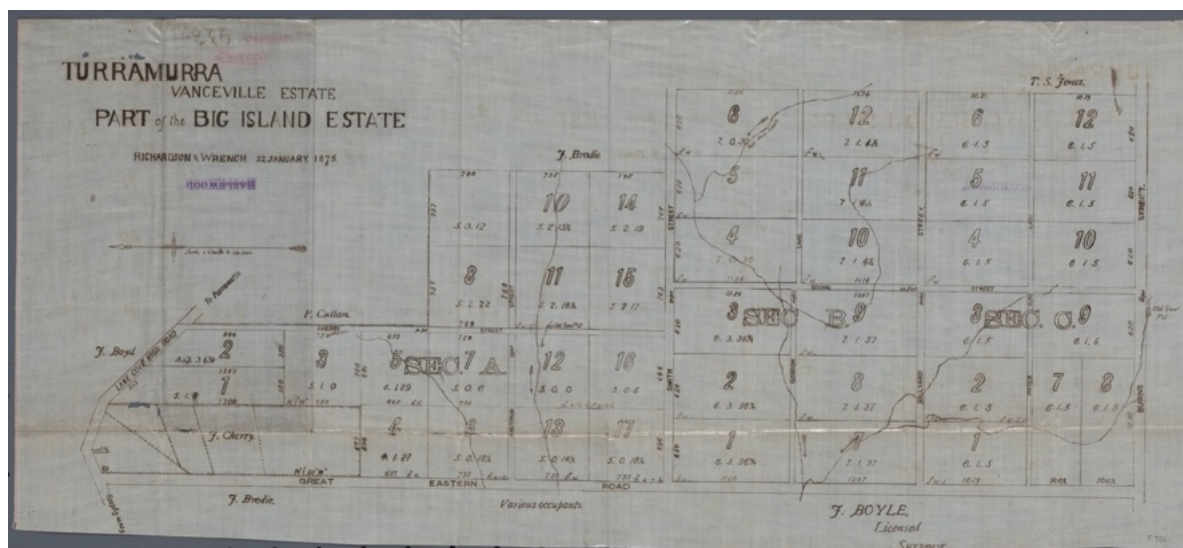


ATTACHMENT 1:  
HISTORY OF ROHINI VILLAGE 51-53 ROHINI STREET TURRAMURRA  
PREPARED BY JOHN JOHNSON, HISTORIAN

## HISTORY OF ROHINI VILLAGE SITE, TURRAMURRA

Prepared by John Johnson, Historian, June 2023

Rohini Village is built on part of Lot 1, Section A of the Vanceville Estate, and Lots 12, 13 and 14 of Cherry's Orchard Subdivision, themselves part of Lots 2 and 3, Section A of the Vanceville Estate. All of the Vanceville Estate was part of the 2000-acre Big Island Estate.<sup>i</sup>



Turramurra Vanceville Estate, part of the Big Island Estate, 1876, NLA, MAP F 751 copy

In February 1881 landholder William Ray purchased Lot 1, Section A of the Vanceville Estate. Ray mortgaged the property and sold the northern portion of the block to the NSW Commissioner for Railways in August 1888.<sup>ii</sup>

In May 1892 Francis Gerard purchased the section of Lot 1 Section A that was north of the railway reservation and abutted the northern end of Cherry (now Rohini) Street. This block was slightly over 1 acre.<sup>iii</sup> It seems likely that Gerard built a house on the block between 1892 and 1895. The house appears on an 1895 subdivision map of Wilson's Subdivision. An ancillary building to the northwest of the house was probably a stables.



Wilson's Subdivision, 1895, SLNSW Z/SP/T7

It is possible that Gerard's house was designed by architect John Horbury Hunt. Francis Gerard lived nearby in "Cheddington" a Horbury Hunt designed house, now 52 Hastings Road Warrawee, which was completed in about 1890.<sup>iv</sup> Horbury Hunt also designed a timber framed cottage for the Gerard family. Believed to have been constructed in either King Street or Eastern Road, Turramurra, it was photographed whilst in the ownership of the Gerard family.<sup>v</sup>





House for the Gerard Family, Turramurra. *Private collection*

Image from John Horbury Hunt: radical architect, Page 143

In March 1896 Gerard purchased Lots 12 and 13 of Cherry's Orchard Subdivision and in April 1896 purchased Lot 14.<sup>vi</sup> These lots adjoined Gerard's original purchase and were located north of Cherry Street. In total this added about an acre to the original acre purchased in 1892.

Francis Gerard sold the block containing the house to Miss Emmaline Mary Doherty Woolley May 1899.<sup>vii</sup> Miss Woolley was the sister of Blanche Mary Elizabeth Du Faur (nee Woolley) second wife of Frederick Eccleston Du Faur. Eccleston Du Faur was a former business partner of Gerard and lived with his family in a Horbury Hunt-designed house called "Pibrac", nearby in Warrawee. Francis Gerard retained ownership of Lots 12, 13 and 14 of Cherry's Orchard Subdivision.

Miss Woolley onsold the house to Henry Yule Braddon, secretary of Dalgety & Co, in May 1901.<sup>viii</sup> At the same time Braddon also purchased Lots 12, 13 and 14 of Cherry's Orchard Subdivision from Francis Gerard.<sup>ix</sup> Henry Yule Braddon, later Sir Henry Braddon, "was born on 27 April 1863 near Calcutta, India, second son of (Sir) Edward Nicholas Coventry Braddon, and his first wife Amy Georgina (d.1864), née Palmer. He was brought up at Lucknow until he went to Germany in 1869, where he was educated at Dusseldorf. He spent 1874-75 at Caen, Normandy, France, and in April 1875 went to Alleyn's College of God's Gift (Dulwich College), London. In April 1878 he left to join his father in Tasmania."<sup>x</sup> Braddon led Dalgety & Co in a period of expansion, until it became one of the most important trading firms in Australia.

Braddon, who had lived in India until the age of 6, named the house "Rohini", with the name first appearing in February 1902.<sup>xi</sup> Rohini is a Hindu goddess, the favourite consort of Chandra, the moon god. Braddon's address was Victoria Street Ashfield in 1901 and he was living "off Eastern Road, Turramurra" in 1902.<sup>xii</sup>

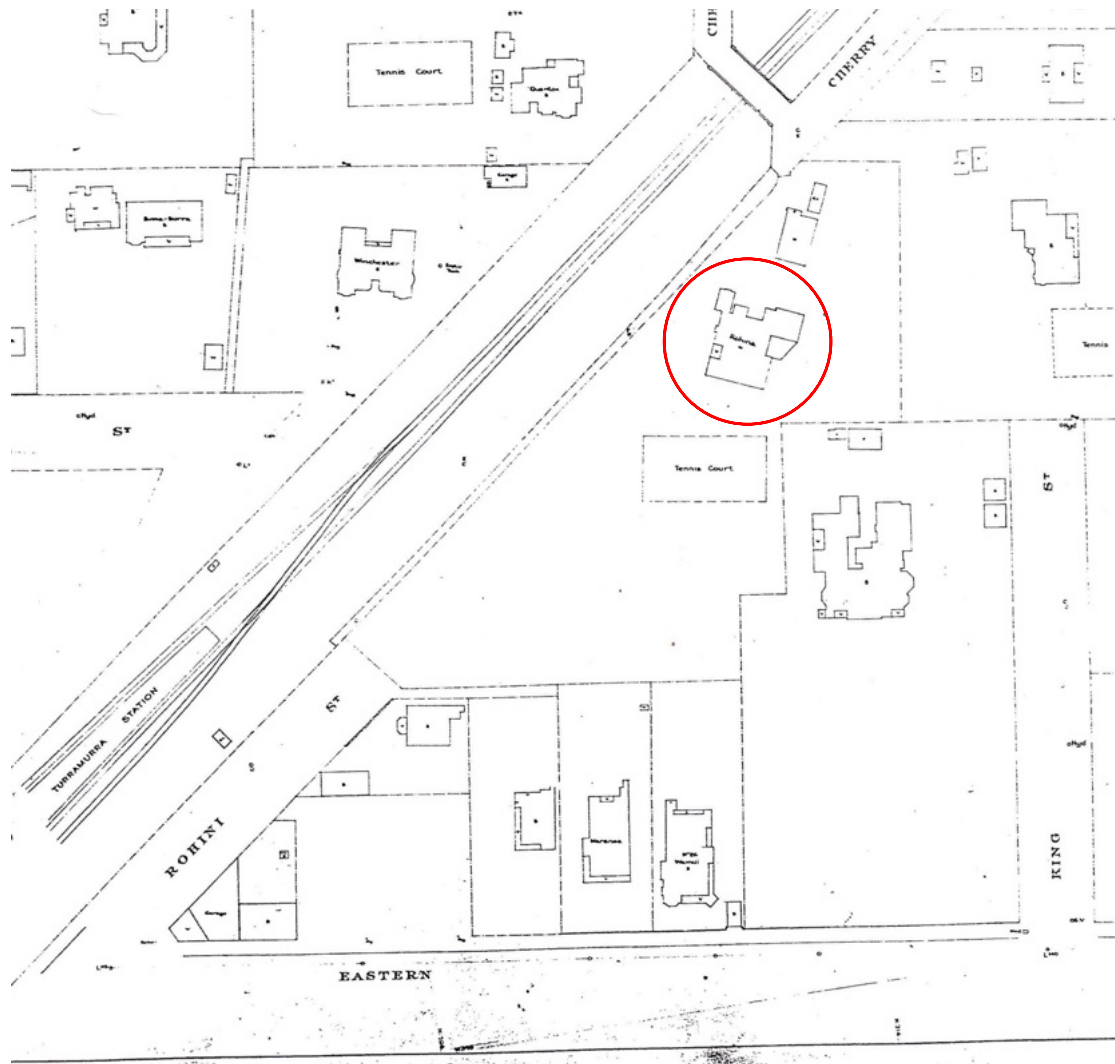


(Left) Henry Yule Braddon, 1928 NLA, PIC Row 14/6/7  
#PIC/15611/6696

In July 1908 Henry Braddon purchased the portion of Cherry Street adjacent to Lots 12, 13 and 14 from John Booth Jones. He closed this part of Cherry Street, added it to his landholdings, and was issued a new title over the resulting one and a half acres in November 1908.<sup>xiii</sup> The total block was now over two and a half acres. Railway lands bordered the block to the south and the only street frontages were to the closed end of Cherry Street (now Rohini Street) to the southeast and to Cherry Street to the northwest. At some time after this Cherry Street was renamed Rohini Street. An undated Water Board map shows “Rohini” as “Rohina”, in Rohini Street. It notes the construction as “W” (weatherboard), suggesting that this may have been the original Horbury Hunt cottage, though with extensions. A tennis court is located to the east of the house and a pathway in the railway corridor links Cherry Street to Rohini Street. The stable block, shown in 1895, is still extant with a frontage to Cherry Street.<sup>xiv</sup>



Rohini Street, showing the gates to “Rohini” (arrowed), c 1920. Ku-ring-Gai Library Photograph



Water Board Plan (date unknown) showing "Rohini" (circled) and Rohini Street.

In August 1916 Henry Braddon sold the amalgamated block and "Rohini" to engineer and building contractor John Symonds. Symonds had been born in England and was one of the first students at Sydney Boys High School.<sup>xv</sup> His father, James Symonds, was an engineer, serving as Superintendent of Roads for Parramatta for the Public Works Commission.<sup>xvi</sup> John Symonds "received his practical training, by pupilage, from 1889-93, with C. W. Darley, M.I.C.E., W.A. Smith, M.I.C.E., and P. R. Hickson, M.I.C.E. In 1894 he was appointed Assistant Resident Engineer and later Relieving Resident Engineer on roads and bridges. In 1897 he was appointed Resident Engineer on Cootamundra Water Supply. In 1898 he was appointed Resident Engineer on Wellington Water Supply."<sup>xvii</sup> He was assistant Superintendent of Roads at Stroud in 1895 when he married Emily Henderson in Parramatta in 1895.<sup>xviii</sup> John Symonds was appointed site engineer for the construction of Cataract Dam in 1902.<sup>xix</sup> In 1912 he toured important engineering construction sites in America. He spent five weeks examining the construction of the Panama Canal.<sup>xx</sup> His notes were serialised over 5 months in Building Magazine by George Taylor as "Man-The Conqueror".<sup>xxi</sup>

It seems likely that Symonds either altered "Rohini" or demolished and replaced it entirely. No contract has been found for works, but given his experience, it seems likely that Symonds could have supervised the works himself. Certainly, the footprint of "Rohini" shown in the Water Board plan matches the earliest aerial photograph (1930) and the house remained largely unaltered from that time until its demolition in the 1970s.





Aerial View, 1930, "Rohini" adjacent to the railway, middle. NSW Historical Imagery Viewer



J. SYMONDS.

(Left) John Symonds, Sydney Mail, Wednesday 10 August 1927, Page 10

In 1918 John Symonds was appointed Manager of the Commonwealth Portland Cement Company at Portland.<sup>xxii</sup> He retained that position until he stepped down in 1940.<sup>xxiii</sup> In about 1922 he became a director of Peters American Delicacy Company Limited (later Peters Ice Cream).<sup>xxiv</sup> After Fred Peters retired Symonds became Chairman of the Board until stepping down as a director in 1945.<sup>xxv</sup>

Mr and Mrs Symonds embarked on an around the world trip in April 1928. "Mr. J. Symonds, general manager of the Commonwealth Portland Cement Co. and Mrs. Symonds, of 'Rohini', Turramurra, are leaving by the Naldera on Tuesday, for an extended tour of England and the Continent, returning via America."<sup>xxvi</sup> Other passengers on board the ship included the Australian team for the 1928 Olympics. On their trip they visited England, Scotland and America. They returned via the Aorangi and it was reported that it "was a beautiful summer In England, and Mr. and Mrs, Symonds enjoyed motoring on the perfect roads."<sup>xxvii</sup>

John Symonds was a very keen motorist, who covered tens of thousands of miles. In 1935 he imported the first Lincoln V-12 to Australia. Weighing 2.5 tons the coupe would have been accommodated in the stable block at "Rohini".<sup>xxviii</sup> The price is unknown, but potentially around £2,000. In July 1947 Mrs Emily Symonds died at "Rohini" and was cremated in a private ceremony.<sup>xxix</sup> She and John Symonds had no children and John did not remarry.

In 1959 Mr Symonds embarked on one final business venture. The location was probably a 1.5-acre block on the corner of King Street and Eastern Road (now 28-30 Eastern Road) which Symonds had purchased in December 1959.<sup>xxx</sup> Symonds contracted to sell a portion of land to Turramurra Bowling Club for a residential bowling club, designed to accommodate visiting bowling teams. The contract would take effect once three bowling greens and a clubhouse had been built there. The proposal was the subject of vigorous opposition from the neighbouring churches, St James Church of England in King Street and St Margarets Presbyterian Church, Eastern Road, with a petition signed by 450 residents.<sup>xxxi</sup> Ultimately the proposal was defeated. Mr Symonds said "The Churches with their criticism have blocked an excellent plan which would have benefited the locality. As far as I'm concerned the whole plan can go hang."<sup>xxxii</sup>

John Symonds died on 19 February 1962 at the age of 90. Childless and widowed he left an estate of nearly £1.5m to be distributed amongst "relatives and friends, including nephews in the Quirindi district".<sup>xxxiii</sup> One of those nephews, grazier Alexander John Douglas Symonds of Willow Tree, became the owner of Rohini in September 1963.<sup>xxxiv</sup>

In May 1966 Alexander Symonds subdivided the block into 4 lots which were separately titled.<sup>xxxv</sup> Rohini Street was extended to create access to the subdivided blocks and Ku-ring-gai Council became the registered owner of the new portion of Rohini Street in July 1966.<sup>xxxvi</sup>

By March 1969 construction was underway on a retirement village on a portion of the "Rohini" property.<sup>xxxvii</sup> By this time the property was in the ownership of the Anglican Church. "Rohini" and its tennis court remained untouched. In 1974 construction was underway on Cowper Close, an extension of Rohini Village, which replaced "Rohini".<sup>xxxviii</sup> Cowper Close was opened by Australian Governor General Sir John Kerr in April 1975.<sup>xxxix</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> NSW LRS Volume 492 Folio 130, Vanceville Estate Subdivision Map, State Library of NSW

<sup>ii</sup> NSW LRS Volume 518 Folio 158

<sup>iii</sup> NSW LRS Volume 1058 Folio 84

<sup>iv</sup> John Horbury Hunt: radical architect, 1838-1904, Peter Reynolds, Lesley Muir and Joy Hughes, Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales, 2002, Page 143

<sup>v</sup> John Horbury Hunt : radical architect, 1838-1904, Peter Reynolds, Lesley Muir and Joy Hughes, Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales, 2002, Pages 143-144

<sup>vi</sup> NSW LRS Volume 1068 Folio 216, NSW LRS Volume 1188 Folio 69

<sup>vii</sup> NSW LRS Volume 1058 Folio 84

<sup>viii</sup> NSW LRS Volume 1058 Folio 84

<sup>ix</sup> NSW LRS Volume 1068 Folio 216, NSW LRS Volume 1188 Folio 69

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<sup>x</sup> H. McCredie, 'Braddon, Sir Henry Yule (1863–1955)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/braddon-sir-henry-yule-143/text9009>, published first in hardcopy 1979, accessed online 11 April 2023.

<sup>xi</sup> The Daily Telegraph, Tuesday 11 February 1902, Page 1

<sup>xii</sup> Sands Directory Alphabetical Index, 1901 and 1902

<sup>xiii</sup> NSW LRS Volume 1923 Folio 26

<sup>xiv</sup> **Water Board Plan**, undated

<sup>xv</sup> The Sydney Morning Herald, Thursday 3 May 1962, Page 1

<sup>xvi</sup> The Sydney Morning Herald, 11 July 1896, Page 7

<sup>xvii</sup> Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers, Volume 25 Issue 3, June 1963, Page 432

<sup>xviii</sup> The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Saturday 12 October 1895, Page 8

<sup>xix</sup> The Campbelltown Herald, Wednesday 8 October 1902, Page 2

<sup>xx</sup> The Daily Telegraph, Wednesday 10 July 1912, Page 10

<sup>xxi</sup> Part V, Building Magazine, Vol. 6 No. 66, 12 February 1913, Pages 94-96

<sup>xxii</sup> The Sydney Morning Herald, Tuesday 14 May 1918, Page 8

<sup>xxiii</sup> Construction, Wednesday 27 March 1940, Page 16

<sup>xxiv</sup> The Sydney Morning Herald, Friday 20 July 1923, Page 11

<sup>xxv</sup> The Northern Champion, Saturday 22 Sep 1945, Page 4

<sup>xxvi</sup> Sunday Times, Sunday 29 April 1928, Page 28

<sup>xxvii</sup> Evening News, Tuesday 8 January 1929, Page 12

<sup>xxviii</sup> Smith's Weekly, Saturday 22 June 1935, Page 14

<sup>xxix</sup> The Sydney Morning Herald, Thursday 10 July 1947, Page 24

<sup>xxx</sup> NSW LRS Volume 1082 Folio 146

<sup>xxxi</sup> The Sydney Morning Herald, Wednesday 8 July 1959, Page 9

<sup>xxxii</sup> The Sydney Morning Herald, Sunday 26 July 1959, Page 23

<sup>xxxiii</sup> The Sydney Morning Herald, Thursday 3 May 1962, Page 1

<sup>xxxiv</sup> NSW LRS Volume 1058 Folio 84, NSW LRS Volume 1923 Folio 26

<sup>xxxv</sup> Deposited Plan 229719

<sup>xxxvi</sup> NSW LRS Volume 1923 Folio 26

<sup>xxxvii</sup> The Sydney Morning Herald, Thursday 27 March 1969, Page 36

<sup>xxxviii</sup> The Sydney Morning Herald, Thursday 15 August 1974, Page 29

<sup>xxxix</sup> The Sydney Morning Herald, Monday 21 April 1975, Page 8