

Council Meeting 11 June 2020 - Agenda Item 9.2
Attachment 4 - Representations - 189 George Street Launceston

Launceston Council's General Manager.

I would like to firstly thank you for your time in reading this email. My name is Mark Bonham and my family and I are the current tenants of [REDACTED] We moved here May 2019 from WA for work (optometrist) and lifestyle. We first learned of this proposal from the applicant's parents who are both our [REDACTED] and grounds keepers for 189 George St.

For the sake of transparency, we have no vested interest in 189 George St. We do not intend to purchase the property in the future, nor keep residing here if the proposition goes ahead (or doesn't). My opinions here are solely based on what this proposal would do to the character of the property itself and Launceston in general.

For the past 5 months we have felt very blessed to be living in this home. The dwelling and gardens have a beautiful history and compliment the downtown scenery. I wasn't prepared for the amount of (predominantly Asian) tourists that stand in front of the property taking pictures of the house and gardens due to it's stunning historical nature. The proposal states that the 2 new dwellings at the front of the house wouldn't detract from the original home's view from the road, but I can't see how that's possible.

189 George St also compliments, and is complimented by, 191 George St as well as the houses that back onto the property. It is not simply this one property that would be affected by this development proposal but the whole area. I believe that if this development goes ahead it would detract from the very character of Launceston itself. Heritage properties such as this are becoming rarer and can not be restored in the future.

Being the first new tenants in [REDACTED] since the previous owners, who lived here for 23 years and learning about it's history from the applicant's parents and previous owner (Mona) who is still living in the units adjacent, I believe I have a unique perspective about the proposed development of 189 George St. I'm aware that the applicant coveted the property before the previous owners (Warwick) passed away. I'm aware that he had always planned on buying the property solely to develop it and used it as a nest egg for his future retirement. These are all things I have heard first hand from casual conversations with the above mentioned. I understand the need for progress and forging ahead in developing a flourishing future for Launceston, but I feel that one persons gain will come at the loss to many. In this case I believe that the City of Launceston will be the loser, as well as many of the residents of George St. The city will lose some of it's character and a little bit more of it's spectacular heritage, along with its wonderful charm and historical attractions; all of which are a few of the very reasons my family and I moved to Launceston and the reason for so many tourist visitors.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Dr Mark Bonham

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

Dear Launceston City Council

I am writing to register my objection to DA0405/2019 189 George Street Launceston division into 3 x lots.

I believe there are a number of reasons that the development should not be allowed to proceed and have listed them below.

1. The submission fails to recognise the gardens as being part of the Heritage Register listing of 189 George Street, and section 5.3.4 Local Cultural Heritage Code, clause E13.6.12 - Tree and vegetation removal has not been addressed anywhere within the applicants submission.
 - This should be applied before council and the community is able to progress with consideration of the application.
 - The form and structure of the garden has been in place since 1933, (as demonstrated by photo (a) below), with the original roses still flourishing today. The garden also displays a spectacular flowering magnolia tree that must be in excess of 50 years old, the date of this tree should be assessed as part of the submission and before the application can be properly considered.
 - Works required to permit the division of 189 George Street into 3 separate lots would naturally result in the ‘removal, destruction or lopping of trees’ and ‘removal of vegetation’ impacting on the ‘historic heritage significance’ of the house and its setting – thus not complying with protections that are integral to its listing on the Heritage Register.
2. This development will result in substantial degradation of the heritage precinct of 189 & ‘Hargate’ 191 George Street
 - a. Views of heritage listed, 189 George Street will be compromised and reduced to a small opening down a long driveway, further obstructed by the ultimate intention of use of the development sites for buildings facing George Street.
 - b. Loss of views of Heritage Register listed, ‘Hargate’ 191 George Street, with the spectacular Federation, upper and lower balconies concealed from public view if a 2 storey building was to be built on a resulting lot. It is noted that this is not an application for a building, however as a 2 storey building is permissible under the planning code the ethical implications of allowing a sub-division and the current owner to on-sell the newly created block, to an unsuspecting purchaser should be a consideration of its appropriateness for sub-dividing 189 George Street in the first place.
 - c. The loss of views to both 189 and 191 George Streets (forming a heritage precinct on George Street) would be a significant loss for the cultural fabric of Launceston.

Photos (b & c) below demonstrate how ‘Hargate’ in particular forms part of the cultural fabric of Launceston and as such is part of the tourist attraction of Launceston. Street views of 189 George Street & ‘Hargate’ should be retained to be enjoyed by residents and tourists alike.
3. 189 George Street is listed on the heritage register as a site, not as a building alone, so the presentation to the street should be considered as integral to the heritage listing and therefore remain as it is for future for generations to enjoy.

Further considerations:

- 189 George Street and 'Hargate' 191 George Street Launceston are listed on the Tasmanian Heritage Register.

The Tasmanian Heritage Register is an inventory of those places identified as being important to Tasmania, and Tasmanians, because of their connections to the State's history, culture and society. These places are linked to the cultural fabric that is so important to our local communities, our State's identity and our tourism industry. Each place has the potential to offer unique and special insights into Tasmania's rich and colourful history, and countless stories.

- Figure 4 of the heritage assessment report demonstrates there was a single storey shopfront originally onsite 189 George Street. It is important to note that this was a **single storey** building, therefore not obstructing views of Hargate (or 189 George Street), never-the-less it was demolished very soon after the completion of the Arts and Crafts residence on 189 George Street and the site has been an integral part of its presentation to the street ever since.

I can be contacted on the details below should you require me to represent my objection in person and I would like to be kept informed of the progress of the application.

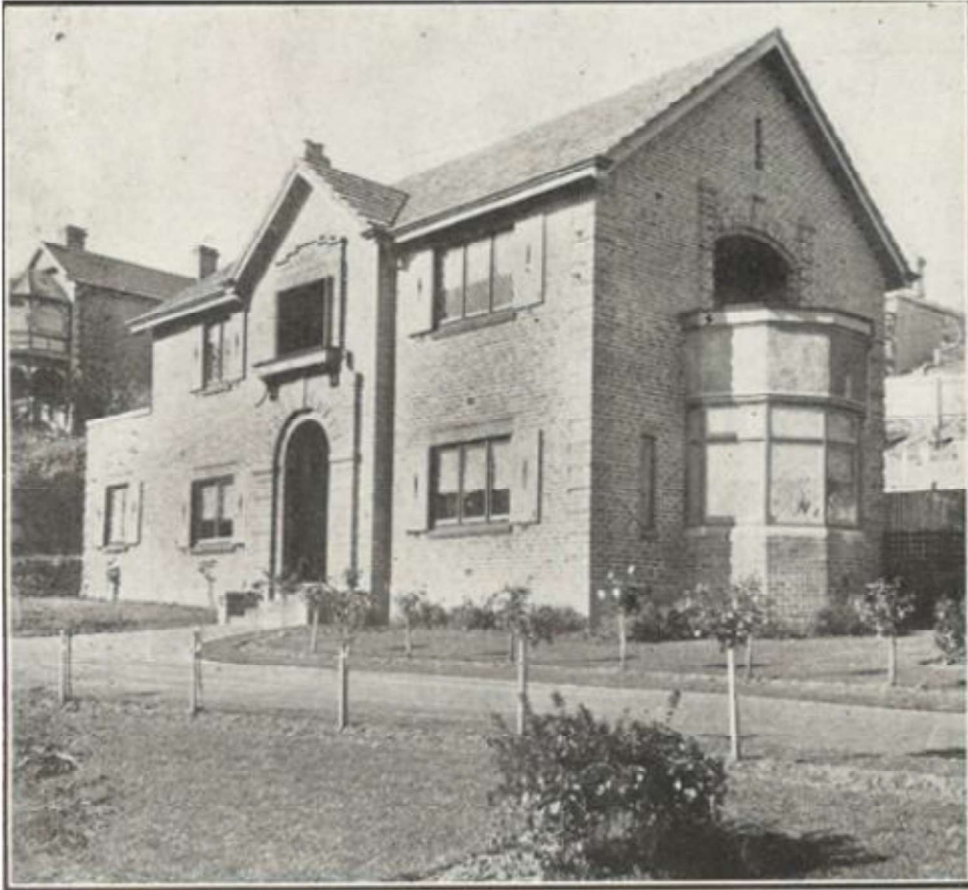
Kind regards

Sarah Hurst

BIA, Hons, UNSW

Mobile number: [REDACTED]

Photo a



The residence of Mr. E. H. Humphreys, George Street. The contractors were Messrs. Hinman, Wright, & Manser Pty. Ltd., Cimitiere Street.

Photo b




Photo c


Destination
Launceston

Visit Launceston in any season and you'll find a city alive with colour; boasting magnificent natural attractions, enchanting parks and gardens, world-class experiences and a thriving food and wine scene set amongst the backdrop of beautiful Georgian streetscapes.

Explore or be guided through a tapestry of colour, history and mystery.

www.destinationlaunceston.com.au
Image: Hargate Credit: Tourism Tasmania & Hargate

 City of LAUNCESTON
**VISITOR
INFORMATION CENTRE**



68-72 Cameron Street, Launceston
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<http://www.mailguard.com.au>

Michael Stretton
General Manager, Launceston City Council

Dear Sir,

Together with my partner I am the owner of [REDACTED] and having viewed the plans and being also very familiar with the site (walking past it on numerous occasions) I would like to lodge an objection to the proposed development at 189 George St as described in

<https://onlineservice.launceston.tas.gov.au/eProperty/Publicnotices/421576/Planning%20Onsite%20Notice%20-%20189%20George%20Street.pdf>

<https://onlineservice.launceston.tas.gov.au/eProperty/Publicnotices/421576/Advertised%20Plans.pdf>

I wish to lodge an objection on the following grounds:

1. Historical significance and amenity surrounding existing buildings, particularly 189 and 191 George St which are both heritage listed buildings (on the Register of the National Estate like 171 St John St and many other buildings in the vicinity). The proposed development would remove the garden and the present view of 189 George St, making it appear like a battle-axe development rather than a building of historical importance and part of Launceston's precious built heritage. It will also compromise the aspect of gardens surrounding 191 George St. Apart from being one of Launceston's imposing Queen Anne residences – a important feature of the city's landscape – this building also has historical significance, having once served as a private maternity hospital (this can be verified by the Launceston General Hospital Historical Society and indeed it is pictured in a book on early hospitals). This heritage is an essential distinctive feature of Launceston especially precious to tourism and the city's amenity because Launceston is an inland city not a harbour city like Hobart. The proposed development is entirely unsympathetic to the historical aspects of this area of Launceston which combines residences from a range of historical eras (from the 1830s onwards) and unlike many other cities these residences have often substantial gardens.
2. The removal of garden and space for trees is environmentally insensitive especially in the context of climate change that will be marked by more extreme heat and wilder storms. Increasing the built footprint removes the capacity for rain to soak in, increasing damaging run-off. Apart from its parks inner Launceston does not possess significant numbers of urban trees providing shade, soaking up water and lowering heat. Developments of this type accentuate these problems leaving no space to plant trees in the future as well as the loss of the beautiful gardens like that presently at 189.
3. In my view the development is similar to 'infill' developments that have blighted the inner suburbs of cities like Melbourne (and impossible to rectify once done) and it would be more than tragic if Launceston were to follow this path. I am aware of other developments of this type starting to appear around the inner city which I believe also damage Launceston's attractiveness to tourists (while much less intrusive/more desirable developments are occurring elsewhere like South Launceston) – I frequently see tourists wandering up from Prince's Park along St John and doing a circuit that either goes west to Charles St or east up Canning St to George St or wandering up George St. This central aspect of Launceston has strong heritage and

cultural significance as well as being attractive to tourists. The proposed development would degrade what are currently two attractive buildings that are part and parcel of this.

I would urge Council to refuse this DA. Many thanks for taking the time to read my email.

Regards

Emeritus Professor Michael Quinlan

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Dear General Manager,

I am writing to oppose the above subdivision on the grounds of seriously affecting the streetscape of George St.

This Heritage listed property and garden is much admired. I walk past on a daily basis and have often seen people especially international tourists exclaiming about the beauty of the house and garden and photographing it.

If we desecrate more Heritage properties there won't be any reason for tourists to visit this city, the Council itself acknowledges that Launceston has such beautiful Heritage streetscapes.

Two modern dwellings in front of the house would destroy the garden and block the very appealing house view from the street.

In addition with the Climate Emergency already acknowledged why would you destroy more green space?

Yours Sincerely

Jenny Davidson

FILE No.	DA0405/2019			
EO	✓	OD	Box	✓
RGV'D 01 OCT 2019 LCC				
Doc No.				
	Action Officer	Noted	Replied	
	C. Wronkmore			

E-copy: I. more



1st November
2019-10-01

I would like to register my objections to the proposed development at 189 George Street, your DA number DA0405/2019

My objections are based on the premise that the council of Launceston should act for the betterment of the city and should be doing all it can to keep the architecture and gardens of this city intact if at all possible.

The property at 189 George Street has a heritage listing and would be surely compromised if two town houses are allowed to be built in the land in front of this home.

The gardens and especially the Magnolia tree are spectacular when in bloom also the palm tree on the front fence is very old.

Is the council willing to see our lovely gardens demolished to provide space for development not only compromising 189 George Street but also having a detrimental impact on 191 George Street, which is listed also with the Tasmania Heritage Register. 191 George is also listed on the register of the National Estate.

I hope that my objections will be given your utmost attention.

Yours truly,

Elizabeth and Don Harkness.

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Yours truly,

Elizabeth and Don Harkness.

To The General Manager, Launceston City Council.

I wish to make the following written representation regarding the subdivision proposal for the heritage listed property at 189 George Street Launceston. DA405/2019.

I believe that the proposed development is inappropriate due to the significant impacts that it will have on a unique heritage listed property, and accordingly the proposal should be refused. I have based my opinion on the following grounds:

The heritage impact statement prepared on behalf of the proponents has many shortcomings and draws potentially misleading conclusions.

Heritage Property

The property at 189 George Street is listed as a heritage site in its entirety. The Heritage Impact Statement is insufficient as it overlooks this overall fact.

Heritage building and garden structures

The property has its original gardens, plantings (roses), and garden bed structures, which are all part of the listing, and are likely to be lost, but are not mentioned in the report.

Heritage driveway

The property has its original driveway structure, which is part of the heritage listing and likely to be lost, but which is not mentioned in the report.

Heritage trees

The gardens contain many trees, some are almost as old as the house itself and are protected as part of the heritage listing but these are also not mentioned in the report.

Features of the façade

The street facing façade of the building is a rare example of the Arts and Crafts movement in Architecture and has unique and precise symmetry in the brickwork. This was no accident as it would have required precision craftsmanship and considerable extra expense to build. This exacting symmetry feature in the brickwork can only be appreciated when the building is viewed front-on from the street. This is not mentioned in the report.

The intention of the architect

It would have been the intention of the architect for the quality of the design and craftsmanship to have been viewed from the street, as this is the only perspective from where it can be fully observed. It would seem apparent that this expensive and detailed feature of the house would not have been added to the street facing façade unless it was intended to be seen - from the street. Accordingly, it seems that it was always the intention of the architect and original property owner to remove the older shopfront from the front of the property that was obstructing the view of the house once the build was complete, there being no point including this level of detail in the façade if it could not have been seen.

The false narrative

This reveals that there is likely a false narrative in the heritage impact statement whereby it is implied that the "original condition" of the heritage listed property included a shop at the front of the site. This is not the case as the old shop was removed almost immediately after the house was completed, as was most likely always the intention of the property owner. This is evidenced in the photo from early 1935 where it can be seen that the driveway and gardens have been fully established and the view of the house from the street has been fully opened up. This creates the setting and context that is ubiquitous to the Arts and Crafts Style for an "English Counties" family manor home, after which this house and its garden setting clearly takes its inspiration.

The misleading scale of the view analysis diagrams

The diagrams in the view analysis are erroneous as they depict the existing house as smaller than it actually is. Overlaying the diagrams on an aerial photo of the site reveals that the house is in fact larger, being nearer both the southern boundary and the street. The effect of this smaller representation in the report is that it becomes easier to see the entire façade in the final view analysis when it is depicted as being smaller than it actually is. The reality is that the proposed building envelopes on the proposed

blocks will obstruct the view of the existing house in some quarter, making it impossible to see the entirety of the façade or the expert craftsmanship in full.

The Heritage Magnolia in Hargate 191 George Street already blocks the view

Furthermore, the report attempts to suggest that the façade can be seen from the street when viewed across the neighbouring property at 191 George Street. This is not the case as that view is entirely obstructed by existing hedging and a heritage listed magnolia in the front garden. So this component of the Heritage Impact Statement's analysis draws unobtainable conclusions regarding the retention of the views to the house as that view is already obstructed.

The custodianship of a heritage property

The previous owners of the property have viewed the heritage listing as a measure of its worth, and have seen their custodianship of the entire heritage property as a worthy responsibility. Not recognising this responsibility does not excuse the owner of a heritage property from the legal responsibility to protect and maintain the listed property.

The Council and the Community must protect this Heritage Listed Property

Protecting the property does not sterilise the site from development because the site is already fully developed. The entire property is one of Launceston's finest examples of an intact Arts and Crafts Family Manor Home, carefully set in its original garden, which forms a crucial part of the entire site's overall significance. Removing the gardens from the property, and the original structures contained therein, would remove an integral component of the property's heritage significance.

Subdividing this property would significantly degrade the resultant heritage value of the original dwelling. Subdividing the property would leave the house with little to no context, cramped in a crowded setting, and not representative of the intent of the original garden setting and visual aspect from the street. Accordingly, the subdivision of the property at 189 George Street should be refused on heritage grounds as subdivision will not maintain the unique heritage values of the listed site.

With Best Regards

Matt Hurst BTP

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