

## Council Meeting - Agenda Item 9.1 - Attachment 4 - Representations - 6 October 2021

**From:** "Helen Davies" [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Mon, 13 Sep 2021 16:30:37 +1000  
**To:** "Contact Us" <contactus@launceston.tas.gov.au>  
**Subject:** DA0422/2021. 5 Welman Street Launceston

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Re: DA0422/2021. 5 Welman Street, Launceston.

Residential - Construction of alterations and additions to a heritage dwelling.

Dear Sir,

I am a [REDACTED] (thirty-five years) of the above property, and have a detailed knowledge of the history of 5 Welman Street and its cultural heritage significance in Launceston, as researcher, author and illustrator of "For the Record, James Bennell's Buildings in Early Launceston", published in 2006 and launched as part of the Launceston City Council's Bicentenary celebrations.

### **Some historical background**

James Bennell was one of Australia's first speculative builders and made a considerable contribution to Launceston's built heritage with 26 properties, constructed between 1835 and 1870.

The seven houses that comprise 1 - 13 Welman Street, originally named "Victoria Terrace", are perhaps the finest of all his houses - remarkable for their dramatic site on Windmill Hill close to the city, the subtle adjustments to each house in forming the unified terrace and in the many Regency-inspired architectural details to be discovered throughout the properties.

Dr Eric Ratcliff (architect, historian, author, illustrator and psychiatrist) referred to these houses as follows:

*"At Victoria Terrace in Welman Street, Bennell built in miniature one of the few urban set-pieces of any importance in Australia. On Windmill Hill, Bennell arranged a series of speculative houses in four sizes, some conjoined and some free-standing, in such a way that their combined roof-lines remained horizontal while standing on a gently rising slope. The ensemble is on the most prominent site in Launceston. It has suffered from alteration, but many owners have undertaken sympathetic restoration...and If I were to suddenly come to millions, I would forcibly reinstate the remainder. It would then be recognised as one of the few important nineteenth-century urban set-pieces in Australia."*

Address for the Launch of "For the Record" by Helen Davies, Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery at Inveresk, 11 November 2006.

It is not an accident that 5 Welman Street retains its neat proportions, charming architectural details and so much of its original fabric 160 years after it was built. It has been cared for and cherished by its owners (notably by Dr Ludbey and his family through the 1980s) who made few changes to the main rooms of the house - enough to bring bathroom facilities indoors and a create a comfortable kitchen.

This property had the last remaining - and carefully preserved - original paired verandah posts on which our own fourteen replacement posts were based at 13 Welman Street for our 1994 restoration recognised by the National Trust.

Since the publication of For the Record in 2006, long-standing and new owners of the "Victoria Terrace" houses (and other Bennell house-owners in Launceston) have used the architectural references in the book to restore and renovate their houses. Before this time there were no

references at all to James Bennell's remarkable houses and their heritage value for house-owners, builders, real estate agents or the Launceston City Council. I am hoping that any decisions in this development application will take the architectural value and history of this property into account.

### **My representation**

Numbers 5 and 3 Welman Street were built as compact versions of the earlier numbers 11 and 13 Welman Street by necessity, as they were built last in the row, on smaller sites. The rooms are of a smaller scale, and in keeping with the refined unostentatious Regency details of the building as a whole.

While I believe the Orangery is a welcome addition for the function and comfort of the property I am concerned that the proposed design is too elaborate and stylistically out of place with the best historical details of the house. Regency design is exquisitely scaled and its details are refined - eg. beaded panels, low slim sills, super fine glazing bars and finely fluted trims. I am concerned that original doorways are proposed to be removed from the hall - especially beside the superbly fine stair - and a pair of new doors are planned to form a dressing room space and bathroom. The single north-east room could be beautifully designed to contain these functions, plus a discrete laundry, all accessed from the existing hall.

It is a common solution to place a master bed against the chimney breast when renovation space proves tight, removing the need for the extra doors.

The proposed door with a semi circular fanlight above is out of place in the context of a laundry/ toilet/ bathroom here: the neat and modest open arch in the hall is a single feature in every Bennell house in the Terrace.

### **Conclusion**

I hope that the history of this superbly unspoiled home will guide the style and extent of the proposed renovations. That a close examination of the refined details that are precious to this Victorian Regency gem become the guide and unrelated 'bigger' styles are not pressed upon it. The fewer new doors and reconfigured halls the better!

Yours faithfully

Helen Davies



Sent from my iPad

**From:** "Glenda King" [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sun, 12 Sep 2021 22:41:26 +1000  
**To:** "Contact Us" <contactus@launceston.tas.gov.au>  
**Subject:** 5 Welman Street - Development Application - DA0422/2021

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SENT BY EMAIL TO contactus@launceston.tas.gov.au

12 September, 2021

Mr Michael Stretton

General Manager

Launceston City Council

St John Street

LAUNCESTON, TASMANIA 7250

Dear Mr Stretton,

**RE: DA0422/2021 for 5 Welman Street, Launceston**

I wish to make the following comments in relation to the advertised plans for the proposed alterations and additions to 5 Welman Street, Launceston.

**1. Historical Importance of 5 Welman Street**

This property is one of twenty houses in Launceston designed and built by James Bennell for sale and for rental between 1835 and 1876. Seventeen of Bennell's original houses remain today in Launceston.

5 Welman Street is a significant house in one of the most complete rows of colonial houses built in Launceston over this period. Part of what was known as *Victoria Terrace*, 5 Welman Street is regarded, despite some alterations to date, as the most intact of Bennell's houses in this row. These houses, together with those in adjoining Adelaide Street and those built by Bennell in St John Street (known as *Quality Row*) arguably form the finest and largest number of examples of Regency-style rowhouses in the southern hemisphere. Bennell also built three commercial properties in Launceston which have survived.

As one of Australia's earliest speculative builders and developers, James Bennell, who arrived in the colony in 1834, is of great significance to the architectural history of Australia and the history of Launceston and its development. 5 Welman Street is a fine example of Bennell's architectural design. It is important not only for its exterior but also for the design and quality of its interior fittings.

**2. Rear Extension**

The proposed extension at the rear of the house, described as an 'orangery' in the plans, should more accurately be described as a conservatory. The plans indicate that it is to be used for a dining and lounge area. The scale of the extension is many times that of the existing enclosed rear extension. The proposed extension does not fit either in scale or design with the elegant simplicity of James Bennell's original house. It is contrary to the existing architectural features of the existing house and it detracts from the integrity of the original design.

The dominant addition will occupy the majority of the rear yard leaving little scope for any vegetation and extremely limited open space. It has no relevance to any of the adjoining Bennell houses nor to the My Street streetscape that is created collectively by the rear of each of the Bennell houses. The proposed large extension will be easily able to be viewed externally from the Adelaide Street end of My Street and from other positions in My Street.

The design of extensions to heritage-listed properties should embrace conservation architecture principles and respect the integrity of the original heritage structure. Regrettably, the proposed design for the rear extension does not.

### **3. Internal Changes**

The advertised plans indicate that there will be significant changes within the interior that will result in the removal of original fixtures and fittings that were designed by Bennell. One has to question why, in a heritage-listed building, the removal of such original fittings would be permitted.

It is a key principle of good heritage architectural practice that wherever possible original features in a heritage-listed building are retained in-situ. If this principle is not strictly applied to this development application then important heritage interiors will be lost forever. The value of the house as a record of colonial living in Launceston is then severely diminished.

The potential outcome of allowing the removal of such material is the creation of what can be termed *street facadism* which can be likened to a heritage film set. A house that looks original from the exterior has little or nothing of heritage value remaining behind the front door.

The remarkable nationally significant colonial architecture and design heritage held in this James Bennell house must be preserved. The design of any alterations and additions to the existing house, both externally and internally, must acknowledge and respect that heritage.

The current plans should not be recommended for approval.

Yours sincerely,

**Glenda King**

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**From:** "PlanningAlerts" <contact@planningalerts.org.au>  
**Sent:** Fri, 10 Sep 2021 11:40:44 +1000  
**To:** "Council" <council@launceston.tas.gov.au>  
**Subject:** Comment on application DA0422/2021

## For the attention of the General Manager / Planning Manager / Planning Department

Application DA0422/2021  
Address 5 Welman Street Launceston, TAS, 7250  
Description Residential - Construction of alterations and additions to a heritage dwelling  
Name of commenter LISA WALKDEN  
Address of commenter [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

### Comment

To whom it may concern

This row of Bennell houses in Weman St is quite special and externally are intact.

The addition of an orangerie at the rear of the house is not in keeping with the period or the architectural style of this wonderful colonial architect.

To keep the Integrity of the home and this area such additions should not be considered and approved by the planning officers of the council.

Any structural changes to the original building's interior should not be allowed when alternatives which don't require permanently changing it's historic architectural features can occur.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Kind regards  
Lisa Walkden

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This comment was submitted via PlanningAlerts, a free service run by [the OpenAustralia Foundation](#) for the public good. [View this application on PlanningAlerts](#)

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Fri, 10 Sep 2021 09:54:26 +1000  
**To:** "Contact Us" <contactus@launceston.tas.gov.au>; "Michael Stretton"  
[REDACTED]  
**Subject:** DA 0422/2021 Representation 5 Welman Street  
**Attachments:** Heritage Protection Society (Tasmania) Incorporated 5 Welman St Launceston  
.pdf

Please see attached representation.  
Heritage Protection Society (Tasmania) Inc  
[REDACTED]

# HERITAGE PROTECTION SOCIETY (TASMANIA) Inc.



9 September 2021

Mr. Michael Stretton  
General Manager  
Launceston City Council  
Town Hall  
St John Street

LAUNCESTON TAS 7250 By email to [contactus@launceston.tas.gov.au](mailto:contactus@launceston.tas.gov.au)

Dear Sir, **Re: DA0422/2021. 5 Welman Street LAUNCESTON Residential – Construction of alterations and additions to a heritage dwelling.**

We refer to the advertisement in The Examiner Newspaper on 28<sup>th</sup> August 2021.

In establishing the cultural heritage significance of the place, we refer to Helen Davies' publication "*For the Record*", published in 2006, and described as "an architectural and social history of James Bennell's buildings in Launceston" by the author. James Bennell b1809 (London) – d1878 (Launceston), arrived in Launceston in 1834, and during his life in Launceston he had '*erected more buildings in Launceston than perhaps any other man*'.

***James Bennell's buildings may not necessarily be remarkable examples of their time but they are remarkable survivors with a rich and unusual history. They are the work of one of Australia's first speculative builders, a decorative artist and craftsman.***- Helen Davies, 2002.

This Georgian Regency style residence, now over 160 years old, is an integral part of James Bennell's "Victoria Terrace", and is one of the third pair of houses constructed and forming the terrace row, built by Bennell and completed by early 1861. The half basement of No. 5 (and also the matching No. 3), originally accommodated the kitchen and two other service rooms, accessed only by an internal stair down from the rear yard. Subsequent modifications and modernisation has seen the kitchen relocated to a rear room at the main level, and a later skillion-roofed room added towards the rear yard. In spite of various modifications, No. 5 Welman Street is today, probably the most original and intact dwelling in Bennell's Victoria Terrace. All roofs of Victoria Terrace were originally timber shingles, but this one was later re-roofed in slates whilst others were re-roofed in corrugated iron.

Summary of past changes (by reference to "For the Record" Davies 2002.

## EXTERIOR

Front - The photograph of No.5 on p157 (and by deduction the matching No.3, also by reference to No.3 on p150) shows the exterior ground level on the western (front) side has been dug down and hence the verandah floor height is raised and the basement floor level presumably lowered, modern French doors added to the basement level, and the verandah reconstructed without the decorative support posts

and decorative balustrades, and the weather screen infill covering the front door. This excavation work is likely to have been the reason for demolition of the masonry/vaulted construction of the front stairs, because of the supporting ground being lowered. A new stair has been constructed in a central position, replacing possibly a masonry stair to one side (like existed at No.3). The lower verandah screens with slatted timber infills and diamond decorations (possibly a later adornment), is removed.

Rear – A modern sunroom has been added and acts as a porch to the pair of central double doorways. The original exterior doorway to the basement level is removed, that opening blocked, and two new pairs of double doors installed (one pair in a new opening is constructed to the modern kitchen room) on the main level.

INTERIOR From reference to plans on p151

Basement

The partition walls creating 3 rooms including doors etc., are removed to create a single room.

The southern side rear undercroft area has since been excavated and a doorway formed to create a modern bathroom.

Main (Ground) Level

A timber mantelpiece is removed and a modern kitchen has been fitted to the southern rear parlour, with structural alterations to form an exterior doorway (previously referred to) and a large double - sized doorway opening joining up the southern side front parlour.

The two northern side rooms are unchanged.

The dividing partition under the stair landing has been removed as a doorway (Note discrepancy with drawings showing the stair landing protruding to the rear ?).

First Floor Level

The two attic bedrooms are unchanged and the central room has been converted to a modern bathroom.

## PROPOSED DEMOLITIONS

(not necessarily aligning with the Applicant's statement)

Basement Level

Northern side rear undercroft area is proposed to be excavated to form a new Cellar Room. It is unlikely that the stone foundation walls are constructed sufficiently deep to permit this without underpinning and significant risk to stability of the building (Note the previous excavation of the southern side undercroft has been to a differing extent and inner retaining walls were constructed). Had the stone foundation walls been originally constructed deep enough, then it is more-likely Bennell would have made this undercroft area as a room in the first place. A new doorway is constructed to access the new room.

Main (Ground) Level

An original door and doorway from the Hall 1 is removed. Two doorway openings are constructed joining up the rear room to create a Master Bedroom/ Dressing Room and Laundry Alcove (denoted Hall 3). A doorway, door and section of wall is removed, and potentially mantelpiece joinery lost.

The modern kitchen joinery is removed (query what remains of the old fireplace construction), the exterior (modern) doorway is widened. A new doorway is constructed to the Stair Hall.

The modern sunroom is demolished.



### First Floor Level

The modern bathroom fit-out is removed.

New skylights are cut through the rear roof to illuminate the two rear rooms at the Main Level. (Note again, the plan conflict with stair landing shown protruding to the rear, and the curious depiction of a lowered stair landing at the First Floor Level compromising safe access to the bedrooms and bathroom).

### PROPOSED NEW WORKS/FUNCTIONS

#### Basement

The creation of an unventilated cellar room and the risk to the stability of the building structure indicates this work as proposed, to be likely to be inappropriate and inadvisable. The internal finish of the stone foundation walls is unlikely to be smooth and regular and not have pointed-up joints. There is almost certainly a waterproofing risk to be encountered and new drainage required.

#### Main (Ground) Level

The planning to create a new Master Bedroom is to be resisted, given the radical change to this relatively intact heritage residence.

There is no justification for the removal of the doorway and door/architrave joinery etc, as this could simply be locked and sealed off.

It is a relatively small residence, not a capacious family home, and the applicant suggests it will be used as tourist accommodation. Given the acceptance that this is an important heritage building and not all desired modern facilities and standards can be achieved, then the two new doorways from Bedroom 1 should be deleted, using the present doorway as access via the Halls 1 & 2 to a Bathroom/Dressing Room. The Laundry could be located in the Basement or Outbuilding, or by a discreet alcove of the Kitchen. The removal of the door/doorway and section of wall in Hall 2 to create Hall 3 (a Laundry Alcove is unnecessary and undesirable).

The second doorway opening from Hall 2 to the Kitchen is unnecessary.

The design/style of the new Orangery is too elaborate and of the wrong style. This ebullient treatment with pilasters and decadent cornicing and mouldings is stylistically far too lavish for the simplistic “Bennellesque” architecture which uses ‘cymer’ moulds and treillage as decoration. An uncomfortable comparison can be drawn by comparison with the embellishment carried out by extensions at ‘Lake House’ Cressy. Accordingly, a much more restrained architectural resolution is encouraged.

Interior details, such as the ‘transome – style’ architraves on interior doors is more 1920’s and 30’s than “Bennell”.

The loss of the chimney breast in the Kitchen is inappropriate, and if it is not found to be present when the modern joinery is demolished, then it should be reinstated, even if only for structural reinstatement reasons.

The style of the semi-circular arched highlight above GD-09 is questionable.

If an original ‘Bennell’ mantelpiece is to be lost on account of demolition works, then it should be installed on the new fireplace in the Orangery.

### CONCLUSION

The proposed constructions and alterations to this heritage residence involves unnecessary and undesirable intrusion to the fabric and interpretation of the place, and accordingly, unless adequate changes, amendments and conditions are imposed by and accepted by agreement, then alternatively the application should be **refused** in its present form and intensification.

DA0422/2021 5 Welman Street, Launceston

Yours faithfully,

Lionel Morrell

President

**HERITAGE PROTECTION SOCIETY (TASMANIA) INC.**

**From:** "Glenn Chintock" [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wed, 8 Sep 2021 13:01:38 +1000  
**To:** "Contact Us" <contactus@launceston.tas.gov.au>  
**Subject:** Objection to Development Application fro 5 Welman Street, Launceston (DA0422/2021)

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Glenn P. Chintock  
[REDACTED]

Kim Hewitt  
[REDACTED]

We write to oppose the development application (DA0422/2021) for 5 Welman Street recently advertised.

Our central concern is the adequacy (or lack of) parking space for vehicles associated with the proposal for that property.

Both number 1 and number 3 Welman Street have sufficient off-street parking (garaging/car bays) for the all the vehicles owned by the residents currently living in these two residential properties. Number 5 Welman Street has currently only one off-street parking space (a single car garage) and no provision on the planning application for any further off-street car parking.

We are advised (on the planning permit application notice) that the development of 5 Welman Street is "Residential – Construction of alterations and additions to a heritage dwelling" put forward by applicants P.A.Nicholas & D.Day.

Yet a thorough perusal of the documents provided on the D.A. on the LCC website clearly shows, on the bottom right hand corner of pages 8,9,10 & 11,:

**"PROJECT: Upgrading of Existing Residence for Visitor Accommodation;**

**ADDRESS: Vaucluse Estate, 643 Glen Esk Road, Conara:**

**CLIENT: Vaucluse Agricultural Company Pty, Ltd."**

If this 'upgrading' is to be for the purpose of 'visitor accommodation' rather than a dwelling/house for long term residential occupation then we are strongly of the view that the provision of suitable parking is inadequate and would lead to a loss of amenity for other residents (all of whom are long term owner/residents) of the street who require off street parking for visitors and workers, etc.

Further, If this DA is intended to facilitate 'Visitor Accommodation' the means of advertising that fact is also inadequate. Such important information should be boldly expressed, not found in 'hiding' on the bottom of relatively unimportant pages within the document.

Thank you for your consideration for our objection.

Regards,

G.P.Chintock, [REDACTED]

K. Hewitt, [REDACTED]