

21 December 2016

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**Re: DS/867/2016—Application for Planning Permit for a Subdivision, 40 Harley Street, Strathdale**

Dear Madam/Sir,

The National Trust of Australia (Victoria) (NTAV) strongly objects to the above permit application relating to the property known as 'Nanga Gnulle', which we submit would adversely affect a place of heritage significance, contrary to the objectives of the City of Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme.

The NTAV was recently made aware of this application by a number of people in the Bendigo and wider heritage communities who are concerned about the future of this place. We understand that the subject site is the location of a 1973 mud-brick house designed by noted architect and environmentalist Alistair Knox<sup>1</sup>, and that the design incorporates an eclectic range of reclaimed materials, many of which have provenance to the Bendigo area. We further understand that the house is surrounded by extensive gardens planted and maintained Robin and Peg Green, the previous owners of the site.

Our research indicates that 'Nanga Gnulle', also known as Green House, is the only example of Alistair Knox's work in the Bendigo area, although several examples of his work are included in the Heritage Overlay for the Shire of Nillumbik. We note that plans for the house are located in the collection of the State Library of Victoria (ref. YLTAD 106/06).

We believe there is a strong *prima facie* case for architectural, aesthetic and associative significance at a local level, and that a heritage assessment should be undertaken as a matter of urgency to inform any subdivision or future development. Any assessment of significance should include the gardens and trees on the site, as well as the round pavilion building/reception centre on the site which was designed by architect Robert Marshall, who is a former associate of Alistair Knox.

We submit that the current permit application is contrary to the City of Greater Bendigo's Environment policy outlined at Clause 21.08-2 of the Planning Scheme, which states the following objectives:

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<sup>1</sup> Fay Woodhouse, 'Knox, Alistair Samuel (1912–1986)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/knox-alistair-samuel-12750/text22995>, published first in hardcopy 2007, accessed online 12 December 2016.

- *To identify and protect heritage places with Aboriginal and historic cultural value as well as natural value.*
- *To protect and enhance the municipality's heritage for future generations.*
- *To encourage the appropriate reuse of heritage buildings.*
- *To encourage compatible development adjacent to heritage places and features.*

Clause 21.08-3 provides further guidance, stating the following strategies:

- *Ensure that all new development in heritage areas is sympathetic to the character and heritage of the area.*
- *Identify all heritage assets in the municipality.*
- *Support appropriate sympathetic redevelopment.*

We submit that the current application is also contrary to Council's Heritage Policy outlined at Clause 22.06 of the Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme which states the following objectives:

- *To retain heritage assets for the enjoyment, education and experience of residents, visitors and future generations of the municipality.*
- *To ensure that new development is sympathetic with the appearance and character and maintains the significance of heritage places, including surrounding precincts.*
- *To encourage the preservation, maintenance, restoration and where appropriate, reconstruction of heritage places.*
- *To encourage the sympathetic re-use and adaptation of heritage places so that such places are maintained and enhanced.*

We further submit that the current permit application is contrary to Council's Subdivision Policy at Clause 22.06 which requires Council to:

- *Ensure that subdivision does not adversely affect the significance of the heritage place.*
- *Ensure that appropriate settings and elements for heritage places are maintained including the retention of any original garden areas, large trees and other features which contribute to the significance of the place.*
- *Ensure that development which may result from the subdivision of heritage places does not adversely affect the heritage significance of the place.*
- *Ensure that the subdivision of heritage places retains the existing built form pattern where such pattern contributes to the significance of the heritage place.*

We note that the Planning Permit Application prepared by Terraco states that "there are some building materials which may have some heritage value which will be reclaimed as part of the demolition process where possible."<sup>2</sup> We submit that this is not an acceptable heritage outcome, and that this advice has not been provided by suitably qualified expert. Any future development on the site should be informed by a Heritage Impact Statement prepared by a heritage expert, and the advice of Council's Heritage Advisor.

For the above reasons, we object to the subdivision application its current form, and respectfully request Council to undertake a detailed heritage assessment as soon as possible to inform future planning at the site. We believe that 'Nanga Gnulle' is a unique and significant place which should be

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<sup>2</sup> Planning Permit Application, 40 Harley Street, Strathdale, Terraco Civil Engineers, Project Managers, Development Consultants.

recognised and protected for future generations to enjoy. Please don't hesitate to contact me on 9656 9802 should you wish to discuss any aspect of this objection.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'F Watson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Felicity Watson  
Advocacy Manager (Acting)

CC: Cr Margaret O'Rourke, Mayor