

## DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Web: <u>www.strathfieldhomebushhistory.org</u> Email: strathfieldhistory@gmail.com

21 July 2025

The General Manager Strathfield Council PO Box 120 STRATHFIELD NSW 2135

Re: Objection to proposed demolition of 'Ettalong' 90 Abbotsford Road Homebush

Dear Michael

On behalf of the Strathfield-Homebush District Historical Society, I am writing to express our strong objection to the proposed demolition of the heritage-listed property 'Ettalong' 90 Abbotsford Rd Homebush. 'Ettalong' is a local heritage item on Strathfield Local Environmental Plan and is also a contributory item of the Abbotsford Road Heritage Conservation area.

As a Society dedicated to conserving, protecting and promoting Strathfield's rich history and particularly its architectural heritage, we are deeply concerned about the potential loss of this culturally significant property. Approval of this development application would create a precedent and encourage maintenance neglect and demolition of heritage properties across the Strathfield LGA.

'Ettalong' has considerable social, aesthetic, and historical importance to the Strathfield area. Built c.1883, it is one of the oldest houses on the 1878 Village of Homebush Estate. It has associations with the district's commercial and agricultural history at Homebush Stockyards through William Charles Hill, Director Hill, Clark & Co, wool brokers, stock and station agents and Member of NSW Legislative Council 1900-1919) and William Richards auctioneer and Director of Hill, Clark & Co (future owner of 'Broughlea' 82 Abbotsford Road Homebush). The house was also occupied by William Morris Hughes MHR, Prime Minister of Australia 1915-1923. These factors make 'Ettalong' a vital part of our shared local heritage.

We are particularly concerned that the proposed demolition appears to disregard the property's statutory heritage listing, and the objectives of the Strathfield Local Environment Plan 2012 and Development Control Plan, which aim to conserve places of heritage significance for future generations and not demolish them. The development application does not set out any compelling reasons that would support the demolition of the entire property. This house being located on a site of over 2000 sq metres with ample land behind the house

which would allow for new rear additions to the property. It is also strange that the proposed development requires excavation for underground garages on a site of over 2000 sq metres. We do not support unnecessary excavation especially in a heritage conservation area which may destabilise and cause damage to other heritage buildings. Strathfield LGA is mainly situated on reactive clay soils, which are subject to expansion and contraction, which can result in cracking.

We do not agree that the inter-war bungalow additions detract from the heritage significance of the property. The additions occurred over 100 years ago and were considered in the assessment supporting heritage listing of the property. Additions of this nature are not uncommon in the Strathfield LGA and part of the evolution of the property history. Another example of a heritage listed Victorian house with inter-war bungalow additions is 'Strathfield Gardens' (former Fairholm), 22-26 Cotswold Rd Strathfield.

I further note that significant amounts of trees and vegetation appear to have been cleared from the rear of the site, which arguably part of the heritage listing of the property. Council's Significant Tree Register Index notes a Forest Red Gum (*Eucalyptus tereticornis*) located at the rear of 90 Abbotsford Road. This is not listed in the Arborist Report, which unbelievably recommends to remove 22 trees, primarily because the trees conflict with the proposed new development. It appears from photos in the application that clearing of the rear yard had already occurred.

We urge that Council decline the development application for demolition. The loss of this property would not only be irreversible but would also diminish the historical character of our municipality.

The Society can be contacted for further comments at strathfieldhistory@gmail.com Yours sincerely,

Michael Nicholls

President Strathfield-Homebush District Historical Society