



Scoping Report - 1 Rosemead Road, Hornsby

March 2020

*Request for Secretary Environmental Assessment
Requirements (SEARs)*



Adaptive reuse of heritage listed dwelling including building works at 'Mount Errington' and gardens as a small Preschool and Primary School.

Scoping Report

1 Rosemead Road, Hornsby

Table of Contents

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
2. PROPONENT DETAILS
3. PROJECT HISTORY
4. PROJECT DETAILS
5. STRATEGIC & STATUTORY CONTEXT
6. MATTERS & IMPACTS
7. COMMUNITY & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT
8. CONCLUSION
9. APPENDIX

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This scoping report requests the Secretary prepare the Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) to guide the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for a State Significant Development (SSD) application.

The report has been prepared by the proponent (Best-Practice Education Group Ltd) in consultation with Andrew Martin Planning Pty Ltd, in relation to the adaptive reuse of a local heritage listed dwelling, 'Mount Errington' and its gardens at 1 Rosemead Road, in Hornsby. Best-Practice is seeking to establish a preschool and new non-government primary school on the site, to be known as Blue Gum Community School.

As the proposal seeks consent for a new school, in accordance with Schedule 1, Clause 15 of *State Environmental Planning Policy (State and Regional Development) 2011* (SEPP SRD), the proposal is classified as SDD.

The project involves alterations to the existing house to meet compliance as an educational facility. The design allows for a kiss and drop zone, an additional driveway exit, fenced play areas to the rear of the property, on-site car parking for 12 vehicles, the addition of an external fire stair, and associated tree removal, acoustic attenuation and new landscaping.

To support the request for the SEARs, the following information is provided:

- The proponent details;
- The details of the project itself;
- An overview of the statutory and strategic context;
- A summary of the potential matters and impacts to arise out of the project; and
- A description of community and stakeholder engagement.

Indicative Architectural Plans are also provided for your reference as an Appendix.

2. PROPONENT DETAILS

Company and Owner of the site

Best-Practice Education Group Ltd

Best-Practice Education Group Ltd (a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee) is the auspicing body for Blue Gum Community School. **Blue Gum Community School** has been in operation in Canberra since 1998. Best-Practice Education Group Ltd purchased the site at 1 Rosemead Road in Hornsby in August 2019 for the purposes of establishing a new community school and preschool in NSW under the same name as the Canberra school. The Hornsby school is proposed to cater for a maximum of 80 children on the site; 32 preschool aged children (3-5 years) and 48 primary students (6-12 years).

Executive Director of Best-Practice Education Group Ltd

Maureen Hartung OAM

maureen@bluegum.act.edu.au

0438 091 910

Nominated Contact for the Project

Education Director of Blue Gum Community School, Hornsby

Jill McLachlan BEd (ECE) MEd

jill@bluegum.act.edu.au

0414 240 090

Reviewed by

Andrew Martin MPIA

Planning Consultant

Andrew Martin Planning Pty Ltd

ABN 71 101 798 001

amartin@amplanning.com.au

0405 449 150

3. PROJECT HISTORY

This proposal was initially submitted to and accepted as a Development Application (DA1119/2019) with Hornsby Shire Council on 11 December 2020. In March 2020, after three months of assessment at a local level, the proposal was deemed to be a State Significant Development (SSD), outside of the delegation of Hornsby Shire Council. In response to this determination, we withdrew our application from Hornsby Shire Council and are now resubmitting our proposal through the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, as a SSD.

Notably, due to the length of time our Development Application was in review at a Local Council level, significant progress was made in a number of areas related to planning and design, community consultation and the preparation of consultant reports to support the application.

As a part of the Council process the initial designs and plans for the preschool and school were exhibited publicly (online, in the local paper and through the Council's planning portal) and made open for submissions for 4 weeks, from 27 December 2019 until 23 January 2020. Beyond the initial exhibition period, Council chose to continue to accept submissions right up until the application was withdrawn on 17 March 2020. During that time, ninety-nine unique submissions were received in response to the proposal, both in support of and by way of objection.

On 28 January 2020, Hornsby Council we received our first formal feedback about the application which requested changes and additional information be provided to progress the assessment. In response to this request, on 11 February 2020, amended plans and additional reports and documentation were submitted, further refining the design in response to various stakeholders' perspectives and concerns.

The time spent under review with Hornsby Shire Council was not wasted. We believe the significant work invested by both the Council and the school provided a crucial understanding of the project from a local perspective. None of the information gathered through that assessment period, or points of view shared during that stage of our process, will be dismissed as we progress the application as a SSD. A summary of the feedback received, and assessments completed, provided to us by Hornsby Shire Council after we withdrew the DA, was used to scope out this report.

4. PROJECT DETAILS – Blue Gum Community School, Hornsby

Description of the Project

This project represents a proposal to establish a low-fee, not-for-profit community school in the Hornsby region, providing education for children in Preschool (32 places for 3-5 year olds) and Primary School (48 places for K-6 students).

Rationale for a new school in Hornsby

Hornsby is a growing and vibrant community with increasing numbers of young families moving into the area, from various cultural backgrounds. Our preschool and school will be well positioned to meet the needs of these young families, especially those interested in a smaller school for their children, with flexible hours to support working families. Hornsby's focus on the future, the strong arts community and people's notable commitment to the environment were also factors that informed our belief that Blue Gum Community School's ethos will be a good fit for families in the area.

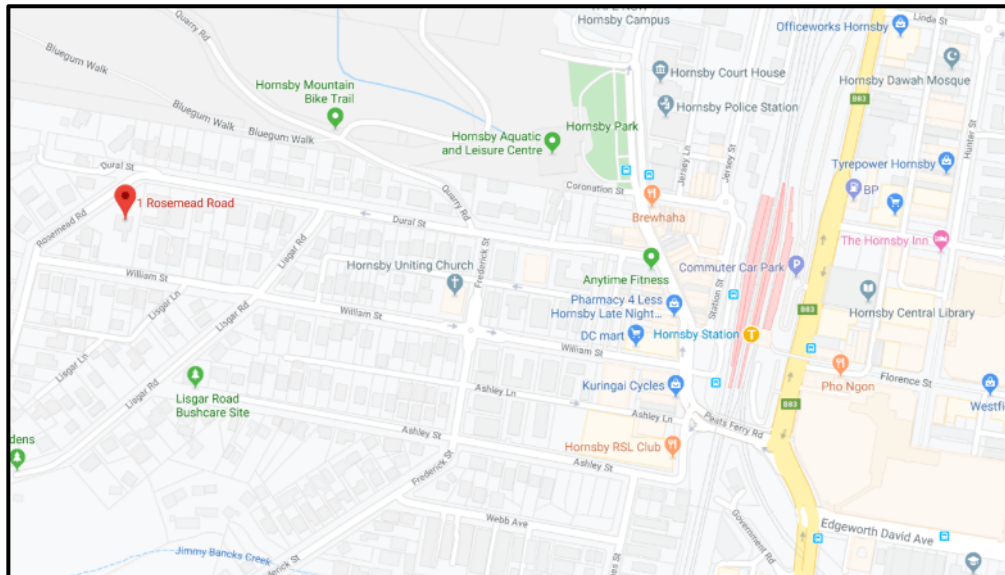
Rationale for the adaptive re-use of heritage listed Mount Errington and its gardens as the site for the new school and preschool

This site was selected for a range of important reasons.

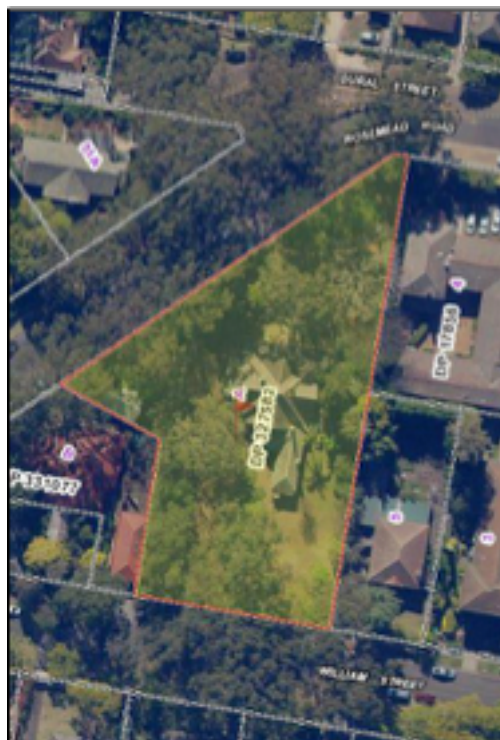
- The existing internal layout includes generous sized rooms on both levels, positioned around central spaces. Very little modification needed to adapt the home into a place of learning.
- The established gardens suit the priority our school gives to learning in the natural world. The invitational character of the gardens combined with large grassed open areas to the front and rear of the property offer ideal natural outdoor play spaces for children.
- Architecturally the home is stunning. It has been thoughtfully and aesthetically designed, providing a stunning backdrop for children's learning. It supports our non-institutional approach to learning.
- The house carries significance locally and historically. Blue Gum's plans will ensure the house is cared for, celebrated and protected for years to come. Mt Errington's heritage will be enhanced and celebrated more broadly as a result of this change in use. The use has a commercial imperative which will allow funds to be used to maintain Mt Errington that potentially would not be available under a private ownership.
- Mt Errington is positioned within easy walking distance to Hornsby station, the local shops, parks, the aquatic centre, TAFE, Hornsby Council and local bush tracks.
- It's operation - only during the day, from Monday to Friday only - is ideal, when taking into account the residential surrounds.
- Capable of providing drop off and pick up on site and on-site parking without any undue burden on the on-street parking availability.

Site Details - Lot A DP 327582

The site has an area of 3,623sqm, with frontage to Rosemead Road of 83.1m, frontage to William Street of 40.54m, eastern boundary of 97.53m and 32.67m and 24.46m around 1A Rosemead Road (south-western boundaries of the site). The main entry and access into the site are via Rosemead Road. The site is generally flat, with a small fall to the south-east to William Street.



Location of school site (Source: Google Maps)



Aerial view of locality with approximate boundaries of the subject site outlined in red.
(Source: NSW Land and Property Information, 'SIX Maps', n.d., <http://maps.six.nsw.gov.au/>.)

Heritage Listing

Mount Errington, built in 1897 for the Roberts family, is the chosen site for the proposed school. The home and gardens at 1 Rosemead Road are steeped in significance as one of the original homes of Hornsby. The original features of the home, largely intact from its original build, were a major drawcard influencing the school's decision to purchase the property. We love the history of the house, gardens and surrounding area.

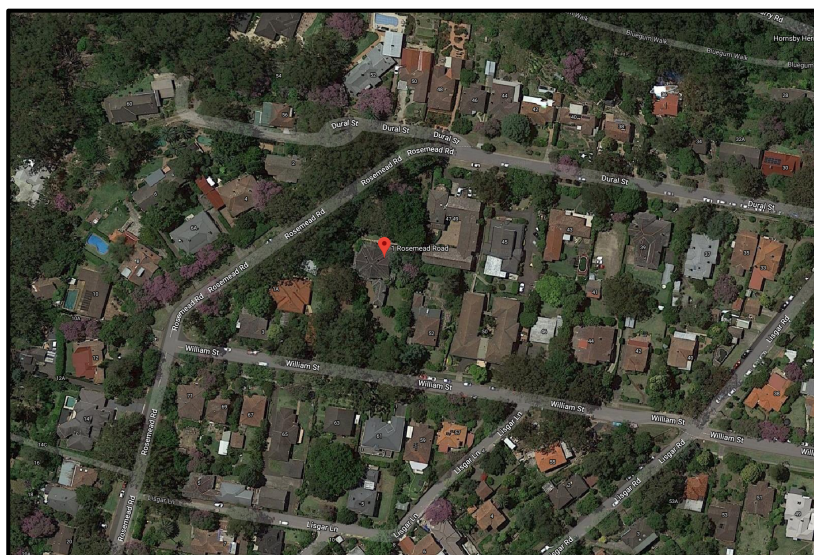
The subject site is located within the boundaries of the Mount Errington Precinct, Hornsby West Side Heritage Conservation Area ('HCA') and is listed as an item of environmental heritage in the Hornsby Local Environmental Plan 2013 ('HLEP2013'). The site is also listed on the National Trust. The site is not however listed as an item on any other statutory or non-statutory registers or lists.

Mount Errington and Mount Errington Garden - Item 545

We plan to honour the heritage visibly in shared stories from the children, signage, and in the maintenance of the property. What a joy it would be for the gates to be opened, not to another private resident, but to the community and children of the Hornsby Shire.

Blue Gum also chooses to respectfully acknowledge the First Nation's Peoples - past, present, and emerging - as the traditional custodians of the land on which Mount Errington was built. We intend to care for the land, and for the people who meet in this place, in a manner that gives honour to our nation's first peoples.

Surrounding Development



The immediate area is characterised by a variety of low density residential properties and the Adventist Retirement Village to the east.

North of Dural Street is the Bluegum Walk and Hornsby Mountain Bike Trial. The Hornsby Train Station and shops is less than 700m to the east along Dural Street and the Jimmy Bancks Creek is south along Rosemead Road, less than 500m from the site.

Zoning - R2 Low Density Residential

The site is zoned R2 Low Density Residential under the Hornsby LEP 2013. The proposal, defined as a centre based childcare and educational establishment, is permissible with consent. The new school will cater to residents in the area, providing a locally based alternative to families. As such the land use is consistent with the objectives of the R2 zone.

1 Objectives of zone

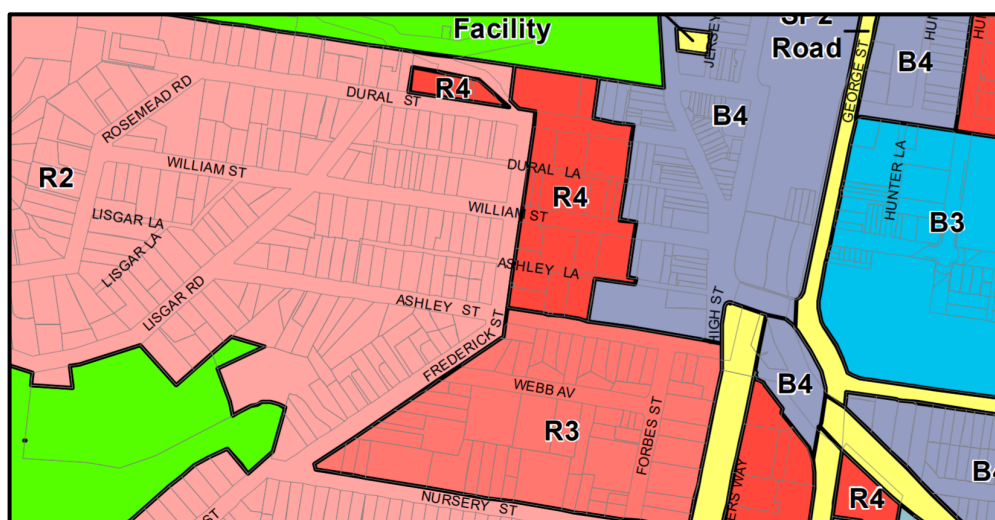
- To provide for the housing needs of the community within a low-density residential environment.
- To enable other land uses that provide facilities or services to meet the day to day needs of residents.

2 Permitted without consent

- Environmental protection works; Home occupations

3 Permitted with consent

- Boarding houses; Building identification signs; Business identification signs; Centre-based child care facilities; Community facilities; Dwelling houses; Educational establishments; Emergency services facilities; Exhibition homes; Flood mitigation works; Group homes; Home-based child care; Home businesses; Information and education facilities; Oyster aquaculture; Places of public worship; Pond-based aquaculture; Public administration buildings; Recreation areas; Recreation facilities (outdoor); Respite day care centres; Roads; Tank-based aquaculture; Tourist and visitor accommodation; Veterinary hospitals; Water reticulation systems



HELP 2013 zoning map (Map_17)

5. STRATEGIC AND STATUTORY CONTEXT

Legislation relevant to this application include the:

State Environmental Planning Policy (State and Regional Development) 2011

- In Schedule 1, Part 15 of the SEPP it states, “Development for the purpose of a **new school** (regardless of the capital investment value)”. This clause triggers this application to be categorised as a **State Significant Development**.

Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act)

State Environmental Planning Policy (Educational Establishments and Child Care Facilities) 2017

- By definition, the proposal comprises an educational establishment, being a school and a centre based childcare facility, being a preschool. Each mode will operate in accordance with the relevant provisions applicable to that mode. As the number of children in each mode of the school is generally balanced between preschool and primary and the design of the school is based on shared facilities and grounds, there is no dominant and subordinate use in this case.
- The Child Care Planning Guide was referred to throughout the design process and an assessment of the proposal against the SEPP Childcare will be included in the EIS.

Hornsby Development Control Plan (HDCP) 2013

- HDCP 2013 is relevant to the assessment of the application given that the DCP applies to all development in the LGA.
- The DCP does not contain specific provisions applying to an educational establishment. However, Part 1 General Provisions and Part 9 Heritage are relevant to the proposed works.

Hornsby Local Environmental Plan 2013 (HLEP 2013)

- HLEP 2013 is the relevant local environmental planning instrument applicable to the subject site.
- Particular aims of the HLEP 2013 that relate to this application include:
 - a well-planned area with managed growth to provide for the needs of future generations and people enriched by diversity of cultures, the beauty of the environment and a strong economy
 - to guide the orderly and sustainable development of Hornsby, balancing its economic, environmental and social needs
 - to permit business and industrial development that meets the needs of the community near housing, transport and services, and is consistent with and reinforces the role of centres within the subregional commercial centre’s hierarchy
 - to protect and enhance the heritage of Hornsby, including places of historic, aesthetic, architectural, natural, cultural and Aboriginal significance

State Environmental Planning Policy No 55—Remediation of Land

State Environmental Planning Policy No. 55 – Remediation of Land (SEPP 55) applies to the proposed development. Clause 7 requires a consent authority to consider the contamination status of the land and be satisfied that the land is, or will be made, suitable for the purpose for which the development is proposed to be carried out.

A Preliminary Site Investigation Report, prepared by NG Child & Associates, dated 5 December 2019, provided an assessment and consideration of the history and past uses of the site, an inspection of the site and surrounding properties and a physical examination of soil samples across the site.

The site has a long-standing history of low-density residential occupation and on that basis is highly unlikely to have been exposed to any contaminating material within the grounds. Eighteen (18) samples from six (6) location were tested for indications of contamination and confirmed this to be the case.

The overall findings of the preliminary assessment noted above, indicated that:

- “The underlying soils at the site are not contaminated, and that soil quality at the 1 Rosemead Road Hornsby NSW site is appropriate for the educational purpose proposed.
- A thorough inspection of the site did not identify any environmental issues, risks or exposures considered to be of significant concern.
- A review of the history and past uses of the site did not identify any issues that might have resulted in residual environmental or contamination risks or exposures.
- No significant quantities of materials known or suspected to contain hazardous materials were identified at or in the vicinity of the site.
- The only potentially hazardous material issue identified at the site was the presence of lead in old and underlying paint films at the site.
- It was found that while some underlying paint films at the site contained lead, no significant hazard or risk resulted provided that (a) painted surfaces throughout the building are maintained in a stable condition, and (b) paints used following the repair of several areas of peeling paint caused by previous leaks (now repaired) are lead free.

From a contamination and hazardous material perspective, the site is considered appropriate for the educational purpose proposed.”

6. POTENTIAL IMPACTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROPOSAL

HERITAGE

A heritage impact statement will form part of the EIS. This impact statement, prepared by Heritage 21 and completed as part of the earlier Development Application for Hornsby Shire Council, guided the current design ensuring minimal impact to the original fabric. All changes proposed are reversible. The HIS concludes that the proposal is acceptable from a heritage and conservation perspective.

TREES

With more than 230 trees on the site this proposal, whilst design intentionally for minimal impact, could not completely avoid the need to remove trees on the site. A thorough Arboricultural Impact Assessment Report guided the design process from the start and will form part of the EIS and concluded that the proposal was supportable based on the achievement of a balance between impacts/preservation of trees and development potential. The request for a biodiversity waiver, requested with this scoping report, was positioned from the findings outlined in this thorough report.

TRAFFIC, TRANSPORT & PARKING

A traffic and parking impact assessment will form part of the EIS and will address issues relating to impacts on the existing road network and parking, arrangement of on-site parking, potential delays and peak traffic movements generated by the proposed school sites, as well as details of any linkages to existing and planned public transport. In addition, an assessment of pedestrian networks and overall accessibility will be included. The TIA supporting the DA concluded that the proposed entry, exit and parking was acceptable for the intended use.

ACCESS, FIRE SAFETY & BCA REQUIREMENTS

suitable access and ensuring relevant fire safety and BCA standards are addressed. Performance Based Solutions will be proposed to ensure access is provided without detrimentally affecting the fabric of the heritage item.

ACOUSTIC IMPACT

An acoustic assessment will form part of the EIS and address potential acoustic impact on nearby properties, including adjacent tenancies and any other sensitive noise receivers. The assessment will provide suitable measures to help mitigate against the potential acoustic impacts.

7. COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

We cannot overstate our desire to build strong relationships with our neighbours, the wider community and key stakeholders invested in the outcome of this proposal. Considering the impact of our proposal has been in focus from the start of our planning. In particular, as noted in the section prior, questions about tree retention, acoustics, parking, traffic and heritage have been the priority in all conversations and have influenced the current design. Consultants were engaged early in the design phase.

Engagement has taken on various forms in the scoping phase of this project, including both informal and formal approaches. For example:

- Informal conversations about the project and proposal with neighbours through conversations face to face
- Phone calls with key stakeholders to discuss the project, for example a member of the Hornsby Historical Society,
- Email sent to Hornsby Shire Councillors inviting questions, comments or a meeting to discuss the proposal
- Meetings with neighbours on request to clarify aspects of the proposal and respond to questions and concerns
- A landing page was developed and shared with the local community through an article published by the Hornsby Advocate which invited contact and provide answers to frequently asked questions and a direct link to all publicly available documentation related to the project.
- Interview with media

The feedback received directly from Council and indirectly, as a result of submissions made to Hornsby Shire Council* and drawn from and conversations with neighbours, community members and other stakeholders have significantly influenced both the original design and the changes made to date. Amended plans and reports were available online for review from 11 February 2020.

During preparation of the EIS, we anticipate consultation will be undertaken with the following stakeholders:

- Department of Planning, Industry and Environment;
- Hornsby Shire Council;
- Roads and Maritime Services (RMS)
- Transport NSW; and
- Surrounding landowners.

*To ensure the submissions made to our lodged DA are not lost in the transfer of this application to the Department of Planning we have requested, and received, a full summary of the submissions made to Council. These will be discussed in more depth in the sections that follow: Matters & Impacts and Community & Stakeholder Engagement.

8. CONCLUSION

Hornsby's focus on the future, the strong arts community and people's notable commitment to the environment give us great confidence that Blue Gum Community School's ethos will be a good fit for families in the area and add to the rich alternatives available in the area for children's education.

Hornsby is a growing community with increasing numbers of young families moving in each year. Our preschool and school will be well positioned to meet the needs of these families, especially those interested in a smaller school for their children.

Finally, the adaptation of Mount Errington into a place of learning is a very pleasing re-purposing of the heritage item. With this proposal, the maintenance and continued protection of Mount Errington and its character is assured.

We trust that the information detailed in this document is sufficient to enable the Secretary to issue the SEARs. Should you have any queries about this matter, please do not hesitate to contact our Project Director on 0414 240 090 or jill@bluegum.act.edu.au.

Indicative Plans

