



PRESERVING OUR HERITAGE
PO BOX 85, HUNTERS HILL, NSW 2110
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Hunters Hill Council
22 Alexandra Street
Hunters Hill
NSW 2110

3 December 2022

**Submission re Figtree Park Amended DA20220104
Removal of 21 trees and pruning of 7**

While the Trust is pleased that iconic trees in Figtree Park have been saved and the size of the infrastructure has been somewhat reduced, we are disappointed that there are still many trees earmarked for removal and a few more were added to the 'destroy' list. The design aspects don't appear to have changed to warrant such action and the **removal of trees to accommodate as yet unbuilt footpaths should not be an option.**

Whilst some upgrades to the park including an appropriate play area and additional seating are in line with community wishes – the destruction of trees is not. There is no doubt that judicious pruning is overdue for trees that have been long neglected and, while no-one would question the removal of trees for reasons of disease or public safety, Council has a duty to ensure that proposed designs work around existing trees.

In fact Council's own *Plan of Management for Figtree Park* includes the action to "**Retain and maintain existing trees and vegetation in the park for environmental and community benefit**".

We wish to raise the following:

- a) Tree 5, a 7m Broad Leaved Paperbark in good health and structural condition, is now under threat. The position of this tree was not identified as a problem previously so the proposed path could be designed around it in order for it to continue providing shade for park users.
- b) Tree 39, a 7m Native Daphne is good health and structural condition, is due to be removed for a footpath. This currently provides shade to both the croquet lawn and the park. To preserve this tree could be important, as its neighbours, Tree 41, an 11m Willow Gum **not previously under threat** and marked 'Consider for Retention' and Tree 40, a 9m Willow Gum, are both to be removed. Whilst these trees are in dire need of pruning, removing 2 major sources of shade over proposed new seating seems counterintuitive.
- c) Tree 53 is a 10m Willow Gum, **not previously under threat**. Even though only in 'fair' health, it is a threatened species in its natural habitat and could be considered for retention, particularly when Trees 40 & 41 of the same species are slated for removal.
- d) Tree 58, a 9m Queensland Firewheel Tree is in good health and structural condition and marked 'Consider for Retention' by the Arborists. It should not be removed to accommodate a footpath.

e) The removal (rather than pruning) of 10 key middle storey flowering trees providing biodiversity and bird habitat in the central portion of the park beside the croquet lawn will reduce shade and amenity in this area. It would appear logical to retain these until such time as a planned fig tree has been planted and established.

As the public budget for this project is extremely generous, it is incumbent upon Council to do whatever is possible to improve the condition of all existing trees rather than remove them. Council can afford to dramatically improve the condition of existing trees to retain the natural tree cover. This is a no-brainer to benefit both the environment and improve usage of the park.

The invaluable shade and amenity that trees provide cannot be underestimated. Residents expect Council to lead the community in 'best practice' and set a high standard in terms of tree conservation and management, particularly in light of our declining tree canopy and continued tree destruction. This DA is a missed opportunity and does not instil confidence that everything possible has been done to minimise tree loss.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alister Sharp'.

Alister Sharp
President
Hunters Hill Trust
www.huntershilltrust.org.au