

November 2019

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Advocacy - City of Maribyrnong.

VCAT recently overturned Maribyrnong City Council's refusal of a planning permit for the former VCAT Bus Depot, paving the way for a multi-storey high density development at the site. The Branch objected to the development.



Maribyrnong Council also has received an application for a 10-storey residential development (*left*) in Nicholson Street Footscray, The site is currently occupied by heritage buildings, which date from the late 1800's and are part of what is locally known as 'Little Africa'.

These developments further highlight the difficulties that exist in Council's Planning Schemes regarding heritage issues, where it seems as if Activity Centre controls seem to overrule Heritage Overlays.

Branch members Hugh Basset, Ian Rae and Carmel Taig plan to meet with the Trust's Advocacy Team in early November to plan a National Trust response to Council on heritage planning matters.

Still in Maribyrnong, members will be aware that the trust has nominated the Brutalist **Footscray**

Psychiatric Centre for listing in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). Heritage Victoria has recommended listing to the Heritage Council, however the Department of Health and Western Health have objected, necessitating a hearing of the heritage Council to determine the matter..



Photos: top: Nicholson Street development (starweekly.com.au) Below: Footscray Psychiatric Centre (trustadvocate.org/JohnJovic)

Activities

September: Our September Activity was a dinner and meeting at Hardiman's Hotel in Kensington. Thirteen members attended and enjoyed typical pub fare. The meeting after dinner covered a number of items including advocacy, activities calendar and general Trust matters.

October: Napier Waller House On Saturday 19 October 11 members visited the Napier Waller House in Ivanhoe.



Due to wide publicity from the *Doctor Blake Mysteries* TV Series this has become the Trust's most visited site. Due to lack of volunteers it is only open to the public on Tuesdays and it is booked out nearly a year in advance! However Site manager Tony Armstrong made an exception for us and opened up on Saturday, for which we are most grateful. Tony and his fellow guides Liz and Kerry

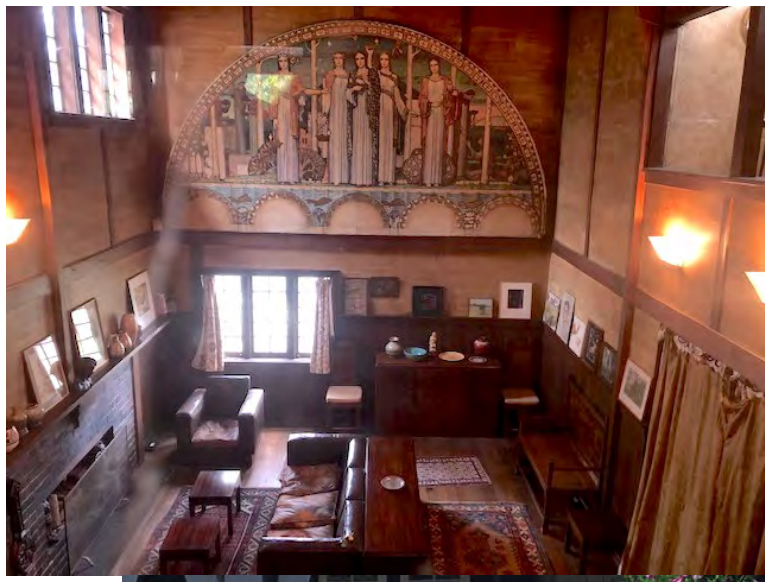
gave us a wonderful tour, which included some behind the scenes aspects in addition to the regular tour.

Mervyn Napier Waller (1893 – 1972) was a noted Australian muralist, mosaicist and painter in stained glass and other media. He is perhaps best known for the mosaics and stained glass for the Hall of Memory at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra. In Melbourne eleven monumental murals by Waller are on display in the CBD and at the University of Melbourne's main campus. Remarkably, much of his work was done with only his left arm,



Mervyn having lost his right arm at Bullecourt in France in WWI. Mervyn's first wife Christian Waller worked alongside her husband to establish this superb Arts and Crafts style home, whilst also pursuing her own successful artistic career. Christian's young niece Klytie Pate came to live in the house, going on to become one of Australia's foremost studio potters of the twentieth century. Napier's second wife Lorna, also a talented artist, worked alongside Napier to create the Hall of Memory mosaic for the Australian War Memorial.

Mervyn completed the first part of his home in 1922 to his own design. It was later extended by the addition of two studios. The main living area was used as a studio originally and was used again for very large projects. It remains remarkably intact. It contains furniture designed by Napier Waller, many of his artworks and his library. Many preliminary drawings, and sketches remain in the house.



Napier Waller died in 1972. Lorna lived on in the house, which was gifted to the State on her death. The National Trust now manages the property, which is listed on the State Heritage Register. Our sincere thanks go to Tony, Liz and Kerry for this memorable experience. *Photos: Joan Taylor and Virginia Coghill*



Truganina Explosives Reserve update

Restoration works: The volunteers are continuing with restoration of the buildings, furnishings and gardens. The old corrugated iron dividing fence between the houses has been removed and replaced with a post-and-rail design, which opens up the space. Re-weatherboarding of the Under Keeper's house (1915) has been completed, and restoration of the stables is under way.



Open Days: These continue to be a success, mainly due to publicity on social media. Visitor numbers average around 50 - 60. The secret of Eleanor's afternoon teas is out and this is increasing numbers as well.

Future use and management: The buildings are now being used regularly by the Hobsons Bay Wetlands Group and the Friends of Truganina Swamp as well as by TERPS. Promotion of the Reserve through the National Trust is still being investigated, and Council is taking a number of staff and volunteers to **The Briars, Mornington**, in late November to look at how this might work. The Briars operates on a Council/National Trust model similar to what is envisaged.



Inner West Branch Activities

November: Newport Mosque, Blenheim Road, Altona North. Date/time TBA

December: Saturday 7, 6.30 pm. Annual General Meeting and Christmas Break-up, Truganina Explosives Reserve, Queen Street Altona