



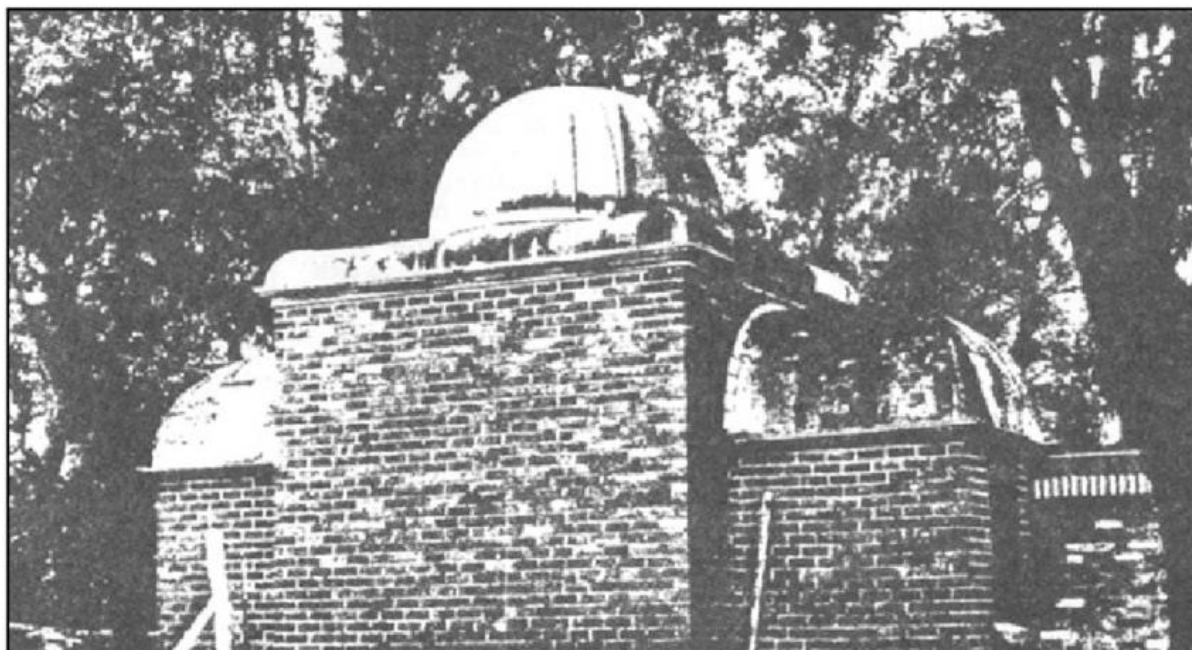
**National Trust of Australia (Victoria)
Bendigo and Region Branch
June 2021 Newsletter**

**Branch Meeting Monday 28th June, 5.30pm
Federation Room Shamrock Hotel (1st Floor)**

Note change of time

Theme: Review of Branch Activity & Participation

**The region's heritage needs greater protection! How best to do it
and getting authorities to take action?**



It took nearly two years for Beebe's Conservatory to get on the council agenda for decisive action to be taken, five years for the City Centre Heritage Study to be released and permits are still being issued for businesses to operate from heritage properties around the CBD. While council action is most welcomed it should not take this long.

Covid is also taking its toll on the number of people who are involved in heritage issues with few people wanting to attend meetings and the branch has been slow to embrace zoom meetings and the use of technology to enhance involvement.

Your views are sought on how the branch can operate more effectively, what activities do you want the branch to work on and how best the branch can communicate to its supporters? As the group gets older in age it is important that a younger age group gets involved. If you cannot make the meeting, please send your thoughts via email or give me a call. A report on branch activities appears later in the newsletter.

Peter Cox, President

natrustbendigo@gmail.com

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The E. Graeme Robertson Cast Iron Collection Event Postponed Again due to Covid but it will be on again soon.



Edward Graeme Robertson (1903-1975). A man to be honored for his work in saving 19th century architecture and forming the National Trust in Victoria.

I have spoken to our guest speakers from Melbourne, Dr Denis Robertson and Professor Miles Lewis and they are very keen for another date. Denis is to speak about his father's life and Miles on the history of cast iron. Past Branch Presidents, Mike Butcher & Gary Hill and Euan McGillivray, Curator, Modern Revolution: Bendigo and the 1960s, will also speak in honoring Graeme Robertson.

You can register for this event at natrustbendigo@gmail.com and you will be contacted by the branch. No need for those who registered for 30th May event.

Humble Miners Cottage Protected in Heritage Precinct



An application to demolish a miners cottage at 45 Abbott St Bendigo has been lodged with council. As it has a heritage overlay an objection was lodged with council making the following response.

Response from Council

“I am emailing in regards to the objection that the City has received from you in regards to the planning permit application for 45 Abbott Street. A copy of your objection was forwarded to the applicant for their consideration.

The applicant has requested that I send through a copy of the written advice provided from the City in response to a demolition enquiry from 2019 for the dwelling at 45 Abbott Street.

To summarise the advice, the City’s Heritage Advisor undertook an external and internal inspection of the dwelling and determined that substantial sub-floor works would be required to stabilise the dwelling and that significant works would be required to raise the floor for compliance with the current building codes. It was also noted that the dwelling had also lost many of its original significance features including the chimneys, the original windows and the verandah floor having been concreted. Given the compromised nature of the dwelling and that the extent of works required to rectify the structural defects were beyond reasonable expectations, it was considered that demolition can be supported, subject to an appropriate replacement design.

This advice was the basis for the landowners choosing to propose demolition of the existing dwelling and the construction of a new dwelling, rather than choosing to propose renovation of the existing dwelling and the construction of a second dwelling on the lot.”

Response to email

“I was surprised that the council encouraged demolition rather than refurbishment with a building addition. The building is protected by the planning scheme and this must be followed in advice to applicants, in particular, at pre application discussions.

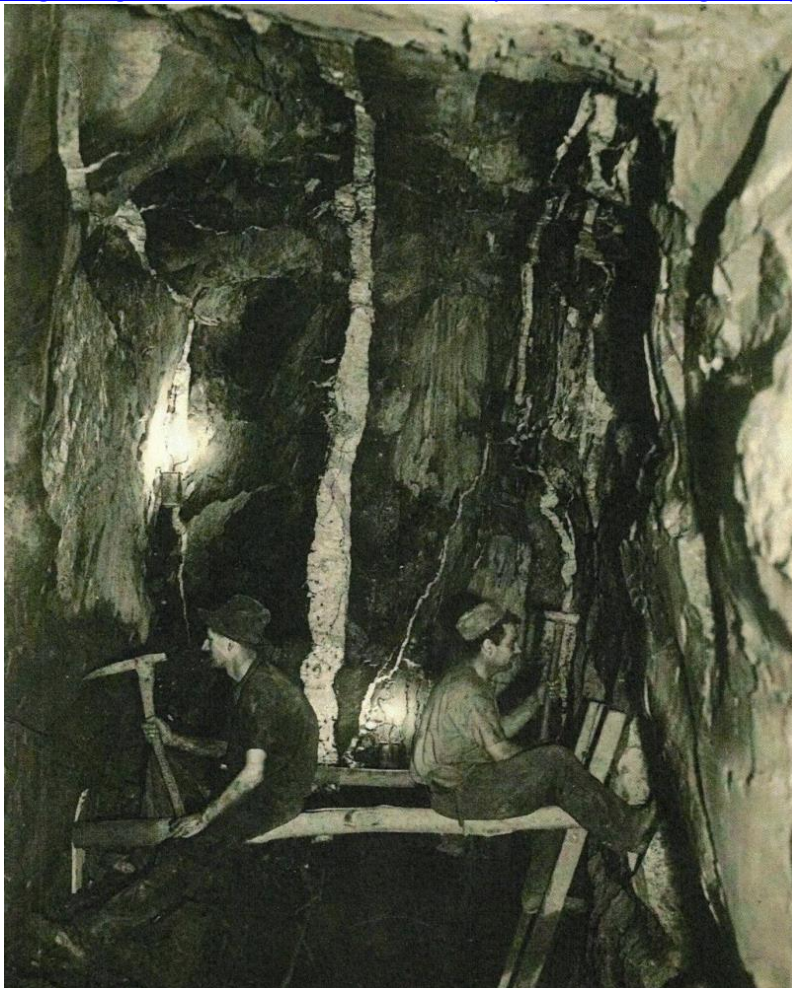
Economic considerations are a secondary concern although retaining the cottage with an addition would be cheaper than a completely new build.....

The context of the demolition is very important on this site as the cottage is located on the street boundary and is visible in both directions; therefore, it has a very important role in maintaining the heritage streetscape. The replacement of aluminium windows and chimney is a minor cost to reinstate compared to constructing a new build.

I remind officers that this building is protected and any decision to demolish will diminish the built and social history of the area. I again ask for a consultation meeting between the applicant and objectors to discuss the alternatives to demolition. At the very least the application should go to a council meeting for a decision.”

Comment: Miners Cottages are often thought of as dispensable as they do not measure up to the grand buildings such as the Town Hall or the Shamrock Hotel. However, they provide a wonderful historical addition to the streetscape and for those who want to dig deeper, explain the social history of a location. This can be better understood by reading The Iron Bark Heritage Study.

<https://www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/About/Document-Library/ironbark-heritage-study-2010>



Council Budget 2021-2022

The Greater Bendigo City Council has provided a summary of what's in the budget for heritage issues.

I have been asked to respond to questions you raised recently at the Budget Submissions hearings. I have provided separate comments for each of your dot points.

- **Are there funds allocated for heritage studies in the budget?**

The current funding for heritage studies was the result of a previous budget submission which concludes in June 2021. As a result, an internal budget submission has been made to continue the program for four years with an allocation of \$150, 000 per year. This formed part of the draft budget that was exhibited.

- ***I received a letter in 2019 from Trevor Budge saying that a Heritage Strategy was to be written and released for public comment in April 2020. This Strategy has not been released. Are there funds in the budget for this strategy to be finalised and released? Council started this project in 2011.***

Resourcing of studies such as the City Centre Heritage Study Stage 1 – Individual sites was considered a higher priority to follow through to planning scheme inclusion before further work on a heritage strategy was undertaken. The State government now has very clear guidelines on what a Heritage Strategy should include. The work undertaken previously for a heritage strategy provides good background information with a draft strategy, developed in line with the guidelines, to be presented to Council by the end of this year.

- **Are there funds in the budget to implement the recommendations of the Cardemone Report on storage of historical artefacts?**

The draft budget does not provide a specific line item for this matter, however, the budget does cover the resourcing of several council officers from across the organisation that contribute to the Strategic Artefacts Report (SAR) recommendations.

The SAR was considered by Council at its 19 September 2018 Meeting. There are four key recommendations from the SAR:

1. Establish and staff an object storage and preservation facility – refer to the response to your final dot point below.
2. Support viability of the groups –
The principle underpinning Recommendation Two is that the groups are most viable and effective when they work together to help themselves. In this regard a Heritage Collections Officer was funded for a three year period commencing in the current budget, draft exhibited and the following year. Part of that role is to assist collecting groups through advice about applying their collection policy or developing one if they don't have one. Training has also been offered to groups for upskilling in areas such as managing collections and archiving. The Heritage Collections Officer has also worked with other areas of Council who assist groups with storage and property matters.
3. Engage in contingency planning –
Recommendation three required the City develop a collection policy and apply it to the items on a general audit list to establish a formal Civic Collection. The Collection Policy was

adopted on 20 March 2019 and the Heritage Collections Officer is currently going through the process of applying the policy to determine which items are assessed. The recommendation also requested that the Policy then be shared with all collecting bodies which has also occurred and included an offer to help with updating or developing their own policy if required.

4. Commission a museum feasibility study

As concluded in the SAR this matter was not a priority as the storage issue was considered higher and would not be resolved by the provision of a museum which is more focused on display/exhibit.

- **The construction of stage 2 of the Bendigo Regional Archive Centre in Nolan St was to proceed. Are there funds in the budget for this project and at what stage is it at?**

Point three of the Council Resolution when the SAR was considered states:

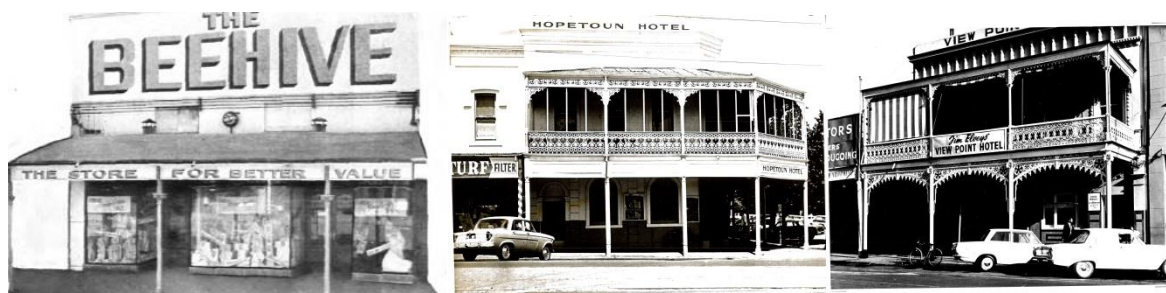
- 3. Undertake a feasibility study for the development and management of an object storage and preservation facility.

This feasibility analysis was undertaken based only on costings of an extension to the Nolan Street building and reported back to Council on 20 March 2019. The report provided the preliminary costs for construction, fit out and staffing for this facility (approximately \$3 million). Council did not specifically resolve to build an extension to the Nolan Street building, however acknowledged a purpose built object storage and preservation facility is one of several solutions to Greater Bendigo's collection issues.

The resolution also stated:

2. Investigate the potential for project partners and funding assistance from State bodies, such as Creative Victoria and Museums Victoria, to determine the full extent of the cost burden on the City in a business case for an object storage and preservation facility at 84 Nolan Street, North Bendigo.

Several meetings have been held with other organisations to look at joint ventures for constructing a facility as was the case when the Bendigo Regional Archives Centre was constructed several years ago. That project took 11 years to achieve funding and construction. Unfortunately, these meetings have not been successful in securing a partner; however, external funding options continue to be pursued.





Maldon Tea Rooms

This building is an iconic element in the Maldon streetscape. The small upstairs balcony is a rare element in any of our country towns, particularly one with such original detail. As the Maldon Conservation Study, 1977, states, the verandah timber valence at street level is not original. It seems that the overly heavy posts and the valence were added after the National Trust classification of Maldon as a Notable Town in 1966.

Conrad Mohr ran a 'Hairdressing Saloon and Tobacconists' in this building from c1870 up to his death in June 1899. It was taken over by a Mrs A. E. Anderson who continued the business of hairdresser and tobacconist from 1900 up to as least as late as 1911. Until the recent sale of the building it still had and an original business sign in the front section of the building. According to the 1899 application for Probate the frontage to High Street was twelve feet. It is described as, 'A weatherboard shop and hairdressing saloon and three dwelling rooms.'

A great concern in regards to the application for the artificial flowers to remain is that the proprietors have started a social media campaign to support their 'Business identification & Floral installation.' The first paragraph of their supporting statement in their planning application reads: 'Our floral installation (located at entry way and below window of 6 Main Street Maldon 3463) has become a destination spot and has captured the interest of many travellers arriving into Maldon for the first time and has reimagined the possibility of what the future of Maldon can look like.' They do argue that the installation is created on wire and is currently not fixed to the building. They state that photographs of the installation have made waves over their social media. I am worried that widespread populist views on social media might have some of our councillors and others thinking that Maldon with its current protection by planning controls is far too limited.

Maldon Streetscape Revitalisation Project



It's good news that Maldon has attracted funds from the State Government to revitalize the town center with power lines to be put underground and new infrastructure and landscape designs to be installed. There appears to be plenty of discussion about proposed works and how they will impact the historic town. Members are encouraged to visit the Mount Alexander Council web site where you can comment on proposed changes to the streetscape. <https://www.mountalexander.vic.gov.au/maldonstreetscapeproject>

Maldon provides a wonderful day out with walks around the streets showcasing beautiful historic homes and gardens. The town centre needs some care but any changes need to complement what is already there rather than change its appearance.



A sample of a planter box that may be installed in the main street of Maldon. Does this complement the heritage of the town?



Maldon Museum

National Trust of Australia (Victoria)
Bendigo & Region Branch
2020 Annual Report to Branch

Branch Committee consisted of:

Peter Cox, Kay MacGregor, Allison Glanville, Darren Wright, Kay Smith, Helen Wansink.

While the committee has met at irregular times during the Covid pandemic the last branch meeting was held in November 2019. Unfortunately the many activities organized for the Heritage Festival were also cancelled. Newsletters have been produced bimonthly as usual, keeping members informed of important issues and submissions made by the branch on planning permit applications, heritage studies and new developments.

Activities:

- **Bendigo Mechanics Institute and Free Library.** The branch has been advocating for the refurbishment and reuse of this building for over two years along with the three storey administration block and the McGillivray Hall on the TAFE site in McCrae St. TAFE has made the decision that these buildings are now obsolete to their needs and in a master plan of the site have designated them to be in a Community Precinct. TAFE plan to consult with the Bendigo community on the reuse of these buildings. It presents a major opportunity for another major attraction for Bendigo. It's a discussion that we all must get involved in.
- **Securing the E. Graeme Robertson Cast Iron Collection.** Owned by the National Trust and has been in the custody of the Greater Bendigo City Council since 2002 the Collection has been in storage since 1975 and never exhibited. The branch is keen to manage the Collection by developing an on-line presence and encouraging restoration projects to use items on loan to produce moulds. Special openings for the Collection would also be a feature of annual events. The branch has not been able find a site suitable for its location to this point of time. A Collections event was scheduled during last year's Heritage Festival but had to be postponed to the 30th May 2021. Representation has been made to Council and the National Trust in Melbourne.
- **Specimen Cottage.** Known as Bendigo's first built house that still survives today submissions have been made to Heritage Victoria on planning applications in relation to the construction of the new Law Courts situated immediately behind the cottage. Meaningful discussions have been held with Court Services Victoria to the point where CSV is undertaking a Conservation Management Plan and has committed to restoring the cottage. The branch has been impressed with the consultation process with CSV and continues to work closely with them.
- **Preservation of Heritage Sites.** The branch continues to advocate for the preservation of a culvert/bridge and surrounding land in Spring Gully, the restoration of stone buildings on a government reserve in Ravenswood and Beebe's Observatory in Kennington. These are all under threat and it is very disappointing that public authorities are slow to act. More people are much needed to become aware and become actively involved in these three sites.

- **Planning Watch.** The branch uses the App, Planning Alerts, and has submitted objections to two of the hotel developments which have been poorly designed compared to the 19th century architecture in which they sit. The demolition of mining cottages appear regularly and need protection. Town planning is losing its democratic process. The City Centre Heritage Study was adopted by Council without community input, the GovHub and new Law Courts are both state government developments which do not follow normal planning approval. For a planning approval to be debated at Council it needs to now have six objections or it is decided at officer level.
- **World Heritage Recognition of the Central Victorian Goldfield Region Bid.** The gold rush of the 1850's and beyond changed the world financially, created migration as we know it today and participation in politics became relevant to everybody and not just to the ruling class. Inventions prolonged mining and the Miners Cottage created home ownership and the Great Australian Dream. The current process seems narrow, is in need of some broad publicity of the issues and be inclusive of the many historians living in the region. The bid has been discussed since 1989, yet few people are involved or are aware of it.
- **Bendigo City Centre Heritage Study.** It took Council five years to undertake this study. During this time the Council preferred to work on a City Centre Plan concentrating on the commercialization of the area before the heritage study was completed. It is the branch's view that the Heritage Study needed to inform the City Plan rather than the other way round. In 2016 over 300 properties were to be evaluated but the study only resulted in 18 new recommended heritage sites. It indicates that Council prefers to prioritise development at the cost of heritage. Bendigo's point of difference is its heritage, fine architecture and social history. Tourism revolves around this history but its uniqueness is being destroyed.
- **Bendigo City Centre Plan.** One of the major issues in this plan, the branch submitted, is that Council continues to issue planning permits for businesses to operate in residential dwellings around the CBD when these businesses need to operate in the CBD. While the plan acknowledges "the CBD is surrounded by existing heritage residential stock and ideally suited to family living", population has declined in these precincts. Not only population decline but gardens are replaced with concrete for car parking and empty buildings in the CBD are not transformed for reuse to accommodate business. The plan also encourages high rise development such as six storey hotels which will only be fully occupied for certain months of the year.

The year ahead.

Heritage issues take a long time to resolve. The above issues demonstrate this and authorities work slowly. People are needed to work in teams to come up with innovative ways to adequately communicate the issues and what needs to be done. You are encouraged to participate in an issue which you might be interested in and work with others to find a solution.

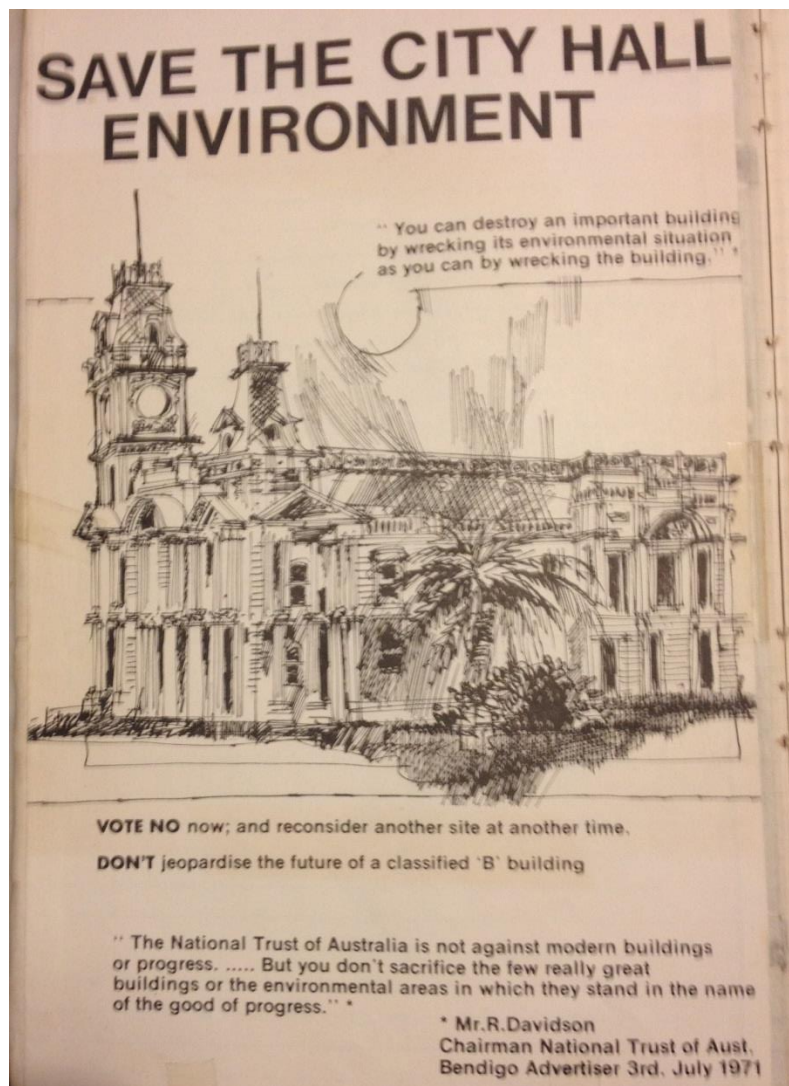
Our thanks go to those who have been involved, in particular, Elaine Doling who formats the newsletter, to the Shamrock Hotel and La Trobe Arts Institute who provide meeting spaces and to the many contributions people make to the branch.

**Your views are sought on the issues!
The branch welcomes your ideas, contributions and photographs for the newsletter which is published bimonthly.**

You can keep up with the current advocacy issues at the Trust Advocate blog at <http://www.trustadvocate.org.au/>
National Trust of Australia(Vic) Bendigo & Region Branch
Email: natrustbendigo@gmail.com
Telephone: President, Peter Cox 0447473674
Mail; C/- 57 Green St California Gully 3556

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Victoria and recognize the continuing connection to lands, waters and communities. We pay respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures; and to Elders past, present and future.

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Advocating on heritage issues for over 50 years