



HUNTER'S HILL COUNCIL

SIGNIFICANT TREE REGISTER

TREE PROFILE SHEET

1. LOCATION OF PROPERTY

House No: 1
Street: Sea Street
Suburb: Hunters Hill
Post Code: 2110
GPS Co ordinates : northing 6254980.802, easting 328961.187



2. DETAILS

Listed Significant Trees:

Botanical Name	Common Name
<i>Ficus macrophylla</i> x 2	Moreton Bay Fig
<i>Ficus rubiginosa</i> x 5	Port Jackson Fig

Public or Private Type: Private
Group or Individual: Group
Date of Assessment/Inspection: 30.09.2014

3. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The collection of seven Figs located at 1 Sea Street, Hunters Hill are considered historically significant due to their association with Villa Floridiana, former residents the Jouberts, D'apices and Baglins and the early phase of development of the suburb (*historic value*).

The Figs are of great visual prominence on the Lane Cove River and create a dramatic sense of place and scale in this location. They are considered major landscape elements (*aesthetic value*).

As an important remnant from the former Villa Floridiana Estate the trees were regarded as having social and cultural significance for Hunters Hill through the sites association with the Jouberts, d'Apices and Baglins, and earlier Aboriginal occupation (*social value*).

As possible indigenous remnant or regrowth specimens and part of the former open-forest/ woodland community on the area's sandstone overhangs, the five *Ficus rubiginosa* (Port Jackson Fig) are considered to have ecological value (*ecological and botanical/scientific value*).

The collection of *Ficus rubiginosa* (Port Jackson Fig) and *Ficus macrophylla* (Moreton Bay Fig) are considered to have group significance at a local level in terms of historic, aesthetic, social, ecological value and botanical scientific value.

4. IMAGES



Port Jackson Fig (*Ficus rubiginosa*) & Moreton Bay Fig (*Ficus macrophylla*) Note: both trees shown in both photos



1 SEA STREET, HUNTERS HILL — SIGNIFICANT TREE REGISTER

5. SIGNIFICANCE ATTRIBUTES

Cultural/Social/Commemorative Historic Botanical/Scientific Ecological Visual/Aesthetic

6. SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL

Local State National

7. BACKGROUND

The scheduled trees are two *Ficus macrophylla* (Moreton Bay Fig) and one *Ficus rubiginosa* (Port Jackson Fig) located within the foreshore grounds of 1 Sea Street, Hunters Hill, and four *Ficus rubiginosa* (Port Jackson Fig) located on the sandstone overhang that extends along the entrance way for 1 Sea Street, Hunters Hill.

Villa Floridiana, which formerly stood on the site of 1 Sea Street, was Jules Joubert's first house, built in late 1854 for himself and his wife. The house was a Georgian timber bungalow sited below a huge sandstone overhang by the shores of the Lane Cove River and was built on a midden. It was adjacent to brother Didier Joubert's Figtree Farm.¹

Italian born Chevalier Charles d'Apice bought Villa Floridiana in 1861 and lived there until his death in 1888. Later his widow ran a small French school on the premises for twenty years.²

It is thought that the site and further rock overhangs located eastwards would have been sheltered camping grounds for the Wallumattagal, or the more northerly Cammeraigal. In a rock shelter east of the Villa Floridiana, several stencils depicting hands are further indicators of habitation.³

The Villa Floridiana Estate was subdivided in 1914. Douglass Baglin, photographer, filmmaker and author, moved to Villa Floridiana in 1957. With his wife Elaine he lived there for 37 years until 1988 when he retired. Douglass began taking photographs of the French, Italian and English houses of Hunters Hill, which were threatened by development. The thousands of photographs taken by him became an important visual record of the suburb. The pictures were used in the campaign to protect the historic precinct and played a part in the declaration of a large part of Hunters Hill as a conservation area.

Villa Floridiana was demolished in July 1990 after a period of intense opposition including a Land and Environment Court hearing.

Villa Floridiana was regarded as having had historical, social and cultural significance for Hunters Hill through its association with the Jouberts, d'Apices and Baglins, and the site's earlier Aboriginal occupation.

Prior to demolition of Villa Floridiana the three Figs located within the foreshore grounds are noted as being close to the original shore line and framing the views from the verandah of the house. In a site inspection undertaken in 1989, the trees were described as overhanging the galvanized tin roof and forming a tangled network of roots at ground level.

The very old *Ficus rubiginosa* (Port Jackson Fig) growing on the foreshore area is possibly an indigenous remnant or regrowth and part of the former open-forest/ woodland community on these sandstone cliffs. The two *Ficus macrophylla* (Moreton Bay Fig) are cultural plantings and are considered likely to date from the late 19th century when the use of this species was common in domestic and civic spaces due to the influences of the Director of Botanic Gardens Sydney, Charles Moore.

The four *Ficus rubiginosa* (Port Jackson Fig) located on the sandstone overhang that extends along the entrance way for Sea Street are also considered likely to be indigenous remnant or regrowth specimens.

The sandstone overhang is also a heritage item in Hunters Hill Council's Local Environmental Plan 2012 (Item I297).

Collectively the Figs are of great visual prominence on this section of Lane Cove River and create a dramatic sense of place and scale. They are considered major landscape elements. Furthermore, the trees continue the lush, native evergreen and broadleaf theme typical of 19th century planting.

Although the form and wider vegetation of the site has been altered and now incorporates 20th century changes, the Figs are considered culturally significant due to their association with Villa Floridiana, former residents the Jouberts, d'Apices and Baglins and the early phase of development of the suburb.

Ficus rubiginosa (Port Jackson Fig) is a locally native species naturally growing as a lithophyte clinging to clefts in rock and sandstone scarps. The species has the potential to self-seed.



1 SEA STREET, HUNTERS HILL — SIGNIFICANT TREE REGISTER

The species has also been widely cultivated in private gardens, large estates, institutional lands and public parkland throughout the Hunters Hill area and Sydney. The species has a long association with Sydney and is highly representative of an iconic Sydney tree species. Plantings of figs in public parks and large gardens reached its height in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Ficus macrophylla (Moreton Bay Fig) is a large evergreen broadleaf species that is native to most of the east coast of Australia. The species was an early ornamental introduction to colonial gardens and became a major landscape element throughout much of the 19th century. This species remains as a significant historic and cultural element from Victorian era planting schemes. The impressive scale and broad dense canopies of these evergreens were ideally suited to grand garden schemes. Charles Moore (Director, Sydney Botanic Gardens 1848-1896) promoted the use of Moreton Bay Figs and many other rainforest specimens throughout the mid-to late 19th century.

References:

¹Clive, Lucas, Stapleton & Partners, 1989, *Villa Floridiana Assessment of Significance and Condition*, Clive, Lucas, Stapleton, NSW

²Sherry Beverley, *Hunter's Hill Australia's Oldest Garden Suburb*, David Ell Press, Sydney, 1989, pg 51-52

³Clive, Lucas, Stapleton & Partners, 1989, *Villa Floridiana Assessment of Significance and Condition*