



# HUNTER'S HILL COUNCIL

## SIGNIFICANT TREE REGISTER

### 1. LOCATION OF PROPERTY

Street: 8 Ferry Street

Suburb: Hunters Hill

Post Code: 2110

GPS: Co ordinates : northings 6254322.933, 329255.289

Other: Located on boundary of 8 Ferry Street and Muirbank Avenue



### 2. DETAILS

Listed Significant Trees:

Botanical Name	Common Name
<i>Ficus rubiginosa</i>	Port Jackson Fig

**Public or Private Type:** Public/Private shared ownership

**Group or Individual:** Individual

**Date of Assessment/Inspection:** Mid 2015

### 3. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The *Ficus rubiginosa* (Port Jackson Fig) is associated with the rare prefabricated cottage, 'The Chalet' and the development of the Ferry Street area during the mid-to late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Fig is considered to have rarity value in terms of its longevity within a residential setting and is indicative of the popularity of the species during the 19<sup>th</sup> century (*historic value*).

The Port Jackson Fig is considered outstanding for its combination of height and canopy spread (*aesthetic value*).

The Port Jackson Fig is believed to date from the mid-to-late 19<sup>th</sup> century; an old example of the species for the Hunters Hill LGA. The specimen is considered the largest example of the species in the area (*botanic value*).

The *Ficus rubiginosa* (Port Jackson Fig) is considered to have individual local significance in terms of historic value, aesthetic and botanic value.

### 4. IMAGES





## 5. SIGNIFICANCE ATTRIBUTES

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

## 6. SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL

Local  State  National

## 7. BACKGROUND

The *Ficus rubiginosa* (Port Jackson Fig) is located along the north-eastern boundary of 8 Ferry Street, Hunters Hill. The tree's broad spreading trunk and canopy extend into Muirbank Avenue. The Port Jackson Fig is considered jointly owned between 8 Ferry Street and Hunters Hill Council.

The house at 8 Ferry Street 'Eskdaile' was constructed c.1906 in the Queen Anne Federation style. 'Eskdaile' is listed in the Hunters Hill Local Environment Plan (2012) Schedule 5 (Item I123).

The land on which 'Eskdaile' was built was purchased from Philip B. Walker in 1891 by William Herbert Manning, who lived at the adjacent 'The Chalet', 2 Yerton Avenue. The land was part of an earlier subdivision of 'The Chalet' lot.

'The Chalet', is identified as an item of state significance listed on the NSW Heritage Register under the NSW Heritage Act. 'The Chalet' is also listed by the National Trust of Australia (NSW). The Chalet is listed in the Hunters Hill Local Environment Plan (2012) Schedule 5 (Item I7).

'The Chalet' is a rare prefabricated single-storey cottage imported from Germany in 1854 as one of four identical cottages by Swiss émigré Leonardo Bordier. The four houses were erected on two whaling land grants purchased by Bordier in 1855, located on the Parramatta River, as a speculative housing venture. The four cottages were erected on Ferry Street, two on either side. Bordier advertised the cottages as 'four splendid family residences, standing in their own grounds, of about 1½ acres each with wood and water in abundance'. Bordier's enterprise was the first planned multiple-housing development in Hunters Hill and it was in the garden-suburb mode. After the houses were built, a wharf was constructed at the foot of Ferry Street. Bordier was unsuccessful in selling the properties and his estate was placed in sequestration in May 1856, as a result of bankruptcy. Bordier returned to Switzerland in the late 1850s.

'The Chalet' was purchased by William Jack and named "The Bungalow" in 1867. It was subsequently occupied by the City Architect William Sapsford. William Herbert Manning, a barrister purchased the house and it was renamed 'Yerton'. Manning subdivided the land, creating three waterfront lots and cutting the house off from direct access to the river. Manning converted the former driveway of the property into a public road which was named Yerton Avenue. The allotments have since been subdivided again.

*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. Whilst being an endemic species, Port Jackson Figs have also been widely used as cultural plantings in the Hunters Hill area. As part of Council early tree planting initiative in c.1870, Mayor Jeanneret proposed an avenue of thirty trees, including twenty-six Port Jackson Figs, be planted along Ferry Street.

Directors of the Sydney Royal Botanic Gardens, Charles Moore (1848-1896) and Joseph Maiden, (1896 -1924), promoted the use of Port Jackson Figs and Moreton Bay Figs as key components for planting schemes throughout the mid-to-late nineteenth century. The magnificent scale and broad dense evergreen canopies of figs were ideally suited to grand garden schemes.

The specimen Port Jackson Fig is outstanding in terms of height and canopy spread and considered the best example of the species in the area. Port Jackson Figs of this size are rare in an urban setting, not only in the Hunters Hill area but wider Sydney. The specimen continues the rich natural and cultural legacy of the species in Hunters Hill, particularly around the Ferry Street area.

A large Moreton Bay Fig in the front area of 3 Yerton Avenue is also believed to be associated with 'The Chalet' prior to subdivision. Analysis of 1943 images shows extensive vegetation to the rear of 'The Chalet' and 'Eskdaile' particularly in the north and north-western areas of the site. It is difficult to distinguish individual canopies.

Whilst not visually prominent due to its location at the rear of "Eskdaile" and Muirbank Avenue, the Port Jackson Fig is considered outstanding for its combination of height (19m) and canopy spread (26m).

### References:

- <sup>1</sup> Beverley Sherry, 1989, Hunters Hill Australia's Oldest Garden Suburb, David Ell Press, Australia, pg 47
- <sup>2</sup> City Plan Heritage, 2005-2006, 'The Chalet' Conservation Management Plan', City Plan Heritage pg 25
- <sup>3</sup> Beverley Sherry, 1989, Hunters Hill Australia's Oldest Garden Suburb, David Ell Press, Australia, pg 63

## 8. ADDITIONAL IMAGES

IMAGE SOURCE: RTA, From the Skies, 1943



IMAGE SOURCE: Hunters Hill Trust Journal, 1994

Exert from the subdivision plan c.1862 showing the location of the four pre-fabricated houses

