



# HUNTER'S HILL COUNCIL

## SIGNIFICANT TREE REGISTER

### TREE PROFILE SHEET

#### 1. LOCATION OF PROPERTY

Street: Alexandra Street  
Suburb: Hunters Hill  
Post Code: 2110  
Other: Located on the corner of Alexandra and Ferry Streets.



#### 2. DETAILS

Listed Significant Trees:

Botanical Name	Common Name
<i>Lophostemon confertus</i>	Brush Box

Public or Private Type: Public—street tree

Group or Individual: Individual

Date of Assessment/Inspection: 15.03.2015

#### 3. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The *Lophostemon confertus* (Brush Box) is historically significant for exemplifying the reaction of Hunters Hill to World War I. It is representative of plantings that first appeared in Australia during World War I commemorating those who enlisted for service in an egalitarian form where each individual, regardless of rank, was equally recognised for their service. It is also an important historical reminder to future generations of the sacrifice that those who served made and of the human loss sustained in conflict (*historic value*).

The Brush Box is of aesthetic significance as a distinctive commemorative planting and a living memorial in Hunters Hill (*aesthetic value*).

The Brush Box is of social significance for its relationship with the community as a memorial to those who served in World War I and for its continuing commemorative importance (*cultural/social/commemorative significance*).

The *Lophostemon confertus* (Brush Box) is considered to have individual significance at a local level in terms of the unique combination of aesthetic, historic and cultural/social/commemorative values.

#### 4. IMAGES





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### 5. SIGNIFICANCE ATTRIBUTES

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

### 6. SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL

Local  State  National

### 7. BACKGROUND

The single specimen *Lophostemon confertus* (Brush Box) is located at the corner of Alexandra and Ferry Streets, Hunters Hill. At the base of the Brush Box, attached to a small sandstone rock, is a brass memorial plaque. The memorial is located approximately 100 metres east of the RSL Memorial Hall. The plaque has the inscription 'This tree was planted by His Excellency Sir Walter Davidson, KCMG, the well beloved Governor of NSW on 13th September 1919 in commemoration of the patriotism of the youth of Hunter's Hill during the Great War'. The memorial is listed on the Register of War Memorials in NSW.<sup>1</sup>

The Brush Box was planted to commemorate the services of the men and women of Hunters Hill during World War I (1914-1918). Considering the small population at the time, a remarkably high number of men and women from the area enlisted for service. The war claimed the lives of forty five Hunters Hill men on active service.<sup>2</sup>

An article in the Sunday Times on the 14<sup>th</sup> September 1919, describes the memorial proceedings of the previous day. The article describes how residents participated in the opening of the Soldiers' Club and planting of an 'avenue of honour'.<sup>3</sup> No further details of the planting are mentioned.

In an article that appeared in the Sydney Morning Herald on the 8<sup>th</sup> September 1919, the plans for the forthcoming celebrations were detailed. The article outlines that 'later on, the names of the men on the local roll of honour will, in addition to being inscribed on a monument to be erected at the corner of Alexandra and Ferry Streets, be placed on suitable tablets against the trees to be planted on Saturday. Each tree will thus be a memorial to the valour of the soldiers whose name it bears'.<sup>4</sup>

An additional article describing the celebrations (Sydney Morning Herald, 15<sup>th</sup> September 1919) states that the Sir Walter Davidson planted three trees at the peace memorial proceedings on the 13<sup>th</sup> September 1919.<sup>5</sup>

'Avenue of honour' is the term given to a memorial avenue of trees, with each tree symbolising a person. Most avenues are in remembrance of those who fought or died at war, particularly World War I (1914-1918), although the earliest recorded avenues were planted in remembrance of Australia's participation in the Second Boer War (1899-1902). There are 547 known 'avenues of honour' in Australia, in all states and territories except the Northern Territory. Over half are in Victoria.<sup>6</sup>

The idea of planting trees as a war memorial is thought to have originated in the United Kingdom in 1918 when the office of the King's Highway issued a pamphlet titled "Road of Remembrance as War memorials". The objectives of the program were to transform suitable existing highways "to the dignity of Roads of Remembrance adored with trees" and to organize the building of highways "of exceptional dignity and beauty with open spaces at intervals at special memorials to the Great War". It appears that the idea was taken up more by former colonies than by Britain itself.<sup>7</sup>

One memorial plaque remains on Alexandra Street. The above newspaper articles indicate that an 'avenue of honour' was originally intended and a number of trees were planted. It is not known whether more memorial plaques were placed at the base of trees and have since been removed, or the intention was never fully realized.

*Lophostemon confertus* (Brush Box) is a rainforest margin species that is highly adaptable under harsh urban conditions and will tolerate drought as well as regular pruning/alignment for overhead power-lines and other services. The Brush Box may achieve large proportions under optimum conditions but tends to be much smaller in a suburban setting.

During the Federation period, Brush Box became the preferred street tree of the new garden suburbs of Sydney. The popularity of Brush Box as a street tree continued throughout the Inter-war period (c. 1919-1939) and much of the Post-War II. Brush Box have also frequently been used in commemorative plantings, particularly in association with war memorials.

Aerial photos from 1943 show a number of small trees at the eastern end of Alexandra Street (up to the corner of Ferry Street). The trees are planted on both sides of the road but do not appear uniformly spaced. A small tree is evident in the location of the Brush Box with the memorial plaque.

It is also documented that electric street lighting was introduced to Hunters Hill in 1920 and that the Norfolk Island Pines, which had formerly lined Woolwich Road, were cut down to make way for the wires and poles. The Norfolk Island Pines were replaced with Brush Box.<sup>8</sup>



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The subject Brush Box is of relatively small stature given its age and when compared with a number of the Brush Box along Woolwich Road. However, the species does frequently present with variable growth rates in an urban environment.

Note: further investigation is recommended regarding the potential significance of other Brush Box along Alexandra Street that may be part of an 'Avenue of Honour'.

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### References

<sup>1</sup>Register of War Memorials in NSW, *Hunters Hill War Memorial Tree*, accessed 30.03.15 <https://www.warmemorialsregister.nsw.gov.au/content/hunters-hill-war-memorial-tree>

<sup>2</sup>Emery, Linda. 2011, *Pictorial History Hunters Hill*, Kingsclear Books, pg. 112

<sup>3</sup>Sunday Times, 14<sup>th</sup> September 1919, *Hunters Hill Peace Memorial*, page 5, accessed 30.03.15 <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/result?title=35&q=hunters+hill+peace+memorial>

<sup>4</sup>The Sydney Morning Herald, 8<sup>th</sup> September 1919, page 7, *Peace Celebrations Hunters Hill*, accessed 29.03.15 <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/15853156?searchTerm=peace%20celebrations%20hunters%20hill&searchLimits=>

<sup>5</sup>The Sydney Morning Herald, 15<sup>th</sup> September 1919, page 8, *A Soldiers' Club Open By Governor*, accessed 29.03.15 <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/15860575?searchTerm=a%20soldiers%20club%20hunters%20hill&searchLimits=l-title=35>

<sup>6</sup>Backhouse, Megan. 2013, *Felled But Not Forgotten*, Sydney Morning Herald, accessed 30.03.15 <http://www.smh.com.au/lifestyle/homestyle/felled-but-not-forgotten-20130607-2nufd.html>

<sup>7</sup>Scott, Ian. 2013, *Remembrance Driveway*, accessed 30.03.15 <http://www.remembrancedriveway.org.au/history/default.as>

<sup>8</sup>Sherry, Beverley. 1989, *Hunter's Hill Australia's Oldest Garden Suburb*, David Ell Press, pg 109