



HUNTER'S HILL COUNCIL

SIGNIFICANT TREE REGISTER

TREE PROFILE SHEET

1. LOCATION OF PROPERTY

Street: Dick Street
Suburb: Henley
Post Code: 2111
GPS Co ordinates : northing 6253692.891, easting 327395.867
northing 6253684.33, easting 327396.157
Other: Located outside 14 Dick Street



2. DETAILS

Listed Significant Trees:

Botanical Name	Common Name
<i>Washingtonia robusta</i> x 2	Mexican Palm

Public or Private Type: Public—street trees

Group or Individual: Individual x 2

Date of Assessment/Inspection: 30.09.2014

3. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

With high visibility and located in a prominent location, the two *Washingtonia robusta* (Mexican Palm) are considered to make a high contribution to the establishment of landscape character in this location (*aesthetic value*).

The Palms are considered to have a historic and social association with sporting and transport related activities on the Parramatta River, Henley (*historic and cultural/social/commemorative value*).

The *Washingtonia robusta* (Mexican Palm) are considered to have significance at a local level in terms of aesthetic, historic and social value.

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 scheduled *Washingtonia robusta* (Mexican Palm) are located on the nature strip outside of 16 Dick Street, Henley.

Among the early land grants along the Parramatta River near Kissing Point was an area of 30 acres on an elevated peninsula now known as Henley (originally called Blandville). Promised to George Fieldhouse in 1795, it appears he did not take up the land, and, in 1837, it was acquired by Dr William Bland (1789-1868). Dr Bland was transported for killing a fellow naval officer in a duel and arrived in Australia in 1814. He was pardoned in 1815 and began a private practice.

In 1857, Dr Bland had a plan prepared to divide the land into twenty-two villa sites, and the whole parcel of 30 acres was put up for auction. Although a substantial landowner, he was in financial difficulty and, in 1861, was declared insolvent. In 1866, surveyor Alfred Huntley of Huntleys Point prepared a new plan for a village subdivision to be known as Blandville with twenty-seven lots for sale, and, in 1882, a further 100 lots were offered for sale.

A strong connection with rowing led to a move in 1895 to have the village of Blandville renamed Henley, as a link to the home of rowing, Henley-on-Thames, United Kingdom.

Regattas had been a regular feature of social and sporting life on the Parramatta River since the mid 1840s. By 1882, the Mercantile Rowing Club had a training establishment at Blandville in the centre of what is now 15 Dick Street. In 1920, the Mercantile Rowing Club moved its main clubhouse to Mosman and the Dick Street land became the property of HE and AT Morgan and remained in their ownership until 1947 when the land was resumed by the Housing Commission of NSW. Thirty one-bedroom flats were completed and opened in April 1949.¹

A wharf, later a punt, was established at the end of Kelly Street c.1907, and a steamers wharf was located adjacent to William Street c.1886.

Interpretation of 1943 aerial images shows two small trees that are thought to be the Mexican Palms. It is difficult to determine the size of the palms from aerial view. Two additional trees or palms are located adjacent to the subject palms and at an equal distance. It appears possible that four were originally planted.

It is remembered by long-time residents of Henley that the Mexican Palms were historically used as channel markers for coal boats (pers. comm. John Walker). The formation during the 19th century of the Newcastle and Hunters River Steamship Company saw the establishment of regular steamship services between Newcastle and Sydney. Small ships plied between Newcastle and Sydney carrying coal to gas works and bunkers for shipping and railways. These were commonly known as "sixty-milers", referring to the nautical journey between Newcastle and Sydney. These ships continued in service until the late 1980s.²

Mexican Palms have often been planted as marker trees and have a historic association with transport. The location of the Palms suggests they may have been planted to indicate the location of either the adjacent wharves or the Mercantile Rowing Club.

The Mexican Palm is a hardy and drought tolerant species from northern Mexico. The species has been used extensively throughout Sydney since the latter part of the 19th century, particularly during the Inter-War period (c.1915-1940).

The two Mexican Palms have high visual significance and are a defining landscape feature of this part of Henley. The Palms are expected to be visible from Parramatta River.

A small *Lophostemon confertus* (Brush Box) and a *Callistemon* spp. (Bottlebrush) have recently been planted in between the two Mexican Palms. The location of these street trees is considered intrusive to the significance of the Palms, and consideration should be made to their removal.

References:

¹Gil Wahlquist & Diana Drake (1997), *Rowing Heritage at Henley*, The Hunters Hill Trust Journal <http://huntershilltrust.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Vol-26-No-2-April-1997.pdf>

²NSW Maritime (2008), *Ships and Shores and Trading Posts*, NSW Maritime .



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8. ADDITIONAL IMAGES



IMAGE SOURCE: RTA, From the Skies, 1943