



Artist's impression

Blenheim House Cultural Facility

Randwick City Council is proposing a new cultural facility to support local artists in our City.

Increasing the number of places that are available for people to participate in art and culture is part of Randwick Council's Arts and Culture Strategy. The currently empty house will be refurbished and turned into a space for artists. It will be the first dedicated creative space for artists in Randwick City. The conversion of Blenheim House to a cultural facility will maintain the social significance of the House for the community into the future.

Background

Blenheim House has been identified as an under-utilised building that could be delivering more for our City.

Located close to Randwick Town Centre and Randwick health and education precinct, the 1848 two-storey sandstone building was built on 1.6 hectares of land overlooking what is today Randwick Racecourse.

Over the years the property has decreased in land size as residential apartments have been built around the house. It is set back from the street and somewhat hidden from view behind a car port, fence and shrubs fronting Blenheim Street.

The property is now owned by Randwick City Council who purchased it in 1984 and for some years has been planning towards its refurbishment and restoration as an ongoing community asset.

What's planned?

The refurbished building will deliver a multi-purpose art and culture centre, providing four studios, including an accessible studio, as well as exhibition spaces. The facility will be used as a public space for community art exhibitions, performances, workshops and other cultural

events. The proposed development will respect the features of the original building and will reconstruct original elements where possible.

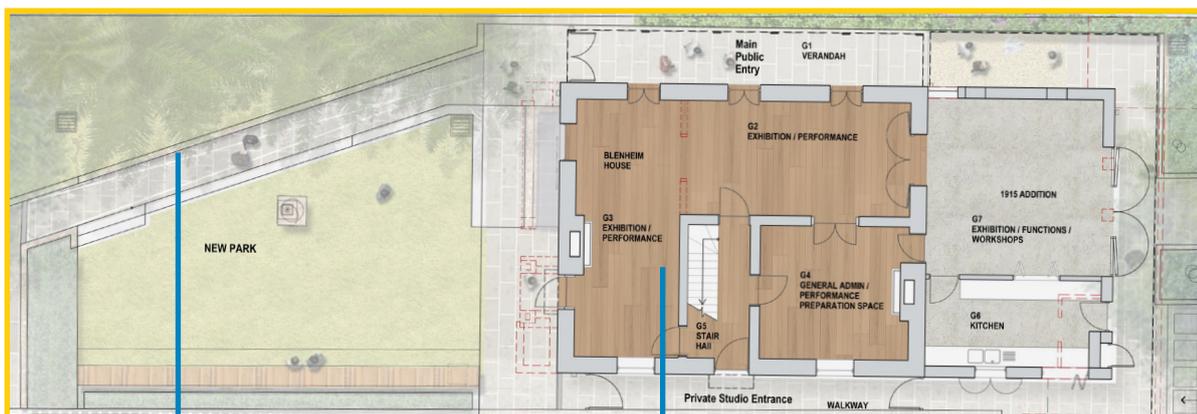
There will be no substantial alterations to the external fabric of the dwelling or outbuilding. The sandstone walls, which contributes to the character of the building, will be retained.

The proposed addition to the outbuilding will be respectful of the size and design of the existing building and will allow toilets (both accessible and ambulant) as well as an accessible studio to be built.

The majority of trees on the site will be retained and protected. Approximately 20 trees will remain onsite, while some trees of varying levels of maturity will be removed due to being an inappropriate species, having excessive root growth that is damaging the property, or deteriorating tree health. New native species that are compatible with the existing landscaping will be planted.



17 Blenheim Street, Randwick



The driveway and fence will be removed so the front garden can be turned into a small park.

The downstairs rooms will be turned into performance and exhibition spaces for artists.

The upstairs rooms will become individual artist studios.

The stone outhouse, which is adjacent to the house, will become an accessible artist studio. Storage space and public toilets will be located next to it.

Hours of operation

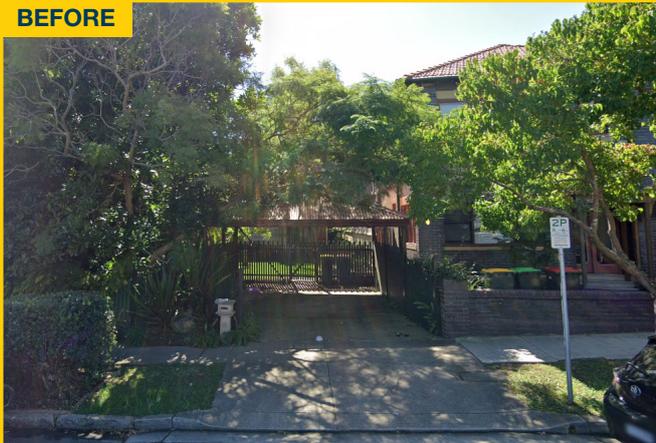
Once completed, the studios will be offered through an Expression of Interest application program that will be open to local artists and will be available on a short-term to longer-term affordable lease basis.

General operation of the premises will be four days per week, including weekends. Three days per week the premises will operate from 10am to 4pm and one day per week the premises will operate from 10am to 6pm.

Special events will be held onsite approximately 15 times per year. These events may occur outside of the above hours. Adequate notification of the events, as well as their start/finishing times, will be provided to neighbouring properties a minimum of one week before the event.

The four artists' studios, which are intended to be used for artists or writers will be available to the artist seven days a week, 24-hours a day.

BEFORE



A community park

The house sits back from the front of the block, providing the ideal area for a small community pocket park. Council will remove the driveway and fence so the front garden can be turned into a public outdoor park that can be enjoyed by all.

AFTER

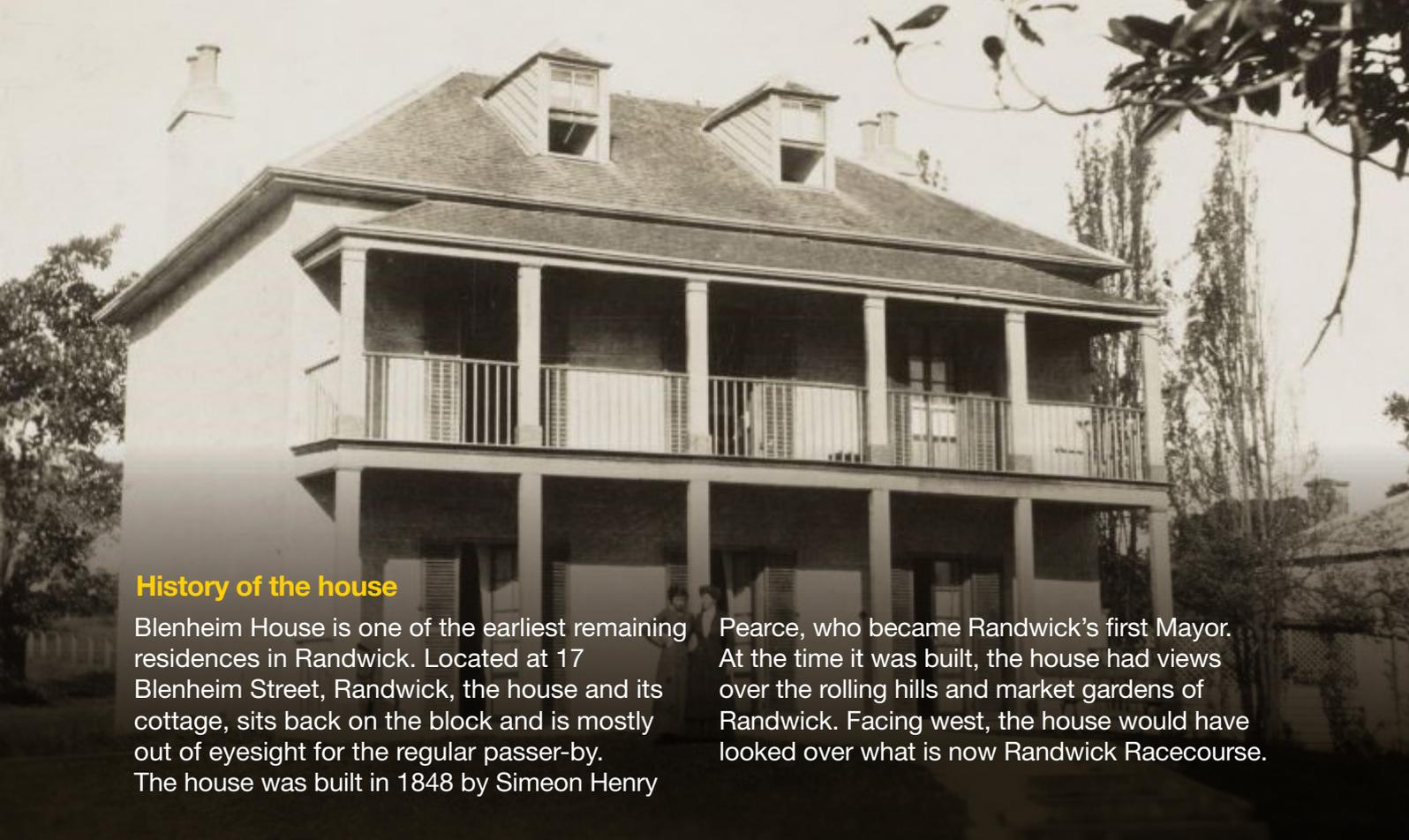


Timeline

The development application will be lodged in the coming months, when we will be seeking community feedback. Once finalised, a tender process for a builder will take place before the refurbishment begins. The community will be kept informed as we progress through the steps.

Need more information?

Please contact Council:
Council@randwick.nsw.gov.au
1300 722 542



History of the house

Blenheim House is one of the earliest remaining residences in Randwick. Located at 17 Blenheim Street, Randwick, the house and its cottage, sits back on the block and is mostly out of eyesight for the regular passer-by. The house was built in 1848 by Simeon Henry

Pearce, who became Randwick's first Mayor. At the time it was built, the house had views over the rolling hills and market gardens of Randwick. Facing west, the house would have looked over what is now Randwick Racecourse.

1848 Blenheim House was constructed by Simeon Henry Pearce, the first Mayor of Randwick.

1890s From the 1890s to 1913, the estate was progressively subdivided and sold off. Blenheim House itself was sold in 1913.

1915 Blenheim House was divided into four flats. In the 1920s further additions hid the original sandstone house from the street and left it standing side-on to Blenheim Street.

1950s The house was documented as being in a state of decay.

1973 The Randwick District and Historical Society succeeded in having the house classified by the National Trust.

1983 The property was purchased with a proposal to demolish the house and construct an apartment building in its place. After a community campaign the house was saved and listed by the

National Trust of Australia. It was then purchased by Randwick City Council.

1989 Friends of Blenheim House formed with the aim of seeing the building restored.

1991 The Blenheim House Restoration Committee was established, with members from Council, FOBH and Randwick & District Historical Society.

1993 Friends of Blenheim House signed a 25-year lease with Randwick Council and restoration work began under the direction of heritage architect, David Sheedy.

1995 Graham and Helen Bailey, with Council's consent, took on the remainder of the lease and completed remaining restoration works. The lease expired in February 2018 and Blenheim House has remained vacant since.