

TULKIYAN MATTERS

THE HISTORIC HOUSES ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA



BY ROBERT
GRIFFIN,
PROJECT
CO-ORDINATOR

Although the property has been closed to volunteers due to COVID-19, Greg the gardener and I have been there regularly and things are still happening.

In the house the focus has been the repair of plasterwork in several rooms – the scullery/laundry; the pantries; and the housekeeper’s room. These spaces were all badly damaged by the hot water system and, as is usual with old houses, once the work started the job became bigger than originally planned!

The corner of the ceiling above the hot water service simply dropped out as soon as the plasterer touched it and the same thing happened with the wall above the door to the housekeeper’s room.

The photograph shows the damaged area in the back room (with the original timber lathes exposed).





(Left) Plasterwork

(Below) Bodice

This work has now been completed, the stairway wall was finished this week (25/05) and the final work, to the sitting room, will be done in the coming week. A very nice surprise was that there was only a little dust, thanks to the care taken by the plasterers, and they were also very good at cleaning up after the work.

Next will be repairs to the window sashes and frames throughout the house and it will be great to have them all working again. I'm hoping that work will start in the next week or so and once that is done and the plasterwork has dried/cured, we start the repainting.

While the plasterwork was going on, several pieces of furniture went off to Ian Thomson for conservation. The oak drop-side table needed further treatment of its water-damaged surface; the wardrobe cornice from the principal bedroom couldn't be repaired on-site (thanks to the nail hammered through it!); and the small bed-table that we found in the under-roof space is to have its folding legs repaired.



Also, the bodices and dress from the attic have now been sent for conservation/stabilisation and appropriate packing for conservation storage. The textile conservator was excited about the pieces, especially the striped bodice which she believes dates from c.1850.

The conservator was also interested in how the garments show they had been adjusted/adapted by the family – some of the trims replaced, buttons removed and so forth.



*(Left) Tulkiyan
following tree
removal*

(Below) Garden

In terms of the garden, we've had one of the greatest changes - the removal of the storm-damaged Lilli-pilli that stood next to the front gate. This is a very sad loss however the Council's arborist advised that the tree needed to be removed for safety reasons. Hopefully the tree will re-shoot from what remains.

Greg has some seedlings from the other tree so we have those as back-up or as eventual replacements. One positive from the tree removal is that the house is now far more visible to those passing-by. The tree removal has prompted Greg and I to re-examine the mid-1980s plan of the garden showing the tree plantings. As a result we have planted a small Lilli-pilli, donated by Greg, near to where the removed tree stood, to give some balance to the plantings along the front fence. Based on the 1980s plan, we are also planning a couple of plantings along the side fence. These will replace trees missing from there and eventually the Magnolia as well, which is not in keeping with the garden.

Greg has been busy in the garden, re-seeding areas of damaged lawn, pruning where necessary and building on the good initial work done by Ryan. The result is that the garden is looking very good. In fact, so good that some-one came in 'after hours' and took some clippings from several of the plants!

Winter is a 'quiet time in the garden in terms of flowers but we have some colour, thanks to the camellias and some of the bromeliads.

