

# List of improvements made to the 1904 heritage listed Unara Tourist Road facility.

Doug Harland 12.11.08

The building had sat untenanted for around 6 years before Premier Peter Beattie and the Health Minister Wendy Edmonds made it available to the Sunrise Way Board, and was heavily vandalized and derelict, and infested in some areas with white ants. Paper and timber materials comprising stolen mail from Weis Restaurant were stacked in one room inside in a manner that had the appearance of a planned arson incident.

Vandalism had been rife, and young people were told of the restoration and its purpose by the Mayor Dianne Thorley and several street kid advocates and I am proud to say it has not reoccurred at all since renovation work started 8 years ago.

Improvements made are:

1. An arborist surveyed every tree and all dangerous branches and declared pest trees were removed. A huge Celtis tree declared a pest by Council took 4 professionals 2 days to remove.
2. Paths were repaired and many new ones installed to allow wheel chair access around the building perimeter. Only one section remains to be completed. TAFE students installed some paths.
3. 6 years of leaves were thick under the building and a huge amount of rubbish, including hospital records and rubbish were cleaned out and disposed.
4. All battening to under floor areas was extended and lockable gates installed to ensure access to under floor areas was prevented.
5. Gravel was spread to under floor areas to stop powdery dusty penetrating through floor boards.
6. Floor boards in the Gents wing that were not tongue and groove had ply nailed under to prevent dust and draughts by the local helicopter squadron from Singapore.
7. All rotten bearers were replaced and sagging ones plated with steel plates.
8. All rotten flooring (In the original 1904 section) was replaced and areas affected by hoop pine borers repaired and treated.
9. External Timber stairs were replaced or repaired and hand rails restored.
10. Damaged sheeting and wall boards and mouldings to external walls was replaced or repaired.
11. Over 30 damaged and vandalized doors were replaced.
12. All doors had the highest quality gold architectural door locks and handles fitted, supplied at a token cost by the supplier.
13. Old damaged heritage locksets and escutcheons & push panels in the 1904 area were restored by a skilled fitter & turner and brass restored by polishing, lacquering or plating.
14. The old damaged food store cabinets in the 1904 area were stripped of paint, and repaired, straightened and carefully reinstalled in the kitchen area.
15. 120-130 smashed louvers / panes of glass were replaced,
16. Approx \$30,000 was invested in new powder coated windows and security grilles.
17. All internal and external lead paint was neutralized by registered professionals and the facility painted inside and out. The southern wall had peeling paint up to 5mm thick and proved a huge task to restore. This cost was covered by the Hon Minister Robert Swarten's department.
18. The roof was cleaned and repaired and painted white as was flashing.
19. All guttering on the 1000sqm building was replaced, and a local plumber hand rolled the unavailable old 2 inch gutter heritage sections to maintain originality.
20. Damaged heritage internal walls, and new openings cut into heritage walls were restored to original condition. Some missing and damaged skirting mouldings were specially made on CNC machinery to replicate original finishes.
21. 8 white ant infestations were treated and eliminated, mainly in the 1904 section.
22. A rare borer infestation in the original hoop pine floor was treated also.
23. Hundreds of power points with external exposed conduit were all through the building, and these were removed as far as practical to restore originality.

24. Hundreds of holes in walls from old fittings that had been removed were professionally repaired back to the original state using very innovative methods by a skilled craftsman Ron Wilson who volunteered much of his time and was site manager.
25. The damaged and sagging ornate plaster ceilings in the Ladies wing were meticulously repaired and restored by a retired plasterer Bob Macinlay at a token cost.
26. A local artist Cathy Pollit spent months at no charge at night and weekends lovingly painting the ornate ceilings and they are trimmed with gold leaf. The colours being selected for their healing characteristics.
27. New fire safe curtains and commercial blinds fitted throughout.
28. All surplus and redundant wiring was painstakingly removed, as was the huge amount of computer and phone cabling strung throughout the building. Most of this cabling was exposed on walls.
29. Two new entry decks were installed, and long life wheel chair ramps installed at the front and rear entrances.
30. The long and large rear wheel chair ramp has oversized turning points to accommodate ambulance trolleys if needed.
31. A wide driveway for Ambulance access was provided to rear ramp.
32. The front ramp has heritage railings to maintain the character of the facility.
33. Tactiles to assist the vision impaired have been installed to the front entrance.
34. Neat landscaping has been provided at the front entrance.
35. Lawns have been kept tidy for the last 8 years by volunteers using a new ride on mower donated by a Brisbane company. Steven Kite, the Director of the Green gardener generously undertook in 2010 to maintain the grounds and upgrade them to carnival standard and teach residents how to grow vegetables and flowers. Steven is a member of Toowoomba North Rotary Club who are supporting Steven in this role.
36. Thousands of exposed floor nails from the wide variety of floor coverings used over the years were painstakingly removed over weeks by volunteers. (work for the dole people and others)
37. All floors are now polished, carpeted or covered with industrial vinyl.
38. All vinyl in wet areas toilets, showers & kitchen is coved and edged and was professionally laid, mostly at no cost. Durable commercial quality was used in the kitchen area.
39. All toilets were wretched and were replaced with new water wise cisterns and pedestals.
40. All light fittings had been smashed and all were replaced with new gold trimmed lights fitted with low energy bulbs.
41. External security lights were installed.
42. All damaged switches were replaced, as were the 6 ceiling fans.
43. All ablution blocks were restored to modern hygiene standards, they were in a filthy and wretched state as a result of vandals.
44. An in ceiling and under floor sprinkler system has been hydraulically engineered (by volunteer professionals and signed off by a certified Engineer) and installed using copper piping for durability, with concealed sprinklers in bedroom and care wing areas.
45. New 100mm blue brute PVC fire mains (2) with testable backflow valves were installed, along with a new hydrant in the rear yard to comply with fire regulations. Internal control and external valve cabinets have been installed. Wormald tests the system regularly at no cost. One main services the sprinkler system the other the hydrant.
46. Flow and pressure checks have been documented for fire main.
47. Fire seals to wing doors fitted.
48. Insurance cover by Guild insurance is donated.
49. Over \$30,000 has been invested in a modern standard ducted stainless steel kitchen, and a commercial fridge and freezer valued at \$17,000 were donated by the recently deceased Councilor Ian Orford.
50. New computer networking cabling as required is hidden and installed.
51. Over \$30,000 has been invested in high quality gold framed wall prints to decorate inside walls with specially selected images.
52. A small library of self help books was installed.
53. A \$5000 quilt was donated as a wall hanging in the entrance hall to support the homely feeling required.
54. A good quality Yamaha piano was also donated by a local resident, as was a guitar.
55. Entrance tiling was all donated by a Brisbane company and laid free of charge by a local tiler.
56. A filthy under floor sealed area called the "black hole" was tiled (supplied free) and treated for white ants and restored and rewired with sprinklers, incorporating a PWD toilet to replace a filthy unit.
57. A storage area underneath the building with large doors damaged by vandals had the doors reskinned.

58. All plumbing was renewed and a new water main installed.
59. Many old sewerage mains were upgraded.
60. Three hot water systems were rusted out and replaced.
61. Each hot water system has a \$1000 anti scald stainless steel control system installed.
62. A commercial sized grease trap was installed in ground outside the kitchen.
63. Two 50,000 litre underground engineered certified concrete tanks have been installed and connected to the mains with the appropriate back flow and isolation valves fitted.
64. All guttering has leaf guard fitted to stop leaf ingress (250 metre and 5000 screws)
65. All downpipes had rain heads with filters installed.
66. All down pipes except one are connected to an extensive rain water collection system that passes through a 500litre first flush unit before entering the tanks.
67. Overflow water is spread across the rear yard area in 8 bubblers and tank outlets are meshed.
68. Tank access risers have removable lockable covers. All tank access & under floor gate locks are 003 for fire brigade access.
69. A pump and pump shed was installed for the rain water system.
70. A 23 seater bus has been donated by a Melbourne businessman.
71. A large area of paving (all selected colour bricks donated by TAFE and a local supplier) to rectify an area that was a mud hole in rain, which washed into the sealed under floor area.
72. New security fencing was built and painted.
73. A large rear deck with heritage railings was built by Q build volunteers and Ron Wilson.
74. Most architectural drawings were donated by a local architect & Design draughtsman.
75. A 50 sq m brick paved car park area is about to be installed at no cost by McNab Constructions.
76. A large sandstone name block at the entrance was donated by a Helidon stone mason and installed by volunteers.
77. The bitumen driveway was repaired.
78. A new paved car park was provided at the driveway entrance by McNab constructions.