



Cobbitty Anglican

Exploring Tree Cobbitty



Cobbitty Anglican Church,
Partnering with -
Exploring Tree





EXPLORING TREE, COBBITTY

Proposed Childcare Centre

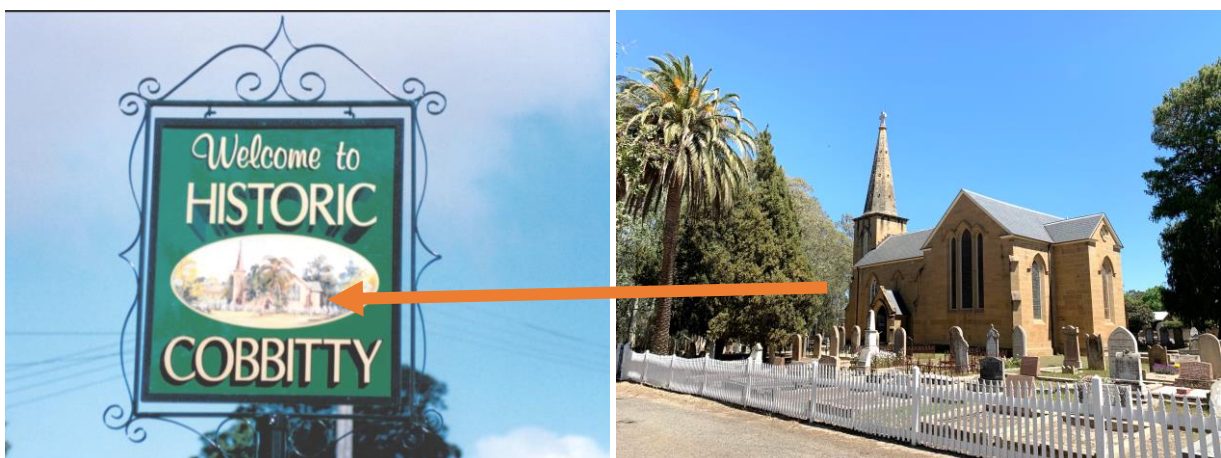
335 Cobbitty Road,
Cobbitty, NSW 2570

Dear Cobbitty Resident,

Cobbitty Anglican Church and Exploring Tree are hoping to partner together to build a high-quality childcare centre on the vacant block of land at the corner of Chittick Lane, directly opposite the church hall. We believe this centre will be a wonderful addition to the life of our village. Even though we are still in the early stages of planning, as a courtesy, we are writing to all residents of Cobbitty Village so that you will be well informed about this proposed project.

Why is the church building a Christian childcare centre?

Since its establishment, on the 1st of April 1827, Cobbitty Anglican Church has been serving the residents of Cobbitty Village and strengthening community life. The “Welcome to Historic Cobbitty” sign reflects this reality with a picture of the historic St Paul’s Church building.



For many residents, St Paul’s Church building is a spiritual home where they gather weekly with other believers to encourage one another in the Christian faith. For others it is a place where the family gathers to mark significant occasions like weddings, christenings, and funerals, along with Easter and Christmas services.



9am Service



5pm Service

The church hall also serves as a centre of village life. Each week it is home to Junior Jivers Playgroup; KU Starting Points for children with learning difficulties; Cobbitty Kids Club; Cobbitty Youth Group; a young-adults fellowship group; Sunday Kids Church; and Sunday night pot-luck dinner.



Cobbitty Youth Group



Sunday night dinner

As well as this weekly use, the church hall brings the community together for the annual pancake night (500 people); seniors’ luncheons; musical concerts; State of Origin screenings; women’s dinners; craft nights; parenting seminars; Carols by Candlelight; kids holiday clubs; and many more events throughout the year. The church hall also serves as a meeting place for various volunteer community groups. These gatherings strengthen the relational bonds which bind our village together and help make Cobbitty such an enjoyable place to live.



Cobbitty Pancake Night



Carols by Candlelight

Cobbitty Anglican Church is committed to meeting the needs of its community. A recent example of this is the children's playground that was installed next to the church hall in 2019. Members of the church donated over \$30,000 of their own money, and many hours of hard work, to build this playground for the benefit of the whole community (an additional \$20,000 came from a Federal Grant). It is a joy to see local families making good use of these facilities.



As you will read in the rest of this letter, the church has a new project in the wings which will meet the needs of young families in our area. We are excited to partner with a local Christian couple, Brett and Robyn Legge, to build a high-quality childcare centre on the vacant block of land at the corner of Chittick Lane, directly opposite the church hall. The church will retain ownership of the land and the Legge's will operate the centre under a long-term arrangement. You can see from the images below that this will be an architecturally designed, premium build with extensive landscaping. This will ensure the building enhances the streetscape and is in keeping with the historic rectory it will be adjacent to.

Christian education is one of the core activities of any church. Thus, the church is delighted to have found a way to extend its ministry to young families in the area whilst also meeting their very practical need for childcare. Additionally, this project will provide an ongoing income for the Parish which will allow it to enhance its services to the village. It will also provide much needed funds for the ongoing maintenance and upkeep of the church's four heritage buildings: The Heber Chapel (1828); St Paul's Church (1842); the Rectory (1870); and the Hall (1886).

The need for childcare in Cobbitty

As the local population continues to grow, younger families are moving into the area. Cobbitty Public School has seen significant growth in recent years and there is also growing demand for childcare places. Exploring Tree's centres, at Macarthur Anglican School and Oran Park, are currently booked out for the next 3 years. This proposed development will meet a pressing need experienced by local families – many of whom are desperate to find a good childcare centre close to home.

The NSW Childcare Planning Guidelines specify that...

“A childcare facility should be located near compatible social uses such as schools and other educational establishments, parks and other public open space, community facilities, or places of public worship”.

A childcare centre in Cobbitty will generate local employment opportunities for childcare workers and teachers, as well provide a needed service to working parents and carers. We anticipate this will have flow-on benefits to local businesses. The centre aims to be a huge blessing to Cobbitty for generations to come.



Who is Exploring Tree?

Exploring Tree is a childcare brand with two existing centres: Exploring Tree Macarthur (opened May 2018) and Exploring Tree Oran Park (opened June 2021). Behind the brand, is a local husband and wife team – Brett and Robyn Legge. After seeing the quality of the centre at Macarthur Anglican School, the church approached Brett and Robyn about the possibility of building and operating a Christian early learning centre on the church’s vacant land.



The proposed centre would be built by Brett Legge, of BJ Legge Prominence Builders, whose carpentry and building skills are exemplary. Brett has been building homes, schools, churches, shops, and medical practices around the Blue Mountains, Penrith, and Macarthur areas since 1982. Brett is a down to earth builder who values honesty and integrity. He has often been commissioned to do heritage restoration projects due to his meticulous eye for detail.

Robyn Legge (nee Key) has been working in the Early childhood field since 1989 and holds a Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood. Robyn is passionate for early childhood education and for sharing the love of God with children. Over her many years in the industry, she has developed a deep understanding of what makes a childcare centre exceptional. Robyn has an eye for good design and believes children thrive in a visually appealing environment, with high quality facilities and well-trained educators.

Out of this vision came Exploring Tree Macarthur which Brett and Robyn built and operate on the grounds of Macarthur Anglican School.



Due to the high demand for positions at Exploring Tree Macarthur, Brett and Robyn built, and now operate, Exploring Tree Oran Park which is located at 88 Skaife St, Oran Park.



Exploring Tree endeavours to establish a new standard for purpose built childcare centres. Most childcare centres are designed with little consideration to presentation, they lack aesthetic merit and are set within gardens of no particular distinction. Exploring Tree Cobbitty is planned to have a high-quality visual appearance making a positive contribution to the Cobbitty streetscape.

Robyn and Brett have many personal friends who live in Cobbitty Village. As such, they have a special interest in ensuring they build an exceptional, aesthetically pleasing centre that adds value to homes in Cobbitty.

Council Approvals

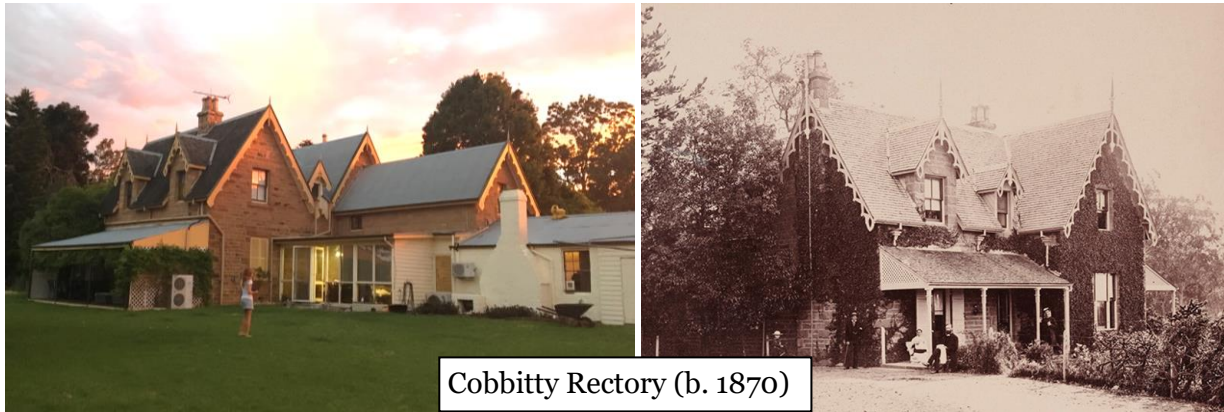
Under the Camden Council LEP (Local Environmental Plan) the land is zoned suitably for Childcare usage, subject to Development Application (DA). In addition to the LEP there is a Development Control Plan (DCP). Council use the LEP and DCP to ensure compliance is met on all aspects of any DA approvals that occur. The following items provide some insight into what we believe will be of most interest to our Cobbitty community.

Exploring Tree have an excellent track record of working with Camden Council to ensure full compliance of any developments they complete.

Community Information

Design

Cobbitty is a picturesque semi-rural village, with lush country views and beautifully kept historic buildings. Our aim is to design a childcare centre which is an asset to Cobbitty, showing innovation and imagination, and contributing to Cobbitty's identity. The centre's design will be in keeping with, and complementary to, the character of the village and the historic rectory it shares a block with.



Whilst the land size could easily accommodate a 134-place childcare facility, we are only proposing to build a 94-place centre, aligning to Cobbitty's more intimate country feel.

Landscaping, fencing, signage, and car parking has been integrated into the design. It will be an architecturally designed, single-story barn style building, incorporating beautiful timber and stonework. The surrounds will be designed by a landscape architect incorporating plants which will suit Cobbitty, along with timber and stone fencing. We are designing a country style building and well landscaped frontage.

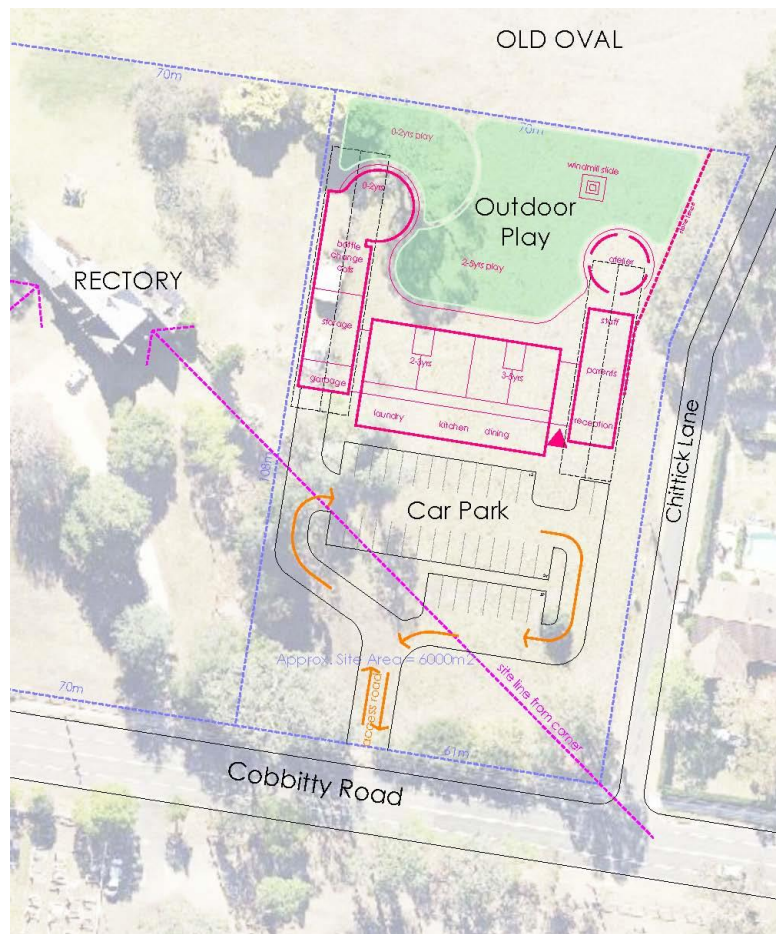
We are committed to minimise the impact on the environment by having a low carbon footprint. We will be using natural materials where practical, solar, and onsite wastewater management.

Outdoor play spaces have been designed to the rear of the site. They are sheltered by the building forms and landscaping, to minimise any potential noise from children playing.

The signage (Exploring Tree's decorative tree logo) will be kept to the building, rather than on Cobbitty Road or Chittick Lane. Because Exploring Tree is now well known in the community, it is not necessary for prominent advertising. In fact, an uniformed observer would think it is just another Cobbitty character home, having to look closely to identify it as a childcare centre.

The site layout retains the pattern of development along Cobbitty Road, with the building set approximately 60m back from the road. This will maintain the required heritage site lines and setbacks for the rectory. The layout has also been designed to maximise the distance from, and preserve the outlook of, the residences in Chittick Lane.

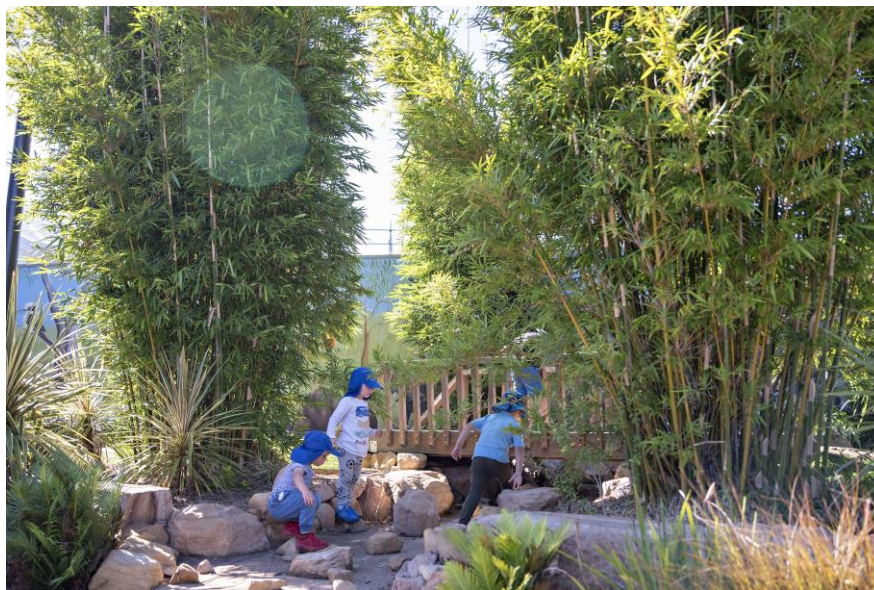
Well-designed childcare facilities, such as this, complement and enhance the qualities and identity of the area including adjacent sites, the streetscape, and the neighbourhood.



Indicative image of what Exploring Tree Cobbitty will look like when complete



Some examples of Exploring Tree Macarthur's site –



Acoustics

Camden Council has strict noise-control standards which must be complied with. As with Exploring Tree's other centres, we will engage an acoustic consultant to ensure all standards are not only met but exceeded.

Minimising the acoustic impact on adjacent dwellings is a high priority for both the church and Exploring Tree. There are several design measures we could take to achieve this, including: acoustic seals on doors; 6mm laminated glass on windows; cavity brick walls; using materials with sound insulation or absorption properties; external acoustic screens; and clever landscaping.

The centre's proposed hours of operation are Monday to Friday 6:30am – 6:30pm. Children typically have outdoor play for 3 hours of this time: 10am to 11am; and then 2.30pm to 4.30pm. Use of outdoor play areas is always subject to seasonal weather conditions, so on many days it will be less than these 3 hours.

Staffing ratios are generous, and the staff are well trained educators who engage with the children during times of outdoor play. This means that children typically play happily and, on the occasions when a child does get upset, the staff are on hand to care for them.

Exploring Tree also encourages parents to be conscious of the neighbours whilst dropping off and picking up children. We are confident that the noise level from Exploring Tree Cobbitty will be well below Camden Council's noise-control standards and have a minimal impact on the adjacent residences.



Car parking and traffic

Camden Council is very aware of the need for good traffic management. This build will only be approved if we can demonstrate that it meets their strict planning criteria. This will require advice from professional traffic consultants and expert reports approved by the Council's planning officers. Residents of Cobbitty should be assured that Camden Council takes this aspect of DA approval very seriously.

Some of the traffic-management design features which have already been included in the preliminary design are a generous number of car parking spaces; separate ingress and egress

lanes to enable all vehicles to enter and leave the centre in a forward direction; one directional traffic flow around the car park to facilitate safe manoeuvring; and ensuring all access to the centre is from Cobbitty Road to minimise any traffic impact on the residents of Chittick Lane.

Because the centre will be operational from 6.30am to 6.30pm, parent drop-offs and pick-ups are spread over several hours in the morning and several hours in the afternoon. This significantly reduces the chance of traffic building up. Since the childcare centre will operate Monday to Friday, there will be no traffic generation over weekends, or on public holidays.

Residents who live on Cobbitty Road will be familiar with the afternoon traffic build up associated with school pick up from Cobbitty Public School. Parents start parking on the street and in the church carpark from 3pm. Despite this, traffic typically flows smoothly until the bell rings at 3:30pm. It then quickly backs up in both directions and remains slow for a full 15 minutes. On most days, by 3:45pm the parked cars are gone, and Cobbitty Road is flowing freely again. There is usually no traffic build up in the morning as the drop off is more spread out. The staff at Cobbitty Public School have done a tremendous job of minimising the disruption by streamlining the pickup process. The school is also in the process of expanding their teacher car park which will free up a significant amount of on-street parking for parents.

We believe that this new centre will have a minimal impact on the afternoon school traffic. Robyn has decades of experience operating childcare centres next to schools. Based on this experience, the only parents who are likely to regularly pick up their children during the afternoon school rush will be those who also have older kids at Cobbitty Public School. These parents, who are already on the road at this time, will now have access to off-street parking. This will free up even more on-street parking for other parents of Cobbitty Public School.

In summary, the proposed childcare centre will have ample off-street parking and we believe it will not add to the after-school congestion. Any additional traffic generated outside of the school pick up rush (3:30-3:45pm) will likely be so spread out as to be negligible.



More information is available

Brett and Robyn would like to extend an invitation to anyone interested in visiting Exploring Tree Macarthur or Exploring Tree Oran Park. You will be pleasantly surprised to see how engaged the educators are with the children, and the way this translates into happy and quiet play.

Exploring Tree also have many procedures, policies, and operational plans, should you wish for more information. Please feel free to look at their website www.exploringtree.com.au or visit their Facebook and Instagram pages - Exploring Tree.

If you have any questions, please get in touch using the contact details below.

A blessing for the whole community

Thank you for taking the time to read through this document. As you can see, not all childcare centres are the same. Exploring Tree is setting new standards of excellence in the industry. They have a reputation for quality, are winning awards for their excellence and already have a 3-year waiting list of parents wanting to book a spot for their child.

Cobbitty Anglican Church is committed to meeting the needs of our community and this is a service that the young families in our area are desperate for. It also aligns completely with the Christian mission of the church to share the love of God with all people.

We know that the residents of Cobbitty value the semi-rural lifestyle of the village and the streetscape of Cobbitty Road. Thus, every effort is being made by the church and by Exploring Tree to design a centre which will enhance both the liveability of Cobbitty Village and the curb side appeal of local real estate. We are excited about the benefits this project will bring to the Cobbitty community for generations to come.

Sincerely yours,

Mrs. Robyn Legge, Exploring Tree Director (robyn.legge@exploringtree.com.au)

Mr. Brett Legge, BJ Legge Prominence Builders

Rev. David Barrie, Minister (dave@cobbittyanglican.com.au | 4651 2226)

Mr. Raoul Corry (Parish Warden)

Mr. Michael Guyer (Parish Warden)

Mrs. Rose Nockles (Parish Warden)



***All photos were taken prior to any Government restrictions due to Covid-19*
Community Information

