



ARDOCH OWNERS NEWSLETTER

November 2021

SAVING ARDOCH - THE FACTS OF THE MATTER

Some Ardoch owners may have recently received a document entitled "Saving Ardoch".

This document draws attention to one of a suite of measures recommended in Ardoch's Long Term Maintenance Plan (LTMP), designed to prevent building instability in the older-style buildings at Ardoch.

The measure referred to in the document is the construction of paving and a spoon-drain skirt around the buildings. This paving and the spoon-drains will ensure moisture is directed away from the footings of the buildings, and sub-floor ventilation is improved.

The document presents an artificially confected photo which supposedly illustrates what the result would look like (see picture top right). In fact, after re-landscaping the building will look more like the picture at bottom right. The actual treatment will be decided following advice by Ardoch's landscape architects, John Patrick.

What the document *does not* mention is that the paving and spoon-drains are not the only measures listed in the LTMP that would help prevent the sort of major cracking that has happened in the building illustrated on the right.

Other measures might include:

- ▶ removal *and replacement* of trees too close to buildings
- ▶ installation of root barriers
- ▶ *modification (not removal)* of planting beds adjacent to buildings
- ▶ installation of new agricultural drains.

As our independent structural engineering reports indicated, Ardoch's older-style buildings are vulnerable to major cracking as trees mature and their roots impinge on the buildings; as old ceramic underground pipes decay and fail; as garden beds are built up by years of mulching.



Supposed "after" look

It would be irresponsible in the extreme if the Ardoch OC ignored these future risks to the structural integrity of Ardoch's buildings. Major works *must* be undertaken to protect the buildings and the value of owners' investments.

While there will be transitional changes to the gardens as these works are undertaken, new landscaping will be implemented to hide any paving and spoon-drains that are constructed, new (and more suitable) trees and shrubs will be planted.

Ardoch's gardens and grounds will not be "devastated", as the document states.



Actual "after" look

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The document goes on to allege that "a lot of important information was withheld from the AGM", and seems to suggest that it was the full LTMP that was withheld.

But in the notice of AGM, a 10-page Briefing Paper was included, explaining the LTMP and its implications for the 2021-22 OC fees.

The full 25-page LTMP is on the Ardoch website (www.ardochvillage.org.au) for owners to download and read. It comprises 9 pages of text, 3 pages of graphs, and then 11 pages of highly detailed spreadsheets and lists.

Rather than expect owners to read such detail, the committee provided the Briefing Paper to explain the background and provide context for the Plan.

The "Saving Ardoch" document claims that owners "knew nothing" about costs or how the works were assessed.

This is simply false.

The Briefing Paper clearly described the sequence of work the committee undertook reviewing Ardoch's maintenance requirements (page 2 of the Paper), and



Willsmere treatment, showing spoon-drain (perhaps with root barrier under), and trees set well back.

showed in clear graphical format the implications for annual OC fees (page 3 of the Paper).

Further, the "Saving Ardoch" document includes photos of other heritage-covered buildings, stating, "Many Melbourne buildings of similar type and era have magnificent adjacent gardens and trees, and they do not require full perimeter concrete aprons".

But posting promotional photos of other heritage-covered buildings proves nothing. We don't know when these photos were taken, what works have been done to the buildings or are planned, and how much those works might have cost.

Two of the photos are of Willsmere in Kew. However, as can be seen in the photo bottom left, taken in July 2021, Willsmere *does* have spoon-drains around the perimeter of many of their heritage buildings and does *not* have large trees immediately adjacent to buildings.

The "Saving Ardoch" document is mischievous at best and deliberately provocative at worst.

- ▶ the landscape will *not* be "devastated" - on the contrary, Ardoch's landscape architects John Patrick will be designing ways to implement the recommended preventative measures so as to retain and enhance the beauty (and suitability) of the gardens
- ▶ property values will *not* decrease; they will be protected
- ▶ heritage listing will *not* be "meaningless" - all works must gain the approval of Heritage Victoria
- ▶ your annual OC fees will *not* continue to rise "excessively" to pay for "unnecessary works". There has been a significant rise this year to ensure we can pay for the necessary preventative maintenance and associated landscaping, but this is scheduled to rise thereafter by the normal 3% a year
- ▶ the Ardoch OC committee ensures its decisions about maintaining our buildings, gardens and grounds are fully informed by professional and independent advice.

If you want any further information about the *facts* of this matter, please email our OC Manager, Ben Harewood, at BenH@selectsc.com.au.

Thank you,

The Ardoch OC committee.

November 2021.