

Developers ride roughshod over our heritage

ON Sunday, I watched the TV news with disgust and dismay as a historic home and its heritage-listed trees in Mt Stuart were destroyed by a developer.

It appears the wrecking continued despite an order from the Hobart City Council for it to cease. On Tuesday, I read about the previous owner, Jack Bone, who had spent most of his 97 years in the home he loved with its memories of family and his life.

Mr Bone was clearly a dignified and courageous man who had served with the 2/40th, Tasmania's "Doomed Battalion", in the battle for Timor in World War II, and spent three years in Changi for his efforts.

For his life and home to be treated with such arrogance and disrespect, makes me ashamed and angry.

It was cold comfort to read that he did not live to see this destruction.



DESTROYED: Mt Stuart heritage home and tree

Dodgy demolitions tear at the fabric of our cities, says Rosemary Sandford

Such destruction reminds me of the Joh Bjelke-Petersen era in Queensland (1968-87) when cranes on the skyline were much-championed by that Premier as barometers of progress and a flourishing state economy. However, they simultaneously signalled the reckless destruction of Brisbane's historic homes and heritage-listed commercial

buildings. The infamous and cowardly wrecking of the Bellevue Hotel and its wrought-iron, wrap-around verandas in the dead of a Sunday night in 1979 was a taste of things to come.

In 2003, my family home in Brisbane had to be sold after my parents died. Built in 1920 by my grandfather E.H.F. Swain, a well-known figure in Australian forestry, the house and its arboretum were heritage listed with the Brisbane City Council.

Yet this did not protect them from destruction by the buyer, who claimed to be an arborist, but who drove a D-9 dozer through the lot within 24 hours of taking possession

For him it was the "faster, simpler and cheaper" option. I was gutted, although relieved my parents were not alive to witness the carnage.

The destruction of Mr Bone's house brought back many unwanted memories.

Is this the fate in store for Tasmania's historic homes, many of which were recently delisted by the Tasmanian Heritage Council?

The value of our heritage buildings derives not only from the fabric of which they are made, but from the stories they tell us about our past.

They tell about the ordinary, as well as the

extraordinary, men and women to whom we owe the quality of life and the sense of community we all enjoy today. They tell about lives lived well when values of honesty, hard work, respect and compassion for others were the hallmarks of our communities, and they tell of residents who pulled together through hard times, such as the bushfires of 1967 and the northern floods of 2016

Are these the community values the Government is prepared to sacrifice in favour of a "developer rules" mentality masquerading as the "faster, fairer, simpler and cheaper" mantra of the new statewide planning system?

If so, it will not be the Tasmania I have loved for the 37 years I have called this state home. Nor will it be the Tasmania our tourists come to see and which attracts new residents from interstate.

If we become like Bjelke-Petersen's Queensland, a state marked by corporate and private greed and corruption at the highest levels of government in pursuit of the dollar, we risk all that makes Tasmania special. And we risk becoming just another mass-market, tourism destination of high rise buildings and corporate facades, until the tourists get bored and move on to places that have retained their character.

Rosemary Sandford is the president of the South Hobart Progress Association.

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