

# Harry's Tree

by Shelley Blechynden

My house at 59 Ellesmere Street, Mount Hawthorn was built in 1929/1930. The first owner, Mr Harry Tandy, had very strong connections to the Pickle District, a contemporary burgeoning arts hub in West Perth. Mr Tandy was the younger brother of John Thomas Tandy aka Tom Tandy, who owned the Swan Brand Products Factory at 567 Newcastle Street and later became Mayor of Subiaco. The company began in 1922 on the corner of Wellington and Marquis Streets West Perth originally selling 'aerated waters' (soft drinks and cordials). In 1926, the factory moved to Newcastle Street and Swan Brand Products expanded their line to include pickles, sauces, vinegar, and fig conserve. Swan Brand Products continued production into the late 1950s and was a major producer and exporter of sauces and pickled products providing income for local Western Australian farmers and employment for local factory workers.

After returning from serving in WW1, Harry Tandy took up the role of assistant manager at the factory. Tragically Harry's life was cut short soon after he moved into Ellesmere Street. At the age of 34, he died at work from being electrocuted as a result of faulty equipment. He was worked on for three hours by a team of doctors before finally being declared dead. Harry left behind his wife Ada and two small children who continued to live at Ellesmere Street. Ada sold the house in 1931 to William Baird who rented the home to various tenants for a decade afterwards.

Considering the very large size of the tree and the possibility it was in existence in 1942 as determined from early aerial maps, together with the knowledge that Jacaranda trees were very popular at the time, it is possible the tree is 90 years old. With the history of a succession of renters after the home was sold in 1931, who would have been less likely to have planted a tree in the backyard, it is possible that the Tandy family planted the Jacaranda. Recent gardening efforts under the Jacaranda revealed an old Swan Brand tomato sauce bottle, which may have been used by Mrs Tandy herself!



Display at the Perth Royal Show



The size and aesthetic quality of the tree, plus the connection of the builders of the home to a significant long-standing business in the Vincent area (after whom Tandy Street was later named) gives this tree a special heritage connection to the broader area.



What is significant about this tree that it should be entered on the Trees of Significance Inventory?

The Jacaranda has several significant features that justify it being entered on the Trees of Significance Inventory. The tree is:

- very beautiful. It has a striking mass of purple flowers in Spring, and a delightfully abundant canopy in Summer.
- very large. The City of Vincent “Choosing a tree brochure” describes a Jacaranda tree as typically reaching 10 metres in height with 8 metres canopy spread. My tree is 15 metres tall and 15 metres wide.
- historically significant as it may have been planted by the Tandy Family.
- very old. The tree is approximately 90 years old and was possibly planted in 1930 by the original owners.
- an outstanding example of a Jacaranda due to its advanced age, size and beauty.



## References

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Perth, Western Australia, Australia, Rate Books, 1880 to 1946. 1931 > North Perth Ward.



## Other comments

I have lived at 59 Ellesmere Street for over 30 years. The Jacaranda is the centrepiece of my back garden. Every summer I feel thankful for the beautiful shade it brings. I enjoy witnessing every season the tree goes through. In Spring there's the mass of flowers, in summer the welcome shade, in Autumn and Winter the tree allows sunshine into my garden. My daughter and her friends played under the tree. There used to be a swing. One year the Easter Bunny was seen jumping from branch to branch!

The tree also provides shade to my immediate neighbours at different times of the day. It acts like an air conditioner for my neighbourhood.

Many birds like the tree, in particular the Wattle bird. I had a Tawny Frog Mouth roost there for a few weeks. Occasionally one can see Black Cockatoos munching on the seed pods.

The Jacaranda is an iconic species for Mount Hawthorn and the City of Vincent. We have them as street trees. They are part of what makes Mount Hawthorn an attractive and desirable place to live.

The main reason I am nominating my tree is to inform future owners that this tree is worthy of retention. I have seen many large trees come down in recent years due to infill or extensions or redevelopment or simply to put in a swimming pool. Hopefully the fact that the tree is on the Inventory may preserve it for benefit of the neighbourhood.

