




# Braidwood Heritage Centre

## Creating the future



A community proposal to realise the heritage tourism potential of Braidwood

AIMS

 Braidwood Heritage Centre

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## We aim

to connect visitors and our community  
to support the creativity of our community  
to share our experience with visitors  
to give our museum a sustainable future  
to build and maintain a viable venue that will  
benefit our community.

This plan by the Braidwood & District Historical Society will help establish our town as a cultural and heritage centre. We intend to build infrastructure that, for a relatively small investment, will leverage enormous value from the beautiful irreplaceable built fabric and extraordinary creative life of the village. This unique, historic, State heritage listed town will be a major tourism and educational destination.

The plan will better utilise the museum and its site to give it a professional, self-sufficient future. We will be helping to fulfil the aspirations of the Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council's tourism plan by engaging visitors whilst more effectively bringing the town's stories to our own community.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> QPRC Tourism Plan 2017-2025 Supporting the Visitor Economy

## BACKGROUND

### Braidwood Heritage Centre

Braidwood's heritage is a valuable but barely tapped resource. For decades, from at least the 1970's, Governments and Councils have commissioned report after report, study after study that have all drawn the obvious conclusion that with the right investment Braidwood can build itself into a major destination for heritage tourism. With the State Heritage listing of the town in 2006 came promises of investment, but sadly, 14 years later there has been none. <sup>2</sup>



The town was State heritage listed for the people of the State, but it has been the people of the town who have borne the restrictions involved without seeing any of the perceived benefits. Our community remains broadly supportive of the listing, but without visible signs of support from the people of the State that goodwill threatens to evaporate. That will be everyone's loss.

Central to our vision and at the heart of this plan is the fact that the Braidwood & District Historical Society fully owns the land, building and collection of the museum. By exploiting the considerable real estate assets of the Historical Society and the valuable museum collection, an opportunity exists to generate income that can help us better fulfil our mission to preserve and protect the town's heritage values for the people of New South Wales,

The Braidwood & District Historical Society is offering our own financial assets as an investment in the town's future. We have also encouraged and enthused our own community, through a number of community groups that share our goals. We stand ready to execute and manage this major tourist attraction and we hope governments at all levels will make significant contributions that help us realise our vision.

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<sup>2</sup> Tallaganda Times 1976  
Paynter 1966  
Buckland J 1970

# THE VISION

## Braidwood Heritage Centre

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The objective is to build an economically self-sustaining cultural and creative centre. To provide a place that connects our community & visitors



## The Makers.

The first element that will help us achieve those goals is a commercially operated Artisan Precinct. Braidwood already has a deserved reputation as a creative centre. Our makers are intertwined with the identity of our town and are a part of our economic future. By supporting their work we help maintain social cohesion and assure the Historical Society's own future.

## Our history.

The second element will be a revitalisation of the Braidwood Museum and its physical expansion across the town. Braidwood has a rich, well documented history that reflects the experience of hundreds of rural communities in New South Wales. We have an evocative well preserved C19th Century built environment as well as being a vibrant and creative C21st community. Braidwood is already an interesting destination and we must continue to protect and enhance it.

## Connection

The precinct will be a place where people connect in a creative space, cross fertilised within the rich history of our town and district. The space we create will help build connections craftspeople, students, teachers, tourists, historians, archivists, conservators and artisans. The planned café and accommodation will provide guests an opportunity to immerse themselves in the total experience. Providing these facilities will blur the lines where creative practice start and the public enter. We will provide an experience.

# THE HERITAGE CENTRE

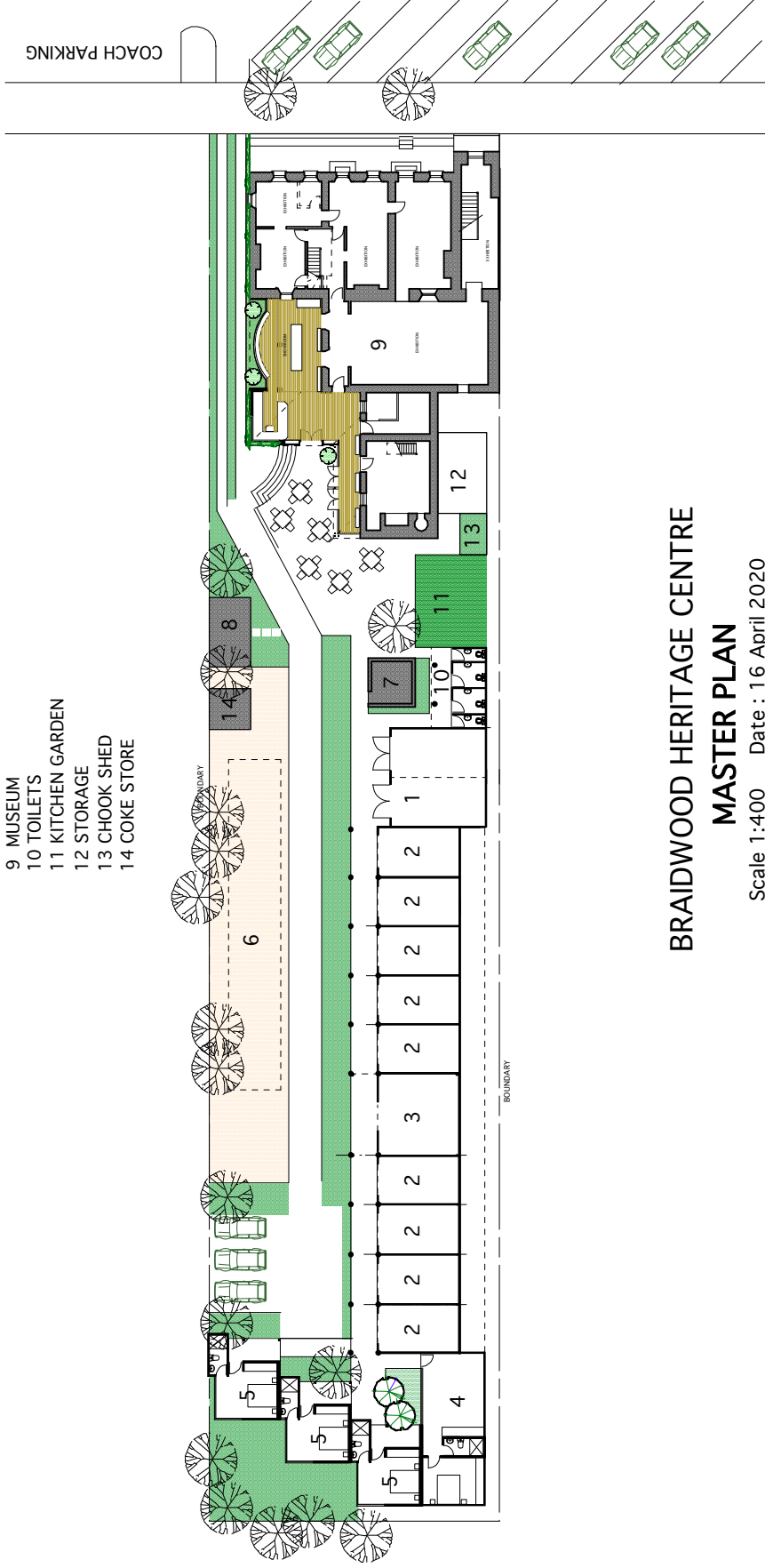
 Braidwood Heritage Centre

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Artisans Workshops  
Gallery  
College of Rare and Lost Crafts  
Café  
Accommodation  
The Museum  
The Collection  
Museum shop.  
Tours  
Events  
Education  
Research  
Conservation

- 1 BLACKSMITH
- 2 ARTISAN
- 3 MUSEUM DISPLAY
- 4 MOTEL UNIT / FUTURE CARETAKER
- 5 MOTEL UNIT
- 6 OUTDOOR DISPLAY
- 7 GOLDFIELDS LOCK UP
- 8 DAIRY
- 9 MUSEUM
- 10 TOILETS
- 11 KITCHEN GARDEN
- 12 STORAGE
- 13 CHOOK SHED
- 14 COKE STORE

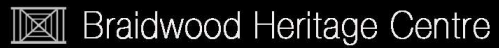


# BRAIDWOOD HERITAGE CENTRE

## MASTER PLAN

Scale 1:400 Date : 16 April 2020

## ARTISANS WORKSHOPS



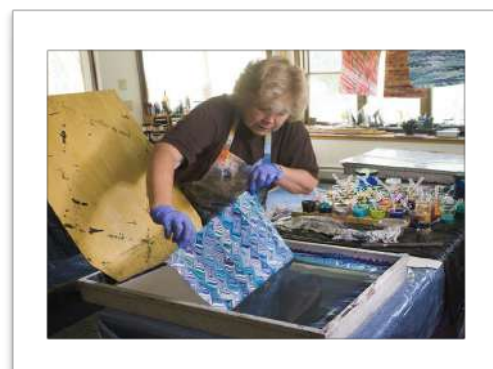
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The precinct will have 9 workshops that will be available by artisans at a modest rent.<sup>3</sup>

Braidwood is an active creative hub. Many crafts people settled in Braidwood because it was affordable, but over the past few years artists have struggled to keep pace with the cost of real estate and rentals. Artisans are important members of our community and it is in everyone's interest to ensure they thrive.

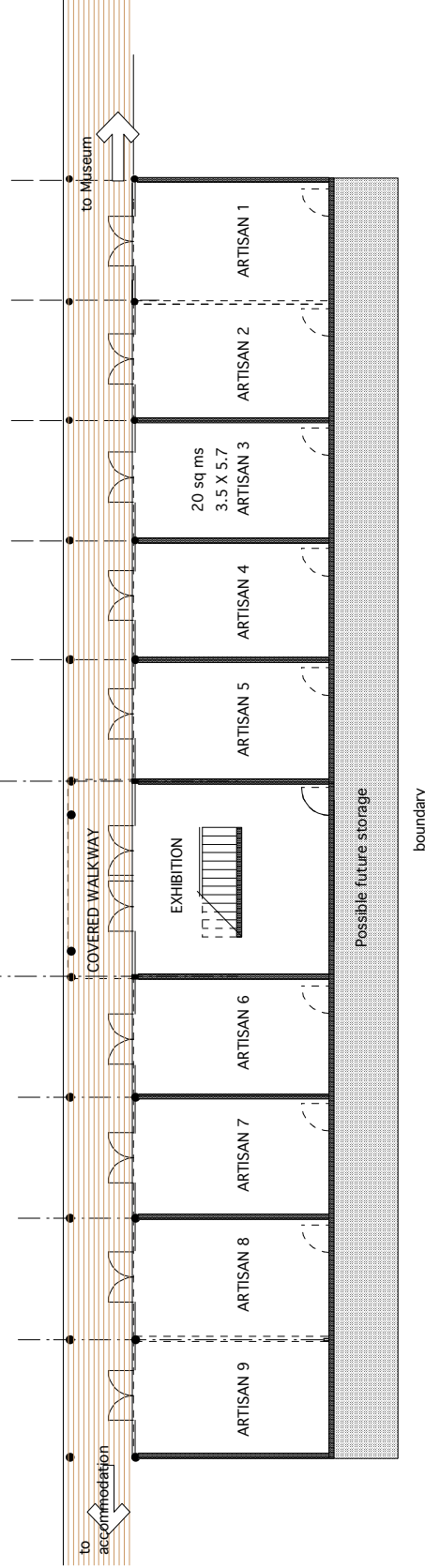
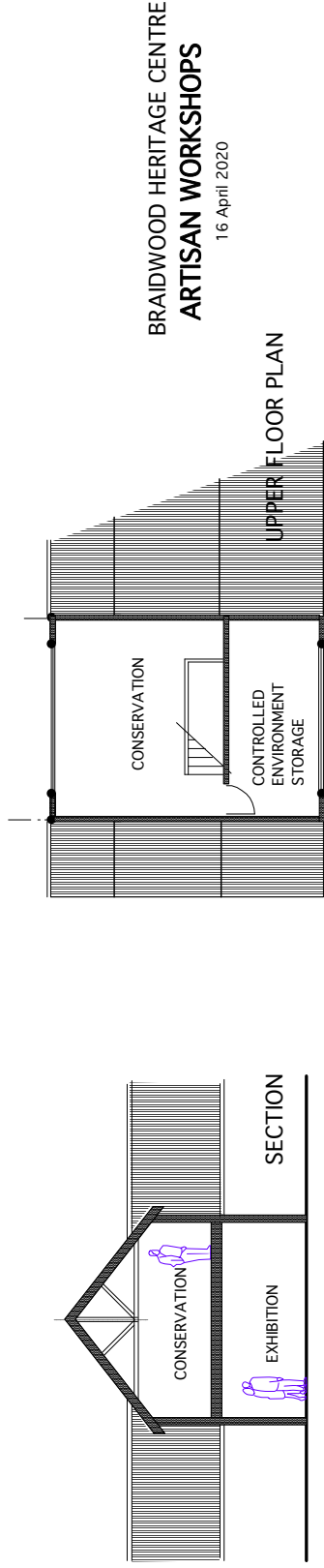
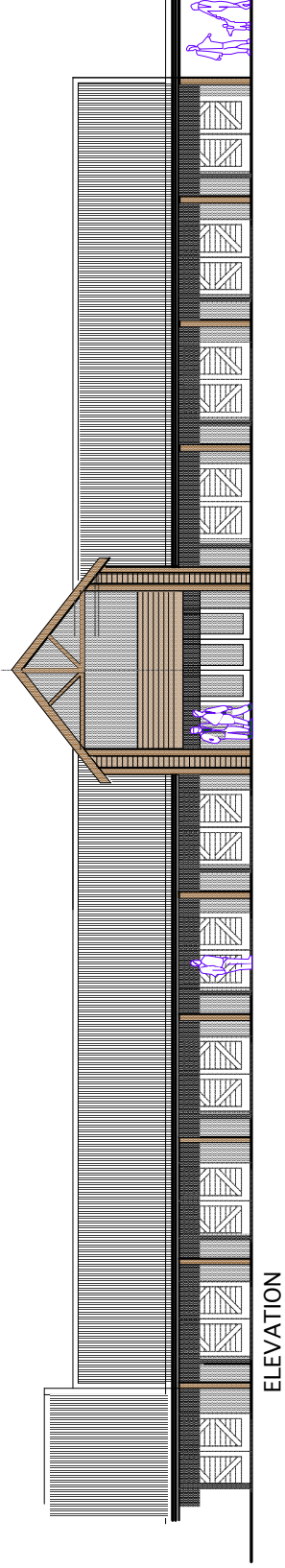
Within the museum precinct, amongst the museum collection and the stories of the district we will be providing an opportunity for them to increase their commercial exposure, test ideas and markets within a safe affordable environment. It will be an environment where people can share ideas and connect with the public and master practitioners will be able to pass on their experience.

The close proximity of all these crafts and skills in one area will enable the casual exchange of knowledge between creative disciplines.



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<sup>3</sup> Expressions of interest



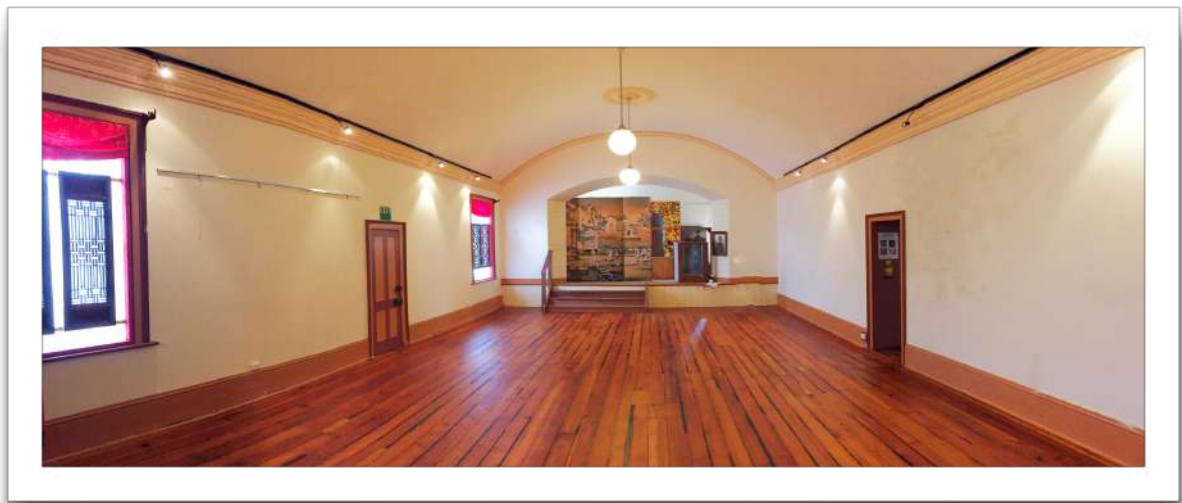


## GALLERY


 Braidwood Heritage Centre

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The Museum has recently refurbished and restored the beautiful 1880's Oddfellows Hall. This striking hall in our State Heritage listed main building will provide space to showcase the work of the Precinct in specific exhibitions that will be curated by the artisans working at the precinct. The hall will be also be available for community events, films, lectures, dance classes, performances, presentations and exhibitions that will continue to connect the community to the Heritage Centre



# COLLEGE OF RARE AND LOST CRAFTS

 Braidwood Heritage Centre

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One of the future challenges for museums around the world is that the people with particular skills in rare crafts, those who can conserve, make and repair, are in high demand. Our initiative will go some way to keeping these crafts alive.

The Braidwood Heritage Centre will encourage and assist those with rare skills to pass on their knowledge and we will provide the space for them to operate.

Under the umbrella of the Braidwood Heritage Centre Blacksmiths, Bootmakers, Saddlers, Feltmakers, Clockmakers, Coopers, Bookbinding, Conservators, Furniture Makers, Instrument Makers, Fletchers, Upholsterers, Luthiers, Woodturners, Whip plaiters, Stonemasons, Tinsmiths, Weavers, Glassblowers, Silversmiths, Goldsmiths, Wheelwrights and many others will have the chance to pass on their skills.

An authentic Blacksmith shop is planned and will be our first priority. Within the context of the museum it will be a demonstration area, but its main function will be a commercial workshop and a school.





Braidwood has a long history of Blacksmithing because of its location on various stock routes and as a manufacturing and commercial centre for the Southern Goldfields. That tradition is very much alive. For the last thirty five years, the town has hosted the Iron Corroboree Festival, a free event where Blacksmiths from around the country meet and work for a week in the summer. The district boasts a number of Master Blacksmiths all with life long experience practicing and teaching their craft. They will supervise the building of the facility and will be responsible for running the Blacksmith school as a commercial enterprise. They in turn will pay an affordable rental to the museum. Weekend workshops will be held where basic techniques will be taught as well as longer workshops for advanced students.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Expression of Interest

## ACCOMMODATION

### Braidwood Heritage Centre

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The museum and its associated buildings currently occupy a tiny fraction of the site. The extra land can be capitalised upon. The land is large enough to build accommodation units that will be used by both students and tourists. Four accommodation units are planned. The romantic idea of spending a night in the Museum and Crafts Heritage Centre will be popular and an economic asset for the town. Visitors really will be immersed in an experience. The QPRC tourism plan acknowledges the lack of suitable 'destination' accommodation in Braidwood and we know this initiative will assist.

Initial studies and costings indicate the feasibility of the project<sup>5</sup>

## CAFÉ

### Braidwood Heritage Centre

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The Café will provide an opportunity for visitors to connect with the creative life of the town. It will serve as a meeting point for the artisans themselves where they will mingle with other staff working in the museum. The Café will provide light refreshments for tour groups and will be available as a serving area for functions and events. We do not envisage the Café providing competition with other businesses in town. The Café will be managed by staff and volunteers.

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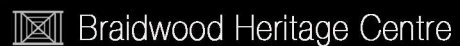
<sup>5</sup> Study by Braidwood Business Chamber  
QPRC Tourism Plan 2017-2025 Visitor Accommodation Strategy



**BRAIDWOOD HERITAGE CENTRE  
ACCOMMODATION UNITS**

16 April 2020

## THE MUSEUM - REVITALISED and ACCESSIBLE



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Increased visitation to the museum, generated by the activity in the artisans workshops and the on site accommodation will provide funds for reinvestment in the museum and the significant collection.

The Historical Society owns a collection that includes artefacts of State, National and even International significance <sup>6</sup>

In order to better connect the town and visitors we plan to take some of this collection into the community. The collection can then be experienced in everyday life, not just a specific museum visit. Archives and artefacts can be carefully curated within the town. Bank records dating from the gold rush, apothecary records, council records, post office archives, ephemera from shops, theatre and workshops can all be displayed and enjoyed throughout the village. Some large robust artefacts will be on display in parks and playgrounds and there will be quiet nooks where some items can be returned to their original sites. Interpretive signage in each location will tell the story of the town and region. This aspect of the plan is already written into the QPRC tourism plan – Braidwood will not be a folk village but a living museum, within a living creative community.<sup>7</sup>

The museum building is in sound condition but for it to operate as a major tourist facility it requires some elements of modernising to meet building codes, provide a greater level of comfort and to create more exhibition spaces. The plans therefore include the installation of an elevator, heating and the redesign of the entrance to include a bright and airy shop and reception. This work will be undertaken with close reference to the Conservation Management Plan.<sup>8</sup> Architects and Project Managers will work closely with the New South Wales Heritage Office to ensure the renovations and additions meet their standards.

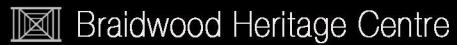
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<sup>6</sup> Significance Assessment BDHS Collection Shar Jones 2008  
Significance Assessment Chinese Collection Cash Brown 2017

<sup>7</sup> QPRC Tourism Plan 2017-2025 Heritage Tourism

<sup>8</sup> Conservation Management Plan Pip Giovanelli 2019

## MUSEUM SHOP



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The Museum Shop will provide a retail outlet for those renting studios as well as our wider creative community. The shop will be operated on a professional basis, open 7 days per week and will be staffed by volunteers and and artists.

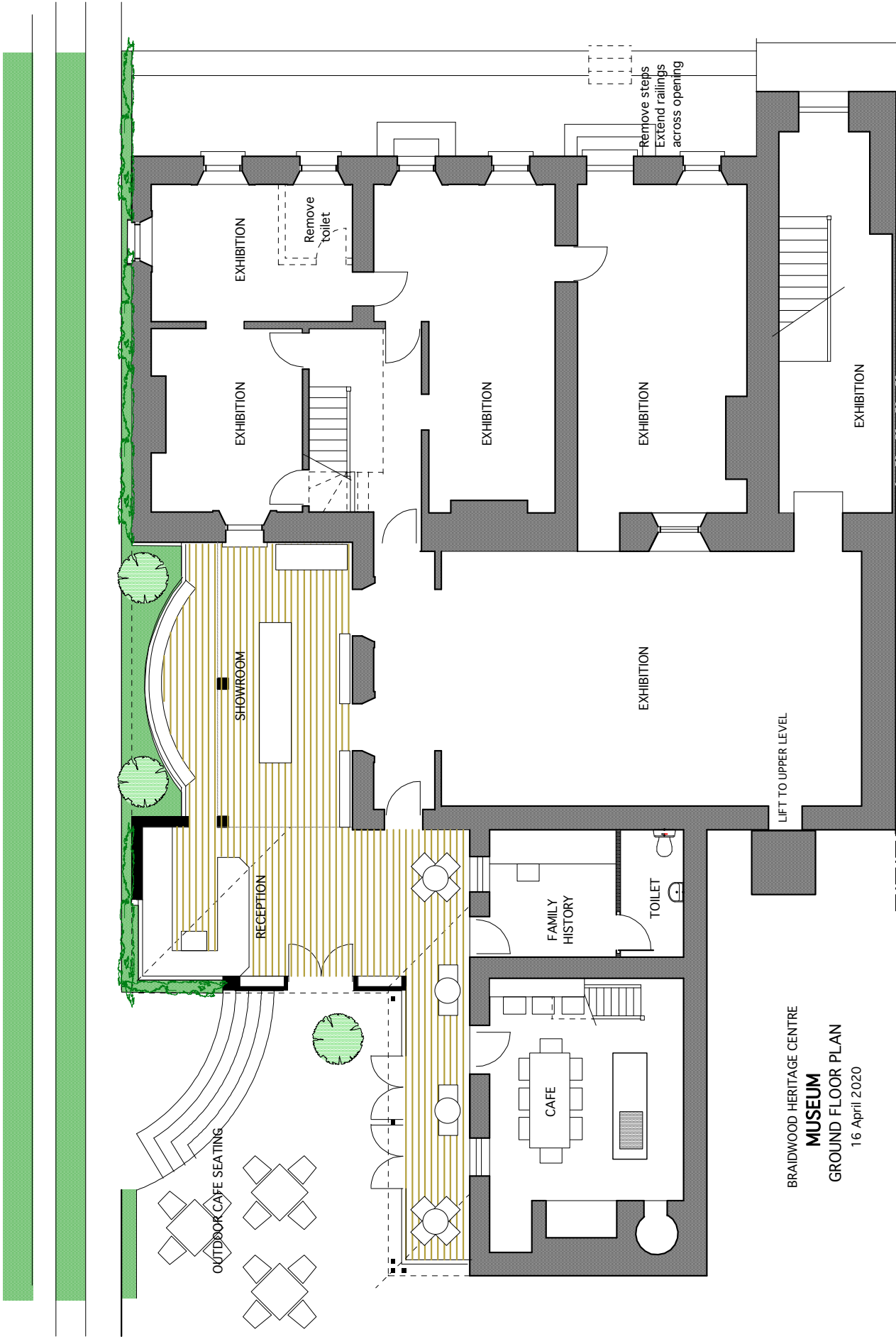
The Historical Society already publishes and sells a substantial catalogue of books about the district and the opportunity to broaden the range of products for sale will also help to diversify our income stream

As well as providing a main street outlet for the Artisans precinct, the shop will embrace an artists co-operative.

Many craftspeople in Braidwood have their own workshops already, but do not have the resources to run a retail outlet. By co-operating, in the space provided by the Museum Shop, artists and artisans across the region can staff and maintain the retail outlet. This is a familiar, well proven model around the world. The Heritage Centre provides rent and commission free space in exchange for keeping the shop fully staffed. A Co-operative. Artists connecting with artisans connecting with our history and heritage. We will work closely with the Braidwood Regional Arts Group ( BRAG ) to ensure the success of this co-operative venture<sup>9</sup>

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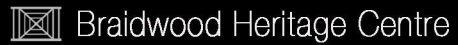
<sup>9</sup> Letter of support and Co-operative details



BRAIDWOOD HERITAGE CENTRE  
**MUSEUM**  
 GROUND FLOOR PLAN  
 16 April 2020



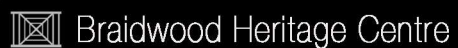
## TOURS



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The museum already runs about 6 town tours per year. Historical societies, school groups, clubs, senior citizen groups etc are given some historical overview of the region and time in the museum. We currently provide these tours only to groups who specifically ask if we provide this service. We do not advertise and are confident that if we did, the experience would be popular, thereby adding another modest but significant income stream but just as importantly driving more visitors to the precinct and the town.

## EVENTS



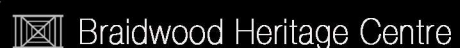
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The Heritage Centre will be well placed to marshal the volunteer resources of a town that is already actively engaged in its own history and heritage. We will continue to help to co-ordinate all the town's existing heritage related activities

A number of extra events will be added to the town's calendar including the regions first Lost Crafts Fair. The town's Heritage Day parade will be resuscitated and a significant artefact in the collection, an 1868 cider press, will be restored and used as a centrepiece for a Cider Festival.

We plan a major event to launch and advertise the precinct.

## EDUCATION



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Canberra University and the Australian National University provide degrees in Museum Studies. The B & DHS already has a relationship with these institutions. Graduate and Undergraduate students have spent time in the our museum where they gain valuable practical experience in archiving, conservation, exhibition and administration. Many of the exhibits, conservation work and archiving systems in the museum now are the result of these student endeavours. We will continue to offer placements and will be able to provide low cost or free accommodation during the week in exchange for their work and scholarship. We are confident that other educational institutions and other museums will be interested in the opportunity we offer. Museums & Galleries New South Wales run regular workshops for Museum Volunteers and some of those courses for regional participants can be held at the Braidwood Heritage Centre<sup>10</sup>

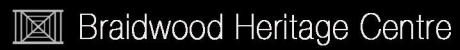
The Museum also has a close connection to the Braidwood Central School. Students are regularly involved in displays and exhibitions, archeological digs and working as volunteers cleaning the building and site. This close connection and co-operation will continue and expand. Braidwood Central School opened in 1849 and is one of oldest public schools in the State. The school culture and identity are closely bound to its history and heritage. It is directly adjacent to the Museum site and has workshops that can be utilised for short courses to augment the College of Rare and Lost Crafts main campus.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> letters of support MGNSW Canberra Uni ANU

<sup>11</sup> letter of support BCS

## RESEARCH

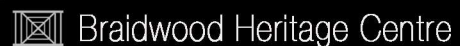


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Braidwood Museum has very rich archives. We have cataloged files on over 2,500 families that have lived in the area. Council records, bank records, post office and apothecary records. We have a large photographic collection.

These archives provide historians, scholars, family historians and the media with a very valuable resource. We charge for access and for the research we undertake on others behalf. This service provides our team of professional local researchers with satisfying and meaningful part time work and is another income stream for the Centre.

## CONSERVATION & RESTORATION SERVICE



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The plans include the expansion and modernisation of the museum's conservation facilities. Our accumulated conservation skills and experience, cross fertilised with the skills of our artisans provides the perfect setting for a Conservation & Restoration Service. The sensitive repair of family heirlooms, furniture, rare books, museum artefacts, art, historic machinery, vehicles can be co-ordinated through the Heritage Centre with work carried out on site and in workshops and studios in the district.

## CAPITAL REQUIREMENTS

### Braidwood Heritage Centre

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Initial numbers indicate that to complete to commencement of operation, including fit out, a government grant of \$2.1 million will be required. Income generated would be sufficient to employ a full time manager who, assisted by volunteers, would run the Centre. The anticipated income will be sufficient to cover ongoing maintenance of the precinct and the management of the collection and exhibitions.<sup>12</sup>

## COMPLIANCE

### Braidwood Heritage Centre

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The development of the Centre is predicated on the Conservation Management Plan and the proposal incorporates all aspects of the CMP, including better entry and disabled access, as well as a lift to the first floor.

The proposal complies with the Palerang Local Environment Plan, and with the exception of the back boundary set back, complies with the Braidwood Development Control Plan. An integrated development application will be required by Council, and Heritage approval will be required for modifications to the existing heritage building, all of which are considered achievable.

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<sup>12</sup> Appendices Construction Costs  
Operation Costs

## INVESTMENT BENEFIT

### Braidwood Heritage Centre

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A relatively small investment will leverage considerable benefits for the region. We say relatively small because unlike many small towns we do not have to build a tourist facility from scratch. Whilst some remote locations struggle to find a theme or to build something to attract visitors, we already have a whole town, a town so significant that it has been State Heritage listed. Consider the cost if we had to build the town; millions of dollars and even then, you would only have built a folk village. What already exists here is a dynamic, creative, culturally rich historic town. An authentic community. Our proposal will build a focal point for co-ordinating and exploiting all those elements from a relatively small investment.

The proposal's feasibility is enhanced by the creation of a range of different income streams and the profits generated will be reinvested into the local economy and the preservation of the town. This will reduce or eliminate the need for future government heritage grants and loans.

The Heritage Centre will be a destination in its own right. It will also provide an added incentive for the over 4 million vehicles that pass through Braidwood annually to stop and enjoy the historic nature of the town and patronise the local businesses.

The project will provide local employment during construction and operation. It will be a precinct where small and start up businesses are encouraged and assisted.

## CAPABILITY



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The Braidwood & District Historical Society has been an active and important institution in the region for over 50 years and has a proven record managing major projects.

The Society is an incorporated non profit organisation run entirely by enthusiastic volunteers who have demonstrated their capabilities

We own our valuable museum building and a magnificent collection of significant artefacts, archives and exhibitions.

Critically, the land area is large enough to utilise and develop our vision and it is in a very prominent location.

We have extensive experience in managing large grants resulting in the award winning restoration of our significant State heritage listed building.

The key project managers are ex senior executives from business and government.

Our community, our membership and volunteers have a wide range of practical skills, academic scholarship and management experience. Our local community and volunteer base will continue to support the project.

## A REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

 Braidwood Heritage Centre

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We offer our considerable, barely tapped, financial assets and our vision to help drive the intent of the current QPRC Tourism plan which states

“A strong desire to ensure that the region maintains its authenticity and more intimate and friendly ambience. This means positioning QPRC to leverage its history and heritage, local artisans, designers and crafts people”

“ Our vision is to connect our region, honour our heritage and inspire a future of possibilities”

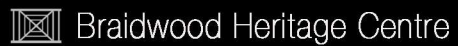
The same plan describes the Queanbeyan Palerang Council's vision and highlights the regions crafts.

“We are proud of our artisans, our produce, our places and invite our visitors to experience them with us.”

Our proposal could not be more closely aligned with the Council plan and it's signature theme “Meet the Makers”

Our proposal will help achieve all these goals and we encourage investment from governments at all levels to support this realistic vision.

## THE COLLECTIVE GOOD



The benefits that will flow from this proposal are both social and economic. This viable business model will reliably sustain the Braidwood Historical Society into the future and comes at a time when purely volunteer run enterprises are becoming harder to sustain. The precinct will become an active creative hub. The precinct will engage the local community and will be a major tourist destination with obvious social benefits. Our primary goal will be to create a self sustaining enterprise with the continuity of paid staff that will provide employment and help build the local economy.



Museums enrich the lives of individuals, contribute to strong and resilient communities and help create a fair and just society. Museums, in turn, are enriched by the skills and creativity of their communities

We present this project for the benefit of our community.