

MINUTES OF HERITAGE REFERENCE COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY, 5 DECEMBER 2024

Present: Councillor K Wheatley (Chairperson) (Wahroonga Ward)
Councillor I Balachandran (Deputy Chairperson) (Gordon Ward)
Mr Robert Moore – National Trust
Ms Lorna Watt – Ku-ring-gai Historical Society
Ms Margaret Skilbeck – Australian Institute of Architects
Ms Zeny Edwards – Local Historian and Community Member
Mr Chris Bluett- Community Member

Staff Present: Manager Urban & Heritage Planning (Antony Fabbro)
Team Leader Urban Planning (Craig Wyse)
Heritage Specialist Planner (Claudine Loffi)
Strategic Planner Heritage (Philippa Hayes)
Heritage Research Assistant (Kerrily Sullivan)

Others Present: Councillor C Kay - Ku-ring-gai Council (Mayor)

Apologies: Nil

The Meeting commenced at 12:30 PM

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

GB. 3 Heritage assessments for comment - Robert Moore declared he provided past advice to the owners with no current or ongoing involvement.

MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

NOTING OF MINUTES

Minutes of Heritage Reference Committee

File: CY00413/12

Meeting held 7 November 2024

RESOLVED:

Previously circulated and confirmed minutes were noted.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Briefing on heritage item planning for alternative housing scenarios

File: CY00413/12

Vide: GB.1

Urban design team leader, Bill Royal, overviewed the proposed measures to minimise impacts on heritage items in Council's exhibited housing scenarios, compared to the blanket provisions of the Transport Oriented Development State Environmental Planning Policy (the TOD SEPP). The Committee queried and confirmed that these housing scenarios propose to remove and replace the existing TOD SEPP, noting the recent Court mediation agreement. The Committee also queried and confirmed that these housing scenarios do not intend to redevelop heritage items in the same manner as surrounding unlisted sites, but to better integrate and adaptively re-use the retained significant items into appropriate surrounding development.

The Committee generally supported Council's housing scenario treatment of heritage items by integrating retained and adapted items into surrounding development, transferable development rights for items, and master-planning heritage items and surrounds for customised development responses. The Committee indicated this can be a good option if done well. The Committee noted the benefits for items for preventing devaluing, encouraging restoration, continued item use and maintenance. Further benefits noted were greater Council input into site specific controls, development resolution, and retained application of the DCP controls for item surrounds.

Discussed issues include the feasibility for integrated heritage item development, item uses options, item gardens and vegetation. The importance of building setbacks and challenges of confined sites were discussed. The need to identify detailed site and landscape features was discussed as part of a Conservation Management Plan at the Development Application stage. The importance of significance assessments for heritage items was also noted.

Examples of past integrated item and residential development, of varying scales were also discussed, including the process, building scale, uses, and positive outcomes.

The reduced number of affected items was also discussed as a result of redirecting higher density to locations with fewer heritage items and out of existing conservation areas, reduced by 136 items within existing heritage conservation areas to approximately 30 heritage items outside of conservation areas.

This treatment was generally considered a more favourable outcome for heritage items and their setting than the TOD SEPP, while noting more detail is to follow.

RESOLVED:

The Heritage Reference Committee received and noted the briefing, supports in principle the proposed treatment of heritage items in the proposed housing scenarios as more favourable to the TOD SEPP, and notes further details shall follow.

Her-story Project Update

File: S13598

Vide: GB.2

The Committee noted the properties with updated inventories. The ongoing progress and selection for inventory updates was discussed. Staff agreed to recirculate the list of addresses to members. The contribution of outgoing research assistant, Kirrily Sullivan, was acknowledged.

RESOLVED:

The Heritage Reference Committee received and noted the heritage items with updated online inventories since the last report.

Heritage assessments for comment

File: CY00413/12

Vide: GB.3

Robert Moore observed and remained available for questions. The Committee discussed the proponent's heritage assessment seeking delisting, noting this is being treated as confidential until reported to Council.

The Committee noted that only one Heritage Council criteria of local heritage significance is required to meet the listing threshold and that Council's assessment supports four satisfied criteria. The Committee noted the proponent's heritage assessment concludes the item may satisfy a number of criteria and did not demonstrate or conclude that no Heritage Council criteria are satisfied for delisting consideration under these NSW heritage standards.

The Committee recommended that further investigation, enquiry, or evidence was required to support that criteria are not satisfied, including social significance. In relation to social significance, it was noted that the Historical Society input has not been sought and community reported concerns about the façade painting indicate potential social significance. Detracting statements alone are not sufficient.

The Historical Society Committee member identified that the first owner, Simpson, is a significant local figure in the development of the suburb through his senior position in the influential Progress Association. This association has not been identified in the heritage assessment or Council's inventory. The Committee agreed this new information likely fulfils extra Heritage Council criteria for historical associations, and potentially social significance. The Committee recommended referring this research to the consultant, to be supplied by the Committee member following the meeting, for consideration in a revised heritage assessment.

The Committee noted that the delisting recommendation in the heritage assessment is primarily based on context or setting in relation to the built apartments across the road and potential further apartments permitted by the TOD

SEPP on adjoining sites to the heritage item.

The Committee discussed whether surrounding development or development standards affect the Heritage Council criteria for listing the heritage item. The Committee noted the setting adds a dimension to how the building presents to the street. The Committee noted that the former historic prestige of the street has changed. The Committee noted the adjoining sites currently contain houses with no TOD developments yet to be proposed, assessed, approved or built.

The Committee noted that the potential contextual impact from the TOD SEPP is caused by a planning and development issue that Council is currently seeking to rectify through changes to the planning and development framework rather than changes to listing, as discussed in the previous item.

In relation to the criteria and setting for the heritage item, the Committee noted that the important listing consideration is whether the subject building provides evidence of the historical, aesthetic, social and other criteria. The Committee observed that Council needs to objectively validate the significance of the item.

The Committee discussed the comparisons and subject building alterations raised in the heritage assessment in relation to the building's significance. The Committee noted that the face brick painting of the subject building occurred without Council's approval before the current item listing and that these works are reversible.

The Committee supported the Council-approved two-storey rear addition as acceptable for a heritage item, retaining original internal and external features. The Committee commented that heritage items can be viewed as dynamic, supporting appropriate changes which retain significance.

The Committee noted that the approved addition is not yet constructed. The Committee noted that the existing building alterations include setback side dormers for a second storey in the attic, and a side timber ground floor addition that is a verandah enclosure with the original verandah post retained. The Committee also discussed the maintenance of the building and site, noting its current state as unoccupied and with construction site fencing.

The Committee expressed caution about delisting based on common and reversible paintwork and additions that were approved as having an acceptable impact on the significance of the heritage item.

RESOLVED:

The Heritage Reference Committee received and noted the report and attachments. The Heritage Reference Committee recommends the Simpson history information is referred to the heritage assessment author for consideration in a revised heritage assessment under the historical associations and social criteria. The Heritage Reference Committee recommends that further investigation, enquiry, or evidence is required in the heritage assessment to support that Heritage Council criteria are not satisfied including social significance.

OTHER BUSINESS

Committee improvements

Discussion on improvements was invited, following the recent Committee member survey report. The Committee recommended filling the heritage research assistant position to continue the inventory completion work, acknowledging the value this provides to Council and the community.

Pymble Town Hall works inspection

The Committee considered the staff invitation to inspect the completed external works and proposed an inspection after the next scheduled meeting of 20 February.

The Meeting closed at 1:40pm