

Statement of heritage impact

Name of the heritage item:

Dungog Commercial Precinct

Address and location:

205 Dowling St, Dungog

Statement of heritage impact for:

Renovation and extension of shop and cafe

Prepared by:

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Prepared for:

Norval

Date:

19 April 2025

Issue:

Development application

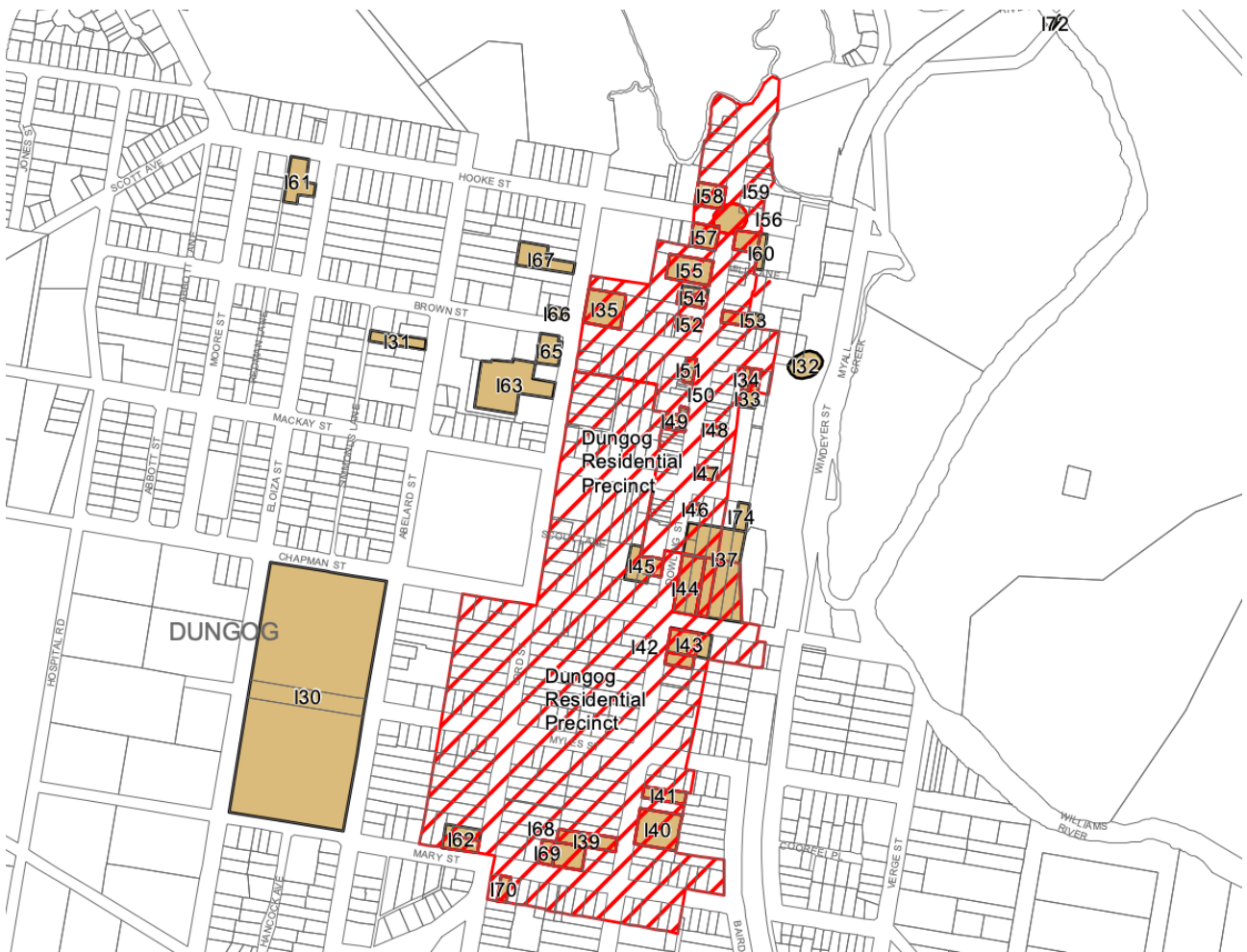
1. The heritage item

1.1 Site description

Heritage item

A heritage building within Dungog Commercial Precinct.

Dungog Commercial Precinct is shown by red hatching and labelled “Dungog Commercial Precinct”.



Heritage listings

Listing type	Item name and document details	Listing number
Heritage conservation area	Dungog Commercial Precinct in Dungog Local Environmental Plan 2014	Identification on Heritage Map by red hatching and labelled “Dungog Commercial Precinct”

Site and its context

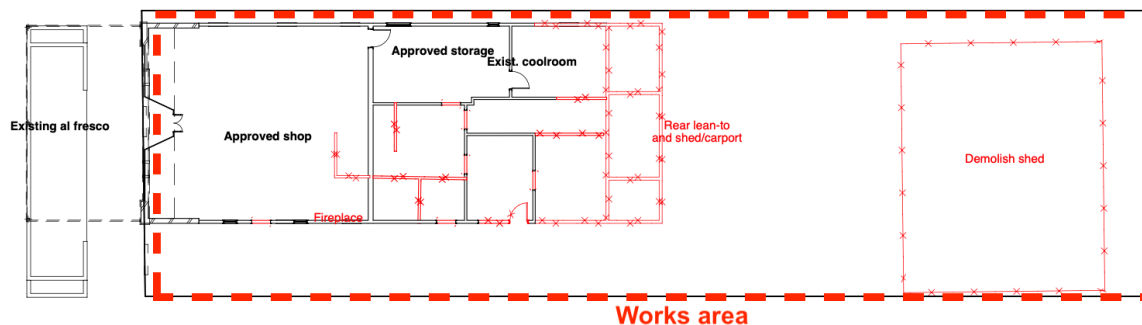
The building is located within Dungog Commercial Precinct.

Surrounding buildings are mainly single storey with high parapets, with styles mainly from the 1900-1940s, with several exceptions originating in more recent decades, notably including the former Country Women's Association building at the southern boundary of the site.

Many layers of largely detrimental changes to the original building are evident.

The proposed works area

Works are include the entirety of the site with exception of the heritage front facade and floor and roof over sections not scheduled for demolition as per the attached architectural plans.



1.2 Site summary history

Documented history - heritage area

The built character of Dungog's commercial precinct is one of low density and modest scale. While the precinct has a sense of enclosure it is also one from which there are many views of the surrounding countryside. Because of its elevated nature the rear elevations of buildings can readily be seen from a number of viewing points. The precinct has no real focal point other than the Dowling Street/Hooke Street intersection with its Obelisk but it contains a number of landmark buildings and many more modest buildings that make important contributions to the character of the precinct.

The area is notable for its apparent continuity of facades. Most of the buildings are commercial ones built to the street frontage but there are some residential buildings which are set back slightly. Separations are narrow, often being narrow laneways from Dowling Street to the rear of buildings.

Commercial buildings have restricted and functional rear yards while residential buildings have lightly improved large yards, often backing onto open rough-grassed areas. Commercial buildings are mainly single storey shop buildings with high parapets giving the street frontage a 'long and low' appearance that is accentuated by many shop buildings having two or more shop fronts (the shops in these buildings are generally narrow and deep). There are two storey commercial buildings, several with attached residences and several imposing two-storey house buildings.

Although there are earlier and post World War II buildings in the area most buildings date from the early twentieth century or between the wars. Some older buildings were significantly altered in the interwar period. There are fine examples of late Victorian through to 1930s residential and commercial buildings and the well-preserved rows of single storey shop buildings are especially notable in this regard. Reflecting their era, roofs are medium to high pitched, typically of unpainted (often rusting) galvanised iron, though tiles are common in interwar buildings. Walls are extensively of brick or rendered masonry often painted on the street frontage. Many interwar shop fronts appear to be original and there are examples of early advertising signage on walls. Some early brick paving also remains in footpaths. The maintenance of many building facades, especially to their rear, has been sadly neglected.

The unusually wide post-supported low-pitched skillion awnings on older shop facades and back supported awnings on interwar facades are special features of this precinct. The street lighting and illuminated signage both under shop awnings and above these awnings is somewhat intrusive but most signage is painted and sympathetic to the early to mid twentieth century character of the area.¹

Documented history - building

The Centennial Hall, built here in 1888 by R A Oakley, was described as a 'wooden building 71 feet long by 31 feet wide, with an iron roof, is well ventilated, and lined and ceiled throughout with Baltic pine', 'with a tallow wood floor', and that 'there are no less than four places of exit from the hall in case of fire'. The Centennial Hall was used as a skating rink (one shilling plus 6 pence for skates, ladies & children free afternoons – skates 6d), and for entertainments such as a 'Fancy Dress Skating Carnival'.

In 1891 the hall was the venue for Esther - a 'popular Cantata'. And in 1892 Mr Oakley was the first to install gas lighting, which was a 'vivid contrast' to oil lamp lights, using a '25 light Alpha gasoline machine'. By 1926, however, the old hall had become an 'eyesore' and was extensively renovated, including the addition of a two bedroom residence at the back lined with 'Wunderlich

¹ Dungog Development Control Plan

durabestos' (a forerunner of James Hardie) for which the owner Mr Fleming was an agent. It was then used as a furniture shop and funeral parlour, later a hardware shop.

Mostly recently this site has been used by cafes. In 1983 Crazy Chairs opened here, then the Poets Table Cafe, and it is currently Chill Billies, featuring tables decorated by various local artists.²

Last know use was by Stella Bistro.

Previous physical changes

The precise timeline of changes to the building is unknown. Past changes include

- front awning addition and at least one replacement,
- painting of brick facade,
- roof and gutter replacement,
- floor level changes,
- window opening changes,
- commercial kitchen and bathrooms installation,
- several layers of rear extensions,
- backyard shed and carport construction,
- concrete pathways.

2. Significance assessment

2.1 Statement of significance

This area is significant for the Lower Hunter region for a built character which has remained largely intact since the Second World War and which reflects the long history of development in Dungog as an important country town within the lower Hunter region. This character is derived particularly from the continuity of facades which are mainly single storey with high parapets along Dowling Street, and building styles which are mainly from the first four decades of this century. A lack of pressures for new development (including renovations) has enable the survival of many interwar

² Williams, Michael (2011). *Ah, Dungog — A Brief Survey of its Charming Houses & Historic Buildings*. Dungog Historical Society.

*buildings with original details such as lead-glass shop fronts and post supported verandahs in the northern section.*³

2.2 Significance of the proposed work area

Part of the building adjacent to the proposed work area contributes to the significance of the heritage area, namely the remaining original brick facade of the building and side brick walls supporting it. The value of this part may be considered high.

The actual proposed works are to occur behind this facade and the facade should remain intact.

(In its current state the visual contribution of the facade to the streetscape is compromised by its ad-hoc street awning added later, likely some decades ago.)

The heritage significance value of the proposed works area and building fabric scheduled for demolition may be considered nil, or detrimental to the significance, with the exception of any artefacts possibly discovered within or under the demolished fabric.

3. Proposed works

3.1 The proposal

The extent and area of demolition is limited to area and building fabric of nil/detrimental significance.

Location and extent of any excavation is limited to area and building fabric of nil/detrimental significance. Existing/previous ground disturbance can not be ruled out without removing existing concrete pavement and floors.

Proposed works to the existing building/s or new developments include partial reconstruction of the existing building and the replacement of backyard shed and carport with a new commercial building of form complementary to the front building.

Proposed new services include water, sewer, stormwater and on-site gas. Proposed landscape works include new paving and decking.

Proposed use is continuation of existing: a shopfront and a cafe.

3.2 Background

Considerations of alternatives

Alternative options were considered, namely repairs to the existing building fabric, however due to the age, state and non-compliance issues, this option has been ruled out. A reconstruction and replacement of compromised or unsuitable building fabric is the only way the building may be brought to code compliance and enable continuing occupation and service.

4. Matters for consideration

The subheadings below are used to accurately assess the impacts of the proposed works on heritage significance of the heritage items or the heritage conservation area. Measures are described to be implemented so that the proposed works avoid, minimise or mitigate any adverse impacts on the heritage significance of the item.

Fabric and spatial arrangements

Only nil/negative significance fabric is to be affected by the proposed works. The resulting structure will improve and complement the building's visual contribution to the streetscape.⁴

Setting, views and vistas

Positive impact on the heritage area landscape, land uses and character is anticipated.

Landscape

~~(The impacts do not apply to this specific heritage value.)~~

Use

The proposed use contributes to the significance of the heritage area and the proposed use will result in better compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act (Commonwealth), code compliance and upgraded services.

Demolition

Demolition is proposed only to nil/detrimental heritage value fabric.

Curtilage

~~(The impacts do not apply to this specific heritage value.)~~

⁴ Assessing heritage significance (Heritage NSW 2023)

Moveable heritage

~~(The impacts do not apply to this specific heritage value.)~~

Aboriginal cultural heritage

~~(The impacts do not apply to this specific heritage value.)~~

Historical archaeology

The proposed works may have some limited impact on the archaeological potential of the site, in that artefact may be discover within or beneath the building fabric.

Natural heritage

~~(The impacts do not apply to this specific heritage value.)~~

Conservation areas

The impact will be positive as described above.

Cumulative impacts

The cumulative impact of the proposed works, considering previous approvals and future applications have been considered. The proposed works as part of this application are not one part of a broader scope of works or related to any other applications.

~~The conservation management plan~~

~~(The impacts do not apply to this specific heritage value.)~~

Other heritage items in the vicinity

As per impact on conservation areas.

Commonwealth/National heritage significance

~~(The impacts do not apply to this specific heritage value.)~~

World Heritage significance

~~(The impacts do not apply to this specific heritage value.)~~

5. Summary and recommendations

The overall impacts to the heritage area, focusing on the impacts to the heritage significance of the heritage area, are considered wholly positive, by replacement of compromised and non-compliant building fabric by new structure, enabling continuing use and maintenance of the historically significant facade and site.

Recommendations that will help mitigate any adverse impacts on the heritage:

1. Salvage any significant building fabric if discovered during demolition.
2. Photograph in-situ, document and collect any historical artefacts discovered during works.
3. Photograph and document stages of work (demolition, footings, slab/flooring, framing, completion) for archival recording.
4. While it does not form part of the current proposal, it is recommended that the front awning is reconstructed at later stage utilising historically appropriate form, colour and material palette.

Definitions

This section lists the relevant definitions and abbreviations used in this report. Information is sourced from the Heritage Act 1977, Environment Planning and Assessment Act 1979 and The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance.

Term — Meaning

Consent authority — The person or body with whose approval that act, matter or thing may be done or without whose approval that act, matter or thing may not be done.

Conservation — Conservation means all the processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance (as defined in The Burra Charter).

Development — The erection of a building, carrying out work, use of or subdivision of land.

Heritage significance — Term used in the assessment and understanding of heritage items that have significance in relation to their historical, scientific, cultural, social, archaeological, architectural, natural or aesthetic value.

Moveable heritage — A moveable object that is not a relic.

National construction code — A code that sets minimum requirements for design, construction and performance of buildings, as well as plumbing and drainage systems throughout Australia.

Relic — Any deposit, artefact, object or material evidence that is of state or local heritage significance.

Setting — The area around an item, which may include the visual catchment.

State Heritage Inventory — An online database containing heritage items and conservation areas on statutory lists in NSW. This includes the State Heritage Register and local government items.

State Heritage Register — The NSW State Heritage Register. A list of places and items of importance to the people of NSW. Only places of state heritage significance are listed on the State Heritage Register. The State Heritage Register protects these items and their significance.

State Heritage Register item — A term to describe a heritage item that is of state heritage significance and is listed on the State Heritage Register.

References

Australia ICOMOS Inc (2013a) 'The Burra Charter: the Australia ICOMOS charter for places of cultural significance', Australian ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) Inc, Burwood, accessed 9 June 2023.

Australia ICOMOS Inc (2013b) 'Burra Charter article 22 — new work', practice note, Australian ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) Inc, Burwood, accessed 9 June 2023.

Heritage NSW (2019) Subdivision and NSW State Heritage Register items policy and procedure, Heritage NSW, NSW Government, accessed 9 June 2023.

Heritage NSW (2020) Material threshold policy, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, NSW Government, accessed 9 June 2023.

DPE (Department of Planning and Environment) (2023) Assessing heritage significance, DPE, NSW Government, accessed 9 June 2023.

Legislation

- Heritage Act 1977 (NSW)
- Environment Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (NSW)
- State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 (NSW)