


Statement of Environmental Effects

Demolition of St. John Church

Prepared by Barr Planning
for Anglican Diocese of Newcastle

February 2025





Barr Planning acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their Elders past and present and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today, through considerate and respectful approaches to our work, and seeking to facilitate a balance between the transformation of land and the preservation of the natural and cultural environment.

'Connection' by Aboriginal Artist, Lauren Freestone

Document Control

Title:	Statement of Environmental Effects
Address:	34 Lostock School Road Lostock NSW 2311
Job No.	24BAS0066
Client:	Anglican Diocese of Newcastle

Document Issue

Issue	Date	Prepared by	Reviewed by
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Client Review	19/12/2024		Bryan Pead
Final	05/02/2025	Chloe Howarth	Rebecca Boresch



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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this Statement of Environmental Effects

Barr Planning has prepared this Statement of Environmental Effects (SEE) on behalf of the Anglican Diocese of Newcastle. It accompanies a Development Application lodged to Dungog Shire Council under Section 4.12 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (the EP&A Act) for the demolition of an existing church and erection of a new shade structure that utilises appropriate building elements from the church.

1.2 Ownership

Trustees of Church Property for the Diocese of Newcastle are the owners of the land.

1.3 Consent Authority

The consent authority is the Dungog Shire Council.

1.4 Supporting Documentation

This SEE is supported by the following documentation:

Table 1 Submitted Documentation

Document	Author	Revision	Date
Demolition Plan	Manns & Troup Architects	02	19/12/2024
Heritage Impact Statement	Placemark Architecture & Cultural Heritage	A	11/12/2024
Detailed Site Survey	Land Development Solutions	-	14/10/2024
Engineering Report	Northrop Engineering	A	25/10/2024

These documents have been uploaded separately onto the NSW Planning Portal for consideration.

2 Site and Context

2.1 The Site

The site is located on the traditional lands of the Gringai and Koori people and within the boundary of the Karuah Local Aboriginal Land Council.

The site is Lot 10 Deposited Plan 1145202, 34 Lostock School Road Lostock. It is rectangular with an area of approximately 2,351m², and a primary frontage of 53 metres to Lostock School Road. The site is zoned as RU1 Primary Production under the Dungog Local Environmental Plan 2014. Existing structures comprise a single-storey weatherboard church, an outhouse and a cemetery, the existing church and cemetery are recognised as heritage item '195' St. John's Church and Cemetery, which holds local significance.

The site is surrounded by agricultural uses such as grazing and cultivation. Adjoining land to the east comprises the Paterson River a natural waterway, and to the south the Lostock Community Hall. The rural fire service buildings are Southwest of the site with Lostock Dam, Lostock Dam Caravan Park, Lostock Dam Park and Boat Ramp further west. Rural residential structures and cultivation land are to the north of the site. The surrounding areas also have a mix of pasturage and tree clusters.



Figure 1 Locality Plan. Source from Six Maps

2.2 Background

Searches of the Dungog Shire DA tracker were conducted on 6 August 2024, with no record of previous Development Applications found. It is understood that before the development of the existing St. John's Church and cemetery, the land was vacant pastoral land. The Heritage Impact Statement

prepared by Placemark Architecture and Cultural Heritage outlines the known history of St. John's Church. It is understood that the church was erected in the early 1880s, being consecrated on 10 June 1892. Although the church Lot had been considered the Lostock General Cemetery for decades, Lot 1 to the northeast and the lots to the northwest were dedicated for use as a General Cemetery by the Government Gazette, dated 22 August 1903. St. John's Anglican Church at Lostock was deconsecrated on 20 October 2018 and has not been utilised for years.

3 Proposed Development

3.1 Summary

The proposed application seeks consent to demolish the existing heritage-listed St. John's Church and retain elements from the church, the existing front gate, entry and pathway, along with the pointed arch windows, to be placed in storage to conserve and interpret the local heritage significance of the site.

The proposed works will remove a small, de-consecrated timber-clad church from the cemetery site at Lostock. Substantial costs are associated with ongoing maintenance limiting prospects for repair or ability to meet contemporary compliance or adaptive new uses. The diminished integrity and the loss of the Church's original fabric are inevitable outcomes of social change. Removal is therefore an acceptable outcome and impact on the heritage significance of the building.

The matters of consideration under the Dungog Development Control Plan (DCP) Dungog Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2014 (Clause 5.10) are considered within Section 5 of this SEE.

3.2 Demolition

The following works are proposed:

- Demolition via dismantling the existing heritage-listed St. John's Church to reduce damage to the surrounding graves, burial sites, gardens and paths.
- Retention of the window arches and glass where able, to be stored and reused as interpretative items when funding allows.

3.2.1 Waste Management

Of the materials that cannot be salvaged, these will be stockpiled, for recycling and reuse off-site where possible or removed and disposed of at the Dungog Waste Management facility.

4 Strategic Context

4.1 Hunter Regional Plan 2041

The Hunter Regional Plan (HRP) 2041 provides the NSW Government's land use vision for the Hunter. The vision of the HRP is for the Hunter Region to be the leading regional economy in Australia, connected to and caring for Country, with a vibrant metropolitan city and sustainable 15-minute neighbourhoods at its heart. The proposed development is consistent with the HRP 2041 objective 6.

Objective 6: Conserve heritage, landscapes, environmentally sensitive areas, waterways and drinking water catchments. The site comprises the local heritage item (I95) St. John's Church and Cemetery. The heritage significance of the site will remain unchanged despite the removal of the church structure. The ability of the community to maintain the gardens and preserve the cemetery grounds continues the legacies and historical identity associated with the site. Historical interpretations can be added to the site as funding allows.

4.2 Dungog Shire Local Strategic Planning Statement

The Dungog Shire Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) provide a long-term vision for the future of the Dungog LGA, setting out clear planning priorities based on themes identified by the community. The LSPS will guide land use and development across the Shire for the next 20 years to ensure we maintain vibrant communities, biodiversity-rich areas and protect viable agricultural lands. The proposed development aligns with planning priority 1: Connection to Place & Heritage and planning priority 2: A Healthy Community.

The proposed development retains and integrates architectural features such as the pointed arch windows from the church that may form part of a new shed structure as funding allows. The site's cultural significance is preserved through community gardens and the cemetery. This continuity, enables the community to remain connected to its past, fostering a sense of belonging and shared heritage, allowing residents to maintain a tangible connection to the site's history. It also provides a venue for the community to enjoy the open space and gather for activities fostering a sense of community and encouraging social interactions and participation.

5 Statutory Assessment

5.1 Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

This report assesses the proposal against the relevant statutory requirements of the EP&A Act, and other applicable legislation, plans and policies. Section 4.15 of the Act outlines the relevant heads of consideration that must be considered when assessing a development proposal.

The following considerations have been made under section 4.15(1)(a):

- Environmental planning instruments, proposed instruments and development control plans relevant to the site or development are considered below.
- There are no known planning agreements applicable to the site; and
- The Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021 (the Regulation) has been considered below.

The remaining matters for consideration under section 4.15(1)(b), (c), (d) and (e) are considered within sections 6, 7, 8 and 9 of this Statement.

5.2 Objects of the Act

The Objects of this Act are as follows:

- (a) to promote the social and economic welfare of the community and a better environment by the proper management, development and conservation of the State's natural and other resources,*
- (b) to facilitate ecologically sustainable development by integrating relevant economic, environmental and social considerations in decision-making about environmental planning and assessment,*
- (c) to promote the orderly and economic use and development of land,*
- (d) to promote the delivery and maintenance of affordable housing,*
- (e) to protect the environment, including the conservation of threatened and other species of native animals and plants, ecological communities and their habitats,*
- (f) to promote the sustainable management of built and cultural heritage (including Aboriginal cultural heritage),*
- (g) to promote good design and amenity of the built environment,*
- (h) to promote the proper construction and maintenance of buildings, including the protection of the health and safety of their occupants,*
- (i) to promote the sharing of the responsibility for environmental planning and assessment between the different levels of government in the State,*
- (j) to provide increased opportunity for community participation in environmental planning and assessment.*

The proposed development supports the objects of the EP&A Act, in particular object (f), (g) and (h).

Regarding objective (f), the existing structure is no longer functional and has exceeded its design life. Sustainable management has been assessed and would require substantial deconstruction, replacement of materials and reconstruction works that are not financially viable as the structure is unused. The demolition of the structure is considered sustainable management in this case.

Regarding objectives (g) and (h), the structure is past its design life and does not provide an amenity suitable for use by the community concerning health and safety requirements. The financial cost and the extent of construction required to upgrade the structure do not add value in retaining the historical values and significance of the site. Removing the structure promotes good design and amenity in protecting the other historical elements associated with the site.

5.3 Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021

The proposed development will be made and assessed under the relevant requirements of Part 3 and Part 4 of the EPA Regulations 2021.

5.4 State Environmental Planning Policies

State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPPs) are environmental planning instruments administered under the EP&A Act. SEPPs deal with issues considered significant to the State and the people of NSW. In determining the development application, the consent authority will consider these matters under section 4.15(a)(i) of the EP&A Act. The relevant SEPPs applying to the development have been addressed below.

5.4.1 State Environmental Planning Policy (Resilience and Hazards) 2021

Chapter 4 Remediation of land applies to all land within the State. This policy aims to provide a Statewide approach to the remediation of contaminated land. Section 4.6 requires contamination to be considered when determining a development application. A search on the Environmental Protection Authority contaminated land register, did not identify the site as significantly contaminated. The structure was constructed 132 years ago on vacant pastoral land with the use of the site as a church and cemetery being known and remained unchanged. The demolition of the existing church and continued use of the land as a cemetery is unlikely to result in changes that trigger further assessment of this policy. Should the Council be aware of potential contaminating uses, additional investigation can be undertaken as required.

5.5 Dungog Local Environmental Plan 2014

The subject site is located within the Dungog Shire LGA with the Dungog Local Environmental Plan 2014 (DLEP 2014) applying to the land. To the extent possible, an assessment of the proposal against the provisions of this plan is provided below.

5.5.1 Clause 2.3 Zone Objectives and Land Use Table

The subject site is zoned as RU1 – Primary Production under the DLEP 2014, as shown in Figure 2 below.

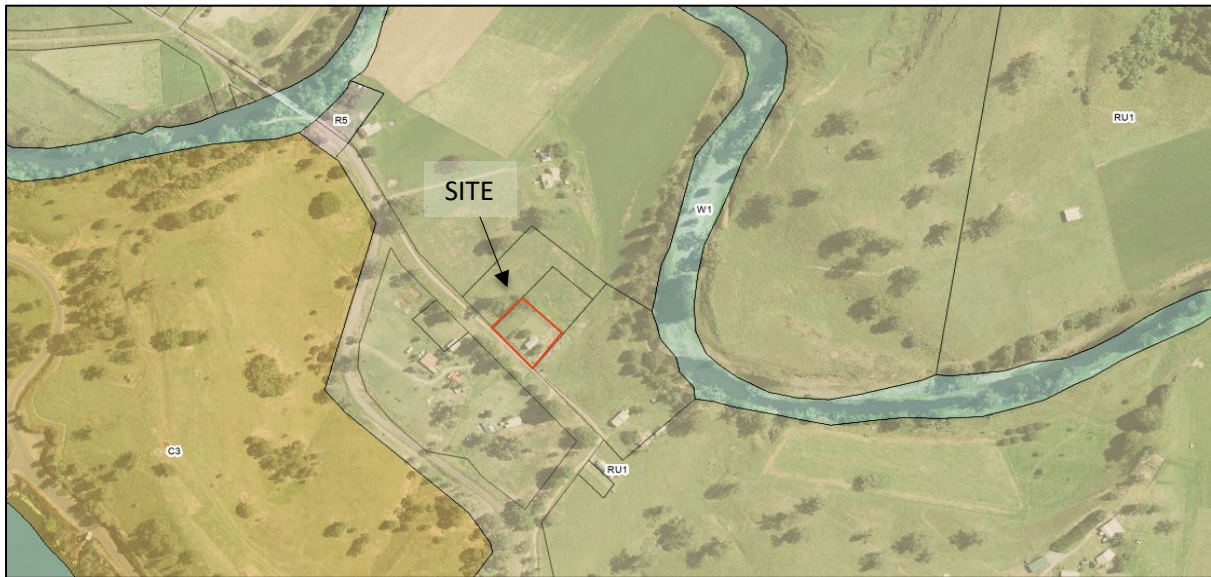


Figure 2 Land Zoning Map, Source: eSpatial Planner (2024)

The objectives of the zone are:

- To encourage sustainable primary industry production by maintaining and enhancing the natural resource base.
- To encourage diversity in primary industry enterprises and systems appropriate for the area.
- To minimise the fragmentation and alienation of resource lands.
- To minimise conflict between land uses within this zone and land uses within adjoining zones.
- To provide for recreational and tourist activities that are compatible with the agricultural, environmental and conservation value of the land.
- To promote the rural amenity and scenic landscape values of the area and prevent the silhouetting of unsympathetic development on ridgelines.

The proposed development is consistent with the objectives of the zone. The proposed development facilitates the conservation of the cemetery forming part of the heritage item associated with the site. The amenity and scenic value of the area will initially change within the locality post-demolition of the structure. Over time, the rural outlook and values will remain.

Table 2 below identifies the land use types permissible or prohibited on RU1 Primary Production zoned land.

Table 2 Land-Use Table RU1 Primary Production Zone

2 Permitted without consent
<i>Environmental protection works; Extensive agriculture; Home occupations; Horticulture; Markets; Roads; Roadside stalls</i>
3 Permitted with consent
<i>Agritourism; Airstrips; Animal boarding or training establishments; Aquaculture; Boat building and repair facilities; Boat launching ramps; Boat sheds; Camping grounds; Car parks; Caravan parks; Cellar door premises; Cemeteries; Charter and tourism boating facilities; Community facilities; Correctional centres; Crematoria; Dual occupancies; Dwelling houses; Eco-tourist facilities; Educational establishments; Environmental facilities; Extractive industries; Farm buildings; Flood mitigation works; Forestry; Freight transport facilities; Function centres; Group homes; Health services facilities; Helipads; Heliports; Highway service centres; Home-based child care; Home businesses; Home industries; Industrial training facilities; Information and education facilities; Intensive livestock agriculture; Intensive plant agriculture; Jetties; Kiosks; Landscaping material supplies; Marinas; Moorings; Open cut mining; Places of public worship; Plant nurseries; Recreation areas; Recreation facilities (outdoor); Restaurants or cafes; Rural industries; Rural supplies; Rural workers' dwellings; Signage; Timber yards; Tourist and visitor accommodation; Transport depots; Truck depots; Veterinary hospitals; Water recreation structures</i>
4 Prohibited
<i>Any development not specified in item 2 or 3</i>

The current land uses comprise a place of public worship and a cemetery, both nominated uses within the closed zone that are permissible with consent.

5.5.2 Clause 2.7 Demolition requires development consent

The proposal seeks consent to demolish the existing church and is consistent with the provisions of this clause.

5.5.3 Clause 5.10 Heritage Conservation

The site is recognised as a local heritage item under Schedule 5, Part 1 of DLEP 20214 lists the site as '195' comprising St. John's Church and Cemetery. As required under subclauses (4) and (5), a The provision of this clause have been satisfied through the Statement of Heritage significance undertaken by Placemark Architecture and Cultural Heritage to address the impacts associated with the demolition of the church. Per the NSW Heritage Guidelines, the Placemark Report (2024) considered the assessment criteria and provided the following statement of significance:

'St, John's Lostock has contributed by its existence and use to the cultural history of the local area. The church was the focal point for the local Anglican community. It was a place for prayer, weddings, baptisms and funerals. Social gatherings. It was also a place for arranging charitable and social assistance. It has historical and social significance¹.'

The matters for consideration determined that:

- The church is suitable for adaptive reuse as a dwelling, noting structural and amenity concerns alongside its location within an operational cemetery.
- The de-consecration and abandonment of the church by the diocese and parish members (i.e., not in use and lack of maintenance) confirms it does not derive the extent of significance it once did. Its importance to the community is negligible.
- The item is not of aesthetic significance or value other than its association with the cemetery. The value is in the people and their contribution. Noting the reduced population and abandonment the impact will be minimal.
- The removal of the church takes away the built evidence and the 132-year history and viewpoint associated with the site and the locality.

The statement of heritage impact within the Placemark Report (2024) is provided below:

*'The proposed works will remove a small, de-consecrated timber clad church from the cemetery site at Lostock. The building has no prospects for repair, meeting contemporary compliance, adaptive new uses, any ongoing maintenance or security. The building exhibits diminished integrity. The village and the parish that it served no longer exist. The loss of its original fabric is an inevitable outcome of social changes. Removal is therefore an acceptable outcome and impact on the heritage significance of the building.'*²

Recommendations were made to reduce the impacts the demolition will have on the continued use of the site for the cemetery and are reasonable to preserve and protect the remaining elements of the heritage item on the site.

5.5.4 Clause 6.5 Drinking Water Catchments

The proposed development site is mapped within Drinking Water Catchment Map. The provisions of this clause are satisfied with the matters for consideration considered in Table 2.

¹ Placemark Heritage, *Statement of Heritage Impact – Proposed Demolition Former St. Johns Church new de-consecrated*, 2024, page 14.

² Placemark Heritage, page 16.

Table 3 Assessment of Clause 6.5 Drinking Water Catchments

Provision	Comments
(3) In deciding whether to grant development consent for development on land to which this clause applies, the consent authority must consider the following—	
(a) whether or not the development is likely to have any adverse impact on the quality and quantity of water entering the drinking water storage, having regard to the following—	
(i) the distance between the development and any waterway that feeds into the drinking water storage,	The proposed development is located approximately 100m away from the Paterson River and 500m from the Lostock Dam. Erosion and sediment control measures will be in place during the demolition work to minimise impacts on the quality and quantity of water entering the drinking water storage.
(ii) the on-site use, storage and disposal of any chemicals on the land,	Minimal impact, the demolition work do not require the use, storage or disposal of chemicals.
(iii) the treatment, storage and disposal of wastewater and solid waste generated or used by the development,	A stockpile will be established on the site to Part of the existing St. John's Church building elements will be used to construct a new shade structure to minimise solid waste. Other demolition waste materials will be disposed of by the contractor and well-covered in a waste bin. This process is unlikely to impact the catchment area and water quality.

5.6 Proposed Environmental Planning Instruments

The proposed development is not subject to any proposed environmental planning instruments.

5.7 Dungog Development Control Plan 2004

The Dungog Development Control Plan 2004 (DDCP) supports the DLEP 2014. It provides general controls within the Local Government Area that should be considered within a development application.

Part C – 17. Heritage

A Statement of Heritage Impact was prepared to address the controls and heritage guidelines identified within this part of the DCP. Advisory Note 4: Demolition within places containing a heritage

item has been considered. The demolition of St John's Church will be documented before and during demolition by a suitably qualified heritage consultant to ensure that a record of demolished heritage items will be kept for posterity. Refer to the recommendations within the Placemark Heritage report.

Part C – 24 Site Waste Minimisation and Management

Deconstruction of the structure will be undertaken rather than an aggressive demolition to protect the surrounding gravestones and burial plots. The materials will be located within the nominated waste stockpile identified in the demolition plan to be sorted. The materials to be retained such as the windowpanes and arches, will be removed and stored offsite. Materials that can be reused or recycled will be separated for collection. All other demolition waste will be removed from the site and disposed of at the Dungog Waste Management Facility.

The potential waste products associated with the demolition activities are provided in the table below.

Table 4 Demolition Waste Types

Demolition Material	Material Volume (m³)
Weatherboard	<416 m ³
Metal	<30 m ³
Glass	<2 m ³
Timber	<100 m ³
Other	<10 m ³
Organic	<1 m ³
Total	<559 m³

Methods for Reuse, Recycling and Disposal

The waste stockpile will comprise a skip bin or wrapped fenced area to contain the waste materials. Demolition waste will be stored southeast of the church adjacent to the public road, as identified in the demolition plan. The demolition contractor or community members will conduct an assessment to determine any materials that can be reused or recycled. Materials will be separated into piles within the Waste Stockpile Location for items to be retained for heritage conservation, and for reusable and recyclable materials to be adapted.

The remaining materials will be handled, managed, transported and disposed of at the Dungog Waste Management Centre.

5.8 Developer Contributions

5.8.1 Local Development Contributions

The subject site falls within the Dungog Local Infrastructure Contributions Plan 2019 catchment. The Council will levy the development based on the estimated cost of work. The following table outlines the levy rate.

Table 5 Development Contributions Levy

Development Type	Levy rate
up to and including \$100,000	Nil
more than \$100,000 and up to and including \$200,000	0.5% of that cost
more than \$200,000	1% of that cost

Based on the estimated costs the development will not be subject to contribution fees.

6 Likely Impacts of the Development

6.1 Environmental Impacts

This section addresses all the likely impacts of the development in the locality, including impacts arising from the development, and impacts on the development under Section 4.15(1)(b) of the EP&A Act.

6.1.1 Access, Traffic Pedestrian links and public transport

The proposed development does not change the existing access, traffic or pedestrian arrangements to and from the site. Demolition waste will be removed from the site via the existing gates along the frontage of Lostock School Road.

6.1.2 Public Domain

The demolition of St. John's Church will require access across the road reserve to remove the demolition materials from the site. Any damage within the road reserve will be rectified after works have been completed.

6.1.3 Air and Microclimate

Minor impacts on air quality and microclimate are expected within the vicinity of the site during the demolition. No ongoing impacts will occur once the construction works are complete.

6.1.4 Flora and Fauna

The demolition does not require the removal of any vegetation and is likely to have minimal impacts on flora and fauna.

6.1.5 Visual Impact

The demolition of St. John's Church will remove a structure that has featured within the landscape for 132 years. The locality comprises a scenic rural character and the overall impacts are considered low. The locality is not highly trafficable, and the change is unlikely to be noticed by people. The removal of St. John's Church will immediately alter the visual character of the locality however, these impacts will reduce over time.

6.1.6 Noise and Vibrations

The demolition will generate minor noise and vibration impacts, on adjoining land occupants and properties. These impacts will need to be mitigated through the management of construction hours.

6.2 Social Impacts

The demographic and social change within the locality is reflected in the de-consecration and lack of maintenance associated with St. John's Church. The church was once a focal point within the community, crucial to its social and cultural structure. It served as a gathering point for social events and fostered community bonds. It facilitated interactions between people to strengthen social ties, cohesion and inclusivity. Changes over time, such as a decline in, and an aging population, and changes to social and cultural interactions have reduced the significance and use of this church.

The materials associated with the church have reached their lifespan, with the Parish considering options for reuse and updating materials to retain the structure. With interest from outside parties being low and the financial feasibility and ability of the Parish to complete the required works to update the structure, it was decided that the demolition of the structure was the best outcome. Consideration of the social implications of the demolition was found presently, to outweigh the former significance of the church. The continued operation and maintenance associated with the cemetery will remain. The Parish intends to construct a picnic area and include an interpretation of the church in the future when funding permits.

6.3 Economic Impacts

The Parish considered different options in determining the management of the church. The review determined that economic impacts associated with the retention of the structure were unfeasible with the most benefit to the Parish being the demolition of the structure.

7 Suitability of the Site

This section addresses the development under section 4.15(1)(c) of the Act. The site is considered suitable for the development for the following reasons:

- The demolition of the structure remains compatible and consistent with the rural amenity and scenic landscape values of the area
- The existing St. John's Church is deconsecrated and no longer in use. Its condition is becoming progressively dilapidated, and as the structure is unlikely to be utilised, demolition is the best outcome in protecting the continued use of the site as a cemetery.
- The development is sympathetic and suitable, based on attributes of the site and relative to the site's local heritage significance.

8 Submissions

This section addresses the development under section 4.15(1)(d) of the Act. It is understood that the development application will be notified. We will review, and address issues raised within any submissions made.

9 Public Interest

This section addresses the development under section 4.15(1)(e) of the Act. This development is considered within the public interest. The proposed development seeks to demolish the dilapidated heritage-listed building while preserving key architectural elements offsite. The historical and cultural significance of the site remains through the continued use of the cemetery. It also protects public safety through the controlled demolition of a dilapidated structure preventing potential vandalism and fire incidents from occurring.

10 Conclusion

This Statement has assessed the development against the requirements of Clause 4.15 of the EP&A Act and found that the demolition is consistent with the applicable policies and plans and is permissible with consent. The proposed development is recommended for approval.