

DEMOLITION REPORT

459 CHAPEL ROAD, BANKSTOWN ST PAUL'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

Issue B, November 2024



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

GBA Heritage acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on and about which this report was written, and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

AUTHORSHIP

This report has been prepared by Dov Midalia, Associate Director, and reviewed by Graham Brooks, Director, of GBA Heritage. Unless otherwise noted, all photographs and drawings in this report are by GBA Heritage.

LIMITATIONS

The site was inspected by GBA Heritage in 2016 and 2023. Recommendations have been made on the basis of documentary evidence viewed and inspection of the existing fabric. Given the time available, the comparative analysis in Section 2.5 of this report is focused on the aesthetic/technical aspects of the buildings considered.

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459 CHAPEL ROAD, BANKSTOWN			
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1.0

INTRODUCTION

1.1 REPORT OVERVIEW

This report has been prepared to accompany a development application for demolition of the existing church and other buildings on the property at 459 Chapel Road, Bankstown.

This report's primary purpose is to assess the heritage significance of the existing buildings as a preliminary step in obtaining consent for demolition. It concludes that no items on the subject site merit heritage listing and that their removal will have no adverse heritage impact.

The heritage impact of any proposed future construction on the site will be the subject of a separate report.

1.2 HERITAGE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

The subject site is not listed as an item of heritage significance in any statutory instrument, nor within any Heritage Conservation Area, nor in close proximity to any listed heritage item.

In November 2015 Bankstown City Council placed an Interim Heritage Order (IHO) on the site, and subsequently removed it.

A State Led Rezoning of the Bankstown City Centre has been proposed by the NSW Department of Planning Housing and Infrastructure, including listing of the subject site as an item of Local heritage significance.

1.3 SITE IDENTIFICATION

The subject site is located on the south-east corner of the intersection of Chapel Road and French Avenue, Bankstown. It comprises three lots, registered at NSW Land Registry Services as Lots 26-28, Section A, DP 7058.

1.4 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The early focus for the Anglican community was in present-day Yagoona, where St Matthews School was established in 1861, also serving as a church until the first church was built on the subject site (and becoming Bankstown Public School in 1968).¹



Figure 1
Aerial view of vicinity with subject site outlined in red. North is to the top



Figure 2
Aerial view showing (1) St Paul's Anglican Church, (2) the Rectory and (3) the Hall. Other buildings are Church offices, a WC block and a garage. North is to the top.

The selection of the subject site for a new church was influenced by the extension of the railway to Bankstown in 1909, and the first Anglican Church on the subject site was constructed c.1914-1920; this remains in place as part of the timber Community Hall on the east side of the site.

In 1938 a new brick Church complex was designed by the architect Norman Welland McPherson, an established church designer. McPherson's original concept drawing shows an elegant compound at whose centre stands a simple brick Romanesque Church with a modest gabled roof behind a low parapet, elegant tall pointed-arch (Gothic) windows and a high solid to void ratio. A modest bell tower, no taller than the Church itself, stands back from the front facade. To either side and set well back are the hall and rectory, connected to the Church by arched walls and to each other by a wing enclosing a rear courtyard.

¹ This historical overview is largely drawn from Sue Rosen Associates, 2016



Figure 3
Aerial view from north-east with subject site outlined in yellow.

A modest version of the Church itself was completed in 1939, comprising one bay of the nave, a simplified front (western) facade and no bell tower. The buildings to either side were never built, though protruding bricks on the Church's north and south sides, intended to be keyed into the connecting arches, remain in place.

An addition to the western side of the Church was commenced in 1958 and completed in 1961, comprising two further bays of the nave, a mezzanine gallery over an entrance lobby and a taller bell tower than originally envisaged. While some doubt has been expressed as to the identity of the designer,² a 1961 plaque inside the new section lists the architects as NW McPherson and DA Harrison - a partnership begun in 1954. The extent to which McPherson himself was involved in the design is unknown.

The long association of St Paul's with the local Anglican community since its initial construction c.1914-1920 is evidenced in historical documentation as well as various plaques and signs in the Church and on its grounds, signifying community involvement.

1.5 THE ARCHITECTS

Norman Welland McPherson began practising architecture c.1923, and soon found a niche in church design. While, by 1930, he supported the use of less costly styles than the Gothic, with its pointed arches and spires,³ most of his work reflected traditional

Gothic or Romanesque styles: he thought church design should employ 'stable, lasting forms'⁴ and was wary of 'novelty for novelty's sake'.⁵

In 1954 he began practising in partnership with David Harrison, and from the early 1960s also with Kenneth Hassall. Overall he or his firm designed in the vicinity of 15 to 20 churches in the Sydney and regional NSW areas, largely in McPherson's early-preferred traditional styles. After c.1954, McPherson's practice began producing more Modernist designs in the Post-War Ecclesiastical style, as exemplified by the churches at Wollongong, Eugowra and Bathurst.

It is noted that neither McPherson, Harrison nor Hassall are included in the *Encyclopedia of Australian Architects*. No buildings designed by McPherson's office are known to have won awards. Three church buildings associated with McPherson are listed as heritage items in the NSW State Heritage Inventory: The Mosman Uniting Church designed by McPherson c.1936; the tower for the Uniting Church in Narooma, designed by McPherson c.1934; and the All Saints Cathedral in Bathurst, designed by McPherson Harrison Hassall c.1970.

Generally, McPherson may be said to have been neither an innovator nor a leader in the field, but a 'journeyman' architect specialising in churches.

⁴ Quoted in 'Sydney Church Building Revival', *SMH*, 3.6.53, p.13

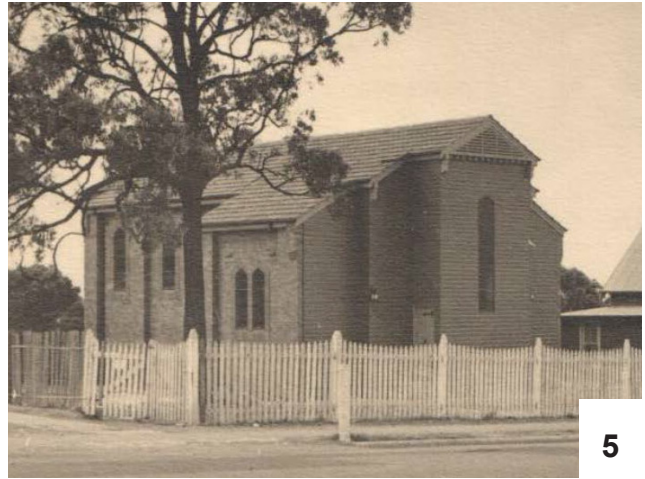
⁵ *Ibid*

² Sue Rosen Associates, p.8

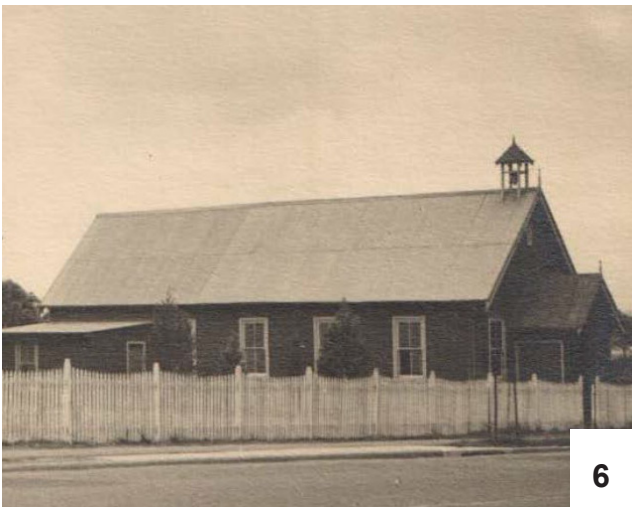
³ NW McPherson, 'The Small Church', *SMH*, 20.9.1930, NLA item 15595719



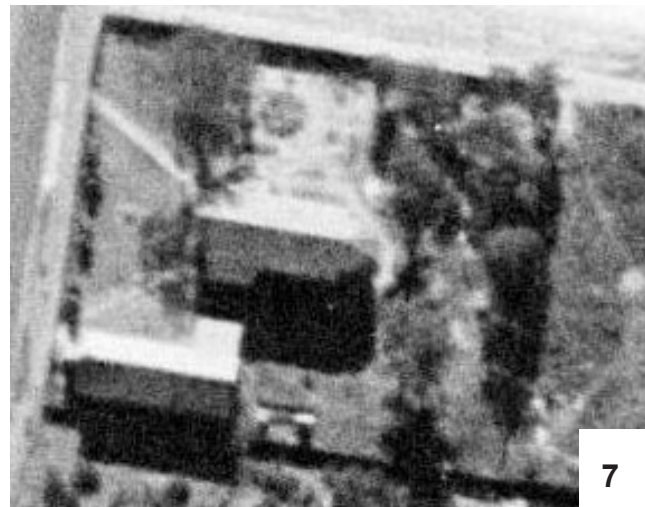
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- 4 McPherson's 1938 concept drawing showing Church at centre, Hall at right and Rectory at left, with arched linking walls.
- 5 The 1939 Church as built. Note the highly simplified front facade.
- 6 The c1914-20 Church as it was c. late1930s.
- 7 Aerial view of site, 1943
- 8 Aerial view of site, 1961
- 9 Current aerial view of site, with 1939 Church footprint outlined in yellow

1.6 PHYSICAL ANALYSIS

1.6.1 The subject site

The subject site is a prominent site on the corner of Chapel Road and French Avenue. While development west of Chapel Road is largely commercial in character and that north of French Avenue largely low-scale traditional residential, the area south-east of the intersection is largely occupied by contemporary high-rise (10-12 storey) apartment buildings.

The site is a flat approximately square property occupied by several buildings, paved areas and some vegetation including lawn and trees, with large street trees along the Chapel Road footpath, partly obscuring views to the Church.

1.6.2 St Paul's Anglican Church

The main building on the site is the Church. This building comprises two distinct sections: the remnant 1939 Church and the 1961 addition.

The 1939 Church remnant

The remnant original Church, designed in McPherson's pre-partnership period, forms the rear section of the building, and is less visible from the public realm, especially its narrower eastern section which is virtually hidden from public view. In form and style, this section was relatively consistent with the design principles of McPherson's concept, with pointed-arch (Gothic) windows and a high solid to void ratio, resulting in a simplified Romanesque mass that eschews complexity or Modernist 'streamlining' in vertical or horizontal dimensions. The Church as built, however, replaced McPherson's originally conceived primary, eastern facade with something much plainer, and this was later demolished. The rectory and hall were never built, though on either side of the Church, bricks protrude laterally from the walls to allow for future keying in of the arched links to them.

Internally, this section features face brick walls in a Flemish bond pattern, with an expressed course at the springing point of the window arches. The timber rafters and timber-lined soffits of the high roof are exposed, augmented at intervals by heavy timber trusses with decorative support brackets and turned centre chords, reflecting a degree of care invested in the modest building. The five-sided apse at the eastern end features an almost full-height pointed arch defined by three soldier courses, with a timber-lined semi-dome above. The original church organ was removed c.1958 and has been replaced with an electronic organ located on the ground floor.

Especially considering the demolition of the front facade, the 1939 Church is considered to have a low degree of integrity.

The 1961 Addition

The addition, designed by McPherson Harrison, dominates the view from the public realm and obstructs public views to the 1939 Church. The brickwork closely matches the original section of the building, . The Chapel Road facade is a clear departure from the original building's style, replacing the Romanesque facade with a modernist Post-War Ecclesiastical style featuring full-height vertical piers, modern stained glass windows, an overhanging roof and a tower approximately twice the height of the Church.

Internally, the addition features lighter face brick in plain stretcher bond, clearly distinguishable from and with a clear joint to the older section. While the exposed roof continues the timber rafters and lining of the original section, the timber trusses are replaced by contemporary steel portal framing. Green acoustic panels line the upper section of the nave and a set of decorative *faux* organ pipes has been installed on the southern wall, concealing the speaker for the electric organ. The western end of the Church features an entrance lobby with contemporary double glass doors facing Chapel Road, and above it a loft/gallery with a timber and glass balustrade, accessed via contemporary steel stairs.

1.6.3 The Community Hall

The c1914-1920 timber Church building remains, in modified form, with a brick western facade in the style of the 1961 addition to the Church, and later fibre-cement-clad extensions to the east and north.

Internally the Hall is a large open space with timber floors and fibre-cement lining and ceilings.

1.6.4 Other buildings

Other site buildings include the modest brick and tile rectory, a small timber and tile office/Vestry and a small brick and tile garage, none of which are in place by 1943.

*

Photographs on the following pages indicate the nature and context of the subject site.



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- 10 View east from Chapel Road with subject site at centre right
- 11 View north along Chapel Road with Church indicated by arrow
- 12 View south along Chapel Road with Church indicated by arrow
- 13 Front facade of Church
- 14 Northern facade of Church with entrance porch



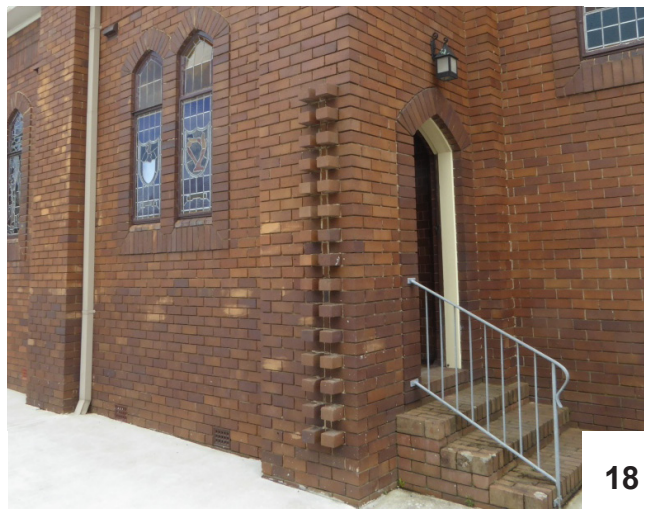
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15 View to Community Hall from Chapel Road

17 Southern facade of Church

19 View east in 1939 Church remnant, showing timber rafters

16 View of Church from south-east

18 Protruding key bricks, southern facade

20 View west in Church, showing gallery, steel rafters and green acoustic panels



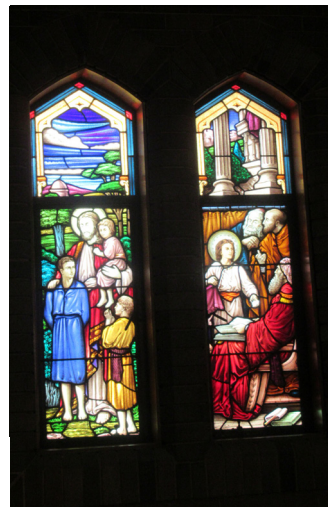
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21 Faux organ pipes, south wall of Church

23 Steel portals in 1961 addition

25 West section of Community hall

22 Original timber trusses in 1939 Church remnant

24 Stained glass windows in 1939 remnant (left) and 1961 addition

26 East section of Community Hall



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28



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- 27 Westward view inside Community Hall
- 28 West facade of Rectory
- 29 West facade of Church office/Vestry
- 30 WC block
- 31 Garage and driveway

2.0

HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

2.1 CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING SIGNIFICANCE

Since 2001, assessments of heritage significance have generally been made against the criteria in the document published in that year by the NSW Heritage Office (now Heritage NSW), *Assessing Heritage Significance*. The seven standard criteria for significance were (emphasis added):

A Historic significance

*An item is **important** in the course, or pattern, of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area)*

B Historical association

*An item has **strong or special** association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of **importance** in NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area)*

C Aesthetic/creative/technical achievement

*An item is **important** in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a **high degree** of creative or technical achievement in NSW (or the local area)*

D Social, cultural and spiritual

*An item has **strong or special** association with a particular community or cultural group in NSW (or the local area) for social, cultural or spiritual reasons*

E Research potential

An item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area)

F Rare

*An item possesses **uncommon, rare or endangered** aspects of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area)*

G Representative

*An item is **important** in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSW's: cultural or natural places; or cultural or natural environments. (or a class of the local area's: cultural or natural places; or cultural or natural environments.)*

The 2001 document also included Guidelines for Inclusion or Exclusion in the category of 'significant'

items. While it was common practice, when assessing a site's significance, to carry out a Comparative Analysis with similar items, this was not a requirement of the 2001 guidelines.

In 2023 the document was updated and republished under the same title by the Department of Environment and Heritage (now Planning, Housing and Infrastructure). The seven standard criteria for significance were retained (with slightly altered titles). However the 2001 Guidelines for Inclusion or Exclusion were deleted, and undertaking a Comparative Analysis became a requirement. Heritage practitioners were advised by the Heritage Council of NSW to commence using the updated document by October 2023.

2.2 PAST ASSESSMENTS OF ST PAUL'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

The heritage significance of St Paul's Anglican Church has been assessed several times between 2015 and 2024 as shown in Table 1, below.

The 2021 assessment by Extent against the 2001 guidelines does not appear to have included either an assessment against the Guidelines for Inclusion or Exclusion, or a Comparative Analysis.

Extent's assessment was peer reviewed and supported by GML Heritage. That review was then peer reviewed by Weir Phillips Heritage and, based on their independent assessment, not supported. The various assessments against each criterion are shown in Table 2.

TABLE 1 : HERITAGE ASSESSMENTS AND PEER REVIEWS, 2015-2024

Year	Document	Authors	Conclusion
2015	State Heritage Inventory form	Sue Rosen	Meets 2001 criteria
2016	Supplementary Heritage Report	Associates	
	Objection to IHO	GBA Heritage	Does not meet 2001 criteria
	Supplement to Objection to IHO		
2021	Heritage Report	Extent Heritage	Site excluded from proposed listings
2023	Updated objection to listing	GBA Heritage	Does not meet 2001 criteria
2024	Heritage Report *	Extent Heritage	Meets 2001 criteria
	Bankstown State-Led Rezoning Transport Oriented Development Precinct - Heritage Significance Assessment Report - <i>peer review of Extent assessment</i>	GML Heritage	Generally concurs with Extent: meets 2001 criteria
	Review of Heritage Assessment - St Pauls Anglican Church - <i>peer review of GML report and independent assessment</i>	Weir Phillips Heritage	Does not meet 2001 criteria

* Not made public; contents referenced herein are based on subsequent GML report.

TABLE 2 : ASSESSMENTS BY CRITERION 2015-2024

Criterion	Criterion met				
	Sue Rosen Associates	GBA 2016, 2023	Extent	GML Peer review of Extent	Weir Phillips Peer review of GML
A Historical	Yes	No	Yes	Concur	No
B Associative					
C Aesthetic					
D Social				Insufficient evidence	
E Research			No	Concur	
F Rare					
G Representative			Yes		

2.3 ASSESSMENT AGAINST ESTABLISHED CRITERIA

This section assesses St Paul's Anglican Church against the criteria established in both the 2001 and 2023 guidelines.

2.3.1 Criterion A : Historic significance

*An item is **important** in the course, or pattern, of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area)*

The establishment of any place of worship can be said to reflect the historical evolution of its locality. This is true for every building, everywhere, institutional or not, and does not distinguish the subject site as 'important'.

As the 2023 guideline document asks (emphasis added):

*Is the association of the place with the historically important event, phase, period, process or movement incidental (minor, secondary)? For example, not every farmhouse is of historical **importance** in demonstrating the spread of European settlement or pastoral land use across NSW or the local area.⁶*

While the history of the Anglican Church in Bankstown extends as far back as the 1860s, the subject site was acquired by the Church only c.1914, primarily due to its proximity to the recently extended railway line, and the original part of the current Church was completed in 1939 and, when expansion became necessary, partly demolished. (The fact of this extension has been argued to be historically significant as an indication of Bankstown's development⁷ - in which case every new building or extension has heritage significance.)

⁶ Assessing Heritage Significance, 2023, p.25

⁷ Extent/GML

Thus, it is the Church as a religious institution that was and is primarily significant in this case, wherever its physical location; and it is the current site that has significance of a secondary kind, rather than any building on it. The building's association with the Anglican Church presence in Bankstown is considered to be at best secondary, rather than 'important'.

The subject building does not meet this criterion.

2.3.2 Criterion B : Historical association

*An item has **strong or special** association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of **importance** in NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area)*

The Church is most obviously associated with its architects, one of whom was Norman McPherson, working in partnership with David Harrison after 1954. Though McPherson was an established designer of ecclesiastical buildings, neither he nor Harrison is listed in the *Australian Encyclopedia of Architects*.

While McPherson designed a church for this site, the 1939 Church as built diverged notably from his design and has been partially demolished. The extent of his involvement in the design of the 1961 addition is unknown. His late partnership with Harrison appears to have signified a distinct change in the style of churches associated with him, from a traditional, Gothic-derived style to a clearly Modernist one, possibly reflecting the younger Harrison's influence. McPherson's unclear association with either part of St Paul's as it stands is thus not considered to be 'strong or special'.

It is also noted that while McPherson, with or without Harrison, designed at least 14 churches, just four of which are listed as heritage items. Simple association with even an established architect is insufficient to establish a building's significance.

It has also been argued that the fact of certain established local families having donated to the Church at various times also confers associational significance upon it.⁸ Such donations are common to every place of worship, and do not in themselves create a 'strong or special' association, or confer sufficient significance to justify heritage listing - otherwise listing-by-donation would no doubt be widely practised.

The subject building does not meet this criterion.

8 Rosen/Extent/GML

2.3.3 Criterion C : Aesthetic/creative/technical achievement

*An item is **important** in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a **high degree** of creative or technical achievement in NSW (or the local area)*

As noted, only a simplified version of McPherson's Romanesque design was built, and its most significant element, the main street facade, has been demolished, leaving a remnant structure that is not in any way 'important' in demonstrating the characteristics of the Romanesque style.

The 1961 addition is in the Post-War Ecclesiastical Style, which sought to embrace modernism while alluding to traditional church design, for example through high quality face brickwork and tall bell-towers of either Gothic or Romanesque influence. As an addition, this section of St Paul's is at best part of such a church and does not offer fine examples of the style's characteristics: the internal brickwork is in simple stretcher bond and the organ pipes are decorative only: *faux* 'heritage' elements detract from rather than contribute to heritage significance.

Further, the combination of and transition between the two styles in one building is abrupt rather than cohesive or sympathetic, with heavy timber trusses giving way to steel beams, Flemish-bond brickwork giving way to stretcher bond, changes in brick colour and the installation of unsympathetic acoustic panels and *faux* organ pipes. The argument that this combination of styles *adds* significance to the building⁹ is undermined not only by the resulting absence of a good example of either style but also by a degree of awkwardness that does not demonstrate a 'high degree of creative achievement'. Neither section of the building demonstrates a degree of technical achievement that was unusual for the time.

2.3.4 Criterion D : Social, cultural and spiritual

*An item has **strong or special** association with a particular community or cultural group in NSW (or the local area) for social, cultural or spiritual reasons*

The Church and its grounds feature a range of plaques and signs denoting the congregation's many contributions and general involvement over the years. However, the same degree of involvement can be found in almost any place of worship with any congregation, and does not place the present Church building in a 'special' category.

Nor can the congregation's association with the current building be said to be 'strong'. The original

9 Sue Rosen Associates, Feb 2016

Anglican 'church' in the area was a school in Yaguna; subsequently the c.1914 building on the subject site (selected for proximity to the railway); from 1939 the original section of the current building; and finally the combined 1939/1961 building. As the practical needs of the congregation for space and convenience changed, so too did the location and nature of the Church building, and it is noted that the Sydney Anglicans' proposal to replace the current building with one better suited to future needs for space and facilities has significant congregational support.

There is indeed a strong and special association between this community group and their place of worship - in whatever appropriate form that may be.

The subject building does not meet this criterion.

2.3.5 Criterion E : Research potential

An item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area)

There is no indication that either section of the building utilised anything but the standard available construction methods of their day. Archaeological and Aboriginal assessment is outside the scope of this report, and previous assessments claim no such significance.

The subject building does not meet this criterion.

2.3.6 Criterion F : Rare

An item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area)

Inter-War Romanesque and Post-War Ecclesiastical styles of church are well represented throughout Sydney, and there are upwards of a dozen other examples of McPherson's ecclesiastical work.

The subject building does not meet this criterion.

2.3.7 Criterion G : Representative

An item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSW's: cultural or natural places; or cultural or natural environments. (or a class of the local area's: cultural or natural places; or cultural or natural environments.)

While certain elements of both the Romanesque and Post-War Ecclesiastical architectural styles can be identified in the building, neither section is a complete

or 'important' example of either style and the overall hybrid building cannot be said to be an 'important' example of any class of place.

The subject building does not meet this criterion.

2.3.8 Summary

Based on the above established criteria, the subject building does not meet the threshold of significance required for heritage listing.

2.4 IMPACTS ON SIGNIFICANCE

A place or object assessed as significant according to the standard criteria may lose significance due to other factors. The 2023 guidelines state that when assessing significance, one should

Consider the integrity and condition of the place or object. Significance can be affected by:

- the **integrity**, nature and/or **condition** of a place or object, the **authenticity** of a place or object...
- the extent to which alterations, demolition of fabric and additions have impacted on **readability** of a place or object, including level of **intrusiveness** and **reversibility** of such alterations...¹⁰

These factors are considered below.

2.4.1 Integrity

Integrity is the degree of intactness of a place or building. The integrity of the 1929 Church was significantly reduced when its primary facade was removed; the current structure is a remnant only.

The 1961 section of the building can be said to be an intact addition.

2.4.2 Condition

The overall condition of the building appears to be good.

2.4.3 Authenticity

Both sections of the building appear to be authentic, that is, to genuinely reflect their original form, but the building as a whole is neither an authentic Romanesque Church or an authentically Post-War Ecclesiastical one. Nor, given the questions about NW McPherson's involvement in designing the 1961 additions, is it possible to conclude that this is an authentic McPherson church. The entirely inauthentic *faux* organ pipes introduced c.1961 are considered to have a detrimental impact on the heritage significance of the building.

¹⁰ NSW Dept of Environment & Heritage, 2023, p.18

2.4.4 Readability

Readability (or legibility) is the ability to visually identify the stages of a place's evolution. In the subject building these stages are blurred. The current front facade and much of the western interior are identifiable as Post-War, and the remnant original section as Inter-War, but the nature of the original Church is unreadable due to the demolition of its primary facade. Internally and externally, the brick walls of the 1961 addition appear to seek to mimic the original brickwork, and the *faux* organ pipes further hinder readability.

2.4.5 Intrusiveness

The demolition of the 1939 Church's primary facade, its replacement with a facade of a completely different style, the abrupt insertion of steel structural, *faux* 'heritage' elements, starkly different window styles and the obstruction of public views to the remnant Church by the new addition could all be regarded as intrusive impacts on the significance of the original building.

2.4.6 Reversibility

The changes made to the 1939 Church are not considered reversible in the accepted heritage practice sense of the word. Were the 1961 additions removed, the 1939 Church would remain in a highly damaged condition with greatly reduced heritage significance.

2.4.7 Summary

Based on five of the above six parameters, the significance of the Church has been detrimentally impacted to a significant extent.

2.5 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

In this section, the significance of St Paul's Anglican Church is compared to three categories of church: those in the Inter-War Romanesque and Post-War Ecclesiastical styles, and those associated with NW McPherson. Heritage buildings with later additions are also considered.

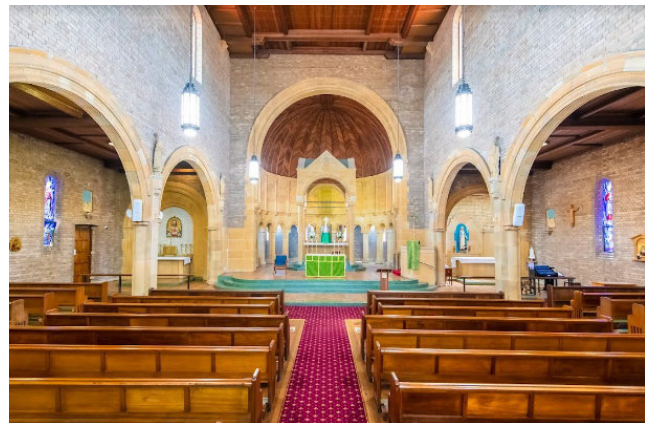
2.5.1 Inter-War Romanesque Churches

Descriptive text in this section is taken from a comparative analysis of a different McPherson church, by Urbis Heritage.¹¹ All examples are listed heritage items.

- **St Anne's Church**
1934-1964
47 Mitchell Street, North Bondi
Waverley LEP 2012, item I375
State Heritage Register #01706

The church is a fine and representative example of the interwar Romanesque style. The main body of the church was constructed in 1934, but the sanctuary and apses were not completed until 1964.

¹¹ Urbis Heritage, *Hope Uniting Church, Maroubra; Heritage Assessment*, April 2018



Figures 32-33
St Anne's Catholic Church

The façade is of textured red brick with sandstone plinth, entry portico, door and window surrounds and parapet copings. The roof is of red tiles over the nave and aisles, and copper over the northern apses. The building won the Sulman Award for architecture in 1935 and offers a historical insight to the interwar aesthetics of Sydney in the 1930s.

It is noted that the 1934 and 1964 sections of the church are in the same style.

- **Manly Village Uniting Church**
1924-1925
4 West Promenade, Manly
Manly LEP 2013, item I253

A substantial building in dark brickwork, in a very contemporary style (for the period, rather than referencing the medieval). It is a prominent part of a unified group of 1920s and 1930s buildings (3-8 West Promenade), the church is a significant landmark building forming a significant backdrop to Gilbert Park. The complex group is an integrated whole, built at the one time

A dark brick Inter-War Romanesque style church with 3 entry doors with arched leadlight fanlights, a 4 storey spire with arched leadlight windows and arched vents, a copper dome and copper finial. Side windows are also arched and either stained glass or leadlight.



Figures 34-35
Manly Village Uniting Church



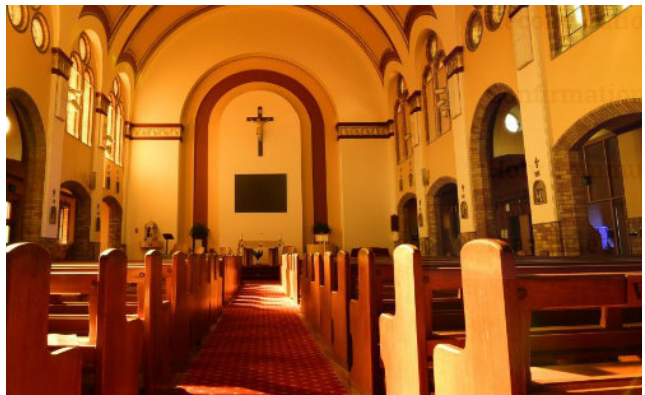
- **Holy Family Church**
1940
214 Maroubra Road, Maroubra
Randwick LEP 2012, item I223

The façade is of red face brick with sandstone and white brick entrance. The church features a large wheel window above the entrance way. The brick church is in a stripped Romanesque style, but with a quite traditional sandstone Lombard porch. Glancey was the pre-eminent architect of the Catholic Romanesque style in New South Wales.



- **St Patrick's Church**
1929-1930
Wellington Street Bondi
Waverley LEP 2012, item I17

All brick construction, with characteristic machicolations and gabled form. Chancel on corner. Slate roof. Good decorative brickwork with stone relief to feature, stained glass window to main façade and round arched openings. The church is significant as an intact example of an all brick church, typical of its period. It features some fine decorative work. Special historical interest to local Catholic community as the second St Patrick's Church, and part of the important church-school grouping on Wellington Street.



Figures 36-37
Holy Family Church



Figures 38-39
St Patrick's Church





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- 40-41 Catholic Church of the Holy Name, Stepney
 42-43 Holy Cross Catholic Church, Millswood
 44-45 St John Vianney's Church, Burnside

Conclusion

Compared to many heritage-listed Inter-War Romanesque churches, even in its original form, either as planned or as built, St Paul's Church at Bankstown was a very modest example of the style and, as a remnant only, cannot be said to have had or to retain sufficient significance to merit heritage listing.

2.5.2 Post-War Ecclesiastical Churches

No churches in the Post-War Ecclesiastical (or Post-War International) style appear to be listed in the NSW Heritage Inventory. An online search indicates that several churches of such styles have been heritage-listed by Heritage South Australia. These include the following:

- **Catholic Church of the Holy Name**
80 Payneham Road, Stepney, SA
Built 1958-59
- **Holy Cross Catholic Church**
159-165 Goodwood Road, Millswood, SA
Built 1969
- **St John Vianney's Catholic Church**
544 Glynburn Road, Burnside, SA
Built 1962-1963

As can be seen, these listed churches are not only whole but include no *faux* elements, and represent the design principles of their period and style in a striking, consistent and clearly readable manner.

Conclusion

As can be seen, the 1961 addition to St Paul's at Bankstown lacks the clarity of design principle, the aesthetic consistency or unity, or the readability of several listed churches of the period and style.

2.5.3 McPherson Churches

As has been noted, three church buildings associated with NW McPherson are listed as heritage items in the NSW State Heritage Inventory:

- **Mosman Uniting Church**
Designed by McPherson c.1936
38A Belmont Road, Mosman
Mosman LEP 2012, item I26
- **Uniting Church**
Tower designed by McPherson c.1934
124 Wagonga Street, Narooma
Eurobadalla LEP 2012, item I196
- **All Saints Cathedral**
Designed by McPherson Harrison Hassall c.1970
Bathurst Town Square
Bathurst Regional LEP 2014, part of Bathurst Town Square, item I7

McPherson or his office also designed over a dozen other churches, including:

- **Chatswood Congregational Church**
1933
45 Anderson St, Chatswood
- **Mayfield Uniting Church**
1937
29 Highfield St, Mayfield
- **St Matthew's Anglican Church**
Early 1960s
9 Bowler St, Eugowra
- **St Mark's Anglican Church**
1963
429 Crown St, West Wollongong

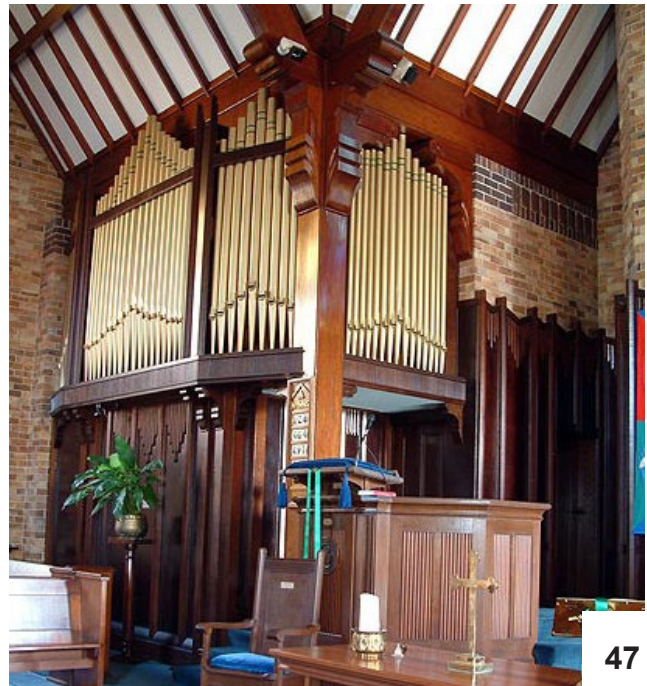
Compared to McPherson's other early Romanesque churches, the 1939 Church at Bankstown was a very modest example of the style both as planned and as built, and such significance as it may have had has been eroded significantly by its lack of integrity, the visual obstructiveness of the 1961 addition and the unreadability of the building from the public realm.

The distinct change of styles between the 1939 remnant Church and the 1961 addition is echoed in the differences between pre-1954 and post-1954 designs by McPherson's office, likely reflecting at least in part the influence of McPherson's younger partners from that date and opening to question the degree to which McPherson took part in the design process.

Further, compared to the Eugowra and West Wollongong churches, designed at around the same time as the 1961 addition to St Paul's in Bankstown, the Bankstown addition offers a far less confident expression of modernist principles, and cannot be said to have the same aesthetic significance as these churches - which themselves are not heritage listed.



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46-47 Mosman Uniting Church

48 Uniting Church, Narooma

It is noted that such significance as St Mark's in West Wollongong once had has been detrimentally impacted by the construction, in front of it, of an obstructive, unsympathetic addition - just as the 1961 addition to St Paul's impacted the 1939 Church.



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49-50 All Saints Cathedral, Bathurst

52 Mayfield Uniting Church

51 Chatswood Congregational Church

53-54 St Matthew's Anglican Church, Eugowra

Conclusion

Neither the Inter-War Romanesque nor Post-War Ecclesiastical section of St Paul's Anglican Church is a fine example of NW McPherson's work in either style. Compared to several other more confident, complete and principled of his office's church designs, St Paul's

Anglican Church was always a very modest example, which does not demonstrate important characteristics of the styles employed and do not merit heritage listing.



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55 St Mark's Anglican Church, West Wollongong, as it once was



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56 St Mark's, recent image showing later addition abutting front facade of original building

57 Port Authority Building, Antwerp

58 Elbphilharmonie, Hamburg

59 Substation 164, Sydney

2.5.4 Contemporary additions

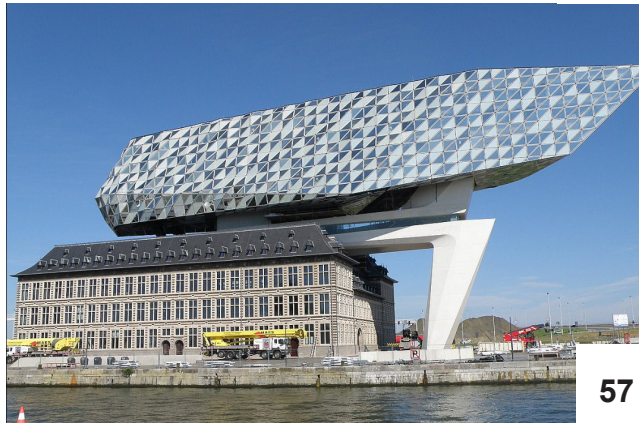
It is not uncommon, today, to find additions to listed buildings being made in very contemporary styles, and it may be that a building could have 'an added level of distinction' as a result.¹²

This enhancement of significance would only apply, however, where the identity of the older part is respected and where the integrity, character and thus the significance of both parts remain readable and appreciable. Examples of successful combinations are shown in Figures 57-59.

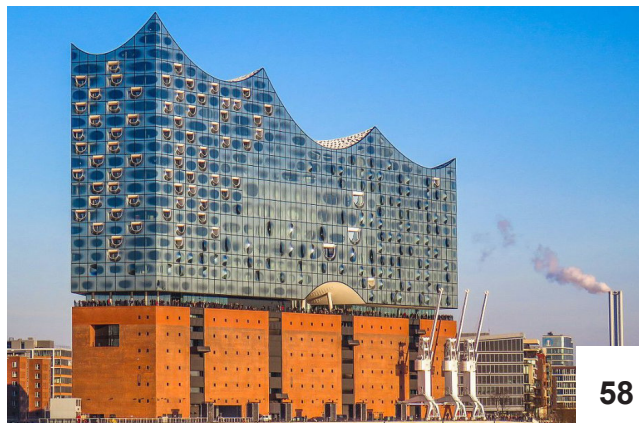
The combination evident in St Paul's is not of the same order: the nature, character and significance of the 1939 Church has not been respected and no longer remains legible, while the combination of the two sections is awkward, resulting not in a celebration, exemplification or transcendence of either style, but in a blurred amalgamation.

Conclusion

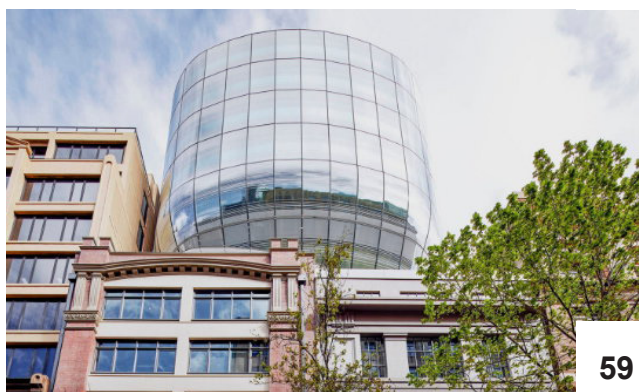
Compared to other examples of heritage buildings with contemporary additions, St Paul's does not merit heritage listing.



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¹² Sue Rosen and Associates, February 2016

2.5.5 Conclusion of comparative analysis

It is evident on the basis of the above comparisons that neither the 1939 nor the 1961 sections of St Paul's Anglican Church have the same degree of architectural, aesthetic or technical quality as the heritage-listed examples of their styles that have been considered herein. Rather, St Paul's was always a very modest local church, and such significance as it may have had has been adversely impacted by the demolition of its important primary facade and an unsympathetic later addition in a different style, which in itself would not, as the comparison in Section 2.5.2 shows, merit heritage listing.

Nor does the present Church comprise a fine example of McPherson's office's work, whether produced by McPherson himself or in some degree of coordination with his post-1954 partners. Neither does the combination of old and new, as handled at St Paul's, result in an important demonstration of aesthetic or technical skill.

Overall, this comparative analysis indicates that St Paul's does not merit heritage listing.

2.6 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Based on the above assessment and analysis, St Paul's Anglican Church is not considered to be sufficiently significant to merit heritage listing.

Historically, it is not the church building that is 'important' or significant, but the Bankstown presence of the Anglican Church as an organisation, and secondarily, as of c.1914-1920, the site on which the current Church is located.

In terms of historic associations, the church is associated primarily with the office of NW McPherson. While McPherson and subsequently his office designed a number of churches, McPherson himself is considered to have been a 'journeyman' architect rather than an 'important', innovative or influential one, and the degree of his involvement with the 1961 addition is not sufficiently apparent to be considered 'strong or special'.

As noted, and as shown in Section 2.5 in particular, the Church is not 'important' in demonstrating the characteristics of either of its architectural styles, and the combination of the two does not, in this case, result in aesthetic, creative or technical importance.

As shown, the social, cultural and spiritual relationship between the congregation and St Paul's is not unusually 'strong or special', as every place of worship has

such a connection. Further, the congregation's strong connection is to the Anglican Church primarily, and to this location secondarily: this is the second church on the site and there is considerable congregational support for the current church to be replaced so as to better serve its needs.

Neither section of the building has been constructed using unusual techniques and the site is not known to have archaeological or Aboriginal significance. Neither Inter-War Romanesque nor Post-War Ecclesiastical are especially rare in Sydney or NSW, and the example of these style at ST Paul's are at best partial and modest.

While the two sections of St Paul's have features associated with their styles, neither section is 'important' in demonstrating these characteristics, especially in view of the other examples available.

Overall, St Paul's Anglican Church does not merit heritage listing.

The c.1914-1920 former church located on the site, now the Community Hall, has been extensively altered and added to, adversely impacting its significance to the extent that it, too, would not merit listing as an item of heritage significance.

Other buildings on the site are relatively recent minor functional buildings (offices, WCs and a garage) that are not considered to have heritage significance.

2.7 HERITAGE IMPACT OF DEMOLITION

This section briefly assesses the heritage impact of the demolition of the site buildings. The heritage impact of any proposed future construction on the site will be the subject of a separate report.

2.7.1 DPE Criteria of assessment

The Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) publication *Guidelines for preparing a Statement of Heritage Impact* (2023) recommends criteria for assessing heritage impact, in the form of 'questions to be answered'. As the subject site is not within a Heritage Conservation Area and there are no listed heritage items in the vicinity, only the following criterion is relevant:

Demolition of a Building or Structure

- *If demolition is proposed, why is it necessary?*
- *Have options for retention and adaptive re-use been explored? If yes, set out why these options have been discarded?*

- *Has technical advice for demolition been obtained?*
- *Identify and include advice about how significant elements, if removed by the proposal, will be salvaged and reused.*

As has been noted, the subject site is not a listed heritage item and, as shown in Section 2.0 of this report, does not have sufficient significance to merit heritage listing. Such significance as the *site itself* has, as opposed to that of the buildings on the site, resides in signifiers of congregational involvement such as various signs, plaques, stained glass windows, etc, which can be retained and appropriately reused in any new development.

Accordingly, the demolition of the site buildings including St Paul's Anglican Church would have no adverse heritage impact on the subject site or on any other heritage items or on any Heritage Conservation Area.

2.7.2 Heritage objectives of the Canterbury-Bankstown LEP 2023

As the demolition of the existing site buildings would have no adverse heritage impact, the proposal meets the heritage objectives of the *Canterbury-Bankstown LEP 2023*, which are:

5.10 Heritage conservation

(1) Objectives

The objectives of this clause are as follows—

- to conserve the environmental heritage of Canterbury-Bankstown,*
- to conserve the heritage significance of heritage items and heritage conservation areas, including associated fabric, settings and views...*

2.7.3 Heritage objectives of the Canterbury-Bankstown DCP 2023

As no heritage item is proposed to be demolished, the proposal is consistent with the relevant heritage objective of the *Canterbury-Bankstown DCP 2023*, which is:

Section 17 Demolition

Objectives

O1 To retain buildings that are of heritage significance including elements on site that contribute to that significance.

2.7.4 Conclusion

The proposed demolition will have no adverse heritage impact.

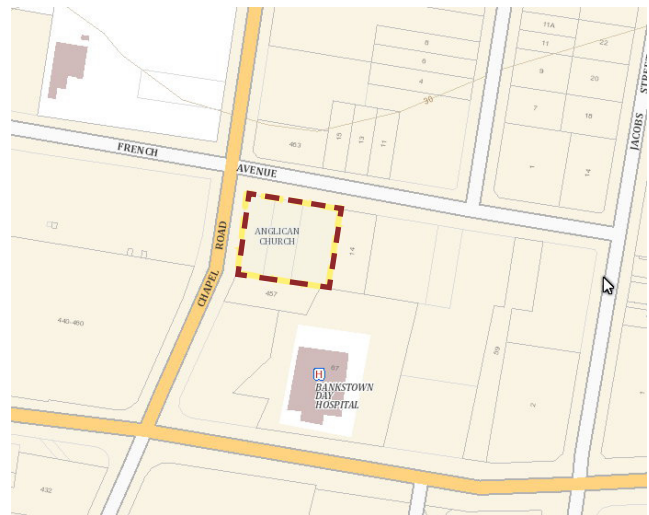


Figure 62

Heritage map showing subject site outlined in dashed line. No heritage items or Conservation Areas are in the vicinity. North is to the top.

3.0

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 CONCLUSION

- The subject site is not listed as an item of heritage significance in any statutory instrument.
- The site is not within any Heritage Conservation Area.
- The site is not in the vicinity of any listed heritage items.
- The two main buildings on the subject site, St Paul's Anglican Church and the former Church, now the Community Hall, have been found not to have sufficient significance to merit heritage listing.
- The other structures on the site have no heritage significance.
- Accordingly demolition of all structures on the site would have no adverse heritage impact on the subject site or on any other heritage item or conservation area.
- Accordingly the proposal is consistent with the relevant heritage objectives of the *Canterbury-Bankstown LEP 2023* and *Canterbury-Bankstown DCP 2023*.

3.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- An Archival Photographic Recording be made of the existing site and its buildings prior to commencement of any works.
- A Heritage Interpretation Plan be required to be commissioned and implemented for any approved future construction on the site, which interprets the significant history of the site for site users and visitors.
- A Salvage Schedule be commissioned, identifying evidence of congregational and community involvement with the site, including signs, plaques, stained glass windows, etc, and that such items be reused insofar as possible and as indicated in the Heritage Interpretation Plan.

Subject to the above recommendations, Council should approve this application.

4.0

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IMAGE SOURCES

Image No.	Source
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2	NSW Spatial Services, SIX Maps
3	Apple Maps
4	Courtesy St Paul's Anglican Church
5	Bankstown Historical Society, image 785
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