

# Matong Hall

Address	26-28 Matong Street, Matong, NSW 2652.
Item name and number	Matong Street Conservation Area #C7

## Proposed Demolition Heritage Impact Statement



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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Project Background

This report has been prepared by NSW Public Works (NSWPW) to assess the heritage impacts of the proposed demolition of Matong Hall.

The building is not a listed heritage item itself; however it is within the Matong Street Conservation Area, which is listed on the Coolamon Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2011, prepared under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act).

## 1.2 The Subject Site

The subject site is located at 26-28 Matong Street, Matong, NSW, 2652. The parcel of land is identified as Lot 2 Section 6 DP 758657. Matong is a town in the central east part of the Riverina region of New South Wales, approximately 300kms northeast of Canberra, see Figure 1-1 for the Matong location map.

The site is within the Coolamon Shire Local Government Area (LGA) on the traditional lands of the Wiradjuri people.

## 1.3 Methodology and Limitations

This assessment is based on desktop research and analysis of heritage listings for Matong Hall. As no statement of significance for the Matong Street Conservation Area was found, the Matong character statement within the Coolamon Shire Council Development Control Plan (DCP) 2015 was used as a basis for understanding the heritage values associated with the site and evaluating the impacts to them according to various heritage criteria.

This report has been developed following the principles of *The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance, 2013*, and guidelines. *The Burra Charter* is the nationally accepted and adopted standard for heritage conservation practice.

It does not consider potential impacts on Aboriginal heritage or ecological communities in the study area.



Figure 1-1: Matong Location Map, the Matong area is within the dotted line. (Source: Google Maps.)



## 2. Heritage Significance

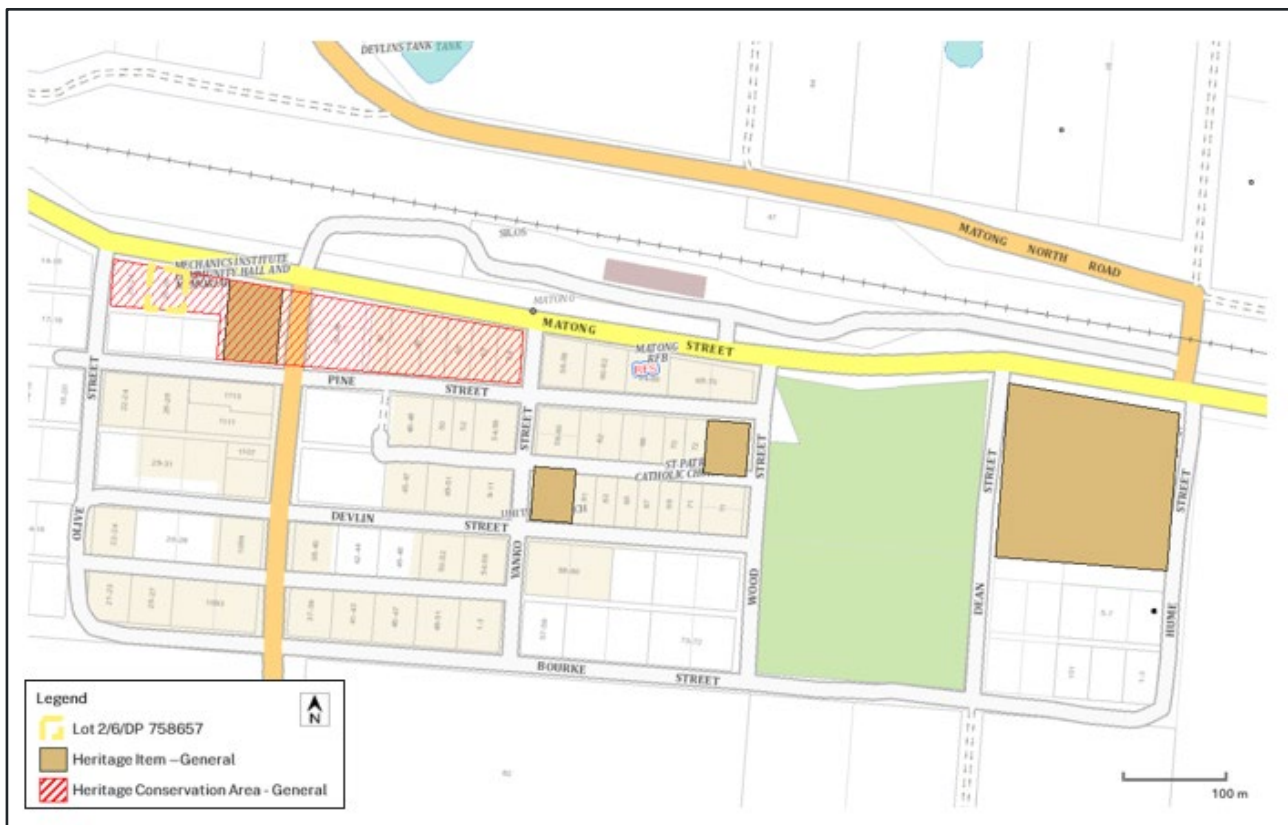
### 2.1 Statutory Heritage Listings

The following statutory heritage listings apply to the subject site:

**Table 2-1: Statutory Heritage Listings**

Item Name	Listing Instrument	Listing details
Matong Street Conservation Area	Coolamon LEP 2011	#C7

Refer to the heritage map shown in Figure 2-1 for a graphic representation of the heritage context.



**Figure 2-1: Heritage Map for Matong Hall. (Source: NSW Planning Portal with NSWPW overlay)**

### 2.2 The Matong Street Conservation Area

The heritage map at Figure 2-1 indicates that the Matong Street Conservation Area (HCA) extends along Matong Street (also known as Canola Way in the locality) between Olive Street to the west and Yanko Street to the east.

The subject site is located towards the western end of the HCA. Views of the hall, as seen in Figure 2-2 and Figure 2-3, show it to be set within a rural landscape of scattered trees and patchy grasses, with few other structures nearby.



**Figure 2-2: View of Matong Hall from the west within the HCA. (Source: Google Maps.)**



**Figure 2-3: View of Matong Hall from the east within the HCA. (Source: Google Maps.)**

An item of local heritage is shown within the curtilage of the Matong Street Conservation Area; however, this building is no longer extant. It was the Farmer's Home Hotel, located on Lots 4 and 5, Section 6, DP 758657, and listed as item #170 on the Coolamon Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2011.

The Farmer's Home Hotel was forced to close in 2008 when it was gutted by fire. Following a second fire in November 2018, it was demolished.<sup>1</sup> The loss of this building has been

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.wwdhs.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/farmers-home-hotel-matong-20190323.pdf>



detrimental to the character of the Matong Street Conservation Area. See Figure 2-4 and Figure 2-5 for comparative views of that site, with the subject site, Matong Hall shown circled in red.



Figure 2-4: The Farmer's Home Hotel in 2010 with Matong Hall circled in red. (Source: Google Maps 2010.)



Figure 2-5: Site of the Farmer's Home Hotel in 2025 with Matong Hall shown circled in red. (Source: Google Maps 2025.)



## 2.3 Matong Hall

### 2.3.1 History of Matong Hall

A search of Trove revealed several references to community activities occurring in the hall, throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, although not the date of its construction.

In 1910, the Coolamon-Ganmain Farmers' Review reported that the floor of the hall was being damaged by skating, which was "in vogue" at the time, see Figure 2-6 <sup>2</sup>. That article also mentions the need for better security at the hall, and a system for hall bookings, both of which indicate the hall was being well used during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The hall was also used by church groups for social events such as the Church of England Ball, as recorded in the article shown in Figure 2-7.<sup>3</sup>

In 1934, a memorial in honour of the men who enlisted in the Great War was erected in front of Matong Hall, as documented in The Narrandera Argus 25/9/1934, <sup>4</sup> see Figure 2-8 for an extract. This demonstrates the important role of the hall within the community. In addition to describing the memorial gates, this lengthy article details the opening ceremony, which was attended by "visitors from Narandera, Ganmain, Coolamon, Grong Grong, and other neighbouring centres." Among those at the ceremony were the junior red cross, school children, returned soldiers as well as the parents of local men lost in the war.

The chairperson for the ceremony stated that "the memorial was one of which they could justly feel proud and would in future prove a fitting reminder of the contribution made by that portion of the Empire in the Great War." The article continues with assurance to the parents of the fallen that, "the memorial gates would be treated with the respect that they deserved." See Figure 2-9 and Figure 2-10 for views of the Memorial Gates as they were in 2021 in their original location at the entrance to Matong Hall.

The Memorial Gates were re-located to Matong Park in 2023, on the southeast corner of Matong Street and Deepwater Road, see Figure 2-11. At that time, a plaque was installed on the gates, as seen in Figure 2-12 marking their relocation from the hall to the park. The Matong Memorial Gates are listed on the NSW War Memorials Register, although they are still shown on that register as being located in front of the hall.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article273732160>

<sup>3</sup> <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article282253987>

<sup>4</sup> <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article100748889>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.war memorials register.nsw.gov.au/>

Skating is in vogue here, much to the detriment of the floor of the local hall and the skin of some of the amateur exponents of the art. Some time ago I drew attention to the condition of the local hall, and the necessity of locks to keep it closed when not let. But it was of no avail apparently as the same state of affairs has been prevalent since, and skating, if it has served no other purpose, has drawn the attention of the committee to the necessity of taking steps to end the present system of allowing all-comers the free use of the hall. A meeting is to be held shortly, and it is to be hoped that the committee will appoint someone secretary who will take a live interest in the welfare of the hall, when perhaps a little revenue may be obtained from the letting of it to responsible persons.

Figure 2-6: Coolamon-Ganmain Farmers' Review, 6/5/1910, p. 6

## MATONG NEWS

(From Our Correspondent).

### CHURCH OF ENGLAND BALL.

The Church of England Ball, held in the Matong Hall on Friday, 10th inst., was a most successful function, visitors coming from many surrounding districts, their action being greatly appreciated.

The Hall had been very attractively decorated in streamers of red and blue with a large centre decoration of the same shade.

In the supper room decorations had been carried out in the same color scheme, and here a most delightful supper had been prepared by the many ladies, and enjoyed by all.

Many novelty dances were conducted throughout the evening and music was supplied by the Ganmain Revelers in their usual fine style.

The joint hon. secretaries, Mesdames S. Stenhouse and T. Halbisich, deserve much praise for such splendid and successful results.

Figure 2-7: Coolamon-Ganmain Farmers' Review, 24/6/1938, p. 5.

## MEMORIAL GATES AT MATONG HALL

### OFFICIAL OPENING

(By our Representative)

Friday last was a red letter day in the history of Matong, as it was on that day that the dream of the residents since the termination of the Great War in 1918 to erect a memorial in honor of the men who enlisted from that centre was realised.

The memorial is in the form of a brick fence about 115 feet along the frontage of the Mechanics' Institute Hall, and is surmounted with grille work. At the small entrance gate the pillars are of brick, and are joined with a massive concrete flat arch, on which are the words in raised letters "Memorial Gates." The two sets of gates are the gift of Messrs. H. V. McKay. On each of the pillars is a granite tablet each bearing the names of 27 men who enlisted from Matong. The fence was erected by Mr. G. S. Baker, of Ganmain, who made a very good job of his contract.

Figure 2-8: The Narandera Argus, 25/9/1934, p. 1.



Figure 2-9: Matong Memorial Gates in Original Position at Matong Hall 2021. (Source: NSW War Memorials Register Website.)



Figure 2-10: Matong Memorial Gates in Original Position at Matong Hall 2021. (Source: NSW War Memorials Register Website.)





Figure 2-11: Matong Memorial Gates , relocated to Matong Park.



Figure 2-12: Matong Memorial Plaque.



### 2.3.2 Description and Condition of Matong Hall

The Matong Hall, seen from Matong Park across Deepwater Road in Figure 2-25, is a rectangular single-story timber-framed building with weatherboard siding and corrugated iron roofing. The building has a western annex (dining area), also weatherboard clad with skillion roof, running the full length of the hall. Off that western extension is a smaller kitchen annex near the southern end. There is another double extension (one part being toilets, the other a backstage area) at the south end.

The principal elevation has a framed façade with a mixed arrangement of pressed metal sheet nailed in place. The upper part of the façade is partly stripped of its cladding (earlier imagery indicates a painted timber sign in this location). Entry doors are clad with sheet metal and the two front windows are double hung timber sash-type with four glazing panes, see Figure 2-13, Figure 2-14 and Figure 2-15. On the east elevation are two further sets of exit doors, and timber windows at higher level with timber two-light windows with simple architrave, see Figure 2-21 and Figure 2-22. The same arrangement is found internally on the west wall of the main hall space (now an internal wall between hall space and dining space). The western extension has external doors facing west and timber windows with textured glass. The kitchen annex has a timber batten door and louvred windows, see Figure 2-16, Figure 2-17 and Figure 2-23 for the interior. The southern wall of the dining space has a door sealed up with corrugated sheet, see Figure 2-18 and Figure 2-19. The toilet annex, shown in Figure 2-20, is weatherboard clad with louvered windows.

Internally, the original hall space has timber lining boards to dado height and a solid timber floor. There is a raised stage, seen in Figure 2-24, at the south end with basic timber framed screens and a fire exit in the east wall. Walls in general are fibro lined, and the ceiling is either Gyproc or sheet metal with a central ceiling grill. There are pairs of timber framed batten doors leading to the dining space.

A condition assessment was undertaken by Stantec, with a report completed in August 2024. That document concludes that Matong Hall is currently in a poor state, with an average condition rating of 3.7, where 1 is very good and 5 is very poor. An average functionality rating of 1.6 was attributed to the hall, although it was considered somewhat fit for purpose.

### 2.3.3 Significance of Matong Hall within the Matong Street Conservation Area

The current condition of the hall indicates that it has not been well maintained or indeed used by the community for some time, and the Coolamon Shire Council website indicates that there is a new Matong community hall located in Wood Street, near the oval.<sup>6</sup>

The front elevation of the original Matong Hall was deleteriously altered with the removal of the painted timber sign that was previously attached above the door. Other infrastructure, such as the external toilet, show signs that the building is indeed disused. The lack of use by

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<sup>6</sup> <https://coolamon.nsw.gov.au/community-centres-halls>

the community and alterations to the built fabric, have depleted the building's ability to demonstrate its history and value.

Additionally, the Memorial Gates have recently been relocated to Matong Park, 140m to the east of the hall, which has also diminished the site's ability to demonstrate its heritage significance, and subsequent value within the Matong Street Conservation Area.



**Figure 2-13: View of north elevation from Matong Street. (Source: Google Maps)**



**Figure 2-14: North elevation.**



**Figure 2-15: North elevation – detail.**



**Figure 2-16: West elevation.**





Figure 2-17: Annex off west elevation.



Figure 2-18: Southwest corner.



Figure 2-19: South elevation.



Figure 2-20: WC off south elevation.



Figure 2-21: East elevation, looking north.



Figure 2-22: East elevation looking south.



Figure 2-23: Interior of kitchen annex.

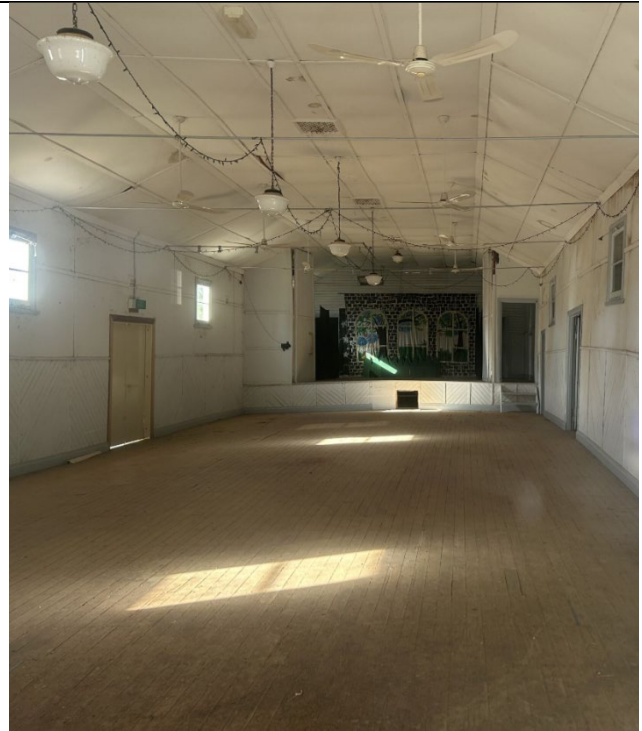


Figure 2-24: Interior looking towards stage at the rear.



Figure 2-25: View of east elevation from Matong Park.



### **3. Coolamon Shire Council DCP 2015 (amended August 2023)**

Section 13.6 of the DCP contains the following Locality Character Statement and Objectives for Matong.<sup>7</sup>

#### **3.1 Matong - History**

Matong is a small village located to the west of Ganmain. The village is on the southern side of the Junee – Griffith rail line.

Matong was proclaimed a village in 1904 following the arrival of the rail line.

#### **3.2 Matong - Existing Character**

Matong is a small rural village and provides a focal point for social and community activity via its village park, school, churches and sportsground.

The Junee – Griffith rail corridor provides the northern boundary of the settlement and like other villages in the Shire is a rail head for grain harvesting.

The village centre is located in Matong Street between Olive and Wood Streets.

#### **3.3 Matong - Desired Future Character**

Matong is to remain a rural village and community focal point.

Remaining heritage buildings and the village centre streetscape are to be retained and enhanced. Any new development is to 'fit in' and be sympathetic to these heritage elements.

Housing will be consolidated in existing residential areas.

The diagram at Figure 3-1, is provided within the DCP to inform future development within Matong, however it is outdated, as it calls for the historic landmark building, the Matong Hotel (Farmer's Home Hotel) to be retained, although it was demolished following a fire in 2018.

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<sup>7</sup> [https://coolamon.nsw.gov.au/s/9\\_Amended-Final-Version-Coolamon-DCP-Adopted-Aug-23-PDF-h4ga.pdf](https://coolamon.nsw.gov.au/s/9_Amended-Final-Version-Coolamon-DCP-Adopted-Aug-23-PDF-h4ga.pdf)

Figure 13.19: Matong Strategic Plan



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Figure 3-1: Matong Strategic Plan within the DCP. (Source: Coolamon Shire Council Website.)

### 3.4 Development within the Matong Street Conservation Area

Where demolition of heritage items or contributory buildings within a heritage conservation area is being considered, section 16.9 of the DCP states that while “demolition of heritage items or contributory buildings within a heritage Conservation Area is contrary to the intent of the heritage listing and should be treated as a last resort,” in its assessment, Council will consider:

1. The heritage significance of the item or the Building,
2. The structural condition,
3. Comparative analysis of options, and
4. The contribution the item or building makes to the streetscape.

As Matong Hall is located within a heritage conservation area, in assessing the application for its demolition, Council will require this report, and also an archival record of the building (exterior and interior) and site (by others). The archival record is to be prepared in accordance

with the guidelines produced by the NSW Heritage Office and must include photographs keyed to a plan of the building.

If a future structure is planned for the site, it should be designed to uphold the provisions of the DCP and could include interpretative signage that describes the previous hall and its history of community use.

## **4. Proposed Works**

Crown Lands are proposing demolition of the remaining fabric of Matong Hall. This process will include various site setup and preparation activities, utilities disconnection, equipment set up such as safety barriers, removal of any hazardous materials, demolition of the existing building including all external structures, recycling of iron sheeting, selected timbers and other metal items, and site rehabilitation such as levelling the ground.

## 5. Heritage Impact Assessment

### 5.1 Methodology

In order to consistently identify the potential impact of the proposed works, the terminology contained in Table 5-1 has been referenced throughout this document. This terminology, and corresponding definitions, are based on those contained within guidelines produced by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS).

**Table 5-1: Definition of Impacts**

Impact	Definition
Major	Actions that would have a long-term and substantial impact on the significance of a heritage item. Actions that would remove key historic building elements, key historic landscape features, or significant archaeological materials, thereby resulting in a change of historic character, or altering of a historical resource.  These actions cannot be fully mitigated.
Moderate	This would include actions involving the modification of a heritage item, including altering the setting of a heritage item or landscape, partially removing archaeological resources, or the alteration of significant elements of fabric from historic structures.  The impacts arising from such actions may be able to be partially mitigated.
Minor	Actions that would results in the slight alteration of heritage buildings, archaeological resources, or the setting of an historical item.  The impacts arising from such actions can usually be mitigated.
Negligible	Actions that would result in very minor changes to heritage items.
Neutral	Actions that would have no heritage impact.
Positive	Actions that would benefit the heritage item by enhancing ability to demonstrate heritage significance.

The following assessment considers both direct and indirect impacts. Direct impacts are defined as being physical alterations to fabric arising from the proposed works. Indirect, or visual, impacts are impacts to views, vistas and/or the setting of a heritage item resulting from the proposed work.



## 5.2 Assessment of Heritage Impact

The following method of assessment as set out in Table 5-2, is in accordance with “*Guidelines For Preparing A Statement Of Heritage Impact*” published by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment, 2023.

**Table 5-2: Assessment of Heritage Impact**

HERITAGE ITEM: Matong Street Conservation Area			
GRADING OF SIGNIFICANCE: not graded			
Proposed work	Matters for consideration	Discussion	Impact
Demolition of Matong Hall	Fabric and spatial arrangements	All remaining fabric will be removed from the site.	<b>Moderate</b> direct and indirect impact.
	Setting, views and vistas	Demolition of the building will alter the visual quality of the Matong Street Conservation Area, leaving the western end of it bereft of built heritage items.	<b>Moderate</b> direct and indirect impact.
	Landscape	Not affected by this proposal.	-
	Use	The hall is currently disused by the community, as another hall has been built in the locality. Demolition obviously eliminates the possibility of any future use of this building.	<b>Moderate</b> direct and indirect impact.
	Demolition	All remaining fabric will be removed from the site. This will diminish the Matong Street Conservation Area, reducing its ability to demonstrate the social history of Matong.	<b>Moderate</b> direct and indirect impact.

HERITAGE ITEM: Matong Street Conservation Area			
GRADING OF SIGNIFICANCE: not graded			
Proposed work	Matters for consideration	Discussion	Impact
	Curtilage	Not affected by this proposal.	-
	Moveable heritage	Not affected by this proposal.	-
	Aboriginal cultural heritage	Not affected by this proposal.	-
	Historical archaeology	Not affected by this proposal.	-
	Natural heritage	Not affected by this proposal.	-
	Conservation areas	Matong Street Conservation Area was diminished with the loss of the Farmer's Home Hotel in 2018. Demolition of Matong Hall will further reduce the ability of the conservation area to demonstrate its heritage.	<b>Moderate</b> direct and indirect impact.
	Cumulative impacts	Demolition of Matong Hall, in addition to the loss of the Farmer's Home Hotel, will further reduce the ability of the Matong Street Conservation Area to demonstrate its heritage.	<b>Moderate</b> direct and indirect impact.

## 6. Recommendations

The proposal seeks full demolition of Matong Hall, which in its current state, can no longer provide the community with a suitable space for its recreational and ceremonial needs.

To mitigate the loss of Matong Hall from the Matong Street Conservation Area, the following steps are recommended:

- prior to any demolition, Council requires that a full archival photographic record be made of the exterior and interior, including the spatial arrangement, windows, doors, ceilings, joinery and original elements,
- building materials should be recycled whenever possible, the flooring timbers in particular appear to be in good condition and should be salvaged and re-used where appropriate, such as in other heritage items in the district, as the need arises,
- site interpretation, such as signage identifying the previous existence of the hall that tells the history of the place, or an interpretive display, should be considered at an appropriate location, perhaps at the new community hall in Wood Street, or on a plaque at the subject site,
- the following protocol should be followed if unanticipated archaeology – including historic objects, items, or features – is encountered during ground disturbance and excavation works:
  - ground disturbing works at the location of the find/s should cease immediately and the site supervisor informed of the find/s,
  - if it is unknown whether the find/s are of historic significance, an opinion from a qualified archaeologist should be sought,
  - if the find/s are of historic significance, then notify Heritage NSW on Ph: 131 555 and provide details of the find/s and location,
  - if the find/s are determined by the qualified archaeologist/heritage specialist or Heritage NSW to not be significant, work can recommence at the location without further investigation. Correspondence relating to this determination should be kept for reference,
  - if the find/s appear to be significant it should be recorded by a qualified heritage specialist, including development of appropriate management strategies,
  - if the find/s are determined to be of historic significance, recommencement of ground disturbance can only resume following compliance with legal requirements and written approval from Heritage NSW,
  - In the case of the unanticipated find/s including human skeletal material:
    - NSW Police should be notified immediately,
    - ground disturbing works at the location of the find/s should cease immediately and the site supervisor informed of the find/s.



## 7. Conclusion

While not a listed heritage item, Matong Hall is located within the Matong Street Conservation Area (local heritage item #C7). The hall has little architectural or technical significance but contributes substantially to the Heritage Conservation Area as an important historic element, the hall having been the location for many recreational and ceremonial events for well over a century. It is the last remnant of the pre-WWII township west of Deepwater Rd, but has been allowed to fall into disrepair, and removal of the Memorial Gates has eroded its integrity. The character of the HCA was diminished by the loss of the Farmers' Home Hotel and will be further diminished by the loss of Matong Hall.

Given the condition of the hall and current integrity of the HCA, demolition will have a moderate heritage impact on the Matong Street Conservation Area.

## 8. References

Burch, G. 2019. WWDHS (Wagga Wagga District Historical Society) *The Farmer's Home Hotel, Matong: 1899 – 2008*.

Coolamon Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2011.

Coolamon Shire Council Development Control Plan (DCP) 2015, (amended August 2023).

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Department of Planning and Environment, 2023, *Guidelines For Preparing A Statement Of Heritage Impact*.

Stantec Australia for the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, 2024. *Matong Hall Asset Condition Assessment*.

The Narandera Argus, 25/9/1934, p. 1.

**END OF REPORT**