

Heritage Advisors Report

Draft Planning Proposal for inclusion of the northern side of William Street Street, Bellingen between Church Street and Oak Street in the B2 Local Centre Zone.



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Reference Draft Planning Proposal

Proposal Rezoning of northern side of William Street, to B2 Local Centre zone.

Plans: Extract from report on Bellingen Shire Employment Lands Strategy by Hill PDA

Photographs D.Wray

1. Proposal

Council resolved in November 2013 to prepare a planning proposal for the extension of the B2 Local Centre Zone to the northern side of William Street between Church and Oak Streets, in accordance with the Bellingen Shire Employment Lands Strategy.

The following comments have been prepared to identify heritage issues raised by this proposal.

2. Site Description

This block of William Street between Church and Oak Streets lies directly to the rear of the main street precinct, separated by a laneway. Along this street frontage are 11 properties which form part of the wider William Street streetscape group. These are summarised in Table 2.1 below;

TABLE 2.1

1-23 William Street; properties subject to the rezoning proposal.

Address	Use/Description	Comments
1 William Street 	Credit Union Modern purpose built commercial building.	This modern building addresses the corner and includes a verandah which encloses the footpath. The materials and detailing could be more sympathetic to the Conservation Area but its scale is generally consistent with the single storey composition of the streetscape.
5 William Street 	Dental Surgery Historic dwelling circa 1900 Well maintained with much original detailing. Has an interwar era front fence to front boundary.	Historic dwelling which contributes strongly to the streetscape. Its retention is critical to the historical aesthetic significance of the Conservation area and the group listing

Address	Use/Description	Comments
7 William Street 	Residential A pair of identical historic dwellings is located on this property. They are, well maintained and display much original fabric. Together with no. 5, they form a good group unified by scale, form, materials proportions and details.	According to records at Bellingen Historical museum This pair was constructed in 1908 and is associated with John Cox. The retention of this pair of cottages and its neighbour at No. 5 is critical to the significance of the Conservation area and the group listing
9 William Street  	Residential As above	

Address	Use/Description	Comments
11 William Street 	Residential Circa 1970s low set brick and tile residence with residential setbacks and large garden to rear. No significant planting.	Intrusive in terms of materials, form and proportions to the conservation area historic streetscape. Sympathetic re-development would be positive.
13 William Street 	Residential Circa 1970s hardiplank and tile low set residence with residential setbacks. Large shed at rear.	As above but note how a painted finish blends more harmoniously with the streetscape than face brick. Sympathetic re-development would be positive.
15 William Street 	Residential Circa 1950-60 Fibro and iron roof dwelling in relatively original state. Double hung timber windows, and original low brick fence and gate typical of era.	This dwelling is representative of its era. Its scale and form are in keeping with the older traditional cottages. Its contribution to the streetscape is assessed as infill.

Address	Use/Description	Comments
17 William Street 	Professional Offices and residential at rear. According to the SHI data, this cottage is estimated as one of the oldest surviving buildings in the town and Shire. It is considered to be typical of the area's earliest cottages and one of the last remaining links to the Shire's pioneering days. It has been restored and is in very good condition. Currently housing an accountant's office with a new build infill two storey residence at the rear.	Historic dwelling which contributes strongly to the streetscape. Its retention is critical to the historical and aesthetic significance of the Conservation Area and the group heritage listing
19 William Street 	Residential Circa 1960-70 hardiplank and iron roof dwelling. Planting in front setback contributes to a green edge to the streetscape.	Non contributory dwelling to the Conservation Area although its scale is not intrusive. Sympathetic re-development would be positive.

Address	Use/Description	Comments
21 William Street 	Residential One of a pair of matching Californian bungalows in residential use. Complete in original detailing with intact period front fence.	Historic dwelling which contributes strongly to the streetscape. Its retention is critical to the historical and aesthetic significance of the Conservation Area and the group listing
23 William Street 	Residential One of a pair of matching Californian bungalow style dwellings in residential use. Complete in original detailing with intact period front fence. This house is on the corner and it is an important anchor to the historic streetscape.	Historic dwelling which contributes strongly to the streetscape. Its retention is critical to the historical and aesthetic significance of the Conservation Area and the group listing

3. Assessed Heritage Significance

The entire row of properties 1-37 William Street is listed as a group in the Bellingen LEP 2010 and is located in the Bellingen Heritage Conservation Area. SHI Item 1110190. The group is assessed as locally significant, historically, aesthetically and socially.

Historically this block is located within the oldest part of the town and the collective value of the group is very important. This group item is assessed both aesthetically rare and aesthetically representative locally.

Statement of Significance for William Street Streetscape Group

'A street with a high proportion of older style houses, generally typical of those built throughout the town's history. A range of periods and styles is represented in different degrees of preservation. All combine to form an attractive streetscape with considerable character. This owes much to the consistency of weatherboard construction and iron roofs. Close to the main street in the oldest part of the town.'

No. 4: Very early house. One of the oldest and least altered in the Shire. Needs repairs and maintenance but, as such, retains its early character. Typical of houses built in the town's pioneering days and popular for a long time after. Dominant roof form and encircling verandah continue to have a major positive impact on the historic streetscape.

No. 17: Estimated to be one of the oldest surviving buildings in the town and the Shire. Would have been typical of the area's earliest cottages. One of the last remaining links with the Shire's pioneering days. Despite the unfortunate loss of its fence and some original fabric the building remains essentially unaltered. Part of the larger William Street group

No. 29: Excellent local example of a Victorian Georgian design. Of particular note for its fine proportioning and detail. The cast iron verandah detailing is rare locally. Interesting rear wing. Would have been typical of many houses built locally in the late nineteenth century. In remarkably good condition and one of the town's oldest surviving buildings. Part of the larger William Street group'.

SHI Database 1110190 includes descriptions from Bellingen Heritage Study 1991.

Note- Since this time many of the properties described above have been restored and missing details reconstructed.

4. Rezoning issues in relation to heritage conservation

4.1 Current Residential Zoning

With regard to the zoning and its potential impact upon heritage conservation, the current residential zoning maintains a residential character through its collection of buildings in residential or compatible uses, residential setbacks and a current single storey built form.

Although a residential zoning is more restrictive in terms of permissible land uses than a business zone, this precinct has already undergone changes of use. Professional consulting rooms and health professionals are accommodated within the precinct adaptively re-using existing historic buildings and maintaining the residential appearance of the streetscape.

The heritage conservation incentive clause 5.10(10) in the Bellingen LEP 2010 also provides flexibility to Council to permit development for '*any purpose*' in relation to a heritage item if it results in the conservation of the building and is not likely to adversely affect the amenity of surrounding properties etc. Refer to full requirements of Clause 5.10(10) of Bellingen LEP 2010.

The current residential zoning is also consistent with the character of the opposite side of the street which forms part of the William Street group heritage listing and will remain in a residential zoning.

Residential setback and DCP requirements also currently apply which assist in maintaining the amenity and existing streetscape character

4.2 Business Zoning

A business zone will, subject to consent, enable a wider range of uses including retail and restaurants etc. New commercial uses located within existing buildings, would not substantially alter the scale and form or built character of the streetscape.

Although the heritage incentives clause opens up further possibilities to buildings which will benefit from conservation, it is not readily applicable to the non-historically significant buildings within the group listing (which are the least contributory to the streetscape). Therefore the rezoning would facilitate the redevelopment of the non contributory sites for purposes other than residential redevelopment.

A business zoning however, tends to carry a higher perception of development potential than a residential zoning and could impact upon requests for demolition and redevelopment of the historic building stock.

Under the heritage and conservation area policies in 5.10 of Bellingen LEP 2010, any demolition would be required to be critically assessed, and associated new buildings would be required to respect the heritage significance of the precinct in terms of scale, form proportions, and materials.

With regard to the non contributory building stock, demolition would not be a conflict with the heritage group listing; however it is critical that the significant buildings within the group as identified in Table 2.1, are retained to maintain the integrity of the Conservation Area and heritage listing.

With regard to setbacks, new commercial development is generally characterised by zero setbacks to front and side boundaries and fire rated solid walls on boundaries. This would be out of keeping in this historic precinct and would have extremely negative impacts on existing historic buildings, particularly where they are located close to boundaries e.g. no 9 William Street. Site specific policies need to be adopted to ensure that the setting and significance of adjoining heritage items is protected.



9 William Street proximity to boundary.



21 William Street proximity to boundary.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the proposed business zone is likely to create further opportunities for commercial development within this frontage, by making a range of commercial uses including offices, retail and restaurant uses permissible, subject to consent.

The proposed rezoning would particularly increase the development potential of the sites of non-contributory buildings, and subject to sympathetically designed development with appropriate setbacks, and frontages, this could be achieved without detriment to the heritage significance of the precinct.

However the proposed business zoning could have potential negative impacts on the contributory historic building stock, due to a tendency for perceived increased development potential in a business zone. This could lead to pressure for the demolition or removal of buildings, and redevelopment or pressure to build to the boundaries of sites in keeping with conventional commercial developments. Changing SEPP code assessable development could also impact upon the heritage values under a business zoning in the future.

The current heritage listing of the entire William Street group is critical to its long term conservation. The listing of 1-37 William Street as a group recognises the collective values of buildings of different eras and their contribution to the streetscape. The SHI description and statement of significance should be upgraded to include additional information about the contributory buildings in the group as there have been some substantial restoration and reconstruction works since the heritage study was conducted in 1991.

If the rezoning to a B2 zone proceeds, there will need to be thorough assessment of any development applications in relation to the heritage listing and conservation area policies in clause 5.10 of Bellingen LEP 2010.

It is also understood that Council will be considering a new draft Heritage DCP. Should this William Street rezoning proceed, the inclusion of additional controls in the commercial buildings section of the Heritage DCP is recommended as this precinct differs in character. The following controls are suggested:

- 1. Any development in the William Street precinct must maintain its residential built character and heritage significance.*
- 2. In the William Street precinct, consistent residential style front and side setbacks are required, to protect the heritage significance, settings and aesthetic values of this precinct.*
- 3. In the William Street precinct, should any sites be combined for redevelopment, it is essential that the future redevelopment maintains the rhythm of the established frontages in the streetscape and does not present as one large building.*
- 4. In the William Street precinct, traditional awnings for commercial development are not in character with the streetscape setting and should not be included..*

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