

3.0 HERITAGE SURVEY FINDINGS

3.1 Assessing Significance

Heritage items are:

- A place or places of outstanding value on either a local, State or national level that may have one or a range of values including, historical, architectural, aesthetic, scientific or social values and that may also be rare or representatives of a type; or
- A place that demonstrates the development of Wilcannia and relates to the State historic themes;
- An element or elements of a place that warrant retention even though the remainder of a place does not have particular heritage value, including archaeological elements or landscape items

Where items are identified as heritage items, it is not always their architectural value which is important. Places, buildings, structures and other works can be identified as having heritage significance as they are:

- Associated with people, events or phases of history of great importance;
- Rare;
- Constructed with unusual technical skill; or
- Excellent examples of a valuable group of items.

Identified items of environmental heritage must be retained in a manner where their heritage significance is preserved and the public can interpret that significance without confusion as to its actual age or function.

Heritage items in Wilcannia are listed in Part 1 the *Central Darling Local Environmental Plan* (2004 as amended). These items have been individually identified as having cultural heritage significance.

The following processes are recommended for the Central Darling Shire in managing heritage items and heritage Conservation Areas:

- Development will be assessed having regard to the principles contained in the Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance (the Burra Charter).
- Applications for demolition of a heritage item or an item in a heritage conservation area will be required to provide details on the replacement development, documentation of the existing item and include Heritage Impact Statement for the building to be removed and for new development.

3.2 Local Environment Plan Heritage Provisions

Town planning in NSW is guided by the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. Under this Act, both State and Local Government have roles and responsibilities to ensure that our built and natural environments are developed in appropriate and sustainable ways. The Central Darling Shire Local Environmental Plan (2004 as amended) controls land use and development within the Local Government Area. An LEP (as amended) allows Council and the community to guide development according to local values and characteristics in conjunction with State Policies and Regional Plans. The current planning and heritage provisions for Wilcannia are outlined in the Central Darling Shire Local Environment Plan (2004 as amended). These provisions provide the local authority with powers and obligations to protect the cultural heritage of Wilcannia.

This report outlines recommendations which to be enacted will require revisions to the LEP. This should be undertaken in the future once the report has been subject to public consultation and adoption by the Shire. (see also 3.14 below)

3.3 State Heritage Significance Recommendations

State Heritage Items

Listing on the State Heritage Register indicates that the heritage item:

- Is of particular importance to the people of NSW and enriches our understanding of our history and identity;
- Is legally protected as a heritage item under the NSW Heritage Act; and
- Requires approval from the Heritage Council of NSW for major changes.

The State Heritage Register is a list of places and objects of particular importance to the people of NSW. The register lists a diverse range of over 1,500 items in both private and public ownership. To be listed, an item must be significant for the whole of NSW. State heritage items are assessed both by local Council and the NSW Heritage Office. The current Local Environmental Plan (LEP) identifies all state listed heritage items in the Central Darling Local Government Area (LGA).

There are no buildings in Wilcannia currently on the State Heritage Register, and this report recommends the following are added to the NSW State Heritage Register. These are considered to be of state wide significance and satisfy the criteria for listing on the State Heritage Register.

Name of Place	Recommended to be Listed as a State Heritage Place on the New South Wales State Heritage Register	Also Scheduled on Central Darling Shire Local Environment Plan (2004) as item of Local Significance
Post Office and Residence 45 Reid Street	Recommended to be added	Listed
Courthouse 66-68 Reid Street	Recommended to be added	Listed
Maximum Security Prison and Police Station 70-72 Reid Street	Recommended to be added	Listed
Rich & Co Bond Store 71 Reid Street	Recommended to be added	Listed

Implications of State Listing

There are advantages and disadvantages for an item being on the State Heritage Register. The listing provides recognition of significance, and provides a status to the place and certainty of retention. Listing can also make a place eligible for state heritage funding when these grants are available.

However the approvals process is more involved, as development requires input from the NSW State Heritage Branch and can delay the process. Conservation standards are also higher with more scrutiny given to works proposed – and sometimes proposals are rejected and not approved if they are considered by the State Heritage Branch to not confirm to appropriate conservation standards.

3.4 Local Heritage Significance Recommendations

Local Heritage Items

Local heritage items are those items of heritage significance to the Central Darling Shire. Heritage significance includes items of historical, scientific, cultural, social, archaeological, architectural, natural or aesthetic value. These items contribute to the individuality, streetscape, townscape, landscape or natural character of an area and are irreplaceable parts of its environmental heritage. Local heritage items are assessed by the Local Council. The current Local Environment Plan (LEP) identifies all listed heritage items in the Central Darling Shire Local Environment Plan (2004 as amended).

The following buildings are currently on the Darling Shire Local Environment Plan (2004 as amended) as items of Local Significance;

Name of Place	Scheduled on Central Darling Shire Local Environment Plan (2004 as amended) as item of Local Significance
Central Lift Bridge over the Darling River Barrier Highway	Listed
Old Wharf and Winch, Barrier Highway, Adjacent to Bridge	Listed
Wilcannia Central School 93 Hood Street	Listed
Sandstone Houses, 8 – 10 Myers Street - note this numbering is incorrect and should be 24 – 26 Myers Street , The LEP needs to be corrected	Listed (but with wrong numbers, should be 24 – 26 Myers)
Wilcannia Council Chambers 21 Reid Street	Listed
Old sandstone shop 30 Reid Street	Listed
Museum/Wilcannia Athenaeum 37 Reid Street	Listed
(Former) Knox & Downs Store 44 Reid Street	Listed
Post Office and Residence 45 Reid Street	Listed (also recommended for State Heritage Listing, see above)
Club Hotel, 46 Reid Street	Listed
Shops, 48 Reid Street	Listed
Baker Park, Memorial World War One, Reid Street	Listed
Butcher Shop 50 Reid Street	Listed
(Old) Queens Head Hotel 64 Reid Street	Listed
Courthouse 66-68 Reid Street	Listed (also recommended for State Heritage Listing, see above)
Maximum Security Prison and Police Station 70-72 Reid Street	Listed (also recommended for State Heritage Listing, see above)

Name of Place	Scheduled on Central Darling Shire Local Environment Plan (2004 as amended) as item of Local Significance
Rich & Co Bond Store 71 Reid Street	Listed (also recommended for State Heritage Listing, see above)
Police Residence 74-76 Reid Street	Listed
Hospital, 1- 7 Ross Street	Listed
Water Tower, 6-8 Ross Street	Listed
Golf Club, 25 – 29 Ross St	Listed
Former Roman Catholic Convent, 52 – 54 Woore Street	Listed
St James Anglican Church, 80 – 82 Woore Street	Listed

The following places are **recommended for addition** to the Darling Shire Local Environment Plan (2004 as amended) as items of Local Heritage Significance;

Former Commercial Bank, 25 Reid Street	Recommended to be Scheduled on the LEP
Wilcannia CDEP Building (fmr West Darling Transport), 39 Reid Street	Recommended to be Scheduled on the LEP
Row of Shops, 40 Reid Street	Recommended to be Scheduled on the LEP
Portable Steam Engine, 41 – 43 Reid St	Recommended to be Scheduled on the LEP
Shop and House, 54 Reid St	Recommended to be Scheduled on the LEP
Wilcannia Auto Repairs, 60 Reid Street	Recommended to be Scheduled on the LEP
Former Court House Hotel, 65 – 67 Reid Street, cnr Cleaton Street	Recommended to be Scheduled on the LEP
House, Riversleigh, behind 73 Reid Street	Recommended to be Scheduled on the LEP
Old Fuel Store, 73 Reid Street	Recommended to be Scheduled on the LEP
Sandstone Houses, 81 – 83 Reid Street Reid Street	Recommended to be Scheduled on the LEP
Cottages 97- 99 Reid Street	Recommended to be Scheduled on the LEP
House, 26 – 30 Byres Street	Recommended to be Scheduled on the LEP
House, 19 – 21 Hood Street	Recommended to be Scheduled on the LEP
Wilcannia Cemetery, Menindee Road	Recommended to be Scheduled on the LEP
Steam Engines, 6 – 8 Ross Street (add to existing Water Tower Listing)	Recommended to be Scheduled on the LEP
House, former Brewery Residence, 19 Bonney Street , (also known at 19 – 23 Ross Street)	Recommended to be Scheduled on the LEP

Big Ampy Windmill

Note that a special request has been made by one of the owners of Big Ampy Station, Captain James Boland, for the following to be included in the LEP as a local heritage item – outside of the Wilcannia Township. The authors of this report support this request and consider that it has considerable local heritage significance.

Big Ampy Windmill, Big Ampy Station 50 km's East of Menindee on the Ivanhoe-Menindee Road S32 28.09 E142 53.79	Recommended to be Scheduled on the LEP
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Lot 4742 DP 762609	
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Implications of Local Listing

There are advantages and disadvantages for an item being the Schedule of Heritage Items on the LEP. The listing provides recognition of local heritage significance. The primary intention of the listing is to protect the item from demolition and retain its streetscape contribution.

Listing can also make a place eligible for local heritage funding when these grants are available: the current Heritage Near Me program has provided funding for two places in Wilcannia included on this schedule in the 2016-17 period.

3.5 Conservation Area Recommendation

Heritage Conservation Areas

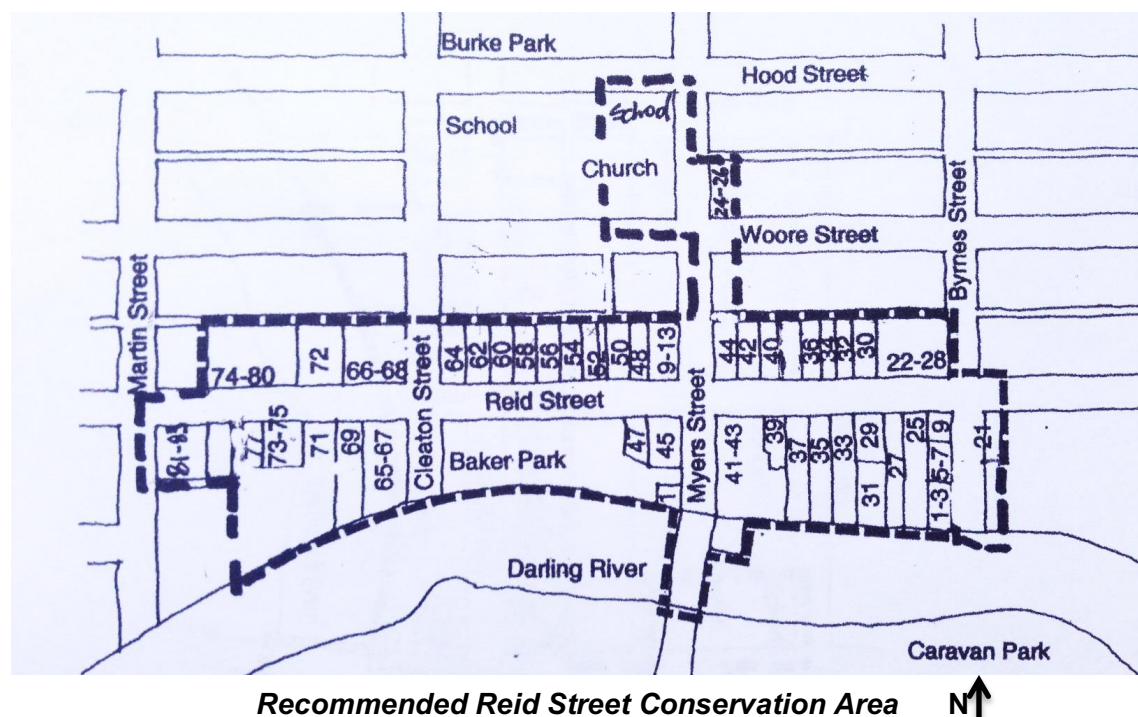
Heritage Conservation Areas (HCAs) are significant for their streetscape character and are of value due to the collective nature of buildings and elements in that area.

A HCA is more than a collection of individual heritage items – Heritage Conservation Areas have a specific significant sense of place. This is because the character reflects not just the buildings in them, but also the reasons for the buildings, the changing social and economic conditions over time, and the physical responses to those changes. Keeping heritage places enables the community to experience again and again the pleasures and interest they offer. Once lost, they are gone forever. No record or photograph can ever substitute for an actual place.

The collective existence of buildings, individual heritage items, trees, open spaces, views and landmarks, and smaller details such as sandstone kerbing and gutters, all contribute to our appreciation of an area's historic value. Ongoing care and maintenance of all elements of any HCA is considered to be an essential part of achieving their conservation. The whole community has a role to play to ensure that individual buildings, their settings and public areas are maintained, and not left to decay.

Recommended Heritage Conservation Area in Wilcannia

This study recommends the designation of a Reid Street Conservation Area in the Central Darling Shire LEP, with boundaries as per the map below. This includes the bridge over the Darling River, the old wharf area, and sections of Myers Street and Reid Street from the Council Chambers to the south western end of Reid Street. This grouping includes the fine collection of nineteenth century sandstone buildings, (several being the work of NSW Government Architect James Barnett) – being the Post Office and Court House Group.



The following buildings have been identified as significant buildings in this Reid Street Conservation Area which should be retained:(note refer individual building data sheets in Section 5 of this report):

21 Reid Street, Wilcannia Council Chambers
 25 Reid Street, Former Shop
 30 Reid Street, Old Sandstone Shop
 37 Reid Street, Wilcannia Athenaeum
 39 Reid Street, Wilcannia CDEP Building (fmr West Darling Transport)
 40 Reid Street, Row of Shops
 41 - 43 Reid Street, Steam Engine
 44 Reid Street, cnr Myers St(Former) Knox & Downs Store – note however that condition may make retention problematic
 45 Reid Street, cnr Myers, Wilcannia Post Office & Residence
 46 Reid Street, cnr Myers Street, Wilcannia Club Hotel
 48 Reid Street, Shop
 49 - 63 Reid Street, Baker Park and War Memorial,
 50 Reid Street, Butcher Shop
 54 Reid Street, Shop & House
 60 Reid Street, Wilcannia Auto Repairs
 64 Reid Street, cnr Cleaton Street, Queens Head Hotel,
 65 - 67 Reid St, Former Court House Hotel, cnr Cleaton Street
 66 - 68 Reid Street, Wilcannia Court House, cnr Cleaton Street
 70 - 72 Reid Street, Wilcannia Police Station and Gaol
 71 Reid Street, Rich & Company Bond Store
 73 Reid Street, Old Fuel Store
 Behind 73 Reid Street, House, Riversleigh
 74 – 76 Reid Street, Police Residence (adjacent to Police Station)
 77 Reid Street, Attached Cottages
 81 - 33 Reid Street, Sandstone Houses
 97 - 99 Reid Street, Sandstone Houses
 Wilcannia Bridge and Wilcannia Wharf
 93 Hood Street, Wilcannia Central School
 24 – 26 Myers Street, stone houses
 80 – 82 Woore Street, St James Anglican Church

3.6 Heritage Advisory Service, Ongoing Building Improvements and Heritage Funding Incentives

A key recommendation for Wilcannia is to retain the early heritage buildings which contribute to its historic character and ensure that any new development or alterations to existing buildings reinforce this traditional character. The existing Heritage Advisory Service, established in 2007 is key to the ongoing building improvements in Wilcannia.

In addition, the use of modest grants available through the Heritage Fund (and where successful State and Federal Government funding) have seen a marked improvement in the appearance of the town, with both private and public sector involvement in building upgrades over the past few years.

It is most important that any building improvements undertaken within the town (including the erection of fences) take into consideration the age of the building in question and any significant detailing which may pertain to its date of construction. The Heritage Adviser has previously prepared Conservation Guidelines (May 2008), available at the Central Darling Shire office in Wilcannia. These guidelines emphasise the importance of carefully conserving and managing the heritage buildings in Wilcannia. These guidelines are made available to building owners and occupiers on request.

Central Darling Council should continue to apply for relevant heritage funding through the NSW Heritage Branch for the ongoing provision of the Heritage Fund and the position of the Heritage Advisor. In addition, other funding sources should continue to be pursued for the ongoing conservation of buildings in Wilcannia.

EXAMPLES OF HERITAGE UPGRADES IN WILCANNIA



Before - Typical altered verandah on residence at 24 – 26 Myers Street, Wilcannia



After - stone and verandah conservation on residence at 24 – 26 Myers Street, Wilcannia



Before – Former Court House Hotel, Reid Street



After - reconstruction of early verandah at Former Court House Hotel, Reid Street



54 Reid Street, before and after conservation work in 2011

3.7 New Development

The construction of any new building in Wilcannia should take into consideration the historic character of the town. Any new development should be sympathetic with the existing character, and modern architectural forms and materials which are completely different from original materials used in the town would not be appropriate. The heritage provisions of the LEP can be used to ensure that new development is appropriate to the towns character. In addition, the proposed Conservation Area in the centre of the town will ensure that any new development fits in with the historic character.

3.8 Street Trees, Stone Kerbing, Landscaping and Fences

Council minutes record that street trees were planted in Wilcannia in the late 1880s and early photos show these street trees and picket fences. As these are mostly gone, reinstatement of trees and suitable fences is strongly recommended. Some community involvement has resulted in some planting of pepper trees in Reid Street, near the Queens Head Hotel. Fences are an important part of the character of the town, particularly on residential buildings.

Street trees should also be planted in Reid and Myers Street to recapture the previous planted character of Wilcannia and to provide well needed shade and protection from the harsh summer temperatures. A key area for planting is Reid Street near Byrnes Street where many trees have been removed, and the area is devoid of vegetation.

Retention of Stone gutters in Reid street should also be part of Councils objectives. These, these together (with the unpaved verges), add to the character of the town centre. An inventory of surviving stone gutters should be compiled.

The reinstatement of picket fences to both public and private buildings is to be encouraged. These were once common in Wilcannia and would assist in re-establishing the historic character of the town centre.

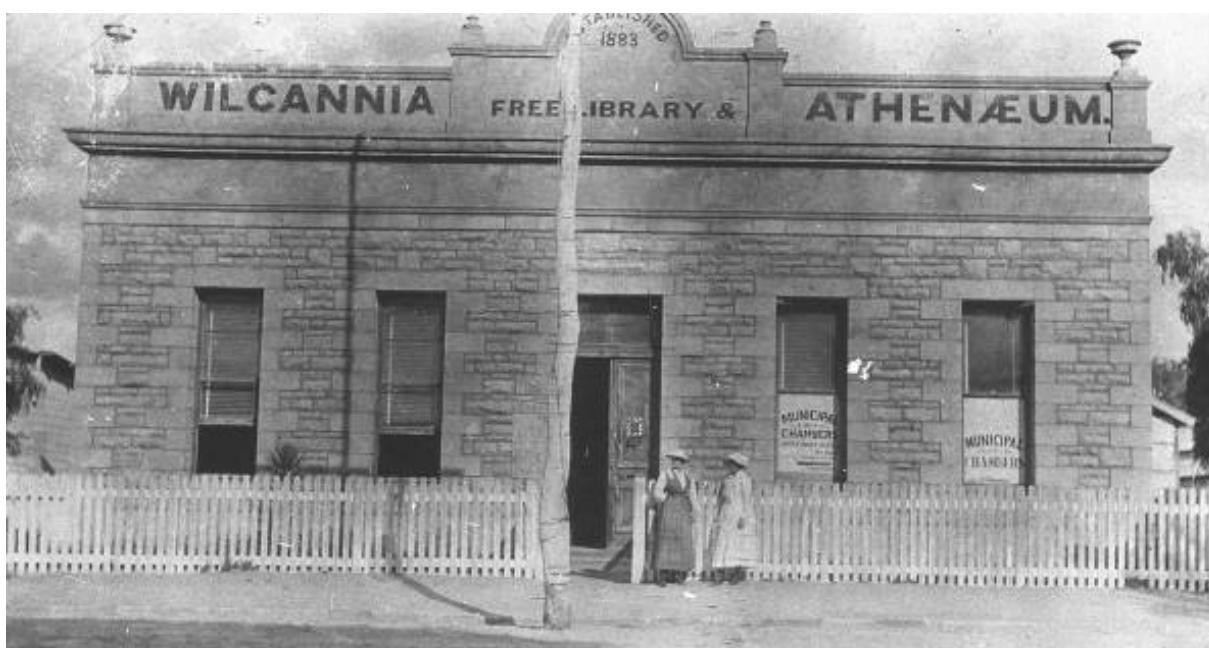


View of Myers Street, showing the early street trees



LHS View of Reid Street, showing the early street trees – RHS example of stone kerbing and guttering

(Source of street tree early photos: State Library of NSW bcp_06767r, bcp_06764r & PRG280_1_10_81 respectively)



Picket fence in front of the Wilcannia Athenaeum

(Source: State Library of New South Wales 06744h)



View of Wilcannia Post Office, 1946
 (note picket fencing in front of Residence on RHS)
(Source: National Archives of Australia, 3031644)

3.9 Wilcannia Post Office

Ongoing Conservation

Wilcannia for many years has suffered from a poor reputation, and this is now gradually changing. In the past visitors have avoided stopping in Wilcannia due to the poor condition of buildings, and lack of any focus for tourist activities. However, the last 3 years have seen several of the buildings conserved and upgraded, in particular the Council Chambers, the Post Office and some shops, with more work being undertaken by private building owners.

Potential Visitor Information Centre

What the town currently lacks is a Visitor Information Centre. The logical and ideal location for this would be in the upgraded Post Office room and with more information provided in the adjacent residential part of the Post Office. This needs to be pursued both by the Council and the community.

The development of a Visitor Information Centre at the former Post Office should be investigated. This should form part of the current staged program of conservation works for this building.

Council should actively pursue more funding to complete the works at the Post Office. A visitor interpretation centre would provide a focal point for tourists when they enter town and could also provide information on the surrounding sites of interests such as the National Parks.

3.10 Heritage Interpretation, Town Identity and Promotion

For country towns to encourage visitors, attractive visitor information and interpretation programs need to be provided. The town currently has interesting tourist information signs, and these were replaced in 2014 with new metal panels. Entry signs have also been provided for the town in 2013.

Council should pursue sources of heritage and tourism funding to undertake further interpretive programs. For example, telling the story of Edward Dickens association with Wilcannia (he was the youngest son of English author Charles Dickens) could be an interesting local social historical story. The involvement of the local school to encourage local community input and establish ownership of the town interpretation is considered a key element of its potential success.

3.11 Deteriorating Buildings in the Town Centre

There are currently many buildings in a deteriorating condition the town. Contact should be made with property owners of run down buildings. A major challenge is the Knox and Downs site (refer 3.12 below).

Council should continue, through the Heritage Advisory Service, to actively encourage the upgrading of buildings which are currently empty and deteriorating. This should be facilitated and assisted by the heritage advisor.



Photos of the deteriorated buildings in Reid Street requiring upgrading

3.12 Knox and Downs Site, Reid Street, cnr Myers Street

The Knox and Downs site is currently a major negative element in the centre of Wilcannia. Previous assessments have been undertaken of the condition of the remnant building which is found to be beyond repair or reuse. A new building should be constructed on the site which would contribute to the character of Wilcannia. This building should be of suitable materials and an appropriate building form which reflects other character buildings in Wilcannia.

Council should actively encourage rebuilding on the Knox and Downs site which is derelict and beyond repair. Incorporation of some elements of the existing building may be possible. An appropriate community use should be explored for the site.



Current derelict building on the site



Rear stone store building which should be upgraded and reused



Building prior to the fire which destroyed the current building



INDICATIVE SKETCH OF TYPE OF REPLACEMENT BUILDING
WHICH WOULD BE APPROPRIATE FOR THIS SITE

3.13 Archival Records

There are many historical records in a variety of locations. Some are in private hands, some records are held at the Council, but storage is not secure or to ideal conditions. Also records have not been scanned or systematically recorded. The local History Society could assist if there was a suitable scanner and should be involved in determining the best way forward for effective management of archives. In addition, collaboration with Broken Hill City Council could be pursued as they are currently undertaking an archival storage upgrade program. The Shire should also apply for any available funding to assist with the management, recording and storage of archives.

3.14 Public Consultation

This report should be made to the public and once public feedback has been obtained, the Shire determine a way forward via revisions to the LEP to incorporate the report recommendations.