



planning consultants

Peer review of Report by Architectural Projects on the Proposed Middle Harbour Road Heritage Conservation Area.

This letter responds to your request, on behalf of a group of local residents, to undertake a peer review of the report prepared by Jennifer Hill, dated 6 July 2017. This report provides the background to the history of the area, including the previous studies, reports and surveys that relate to the current planning proposal by Ku ring gai Council to list the Middle Harbour Road Heritage Conservation Area. I have also reviewed the most recent report by Perumal Murphy Alessi that supports listing of the Heritage Conservation Area. I have not undertaken independent research but rely on the historical background provided by other source material.

I carried out a field survey on foot on 21 August 2017 during which I mapped contributory buildings and detracting items. Heritage items were identified using the heritage map that accompanies Ku ring gai LEP 2015.

The first matter to address is whether the methodology of the report by Jennifer Hill is sound? I am mindful that Jennifer Hill is familiar with this area from a previous study – the Southern Ku ring gai Conservation Areas Review in 2011. I find the methodology applied to be sound and thorough. I note that every property in the area has been assessed.

FINDINGS

My findings are based on the field survey and examination of the detailed analysis of properties in the Architectural Projects Report. I have adopted the total number of houses as 208 from the Architectural Projects Report, which accords with the number stated by council officers in a report on public submissions dated 28 June 2016.

The results of my field work are as follows:

- 4 Heritage items, (approx. 2%)
- 80 contributory items, (38%)
- 43 detracting items, (20.7%).

The heritage items and contributory items together account for 40% of the properties in the proposed Heritage Conservation Area.

According the Council's criteria the number of contributory items must exceed 50% to justify a Heritage Conservation Area. I note that the Perumal Murphy Alessi study concluded that 106 of the properties contained contributory items (51%). The Architectural Projects report identified



contributory items, including heritage items, amounting to 39% and detracting items amounting to 22%.

The number of detracting items identified in my survey amount to more than one fifth of all properties. I have adopted a high test for identification of detracting items in the following categories:

1. Out of character buildings due to non - complementary architectural expression;
2. Out of character large buildings that are out of scale;
3. Buildings of the key early twentieth century period that have been altered so much that they have completely lost the attributes of the original architecture;
4. Formerly contributory items that have been unsympathetically and irreversibly modified, e.g: large dominating upper floor additions, render over face brick and removal of window joinery and timber detailing;
5. Otherwise contributory buildings that are obscured by dominating garages and carports on the street frontage.

The reason that categories 4 and 5 have been used is that the significant changes to the original buildings and street presentations of these items set a bad precedent. To include them as contributory items would be to send the wrong message, encouraging more changes of this kind that cumulatively erode the character of an area.

CONCLUSION

I support the findings of the Architectural Projects Review. In my opinion, the area contains an insufficient number of contributory items to form a cohesive Heritage Conservation Area and it also contains a significant proportion of detracting items. The area stands as an example of the process of cumulative adverse change that diminishes the period streetscapes of the Ku ring gai municipality.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Brian McDonald'.

Brian McDonald
Principal Urban Designer and Heritage Consultant
DFP Planning