

ITEM NO	: 2
SUBJECT	: CONSIDERATION OF POTENTIAL HERITAGE LISTINGS (INCLUDING 10 COWELL STREET, GLADESVILLE)
CSP THEME	: OUR HERITAGE AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT
DELIVERY PLAN STRATEGY	: ASSESS ALL APPLICATIONS AGAINST THE NEW LEP/DCP
REPORTING OFFICER	: PHILIPPA HAYES

INTRODUCTION

The reason for this report is to consider the future of 17 potential heritage listings (including 10 Cowell Street) deferred at the time of the making of Local Environmental Plan 2012.

REPORT

Background

Heritage listings are included in Local Environmental Plans (LEPs). In 2011 when Council commenced preparation of its standard LEP 2012 the Hunters Hill Heritage Study prepared by Paul Davies in 2005 was referenced. Based on his recommendations 52 properties were identified for assessment as potential new heritage items in the draft LEP 2012. The property 10 Cowell Street was included in this list.

Council exhibited the draft LEP 2012 and the list of 52 potential heritage items for the statutory 28 days from the 23 April to 21 May 2012. Draft heritage inventory sheets prepared by Council's Heritage Planner were available during the exhibition period for the 52 subject properties. At a Council meeting on 28 May 2012 it was resolved by Council to extend the exhibition period till 8 June 2012.

The preparation of LEP 2012 was fully funded by a State Government Grant as long as the project was completed by 30 June 2012. An extension of time was requested from the State Government and they provided an extension to 30 August 2012. Due to the extremely tight project schedule Council resolved to defer the consideration of any potential heritage items that required any further discussion, assessment, site visits or meetings allowing Council to meet its deadline. A total of 17 potential heritage items fell into this category – including 10 Cowell Street. It was resolved by Council to defer the 17 potential listings for further consideration during the first amendment to the LEP. This amendment is scheduled for late 2015.

The existing timber cottage at 10 Cowell Street which is owned by Council has never been listed as a heritage item. However, its future and potential listing as a heritage item has been the subject of much recent focus as the cottage forms part of a development site (Block 21) in the Gladesville Commercial Precinct.

Over the last month correspondence has been received from the Hunters Hill Trust expressing the view that the Council should undertake the process of heritage listing the cottage and retain it in situ (refer Attachment 1). Additionally, two Councillors have emailed Council staff and posed questions without notice (refer Attachment 2) at a recent Council meeting asking whether a review of the heritage status of the cottage has commenced.

Discussion

The potential listing of 10 Cowell Street was deferred during the making of LEP 2012 as further discussion and reporting to the Councillors was required as the site is owned by Council and as mentioned above it is part of a potential development site (Block 21) in the Gladesville Commercial Precinct. The recent GSV development application for this site was opposed by many in the community as it did not propose significant tangible community benefits and it assumed the cottage at 10 Cowell Street would be moved/demolished.

The cottage became a focal point for many objectors and the fact that Council had not already listed the building as a heritage item was portrayed as a failing, as it appeared many objectors had the false view that if the building was heritage listed it could not be altered/moved or demolished.

In a recent memo (July 2014) Council's Heritage Advisor stated that:

"in his view the cottage is significant at a local level and in the context of the Gladesville area". He goes on to comment that "there are approximately 206 timber houses listed under Schedule 5 (Environmental Heritage) of Council's current Local Environmental Plan 2012, meaning that in the broader context of the Hunters Hill LGA, it could not be considered rare."

"Block 21" is constrained by many factors including, a right of way, adjoining residential properties, existing linkages to Victoria Road shops and the heritage value of 10 Cowell Street. Every option for the cottage at 10 Cowell Street – retention or alteration/moving/demolishing has associated benefits and costs. Prior to further decisions being made about 10 Cowell Street it is considered these benefits and costs need to be fully discussed and understood by the community, Council and the applicant.

The applicant has withdrawn their first proposal for "Block 21" but has advised they will be lodging another proposal and that this time they intend to engage more proactively with the community prior to finalising their design. Council has also recently agreed to employ a consultant to carry out a public education campaign to convey the history of the development controls in Gladesville, the nature of forthcoming change and canvas difficult issues such as the future of the cottage at 10 Cowell Street.

Immediately commencing the process (which includes exhibition) that is required to list 10 Cowell Street will result in an illogical sequencing of work and divert limited resources from the agreed strategic planning schedule which shows all potential heritage items deferred during the making of LEP 2012 are to be assessed in 2015 during the first major amendment to the LEP.

The cottage is not under threat as it belongs to Council and therefore time is available to allow Council's consultant to discuss with the community the costs/benefits of the various options for the cottage. It is suggested that Council wait until it has these results before pursuing the heritage listing of the cottage.

For the following reasons it is considered the pursuit of the heritage listing of 10 Cowell Street should remain in the work schedule for 2015:

1. Public consultation addressing a potential "brand" for the Gladesville commercial precinct and community priorities and the cost of options for the cottage will commence over the forthcoming months. It is conceivable that the result of this work may provide new and/or clearer insights about community perspectives and the development site.

2. Waiting until the end of the year before pursuing the listing of the cottage does not expose the cottage to any risk as it is not under threat of being demolished as it belongs to Council.
3. Pursuing the heritage listing now will result in an inefficient use of council's limited resources. The agreed strategic planning schedule identifies that the 17 potential heritage items deferred during the making of LEP 2012 are to be addressed in 2015.
4. The cottage is not of state heritage value and is not considered "rare" as there are 206 timber cottages already listed as heritage items in schedule 5 of LEP 2012. While a heritage listing does not mean the cottage cannot be altered/moved or demolished many members of the community may believe this. Therefore listing the cottage has the potential to create further confusion if for reasons of substantial community benefit; one of these options is to be pursued.

The process to list a potential heritage item in a LEP involves the following steps:

1. Notification of owners of the potential heritage items.
2. Preparation of planning proposal to amend LEP 2012 submitted to Department of Planning and Environment asking for approval to proceed with amendment.
3. Notice of approval to proceed with exhibition and the amendment.
4. Notification of owners and neighbours of potential heritage items.
5. Exhibition (28 days) of Heritage Inventory Sheets for potential heritage items.
6. Assessment of submissions.
7. Report to Council.
8. Amendments made to LEP instrument and maps.
9. Report to Department of Planning and Environment.
10. Amended LEP - gazetted and published on legislation website.

As the process to list an item is time consuming and costly it is not recommended for one potential item. Therefore, if Council considers it must immediately commence the process of pursuing the heritage listing of 10 Cowell Street it is strongly recommended this be done in conjunction with the other 16 items deferred at the same time as 10 Cowell during the making of LEP 2012. The full list of properties are shown below:

- i. 10 Cowell Street Gladesville
- ii. 80 Alexandra Street Hunters Hill
- iii. 2 Alfred Street Hunters Hill
- iv. 4 Alfred Street Hunters Hill
- v. 16 Barons Crescent Hunters Hill
- vi. 24 Bonnefin Road Hunters Hill

- vii. 26 Bonnefin Road Hunters Hill
- viii. 1 Ellesmere Avenue Hunters Hill
- ix. 1 Mount Street Hunters Hill
- x. 5 Prince Edward Parade Hunters Hill
- xi. 7 Reiby Road Hunters Hill
- xii. 11 Toocooya Road Hunters Hill
- xiii. 25 Huntleys Point Road Huntleys Point
- xiv. 53 Huntleys Point Road Huntleys Point
- xv. 55 Huntleys Point Road Huntleys Point
- xvi. 71 Huntleys Point Road Huntleys Point
- xvii. 53 The Point Road Woolwich

CONCLUSION

More information is required about the costs and benefits associated with the various future options for the cottage at 10 Cowell Street. The cottage is not under threat as it is owned by Council and therefore it is considered in the Council's best interest to understand fully the various cost/benefit scenarios and convey them to the community before any further action is taken with regard to 10 Cowell Street. For this reason, the preferred recommendation would be that Council adhere to the agreed strategic planning work schedule and pursue the listing of 10 Cowell Street in 2015 with the other 16 deferred potential heritage items. By this time the outcome of the agreed public education/consultation program will be known.

If however, Council wants to immediately pursue the heritage listing of 10 Cowell Street then an alternate recommendation would be that Council commences with the process of listing the 17 potential heritage items (the entire group of items) that were postponed during the making of LEP 2012. The administrative process (refer body of report) for listing a potential item is so involved and time consuming carrying it out for a single property is to be avoided.

FINANCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Amendments to LEP 2012 will be done by Council staff and therefore there are no direct financial costs associated with altering when Council carries out this work. However, altering the agreed strategic planning work schedule will mean Council staff have to rearrange work priorities.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

There is no direct environmental impact on Council arising from Council consideration of this matter.

SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

There is no direct social impact on Council arising from Council consideration of this matter.

RISK ASSESSMENT

If the listing of 10 Cowell Street is pursued in isolation, Council will be duplicating work as the administrative process required to undertake amendments to an LEP will need to be repeated in 2015 for the other 16 potential heritage items deferred during the making of LEP 2012.

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This matter relates to ensuring that heritage and conservation of the area is respected, preserved and enhanced including the preservation of the character, views to and from the Municipality, and the preservation of the tree canopy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A. PREFERRED OPTION:

That Council note the content of this report and resolve to revisit the matter of listing 10 Cowell Street and the other 16 pending potential items, that were deferred from assessment during the making of LEP 2012, after the agreed public education/ consultation program canvassing all the cost/benefit options for the cottage have been undertaken.

B. ALTERNATE OPTION:

That Council commence to list the 17 potential heritage items (as shown below) that were deferred from assessment during the making of LEP 2012, commencing with the community consultation process with all the property owners (as shown below) and a further report will be brought back to Council after initial consultation is complete:

- i. 10 Cowell Street Gladesville
- ii. 80 Alexandra Street Hunters Hill
- iii. 2 Alfred Street Hunters Hill
- iv. 4 Alfred Street Hunters Hill
- v. 16 Barons Crescent Hunters Hill
- vi. 24 Bonnefin Road Hunters Hill
- vii. 26 Bonnefin Road Hunters Hill
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- xvi. 71 Huntleys Point Road Huntleys Point
- xvii. 53 The Point Road Woolwich

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1. Question posed by Cllr McLaughlin at Ordinary Meeting 4362 – 14 July 2014
- 2. Letter from Hunters Hill Trust dated 24 June 2014
- 3. Address to Council from Hunters Hill Trust dated 14 July 2014