



## PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING – 20 MAY 2014

Item 4 – Planning Proposal to List Strathfield Synagogue as a Local Heritage Item

For the Motion: Councillors Bott, Kokkolis, McLucas, Soulos and Vaccari

Against the Motion: Nil

### REPORTS BY OFFICERS

#### 4. Planning Proposal to List Strathfield Synagogue as a Local Heritage Item

In accordance with Council's Code of Meeting Practice the following persons addressed the meeting:

#### Against the Planning Proposal

Mrs Beverley Brandon  
On behalf of Strathfield Synagogue

Mr Rodney Brender  
On behalf of Strathfield Synagogue

#### P35/14

**RESOLVED:** (Bott/Kokkolis)

1. That Council note the findings of the updated Strathfield Synagogue Heritage Assessment Report by Architectural Projects for the Strathfield Synagogue at 19 Florence Street, Strathfield (refer to Attachment 1).
2. That Council resolve to endorse the draft Planning Proposal (refer Attachment 2) to attempt to amend Schedule 5 Environmental Heritage and Heritage Map of Strathfield Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2012 to list Strathfield Synagogue at 19 Florence Street Strathfield (Lots 1-5 DP 456916, Lots 13-15 DP 581) as a local heritage item.
3. That Council resolve to forward the Planning Proposal to the Department of Planning and Environment to commence the LEP plan making process under s56 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act).

For the Motion: Councillors Bott, Kokkolis, Soulos and Vaccari

Against the Motion: Councillor McLucas

*Report by Ash Chand, Acting Manager Strategic Planning*

### **RECOMMENDATION**

- 1. That Council note the findings of the updated Strathfield Synagogue Heritage Assessment Report by Architectural Projects for the Strathfield Synagogue at 19 Florence Street, Strathfield (refer to Attachment 1).**
- 2. That Council resolve to endorse the draft Planning Proposal (refer Attachment 2) to attempt to amend Schedule 5 Environmental Heritage and Heritage Map of Strathfield Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2012 to list Strathfield Synagogue at 19 Florence Street Strathfield (Lots 1-5 DP 456916, Lots 13-15 DP 581) as a local heritage item.**
- 3. That Council resolve to forward the Planning Proposal to the Department of Planning and Environment to commence the LEP plan making process under s56 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act).**

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

Council at its Liveable Neighbourhoods Committee meeting on 19 November 2013, resolved (Minute No. P88/13):

- "1. That the matter be Deferred for further information to be provided.*
- 2. That Council investigate the issues raised at the Liveable Neighbourhoods Committee Meeting further and that a further report be provided to Council following the completion of the investigation."*

This report provides an update to the proposed listing of the Strathfield Synagogue as a Local Heritage Item.

### **REPORT**

#### **Background**

On 9 April 2013 Council resolved "That Strathfield Council conduct a heritage review of Strathfield Synagogue at 19 Florence Street, Strathfield to determine if this building is of local heritage significance." Following a competitive quotation process, Architectural Projects Pty Ltd were engaged by Council in June 2013 to undertake the Heritage Assessment Report including a recommendation as to whether or not to list the Strathfield Synagogue at 19 Florence Street Strathfield as a local heritage item.

Architectural Projects Pty Ltd assessed the heritage significance of the subject site identified from documentary and physical evidence including historical significance, historical associations, aesthetic values, social value, rarity, representativeness and intactness.

The assessment of the synagogue as a potential local heritage item concluded that local heritage listing was justified on the grounds of historic, aesthetic and social significance as outlined in the Strathfield Synagogue Heritage Assessment Report by Architectural Projects Pty Ltd, dated 13

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September 2013, which concluded the synagogue met the threshold for local significance and therefore supported the potential listing as a local heritage item (refer Attachment 3).

The findings of Architectural Projects heritage assessment of the Strathfield Synagogue were reported to Council on 8 October 2013 (Item TS1. Heritage Review Strathfield Synagogue) where it was resolved that a Planning Proposal be prepared to amend Schedule 5 Environmental Heritage and Heritage Map of Strathfield Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2012 to list Strathfield Synagogue as a local heritage item.

On 19 November 2013, a draft Planning Proposal was presented to Council with a recommendation to amend Schedule 5 Environmental Heritage and Heritage Map of Strathfield Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2012 to list Strathfield Synagogue. At this meeting, objections were raised by members of the governing board of the synagogue to the draft Planning Proposal to amend the LEP. Council resolved to defer the matter so that the issues raised in the meeting could be further investigated and an updated report provided.

Updated Heritage Assessment Report

Architectural Projects Pty Ltd were subsequently engaged to undertake a further assessment of the issues raised as per the aforementioned Council resolution on 19 November 2013. The key findings of this updated Strathfield Synagogue Heritage Assessment Report, dated 10 March 2014 (refer to Attachment 1) are as follows:

- The Strathfield Synagogue Complex, established on the site in 1949, has historical significance for its ability to evidence the dramatic increase in Jewish population in the post war period, and the expansion into the Sydney Suburbs in this period.
- The Complex has historical significance for its ability to illustrate the development of Strathfield as a centre for the Jewish Community in Western Sydney and to evidence the development of the Strathfield and District Hebrew Community since 1950's.
- The Complex also has important associations with the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, and illustrates the importance of education in the developing Jewish Community in Strathfield in the mid 20th Century.
- The Strathfield Synagogue Complex has significance because of its association with the Congregation, including Holocaust survivors, who came to live in the Strathfield District in the mid 20th Century.
- The 1959 building has aesthetic significance as a good example of the work of prominent modernist émigré architect HP Oser.
  - The main form of the 1959 building and Synagogue Hall interior remain substantially intact. It exemplifies the Post war International Style, despite additions to the entry and to the west.
- The Synagogue has been the focus of Jewish communal worship and culture in western Sydney since its construction in 1959 and has social significance for its ongoing associations with the Strathfield and District Hebrew Community, now greatly diminished in number.

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- The 1959 building has social significance because of its importance to the local Congregation in the Post war period.
  - Memorial plaques and plantings commemorate holocaust victims as well as individuals associated with the Strathfield Congregation.
  - The petition (12,000 signatures) to save the Synagogue and the extended legal battle over the use of the building evidence ongoing community esteem for the building within the broader Jewish community.
- The 1959 building has rarity significance as the only surviving purpose built synagogue from the post war period in the Western suburbs of Sydney and as a rare surviving example of Post war International Style in Strathfield.
- The 1959 building has representative significance as part of a small group of fine International Style Synagogues, designed by emigrant architects in the post war period (1958-63) that collectively illustrates a type.
- The significance of a building can be appreciated even though the use has ceased to exist. This is typical of churches and also other building types such as cinemas, theatres and school of arts.
- The significance of the site is best represented in the fabric of the 1959 Synagogue building designed by HP Oser.
- The significance of the site of Strathfield Synagogue does not require retention of any other buildings on the site.
- The significance of the site does not restrict future subdivision of the site, nor does it limit the number of potential lots permissible (subject to relevant legislative requirements and any necessary approval).

Based on this heritage review and assessment by Architectural Projects Pty Ltd, it is recommended that Council resolve to proceed with the Planning Proposal to attempt to list the Strathfield Synagogue as a Local Heritage Item.

#### The Planning Proposal

The draft Planning Proposal (refer Attachment 2) proposes to protect the heritage significance and cultural heritage of the Strathfield Synagogue by listing it as an item of local heritage in Strathfield LEP 2012.

The listing of the subject site as a heritage item in Strathfield LEP 2012 aims to ensure that the heritage significance of the site is conserved and protected. The second heritage assessment undertaken by Architectural Projects Pty Ltd has provided detailed justification for its listing based on its social, aesthetic, historical and cultural significance. The updated assessment has also advised that the heritage significance of the Strathfield Synagogue allows for adaptive reuse of the potential heritage listed item and that the listing would not adversely restrict the future subdivision of the property.

The draft Planning Proposal has been prepared in accordance with the Department of Planning and Environment's (formerly Department of Planning and Infrastructure) *Guide to Preparing Planning*

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*Proposals.* It is considered that the specific matters and requirements of section 55 of the EP&A Act have been adequately addressed in the Planning Proposal (refer Attachment 2).

LEP Plan Making Process

For Council to attempt to amend Schedule 5 Environmental Heritage in Strathfield LEP 2012 the Department of Planning and Environment's LEP plan making process needs to be followed (refer Attachment 5).

The LEP plan making process involves the following major steps:

- Proponent (Council or applicant) suggests potential amendment to existing LEP.
- Proponent formally requests Council to consider the proposed amendment (i.e. lodges Planning Proposal).
- Council considers whether to initially support the proposed amendment to commence the LEP plan making process (Current Stage of Process).
- Council agrees to support the amendment.
- A Planning Proposal is then submitted to NSW Planning and Infrastructure.
- NSW Planning and Infrastructure undertake an assessment and issue the Gateway Determination on whether or not to give Council the authority to continue the process and whether any additional studies are required.
- Council publicly exhibits the Planning Proposal.
- Council considers the submissions received and whether or not to amend and submit the Planning Proposal to NSW Planning and Infrastructure to undertake its final assessment or submit to Parliamentary Counsel if the plan making is delegated to Council.
- The plan is then notified and comes into effect.

The main document to support a LEP amendment is the Planning Proposal which explains the intended effect of the proposed LEP and justification for making the LEP. This document needs to be prepared in accordance with the Department of Planning and Environment's "A Guide to Preparing Planning Proposals" and "A Guide to Preparing Local Environmental Plans."

The preparation of this Planning Proposal is currently at the second and third stage of the LEP Plan Making process diagram (refer Attachment 1) i.e for Council to consider supporting the applicant's Planning Proposal and proposed LEP amendment prior to submitting to NSW Planning and Infrastructure.

Conclusion

The findings of the updated Heritage Review by Architectural Projects Pty Ltd recommend the Strathfield Synagogue site at 19 Florence Street Strathfield be included in Strathfield LEP 2012 as a local heritage item. The Planning Proposal (refer Attachment 2) supports and formalises this recommendation.

Subject to Council approval it is intended to submit the Planning Proposal to the Department of Planning and Environment to commence the LEP plan making process under s56 of the EP&A Act 1979, to have the Synagogue listed as a local heritage item in LEP 2012.

**REFERRAL FROM OTHER DEPARTMENT**

Referral has been made with the Development Assessment section.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no current financial implications to Council in regard to the proposal.

It should be noted that the preparation of this Planning Proposal and the other stages of this process such as liaison with the Department of Planning and Environment, organising the community consultation, assessing the submissions and reporting to Council requires a significant allocation of Council staff time and resources. This proposal is not specifically identified in Council's operational plan targets.

**ATTACHMENTS**

1. Strathfield Synagogue Heritage Assessment by Architectural Projects (10 March 2014).
2. Draft Planning Proposal to list Strathfield Synagogue as a Local Heritage Item (May 2014).
3. Strathfield Synagogue Heritage Assessment by Architectural Projects (13 September 2013).
4. LEP Plan Making Process Diagram (A Guide to Preparing Local Environmental Plans, (Department of Planning and Environment, formerly Department of Planning and Infrastructure October 2012).

Note: Attachments 1 & 3 will be tabled at the Council meeting and are available for viewing by contacting Council.

**Report approved by:**

David Hazeldine
<b>Director Technical Services</b>