

# Nowra CBD

## Heritage Study for Nowra CBD Fringe Planning Proposal

For Shoalhaven City Council



Louise Thom Heritage Consultants

M 0421 983 971

E [info@louisethomheritage.com.au](mailto:info@louisethomheritage.com.au)

W [www.louisethomheritage.com.au](http://www.louisethomheritage.com.au)

P.O. Box 155, Corimal NSW 2518

---

Cover Image: Examples of houses in the Nowra CBD West study area.

NOWRA CBD FRINGE HERITAGE STUDY			
ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	DATE ISSUED	SENT TO
A	Draft	27/02/2019	Molly Porter SCC
B	Final	29/03/2019	Molly Porter SCC

## Table of Contents

Table of Figures.....	4
<b>1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2. INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1. Report Objectives.....	5
2.2. Methodology and Structure.....	5
2.3. Authorship.....	6
2.4. Report limitations.....	6
2.5. Location.....	6
2.6. Study Area.....	7
<b>3. EXISTING HERITAGE STATUS.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>4. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.....</b>	<b>9</b>
Timeline (Freeman, 1998).....	9
Key Historic Themes.....	9
<b>5. PHYSICAL EVIDENCE.....</b>	<b>12</b>
Examples of Key Historic Periods.....	12
<b>6. SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT.....</b>	<b>16</b>
6.1. Significance Assessment Criteria.....	16
6.2. Revised Summary Statement of Significance.....	18
<b>7. REVIEW OF PROPOSED HCA BOUNDARY.....</b>	<b>19</b>
7.1. Analysis of surrounding area.....	19
.....	19
7.2. Analysis of proposed HCA boundary.....	20
<b>8. REVIEW OF PROPOSED PLANNING CONTROLS.....</b>	<b>24</b>
8.1. Proposed HCA.....	24
8.2. Proposed Height of Buildings.....	24
8.3. Proposed Land Zoning.....	25
8.4. Recommendations for DCP controls.....	26
Studio GL DCP Recommendations.....	26
Recommended additions to the DCP.....	27
Existing Shoalhaven DCP 2014.....	28
<b>9. HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT.....</b>	<b>29</b>
9.1 Heritage impact assessment on SHR items.....	29
Meroogal.....	29
Graham Lodge.....	30
9.2 Heritage impact assessment on Local heritage items.....	32
<b>10. CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>33</b>
Recommendations.....	33

11. REFERENCES.....	33
APPENDIX 1.....	34

### Table of Figures

Figure 1. Location of Nowra CBD (SIX Maps) .....	6
Figure 2. Study Area map by Shoalhaven City Council showing proposed HCA hatched and marked C5 (SCC) .....	7
Figure 3. Shoalhaven LEP 2014 Heritage Map 013E (extract) showing heritage items in proposed HCA or its vicinity. The Plunket Street HCA C2 is just outside the proposed HCA. ....	8
Figure 4. Extract from the Town of Nowra map of 1928. The concentration of developed house lots is in the centre of the plan. (Historic Land Records Viewer).....	10
Figure 5 A description of the ballot for houses in Oliver Parade (Argus, 1950) .....	11
Figure 6. Federation house in Worrigee Street .....	12
Figure 7. Interwar house in Shoalhaven Street.....	13
Figure 8 Inter-war dwelling in Osborne Street .....	13
Figure 9 Inter war bungalow in Osborne Street .....	13
Figure 10. Post-war fibro house in Worrigee Street .....	14
Figure 11 Post-war house in Junction Street .....	14
Figure 12 Housing Commission houses in Oliver Parade (1949) .....	15
Figure 13. 1950s Housing Commission in Leaney Avenue .....	15
Figure 14 Rare semi-detached fibro Housing Commission houses in Leaney Avenue .....	15
Figure 15. Examples of contributory buildings in Osborne Street opposite the proposed HCA .....	19
Figure 16. Area proposed as Heritage Conservation Area shown defined by red line .....	20
Figure 17. Suggested amendment to the southern end of the proposed HCA. The shaded area with dashed red line is recommended for inclusion in the HCA.....	21
Figure 18 Suggested amendment to include Oliver Parade .....	21
Figure 19. Northern end of proposed HCA. The unshaded area is proposed to be removed from the proposed HCA .....	22
Figure 20 Recommended HCA boundary shown dashed and shaded.....	23
Figure 21. Left: Existing height of building map under Shoalhaven LEP2014. Right: Proposed changes to the height of buildings map.....	24
Figure 22 Left: Existing Zoning map in SLEP2014 Right: Proposed land zoning amendment.....	25
Figure 23. Meroogal viewed from Worrigee Street (photo by L. Thom) .....	29
Figure 24. SHR Plan showing curtilage of Meroogal .....	30
Figure 25. Graham Lodge facing east away from the CBD West study area. The former RSL building is on the left and the trees screening the Princes Highway are behind. (Photo by L. Thom) .....	31
Figure 26. SHR Plan showing curtilage of Graham Lodge .....	32

## 1. Executive Summary

---

The Planning Proposal for the Nowra CBD Fringe Area will have positive heritage outcomes. The creation of the new Nowra Town Centre West Heritage Conservation Area (proposed HCA C5) will enable Council to manage development so as to conserve the significance and character of the area. The proposed HCA contains buildings, landscapes and streetscapes that represent four key periods which are significant in the history of the Shoalhaven. The concentration of Victorian, Federation, Inter-war and Post-war buildings in the Nowra Town Centre West Area demonstrates the evolution of architectural styles and the history of housing from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the 1950s.

I have recommended a change in the boundary of the proposed HCA to exclude areas where there are large areas of non-contributory buildings. I recommend expanding the HCA boundary to include Oliver Parade which is in the study area but not the proposed HCA. Oliver Parade is an excellent example of very early Housing Commission development in the Post-war period. The streetscape and buildings are very intact and have the ability to demonstrate this important historical period.

The statement of significance for the Nowra Town Centre West Heritage Conservation Area (proposed HCA C5) has been revised as part of this report and I recommend that it be adopted.

There will be no impact upon the State Heritage listed properties Meroogal and Graham Lodge as a result of the PP.

## 2. Introduction

---

### 2.1. Report Objectives

The Nowra CBD Fringe Planning Proposal (PP) requires further heritage work in order to understand the heritage implications of the proposal. This report provides a background study that will inform the PP and meet the requirements of the Office of Environment and Heritage (Heritage Division) and Shoalhaven City Council. This report builds on the substantial amount of heritage work which Council has already completed and provides a professional evaluation of that work.

### 2.2. Methodology and Structure

This report will:

- Provide professional heritage advice to review the existing work that has been done by Council.
- Review the statement of significance and the proposed boundary of the proposed Heritage Conservation Area (HCA).
- Analyse the study area to establish whether other areas should be included in the HCA or if some areas should not be included.
- Review the proposed PP and DCP controls, including proposed contributory designations.
- Recommend any additional DCP objectives and controls if necessary.
- Assess the impact of the Planning Proposal on the State Heritage Register items – Meroogal and Graham Lodge.

The document is guided by the policies and publications of the Office of Environment and Heritage. It is also guided by the principles of the Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance (Burra Charter).

### 2.3. Authorship

This report was prepared by Louise Thom, Heritage Consultant. Most of the background field work was undertaken by Molly Porter, Strategic Planner, Shoalhaven City Council. All photographs unless otherwise specified were taken by Louise Thom and Molly Porter.

### 2.4. Report limitations

This report is not a traditional heritage study. Rather it builds upon the work undertaken in the Nowra CBD Fringe Medium Density Study and the subsequent work undertaken by Shoalhaven Council to better understand the built form and fabric of the area.

This report is limited to the study area shown in figure 2. Where there are areas outside the study area with notable character they will be discussed in the body of the report but not included in the recommendations.

### 2.5. Location



Figure 1. Location of Nowra CBD (SIX Maps)



## 2.6. Study Area

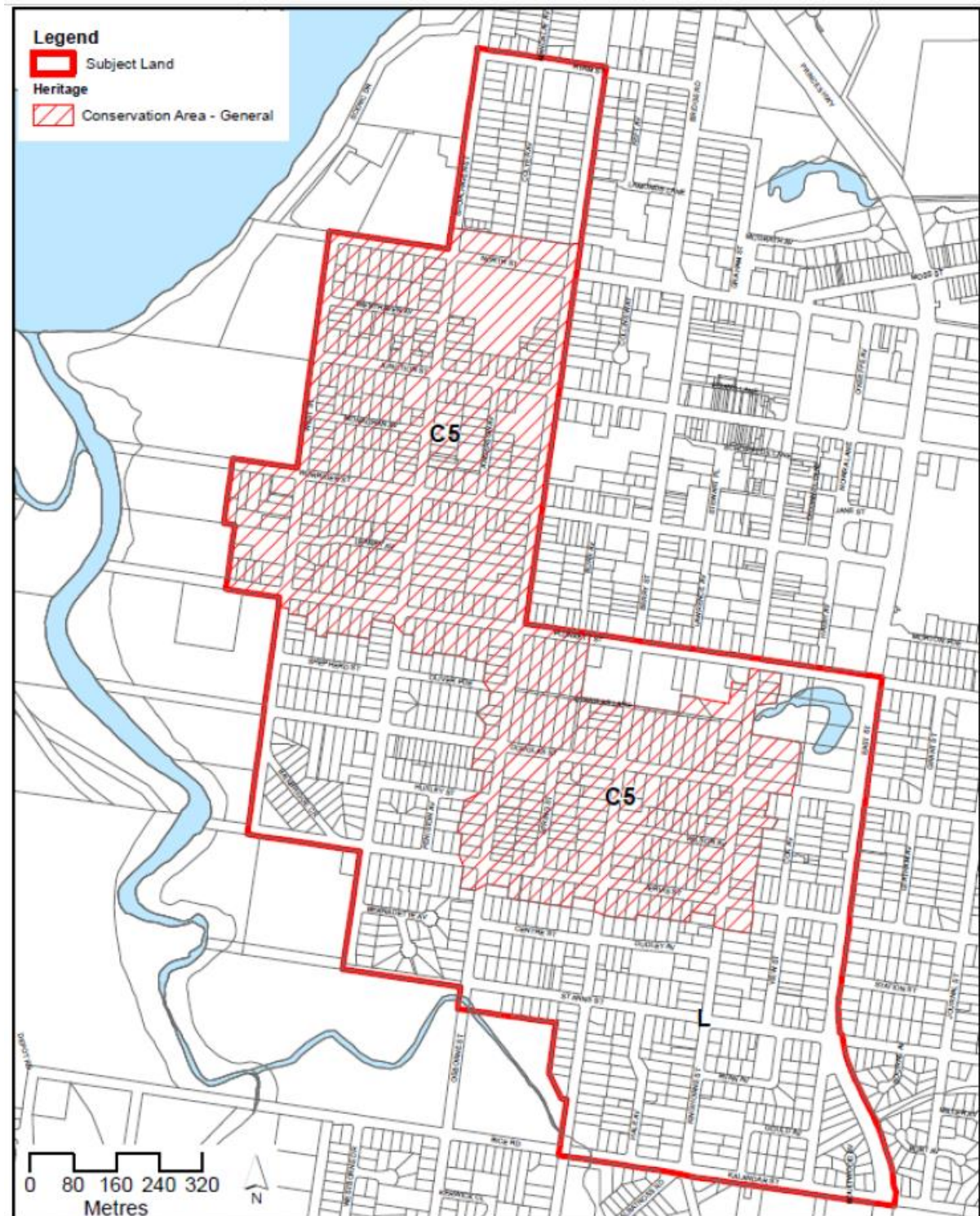


Figure 2. Study Area map by Shoalhaven City Council showing proposed HCA hatched and marked C5 (SCC)

### 3. Existing Heritage Status

The study area contains a number of heritage items listed on Schedule Five in Shoalhaven Local Environmental Plan 2014. The location of these heritage items is identified on the map in figure 3.

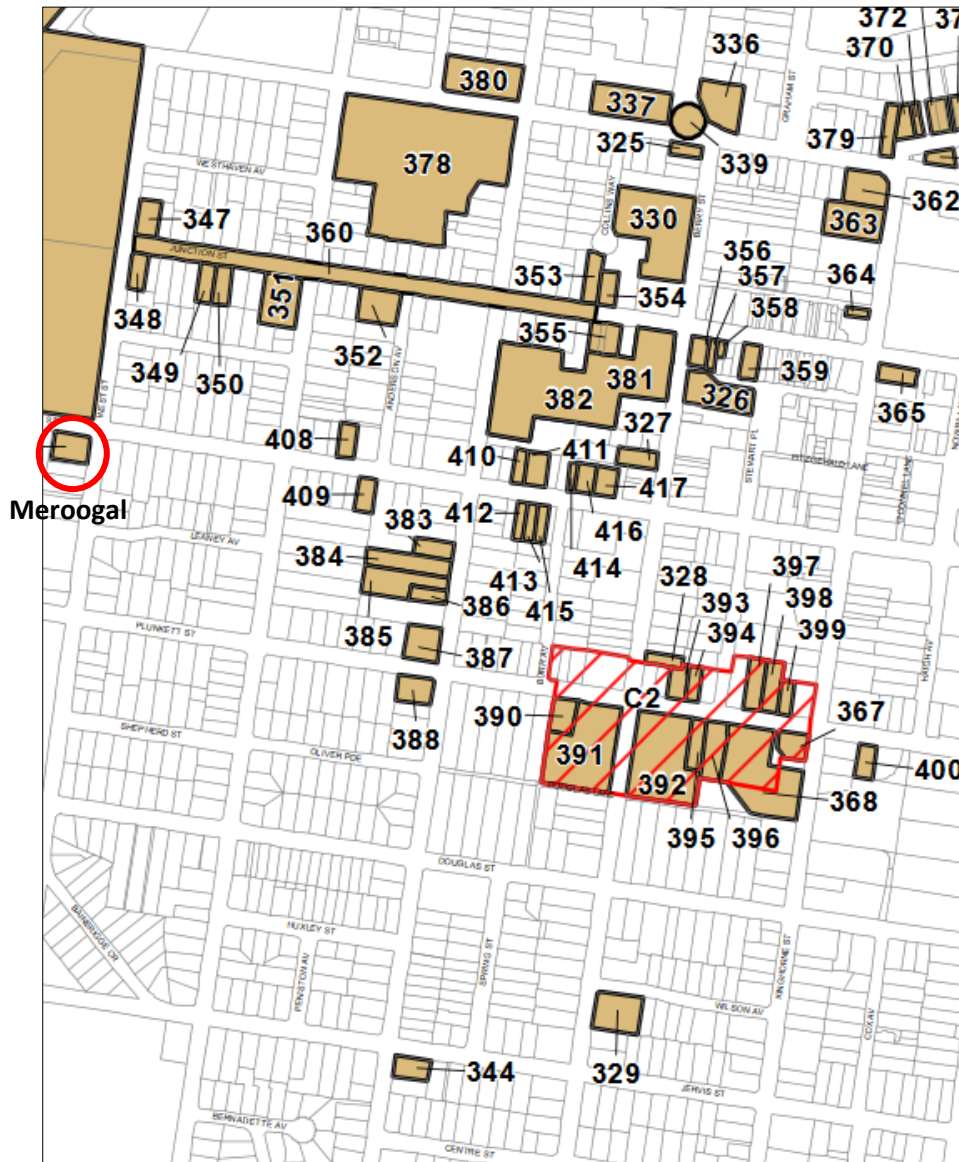


Figure 3. Shoalhaven LEP 2014 Heritage Map 013E (extract) showing heritage items in proposed HCA or its vicinity. The Plunkett Street HCA C2 is just outside the proposed HCA.

Within the study area is one property listed on the State Heritage Register of NSW. Meroogal, 35 West Street, Nowra Lot F DP 412255 is listed as SHR 00953 and is currently used as a house museum. Meroogal is shown circled in figure 3.



## 4. Historical Background

### *Timeline (Freeman, 1998)*

- Alexander Berry built the road to Berry and then to Bomaderry in 1858. This had the long-term effect of preparing for the slow rise of Nowra to late Victorian ascendancy.
- The Shoalhaven River bridge opened in 1881
- Sydney-South Coast railway line was extended to Bomaderry in 1893
- Illawarra Steam Navigation Co established an office at Nowra 1904
- Numbaa and Terara were the centre of government and administration in the 1850s and 1860s however the sites were affected by significant floods in 1860s and 1870s
- 1855 first land sales in the proclaimed township of Nowra
- 1859 there were only sixteen dwelling houses, five of these weatherboard and the rest slab cottages with shingle or bark roofs.
- 1860 Courthouse in Plunkett Street
- 1891 the showground moved to Nowra from Terara
- Nowra was a government town, it had a legal and educational focus around the intersection of Plunkett and Berry Streets in the very centre of the grid pattern.
- The business section of the town, which grew rapidly, lay on the axis of Junction Street and its central intersections with Berry and Kinghorne Streets. The business area therefore was centred to the north-east, the government area to the south-west of the early CBD.
- Housing Commission acquisitions took place in the 1940s and with construction in the 1950s.
- The regular square grid of the government town of Nowra created a road system without a dominant street direction. In general the proliferation of public buildings along Plunkett Street led to the associated development of the surrounding street system for housing eg Worrigee and Osborne Streets. The arrival of the railway at Bomaderry in 1893 reinforced the role of the Shoalhaven Road Bridge erected in 1881 and led to the decline of Moss Street for communication and the rise of Bridge Street as the main entrance to the town from the north.

### *Key Historic Themes*

Nowra had its first major development phase after the opening of the bridge and the arrival of the railway. The Federation period is important as the first prolific phase of domestic building in Nowra, 1890-1915.

The Inter-War period c.1915-c.1940 is the second key period of significant development in domestic building. The dominant Inter-War style is Californian Bungalow with a small number of Georgian Revival and classically styled examples. In keeping with the origins of the Bungalow style weatherboard predominates as the cladding material for buildings with deep set brick pillared front verandahs. The Inter-war period is the most represented housing period in the proposed HCA.

Table 1. Key historic periods

Dates	Period	Description
1850 to 1890	Victorian	Slow development as the shift is slowly made from Numba and Terara after the devastating floods
1890 to 1915	Federation	Increase in growth with opening of the bridge and the railway.
1915 to 1940	Inter-war	Substantial period of growth in housing in West Nowra CBD
1940 to late 1950s	Post-war	Period of infill growth through Housing Commission developments

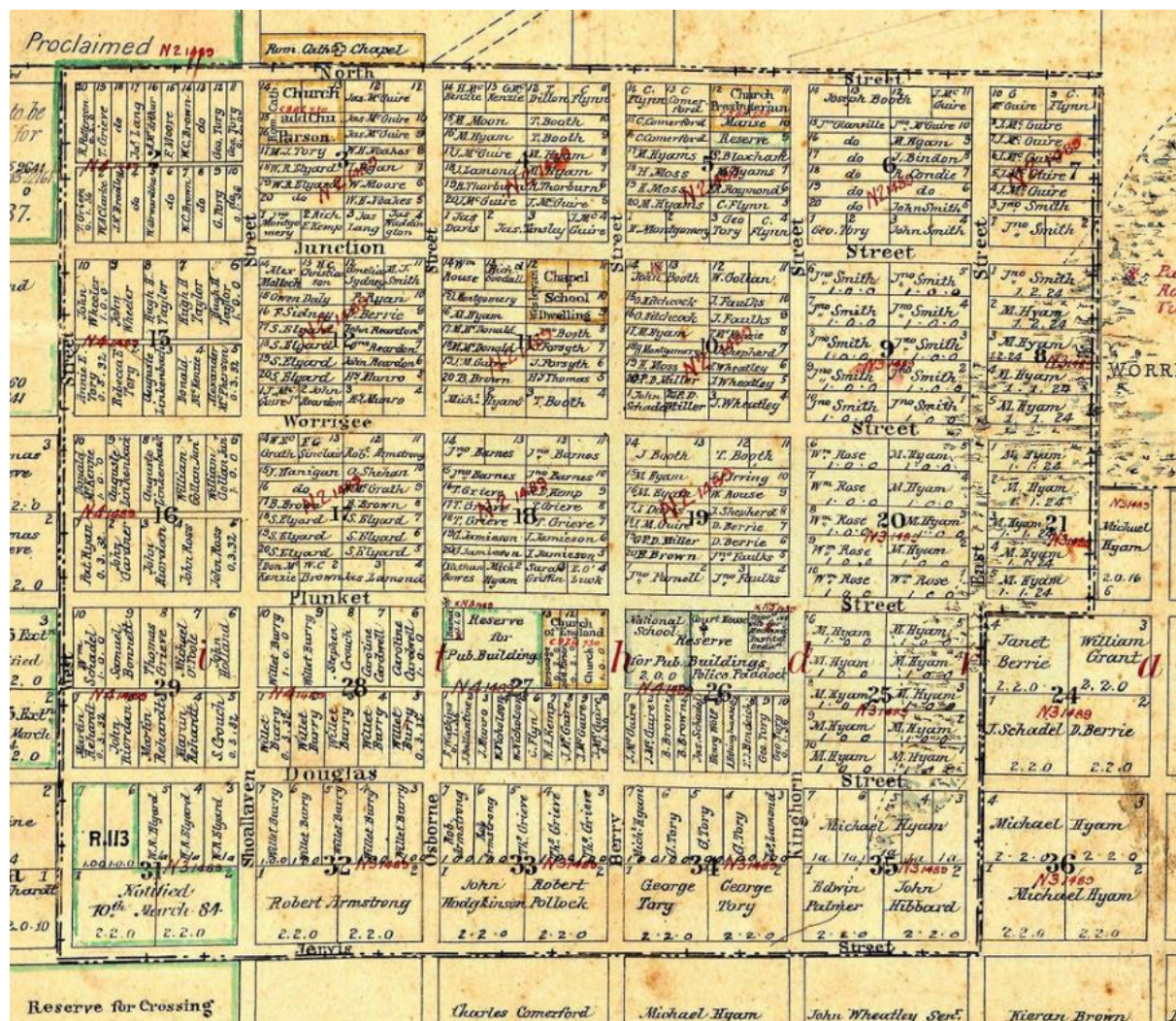


Figure 4. Extract from the Town of Nowra map of 1928. The concentration of developed house lots is in the centre of the plan. (Historic Land Records Viewer)

The original Deposited Plan number for Nowra was DP758794 which provides an indication of where subdivision or amalgamation has occurred.

The Housing Commission of NSW was established in 1941 by the Housing Act. Prior to this public housing was made available under the 1912 Housing Act. From as early as 1946 the Housing Commission acquired considerable amounts of land and built public housing in Nowra. The southern part of the study area was subject to large areas of land acquisition by the Housing Commission in



the 1940s and 1950s. Within the proposed HCA there are examples of these acquisitions and housing programs undertaken in the 1940s and 1950s. Leaney Avenue for example was created by subdivision of Section 16 through an acquisition by the Housing Commission in 1950<sup>1</sup>. Similarly Oliver Parade was also built in 1950. Demand for houses was high and the Commission held public ballots for access to these properties.

### 51 IN NOWRA HOUSING BALLOT

There were 51 participants for the three **Housing** Commission homes drawn at the Nowra School of Arts on Thursday.

The ballot was conducted by Mr. J. Sinclair, of the Commission, Wollongong branch.

In attendance were members of the Nowra Tenancy Advisory Committee, Mr. P. O'Keeffe (chairman), Mrs. H. Wilson (C.W.A.) and Mr. R. Mofflett, (A.L.P.).

The homes in Oliver Parade off Shoalhaven Street, comprise one 2-bedroom house and two 3-bedroom houses.

There were 25 participants for the two bedroom house and the marble was drawn by Mrs. N. H. Phillips, a scrutineer.

After the marble had been withdrawn, Mrs. Phillips drew her own number out as first reserve.

The ballot for the three bedroom houses was divided into two sections, service and non-service. There were 13 applications for each section.

All homes are practically completed. During the last few months the Shoalhaven Shire Council has been constructing a sewerage main to the area. The homes are expected to be available for tenancy within a short period.

It is the aim of the Advisory Committee at Nowra to conduct a "hard luck" ballot for persons who have not been successful at ballots entered within the last two years.

Mr. J. Beale, South Coast Member, on behalf of Council and the committee, is making representations on the matter.

Typical of the many persons requiring homes, Mrs. Phillips told press representatives a story which strikes a sad note.

Her husband has been receiving shock treatment for a disability and the ballot was one of many they had entered for. At present they were living in a lane at Bomaderry, the majority of the time under water. Since Christmas, their two children had attended eight different schools.

Mrs. Phillips said: "I suppose I am lucky to be first reserve, but with the demand for houses the winner is sure to take advantage of the good luck. Fortunately, my husband is a little better now, but with the difficulty in securing a home and the places we have had to stay has made an old woman out of me."

The successful applicants were:—

Two bedroom home (25 applications): A. H. Hiscock (12), R.A.N. Station, Nowra. Reserves: Mrs. N. H. Phillips (20), Hannigans Lane, Bomaderry. J. A. Hubbard (14), Douglas

### BALGOWNIE AMATEUR FISHING CLUB

Some 21 members of this club went by bus to Jerry Bailey for a day's fishing on Sunday, Nov. 22.

Although a north-easter came during the day, some good catches were recorded.

Jimmy Duncombe carried off the trophy with a good bag of fish, and Bob Cram had the misfortune to lose his bag over the side of his boat.

Flathead and bream were caught by the members and everyone had a good day including the driver of the bus who is a keen fisherman.

The next fishing trip will be to Killarney on December 2, and the next meeting of the club will be held tomorrow night.

Lane, Nowra.

Two 3-bedroom homes (26 applications): Service—C. S. Miller (7), R.M.B., 316, Nowra. Reserves: L. G. Dand (3), 18 Worrige Street, Nowra. H. Stokes (11), 91 Berry Street, Nowra. Non-service—S. Cruckshank (2), Illaroo Road, Nowra. Reserves: G. Hope-Johnson (4), Palmer Road, Falls Creek. H. E. Mitchell (9), Lamond Road, Meroo Meadow.

Figure 5 A description of the ballot for houses in Oliver Parade (Argus, 1950)

In 1972 the NSW Housing Commission announced plans to build a housing estate of 1,108 homes – consisting of 561 cottages, 80 singles storey row houses, 20 single storey aged units, 202 two storey town houses and 165 three storey walk-up flats (Times, 1972). This growth occurred outside the study area.

<sup>1</sup> 1950 'HOUSING ACT, 1912-1949.—PUBLIC WORKS ACT, 1912, AS AMENDED.', *Government Gazette of the State of New South Wales (Sydney, NSW : 1901 - 2001)*, 17 March, p. 731., viewed 21 Feb 2019, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article220098961>

## 5. Physical Evidence

The streets in the centre of the study area have the most dwellings from the key historic periods. The 1928 town map reflects the development that had occurred or was occurring at that time (See Figure 4). The smaller lots show house lots that have been subdivided and sold. The concentration in 1928 is between North Street and Plunkett Street and Kinghorne and Shoalhaven Streets. With some blocks to the side of the grid.

Down the south of the study area lots appear larger on the 1928 map and were subdivided into house sized lots at a later date. This is reflected by the housing types seen in a visual inspection of the study area.

Doing a field inspection (see map in figure 7.) by walking several of the blocks within the study area I made the following observations:

Within the centre of the proposed HCA there is a diverse sampling of Federation, Inter-War and Post War dwellings. There is some later infill in the form of flat buildings from the 1960s and 1970s that are at odds with the predominant historic character of the area. Blocks that had Post-war subdivisions for Housing Commission estates such as Leaney Avenue and Oliver Parade have a high degree of intactness both in the buildings and the streetscape. These two streets contribute to the overall significance of the proposed HCA through their ability to demonstrate the key characteristics of the historic Post-war period.

In the many examples of Federation, Inter-War and Post-war housing there is varying degrees of intactness. Many examples have been altered and most would not reach the threshold for heritage listing in their own right. However these modified examples would be considered contributory in a Heritage Conservation Area.

### *Examples of Key Historic Periods*



Figure 6. Federation house in Worrigee Street





*Figure 7. Interwar house in Shoalhaven Street*



*Figure 8 Inter-war dwelling in Plunkett Street*



*Figure 9 Inter war bungalow in Shoalhaven Street*



The most common dwelling type that contributes to the heritage significance of the proposed HCA is the Inter-war house, see examples in figures 7, 8 and 9. Some have large lots with established gardens that also contribute to their heritage value. Wunderlich and James Hardy began mass producing fibre cement sheet in 1916 and 1917 and its use became more prevalent in the Inter-war houses where timber weatherboards were used to clad the house and fibro was used for gable ends. Fibro really came into prevalence after 1945 when WWII ended.

Post-war dwellings also make a contribution to the significance of the conservation area. Houses built in the Post-war period reflect the rise in residential growth in Nowra. In the proposed HCA there was in-filling of lots left over from the Inter-war period. Building materials were scarce and expensive after the war which lead to an increase in the use of fibro (see example in figure 10). Whilst there are many examples of Post-war fibro houses in the study area and in Nowra generally, the best examples in the HCA should be retained as contributory items to provide physical evidence of the development history of the HCA.



Figure 10. Post-war fibro house in Worrige Street



Figure 11 Post-war house in Junction Street

Development by the NSW Housing Commission started in the study area circa 1947. One of the earliest Housing Commission subdivisions and housing developments was the creation of Oliver



Parade in 1949<sup>2</sup>. Leaney Avenue was acquired at the same time and houses were being completed by 1950. The two streets demonstrate the public housing practices of the time which have been historically important in the development of the town of Nowra. Oliver Street is outside the proposed HCA in the Planning Proposal but inside the study area. It is recommended the boundary be adjusted to include Oliver Parade in the HCA, see section 7.0 of this report.



*Figure 12 Housing Commission houses in Oliver Parade (1949)*



*Figure 13. 1950s Housing Commission in Leaney Avenue*



*Figure 14 Rare semi-detached fibro Housing Commission houses in Leaney Avenue*

---

<sup>2</sup> Government Gazette NSW 25 Mar 1949 (Issue No.49)

A visual survey of the houses within the proposed HCA has been completed by Shoalhaven City Council. Each house has been photographed and mapped according to whether it has contributory value to the heritage significance of the HCA. Using this mapping together with the historical background the significance assessment has been reviewed in part 6.

## 6. Significance Assessment

The proposed statement of heritage significance for the draft HCA prepared by Shoalhaven City Council Planning Proposal is:

*The Nowra Town Centre West Heritage Conservation Area is of local historic and aesthetic significance as a good and largely intact residential precinct characterised by substantially intact streetscapes with an attractive character. The area includes a high number of predominately single storey detached houses from the key historical Victorian, Federation, Inter-war and Post War periods, including certain housing groupings which illustrate the local emergence of architectural styles. The built context is enhanced by the underlying grid structure, laid out in 1852 by surveyor Thomas Mann, based on Governor Darling's set of rules for laying out of towns based on a grid of square blocks 10 chains (around 200 metres) on each side, separated by streets 100 feet (30.4metres) wide. The underlying subdivision pattern reveals the terrain and elevated natural setting of the town of Nowra which was established as the dominant urban and administrative centre for the region following the devastating flooding of Numbaa and Terara in 1862 and 1870. The street proportions provide long distance views to the scenic rural landscape, Shoalhaven River or the Cambewarra escarpment, and the built context is further enhanced by street plantings and garden settings. The area is one of the oldest residential areas of Nowra and retains considerable evidence of Nowra's settlement and early expansion during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Infill housing development in the post war period is evidenced through a number of mid-block subdivisions with substantially intact streetscapes and houses. The area is a highly valued part of Nowra's social, cultural and economic history, and is reflective of more than a century of historical development through its mosaic of overlapping development phases, substantially intact buildings and streetscapes.*

### 6.1. Significance Assessment Criteria

The following criteria have been used in the assessment of cultural heritage significance. These criteria are the standard criteria for use in NSW that have been prepared for use by the Heritage Division of the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage and adapted here to apply to Shoalhaven City.<sup>3</sup>

For a place to be deemed to be significant to Shoalhaven City it must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- a) an item is important in the course, or pattern, of Shoalhaven City's cultural or natural history;
- b) an item has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Shoalhaven City's cultural or natural history;
- c) an item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in Shoalhaven City;

<sup>3</sup> See [www.heritage.nsw.gov.au](http://www.heritage.nsw.gov.au) for more information.

- d) an item has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in Shoalhaven City for social, cultural or spiritual reasons;
- e) an item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Shoalhaven City's cultural or natural history;
- f) an item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Shoalhaven City's cultural or natural history;
- g) an item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of Shoalhaven City's - cultural or natural places; or - cultural or natural environments.

Using the criteria outlined above the place is assessed against each criterion taking into consideration the history of the site; the fabric analysis and the comparative data. The Nowra Town Centre West Heritage Conservation Area (HCA) satisfies the following criteria at a local level.

**Criterion (a) Historical Value:** - *an item is important in the course, or pattern, of the City of Shoalhaven's cultural or natural history.*

The HCA has historical value for its ability to demonstrate Governor Darling's set of rules for laying out of towns through the underlying grid structure laid out in 1852 by surveyor Thomas Mann. The HCA provides physical evidence of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century residential development surrounding the administrative and commercial centre of Nowra which was established after floods devastated the centres of Numbaa and Terara in 1862 and 1870. The underlying subdivision pattern reveals the terrain and elevated natural setting of the town of Nowra which made it a superior site for settlement.

The HCA is one of the oldest residential areas of Nowra and retains considerable evidence of Nowra's settlement and early expansion during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The HCA is historically significant for its ability to demonstrate the historical development of housing in types and social attitudes to housing in Nowra from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century through to the 1950s.

The HCA provides evidence of the early work of the NSW Housing Commission to provide affordable housing by acquiring parcels of land within the existing Town Plan and building new streets and cottages.

**Criterion (b) Historical Association:** - *an item has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in the City of Shoalhaven's cultural or natural history.*

The HCA has minor historical association with surveyor Thomas Mann. It also has minor association with the NSW Housing Commission from 1949 to 1950.

**Criterion (c) Aesthetic Value:** - *an item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in the City of Shoalhaven.*

The HCA has aesthetic value as an example of the application of Governor Darling's set of rules for laying out of towns based on a grid of square blocks 10 chains (around 200 metres) on each side, separated by streets 100 feet (30.4metres) wide. The terrain and elevated natural setting of the HCA provide long distance views to the scenic rural landscape, Shoalhaven River or the Cambewarra escarpment, which is enhanced by street plantings and garden settings.

The residential buildings within the HCA provide evidence of the local emergence of architectural styles representative of different periods including late Victorian, Federation, Inter-War, Post-war and public housing. Infill housing development in the post war period is evidenced through a number of mid-block subdivisions with substantially intact streetscapes and houses.

Within the HCA houses demonstrate a consistency in setbacks and heights and architectural styles which as a group form attractive streetscapes. The prevalence of houses from the Inter-war period provide a continuity of house style that has high aesthetic value and contributes to the overall visually appealing character of the HCA. The houses demonstrate the predominant building materials available at different times and the aesthetic value of houses is enhanced by their garden settings and the streetscape plantings.

**Criterion (d) Social Value:** - *an item has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in the City of Shoalhaven for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.*

This criterion has not been proven, however public response to change within the area defined as the HCA has led to the need to investigate its heritage values.

**Criterion (e) Research Potential:** - *an item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the City of Shoalhaven's cultural or natural history.*

The HCA does not meet this criterion.

**Criterion (f) Rarity:** - *an item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of the City of Shoalhaven's cultural or natural history.*

The HCA has rarity as the earliest and most intact area of housing within Nowra that retains evidence of the settlement and early historical development of the area during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The physical evidence provided by the collection of buildings, streetscapes and landscape features representing Victorian, Federation, Inter-war and post war periods is rare as one of the most intact within Nowra.

**Criterion (g) Representativeness:** - *an item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of the City of Shoalhaven's - cultural or natural places; or - cultural or natural environments.*

The HCA is an excellent representative example of a residential area at the centre of a town containing substantially intact built form evidence from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century through to the Post-war period. The architectural house styles within the HCA are representative of the local emergence of architectural styles representative of different periods including late Victorian, Federation, Inter-War, Post-war and public housing.

## 6.2. Revised Summary Statement of Significance

Nowra Town Centre West Heritage Conservation Area (HCA) has historical and aesthetic value for its ability to demonstrate Governor Darling's set of rules for laying out of towns through the underlying grid structure laid out in 1852 by surveyor Thomas Mann. The HCA provides physical evidence of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century residential development surrounding the administrative and commercial centre of Nowra which was established after floods devastated the centres of Numbaa and Terara in 1862 and 1870. The HCA is rare as one of the oldest residential areas of Nowra and for the considerable evidence it retains of Nowra's settlement and early expansion.

The terrain and elevated natural setting add to the aesthetic value of the HCA by providing long distance views to the scenic rural landscape, Shoalhaven River or the Cambewarra escarpment, framed by landscaped streetscapes and garden settings. The residential buildings within the HCA provide evidence of the local emergence of architectural styles representative of different periods



including late Victorian, Federation, Inter-War, Post-war and public housing. Within the HCA houses demonstrate a consistency in character that is defined by similar setbacks and heights and architectural styles from the four key periods of development which as a group form attractive streetscapes. In particular the prevalence of houses from the Inter-war period provide a continuity of house style that has high aesthetic value and contributes to the overall visually appealing character of the HCA. Houses within the HCA demonstrate the predominant building materials available at different times and the aesthetic value of houses is enhanced by their garden settings and the streetscape plantings.

The HCA is an excellent representative example of a residential area in a town centre containing substantially intact built form evidence from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century through to the Post-war period. The HCA is also historically and aesthetically significant as it provides substantially intact examples of the early work of the NSW Housing Commission to provide affordable housing by acquiring parcels of land, creating mid-block subdivisions and building new cottages in the Post-war period.

## 7. Review of Proposed HCA Boundary

### 7.1. Analysis of surrounding area

There are houses on the eastern side of Osborne Street between Worrigee and Junction Streets along with part of Worrigee Street and Junction Street that have similar character to the residential development in the proposed HCA. Many of the houses have been converted to commercial use due to the Business zoning in that area, however they currently retain their key features.



Figure 15. Examples of contributory buildings in Osborne Street opposite the proposed HCA

## 7.2. Analysis of proposed HCA boundary

The proposed HCA has been surveyed by Shoalhaven City Council to determine where there are concentrations of buildings that have characteristics that demonstrate the key historical themes of the significance of the proposed HCA. These are shaded blue on the map in figure 16. Any property that has a character that is clearly different from the historic themes is shown in pink and those sites which have not contribution to make but do not detract from the HCA are unshaded.

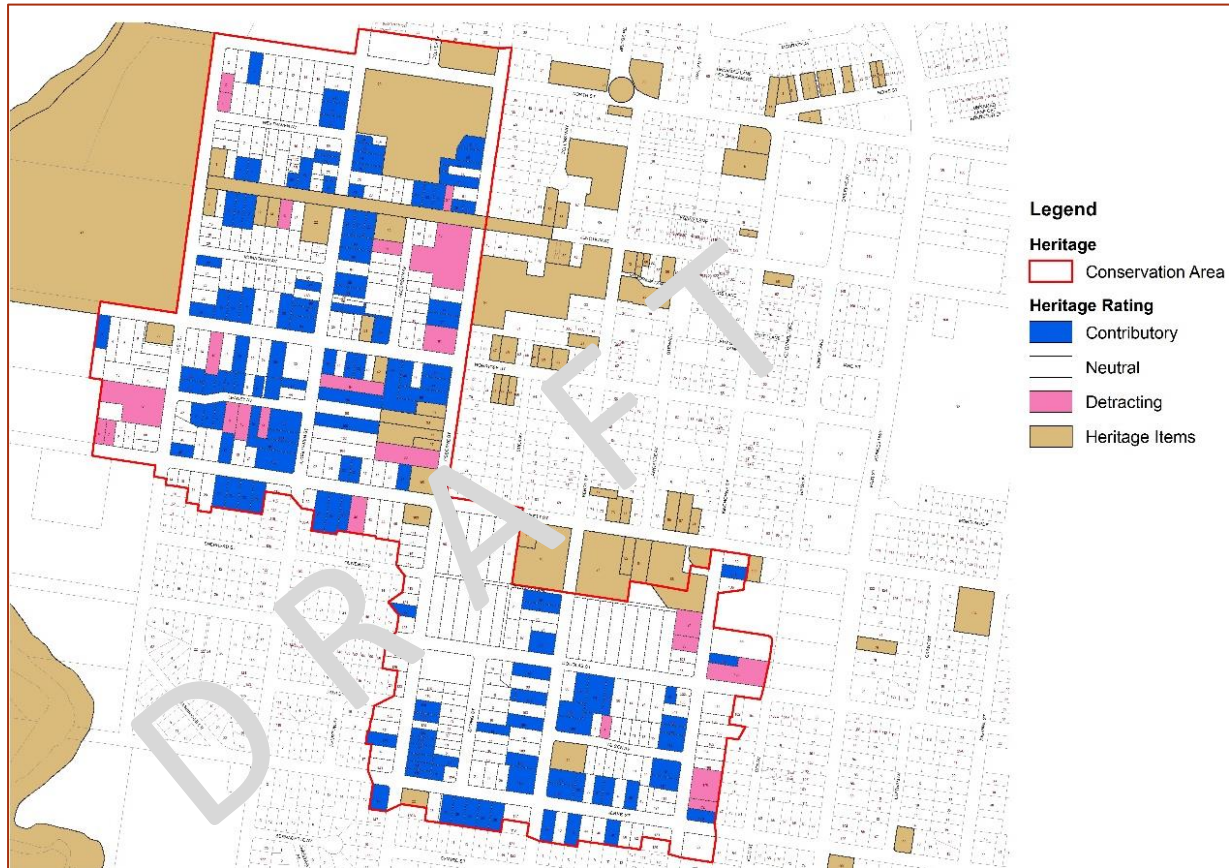


Figure 16. Area proposed as Heritage Conservation Area shown defined by red line

The southern part of the proposed HCA appears to be larger than it needs to be. It would be better to restrict the HCA to the areas that are most intact. For example the eastern side of Kinghorne Street only has two contributory buildings which are isolated by being adjacent to detracting properties. The area around the western end of Douglas Street and Spring Street has no properties of contributory value. It is recommended that the HCA be reduced in this area, see figure 17 for a proposed reduction in the area of the HCA.

Likewise there is no heritage value to the properties on the northern fringe of the proposed HCA. North Street and Westhaven Avenue have insufficient heritage value for inclusion. See figure 19 for the recommended area to be excluded.

The result of the changes to the south and north of the proposed HCA would lead to the HCA being separated into two parts. Both north and south should be considered part of the one HCA as they have the same heritage values and the same significance, however it is not necessary that they be joined physically.



The area to the south of Jervis Street outside the proposed HCA currently excludes Oliver Parade. Oliver Parade is an excellent example of early post-war Housing Commission development and should be considered for inclusion within the HCA. See figure 18.



Figure 17. Suggested amendment to the southern end of the proposed HCA. The shaded area with dashed red line is recommended for inclusion in the HCA.

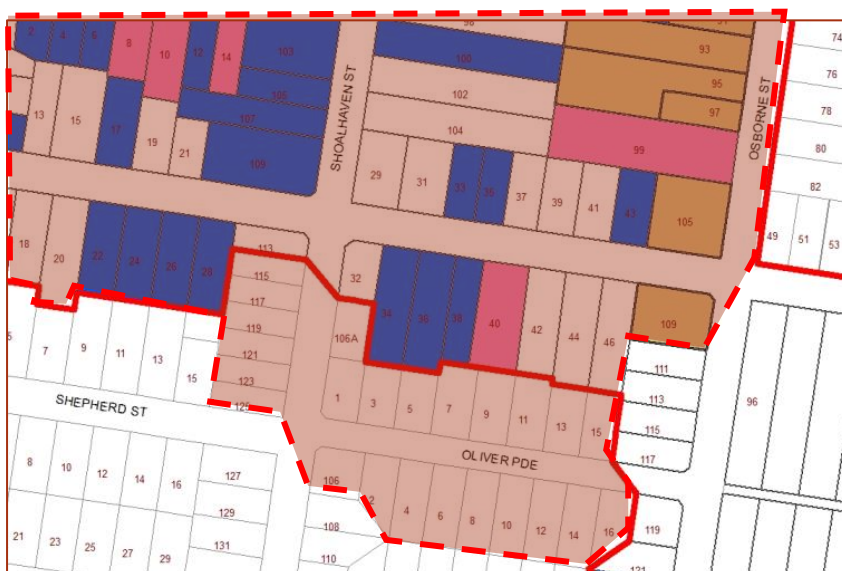


Figure 18 Suggested amendment to include Oliver Parade



Figure 19. Northern end of proposed HCA. The unshaded area is proposed to be removed from the proposed HCA

See figure 20 for an amalgamated map with the recommended boundary of the Nowra Town Centre West Heritage Conservation Area (C5 HCA).

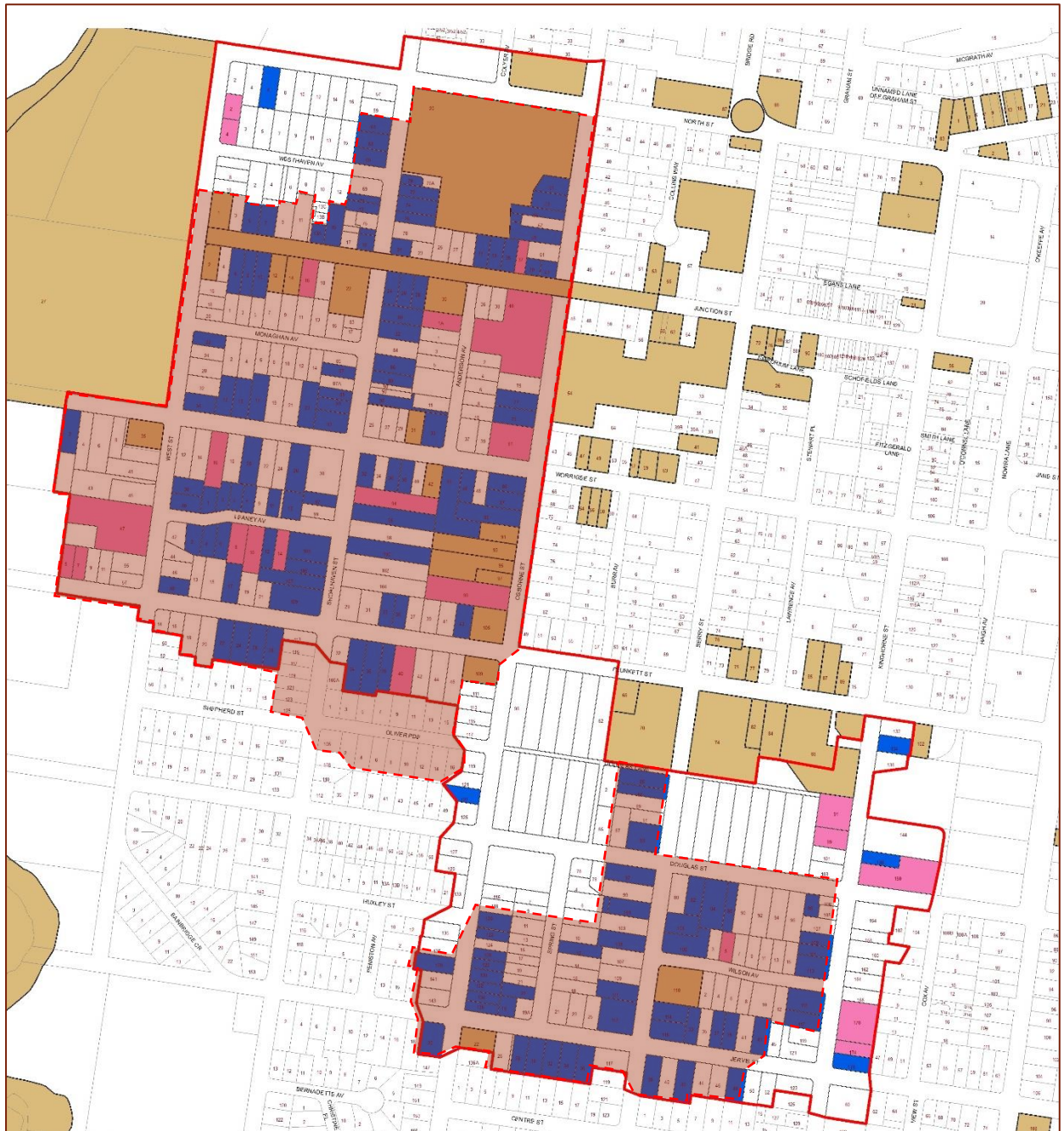


Figure 20 Recommended HCA boundary shown dashed and shaded



## 8. Review of proposed Planning Controls

### 8.1. Proposed HCA

See figure 20 for the proposed HCA boundary. This is based upon the assessment of heritage significance in section 6.

### 8.2. Proposed Height of Buildings

The PP proposes to amend the Height of Buildings Map in Shoalhaven LEP 2014 to:

- a. Introduce a maximum building height of 8.5m within the HCA over part of Central Nowra to the west and south of the Nowra CBD.*
- b. Increase the maximum building height along Shoalhaven and Colyer Street between North and Hyam Street to 11m.*
- c. Increase the maximum building height of the area bound by Bainbridge Crescent, Douglas Street, Osborne Street, and Jervis Street to 11m.*

The increase in height to 11 metres will occur outside the area of the proposed HCA and will therefore have no direct impact upon the HCA. The maximum of 8.5 metres places the streets within the HCA with a limit that is in line with its single storey character.

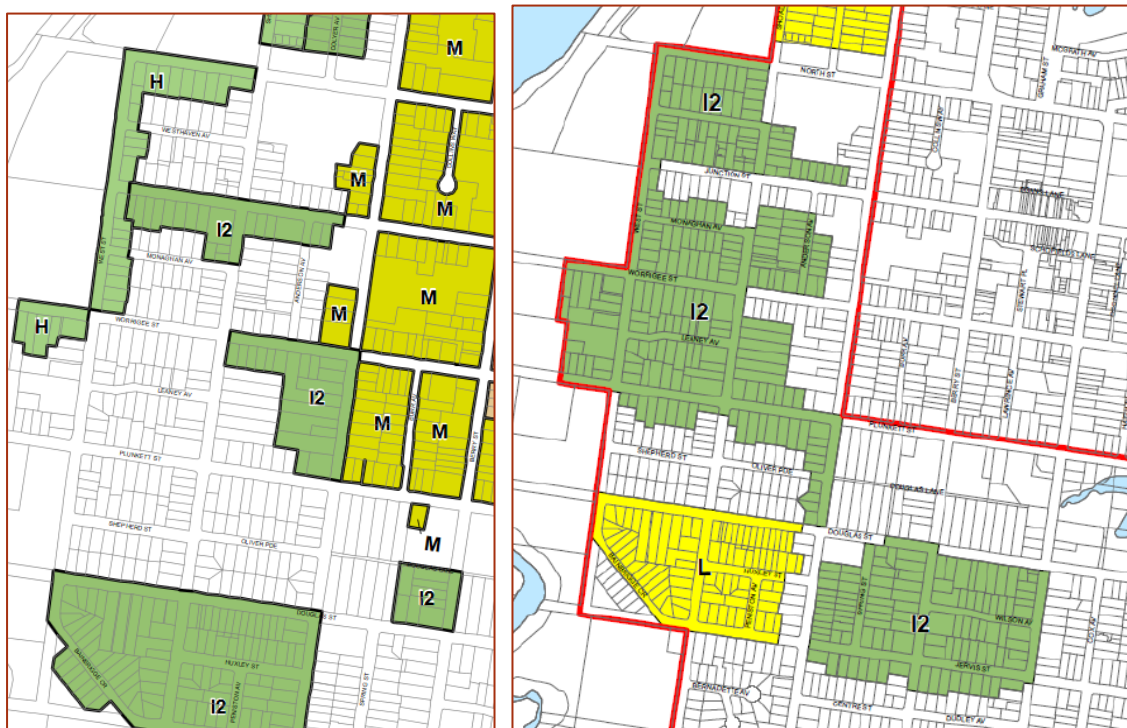


Figure 21. Left: Existing height of building map under Shoalhaven LEP2014. Right: Proposed changes to the height of buildings map.

Key to Maximum building height:

- |                               |                               |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| H = 7.5 metres                | I2 = 8.5 metres (two storeys) |
| L = 11 metres (three storeys) | M = 12 metres                 |

The impact of the changes in building height will encourage more compatible infill development within the HCA.

### 8.3. Proposed Land Zoning

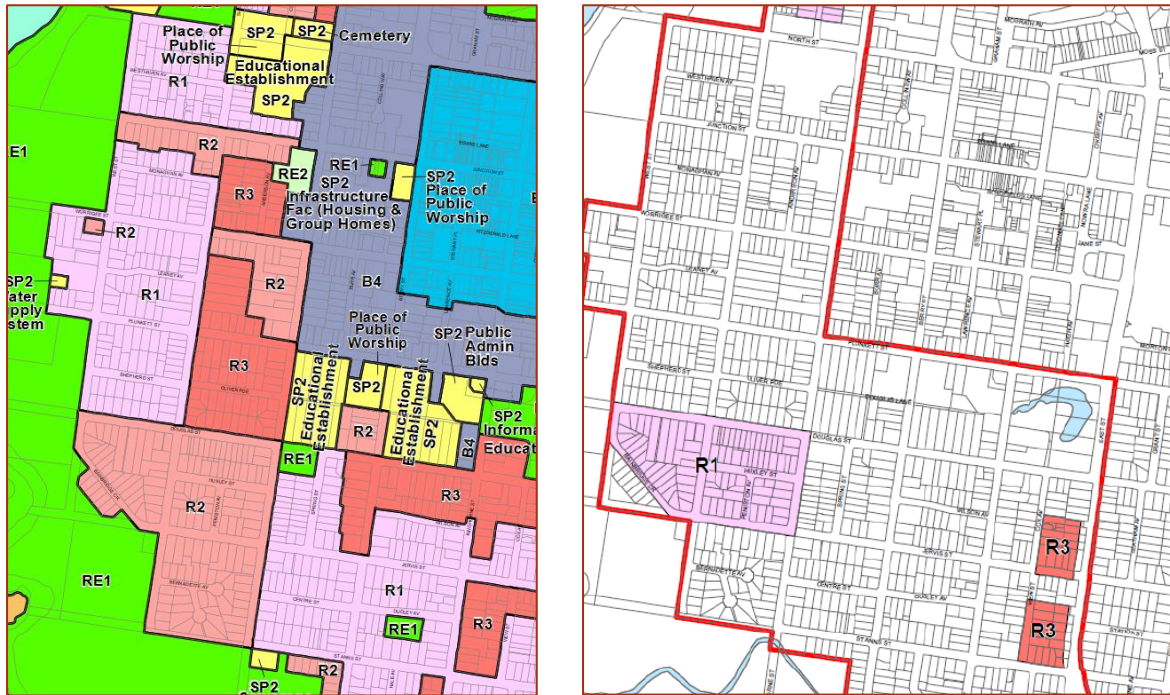


Figure 22 Left: Existing Zoning map in SLEP2014 Right: Proposed land zoning amendment

There are no proposed reductions to the existing zoning within the HCA which currently has large areas of R1, R2 and R3 zoning. R1 is general residential and includes development of multi-unit dwelling houses, seniors housing and residential flat buildings. R2 zoning is for low density development which is in line with the existing residential nature of the HCA. R3 zone is medium density residential which permits a greater intensification of development.

The PP does not propose to change the zoning within the HCA and makes the following statement:

*The proposed zoning changes recognise the need to provide increased housing densities around existing centres and will provide a more flexible zoning regime with a wide range of potential uses permitted with consent. No changes to zoning within the proposed HCA are proposed, as it is considered the combination of reduced building heights, new DCP controls and the HCA will be sufficient to ensure new development considers and respects existing local character whilst enabling additional development in these well-located areas.*

In my experience the use of land is dictated by the zoning regardless of whether it is a HCA or there is a DCP. The R1 and R3 zones existing within the area of the proposed HCA have the potential to encourage development which is not compatible with the significance of the HCA. The objective of the creation of the HCA is to retain the character and scale of key historical periods in line with the statement of significance. If it is not supported by planning controls within the LEP then there is a strong possibility that the character of the HCA will be gradually eroded. Consideration should be given to making the zoning within the HCA low density residential.

## 8.4. Recommendations for DCP controls

### *Studio GL DCP Recommendations*

The following comments are in relation to DCP controls recommended in Attachment B to the PP Chapter 4, *DCP Recommendations of Nowra CBD Fringe Medium Density Study* by Studio GL dated June 2018.

Studio GL DCP	Add new	Amend	Comments
4.1 Building Heights	Objective i) To ensure the height of buildings does not dominate heritage items or contributory items in the HCA.		
	Solution: Height and bulk of development in the HCA must not dominate heritage items or contributory items.		
4.2 Street Setback		The setback to development adjacent to heritage items must be the same as the heritage item.  Development in the HCA must match established setbacks to contributory items	
4.5 Landscaped areas	Objective: To landscape new development to support the aesthetic value of the HCA.  Solution: street front gardens must be planted to complement the traditional landscape character of the HCA.	6 (e) native species are not necessarily preferred in the HCA. Traditional plantings are recommended in historic streets.	There should be no private courtyards in the street front zone. The street front gardens should have low fences and traditional landscaping.
Parking and garages			There should be no parking in front of contributory items and heritage items. Garages should be located at the rear.  Properties adjacent to heritage items or

			groups of contributory items should have single width garages only.
Fences	Control: Fencing for contributory items must be in keeping with the historic period of the item.		

The Studio GL DCP only has general DCP objectives and controls but does not specifically address the HCA. Most DCPs have a special chapter on heritage with specific chapters on HCA.

*Recommended additions to the DCP*

*Nowra Town Centre West Heritage Conservation Area HCA Statement of Significance<sup>4</sup>*

*Nowra Town Centre West Heritage Conservation Area (HCA) has historical and aesthetic value for its ability to demonstrate Governor Darling's set of rules for laying out of towns through the underlying grid structure laid out in 1852 by surveyor Thomas Mann. The HCA provides physical evidence of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century residential development surrounding the administrative and commercial centre of Nowra which was established after floods devastated the centres of Numbaa and Terara in 1862 and 1870. The HCA is rare as one of the oldest residential areas of Nowra and for the considerable evidence it retains of Nowra's settlement and early expansion.*

*The terrain and elevated natural setting add to the aesthetic value of the HCA by providing long distance views to the scenic rural landscape, Shoalhaven River or the Cambewarra escarpment, framed by landscaped streetscapes and garden settings. The residential buildings within the HCA provide evidence of the local emergence of architectural styles representative of different periods including late Victorian, Federation, Inter-War, Post-war and public housing. Within the HCA houses demonstrate a consistency in character that is defined by similar setbacks and heights and architectural styles from the four key periods of development which as a group form attractive streetscapes. In particular the prevalence of houses from the Inter-war period provide a continuity of house style that has high aesthetic value and contributes to the overall visually appealing character of the HCA. Houses within the HCA demonstrate the predominant building materials available at different times and the aesthetic value of houses is enhanced by their garden settings and the streetscape plantings.*

*The HCA is an excellent representative example of a residential area in a town centre containing substantially intact built form evidence from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century through to the Post-war period. The HCA is also historically and aesthetically significant as it provides substantially intact examples of the early work of the NSW Housing Commission to provide affordable housing by acquiring parcels of land, creating mid-block subdivisions and building new cottages in the Post-war period.*

<sup>4</sup> As reviewed and amended in Part 6 of this report

*Definition of a contributory item:*

Contributory buildings are buildings, not listed as heritage items, that are located within a heritage conservation area that make an important and significant contribution to the character and significance of that heritage conservation area. A contributory item is a property defined on the map x and shaded in blue representing one of four key historic periods in the table below.

Dates	Period	Description
<b>1850 to 1890</b>	Victorian	Slow development as the shift is slowly made from Numba and Terara after the devastating floods
<b>1890 to 1915</b>	Federation	Increase in growth with opening of the bridge and the railway.
<b>1915 to 1940</b>	Inter-war	Substantial period of growth in housing in West Nowra CBD
<b>1940 to late 1950s</b>	Post-war	Period of infill growth through Housing Commission developments

Insert Map with HCA boundary and contributory items.

*Objectives:*

1. To ensure the significance and character of the HCA is conserved.
2. To ensure that contributory items representing the key historic periods are conserved.
3. To minimise the impact of development on the significance and character of the HCA.

*Controls:*

1. Contributory items are not to be demolished.
2. Additions to contributory items must retain their character and be located at the rear.
3. Additions to heritage items and contributory items are not permitted in front of the existing building.
4. New development must maintain the predominant setbacks, heights and front streetscape zone of contributory items in the vicinity.
5. Garages and carports must be located at the rear or the side – set back behind the front of the building.

Note: This is not a complete set of controls for the HCA. To fully prepare a heritage DCP chapter is beyond the scope of this study.

*Existing Shoalhaven DCP 2014*

The existing Shoalhaven DCP does not have many objectives or controls pertaining to heritage. It would be good to address this problem for the whole LGA and in so doing to add special chapters on each HCA. Each HCA section should start with the map and summary statement of significance. Then it should set out objectives and controls that are specific to that HCA. Following that model I recommend the statement of significance as amended in part 6.2 of this report should be at the beginning of the section on the Nowra Town Centre West Heritage Conservation Area (C5).

An example of this approach can be found in the DCP of Inner West Council. See Appendix 1.



## 9. Heritage Impact Assessment

### 9.1 Heritage impact assessment on SHR items

#### *Meroogal*

##### *Statement of significance:*

*Meroogal is of outstanding cultural significance. The property, together with associated documents and the recollections of people associated with it, provides a remarkable opportunity to understand and demonstrate aspects of the relationships between a family and its individual members and their material culture. The primary significance of Meroogal is as an artefact of history and its evidence of the lives of four generations of one family who lived in the house, their history and its evidence of taste and circumstances. (Walker 1986: 36, Watts 1987) (OEH, n.d.)*

##### *Physical description:*

*Meroogal is a late Victorian, two storey weatherboard cottage with verandahs and balconies on two similar street frontages and includes a servant's wing. The walls are weatherboard on stone foundations and the roof of corrugated iron. Internally the floors are original hardwood and the joinery cedar. The building features elaborate bargeboards, cast iron balustrades on timber verandahs and balconies, arched window sashes and French doors and dormer windows in two sides. (OEH, n.d.)*



Figure 23. Meroogal viewed from Worrige Street (photo by L. Thom)

Meroogal is located within the study area and within the proposed boundary of the HCA. The objective of the HCA is to promote the conservation of heritage values defined in the statement of significance for the HCA. The creation of the HCA will therefore support the heritage value of Meroogal and will have a positive heritage impact upon the values of the property. The existing zoning surrounding Meroogal is for R1 General residential. This is not proposed to be changed.

The Planning Proposal will not adversely impact the heritage significance of Meroogal.



Figure 24. SHR Plan showing curtilage of Meroogal

### *Graham Lodge*

#### *Statement of significance:*

*Graham Lodge is significant for its aesthetic quality as a substantial nineteenth century Victorian Georgian residence still overlooking much of its original pastoral landholdings and for its potential to expand historical understanding of early European settlement patterns and interactions with Aboriginal people.*

*It also has significance for its historical associations with the foundation of local politics in the Shoalhaven and its more recent recreational role as club premises, in which function it contributed to the social life of the region for nearly 40 years. It can thus be seen to be a microcosm demonstrating some of the broad patterns of historical development of the region.*

*The site has significance particularly for the archaeological potential associated with the 'Greenhills' estate, including remnants from the demolished cottages and sheds recorded in historic paintings, evidence of both pre- and post-contact Aboriginal artefacts, and evidence of early Chinese market gardens. The curtilage includes a small lot within view of the house containing the family cemetery. The headstone dedicated to William Graham is of particular significance as marking the grave of an original land grantee situated on the original grant. (OEH, n.d.)*



### *Physical Description*

*Graham Lodge is a large two-storey residence built in 1860-1861 in the Victorian Georgian style with Victorian Regency influences. Victorian Georgian styling is apparent in the symmetrical ordering and harmonic proportions of windows and doors in the main facades to the east and west, the medium pitch of the main roof and the use of larger paned glass windows and durable slate for the main roof than was typically available for the earlier Colonial Georgian styles housing. (OEH, n.d.)*

*Graham Lodge is located near the south bank of the Shoalhaven River just to the north-east of Nowra's town centre, and adjacent to the Princes Highway by-pass. Facing east, the house overlooks some of its original pastoral landscape, including its family cemetery. A tourist information facility, the Nowra Visitors' Centre, has been recently installed in a wing of the building that used to be part of Graham Lodge in its former life as a Leagues Club, and is now separated from Graham Lodge by several metres of grass. A medium density housing development is nearby to the south. (OEH, n.d.)*



Figure 25. Graham Lodge facing east away from the CBD West study area. The former RSL building is on the left and the trees screening the Princes Highway are behind. (Photo by L. Thom)

As can be seen by the curtilage plan in figure 26, views to Graham Lodge are hindered by vegetation along the Princes Highway and the buildings either side of the original house. The Lodge is now physically isolated by the highway and the new subdivision on the eastern side. Graham Lodge is located a substantial distance from the Planning Proposal study area which commences in the north at Hyam Street. There is no visual connection between the study area and the Lodge. The closest part of the study area to Graham Lodge are the blocks between North and Hyam Streets and Osborne and Shoalhaven Streets. The proposed planning controls in this area allow for a maximum height of 11 metres. The development to 11 metres may produce some building envelopes that could be partially visible from the first floor of Graham Lodge if the trees on the Princes Highway were removed. However the distance between the Lodge and this area is so great as to have no impact upon the buildings significance.

The Planning Proposal will not adversely impact the heritage significance of Graham Lodge.





Figure 26. SHR Plan showing curtilage of Graham Lodge

## 9.2 Heritage impact assessment on Local heritage items

Locally listed heritage items located within the Planning Proposal study area will benefit from the creation of the new Heritage Conservation Area. The HCA will ensure that the historic context existing around the heritage items is retained. It will ensure that there is adequate evaluation of new development in the vicinity of heritage items.

The Planning Proposal will not adversely impact the heritage significance of heritage items listed in Schedule 5 of Shoalhaven local Environmental Plan 2014.

## 10. Conclusion

---

The Planning Proposal has merit on heritage grounds. It will have a positive outcome for the Shoalhaven by conserving a residential area that retains its character and has significant buildings and streetscapes from four key periods in the history of Nowra.

### Recommendations

1. Adopt the statement of significance for Nowra Town Centre West Heritage Conservation Area (proposed HCA C5) as reviewed and updated in section 6.2 of this report.
2. Adopt the revised boundary of the Nowra Town Centre West Heritage Conservation Area (proposed HCA C5) as shown in Figure 20 of this report.
3. Add a section in the proposed DCP amendments to be specific to the Nowra Town Centre West Heritage Conservation Area (proposed HCA C5), as explained in section 8.4 of this report.

## 11. References

---

Argus, S. C. (1950, November 27). Retrieved from Trove.

Freeman, P. (1998). *Shoalhaven Heritage Study*.

*Historic Land Records Viewer*. (n.d.).

Newspaper. (n.d.). New Tourist Hotel An ornament to Shellharbour and South Coast.

OEH. (n.d.). *NSW Heritage Inventory*.

SIX Maps. (2016). *Spatial Information Exchange*. Retrieved from Land and Property Information.

Times, C. (1972, December 21). Retrieved from Trove.

## Appendix 1. Example from the Inner West DCP for a HCA in Inner West Council LGA

### C1 Ambleside and Holwood Heritage Conservation area



#### KEY PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: 1880-1940s

##### HCA TYPE 3: MIXED RESIDENTIAL STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Ambleside and Holwood Heritage Conservation Area is of *local* heritage significance.

The area is *historically* significant as an area developed in the 1880s with a series of late Victorian period "Gentleman's villas" by John Balfour Clement Miles. The properties included "Holwood" (since demolished) and "Ambleside" (now 160 Queen Street), which was later subdivided for development of Federation period housing in Queen Street and for 1920s housing in Yeo Avenue and Holwood Avenue.

The area is of *aesthetic* significance as an area developed from 1880 encompassing late 19th century 2 storey Victorian period villas set in large garden site and then for housing (predominantly brick single storey detached) on later subdivisions that included distinctive 1920s detached housing estates of Inter-war California bungalows (brick, single storey) in Yeo and Holwood Avenues. The HCA includes buildings representing styles from 1880 to the 1940s including Victorian Italianate, Victorian Filigree, Victorian Free Gothic (160 Queen Street), Federation Queen Anne, Inter-war California Bungalow, Inter-war Old English (No. 159 Victoria Street, corner Holwood Avenue).



Draft Comprehensive Inner West DCP 2016

## KEY CHARACTER ELEMENTS

Subdivision and public domain elements:

- Distinctive late 1920s cul-de-sac subdivision pattern of Holwood Avenue
- Distinctive L-shape of Yeo Street subdivision of 1925
- Relatively wide street widths in Victoria Street and Queen Street
- Dense vegetation in large front gardens to heritage listed sites in Victoria Street contributing to the streetscape
- Palm plantings in street verge in Victoria Street
- Narrow street width and complete lack of street verge planting in Seaview Street

Elements that contribute to the consistency of the streetscape (visible from the public domain):

- Predominantly inter-war period residential streetscapes of detached single storey brick Inter-war California bungalow style housing in Yeo Street and Holwood Avenue
- Mix of predominantly single storey detached brick Federation Queen Anne and Inter-war California Bungalow style housing in Queen Street and Victoria Street interspersed with large 2-storey late Victorian detached houses on large sites (all the Victorian period houses are LEP heritage listed).
- Varying architectural styles from late Victorian period styles (Victorian Italianate, Victorian Filigree), Federation Queen Anne, Inter-war California bungalow, 1930s bungalows, occasional 2-storey inter-war period houses (for example 139 and 159
- Victoria Street)
- Predominantly original roof forms, hipped and gabled clad in unglazed terracotta tiles for Federation and Inter-war period housing,
- Front verandahs appropriate to houses styles and periods.
- Original front fence styles – Cast iron palisade for Victorian period houses, low brick or low brick with timber picket for Federation and Inter-war period housing
- Consistent housing setbacks for Federation and Inter-war period houses
- Large 2-storey rendered brick Victorian period villas on large garden sites contrasting with the surrounding predominantly single storey brick detached houses of Federation and Inter-war periods.