

ITEM NO: 21

SUBJECT: THE CLARENDON – REPORT ON INDEPENDENT HERITAGE
ASSESSMENT

FILE NO: F15404 - 24/215825

Delivery Program Link

Principal Activity: Live

Service: City Wide Strategic Planning Service

Recommendations:

1. *That the Council receives the Independent Heritage Assessment of The Clarendon at 68 Lurline Street, Katoomba and notes that it identifies the site as suitable for inclusion within the Local Environmental Plan as a local heritage item.*
 2. *That the Council prepares a Planning Proposal to amend the Blue Mountains Local Environmental Plan 2015 to add The Clarendon at 68 Lurline Street, Katoomba as a local heritage item.*
 3. *That the Council receives a future report with a draft Planning Proposal to amend Schedule 5 of the Blue Mountains Local Environmental Plan 2015, for the local heritage listing of The Clarendon at 68 Lurline Street, Katoomba, alongside some minor heritage housekeeping amendments.*
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Report by Director Environment & Planning Services:**Reason for report**

To notify Council of the results of the Independent Heritage Assessment of The Clarendon Guesthouse at 68 Lurline Street, Katoomba, which identifies the site as suitable for inclusion within the Blue Mountains Local Environmental Plan 2015 as a local heritage item.

To notify Council of the planned future Planning Proposal to amend the Blue Mountains Local Environmental Plan 2015.

Background

This report is in response to the resolution of the Council of 30 July 2024, which stated in part:

“5. That the Council receives a future report, on the results of the heritage assessments and with a recommendation on whether or not the site should be listed as a heritage item in the Blue Mountains Local Environmental Plan via a Planning Proposal.”

[Minute no. 182]

The above resolution was made as part of Minute no.182 of the 30 July 2024 Ordinary Council Meeting, which also placed an Interim Heritage Order over The Clarendon Guesthouse and Theatre (The Clarendon) at 68 Lurline Street Katoomba in accordance with s.25 of the Heritage Act 1977, and required the commissioning of an independent peer review of the Council's heritage assessment, against the NSW Heritage criteria.

An Interim Heritage Order is a temporary measure that prohibits demolition of a building or structure, to enable a detailed heritage assessment to be made as to whether or not the building or place should be listed under a local environmental plan.

The Clarendon has been protected by an Interim Heritage Order, since the Government Gazette, Number 296 – Local Government, was published, dated Friday, 2 August 2024. This protection lasts for 12 months, to enable time for further heritage assessment to be completed and legislative protections to be put in place.

The Interim Heritage Order was triggered after unauthorised works were carried out at the site. These unauthorised works are being separately addressed by Council, exercising its compliance functions, through appropriate legislative mechanisms. SafeWork NSW also attended the site to address asbestos management issues resulting from demolition works, which were identified by Council.

Prior to this Interim Heritage Order being placed The Clarendon was not protected as a local heritage item under the Blue Mountains Local Environmental Plan or listed within a Heritage Conservation Area. It is noted that the site is located within the vicinity of other listed heritage items and within close proximity of the two adjacent heritage conservation areas, K159 Central Katoomba Urban Conservation Area, and K168 Katoomba South Heritage Conservation Area.

Results of the Independent Heritage Assessment

As per the noted resolution [Minute No.182], Council undertook a 'Request for Quotes' process to engage a suitably qualified firm of heritage consultants to prepare a Heritage Assessment. The aim of the assessment was to independently assess the heritage significance of The Clarendon and complete a peer review of the work completed by Council as part of the Interim Heritage Order including the accompanying draft Inventory Sheet (attached to the 30 July 2024 Council Report at Attachment 1).

The successful consultant, Architectural Projects, has extensive experience in this field, working within the Sydney region and the Blue Mountains. The completed Heritage Assessment for The Clarendon at 68 Lurline Street, Katoomba, by Architectural Projects Pty Ltd, October 2024, is included as Enclosure 1.

Summary elements and the recommendation of that assessment are provided below.

General Overview:

The independent Heritage Assessment examines the heritage and cultural significance of 'The Clarendon' at 68 Lurline Street, Katoomba, and its suitability for listing within Schedule 5 of Blue Mountains Local Environmental Plan 2015.

This heritage assessment follows the current guidelines: *Assessing Heritage Significance, Guidelines for assessing places and objects against the Heritage Council of NSW Criteria*, prepared by Environment and Heritage Group, Department of Planning and Environment, NSW Government, in May 2023, and addresses each of the seven assessment criteria for heritage significance. To be considered as significant of local listing, an item only needs to meet a minimum of one of the seven criteria.

The independent Heritage Assessment has identified that The Clarendon meets five of the seven criteria, being: historic, associational, aesthetic, social, and rarity and representative significance at a local level. Therefore, The Clarendon and its interiors are considered to be "*suitable for inclusion on the LEP as a local Heritage item.*"

History of the Clarendon

The below extract from the independent assessment report briefly summaries the history of The Clarendon:

"Built in 1923, The Clarendon is part of a cluster of guesthouses that developed in the vicinity of Waratah and Lurline Street in the period of post WWI prosperity. One of the longest-running guesthouses in Katoomba, the Clarendon has important historical significance in the evolution and development of Katoomba as a popular holiday destination in the Blue Mountains in the early 20th century. The Clarendon survives as a rare example of the successful adaption of the Interwar guesthouse to remain viable through the depression and post WWII period.

For over 100 years, the Clarendon has been a social focus in the upper blue mountains, providing tennis tournaments, live music, and dancing from its opening in 1923. Since the late 1950s, The Clarendon has been recognized locally as a small entertainment venue, nightclub, theatre and popular place for live music and other performances and enjoys a reputation as an iconic music venue and theatre space, to include the regionally important music festival and other events attracting local, national and international artists and musicians.

.... The 1923 building is a distinctive design solution for a guesthouse that clearly shows the hand of the architect Henry Neville Brown. The original distinctive design solution is well documented and remains legible." Pg 5, Section 1.0 Executive Summary



The Clarendon, 1927. Source: Blue Mountains Historical Societ

Assessment of Significance

The below summary of the assessment of significance, extracted from Section 5.3, pages 67-74, identifies that The Clarendon meets five of the HNSW Criteria Heritage significance at a local level:

Criterion (a) Historic Significance:

- *The Clarendon reflects the growth of the tourism industry in the Blue Mountains in the period of post WWI prosperity.*
- *The Clarendon has important historical significance in the evolution and development of Katoomba as a popular holiday destination in the Blue Mountains in the early 20th century.*
- *The Clarendon is one of the longest-running guesthouses in Katoomba, having operated continually, now over 100 years.*
- *The Clarendon has been a social focus in the upper blue mountains, providing tennis tournaments, live music, dancing, nightclub, theatre and cabaret for 100 years.*
- *The Clarendon is an example of the successful adaption of the Interwar guesthouse to remain viable through the tough times following the depression and WWII.*

Criterion (b) Associational Significance:

- *The Clarendon has strong historic associations with the first leaseholders Mr and Mrs WN Leslie, who operated and managed the guest house from its opening in 1923 until 1936... WN Leslie was a well-known figure in Katoomba between the wars.*
- *The Clarendon has strong historic associations with Swiss restaurateurs Joseph Goddard and Friedl Goddard, who owned and operated guesthouse from 1959-1978. The Goddards oversaw the transformation of the 1923 guesthouse into the sophisticated Clarendon-Swiss Inn, developing a continental dining experience, and the popular basement nightclub with live music and dancing.*
- *The Clarendon has strong historic associations with owners and managers Bob and Annette Charter, who oversaw the flourishing of The Clarendon as a home of the performing arts in Katoomba in the period 1978-2003. Bob Charter reinvigorated the live music scene in Katoomba with the Blue Mountains Music Festival since 1996 and remains prominent.*
- *The Clarendon has strong associations with the work of performer Reg Livermore AO, who from 1985-2001 performed regularly at The Clarendon... Livermore was awarded the AO for outstanding achievement and service.*

Criterion (c) Aesthetic Significance:

- *The Clarendon ...can be considered a fine example of a Katoomba inter-war guesthouse in a prominent position with landmark qualities.*
- *The 1923 building is a distinctive design solution for a guesthouse that clearly shows the hand of an architect. The façade has an unusual composition combining three bold bands of external finishes...*
- *The aesthetic considerations for the design and internal fitout for the new Clarendon guesthouse were evident in the commissioning of the well-known department store, 'Bebarfalds' in Sydney.*

Criterion (d) Social Significance:

- *The Clarendon has provided entertainment to guests and locals since its opening in 1923 as evidenced in newspaper articles describing live jazz music, dancing, and tennis tournaments drawing large crowds.*
- *The Clarendon has been recognized locally as a small entertainment venue, theatre and popular place for live music and other performances, and enjoys a reputation as an iconic music venue and theatre space, to include the regionally important music festival...*
- *The Clarendon is known, used and valued by the local community as a longstanding guesthouse and entertainment venue. The attachment of the Blue Mountains community to the site has been demonstrated at various stages including the sale of the building in 2003 and 2013 and following recent unauthorised works 2024.*

Criterion (f) Rarity

- *The Clarendon is one of the few surviving examples of Interwar Guesthouses in Katoomba that has continued to operate as such.*
- *The Clarendon is one of the only known examples of an Interwar Guesthouse in the Upper Blue Mountains with continuity of the entertainment function through the years.*
- *The use of river stones in the wall finish was a feature of some of the more rustic earthy bungalows of Jolly and Peddle Thorp but is unusual in a guesthouse.*
- *The chequerboard parquet flooring in the original Ballroom is a rare and distinctive feature of the interior.*

Criterion (g) Representativeness

- *The Clarendon is a fine representative example of an inter-war period guesthouse, with associated entertainment facilities that is moderately intact.*
- *The Clarendon is representative of the 1920s heyday of the Guesthouse in Katoomba and in NSW. It possessed key features of the typology with architectural features deriving from the popular Interwar bungalow styles.*

Recommendation for Local Heritage Listing

Due to the above mentioned, historic, associational, aesthetic, social, and rarity and representative significance of The Clarendon at a local level, Architectural Projects notes that The Clarendon “is suitable for inclusion on the LEP as a local Heritage item.” (page 5, Section 1.0 Executive Summary).

Considering the current of change via unauthorised works and a current development application for significant changes to the building and site, the listing of The Clarendon, including its interiors, as a local heritage item, is imperative to ensuring that the landmark presence, Interwar aesthetic and continued social values of the site are retained. Therefore, its listing within Blue Mountains Local Environmental Plan 2015, Schedule 5 is recommended.

Proposed listing The Clarendon as a local heritage item

The independent heritage assessment by Architectural Projects identifies the suitability of ‘The Clarendon and interiors’ at 68 Lurline Street, Katoomba, for listing as a local heritage item on Council’s Local Environmental Plan 2015, which aligns with Council’s own assessment prepared to support the Interim Heritage Order.

A Planning Proposal is now required to be prepared, to amend Schedule 5 of Blue Mountains Local Environmental Plan 2015 and associated mapping, to include a new local heritage item ‘The Clarendon and interiors’ at 68 Lurline Street, Katoomba. The future Planning Proposal will be exhibited to the community and owners, allowing for public comment during a required public exhibition process under a successful gateway determination from the Department of Planning, Infrastructure and Environment.

The Planning Proposal is also intended to include minor housekeeping amendments to a small number of existing heritage items within Schedule 5 of Local Environmental Plan 2015 to streamline future heritage amendments.

Sustainability assessment

Effects	Positive	Negative
Environmental	The recommendations of this report will result in a positive environmental outcome through the proposed local heritage listing of The Clarendon, which protects the building itself, the historical and visual environment of Katoomba, and assists in reducing environmental waste, by encouraging adaptive re-use of existing fabric.	Nil
Social	The Independent Heritage Assessment has confirmed the social significance of the site and supports protecting the social value of The Clarendon as an entertainment venue. The future Planning Proposal to list the site will protect this social value.	Nil
Economic	Economic values are preserved through the retention of the heritage value of the site, that generally leads to growth. The retention of the site as a guesthouse and entertainment venue supports sustainable tourism within Katoomba.	Heritage listings can be perceived to have negative impacts, as they may restrict some development options. However, if managed well, heritage values and authenticity can be a positive economic contributor.
Governance	<p>Proceeding from an Interim Heritage Order to a Planning Proposal for the heritage listing of the site within Blue Mountains Local Environmental Plan 2015, follows best practice where an item is found to meet local significance criteria, demonstrating good governance.</p> <p>The planning proposal will be prepared in accordance with the <i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979</i> (EP&A Act) and the Department of Planning and Environment publication, <i>NSW Local Environmental Plan Making Guideline</i> (August 2023).</p>	Nil

Financial implications

There are no financial implications resulting from the recommendations in this report. All work is within the operational budget for the current financial year.

Legal and risk-management issues for the Council

There are no legal or risk management implications for Council in adopting the recommendations of this report. The usual legal processes are available to the owner of the subject property, similar to those available for development proposals.

External consultation

Architectural Projects Pty Ltd were engaged to complete the Independent Heritage Assessment.

Consultation has been undertaken with the property owner following notification of the Interim Heritage Order. A copy of the Independent Heritage Assessment has also been provided to the property owner.

The future planning proposal will be exhibited to the community and owners, allowing for public comment.

Alignment with Delivery Program and/or Operational Plan

The recommendations in this business paper are aligned with the Delivery Program 2022–2026 key direction *Live*, as follows:

- Objective 4.1 *City Planning guides sustainable urban renewal while maintaining the distinctive equality of our towns and villages;*
- Strategy 4.1.b *Preserve, maintain and enhance the City's unique character, local history and it's built, natural and cultural heritage, and*
- Principal Activity D40111.01 *Support conservation of local heritage.*

Conclusion

As per the resolutions made on the 30 July 2024 [Minute no. 182], regarding the Interim Heritage Order placed on The Clarendon at 68 Lurline Street, Katoomba (The Clarendon), the Independent Heritage Assessment has been completed and presented to Council.

The Independent Heritage Assessment has found that The Clarendon is of sufficient local significance when assessed against the Heritage Council of NSW criteria, for a local heritage listing.

Therefore, this report recommends proceeding with a Planning Proposal to list The Clarendon and interiors as a local heritage item, within Schedule 5 of Blue Mountains Local Environmental Plan 2015, while the Interim Heritage Order and its protections remain in place. Council intends to bring the Planning Proposal to Council early in the new year.

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Does this paper need to go to a briefing session OR have Ward Councillors been briefed?: No

ATTACHMENTS/ENCLOSURES

1	Heritage Assessment_v2, The Clarendon, 68 Lurline St, Katoomba	24/228452	Enclosure
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