



# Memorandum

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**To** Paula Poon – Director, Panel Secretariat

**cc.**

**From** Vincent Sicari – Manager  
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**Date** 11 November 2010      **File no**      **File**

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**Subject: ST MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH GROUP, 40 Ridge Street, North Sydney**

## Purpose

Provision of independent review of the Heritage Impact Statement and Council's comments in related to proposed development on the abovementioned site.

## Background

The HIS provided for review was prepared as supporting documentation in relation to heritage impacts of the proposed demolition of the former monastery building (and its later additions) and alterations to the Presbytery buildings.

The Heritage Branch also received an internal Council memo from Council's heritage advisor providing their comments on the HIS and proposed development.

## Advice

The HIS broadly states that:

*The HIS reviewed the level of significance and found that while it does have a level of significance in relation to the historic value, the level of significance did not warrant retention of the building. In addition the HIS recommended that the level of significance could be suitably interpreted on the site as part of the Proposal.*

The Heritage Branch considers that the HIS supplementary statement is inadequate to allow a proper assessment of the heritage significance of the site. Consequently, the Branch is unable to assess the impacts of the proposed development due to the following:

The summary of this analysis is as follows:

- The heritage significance of the Monastery and Presbytery, and their association with the other buildings in this complex (Church) has not been appropriately investigated. Any comment on the heritage significance of any part of the building or site is therefore not adequately justified.
- It is unknown if the proposed works have, or do not have, an impact on heritage significance given the heritage significance has not been adequately investigated.

- The HIS does not clearly articulate the proposed works, in some cases offering a recommended position. The documentation does not use standard development application reporting protocols.

Detailed comments on the HIS are provided at **Attachment A (Former Monastery) and Attachment B (Presbytery)**.

There are various guidelines prepared by the Heritage Branch which provide guidance on the preparation of heritage impact statements, heritage assessments and design guidelines for infill developments including:

- Statements of Heritage Impacts, Heritage Office and Department of Urban Affairs & Planning, 1996, revised 2002
- Assessing heritage significance, Heritage Office and Department of Urban Affairs and Planning, 1996
- Design in Context: Guidelines for infill development in the historic environment, Heritage Office and Royal Australian Institute of Architects, 2005
- Levels of Significance, Heritage Office, NSW Department of Planning in 2008

The applicant's heritage advisor should have regard to these publications which provide advice for all levels of heritage items (local, state, national) and, if addressed, ensure a robust heritage assessment has been prepared.

With regard to comments from Council's heritage advisor, these are generally supported. However it is considered that rather than the "proposed development having detrimental impacts on various heritage items", it is considered that the impacts cannot be properly assessed due to the inadequate investigation of heritage significance of the site in the first instance.

### Recommendation

It is recommended that a revised statement of heritage impact be prepared which contains a robust assessment of the heritage significance of the site as a complex of associated buildings. This should be prepared by a suitably qualified heritage consultant with expertise in historical research of heritage properties.

I trust these comments assist you in your assessment. It may be appropriate for the Heritage Branch to also provide the JRPP with some standard conditions in relation to heritage significance. Please advise if you require such information and perhaps we could meet with you to discuss this further.

Further enquiries may be made at the Heritage Branch, Department of Planning, by contacting Alejandra Rojas on telephone number (02) 9873 8559 or via [alejandra.rojas@planning.nsw.gov.au](mailto:alejandra.rojas@planning.nsw.gov.au).



22/11/2010

Vincent Sicari  
Manager  
Heritage Branch

**Attachment A - Monastery: Demolition of 1920's building**

Heritage Assessment Item	Heritage Significance in HIS	Heritage Branch Comment
Planning and Heritage Context	<i>St. Mary's Church and the St. Mary's School are listed Heritage items. The Presbytery and Monastery are not listed heritage items but are in the vicinity of listed heritage items: The Church and School (Section 3.1, 4th dot point)</i>	The non-identification of buildings within a heritage listed site (which is the entire lot) can not be assumed to be due to a lack of significance. It may be due to a lack of assessment of the significance of the building or a poor recording of the site and its significant elements when it was listed.
Period of construction: 1920's	Not discussed	Did this building replace an earlier building? If not, what was this area formerly used for?
Reason for construction: residence for Marist Brothers	Not discussed	How important were the Marist Brothers order locally? to the State? Is this Marist brother s residence rare?
Building Architect	Architect not discussed; HIS mentions a marble foundation stone (Section 4)	Who built this monastery? Was it modelled on another prominent monastery elsewhere in the state, country, internationally?
Use over time	Not discussed	Was it always used by Marist Brothers as a residence? When did the building become redundant for this use?
Building Modification over time	<i>Replace an existing brick building that has undergone several series of addition and alteration (Section 3.3, second dot point, first square dot point)</i>	When did modifications occur? What were they? What changes to fabric occurred as a result of these modifications? No floor plans have been provided to demonstrate the evolution of the building over time.
Setting within the site	Not discussed	How does the building relate to the other building on the site? Same architect? Different architect? ect

Archaeology	<i>There are no known archaeological items on the site. The demolition of the Monastery and construction of the new building would be subject to the relic's provisions of the NSW Heritage Act. As the sites have been subject to substantial construction from the 1950's the areas have been disturbed for alterations and additions to the Monastery.</i> (Section 3.3, 4th dot point, square dot point)	A baseline archaeological has probably not been prepared for this site. Only such a report would be prepared by a qualified archaeological consultant. Such a report would be required to justify the statement that no known archaeological items exist on the site.
<b>Architectural Elements/Rooms (Section 2)</b>		
Lobby	<i>Original tessellated tile flooring, understood to have originally been a porch</i>	No referencing of comment re: that it used to be a porch. Did this come from a review of previous plans, architectural elements, oral history?
Passage from Lobby	<i>Original Masonary walls but alterations to general walls and ceilings</i>	No identification of which walls are "general walls"
Front Parlour	<i>Original joinery including bay window, corner fire place and picture rail</i>	Is all joinery original? Does this include skirting boards, dado, doors.
Kitchen	<i>Original southern windows and extension to the west</i>	
Pantry	<i>some original timber boarding to the partition wall</i>	Timber type? Is the pantry a part of the original building?
Dining Room	<i>50% original with extension at northern pavillion</i>	Inappropriate description. Must state what elements are original and what elements are not.
Lounge Room	<i>Substantially an extension</i>	Why is it "substantially an extension"? What elements suggest this?
First Floor Stair hallway	<i>Original joinery and leadlighting for tower room. Stair detailing similar to that in the presbytery</i>	
A typical accommodation Room	No discussion of elements	how many accommodation rooms in the original part of the monastery?
Common room (above parlour room)	<i>Original fire place and door which originally passed into the open verandah</i>	
Another Common Room	<i>part original and adapted</i>	which parts, where is it? First floors, ground floor?

Junction with original portion of the passage	No discussion of elements	
Modified tower room above the lobby in the SE corner	<i>two original windows</i>	what was this room used for? Are ceilings, walls, floors original fabric?
<b>Comments on Heritage Significance</b>		
<i>The internal fabric of the original building which retains significance consists of the Parlour Room and Staircase. The other accommodation has been substantially modified during successive changes designed to increase the accommodation from the original two storey residence to a substantial Monastery (text follows photo 16)</i>		This statement of significance is not adequately justified and is based on a visual assessment of some architectural elements. This is not adequate to allow a proper assessment of the impacts of the proposed works to heritage significance.
<i>The loss of the Monastery building has some significant historical value and is a sympathetic contribution to the site</i>		If the site has "some significant historical value" is it appropriate to demolish it? This comment does not appear to be founded on any robust heritage assessment.
<b>Proposed Mitigation Measures for Heritage Impacts</b>		
<i>The earlier building will be recorded in drawings and photos prior to demolition (Section 3.3, 3rd dot point, square dot point 3)</i>		This mitigation approach (interpretation of the site within the new development) has been prepared without a robust assessment of the heritage significance of the Monastery. It is therefore unclear if this approach is appropriate
<i>The outline of the original building will be plotted and expressed in the external pavement as a tangible reminder to visitors and users of the site; (Section 3.3, 3rd dot point, square dot point 5)</i>		
<i>The historical significance of the building and Church precinct will be recorded on an interpretive panel in an appropriate location (Section 3.3, 3rd dot point, square dot points 6)</i>		
<i>Creating a formal archival record of the site, interiors and exteriors should retain the significance of the site development. (Section 3.4, 7th dot point)</i>		
<i>Relocating a significant fireplace and surround from the original ground floor Parlour of the Monastery should be considered as an additional means of retaining and interpreting the historic fabric and social value (Section 3.4, 8th dot point)</i>		

*Providing an appropriate interpretation on the site within the new Parish Centre will act as a tangible reminder of the significant contribution of the Marist Brothers community to the North Sydney Parish.*(Section 3.4, 9th dot point)

## Attachment B - Presbytery: Works are alterations and additions

Heritage Matters	Heritage Significance in HIS	Heritage Branch Comment		
Planning and Heritage Context	Not discussed	Not discussed in the HIS Supplementary Statement		
Period of construction	Not discussed			
Reason for construction	Not discussed			
Building Architect	Not discussed			
Use over time	Not discussed			
Building Modification over time	Not discussed			
Setting within the site	Not discussed			
Heritage Matters	Proposed works	Heritage Significance in HIS	Impact Assessment/Alternatives Discussion	Heritage Branch Comment
<i>Architectural Elements/Rooms (Section 3.5)</i>				
External area	[Works not identified]	<i>The <b>original staircase</b> protrudes to one and a half levels and the later extension with flat roof extends to the right (west) while a laundry/store room backs on to the garages</i>	[No comment on impacts]	Staircase is original, but is it significant?
Block wall and garages	[Works not identified]	<i>No significance</i>	[No comment on impacts]	No assessment of significance or impacts.
ground floor passage (corridor)	<i>4 doors to be replaced</i>	[No comment on significance]	<i>On the basis that there is <b>no alternative</b> to replacing the doors for meeting <b>Code requirements</b> and the <b>new work is sympathetic with the building</b>, the heritage impact is acceptable.</i>	What alternatives were considered and then discounted? Does "the Code" refer to the Building Code of Australia? If so, in what way do the existing doors fail to comply?
			<i>Where possible <b>and appropriate</b> the existing doors and associated joinery and highlights should be re-used</i>	What constitutes "appropriate" in this case?

	<i>Main door dining room - to be replaced</i>	[No comment on significance]	[No comment on impacts]	No assessment of significance or impacts.
	<i>Demolition of wall/fireplace for meeting/dining access; The central fireplace is to be removed to accommodate a pair of double doors, retaining the two side cabinets.</i>	<i>The central fireplace is original, intact and has a high level of significance.</i>	<i>Alternatives to the removal include using the existing passage and removing the right hand cabinet only for a single open passage through. Given the significance, retention of the fireplace is recommended.</i>	No justification provided for comment on significance. What is being proposed in the DA? The recommendation or otherwise? This is unclear.
Dining Room	<i>Replace door for window to southern verandah.</i>	<i>The doors are external, original and have aesthetic and historic significance.</i>	<i>The reason for removal is to reduce the risk of unauthorized access via doors and increase ventilation to the proposed new Guest Bedroom. The alternatives are to retain the doors in a fixed and render them un-openable. It is recommended that the doors be retained.</i>	No justification provided for comment on significance. What is being proposed in the DA? The recommendation or otherwise? This is unclear.
	<i>Block openings in external southern verandah wall.</i>	<i>The walls are original built fabric...</i>	<i>...but the adaptive e-use is appropriate the changes will enhance the significance provided suitable sympathetic details are utilized. The outline of the original openings should be expressed in the new finish so that they are capable of interpretation. The first room is to be adapted to provide a pair of ensuite bathrooms while the second door and associated wall is to be removed for a matching Guest Bedroom.</i>	Walls are original, but are they significant? What is being proposed in the DA? The recommendation or otherwise? This is unclear.
Southern Verandah	<i>The external space is to be restored as a terrace beneath the verandah.</i>	<i>The window wall is an infill of the original open verandah and has a low level of significance.</i>	<i>Replacement has the potential to enhance the significance of the building through interpreting the original character. The new masonry infill to the west for enclosing Guest Bedroom 2 should therefore be expressed as an infill with a minor recess from the external face and a subtle smoother render than the</i>	What does original character refer to? What is being proposed in the DA? The recommendation or otherwise? This is unclear.



			<i>original roughcast</i>	
Staircase	<i>Demolish original staircase for new staircase</i>	<i>The original staircase has historic significance as an original item...</i>	<i>...but adaptation or re-use would not be reasonable and replacement will enhance the general adaptive use of the first floor</i>	No justification provided for comment on significance. What is being proposed in the DA? The recommendation or otherwise? This is unclear.
Kitchen	<i>Demolish walls in north west corner for extended kitchen; Replacement with sympathetic structure and enclosure is recommended as being acceptable.</i>	<i>While the original fabric has historic significance, the level is <b>low...</b></i>	<i>...and replacement will enhance the adaptive re-use of the north west corner of the building and the option of retention would prevent the effective use of the space.</i>	No justification for low level of significance. What is being proposed in the DA? The recommendation or otherwise? This is unclear
First Floor:				
Reading rooms	<i>Remove doors and block openings to east elevation to front reading room; the fibro wall is to be removed and the verandah restored as a reading area. The French door set is to be removed and filled for the adaptation of the existing bedroom for a Study area for Bedroom 4.</i>	<i>The French door set is original and the only one of the kind on this level as the other matching set to the north was previously replaced with aluminum sliding doors.</i>	<i>The alternative is to retain the doors in a fixed position and allow for privacy film to the glass if that is a concern. Removal of the doors would detract from the heritage significance and given there is a reasonable alternative <b>removal is not recommended.</b></i>	No assessment of significance. What is being proposed in the DA? The recommendation or otherwise? This is unclear
North east corner room	[Works not identified]	[No comment on significance]	<i>The opportunity for a simple restoration is recommended as a lower cost option. It is recommended that a pair of french doors to be removed from the ground floor level are relocated to the restored opening to match that</i>	No assessment of significance or impacts. What is being proposed in the DA? The recommendation or otherwise? This is unclear

			on the adjoining room. `	
Bedroom 4	Remove an existing fireplace to accommodate a robe for bedroom 4	As the only remaining intact fireplace and surround, it is recommended that the robe be located on the western wall as a reasonable option for retaining this element of <b>rare historic and aesthetic heritage significance</b>		No justification for level of significance. No assessment of impacts. What is being proposed in the DA? The recommendation or otherwise? This is unclear
western Chapel window	one of a pair to be removed to allow additional space as a balcony or verandah for Bed 5 via a set of double doors.	Given the <b>rarity and historic and aesthetic significance of these windows</b> , the loss will detract from the heritage value of the building. The option for retaining one and removing the other for access is a possibility which could be explored. Retention of one of the walls and the arch headed leadlight window is recommended.		No justification for level of significance. No assessment of impacts. What is being proposed in the DA? The recommendation or otherwise? This is unclear
Front four rooms	Generally demolish walls for the provision of new windows and doors to adapt the existing front four rooms for accommodation. The first door set to the left is the original French door set for the Chapel room which is to be adapted to provide Bed 5. The second door is to be removed to accommodate the lift.	The alternative is to retain the French doors, with a single leaf remaining operable and translucent film to be applied for privacy. <b>Given the historic and aesthetic significance of the set and the option with which they can be retained, removal and infill is not recommended.</b> Adaptation of the second door for the lift is acceptable given the need and the retention of other similar doors in the passage.		No justification for level of significance. No assessment of impacts. What is being proposed in the DA? The recommendation or otherwise? This is unclear

Bedroom 6	external wall in Room 6 to be in-filled for provision of a pair of ensuites for Beds 5 and 6.	<i>The French door set is original and has a level of significance. There appears to be the option of relocating the door set to the west to provide the double doors from Bed 6 leading to the balcony/verandah as shown. <b>This alternative is recommended</b></i>		What level of significance does the door have? No assessment of impacts. What is being proposed in the DA? The recommendation or otherwise? This is unclear
Bedroom 6	existing and original south west corner to be demolished to accommodate an extended balcony/verandah for Bed 6.	<i>The fabric is not in good condition and has undergone previous alterations.</i>		Is the fabric significant? No assessment of significance or impacts. What is being proposed in the DA? The recommendation or otherwise? This is unclear
rear bathrooms		<i>...are previous alterations within the original envelope.</i>	<i>Removal of <b>the fabric</b> for the provision of the new accommodation to Bed 6 and the adjoining fire stair will enhance the heritage significance via compliance <b>with Codes</b> and the heritage impact is acceptable.</i>	does "the fabric" refer to the non-significant bathroom? Does the "Codes" refer to the Building Code of Australia (BCA)? What is being proposed in the DA? The recommendation or otherwise? This is unclear.
Bedroom 1	<i>...north west corner of existing Bedroom 1 to be adapted for a Study as part of the new Bed 1.</i>	<i>The rear window on the left is original and intact as are the French doors. The proposed room layout offers the opportunity to retain both without a loss in amenity <b>and retention is recommended.</b></i>		No assessment of significance or impacts. What is being proposed in the DA? The recommendation or otherwise? This is unclear.
	<i>Removal of the original partition wall will unite the two adjoining spaces to provide the required floor area for the bed 1 study and bedroom.</i>	<i>While <b>fabric is original</b>, the layout could be interpreted with a simple bulkhead and thus removal will have an acceptable heritage impact</i>		Is the fabric significant? No assessment of significance or impacts. What is being proposed in the DA? The recommendation or otherwise? This is unclear.

Bedroom 2	<i>...door and window to be removed to provide two new pairs of French doors on to the balcony/verandah for Bed 2.</i>	[No comment on significance]	<i>Provision of ensuite bathrooms is appreciated for amenity and adaptive re-use. It would appear however that the existing French doors could be retained to access the balcony as their loss would <b>detract from the heritage significance of the building</b></i>	what is the heritage significance of the building (exceptional, high, moderate, low?) No assessment of significance or impacts. What is being proposed in the DA? The recommendation or otherwise? This is unclear.
Bedroom 3	<i>Retain the existing doors where the layout can be reasonably adjusted as the openings comply with the access <b>Code</b> and re-use the doors where the layout requires</i>	<i>The general layout and fabric is original</i>		No assessment of significance or impacts. What is being proposed in the DA? The recommendation or otherwise? This is unclear.
Roof	<i>Construct new colorbond clad pitched roofs to ground floor and first floor extensions</i>	[No comment on significance]	<i>The use of a sympathetic dark grey custom orb profile sheet such as Windspray would be suitable and would be visually recessive in the context. The existing galvanized iron roofing on the verandahs and extensions are not visible from the round due to their low pitch while the roof of the Presbytery is the original fibro slates.</i>	No assessment of significance or impacts. What is being proposed in the DA? The recommendation or otherwise? This is unclear.
Elevations				
North elevation	<i>Rendered masonry walls and fencing to north elevation</i>	[No comment on significance]	<i>New masonry walls and planting will screen the new courtyard in the above area from the driveway and will not detract from the setting and original character.</i>	No assessment of significance or impacts. What is being proposed in the DA? The recommendation or otherwise? This is unclear.
southern elevation (ground floor)	<i>Rendered masonry walls and windows to ground floor south elevation</i>	[No comment on significance]	<i>The existing planting is close to the building – less than 3m and it is recommended that an Arborist review the trees and any impacts upon the building and foundations.</i>	No assessment of significance or impacts. What is being proposed in the DA? The recommendation or otherwise? This is unclear.

southern elevation (first floor)	<i>Replacement glazed windows &amp; cladding to first floor south elevation; The new windows proposed for the Office and Guest 2 Bedroom in the south west corner do not appear sympathetic and further consideration is recommended of options for reuse of the existing windows being removed elsewhere from the building. The external elevations are dotted with air-conditioners and service vents. These detract from the heritage significance of the original appearance and character. It is recommended that they are relocated or replaced and the cladding restored.</i>	[No comment on significance of elevation]	<i>The impact on the <b>heritage character</b> of the replacement walls and windows will be acceptable</i>	Does this refer to the "heritage character" of the building and that the replacement walls and windows will have acceptable impacts? No assessment of significance or impacts. What is being proposed in the DA? The recommendation or otherwise? This is unclear
fencing				
low boundary fencing	<i>new boundary fencing will consolidate the existing low brick wall</i>	Heritage Branch agrees this is non-significant fabric	<i>A dark grey steel standard palisade fence with dense hedge type planting would be appropriate in the context and is recommended</i>	No assessment of significance or impact on the setting of the building.
front fencing (stone wall)	<i>existing stone wall is to be retained and a new steel palisade fence erected.</i>	[No comment on significance of stone fencing and wrought iron gate]	<i>The steel fence will prove satisfactory in relation to the heritage significance and suitable for the security and privacy of the site. It is recommended that the existing wrought iron gate should be retained and incorporated into the fence and the hedge planting continued as a backdrop to the fencing.</i>	No assessment of significance or impacts.
<b>Comments on Mitigation measures</b>				

*An archival Record is to be completed for the Marist Monastery prior to demolition and for the areas of the Presbytery which are to be altered (Section 5, dot point 3)*

*An interpretation plan is to be prepared to document the retained plaque, Monastery layout and historic panel.(Section5, dot point 6)*

This mitigation approach (interpretation of the site within the new development) has been prepared without a robust assessment of the heritage significance of the Monastery. It is therefore unclear if this approach is appropriate