

Interpretation Strategy

32-34 CHURCH STREET, WOLLONGONG



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The following table forms part of the quality management control undertaken by Rappoport Pty Ltd regarding the monitoring of its intellectual property as issued.

Issue	Notes / Description	Date	Initials
1	Draft issued to Client	05/04/12	JB
2	Amended draft issued to client.	12/04/12	AB
3	Amended draft issued to client.	13/04/12	AB
4	Report Issued.	13/04/12	AB
5	Report Re-Issued	16/04/12	SR

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Study Area

The study area comprises 32-34 Church Street, Wollongong. Church Street runs south towards the city travelling through Smith's Hill, past St Michael's Anglican Cathedral, then to the mall at Wollongong Central. The subject site is located to the mid-section of Church Street immediately north of the junction of Gipps Street and Smith Hill High School.

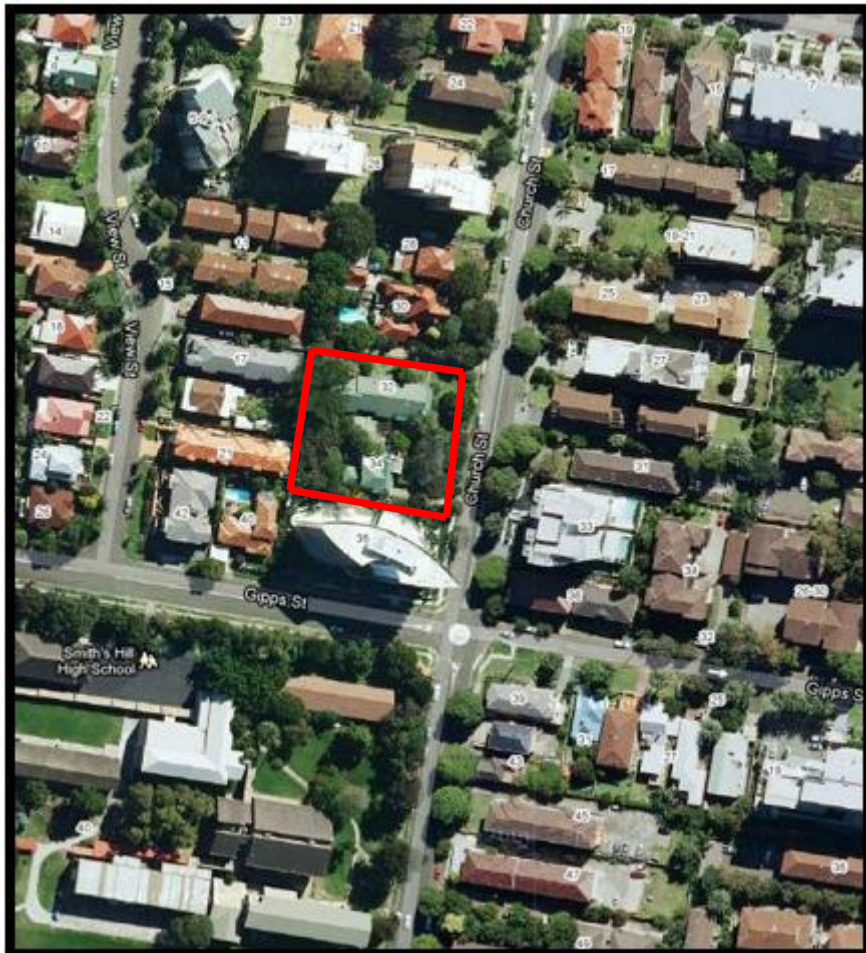


Figure 1: Map showing the location of 32-34 Church Street, Wollongong indicated by the red boundary. (Source: www.maps.google.com)

1.2 Background to this Interpretation Strategy

This Interpretation Strategy has been prepared on behalf of the owner 32-34 Church Street, Wollongong.

The owner of the building seeks to demolish the existing site buildings and construct a residential flat building. This proposal is currently being considered by the Joint Regional Planning Panel (JRPP).

This Interpretation Strategy is intended to demonstrate that the history of the site can be demonstrated through an interpretation strategy and incorporated into the proposed residential flat building.

1.3 Heritage Listings

32-34 Church Street **is not** currently listed on the Wollongong Local Environment Plan 2009 (LEP).

In 2010, an archaeological investigation of the site was prepared by Edward Higginbotham & Associates Pty Ltd. It is noted in that report that the house and grounds of 32 Church Street, Wollongong were listed, as an item of heritage significance, in the 1991 City of Wollongong Heritage Study. However on further investigation Edward Higginbotham & Associates Pty Ltd discovered that:

The address of this property was incorrectly identified. The correct address is 36 Church Street, Wollongong. The house was demolished to make way for the recent redevelopment of 36 Church Street, Wollongong. The heritage item has been removed from the Wollongong LEP. (Edward Higginbotham and Associates Pty Ltd, 2010, p. 2)

Furthermore the subject property is not listed on the State Heritage Register, The National Heritage List, The Commonwealth Heritage List, or the National Trust of Australia (NSW) nor does it fall within the boundaries a Conservation Area.

1.4 Methodology

The methodology used in this Interpretation Strategy is consistent with the Heritage Interpretation Policy contained in the NSW Department of Planning Heritage Information Series, as endorsed by the Heritage Council of NSW in August 2005. It has been prepared in accordance with the principles contained in the most recent edition of the *Burra Charter* (ICOMOS Australia).

1.5 Limitations

The Heritage Values of the site have not been assessed within this document. Rappoport did however assess the Heritage Values of the site in the Heritage Values Assessment (HVA), prepared in January 2012, attached to this report as Appendix A.

This Interpretation Strategy is intended as a research document intended to collate the types of information available for the site. Preparation of this document has not including the seeking of copyright approval for use of any pictures, or information being use in on site interpretation medium. If, and when, the information is selected for use as on site interpretation the necessary copyright must be acquired. The sources of all photographs used in this document are shown in Appendix B – Photolog.

This Report is prepared as a strategic overview of appropriate interpretive concepts for the heritage significance of the site. While developing themes and key messages for the identified audience at the subject site, it does not specify a content development, installation strategy or a maintenance plan for the proposed interpretive media.

1.6 Author and Copyright

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2. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

2.1 The Story of 32-34 Church Street, Wollongong

The following historic timeline was prepared for the HVA undertaken by Rappoport in January 2012. The timeline was developed using the information provided in the *Report on Test Excavation in Advance of Proposed Redevelopment, 32-34 Church Street, Wollongong, NSW* prepared by Edward Higginbotham & Associates Pty Ltd in April 2010.

Date	Event
1819	Explorer Charles Throsby gives his nephew Charles Throsby Smith (Smith) the right to his 300 acres Illawarra grant that had been promised by Governor Lachlan.
1823	Smith is directed by Surveyor General John Oxley to occupy the land originally occupied by Charles Throsby.
1825	300 acres at Illawarra marked out for Smith by Surveyor James McBrien.
1826	Smith is recorded as having; cleared 60 acres; built a house; 3 convict servants; 70 cattle; 5 horses; 25 acres of felled timber; two carts; one plough and one harrow and built a small house on the present day location the corner of Harbour and Smith Street, Wollongong.
1828	Smith built a larger dwelling, in a different location, known as 'Bustle Farm" or 'Bustle Hill"
1829	A survey records Smith as having 300 acres, 6 horses, 86 cattle, a barn, a stable, Dwelling house, kitchen, 3 convict servants, 3 free servants, 3.5 miles of fencing.
1835	The land known as Bustle Farm was formally granted to Charles Throsby Smith.
1859	Municipality of Wollongong established. Smith is appointed as Returning Officer for the election.
1876	25 September Smith dies leaving many descendants.
1878	Title of Smith's grant is conveyed to Vincent Wanostrocht Giblin and Timothy O'Sullivan Green, as trustee for the sale of Smith's grant.
1879	Smith's land is subdivided into 20 sections with a grid of street and auctioned on 15th January. Mary Ann Franklin, wife of Frederick Augustus Franklin, is the successful bidder for the land containing Bustle Hall. Bustle Hall is renamed Buona Vista.

Date	Event
1905	Mary Ann Franklin dies on 9th December. A valuation describes the property as being about 6 acres, the cottage as having a wide verandah hall, 2 sitting, 4 bedroom, bathroom, kitchen, servant's room, stables and outhouses. Buona Vista was subdivided but the sale was not successful and only one plot was sold to Timothy Wood Lee.
1912	The Perpetual Trustee Co Ltd, Timothy Wood Lee, Joseph Matthew Staffand William McKenzie signed a conveyance for the remaining land.
1913	The land was subdivided into 28 lots. Bustle Hall/Buona Vista being located on Lot 4.
1916	Title of Lots 3-5 and 8-12 is transferred to Margaret McKenzie, wife of William McKenzie
1922	A valuation of lots 3-5 was carried out by the Valuer-General. The land was said to contain a brick cottage with 6 rooms, a kitchen and iron roof.
1933	Margaret McKenzie dies on April 20th. The valuation of her land notes that the house is now called "Ellangowan". The property passed by Transmission to Maggie Stichnoch, wife of Ludwig Ferdinand Stichnoch.
1935	The land is subdivided. Lot 1 of that subdivision included the main part of 'Bustle Hall' Lots 1 and 2 were transferred to Norman Bain Finlayson.
Lot 1 DP 331687	
1935	Finlayson mortgaged the property and it is then believed he demolished "Bustle Hall" and built a new dwelling.
1959	Lot 1 DP 331687 was subdivided into Lot A and B. Lot B was transferred to Edward Leslie Milgrove. No further information about either Lots is provided.
Lot 2 DP 331687	
1940	Title transferred to Jess Elsie Sneddon, wife of Andrew Sneddon, with a covenant that no flats were built on the site.
1943	The title was transferred to Edward Leslie Milgrove.
1965	The covenant restricting building of flats was removed.
1975	Title was transferred by transmission to Rowena Vaughan Milgrove. No further information about the lot is provided

2.2 Additional Historical information

Since the preparation of the above timeline, Rappoport has been made aware of a connection between Rowena Milgrove, who owned the 34 Church Street from the time of her husband's death in 1973 until her own death in 2004, and the Regent Theatre at 197 Keira Street, Wollongong.

Rowena Milgrove (nee Jones) was the daughter of Herbert Wyndham Jones and Emily Jones. Herbert Wyndham Jones was original a storekeeper, in 1930 he held the lease for the Princess Theatre in Corrimal. During the Great Depression the Princess Theatre became a Relief Centre. Jones restored the theatre and opened it in 1931 screening silent movies and soon after purchased the theatre¹.

During the 1930s, Jones also held screenings at the Balgownie School of Arts and in the early 1940s Jones is said to have commenced a regular 16mm picture show in the Miners' Reading Room in Kembla Heights.

In 1934, Jones purchased a block of land in Keira Street with the intention constructing a Picture Theatre. In the following years, the plans were drawn up by architect Reginald John Magoffin, and submitted and approved by the Chief Secretary. Jones started a company, called South Coast Theatres Ltd, through which he hoped to raise enough capital to cover construction costs. However by the late 1930s, little had happened at the site.

In the meantime, Jones was awarded a seven year lease to show pictures at Wollongong Council's Town Hall Theatre and Council. Jones who has been described as "a pioneering cinema entrepreneur"² was a cinema lover as well as a business man. He proceeded to make changes to both the building, and to the general format of the business which were, driven by good financial sense and his aforementioned love of cinema. These changes included an emphasis on screening Australian Productions, a willingness to pay higher rental fees for premium films, introduction of daily matinees and extended seasons.

When Jones died, in March 1943, no further work had been carried out at the Keira Street theatre. Jones cinematographic venture was continued by his wife Emily, son Maurice and daughter Rowena.

¹ http://www.heritage.nsw.gov.au/07_subnav_02_2.cfm?itemid=5053515

² http://www.heritageatrisk.org.au/NSW_-_Regent_Theatre.html

Rowena married Dr Edward L Milgrove in 1949³. Milgrove is identified, in Section 2.1 of this report, as owning the Church Street site from 1943. .

Work finally began on the Keira Street Theatre in February 1950 but at an incredibly slow pace finally opening on Boxing Day 1957⁴, twenty three years after Herbert had purchased the land.⁵

According to the state heritage inventory listing sheet for the Regent Theatre the:

Highlights of the theatre's operation were:

- *the first cinemascope screening in 1961,*
- *the installation of a Westrex Stereophonic Sound system in August 1963 for the presentation of the movie 'South Pacific',*
- *- a new giant curved screen (32 feet by 19 feet) for the Todd-AO production "My Fair Lady" in October, 1967 (the screen was renewed in June, 1976),*
- *- in the biobox two Phillips Cinemeccanica 70mm projectors and in more recent years*
- *Dolby system speakers at the rear of the lower circle and on side walls.*

*The Theatre is a remarkable monument to an enterprising family of the Illawarra district.*⁶

The National Trust of Australia (NSW) prepared a Statement of Significance for the property in May 2002 stating that:

It is one of the few intact grand cinemas with dress circle, original furnishings and equipment.

³ www.bdm.com.au

⁴ This date was disputed by Rowena Milgrove who believed it opened in early 1960.

⁵ http://www.heritage.nsw.gov.au/07_subnav_02_2.cfm?itemid=5053515

⁶ http://www.heritage.nsw.gov.au/07_subnav_02_2.cfm?itemid=5053515

Maurice died of a heart attack in 1974⁷ and his mother Emily died two years later in 1976⁸. Rowena died on the 11th January 2004 the Regent theatre closed shortly after on 1st February, 2004 after her death⁹.

Elizabeth Dilevski, friend and employee of Rowena Milgrove, prepared a two volume work shortly after the death of Milgrove titled “A Pictorial Tribute to a great lady of the Regent Theatre” Which records Milgroves life and work from the late 1970s until her death. Dilevski states that people often asked Milgrove why she continued to work and she would answer “because I love it”¹⁰ Dilevski recalls that Milgrove spent much of her life in her office in the Regent and would travel extensively to Show Biz conventions and was even a guest at the Academy Awards. The theatre closed after Milgroves death because as Dilevski states:

*For many years the theatre has not been viable to run as an ongoing concern. However, over the years Rowena would sell some of her investments to finance the continued operation of the cinema.*¹¹

The building was purchased by a Church who conducted their services there until 2010¹². The theatre is currently vacant.

2.3 Statement of Significance for 34 Church Street, Wollongong

The following statement of significance was prepared by Rappoport Pty Ltd for the subject property in January 2012.

The building at 34 Church Street is not considered to demonstrate significant heritage value. The building was constructed after the demolition and subdivision of Bustle Hall. However, there is no evidence, in terms of re-use of fabric or architectural detailing to provide a tangible connection between the demolition of Bustle Hall and the construction of 34 Church Street.

⁷ Dilevski, E, 2005 Vol 1. p29

⁸ www.bdm.com.au

⁹ <http://pandora.nla.gov.au/pan/22092/20040525-0000/www.caths.org.au/news.htm>

¹⁰ Dilevski, E, 2005 Vol 1. P140

¹¹ Dilevski, E, 2005 Vol 2. P376

¹² <http://cinematreasures.org/theaters/2894>

While the design of the building was clearly influenced by several design phases and styles the building does not demonstrate any of these phases to an exemplary standard nor does it have the potential to yield further technical information or provide any further information about the history of Wollongong.

On consideration of the information contained within Section 2.1 of this Report

Rappoport has re-examined the HVA specifically related to **Criterion B – Associated Significance**

An item has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in NSW's cultural or natural history (state significance); OR it has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in the cultural or natural history of the local area (local significance).

Rowena Milgrove was dedicated to the continuation of the theatre, she worked tirelessly to realise her father's dream of building and running a Picture Theatre in Keira Street, Wollongong. She sold assets to personally finance the venture and is reported to have been working at the theatre two weeks prior to her death¹³.

Milgrove is of special important to the history of Wollongong and during her lifetime made a substantial contribution to the areas public entertainment and while it is true that Rowena Milgrove resided at 34 Church Street from 1949- 2004, it is not considered that the building represents a special or strong association with her life or works that cannot be better demonstrated by the Regent Theatre in Wollongong.

Rappoport finds that the above Statement of Significance should remain unaltered.

¹³ Illawarra Mercury, Tuesday 13th 2004

2.3 Historical Themes

2.3.1 Introduction

A framework of historical themes has been developed by the Heritage Council of New South Wales which links in with the National framework of themes developed by the Australian Heritage Commission.

These themes identify the historical values that might be used to interpret heritage significance.

By presenting information about the key historical themes which have shaped the subject site in an enlightening and interesting way, weighed up from an analysis of the building and an assessment of its cultural significance, good interpretative outcomes will be achieved. The key messages which emanate from the historical themes relevant to subject property help us to identify the stories about the site which should be relayed to future site users.


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2.3.2 Key Historical Themes

2.3.2.1		Theme:	
National:		State:	Local:
Developing local, regional and national economies		Pastoralism	Activities associated with the breeding, raising, processing and distribution of livestock for human use
Prior to the development of the current building, the site was occupied by Bustle Hall which was constructed in the late 1820s by Charles Throsby Smith. Bustle Hall was constructed on the 300 Acre grant that he was given right to by his uncle Charles Throsby, explorer.			
Key Messages:			
The exploration and settlement of the Illawarra Region.		The life and history of Charles Throsby Smith who was one of the forefathers of Wollongong later becoming one of the Retuning Officers for the newly established Municipality.	
Early land uses of the subject site.		The development of Bustle Hall as one of the first and premier addressed of the Wollongong area.	
		A description of the Archaeological remains of the house which are believed to remain on site.	


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HERITAGE INTERPRETATION STRATEGY
32-34 Church Street, Wollongong

	<p>A description of how the subdivision of Smiths land subsequently affected the development of the northern area of Wollongong.</p>		
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HERITAGE INTERPRETATION STRATEGY
32-34 Church Street, Wollongong

2.3.2.2	Theme:	
National:	State:	Local:
Developing Australia's cultural life	Creative endeavour	Activities associated with the production and performance of literary, artistic, architectural and other imaginative, interpretive or inventive works; and/or associated with the production and expression of cultural phenomena; and/or environments that have inspired such creative activities.
Bustle Hall was demolished in the mid-1930s by Dr Norman Bain Finlayson. The land was subdivided into two lots and two buildings were constructed in its place. 32 Church Street has some of the indicators of the Inter-war Georgian Revival Style which appears to have been popular in Wollongong at that time.		
Key Messages:		
		<p>The story of the twentieth century architectural development of Wollongong. How it demonstrated the changes in the region from a pastoral setting to a vibrant modern city</p> <p>How the Architecture demonstrates an era of wealth and creativity as a result of ongoing mining activities in the region.</p>

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HERITAGE INTERPRETATION STRATEGY
32-34 Church Street, Wollongong



A description of the changing Architectural styles seen in Australia's during the inter-war period and how traditionally fashionable styles were influenced by those seen in England with pattern books being sent for replication. After the First World War Australia was a young carefree country which began to be influenced by another former Colony, America.

The importance of the Georgian Revival Architectural period as it is believed that this was the first time in Australian architectural history, that an early style of Australian architecture was chosen to be revived and it is thought that this marked the beginning of defining Australia's architectural path.


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HERITAGE INTERPRETATION STRATEGY
32-34 Church Street, Wollongong

2.3.2.3		Theme:	
National:		State:	Local:
Marking the phases of life		Persons	Activities of, and associations with, identifiable individuals, families and communal groups
Rowena Milgrove resided at 34 Church Street, Wollongong until her death in 2004. Rowena was the manageress of the Regent Theatre in Keira Street, Wollongong and daughter of its founder Herbert Jones.			
Key Messages:			
		The early life of Rowena Milgrove including her father’s ambitions and dreams of building and operating a Picture Theatre on Keira Street, Wollongong.	
		The story of her continued role in the day to day operations of the Regent Theatre, Wollongong and how she managed the Theatre until shortly before her death.	
		A lasting record of her life as told by people who knew and worked with her.	




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HERITAGE INTERPRETATION STRATEGY
32-34 Church Street, Wollongong

		<p>A description of the house and gardens that had once stood on the property.</p>
	<p>34 Church Street, Wollongong shortly before the death of Rowena Milgrove in 2004</p>	



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HERITAGE INTERPRETATION STRATEGY
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2.3.2.4		Theme:	
National:		State:	Local:
Developing Australia’s cultural life		Creative endeavour	Activities associated with the production and performance of literary, artistic, architectural and other imaginative, interpretive or inventive works; and/or associated with the production and expression of cultural phenomena; and/or environments that have inspired such creative activities.
The regent Theatre Wollongong is a single screen cinema which opened in the late 1950s/early 1960s. Designed by Reginald J Magoffin with the interior design by Marion Hall Best			
Key Messages:			
			
	<p>An explanation of how and why the Art Deco theatre was designed in 1935 but not constructed until the 1950s.</p> <p>A brief biography of the renowned architect and interior designer who were involved with the design of the Theatre.</p>		


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HERITAGE INTERPRETATION STRATEGY
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		<p>A concise history of the theatre from its opening in 1957 until its closure in 2004.</p> <p>A physical description of the theatre.</p>
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3.0 SITE INVENTORY AND AUDIENCE

3.1 The Circumstances of the Existing Site

The study area and location of the 32-34 Church Street is described in Section 1.1 above. The buildings are currently tenanted and no major works have been undertaken to either building by the current owner.

A physical analysis of 32-34 Church Street with graphic evidence is contained in HVA prepared by Rappoport Pty Limited in January of this year, and is attached as Appendix 'A' to this Report.

As mentioned, in Section 1.2 of this report, the site owner seeks to demolish both 32 and 34 Church Street to make way for the construction of a residential flat building. This proposal is currently being considered by the JRPP.

This Interpretation Strategy is intended to demonstrate that the history of the site can be demonstrated through an interpretation strategy and integrated into the proposed residential flat building and also into the wider Wollongong area. It is considered that, while interpretative information could be incorporated into the lobby, lift cars or exterior of the building, a wider audience could be reached if the information was also made available to the Wollongong City Council, Library and Local Historical Society.

3.2 Audience

As stated above, the interpretative information could be made available to two distinct audiences:

- the site users and their visitors; and
- the general public.

The first could be targeted with onsite information boards and the second could be reached through interpretative information being made available to the Council, Library and/or Local Historical Society.

3.3 Interpretive Materials

Interpretive resources to hand include:

- Historic photographs, newspaper articles and archival records held at the local studies section of the Wollongong library;
- Volumes I and II of *“A Pictorial Tribute to a Great Lady of the Regent Theatre”* by Elizabeth Dilevski. This document was prepared after the death of Rowena Milgrove’s by her friend and personal Assistant Elizabeth Dilevski. This document contains pictures of Milgrove, the Regent Theatre and the house at 34 Church Street prior to Milgrove’s death. This information could be incorporated into a photographic archival record of the site, Theatre and Milgrove’s life which could be retained at the Library, Council Chambers or Local Historical Society and act as a lasting record of the House, Theatre and Rowena Milgrove.

4.0 PROPOSED INTERPRETATION STRATEGY

4.1 Key Messages – The Stories To Be Told

The key historic messages contained in the Historical Themes analysis, see Section 2.3.2, help us to identify the fabric to be conserved and the stories to be told in order to interpret and enhance an understanding of the place and its role in the story of Wollongong. Many of the key messages, under the various Historical Themes, overlap and this helps to identify the pertinent stories. Storytelling is an important component of interpretation. Provided the account of the site is told in an informative and interesting manner, rather than conveying a lot of facts about the place, interpretation will be achieved which taps into the imagination of the audience.

Some of the stories which are derived from these key messages are as follows:

- The exploration and settlement of the Illawarra Region after the establishment of the colony at Sydney Cove. This would include a description of the early land uses of the area.
- The early colonial history of the site, including the life and history of Charles Throsby Smith, his use of the site for agricultural purposes and the development of Bustle Hall.
- A description of how the subdivision of Smiths land subsequently affected the development of the northern area of Wollongong including the naming of the surrounding area of Smiths Hill.
- The development of Wollongong from its pastoral beginnings to its current standing as a city and how the changes can be seen in the Architectural history of the place. This includes the establishment of the municipality and the mining history of the region.
- The importance to Wollongong cultural, creative and recreational development of Herbert Wyndham Jones.
- The role of Rowena Milgrove as the Manager and sole surviving heir of the Regent Theatre.
- The history of the Regent Theatre, Wollongong.

4.2 Interpretation Strategy

Interpretation should engage the senses of the audience. Communicating the history of the site should not be limited to merely providing facts and information. Nevertheless, to help to tell the stories outlined in Section 4.1, it would be appropriate to include some or all of them on interpretive media, such as the interpretation boards within common areas.

The interpretation of the site could, if this Interpretation Strategy is approved, include (but not be limited to) the following:

4.2.1 Interpretive Signage:

- Interpretive boards containing photographs and text about the key stories identified in Section 4.1 could be appropriately placed in common areas of the proposed development such as lobby areas, and within the grounds of the development;

4.2.2 Photographic Recording:

- The information collated by Elizabeth Dilevski, about Rowena Milgrove, the Regent Theatre and pictures of 34 Church Street taken during Milgrove's life and immediately after her death could be reproduced in a photographic archival recording to be stored at the library/ local historical society and Council for future reference and as a lasting historical document. These could be added to by an Archival Recording of the building prior to its demolition.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This Report is structured to communicate the history of the Church Street site and its wider connections to the Wollongong area.

It is recommended that an in depth Interpretation Plan is carried out and that the findings of that report are realised as on site interpretation as well as community based interpretation.

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www.maps.google.com

APPENDIX A

Heritage Values Assessment

Prepared by Rappoport Pty Ltd
January 2012

APPENDIX B

Photolog

Prepared by Rappoport Pty Ltd
April 2012