

28 August 2015

REFERRAL RESPONSE - HERITAGE

FILE NO: DA 315/2015/1

ADDRESS: 163A Victoria Road BELLEVUE HILL 2023

PROPOSAL: Alterations and additions to existing Bellevue Hill Public School including the demolition of buildings, the construction of a new school building and the refurbishment of the existing building to provide accommodation for an additional 450 students. The location of temporary demountables within Bellevue Hill Park during the construction period.

FROM: Kate Harrison - Heritage Officer

TO: Mr D Booth

ISSUES

- *The bulk, scale and setback of the proposed classroom building would result in a building form that appears to dominate the significant Block A building,*
 - *The dominant form of the new building does not provide an appropriate visual setting or opportunities for appreciation of the architectural form of the Block A building.*
 - *Details of the proposed portico and entrance stair to Block A have not been provided.*
 - *Removal of the fig trees would adversely affect the historic landscape setting for the school building.*
 - *No Archaeological Assessment has been provided to demonstrate that archeological remains at the site will not be affected by the works.*
 - *The proposed development is not in accordance with Articles 8 or 22 of The Burra Charter.*
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DOCUMENTATION

The following documentation provided by the applicant has been examined for this referral response:

- Drawing set by Group GSA, dated 18/06/2015, and numbered DA0000, DA1000, DA1101, DA1102, DA1103, DA2000, DA2001, DA2002, DA2003, DA2004, DA2010, DA2020, DA2030, DA3000, DA3001, DA3002, DA3101, DA3102, DA4000, DA4100, DA4200, DA4300, DA4301, DA4302, DA4303, L1001, L1002
- Historic Heritage Assessment and Statement of Heritage Impact by EMGA MM, dated 11 June 2015
- View Assessment by Group GSA dated July 2015

SITE INSPECTION / RESEARCH

The following research was undertaken in the preparation of this assessment:

- The site was inspected on the 28/08/2015, from the public domain

Review of the following documents and photographic evidence:

- Council's property system, to establish dates of earlier building and development applications for the subject and surrounding properties.

- Council's photography files relevant to the immediate area
- Council's heritage inventory sheets
- Council's aerial photography and mapping database
- Google Maps – street view

STATUTORY AND POLICY DOCUMENTS

The following statutory and policy documents are relevant to the application:

- Woollahra LEP 2014

HERITAGE FRAMEWORK

- The subject site contains two Norfolk Island Pines listed as heritage items in Woollahra Local Environment Plan 2014.
- Block A has been identified by EMGA MM as a building that fulfills the criteria for local heritage listing.
- Block A is not a heritage item in Woollahra Local Environment Plan 2014.
- The subject site is listed on the Department of Education and Communities Section 170 Register.
- The subject site has been identified by EMGA MM as a site with archeological potential.

SIGNIFICANCE OF SUBJECT PROPERTY

The Bellevue Hill Public School is an item with local historical, aesthetic and representative significance. It has historic significance as a long term local school in the Bellevue Hill area and is an important local community hub. It is a substantially intact representation of the exterior of an Inter-war Free Classical style and the design of local schools in the early twentieth century.

Source: EMGA MM

Please refer to Table 3.1 *Historic Heritage Assessment and Statement of Heritage Impact* by EMGA MM dated 11 June 2015, for full assessment of significance against Heritage Council of NSW criteria.

The Department of Education and Communities Section 170 Register identifies the school as a site of historical and social significance that should be listed on a Local Environmental Plan

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

The following works are proposed:

- New entrance door and portico to Block A
- Demolition of existing single storey demountable buildings
- Removal of existing Hills Weeping Fig tree
- Removal of existing Melaleuca tree
- Construction of new four storey building
- Extension of existing COLA
- Car-parking adjacent to COLA

ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE IMPACT

It is noted that the subject application will be assessed in accordance with Division 4, section 89 of the EP&A Act 1979 as a Crown development. The following assessment is advisory only.

Woollahra LEP 2014 Part 5.10 Clauses 1(a), 1(b), 4

- Clause 1(a) The development is not in accordance with Articles 8 or 22 of *The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 2013* (The

Burra Charter), for this reason the development is not considered to conserve the heritage of Woollahra.

- Clause 1(b) The impact upon the heritage significance, setting and views of a building that is considered to fulfil the criteria for listing as a heritage item in Schedule 5 of the Woollahra LEP, will be adverse.

Comments

Built Heritage

- The Block A building is an aesthetically significant element in the Birriga Road and Victoria Road streetscapes. The proposed four storey classroom building would obstruct views from the public domain to the Inter-war Free Classical 'Block A' building from Birriga Road and the corner of Birriga Road and Victoria Road as illustrated by the *View Assessment* by Group GSA, see image 41.
- Article 22 of The Burra Charter, the standard of practice for heritage conservation in Australia (utilised by Heritage Conservation Practitioners and the Heritage Council of NSW), states that '*new works such as additions or other changes to the place may be acceptable where it respects and does not distort or obscure the cultural significance of the place, or detract from its interpretation and appreciation.*'
- Article 8 of The Burra Charter, states that *Conservation* of a place '*requires the retention of an appropriate setting. This includes visual and sensory setting*'.
- The bulk and scale of the proposed classroom building is greater than the bulk and scale of the existing significant Block A building. The new building form is sited forward of the building alignment of Block A, obstructing views to the architectural form of the building. These two factors result in a building form that appears to dominate the significant Block A building, particularly when viewed from the corner of Birriga Road and Victoria Road. The dominant form of the new building does not provide an appropriate visual setting or opportunities for appreciation of the architectural form of the Block A building. The bulk, scale and setback of the proposed classroom building would adversely affect the aesthetic significance and setting of the Block A building.
- The scale of the proposed building may be acceptable if the form of the new building was further setback from Birriga Road, providing improved visual separation between the new and old building forms.
- Details of the proposed portico and entrance stair to Block A have not been provided. The form, character and materiality of the proposed portico should complement the Inter-war Free Classical architectural style of the existing building. Corrugated profile roof sheeting should be used for any roof structure to the portico.
- The existing COLA structure is visually and physically separate from the significant Block A structure. The proposed COLA addition would be recessive in scale and would not cause any major obstruction to views of Block A from the public domain.

Landscape

- The existing Fig trees are part of the historic landscape setting for the Block A. building. These trees should be retained and conserved to maintain the historic landscape setting for the school building. Should it be determined that removal of the Hills Weeping Fig tree and other significant trees is acceptable, new mature trees of a similar species should be planted in the general vicinity, to ensure that the historic landscape setting for the Inter-war Free Classical 'Block A' building is retained.
- Please refer to Council's Tree Officer Referral Response with regard to impacts to heritage listed trees and other significant plantings at the site.

Archaeology

- The *Historic Heritage Assessment and Statement of Heritage Impact* by EMGA MM states that the remains of a *Headmaster's cottage* have been found at the subject site. No documentation illustrating where these remains are located has been provided. No assessment of the archeological potential of the affected area has been provided. Given that the subject site is known to contain archeological remains, and is likely to have archeological potential, an *Archeological Assessment* prepared by a suitably qualified an experienced Archaeologist should be undertaken.

RECOMMENDATION

1. Revise the form/increase the setback of the proposed classroom building from the Birriga Road boundary, to prevent obstruction of views to the significant Block A. building and reduce dominance of the new building form when viewed from Birriga and Victoria Road.
2. Retain the existing Hills Weeping Fig trees and the other significant Port Jackson Fig tree/or provide replacement trees of a similar species in the general vicinity, to ensure that the historic landscape setting for the Inter-war Free Classical 'Block A' building is retained.
3. Provide details of the proposed portico and entrance stair to Block A, demonstrating that the form, character and materiality of the proposed portico will complement the Inter-war Free Classical architectural style of the existing building. Corrugated profile roof sheeting should be used for any roof structure to the portico.
4. Provide an *Archeological Assessment* prepared by a suitably qualified an experienced Archaeologist (in accordance with any advice from the Office of Environment and Heritage, Heritage Division/ NSW Heritage Council).

Kate Harrison
Heritage Officer