



STATEMENT OF HERITAGE IMPACT

New QPRC Office Building at 257 Crawford St. Queanbeyan NSW

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On behalf of:
Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council (QPRC)

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Cover image references, top to bottom:

- *Dutton's Cottage in Crawford Street in Queanbeyan*. Photograph by Bidgee, 31 December 2011, Wikimedia Commons.
- *Former Queanbeyan Fire Station in Crawford Street*. Photograph by Bidgee, 31 December 2011, Wikimedia Commons.
- *The School of Arts building on Crawford Street*. Photographs Queanbeyan Historical Museum Society / Penny McIntock, 27 September 2013, abc.net.au.

Introduction

This Statement of Heritage Impact (SOHI) has been commissioned by Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council (QPRC) and prepared by Alanna King at Philip Leeson Architects in August 2019. Minor modifications were made in December 2019. The subject of this SOHI is a proposal for a new multi-storey office building designed by Cox Architecture for a former office building site at 257 Crawford Street in Queanbeyan, NSW.

DA drawings reviewed in the preparation of this report and dated 28 November 2019 include:

- DA 10-01 Subdivision Plan Existing, revision D
- DA 10-02 Subdivision Plan New, revision 5
- DA 11-01 Site Plan, revision 7
- DA 13-01 Staging Plan, revision 4
- DA 15-01 Demolition Plan, revision 4
- DA 21-01 Basement Plan, revision 7
- DA 21-02 Ground Plan, revision 8
- DA 21-03 Mezzanine Plan, revision 7
- DA 21-04 Level 1 Plan, revision 6
- DA 21-05 Level 2 Plan, revision 6
- DA 21-06 to 21-08 Level 3-5 Plans, revision 6
- DA 21-09 Plant – Mechanical + Services, revision 5
- DA 21-10 Roof Plans, revision 5
- DA 30-01 Elevations, revision 5
- DA 30-02 Elevations, revision 5
- DA 31-01 Site Elevation, revision 4
- DA 32-01 External Finishes Schedule, revision 3
- DA 40-01 Sections, revision 3
- DA 40-02 Sections, revision 4
- DA 80-01 Perspective Views, revision 4
- DA 80-02 Perspective View – Civic Plaza, revision 3
- DA 94-01 Signage Schedule, revision 3
- And the Public Realm and Landscape design by Oxygen.

The developing design was presented to Council's Heritage Advisory Committee for review on Thursday 16 May, 2019.

The Place

The subject site at 257 Crawford St. Queanbeyan does not contain any heritage items and is not located within the Queanbeyan Heritage Conservation Area. However, the site is located between two heritage-listed buildings with local significance - the former School of Arts and the former Fire Station – and within a streetscape that contains a number of other local heritage-listed buildings.

- Council Chambers (former School of Arts) at 251 Crawford St.
- Masonic Hall at 258 Crawford St.
- House (Baker Deane and Nutt offices) at 260 Crawford St.
- Fire Station (former) at 261 Crawford St.
- Dutton's Cottage at 263 Crawford St.
- Weatherboard cottage at 274 Crawford St.
- Weatherboard cottage at 276 Crawford St.

The character of the street is varied with buildings of various eras, styles and functional typologies.

The presentation of buildings to the streetscape is generally quite formal with most detail on the front elevation, some attention given to the side elevations one to two rooms deep, and functional elements located at the rear. The roof is also an important element of the architecture.

The heritage-listed buildings are freestanding, separated by driveways, and relatively fine-grained at no more than two rooms wide, and no more than two storeys high.

Council Chambers (former School of Arts)

The former School of Arts is historically significant as Queanbeyan's second School of Arts building, erected when the movement was at its peak in the town. It demonstrates the high importance that the community placed on cultural pursuits. The 1920s building is also a reflection of optimism and good economic times. The inter war Georgian Revival style of the building is rare in Queanbeyan but is evident in various buildings in Canberra. The building is valued by the community for its aesthetic qualities, for its continual use as a meeting place since its construction and for its major civic landmark qualities. Because of its continuity of use, a considerable amount of community memory and association is focused on the building.

Fire Station (former)

There is relatively little information available on the heritage significance of the old Queanbeyan fire station. Historian Brendan O'Keefe carried out some initial research and obtained copies of plans and elevations of the building as part of an earlier Council project, since abandoned. A comparative assessment with other fire stations of its era across NSW could help to determine whether the building is a common or rare survivor of its vintage, whether it was built to a standard design or has some distinctive or unique design features, and how intact it is as a representative of its type. Our recommendation for further research was not accepted as part of the proposal for this project.

Dutton's Cottage

Dutton's Cottage was built in the mid-1880s for Thomas Dutton, one of the Lanyon overseers. It is an example of a Victorian Georgian Style Cottage. It has a corrugated iron gabled roof, bullnose verandah and corbelled chimneys. It has high aesthetic value and makes an important contribution to the street.

Proposed Development

The proposed development has several dimensions, as follows:

1. Consolidation of multiple blocks to achieve one block for the new building and a second for the former Fire Station / Dutton's Cottage;
2. Construction of a single subterranean basement level across several blocks and under a public road at the rear of the site;
3. Construction of a new multi-storey building at 257 Crawford St. Queanbeyan; and
4. New landscape works along the Crawford Street elevation consisting of pavements, lawn, trees and possible public artworks.

Subdivision

The proposed change to the subdivision:

- Consolidates lots 1, 5 and 2 (part) DP 1179998 and lot 1 DP 748338 to form a single large block (proposed lot 1 DP 1179998). The block effectively stretches from the former School of Arts to the former Fire Station on Crawford Street and to the laneway behind, incorporating all the land on which The Q (Queanbeyan Performing Arts Centre) is located; and
- Narrows lot 2 DP 1179998 as viewed from Crawford St. and consolidates it together with lot 18 DP 548244 and lot 2 DP 748338 at the rear of the fire station (addressing Rutledge Street) to achieve a single block stretching from Crawford Street to the laneway behind.

Basement car park

The proposed basement car park is an elongated area on one single subterranean level stretching from Crawford Street to the laneways behind. The shape of the basement has been determined by a storm water main to the north, and the block boundaries to the east and west. Access to the basement is off Rutledge Street.

New multi-storey building

The proposal is for a new Council office building ranging from five to seven storeys, and a single storey volume providing a new foyer for the Bicentennial Hall.

The building will accommodate functions including a reception desk, shop front and library at the ground floor, Council offices on the mezzanine, and office space on upper levels. There is a roof garden proposed atop the lower of the two volumes, and louvres screen rooftop plant to the effect of an additional storey atop the higher volume.

There is a concrete core, but facades of upper levels are generally wholly glazed, with some sections of glass louvres enclosing a winter garden element. There are vertical shade louvres on the western elevation (at the rear). The elevations of ground floor and mezzanine levels appear comparatively solid, with textured brick walls and distinct window and door openings. The width of individual sections of elevations is comparable to that of the heritage buildings adjacent.

The footprint of the ground floor and mezzanine plans is smaller than that of the upper level plans, with the effect that the upper levels stand on concrete stilts at the Crawford Street elevation. The underside of the first floor level volume forms a datum aligning with the parapet moulding on the former Fire Station Building to the south. The underside of the second floor level volume forms a datum with the ridgeline of the former School of Arts building to the north.

The building is designed to be viewed in the round, with particular attention given to the interface with the urban plaza formed between Crawford Street, the former School of Arts and the proposed new buildings. The public interface also continues around the sides of the building, down a pedestrian and cyclist oriented laneway adjacent to the former Fire Station, and through to a civic plaza at the rear of the building facing The Q.

The material palette has been selected to transition from tactile human-scaled unit elements (face brick) at the ground plane and in the facades of lower levels, to the reflective glass of a contemporary office building above.

Landscape works

The proposed landscape works at ground level consist of a paved urban plaza off Crawford Street, a raised planter and seating around the base of an existing significant tree on the block, and conservation of all existing street trees along the Crawford Street frontage.

The landscape plan proposes a paved laneway down the southern side of the new multi-storey building and adjacent to the former Fire Station, which provides pedestrian, cyclist and vehicular access to a bicycle storage shed, and to a civic square at the rear of the building facing The Q.

Analysis of Heritage Effects

In this section, the potential for various types of heritage impacts arising from the proposal has been considered in detail. This includes visual, physical and social impacts from now into the future.

Subdivision

The proposed changes to the subdivision further consolidate small blocks into larger blocks, facilitating a larger scale of development where Crawford Street has historically supported a fine grain of small

individual buildings. Note the scale of blocks on the opposite side of the street, characterising a streetscape with a number of local heritage-listed buildings.

In the case of lots 2 DP 748338 and 18 DP 548244 facing Rutledge Street, consolidation with lot 2 DP 1179998 facing Crawford Street erases a sense of hierarchy of blocks facing Crawford Street as the primary street, and Rutledge Street as a secondary street. It also introduces a level of freedom in the orientation of future buildings on the site, and introduces a process of exposing the side and rear of individual heritage listed buildings (the former Fire Station at 261 Crawford Street and Dutton's Cottage at 263 Crawford Street) to scrutiny in-the-round. This is not highly desirable for buildings designed to address a streetscape, where side elevations are plain and rear elevations are characterized by their service functions.

However, it appears that lot 2 DP 1179998 at the corner of Crawford and Rutledge Streets is a pre-existing consolidation of narrow blocks facing Crawford Street, and the impact of the proposed change will be focused mainly on Rutledge Street.

In the case of lots 1 and 5 DP 1179998 stretching from Crawford Street to the laneway at the rear, the consolidation of the depth of these blocks can facilitate more integrated site planning where larger buildings have existed for some time. The main impact on the former Fire Station will be the proposed change to the side and rear boundaries, impacting on the curtilage for this building.

Basement car park

The design of the subterranean basement car park will have no visual impact on the heritage-listed buildings on Crawford Street. The access ramp will have a visual impact on Rutledge Street.

The external wall of the basement is parallel to and comes relatively close to the northern wall of the former Fire Station. Care will need to be taken to ensure there is no physical impact on the structure of the former Fire Station building during excavation or construction.

The structural consultant on the project, Bonar Bucalina of Robert Bird Group, advised on 12/6/19 that,

- The heritage listed former Fire Station is located approximately 2.4m from the edge of the QPRC Building shoring structure;
- The proposed development will require excavation for one level of basement (no more than 4m in depth). A permanent shoring system is proposed for the excavation, utilising secant piled walls as recommended in the D&N Geotechnical report dated 6/6/19. To minimise wall movements (particularly adjacent the heritage fire station), a single row of temporary ground anchors is proposed to be installed below the Ground floor slab location. These ground anchors will be de-stressed once the Ground Floor has been constructed.

New multi-storey building

The range of impacts the proposed multi-storey building may have on the surrounding heritage listed buildings are:

- Visual, as a result of the bulk, scale, materiality and form of the building;
- Physical, resulting from the vibration and dust associated with construction activity, and from long term physical changes to the setting; and
- Social, owing to the change in the pattern of use of the immediate setting of the buildings.

Visual impacts

The scale of the new multi-storey office building, significantly larger than the flanking heritage buildings, risks overwhelming the finer grain of this section of Crawford Street. However, given the existing planning overlay, and the challenging brief, the architects have made every attempt to break down the scale and the visual bulk of the building. We note in particular:

1. The site planning generally abstracts the large new office building from the fine-grained zero-setback heritage streetscape of Crawford Street. Where the former School of Arts and the

former Fire Station buildings are located on the front boundary, the office building is set back from the front boundary and stepped back gradually in plan to lead the visitor deep into the block. The existing significant tree along with new pavement, public art and ticket kiosk contribute to the sense of an urban plaza off Crawford Street. The effect of this plaza is to remove the visual presence of the large new office building somewhat from the streetscape.

2. The height of the building has been broken down, with ground and mezzanine levels designed to relate to the human scale and tactile brick materiality of neighbouring heritage-listed buildings. The chosen datums are sympathetic to the scale of the former Fire Station to the south, and the former School of Arts building to the north. The reflective glass materiality of upper levels, together with the retention of three mature trees along Crawford Street, will go some way to screen the visual bulk of the upper levels of the building.
3. The overall width of the building has been broken down into narrow components, both at the upper and lower levels, which relate to the width of heritage listed buildings on Crawford Street. Whilst the overall scale of the building is very different to the scale of original buildings in the streetscape, it responds meaningfully to the dominant pattern of the streetscape with two narrower building forms, visually separated in the streetscape.
4. The side setbacks of the development respond to the client's brief, without unnecessarily visually impacting the pattern of development along Crawford Street. The setback from the former Fire Station is equivalent to the driveways separating other buildings in the streetscape, and provides public shared-zone access to the rear of the block. The visual impact of the new foyer to the Bicentennial Hall is minimal, and does not draw unnecessary attention to the compounding physical bulk of this solution. However, we do note that the proposed setback adjacent the former Fires Station does expose the side of this building to the public realm.

Physical impacts

The main risk of physical impacts on the heritage buildings emanates from the construction stage, where excavation and construction cause vibration in the ground on which the buildings stand, potentially causing movement cracking, and produces air borne dust that could settle on or in the buildings immediately adjacent.

There may be ongoing physical impacts from the change in microclimate. For example, the brick former Fire Station building will be overshadowed by the new multi-storey office building to the north, and this may have a minor impact on the masonry construction system. Physical impacts on the construction system could be compounded by the extent to which the building will be surrounded by hard paving, affecting the wetting and drying of soil around foundations, and potentially inhibiting natural movement of the building fabric.

Finally, the buildings are at risk of physical impacts from increased pedestrian, cyclist and traffic movements in the vicinity. This could lead to building fabric damage from vehicular scrapes and collisions, chaining of bicycles to drainpipes or similar, or simply graffiti and billposting.

Social impacts

The social impacts of the new multi-storey Council building on the adjacent heritage buildings are likely to be overwhelmingly positive. The new building is a public destination, and will attract greater visitation to this part of Crawford Street. Respectful in its relationship with the two flanking heritage buildings, and contemporary in its design, the new building is likely to increase the extent to which the former Fire Station and former School of Arts buildings are noticed and respected for their positive contribution to the street.

The new multi-storey office building will also introduce a new way of seeing the heritage listed buildings in Crawford Street – from above. It is expected that where heritage listed buildings can be viewed from an increased number of vantage points, there is also an increased pressure to conserve their aesthetic

values as appreciated from those vantage points. This may have its future challenges when considering the visual impact of future services installations.

Landscape works

To a large extent the potential physical impacts from the landscape have been considered above, in conjunction with the potential for physical impacts from the new multi-storey development.

However, we note in particular the impact of changing the line of the kerb outside the former Fire Station. The proposed kerb line directs traffic into the laneway adjacent, but removes the possibility of vehicles (such as a fire engine) approaching the fire station door. This has a negative impact on the legibility and future interpretation and use of the former Fire Station building.

Other streetscape impacts include:

- The positive visual impact of retaining and conserving mature and significant street trees, and incorporating them into the new urban plaza. It is important that the proposed raised beds do not have a detrimental impact on the long term health of the trees;
- The visual impact of continuing unit paving beyond the front boundary line and onto the Crawford Street footpath. This has the impact of changing the hierarchy of traditional streetscape elements, and diminishing the continuity of the Crawford Street public realm.

Careful consideration of the fabric of flanking heritage buildings needs to be incorporated into the detailed design stage of the landscape plan. For example, if the proposed garden bed is built up too high against the wall of the former School of Arts Building, there could be adverse physical impacts on the building. Similarly, if a new concrete kerb element is introduced hard up against the northern wall of the former Fire Station, it could lead to future cracking of the masonry wall.

Measures Proposed to Reduce Heritage Impact

As heritage consultant to the Cox Architecture design team, we recommend the following measures to reduce the identified heritage impacts.

To reduce the impact of the proposed subdivision it is recommended that:

1. The proposed boundary at the rear of the fire station be moved west, to align with the depth of lot 1 DP 735700 at the former School of Arts building. This increased depth would correspond with the historic pattern of subdivision as demonstrated by other blocks in the street, and allow for historically appropriate site planning.
2. The proposed side boundary adjacent the former Fire Station be confirmed with research to respond to a former boundary line. It is unclear from the drawings available whether the proposed side boundary is hard up against the fire station, or whether it includes a driveway width on the north side of the former Fire Station block. Nor is it clear whether a driveway here is historically relevant – perhaps it would be more relevant for the boundary to be hard up against the former Fire Station. The proposal should relate to an earlier block boundary alignment where possible.

To reduce the visual impact of the new building it is recommended that:

3. The detailed design of the ground and mezzanine level brick facades be reviewed for further opportunities to reference the heritage-listed buildings adjacent. E.g. In the design of window and door openings, datum lines etc.
4. The proposed line of the kerb in front of the former Fire Station should be redesigned to maintain the legibility of fire engine access to the main vehicular door.
5. Further information should be provided about the materials proposed for the Crawford Street public realm, and the extent to which they will provide continuity of the streetscape, which contains several heritage listed buildings.

To reduce the potential for physical impacts from the new building it is recommended that:

6. Dilapidation report - A suitably qualified professional be engaged to document the existing fabric and condition of the former Fire Station and former School of Arts, with a view to establishing recommendations for their monitoring during construction.
7. Risk of movement cracking - The structural consultant should be engaged to advise on the risk of movement cracking to the former Fire Station, and whether monitoring is recommended at any time during excavation or construction. An agreed methodology for monitoring the physical fabric of the heritage-listed buildings during construction should be documented and lodged with the approval authority.
8. Traffic control - Consideration should be given to protecting the former Fire Station from the risk of negative physical impacts from inappropriate vehicular traffic and increased vehicular traffic adjacent e.g. controls on the size and type of vehicles able to use the laneway, and strategically designed and positioned traffic control devices. If possible, protection measures should also address the risk of physical impacts from graffiti and/or billposting.
9. Landscape interface - Pavement should be detailed in such a way as to allow for expansion, and provide for movement in the fabric of heritage listed buildings adjacent. In the design of surface drainage, flow should be directed away from heritage-listed buildings, and proposed levels should maintain the original design levels around the former School of Arts and former Fire Station buildings.
10. Bicycle parking - Ensure sufficient and clearly located bicycle parking in the vicinity of the building, so as to discourage cyclists from chaining bicycles to heritage building fabric.
11. Tree health - Provision of a landscape architect or arborists report to ensure that the proposed raised beds around mature trees will not have a detrimental impact on their long term health;
12. Cleaning - The exterior of the former School of Arts and former Fire Station Buildings should be cleaned of construction dust following completion of construction.

To harness the potential for positive social impacts from the new building it is recommended that:

13. The project consider opportunities to include interpretation (signage) in the design of the new public realm to describe the local significance of heritage-listed buildings in the Crawford Street streetscape, and the aesthetic contribution made by a range of architectural styles.

Conclusion

The proposed building contrasts considerably from the prevailing character of Crawford Street in its height, floor area, typology and use. Given the existing planning overlay and ambitious brief, the architects have expertly navigated the context and produced a building set into an urban plaza that temporarily suspends the fine grain and low rise of Crawford Street. Employing respectful setbacks, breaking down bulk and form, selection of sympathetic materiality and conservation of mature trees have all contributed to an unexpectedly successful outcome.

The main risk of heritage impacts is concentrated in and around the former Fire Station. We have made a series of recommendations to manage these impacts, ranging from review of the subdivision boundary to inspection, monitoring and protection of building fabric during construction. A design review of the north (side) elevation of the former Fire Station and the risks around increased vehicular traffic would improve long-term outcomes for this building.

Where recommendations to reduce impact are carried out in full, it is our opinion that the proposal will not have a detrimental impact on the former Fire Station the former School of Arts adjacent and other heritage listed buildings in Crawford Street. With the ongoing attention of the architect, landscape architect, structural engineer and head contractor through the detailed design and construction stages, the identified heritage impacts can be managed for a successful outcome.