Inspired People.
Dedicated Team.
Quality Outcomes.

Our Ref: 22529_StStanis_BCA_HeritImpact _ltr_230808.docx

8 August 2023

The General Manager
Bathurst Regional Council
158 Russell Street
Bathurst NSW 2795

Dear Sir,

RE: St Stanislaus College, Bathurst – Heritage Implications of Compliance with the Building Code of Australia

I write to inform Bathurst Regional Council about the heritage impacts of compliance with the Fire Safety Upgrade Strategy Report for St Stanislaus College by the Davis Group, dated 26 July 2023 (the report). The report contains an assessment of the existing building against Sections C, D1, D2, D3, E and G of the Building Code of Australia 2022 (BCA).

The school is listed as an item of local heritage significance, and it is located within the Bathurst Conservation Area C1 and is in the distant vicinity of several heritage listed items, as identified in Schedule 5 of the *Bathurst Regional Local Environmental Plan 2014* (LEP).

Umwelt supports the fire safety upgrade strategy being pursued by the school.

Required Work that may have some Heritage Impact

The 'bounding construction' needed for the earlier boarding spaces requires the installation of internal window drenchers adjacent to specified early and significant windows. This includes the pipework and sprinkler fixed to the inside boundary walls of the buildings. The interior walls of the older and more significant buildings are rendered and painted. This work can be done with no removal or cutting into architraves, other joinery or sculpted plaster.

The ceilings throughout the college buildings would be sprinklered according to Specification 17 in AS 2118.1-2017. This is likely to involve a network of metal pipes fixed below or above ceilings, with sprinkler heads descending into each inhabitable room. In rooms with plasterboard ceilings, this will usually involve setting the ducting above the plasterboard. Any cutting into floor joists will only be done at a structural engineer's direction. In rooms that have lath and plaster ceilings (none are clearly so), the best heritage outcome would be fix the ducting into the floor joists from the

Umwelt (Australia) Pty Limited
ABN 18 059 519 041
T| 1300 793 267
E| info@umwelt.com.au
www.umwelt.com.au

underside of the ceiling. When a duct needs to pass from one full-brick room to another, a hole will need to be drilled in the brick wall near ceiling level. Most rooms in the early buildings of the college do not have a cornice, or just have a late twentieth-century coved cornice that has no heritage significance. A small number of rooms have a Victorian period cornice or a Victorian styled cornice. (No imperfections are apparent that would indicate an original cornice for certain) Any damage to cornices would be small in area, and any such damage would be patched repaired to match the original appearance. The impact on fabric also deserves to be seen as acceptable.

A small number of windows placed intrusively in the rear facades of the early buildings would be removed and brick-up to avoid unnecessary sprinklers. This includes the Gallagher wing. In a small number of cases where it is not feasible to continue using a room due to code requirements, the respective original windows may be boarded over on the inside with fire-resistant materials to avoid unnecessary sprinklers. The architraves and all window framing would be retained and conserved in this work.

Where there are terrazzo step treads that are damaged or non-compliant, rebuilding the treads in matching terrazzo should be seen as acceptable in heritage terms. Instances where this is required are in the Gallagher wing (see the report pp111-112).

The ornate timber handrail rising towards the chapel in the original McAuliffe O'Reilly wing is clearly very significant fabric and the report notes this significance with a recommendation not to do anything (see report p125, 149-150). If a compliant metal handrail of minimal material dimensions can be fixed onto this timber handrail using screws of now more than 6mm diameter, it may be worth doing to avoid the substantial dimension in the non-compliance.

There is a passageway adjacent to a mid-twentieth-century pilaster, where the pilaster makes the width of the passageway non-compliant. See the report p147. The pilaster has some minor fluting cut into the wall plaster parallel with the floor. The pilaster would be reduced if the structural engineer agrees. The pilaster's horizontal beading in its wall plaster would be lost, but would continue to be represented in the adjacent wall.

An egress door in the south-west elevation of the marble hall would become redundant. This makes potential for the intrusive door to be reconstructed as a window, to match the original design.

Many other works are needed that would have no heritage impact. In most cases, this is because heritage fabric would not be physically affected, and the work would not adversely affect the setting of significant fabric.

Evaluation of Heritage Impact

Fixing pipework and drenchers to the inside plastered walls of the early buildings would cause the removal of small quantities of wall plaster for fixings. This would result in a slightly intrusive duct system that may be coloured red. While possibly unsightly, this would have no sustained adverse impact on significant fabric, because a plastered and painted wall can made good when the ducting is removed. In the interests of making the school buildings as code compliant as possible, this impact deserves to be seen as acceptable. This work is conducive to the original purpose of the buildings continuing, which is a heritage value.

Sprinklers throughout the building would place a new service in each space, which would be somewhat intrusive, but essential for the original use to continue. The visual impact deserves to be seen as acceptable in the circumstance of necessary safety of people. The impact on early and original fabric is likely to be

small due to the small number of original ceilings in the building. Damage would be patch repaired. The approach to placing the ducting would be done to minimise damage to original and early fabric. The impact on original and early fabric is expected to be small, and so also deserves to be seen as acceptable.

The removal of intrusive windows and bricking up these sections of wall to match the original work would have a positive heritage impact. If windows in rooms that cannot viably be used again are blocked on the inside by fire-resistant cladding, this would have an acceptable heritage impact because the work would be reversible.

The patching or partial reconstruction of terrazzo step treads that are damaged or non-compliant, in matching terrazzo should be seen as acceptable in heritage terms. Reconstructing damaged fabric to the original design conserves the design of the early phases of the school extensions.

An additional handrail fixed with care onto the ornate timber balustrade leading up to the chapel should be acceptable to make best efforts to overcome a large non-compliance here.

Reducing the protrusion of a pilaster in the Gallagher wing to achieve a compliant passage width would have an impact that deserves to be seen as acceptable because the two lines of fluting in the wall plaster of the pilaster would be easily interpreted from the retained fabric of the adjacent wall plaster.

The reconstruction of any fabric to the original design would have a positive heritage impact.

Conclusion

The works to bring the school buildings into compliance with a range of upgrades to meet BCA compliance, and measures to achieve a performance solution as recommended by the Davis Group will result in no significant original designed fabric being removed. Some measures may be seen as intrusive, but they will not block views to the significant early fabric of the building interiors or exteriors. These works are conducive to St Stanislaus College continuing its original function as a boarding school. In this regard, the works are necessary and appropriate.

Umwelt commends the heritage aspects of the recommended code compliance works as devised by the Davis Group working with Stanton Dahl Architects, to Bathurst Regional Council.

We trust this information meets with your current requirements. Please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned on 1300 793 267 (or direct on 0477 989 950) should you require clarification or further information.

Yours sincerely

Umwelt Australia

Brad Vale
Principal Heritage Consultant