

# Heritage Peer Review

1-7 Station Street West, Parramatta

24th February

## Heritage Peer Review: 1-7 Station Street West, Parramatta: Proposed conservation, demolition and new Mixed Use Building

### Background

I have been engaged by the owners, Greenrock Property, to peer review the proposed design for the conservation of a heritage item and demolition of three dwellings, one being a heritage item, on the subject sites and the erection of a new residential flat building.

I am a qualified heritage consultant with extensive experience in built environment heritage at the local, state and community level. I am currently Chair of the Heritage Council of NSW. I attach my CV to this review.

I have visited the site and am familiar with this area of Parramatta.

### Assessment

Heritage interest in a site most often comes from both the interest in the history of the place, the aesthetics of the place and the impact on the locality. The history can include the associational and social connections to the place and the aesthetics can include the research potential for the site.

The *history* of the site has been researched by NBRS and Partners and by Architectural Projects. The building at No.7 Station Street West has been assessed and is assessed as not meeting the threshold for individual listing whilst the building at No.1 station Street West has been assessed as having heritage significance. I concur with these assessments.

It is often easy to expect that established places should not change, and more so that they should not be demolished, however all buildings change over time, and the amount of change in an area often depends on the condition and significance of the place.

In assessing impact I always consider that there are three basic questions:

- How significant is the place?
- What is its context?, and
- What are the opportunities?

#### *No.1 Station Street West, Parramatta*

I support the CMP prepared by Architectural projects for this property. It is accepted that it is a local heritage item that complements the adjoining heritage conservation area in the Holroyd Local Government Area. The building is to be retained.

#### *Nos. 3&5 Station Street West, Parramatta*

I accept the conclusions from a detailed investigation made by NBRS that these dwellings are not of local significance and have been heavily modified.

#### *No. 7 Station Street West, Parramatta.*

As stated in the NBRS report is a modified early twentieth century residence of a standard form that retains some characteristics of this transitional style of development which is relatively common in the Local Government area. The building has no historic evolutionary or associational values and

represents typical residential development of the period in which it was built. The changes to the building to convert it to commercial use have permanently altered its original appearance and form and have obscured original character and detail. In its current form it does not provide accurate evidence of the historic building stock of this area.

The setting of the building amongst later development does not provide support for the setting or contribution of this site to any significant streetscape in the vicinity of the site.

The site does not reach a reasonable threshold for individual heritage listing.

Demolition of the item will not result in any significant loss of cultural heritage to Harris Park, Parramatta City Centre or the wider Parramatta Local Government Area.

Demolition of the item will not have any significant adverse impact on the heritage items and conservation area in the Holroyd Local Government Area adjacent to the boundary of Parramatta across Raymond Street

The detailed heritage assessment has revealed that the site does not meet the threshold for individual listing nor inclusion in a conservation area.

## 2. What is the context?

The historically most significant development phase of the area occurred in the late Victorian to early twentieth century times consisting of a wide variety of villa dwellings and small scaled individual dwellings.

The site contains the Victorian Villa at No. 1 Station Street West, the Federation Bungalow at No.7 and two non-listed buildings between them, being highly altered bungalows that represent the post WW2 immigration changes to buildings, including aluminium windows, rendered surfaces and altered roof lines.

The site is located opposite Harris Park Station and is in a mixed area of altered bungalows and residential flat buildings. The site is north of the Tottenham Street Conservation Area in the Holroyd Council Area, separated from Parramatta LGA by Raymond Street. The listed item at 1 Station Street West retains a link to the conservation area to its south across Raymond Street.

The context is therefore mixed with No 1 Station Street West having a strong relationship to the conservation area to its south while No. 7 is an altered isolated dwelling in the context with residential flat buildings to its north.

## 3. What are the opportunities?

All areas, particularly outside conservation areas, change over time and so the question is by how much and in which style?

The significance and the context have been assessed and in this regard one can consider the opportunities and constraints.

The constraints here relate to the contribution that the buildings make to the area and the nature of the adjoining dwellings.

### **Retention or Demolition?**

I have visited the site and inspected the buildings.

I am convinced by my inspection and the Heritage Assessment that the buildings are such that No.1 should be retained for its contribution the adjacent conservation area and No.7 may be demolished due

to its diminished context and altered form and detail.

I am not in favour of reconstruction/replication as new buildings should be configured to suit contemporary living. In this case the proposed residential flat building may be designed as contemporary new development in the low quality streetscape.

### **New or Old Style?**

There is often debate in heritage circles as to whether the additions to a place/area should be in a similar or different style to the original building.

There are various principles that one can apply to the design philosophy for infill, places adjacent to heritage items or alterations and additions to existing places.

The Burra Charter requires that new work should be clearly new. I am of the school of conservation philosophy that when adding to an existing area that the addition may be very contemporary and represent the current architectural aesthetic of the present day. It should be referential to the period however I am not drawn to the pastiche of historicist approach because it usually leads to poor proportions in terms of the original buildings, confusion in understanding the place and the inhibiting of the opportunity for new architecture, in the professional sense. It should also display excellence.

The result of the analysis is that the dwelling at No. 7 Station Street West need not be conserved. A simple contemporary building on the site is appropriate.

A building envelope has been determined by the Urban Design Consultants in consultation with the Town Planning Consultant and the Heritage Consultants which addresses appropriate setbacks from adjoining sites, separation from any adjoining developments and provision of appropriate curtilage and visual setting for the retained heritage item at No. 1 Station Street and the Conservation Area opposite in Tottenham Road.

There are no views to or from heritage items in the vicinity that are detrimentally affected by the proposal.

The issues for the demolition on the subject site are the eventual relationship between No.1 Station Street West and the design of new development at 3-7 Station Street. A well resolved podium will provide a satisfactory neighbour to No.1 Station Street West. There should be a height and scale relationship in the podium between the two buildings at the southern end of the proposed building. Materials and colour are important here as well.

### **Summary**

It appears the issue for the application is that it proposes demolition of a listed heritage item. There is complete concurrence by five of Sydney's leading heritage practitioners that No.7 Station Street West does not meet the threshold for heritage listing and may be demolished. The legislation allows demolition subject to the level of scrutiny that has been applied.

The subject area is of a mixed style and will change with current controls. The proposal maintains the listed item at No.1, on the subject site, which will complement the transition from the conservation area row in the Holroyd Council conservation area, and provide for redevelopment in accordance with the permissible controls to the north.

These types of applications have a 'recognition of excellence' emphasis and of having the ability to review past listings that did not have the benefit of the subject research.

It is the confidence to accept that No.7 does not satisfy the criteria for listing and to take the opportunity that is provided to redevelop the site.

The subject proposal will maintain the important site characteristics whilst providing a well-designed residential flat/mixed use building on this site which is well located for public transport. The review of the potential amenity impacts, including overshadowing, for a higher building in this location, as assessed by AJC Architects, gives confidence that the proposal will not have a detrimental impact on heritage items and conservation areas in the vicinity.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Davies', followed by a comma.

Stephen Davies  
Director Heritage  
24/02/2016



### Qualifications and Affiliations

Chair, Heritage Council NSW (2016 – current)

1996 Accredited Environmental Mediation

1978 Dip. Cons. Studies, York University, UK  
Institute of Advanced Architectural Studies

1976 Dip. T&CP University of Sydney

1970 BA, Dip. Ed. Newcastle

Member, ICOMOS

Affiliate Member, RAlA. (2004)

Member, SEPP 65 Randwick/  
Waverley Design Review Panel (2004-2006)

Member, NSW Government Sydney Harbour Reference Group (1998-2000)

Councillor, Woollahra Municipal Council (1995-1999)

Member, Heritage Council NSW (1990-1998)

Board Member, State Records Authority of NSW (1 Jan. 2006 – 1 Jan 2012)

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## Stephen Davies

### DIRECTOR - HERITAGE

Stephen Davies established Urbis Heritage in 2007 in response to a growing need for a quality heritage consultancy with 'in house' Town Planning, Urban Design and Social Planning and Research skills.

By offering heritage conservation services within the infrastructure of a larger firm rather than being aligned to any architectural practice, Urbis Heritage can provide truly independent advice for clients.

Urbis Heritage is a firm with varying backgrounds and expertise and collectively the company is experienced in providing a range of heritage services to a varied clientele.

### Expertise

Stephen Davies, currently Chair of the NSW Heritage Council, is experienced in all aspects of heritage management. A member of ICOMOS and an accredited environmental mediator, he has been an expert member of a number of government and local government committees and boards with responsibility for heritage items. His work extends across small and major projects and as a former elected member of Woollahra Council, he has a unique understanding of the political and administrative decision-making process and is a skilled negotiator.

### Experience

In Dec 2007 Stephen was appointed by the Minister for Planning, to a Ministerial Review Panel under the Heritage Act of NSW 1977 to provide expert advice on heritage issues relating to Currawong, as well as an Independent Panel of Experts under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

Also in December 2007 Stephen was appointed by the Minister for Planning to be part of a Heritage Review Panel, established under the Heritage Act, 1997(as amended) to review and make recommendations to the Minister on those places recommended by the Heritage Council of NSW to the Minister to be placed on the State Heritage Register.

Stephen was a Minister appointed Board Member, representing the private sector, on the State Records Authority in NSW. The Authority fell within the Jurisdiction of the NSW Department of Commerce.

Stephen has been selected on a number of occasions as a court appointed expert to assist the Land and Environment Court.

Stephen is often used as a facilitator and presenter in urban design and heritage matters where various representatives present their views. In the case of a proposed 'Aging in Place' residential project in Bondi in 2008 Stephen facilitated an expert panel process for the

Benevolent Society of NSW. This project balances heritage, residential and amenity issues with a brief for an innovative social housing scheme.

*Urbis (2007– Current ) Director*

As Director of Urbis (Heritage), Stephen manages his professional team in the preparation of:

- Conservation Management Plans;
- Heritage Impact Statements;
- Conservation supervision;
- Local Government Heritage studies and reviews;
- Demolition reports;
- Archival recordings;
- Interpretation strategies at both individual building and regional centres levels;
- Evidence to the Land and Environment Court.

*City Plan Heritage (2000–2007) – Director*

In 2002 Stephen was appointed to assist the Commission of Inquiry in the heritage aspects of a proposal for the conservation and adaptive reuse of the Quarantine Station at North Head, Manly. The Commissioner, William Simpson presented the report to Dr. Andrew Refshauge, Deputy Premier, Minister of Planning, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Minister for Housing in 2004. Stephen was responsible for the same conservation activities as outlined above for Urbis, on a State level.

*National Trust of Australia NSW & Victoria (1988–2000) – Deputy Director and Head, Conservation*

In both New South Wales and Victoria, Stephen had a significant role in presenting to local government and planning committees and making representation to local and state government politicians. Major submissions included:

- Cemeteries Review in Victoria;
- HBC on the ANZ Gothic Bank development in Collins Street;
- Central Sydney Planning Committee on the GPO Site;
- NSW Minister for Planning, the Hon Craig Knowles, on the Heritage System Review; and
- Commissioner W Simpson on the Greater Central Sydney Planning Enquiry and the Parliamentary committee of enquiry into the Conservatorium.

*Melbourne City Council, City Planning (1986–1988) – Team Leader Council's Strategy Planning Local Plans Branch:*

Stephen was responsible for local planning (outside the CBD) and for forward conservation planning for the City as a whole. Prepared Draft Residential Development Guidelines for the City of Melbourne 1987.

*Department of Environment & Planning (NSW) Sydney Region West (1978–1986)*

Statutory Duties Blue Mountains and Blacktown, information branch, technical assistant to Director of Department, Heritage and Conservation Branch, Sydney Central Branch.