

# PEER REVIEW

**1-7 Station Street West  
Parramatta**

**Weir  
Phillips  
Heritage**

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Preamble**

Weir Phillips Heritage has been asked to provide a Peer Review of the document entitled *Planning Proposal Heritage Impacts Assessment: One Station Street, Parramatta (1-7 Station Street West, Parramatta)* prepared by NBRS + Partners and dated January 2016.

The Planning Proposal Heritage Impact Assessment (*PPHIA*) assesses the potential impacts of a proposal developed by AJ+C and JBA Planning for the owners of the site. The site comprises Nos. 1, 3, 5 and 7 Station Street West, Parramatta. The proposal is for the demolition of Nos. 3, 5 and 7 Station Street West, retaining No. 1 Station Street West, and the construction of a tower block on a two storey podium on the site. The *PPHIA* identifies Nos. 1 and 7 Station Street West as heritage items and locates a number of other heritage items/conservation areas within the immediate vicinity of the site or within its wider setting.

### **1.2 Authorship**

This report was prepared by James Phillips, B.Sc.(Arch), B.Arch, M.Herit.Cons.(Hons), of Weir Phillips Heritage.

### **1.3 Limitations**

The author had access to the site and the documents listed under Section 1.6 below. No additional historical research or analysis was provided for. No physical intervention was carried out. No Aboriginal or historical archaeology was provided for.

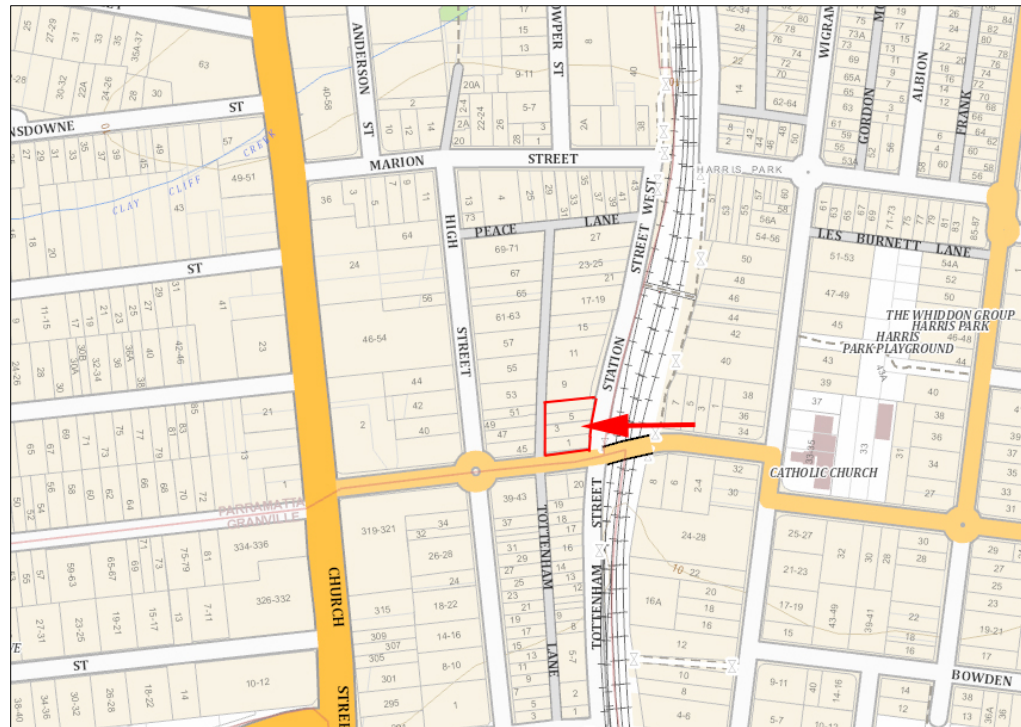
### **1.4 Methodology**

This report was prepared with reference to guidelines for assessment published by the NSW Heritage Office/Division, including *Assessing Heritage Significance* (2001) and *Statements of Heritage Impact* (2002 update).

A site visit was carried out in February 2016. Unless otherwise stated, the author took the photographs in this report on that occasion.

### **1.5 Site Location**

The site is located on the north western corner of Station Street West and Raymond Street, Parramatta (Figure 1). The site is identified as Lot 34 Section 1 D.P. 976 (No. 1 Station Street West); Lot 33 Section 1 D.P. 976 (No. 3 Station Street West); Lot A D.P. 340959 (No. 5 Station Street West); and Lot 31 Section 1 D.P. 976 (No. 7 Station Street West).



**Figure 1: Site Location.**

NSW Lands Department; annotations by WP Heritage.

## 1.6 References

### 1.6.1 Documents Provided

- AJ+C Architects, *One Station Parramatta: Draft Urban Design Report*.
- Architectural Projects, 1608-1, 7 Station Street, Parramatta. *Conservation Management Plan*, November 2015.
- NBRSP+ Partners, *Planning Proposal Heritage Impacts Assessment: One Station Street, Parramatta*, January 2016.

### 1.6.2 Council Controls

- *Parramatta Local Environmental Plan 2011*.

## 2.0 PEER REVIEW

### 2.1 Planning Instruments and Heritage Listings

The site is located within the City of Parramatta. The *PPHIA* cites the primary planning control for the site as being the *Parramatta City Centre Local Environmental Plan 2007 (LEP 2007)*.

It is noted that, as of 18 December 2015, the *LEP 2007* has been consolidated with the *Parramatta Local Environmental Plan 2011 (Amendment 10)*. Consequently, the principal planning controls for the site is now the *Parramatta Local Environmental Plan 2011 (LEP 2011)*. The correct statutory heritage listings for the site are as follow:

- Two Storey Residence, No. 1 Station Street West, Parramatta. Local significance. I744. Listing boundary: Lot 34 Section 1 D.P. 976.
- Single Storey Residence, No. 7 Station Street West, Parramatta. Local significance. I745. Listing boundary: Lot 31 Section 1 D.P. 976.

The *PPHIA* identifies the following heritage items as being within the vicinity of the site under the *LEP 2007*. The items identified by the *PPHIA* are all listed by the *LEP 2011* as follows:

Under Schedule 5 Part 1:

- Attached Houses, Nos. 49 and 51 High Street, Parramatta. Local significance. I710.
- Single Storey Residence, No. 1 Cambridge Street, Harris Park. Local significance. I264.
- Single Storey Residence, No. 3 Cambridge Street, Harris Park. Local significance. I265.
- Single Storey Residence, No. 5 Cambridge Street, Harris Park. Local significance. I266.
- Single Storey Residence, No. 48 Wigram Street, Harris Park. Local significance. I303.

Under Schedule 5 Part 2:

- Harris Park West Conservation Area. Local significance.

It is further noted, that given the massing and scale of the proposed tower, Council will consider other items, not identified by the *PPHIA*, as being potentially impacted upon. These items include, but are not limited to other items in High Street to the north of the site and items in Marion Street, also to the north.

Raymond Street forms the boundary with the Holroyd Local Government Area. The *PPHIA* identifies a number of items, within the Tottenham Road Conservation Area, located within the vicinity of the site as listed by Schedule 5 Part 1 and 2 of the *Holroyd LEP 2013*. This plan remains in force. The heritage items are thus correctly identified.

## 2.2 Heritage Assessment of the Existing Buildings on the Site

The *PPHIA* adopts best practice approach to the assessment of the significance of the existing buildings on the site by providing a history of the site that clearly identifies the gradual subdivision of the original grant to achieve the lot boundaries, the construction date of the extant dwellings and the owners and occupiers over time. The brief history of the surrounding area as a whole is provided to place the site history in context.

With regard to the non-heritage listed buildings on the site (Nos. 3 and 5 Station Street West), Parramatta Council (unlike other Sydney councils) do not appear to provide any guidelines for the type, if any, of assessment that is required for the demolition of non-heritage listed buildings that are not located within a Conservation Area. The *PPHIA* provides sufficient history of Nos. 3 and 5 Station Street West to determine when the dwellings were constructed and to establish that they do not have significant associations with important people or events. There is, however, no description of the sites and no analysis, however brief, to support the conclusion that the properties have no heritage significance. It would be useful to have a brief

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description of each property and a short explanation as to why they do not have heritage significance.

With regard to No. 1 Station Street West, it is noted that a Conservation Management Plan has been prepared for this site by Architectural Projects. The history and assessment contained within these documents follow NSW Heritage Division guidelines.

With regard to No. 7 Station Street West, it is noted that a separate heritage assessment of this site has been prepared by NBR+S and two peer reviews carried out. The NBR+S report follows the NSW Heritage Division guidelines for the assessment of heritage items. The author concurs with the conclusions reached by all three reports that the site does not meet the threshold for listing as a local heritage item.

## **2.3 Heritage Impacts**

It is proposed to construct an, up to, 43 storey mixed-use commercial residential building on the site. This involves the demolition of the heritage item at No. 7 Station Street West and the unlisted dwellings at Nos 3 and 5. No. 1 Station Street West is to be retained and conserved.

No.1 Station Street West is a freestanding two storey terrace-style dwelling; No. 7 Station Street West is a single storey dwelling. Normally such dwellings, if heritage listed, are afforded protection under 5.10 (5) of the *LEP 2011*, which states:

*The consent authority may, before granting consent to any development:*

- (a) on land on which a heritage item is located, or*
- (b) on land that is within a heritage conservation area, or*
- (c) on land that is within the vicinity of land referred to in paragraph (a) or (b), require a heritage management document to be prepared that assesses the extent to which the carrying out of the proposed development would affect the heritage significance of the heritage item or heritage conservation area concerned.*

Under Part 5.10 of the *LEP 2011*, assessment is required to be carried out to determine the extent to which the carrying out of the proposed development would affect the heritage significance of the heritage items.

As stated above, the author concurs with the three assessments prepared by others that No. 7 Station Street West does not meet the threshold for listing as a heritage item on the *LEP 2011*. Its demolition will thus have an acceptable impact on the heritage significance of Parramatta.

It is proposed to retain No. 1 Station Street West. The impact of the proposed tower on this item must therefore be considered.

The desired future character of the area is for tower buildings of similar height and bulk to achieve planning densities required to meet the future population of Sydney. In planning for such densities, two storey free-standing dwellings, such as No. 1 Station Street West, are not anticipated as part of the dense urban development proposed in the vicinity of Harris Park Railway Station.

Every effort has been made to maintain presence of No. 1 Station Street West in the streetscape in relation to the existing lower scale development to the south of Raymond Street and in light of the proximity of such a tall building as that proposed. In relation to the planning requirements for the area and the requirement that heritage items are retained and conserved, an acceptable compromise has been

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reached. This involves the setback of the proposed tower from the Heritage Item and partially cantilevering over it above a certain height.

The potential impacts, including overshadowing, on the Tottenham Road Conservation Area (Holroyd Council) on the southern side of Raymond Street have been considered. As shown by the shadow diagrams that accompany the concept plans, the overshadowing of this area occurs only briefly, around midday. It is further noted that the orientation of this area to the east and the falling topography, together with the retention of No. 1 Station Street and the two storey podium form of the tower, will help mitigate impacts on the Conservation Area.

With regard to the heritage item at No. 49-51 High Street, it is agreed that current redevelopments adjoining the site and to the rear of it have partially separated it from the influence of the subject site. View of the item from High Street will not be blocked. The tower will, however, been visible within the background of this item.

Nos. 3, 5 and 7 Cambridge Street are located on the opposite side of the railway line, which provides a distinct visual barrier. The tower will read as part of their background setting. It will be sufficiently removed for the impact to be acceptable.

## **2.4 Compromised Development**

The proposal to retain No. 1 Station Street West is, however, a compromise. A strong case can be made for accepting the demolition of this item to allow a better architectural and amenity outcome for the proposed development.

The justification would be as follows:

1. The existence of the heritage item at No. 1 Station Street West places an undue constraint on the proposed tower in terms of the cost of construction and the potential to offer its future residents the best possible amenity.
2. The proposed development, and the development encouraged by Council controls on sites in its immediate vicinity, will not allow the item to be readily understood in its historic context.

This item requires a low density setting to preserve a meaningful example of its historic context. Not only is the subject site zoned for high-density development, but the surrounding area is similarly zoned. There is little possibility of maintaining a truly appropriate setting for this item in these circumstances.

There is an inherent conflict in zoning a site with a small-scale heritage item upon it for high-density development of the type encouraged by Council controls. There is no way in which Council's desired future density for the area can be obtained if the standard heritage provisions of the *LEP 2011* and *DCP*, which are themselves informed by best heritage practice, are to be complied with. An example of these provisions is the use of an appropriate massing and scale within the vicinity of a heritage item.

3. The heritage item on the site is one of at least six examples of this type and style of building within the Parramatta Council area. One of these examples, No. 62 Prospect Street, is listed on the State Heritage Register. Analysis could be undertaken to determine if these other items are located in areas that retain a lower density zoning that maintains their setting. If so, an argument could be put forward that the development type represented by No. 1 Station Street West is better represented by other local examples where an appropriate setting is supported by Council controls.
4. Best practice suggests that every effort should be made to incorporate the heritage item into a development to enhance the quality of that development

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and to provide for the conservation of the item. In this case the incorporation of the item into the development does not enhance the overall amenity of the development, as the item is not capable of providing a realistic beneficial amenity to the development (i.e., a grand space, a communal facility or the like).

5. It can be argued that the benefits of providing the proposed development with better layout opportunities, particularly at ground level will greatly outweigh the loss of the local heritage item.
6. Clearer provisions in planning controls for such occurrences should be made in the future to allow for the removal of heritage items where they are clearly not fitting into broader planning requirements and offer no significant or unique contribution to the cultural heritage of the State or the Local Government Area.

### 3.0 SUMMARY

This peer review has considered a report prepared by NBRS + Partners which assesses the heritage impacts of a planning proposal for No. 1-7 Station Street West, Parramatta. The proposal is for the demolition of Nos. 3, 5 and 7 Station Street, the retention of No. 1 Station Street and the construction of a new tower block.

Although No. 7 Station Street is listed as a local heritage item, the author concurs with the conclusions of the NBRS + Partners report, and the conclusions of two independent heritage assessments, that No. 7 Station Street does not meet the threshold for listing as a local heritage item under NSW Heritage Council criterion. Its demolition in order that the proposal might meet other Council planning objectives for this part of Parramatta will thus have a minimal and acceptable impact on the heritage of Parramatta.

It is recommended that the possibility of demolishing No. 1 Station Street West, to allow for a better planning outcome on the site, be actively considered. Should permission for demolition be obtained, a full archival recording to NSW Heritage Council standards and an interpretation strategy demonstrating the history of the site and this part of Parramatta should be prepared.