



North Sydney Public School Response to Submissions, (Heritage)

November 2021

Document Information

Citation

Curio Projects 2021, *North Sydney Public School, Response to Submissions—Heritage*, prepared for NSW Department of Education

Local Government Area

North Sydney Council

Cover Image

Pacific Building from East (Source: Curio 2021)

Issue	Issue date	Version	Notes/Comments	Author	Review
1	28 Oct 2021	Draft Report	For client review	Sam Cooling Tatiana Barreto	Natalie Vinton
1	15 Nov 2021	Draft Report	For client review	Sam Cooling Tatiana Barreto	Natalie Vinton

This report has been prepared based on research by Curio Projects specialists. Historical sources and reference material used in the preparation of this report are acknowledged and referenced at the end of each section and in figure captions.

Unless otherwise specified or agreed, copyright in the intellectual property of this report vests jointly in Curio Projects Pty Ltd.

Curio Projects Pty Ltd
5 Blackfriars Street
Chippendale NSW 2008

Summary of Submissions (Heritage)

Curio Projects Pty Ltd have been commissioned by NSW Department of Education (DoE) to prepare a Response to Submissions (RtS) report, for submissions received with regard to Heritage in relation to the SSD Application submitted for the North Sydney Public School (NSPS) Redevelopment project (SSD-11869481). This report has been prepared by Sam Cooling, Cultural Heritage Manager, and Tatiana Barreto, Architectural and Urban Design Specialist, of Curio Projects Pty Ltd.

This document should be read in conjunction with Curio Projects, 2021, *North Sydney Public School Upgrade—Heritage Impact Statement*, prepared for DoE, that was submitted with the SSD Application, as well as part of the overall RtS package for the development.

Please note, the submissions quoted and responded to in the following table are only those that have relevance to heritage/are appropriate for heritage commentary as part of the RtS process. Where a submission also refers to other non-heritage related topics, only the part of the submission relevant to heritage has been extracted and reproduced below.


Agency/ Name	Submission Comment	Curio Response/Commentary
NSW GAO SDRP	<p><i>1) Bay Street Entry</i></p> <p><i>The rationalised ramp (providing parity with the stair for 'arrival' at the building interface) and addition of the awning roof are noted as positives; however concerns remain regarding the overall amenity and quality of this important entry as the centrepiece of the upgrade. Further design development is recommended to address the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Notwithstanding concerns about minimising the opening in the heritage fence, the reduced stair and gate width have significantly impacted the welcoming and generous nature of the site entry. The reduced stair is no longer aligned with the width of the entry awning and width of the</i> 	<p>Noted, and additional discussion/commentary as follows.</p> <p>While it is recognised that these two points commence with 'Notwithstanding impacts to the heritage fence', it is still relevant to re-iterate the conclusions of the heritage impact assessment regarding impacts (both physical and visual) proposed by the development to the heritage fence. As stated in the SSDA HIS (Section 7.3.1):</p> <p><i>...the creation of the new entrance point will have a negative physical impact in the removal of a section of the original fabric of the heritage fence (c.3500mm in width), on balance, the location of the new entrance in the proposed location will create the new required southern DDA site access without proposing any impact to the original southern former Crow's Nest House gate.</i></p> <p><i>In order to minimise the physical impact of the new entrance, it is recommended that the detailed design of the new entrance ensure that the amount of original fabric required for removal is minimised as much as possible, limited only to that necessary to accommodate the width and form required for the new entrance to meet EFSG/DDA requirements (HIS, p. 132-133).</i></p>

Agency/ Name	Submission Comment	Curio Response/Commentary
	<p><i>stair to Level 2 courtyard beyond. Accordingly the entry has lost its strong and clear axis.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Notwithstanding impacts to the heritage fence, the width of the fence opening does reflect the aggregated width of the stair and ramp, creating a 'bottleneck' scenario. A wider or dual fence openings (to address the issues above) should be considered in conjunction with opportunities for reuse/interpretation of the existing fence.</i> 	<p>As a result, the amended design has retained the width of the entry gate and widened the stairs (from 3500mm to 4500mm) and ramp (from 1750mm to 2100mm). In addition, the swing gates have been replaced by sliding gates, which allow for a more generous footpath/gathering space at the bottom of the entry stairs behind the gate.</p> <p>Therefore, from a heritage perspective, the amended design represents no additional visual and physical impact to the original fence as the proposed alterations optimise the entrance without demolishing any additional heritage fabric in relation to the original proposal.</p> <p>Further, as previously stated on the SSDA HIS, the impact to the heritage fence should be further mitigated and offset through the adoption of sensitive and appropriate detailed design, as well as heritage interpretation initiatives.</p>
3) Façade and roof form		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The east elevation of the main building is not supported. This façade has full height panels without windows, the architectural expression at this end of the building (as it presents to Bay Street) is not supported as an appropriate fit with the heritage context. This includes concerns about:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>the expression and use of DFMA (refer above), specifically the windows providing an 'in between' scale consistent with the aforementioned heritage principle.</i> 	<p>Noted, and additional discussion/commentary as follows.</p> <p>The amended design includes window openings to the eastern façade to help to soften the overall presentation of the façade within the heritage context and to make it more cohesive with the remainder of the building. The windows represent an element of transparency on the façade, creating a smoother transition between modern and heritage fabrics and allowing users to appreciate and visually interact with the original building daily.</p> <p>Further, the amended design has revisited the façade colours and textures to also soften the impact and tonal perception of the façade. The proposed skin cladding colour results from the combination of three different colours, creating a more organic and natural finish to the material that better relates to the sandstone colour of the heritage items.</p> <p>Overall, the proposed alterations to the eastern façade are assessed to have a positive visual impact on the heritage context of the building as they will improve the visual connection between modern and heritage fabrics, creating a cohesive, sympathetic and smooth transition between them.</p>

Agency/ Name	Submission Comment	Curio Response/Commentary
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>DFMA is not considered inappropriate to deliver a contextual / heritage fit for the proposed buildings. The use of DFMA in this project is driven by efficiencies, this combined with the material properties of the product (i.e. its limited application) in combination with value engineering as part of design and construct procurement, presents a risk to design quality and consequently heritage compatibility.</i> 	<p>Noted. Should the detailed design elect to further develop/investigate options for the design and application of the DFMA and its construction procurements, consideration should be given to options that optimise the interaction between the modern facades and the heritage context of the three individually listed heritage buildings and adjacent HCAs, to ensure a sympathetic and optimal use of materials, colours, and finishes, consistent with the heritage principle quoted by GAO from p.131 of the HIS:</p> <p><i>"The materials, finishes, and façade treatments of new buildings should consist of contemporary solutions that are consistent and cohesive with the original fabric throughout the site, creating a sympathetic transition between modern and heritage fabrics".</i></p>
HNSW ACH	<p><i>HNSW is satisfied that the supplied documentation has adequately identified and assessed the impact of the proposal on any ACH and HNSW support the recommendation to not undertake any further ACH investigation within the curtilage of the proposal area.</i></p> <p><i>Stop work procedures have been recommended in the event objects or human remains are found.</i></p> <p><i>It is recommended a condition of consent be created to ensure an unexpected finds protocol is developed in consultation with the RAPs.</i></p>	Agreed and noted.
Public (Name withheld)	<p>Topic: Lady Hay Hall</p> <p><i>Thank you for relisting the project for public submissions - last year when I provided a submission you indicated to me that any public consultation had already taken place. Although no one in the community seemed to know about the demolition of Lady Hall at the North Sydney Demonstration School</i></p>	<p>Further discussion/commentary as follows.</p> <p>Section 5.4 of the HIS that accompanied the SSDA (Curio Projects 2021) included a significance assessment of Lady Hay Hall against the NSW Heritage Council criteria for Assessing Heritage Significance, concluding with the following Statement of Significance:</p> <p><i>Lady Hay Hall was constructed to a simple purpose-built design of the NSW Government Architect in 1964, and is considered a typical example of the hundreds of utilitarian school buildings built during the post-war school expansion programs of the 1950s and 1960s.</i></p>

Agency/ Name	Submission Comment	Curio Response/Commentary
	<p><i>and which you make no mention in the head line comments (misleading???) .</i></p> <p><i>I am writing in relation to the proposed upgrade of North Sydney Public School (formerly named Lady Hay School) and the demolition of the 'Lady Hay Hall' (Refer to 'History of Waverton' below). I believe there is an oversight to your proposal, as the Lady Hay Hall has significant heritage and community value to our neighbourhood. Our heritage is the places, objects and stories that we as a community have inherited from the past and want to protect for future generations.</i></p> <p><i>On searching the NSW Heritage database it states that three buildings at the North Sydney Demonstration School are listed on the SINSW Section 170 Heritage and Conservation Register - 'North Sydney Public School – Buildings B00A, B00D and B00F, Gates and Period Fence' (Item No. 5065652). The listing only applies to the buildings and not the whole site. The following extract from the Statement of Significance is from the updated DoE Heritage and Conservation Register listing sheet (Extent Heritage, 2019): "North Sydney Public School has a collection of prominent elements from the 1890s through to the 1930s. The current school grounds are historically significant as a diverse, layered assemblage of landscape features from the Colonial and Interwar periods. The design and proportion of public-school buildings reflects the aspirations of the Education Department to provide high quality educational facilities for communities on the North Shore. The sandstone and wrought iron gate and fence are rare elements of estate housing in Sydney in the late nineteenth century. The aesthetic</i></p>	<p><i>While the hall is named for Lady Hay, a significant local personality in the North Sydney area from the early 1900s, on whose 'Crow's Nest Estate' the current NSPS site is located, the structure itself has no specific association with the individual beyond the name, and the location of the NSPS as a whole on the southern part of Lady Hay's Crow's Nest Estate.</i></p> <p><i>The hall is neither architecturally nor aesthetically unique at a local or state level, and is a generally neutral built element within the wider school site.</i></p> <p><i>While the hall may have some social value for former pupils, parents and community at a micro level as part of the wider NSPS site, it does not meet the criteria to be considered socially significant at a local level in the context of the wider North Sydney suburban area. There is no evidence that the NSPS Lady Hay Hall has any greater level of social or community significance than other public school assembly halls in the North Sydney LGA.</i></p> <p><i>Lady Hay Hall does not represent any particular technical achievement, and is not considered to have any technical or research value significance</i></p> <p><i>The general fenestration, simple brick patterning along the portico and contrasting brick colour in the window recesses, and the low roof pitch of Lady Hay Hall is typical of, and consistent with, the overall approach to modernist school buildings constructed in the 1960s under the NSW Government Architect Office. It is likely that the design of Lady Hay Hall is reflective of a generalised application of a modernist design of standard school assembly halls required for constructed at existing school sites in the 1960s, as opposed to a representative or rare design specific to the NSPS site.</i></p> <p><i>As noted in the above Statement, while it is acknowledged that the Lady Hay Hall is likely to have social value for former pupils, parents, and school community at a micro-level as part of the wider school site (as demonstrated by this submission), the building itself as a single built item does not meet the NSW Heritage Council criteria for local social significance in the context of the wider North Sydney suburban area.</i></p> <p><i>Further, it is highlighted that Lady Hay Hall is currently in very poor condition (substantial roof and ceiling damage, water egress and mould issues etc), and is thus no longer sufficient to meet the needs of the school in 2021.</i></p>

Agency/ Name	Submission Comment	Curio Response/Commentary
	<p><i>considerations of the school are held in appreciation by the school staff and NSW Education Department.'</i></p> <p><i>The North Sydney Council Development Control Plan (DCP) 2013 provides guidance on provisions for design and development controls that should be considered when developing the design for the school. It appears that you are utilising Clause 11 of SEPP State Significant Development, so Council's DCP does not apply allowing you to BULLDOZE our Community's 90 year old school hall. Given the large site (1.9 hectares) there is plenty of space to erect a new school hall without taking away our existing hall- ie carpark, dilapidated basketball court.</i></p> <p><i>I have not been consulted, nor by neighbours, or heritage planners at North Sydney Council or anyone I have talked to in my Community about the School's impending upgrade. We as parents of the school have been locked out of the school for over 18 months and have limited communication.</i></p>	<p>When considered in the wider context of the NSPS site and the available design options to meet the floor space and facilities targets of the upgrade to meet DoE standards, the proposed demolition of the Hall (along with the Haven Building), allows for the new classrooms, hall, and school facilities to be housed in a consolidated new built form of sufficient size in the south of the site, and thus avoiding major impact and/or alterations to the three Interwar heritage buildings. In this way, the loss of the Hall (to be replaced with a new Hall as part of the upgrade, with vastly improved facilities, conditions, and space), will allow the continuing use of the school including delivery of modern facilities and education standards, while still ensuring that the commanding presence and historical significance of the three main 1930s heritage buildings will remain within the NSPS site. Thus the demolition of Lady Hay Hall also indirectly facilitates retention of the dominant northern heritage character and built form of the NSPS site, with the substantial Interwar school buildings centred around a central courtyard—as was the initial design intent and form of the school from its inception at the site.</p> <p>It is also noted that Lady Hay Hall was constructed in 1964 (i.e. 57 years ago), and thus is not contemporary in date nor style with the c.90 year old Interwar heritage buildings as described and included within the DoE s170 heritage register (e.g. the Pacific, McHatton and River Buildings).</p> <p>Construction of a new building in the location of the existing sports courts as suggested in the submission would have a substantial impact on the existing viewlines to the south from the northwest of the school site, notably the views to the Parramatta River and Sydney CBD background—for which the 1930s River Building itself is named. Obstruction of these significant view lines by a new built form would be a negative heritage impact to the significant viewscape both from the school site, as well as from the residential streetscape and setting of McHatton Street. The figure below has been reproduced from the HIS (Figure 4.73, pg. 89) illustrating this viewline south over the existing sports court and carpark areas (with the red brick of the Pacific Building visible in the left of the image), illustrating the wider view that would be significantly impacted by constructed on a new built form in this location.</p>

Agency/ Name	Submission Comment	Curio Response/Commentary
		
Edward Precinct and Other Public Submissions <i>(Responses condensed by Topic)</i>	<p>Topic: Roof and architectural form</p> <p><i>"The roof form is out of character with the heritage buildings which have hipped, pitched terracotta tiled roofs."</i></p> <p><i>"The brick base and lightly coloured two-storey facade is out of character with the existing heritage buildings which are all face brick. The chosen GRC facade does</i></p>	<p>Infill development in a heritage context does not require the form, fabric, and design of the infill development to exactly match that of nearby heritage items. Rather, infill design in a heritage context should ensure that new design elements (including form, materiality, colour, articulation etc) are appropriately complementary and commensurate with the heritage context, and neither detract from the significant heritage features nor attempt to mimic heritage form and result in 'fake heritage' that is not readily distinguishable from original heritage items and fabric.</p> <p>The design process for the new school buildings aimed to ensure that a clear distinction between modern and heritage fabrics is retained, while also introducing strategic solutions to the façade</p>

Agency/ Name	Submission Comment	Curio Response/Commentary
	<i>not have the depth that the existing brick facades have and appears insubstantial by comparison."</i>	<p data-bbox="913 293 2040 357">treatment of the new buildings to mitigate and/or minimise any visual heritage impact to the surrounding heritage character.</p> <p data-bbox="913 389 2040 517">Materiality and colour for the new buildings have been intentionally selected to encourage preservation of the historical hierarchy between the existing school buildings and the new built forms, while being complementary and commensurate with the materiality, heritage character, and aesthetic of the existing heritage school buildings.</p> <p data-bbox="913 549 2040 644">The amended design has revisited the materiality of the façade, introducing a variety of textured finishes within the panelised system in order to create a depth of colour and tone to the façades that soften the overall perception of the built form.</p> <p data-bbox="913 676 2040 772">The colour palette of the new built form has been developed to respond to the immediate context of the site location, referential to both the existing built forms (i.e. red brick of the 1930s school buildings) and surrounding landscape (i.e. sandstone and iron palings heritage fence).</p> <p data-bbox="913 804 2040 963">Thus, while the roof design of the new building varies in form and colour from the hipped terracotta tiling of the 1930s Interwar heritage school buildings, the roof design and form is simple and neutral in colour and form, avoiding any detracting from or clash with the distinct hipped and terracotta tiled roof forms of the heritage items, and ensuring that the Interwar buildings remain both visually and aesthetically as the dominant built forms within the site.</p> <p data-bbox="913 995 2040 1187">The architectural design and form of the new Buildings J and I in the form of the brick base and lighter coloured upper levels and façade is intentionally referential to the 1930s heritage items (i.e. the Pacific Building)—invoking the verticality of the interwar, functional architectural form of the heritage buildings with a lower horizontal support. It is also noted that a similar design approach was applied to the existing library school building "Building G" (constructed in 2011), which also takes reference from the lower red brick horizontal form and verticality of features of the heritage buildings in its design.</p> <p data-bbox="913 1219 1962 1251">Figure 7.3 from the HIS has been reproduced below to provide further illustration of this principle.</p>

Agency/ Name	Submission Comment	Curio Response/Commentary
Edward Precinct and Other Public Submissions <i>(Responses condensed by Topic)</i>	Setbacks and character of built form from Bay Road	<p>The decision to locate the new school building in the south of the site was informed by a combination of factors, including location of the heritage school buildings in the north of the site (as associated setbacks and curtilages required to avoid impacting the significance and readability of these items, and the open courtyard area established by the placement of these buildings in the 1930s), the significant slope of the landscape from north to south, location of Heritage Conservation Areas immediately along the northern (Crows Nest HCA along McHatton), western (Crows Nest HCA), and south/southwestern boundaries (Priory and Edward Street HCAs) and the need to allow for a clear spatial delineation between modern and heritage buildings within the site, allowing each building to be read individually, while at the same time forming a cohesive school campus.</p>
	<p><i>"The setback should be increased and/or the building heights lowered or redesigned in a tiered fashion. These buildings are too visually prominent."</i></p> <p><i>"...the building form of the buildings facing Bay Road is incongruous in the location given the school grounds are surrounded on 3.5 of its boundaries by a heritage conservation area... The conservation area is dominated by buildings with horizontal elements rather than vertical elements. This incongruity is increased by the visual prominence of the building form so close to the Bay Road boundary. In my view this has an unacceptable visual impact on the public domain."</i></p>	<p>While it is acknowledged that the new built form will be visible along Bay Road and from the southern HCAs, the placement of the new building in this location is on balance the best outcome with respect to the heritage significance and layout of the site.</p> <p>Section 7.4.5 of the HIS discusses significant views and conservation areas with respect to the proposed development, concluding that:</p>



Left: Pacific Building eastern façade, demonstrating lower horizontality and upper verticality of the Interwar design. **Right:** New Building I southern façade from Bay Road that has taken inspiration from the heritage architecture

Agency/ Name	Submission Comment	Curio Response/Commentary
		<p><i>While the new built form of Buildings J and I will be visible along Bay Road from both the Edward and Priory Street southern Conservation Areas, the visual impact of the new buildings on the streetscape and character of the Edward and Priory Street CAs has been minimised and softened through introduction of carefully considered design features such as the articulation of the southern façade to break up any bulk of the building, use of neutral and commensurate materials and colour palette, and by ensuring the existing landscaping character is retained via retention of the mature tree line and introduction of additional landscaping along Bay Road, resulting in an overall minor to neutral visual impact to the setting, character, and significance of the southern heritage conservation areas.</i></p>



5 Blackfriars Street, Chippendale NSW 2008 | 02 8014 9800 | curioprojects.com.au