



NSW GOVERNMENT
Department of Planning

**MAJOR PROJECT ASSESSMENT
ADAPTIVE RE-USE AND FIT-OUT OF
HONEYSUCKLE WORKSHOPS FOR
NEWCASTLE REGIONAL MUSEUM
6 WORKSHOP WAY, NEWCASTLE**

***Proposed by FRANCIS-JONES MOREHEN
THORP
MP06_0083***

Director General's Environmental Assessment
Report
S 75I of the
Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979

March 2009



Southwards perspective looking from Workshop Way, showing the proposed glass and steel foyer between the nineteenth-century workshops – fjmt

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is an environmental assessment of a Project Application for the adaptive re-use and fit-out of the Honeysuckle Workshops for the Newcastle Regional Museum in the Honeysuckle Development Corporation Precinct.

The site is in Worth Place in the Honeysuckle Special Area of the Honeysuckle Development Precinct. The Honeysuckle Workshops buildings are being used for Council, community and some commercial purposes as a function and entertainment group of buildings. The site has been owned by Newcastle City Council since June 2007 and comprises three buildings of State heritage significance having a combined footprint area of approximately 3,135m².

Proposal

This proposal seeks Project Approval for:

- adaptive reuse of Honeysuckle Workshops for the use of a Museum, incorporating a new foyer linking the three heritage buildings and mezzanine levels within, including fit-out and landscaping;
- approval as a Place of Public Entertainment Sunday to Thursday 8:30 am – 12 pm, and
- Friday to Saturday 8:30 am – 12 pm.;
- hours of operation: Monday to Sunday: 10.00am — 5.00pm
- landscaping including retention of trees and a substation; and
- 12 new car spaces including 2 disabled car park spaces; and four bicycle racks.

The capital investment value of the development is **\$11,279,400** and the proposal will create **8** full time equivalent construction jobs and **30** full time equivalent operational jobs.

Permissibility

The Newcastle City Centre LEP 2008 is the principal planning instrument applicable to the site. The site is zoned B4 Mixed Use. Pursuant to the LEP, the proposed use and public domain works are consistent with the objectives of the B4 Zone by encouraging development for cultural, tourism and educational purposes and improving the public domain and pedestrian links.

Public Exhibition

The proposal was exhibited for a 30 day period from 27 October and 25 November 2008. The Department received a total of 2 submissions from public authorities during this period. There were no submissions from the public objecting to the proposal and 1 public submission of support.

Conclusion

The Department has assessed the merits of the Project Application and is satisfied that the impacts of the proposed development have been addressed via the Draft Statement of Commitments and recommended conditions to the Project Application. It is recommended that the finished Newcastle Regional Museum be a place of public entertainment, subject to conditions that include more limited hours due to the sensitivity of nearby residences. The Department is satisfied that the site is suitable for the proposed Museum development and that the proposal will provide environmental, heritage, social and economic benefits to the locality.

All statutory requirements relating to the Project Application have been met. The Department recommends that the Project Application be approved, subject to conditions.

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2 BACKGROUND

2.1 THE SITE

2.1.1 Site context and location

The subject site is located in the east of Newcastle's central business district, to the immediate north of Civic Railway Station and approximately 50m south of Newcastle harbour in the mouth of the Hunter River. It is within the local government area of the City of Newcastle Council. The site is part of the Honeysuckle Development Corporation (HDC) precinct that comprises 50 hectares of land along the Newcastle Harbour directly north of Newcastle CBD. Newcastle Harbour and the former steel works form the northern backdrop to the HDC precinct. The site development of the HDC precinct is part of an ongoing renewal and revitalisation of inner city Newcastle.

The Newcastle Regional Museum at Honeysuckle Workshops occupies Lot 3 in DP 1111305, 6 Workshop Way.

The site has been owned by Newcastle City Council since June 2007 and comprises a total area of approximately 8,268m². The site is bounded by Workshop Way to the north, the railway line to Newcastle terminus to the south, and existing mixed use/residential development to the east, and the Wright Lane carpark to the west (see *Figure 1 – site location*).

2.1.2 Existing site features

The site is currently occupied by 3 buildings constructed for fabricating railway rollingstock, namely the Blacksmith's and Wheel Shop built in 1880, the Locomotive Boiler Shop built in 1887 and the New Erecting Shop built with matching details in 1920. All 3 buildings are listed on the State Heritage Register. The rail lines have long since been removed, but are interpreted with contrasting grey pavement. The site is quite flat with a low gradient of 500m rising from the north-east corner to the south-west corner of the site.

Each of the buildings has an industrial character, with regular structural bays of massive brick construction and truss roofs. The older 2 buildings have parallel gable roofs, while the New Erecting Shop has a saw tooth roof with clerestory windows facing east. The round-arched windows have a Georgian character that is typical of Victorian industrial buildings. The 1880 building is single-storey, while the other 2 buildings have 2 'storeys' of windows but a single slab on ground.

The site is bounded by roads to the east (Merewether Street), north (Workshop Way) and west (Honeysuckle Drive). The site does not contain formed parking spaces. This precinct is readily accessible to pedestrians from the nearby car parking areas, public transport stops and central business district.

The three subject workshop buildings have some landmark quality in the Honeysuckle precinct. Buildings similar to the smaller scale of the 1880 building lie to the west of these buildings, and another to the north of the Boiler Shop.

2.1.3 Surrounding development

Beyond Workshop Way, the remaining former railway workshops to the north and west have been adapted for commercial uses. Other recent buildings of similar scale up to 4 storeys have been constructed to the north of the site. Lee Wharf Road and Newcastle Harbour lie further north. Other commercial and residential buildings of up to 9 storeys lie to the east beyond Merewether Street. The Civic Railway Station with its pedestrian bridge over the Northern Railway Line lies to the south of the site. Further south, Hunter Street is the main road along the Newcastle peninsula and the main commercial street of the inner city. Newcastle City buildings form the backdrop to the railway including the commercial buildings that front Hunter Street and the Newcastle City Hall tower beyond. Further to the west of the site are other larger commercial / retail buildings in an open setting separated by Wright Lane and other landscaped works.

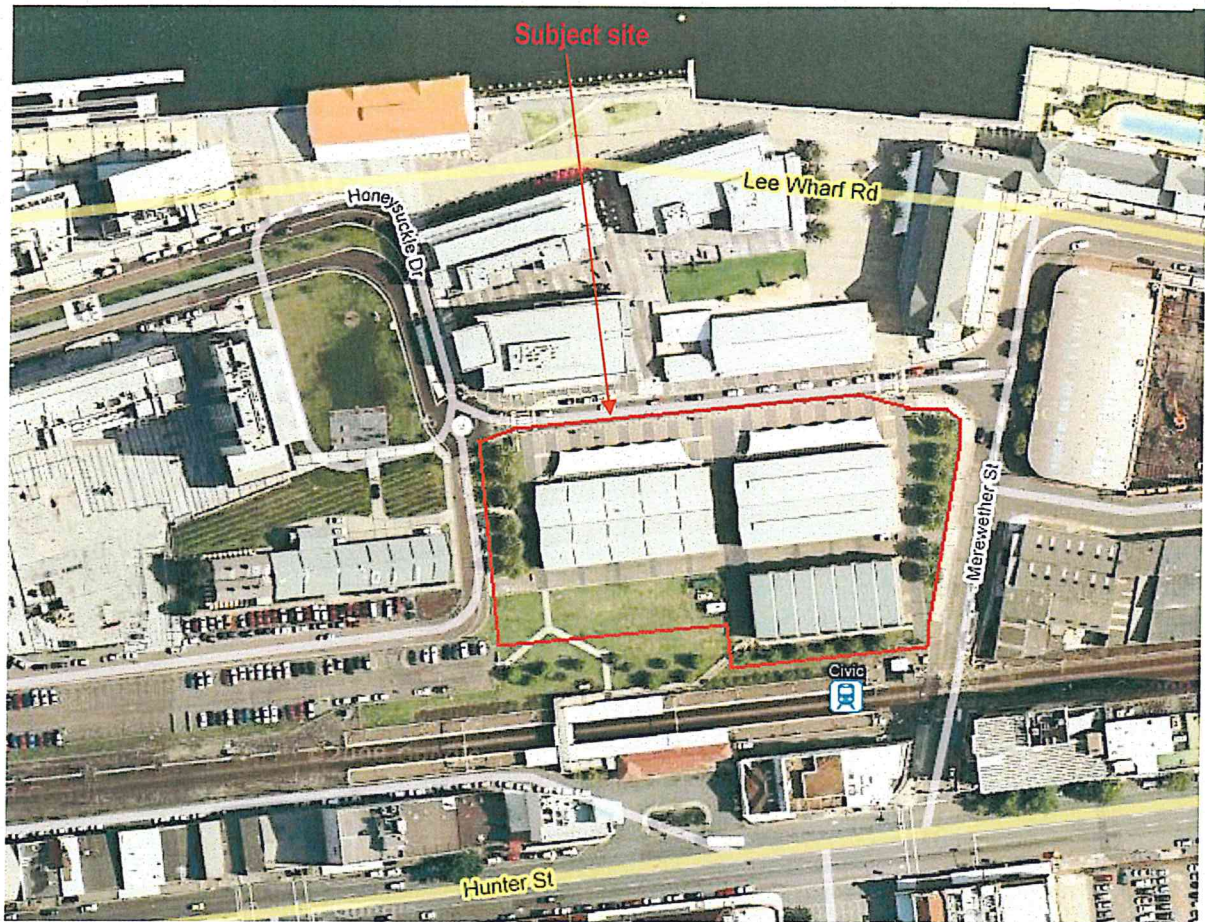


Figure 1 – Site location between the Hunter River and the railway line

Google Earth

2.1.4 Zoning

The site is zoned 'B4 Mixed Use' in the Newcastle City Centre LEP 2008. The Civic Railway Workshops (comprising the site and the three existing buildings subject to this application) are listed on the State Heritage Register (SHR 00956), on Schedule 5 of the Newcastle City Centre Local Environmental Plan 2008 and the site is also included within the City Centre Heritage Conservation Area.

2.2 SITE HISTORY

The Hunter River Railway Company was formed in 1853–1855 to build a line between Newcastle and Maitland. Honeysuckle Point was chosen as the eastern terminus for the railway for its proximity to Newcastle City and Newcastle Harbour in the Hunter River. The company was soon taken over by government due to its poor financial situation. During 1856–1895 the railways constructed 33 buildings at Honeysuckle, including the loco shed, carriage repair shed, carriage painting shop, machine shop and blacksmith's shop. The Blacksmith's and Wheel Shop were constructed before the Eveleigh Railway Workshops, at a time when Newcastle was not connected to Sydney by rail. The connection between the railways and the harbour were augmented in 1908–1910 with the construction of timber wharves and a concrete sea wall along the reclaimed foreshore.

The period 1910—1952 marked the high point and decline of the Honeysuckle workshops when more buildings were constructed, including the New Erecting Shop, Carpenter's Shop and a large foundry. However, the Chullora Railway Workshops were begun in 1920, signalling the likely scale-back of operations at the Honeysuckle workshops. Manufacturing was shifted to Cardiff from 1929, and by the late 1950s, operations were slowly wound down leaving the site largely inactive by 1990.

The NSW Government established the Honeysuckle Development Corporation in 1992. The workshops were predominantly stripped of their machinery and fittings at this time. The subject site passed into the ownership of Newcastle City Council in 2007 for the proposed relocation of the Newcastle Regional Museum. The Boiler Shop building has recently been used as a market, a venue for entertainment and functions by Council, commercial and community organisations. The site is now vacant and has been underutilised for several decades. The workshops have housed large ticketed events under the former Place of Public Entertainment licensing system under section 68 of the *Local Government Act, 1993*.

2.2.1 Previous applications

The Department of Planning has no relevant recent development history for this site and the buildings.



Figure 2 — Interior of the Boiler Shop in 2008, showing the cast iron columns that support the Craven crane.

3 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1 The proposed development

Approval is sought for the adaptive reuse, fit-out of three existing single-storey structures at the Honeysuckle Workshops for the purposes of a regional museum use with a new linking gallery. Approval is also sought for a place of public entertainment to have functions of up to 2,000 patrons after hours. Specifically, the proposal seeks the following:

Adaptive reuse of Honeysuckle Workshops

- Adaptive reuse of the Wheel Shop for an Education Centre with a theatrette of approximately 340m² using the existing toilet facilities;
- Adaptive reuse of the Blacksmith Shop for the actual Museum of Newcastle of approximately 885m², with an internal fitout incorporating new museum partitions and wet service spaces;
- Adaptive reuse of the Boiler Shop for the 'Supernova' display of interactive science and technology resources of approximately 1090m², using existing toilets;
- Adaptive reuse of the Erecting Shed for the 'Newcastle Works' incorporating the BHP Technology Centre of approximately 810m², with a mid-level reinforced concrete mezzanine;
- A landscaped outdoor area to be called Railway Square will be constructed south of the buildings incorporating relocated robust museum items and significant amounts of existing planting and paving. Thirteen new parking spaces would be created; and
- Approval has been sought for a place of public entertainment (PoPE) to enable functions of up to 2,000 patrons to be held until midnight in the Boiler Shop and other spaces.

New Link Building

The three existing buildings will be linked by a new subordinate steel and glass structure to function as the entry, a temporary gallery, and a foyer for functions held in the Boiler Shop.

The proposed trading hours of the Museum are Monday to Sunday: 10.00am – 5.00pm

While the applicant anticipates that functions occurring outside of these hours, this will need to be dealt with in a subsequent application to Newcastle City Council.

3.2 Project Chronology

- 24 March 2006 — the Director General, as a delegate of the Minister, formed the opinion that the Newcastle Regional Museum proposal is a Project to which Part 3A of EP&A Act applies.
- 27 June 2007 — Newcastle City Council acquired this site.
- 16 October 2007 — Preliminary Environmental Assessment (EA) lodged with the Department.
- 26 November 2007 — Director-General's Environmental Assessment Requirements issued to the Proponent.
- 30 September 2008 — Environmental Assessment (EA) lodged with the Department.
- 27 October to 25 November 2008 — EA placed on public exhibition.
- 17 December 2008 — the Department met with the Proponent to discuss the required documentation for a PoPE.
- 12 February 2009 — revised drawings lodged with the Department, minor amendments to internal partitions, services roof vents and, landscaping; deletion of the pivoting glass gates north of the Link.
- 20 March 2009 — revised reports lodged with the Department.



Figure 3 – Perspective looking north-west from Merewether Street showing the new gallery between the workshops.

4 STATUTORY CONTEXT

4.1 MAJOR PROJECT DECLARATION

The project is a Major Project under *State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Projects) 2005* (MP SEPP) because it has a Capital Investment Value of more than \$5 million and is of a kind described in Schedule 2, Part 3A, clause 5 (Specified Site) as a project to which Part 3A of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (the EP&A Act) applies. The opinion was formed by the Director General, as a delegate of the Minister on 24 March 2006 and pursuant to clause 75B of the EP&A Act that Part 3A applies to this development.

4.2 PERMISSIBILITY

Under the MP SEPP, the site is part of the Honeysuckle redevelopment area, which is a Specified Site. The proposed development creates a revitalised use for three buildings of the heritage-listed Honeysuckle Workshops as the Regional Museum and it has a CIV of \$10,254,000 and can therefore be considered by the Minister. The proposal is consistent with the objectives of the B4 Zone objectives under the Department of Planning's Newcastle City Centre LEP 2008 and is permissible.

4.3 MINISTER'S POWER TO APPROVE

The Department has exhibited the Environmental Assessment (EA) in accordance with section 75H (3) of the EP&A Act, as described in Section 5 of this report, below. The project is permissible and meets the requirements of the MP SEPP. Therefore, the Department has met its legal obligations and the Minister has the power to determine this project.

4.4 DIRECTOR GENERAL'S ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS (DGRS)

The DGRs were issued on 26 November 2007 and required the proponent to address the project's compliance with environmental planning instruments, the project's built form, urban design, signage, landscaping and building uses. Specialist reports detailing heritage impacts, traffic and parking impacts and contamination control were required. The proponent was required to consult with key utilities.

The DGRs are in **Appendix A**.

The EA lodged by the Proponent on 30 September 2008 was found to be adequate for exhibition. The Department of Planning is satisfied that the DGRs have been addressed.

4.5 OBJECTS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING & ASSESSMENT ACT 1979

The objects of any statute provide an overarching framework that informs the purpose and intent of the legislation and gives guidance to its operation. The Minister's consideration and determination of a project application under Part 3A must be informed by the relevant provisions of the EP&A Act, consistent with the backdrops of the objects of the EP&A Act.

The objects of EP&A Act in section 5 are as follows:

(a) to encourage:

- (i) the proper management, development and conservation of natural and artificial resources, including agricultural land, natural areas, forests, minerals, water, cities, towns and villages for the purpose of promoting the social and economic welfare of the community and a better environment,
- (ii) the promotion and co-ordination of the orderly and economic use and development of land,
- (iii) the protection, provision and co-ordination of communication and utility services,
- (iv) the provision of land for public purposes,
- (v) the provision and co-ordination of community services and facilities, and
- (vi) the protection of the environment, including the protection and conservation of native animals and plants, including threatened species, populations and ecological communities, and their habitats, and

- (vii) ecologically sustainable development, and*
- (viii) the provision and maintenance of affordable housing,*
- (b) to promote the sharing of the responsibility for environmental planning between the different levels of government in the State, and*
- (c) to provide increased opportunity for public involvement and participation in environmental planning and assessment.*

Of particular relevance to the assessment of the subject application is consideration of the Objects under section 5(a). Relevantly, the Objects stipulated under section 5(a) (i), (ii), (iv), (vi) and (vii) are significant factors informing the determination of the application. The proposal is consistent with the matters in (i), (ii) and (iv), and does not raise significant issues with the remaining matters.

With respect to environmentally sustainable development (ESD), the EP&A Act adopts the definition in the *Protection of the Environment Administration Act 1991* including the precautionary principle, the principle of inter-generational equity, the principle of conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity, and the principle of improved valuation, pricing and incentive mechanisms.

The Department has considered the Objects of the Act, including the encouragement of ESD in the assessment of the application. The balancing of the application in relation to the Objects is provided in Section 5 of this report.

4.5.1 ESD Principles

There are five accepted ESD principles:

- (a) decision-making processes should effectively integrate both long-term and short-term economic, environmental, social and equitable considerations (the integration principle);*
- (b) if there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation (the precautionary principle);*
- (c) the principle of inter-generational equity — that the present generation should ensure that the health, diversity and productivity of the environment is maintained or enhanced for the benefit of future generations (the inter-generational principle);*
- (d) the conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity should be a fundamental consideration in decision-making (the biodiversity principle); and*
- (e) improved valuation, pricing and incentive mechanisms should be promoted (the valuation principle).*

The Department has considered the redevelopment in relation to the ESD principles and has made the following conclusions:

- a) Integration Principle — the environmental impacts of the development are appropriately mitigated as discussed in this report. The Department's assessment has duly considered all issues raised by public authorities, and the proposal as recommended for approval will not compromise a particular stakeholder or hinder the opportunities of others.
- b) Precautionary Principle — the proposal presents no threat of serious or irreversible environmental damage to the site or the wider locality.
- c) Inter-Generational Principle — the proposal represents a sustainable reuse of the site. The redevelopment is for the upgrade and reuse of an existing heritage building, which will conserve the buildings from a heritage point of view, and conserve the latent energy in the construction of these large buildings.
- d) Biodiversity Principle — following an assessment of the Proponent's EA it is considered with certainty that there is no threat of serious or irreversible environmental damage as a result of the proposal.
- e) Valuation Principle — the approach taken for this project has been to assess the environmental impacts of the proposal and identify appropriate safeguards to mitigate adverse environmental effects. The mitigation measures include the cost of implementing these safeguards in the total project cost.

4.6 Section 75I(2) of EP&A Act

Section 75I(2) of EP&A Act and clause 8B of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000* provides that the Director General's Report to the Minister is to address a number of specified requirements. These matters and the Department's response are set out as follows:

Section 75I(2) criteria	Response
Copy of the Proponent's environmental assessment and any preferred project report	The Proponent's EA is located on the assessment file (attached)
Any advice provided by public authorities on the project	All advice provided by public authorities on the project for the Minister's consideration is set out at Appendix B.
Copy of any report of a panel constituted under Section 75G in respect of the project	No statutory independent hearing and assessment panel was undertaken in respect of this project application.
Copy of or reference to the provisions of any State Environmental Planning Policy that substantially govern the carrying out of the project	Each relevant SEPP that substantially governs the carrying out of the project is identified immediately below.
Except in the case of a critical infrastructure project – a copy of or reference to the provisions of any environmental planning instrument that would (but for this Part) substantially govern the carrying out of the project and that have been taken into consideration in the environmental assessment of the project under this Division	An assessment of the development relative to the prevailing environmental planning instrument is provided in Section 4.7 of this report.
Any environmental assessment undertaken by the Director General or other matter the Director General considers appropriate.	The environmental assessment of the Project Application is this report in its entirety.
A statement relating to compliance with the environmental assessment requirements under this Division with respect to the project.	The environmental assessment of the Project Application is this report in its entirety.

Clause 8B criteria	Response
An assessment of the environmental impact of the project	An assessment of the environmental impact of the proposal is discussed in Section 5 of this report.
Any aspect of the public interest that the Director-General considers relevant to the project	The public interest is discussed in Section 5.9 of this report.
The suitability of the site for the project	The site is identified in the <i>State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Projects) 2005</i> as a Specified Site and in the Newcastle City Centre LEP 2008 as having significant development and redevelopment opportunities essential to inner Newcastle's ongoing renewal and revitalisation.
Copies of submissions received by the Director General in connection with public consultation under section 75H of the EP&A Act or a summary of the issues raised in those submissions.	A summary of the issues raised in the submissions is provided in Section 6.2 of this report. Copies of all submissions received is provided in Appendix B.

4.7 ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING INSTRUMENTS (EPIs)

4.7.1 Application of EPIs to Part 3A projects

To satisfy the requirements of section 75I(2)(d) and (e) of the EP&A Act, this report includes references to the provisions of the environmental planning instruments that govern the carrying out of the project and have been taken into consideration in the environmental assessment of the project application.

The primary controls guiding the assessment of the proposal are:

- State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Projects) 2005
- State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007
- State Environmental Planning Policy No. 55 – Remediation of Land
- Lower Hunter Regional Strategy
- Newcastle City Centre LEP 2008

4.7.2 State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Projects) 2005

The project is a Major Project under MP SEPP where schedule 2 of the MP SEPP identifies "Specified sites" to which Part 3A of the EP&A Act applies. Clause 5 of Schedule 2 identifies the area known as 'Honeysuckle' in Newcastle as an area to which Part 3A applies. This opinion was formed by the Minister on 24 March 2006.

4.7.3 State Environmental Planning Policy No. 55 — Remediation of Land

SEPP 55 requires an approval authority to consider whether the land is contaminated, and if so, whether the land will be remediated before the land is used for the intended purpose. The subject proposal requires consideration as to whether this land designated for a public cultural facility with outdoor areas, is suitable for its intended use. The Proponent has submitted a revised remedial action plan for the site to be developed as the Newcastle Regional Museum, following previous investigations which indicated contaminants in the soil at a shallow depth.

Based on the investigations and recommendations in the revised remediation action plan, it is considered that the site can be made suitable for the proposed Museum as a public facility.

4.7.4 State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007

The proposed development meets the aims of the Infrastructure SEPP as it allows for the efficient redevelopment of surplus government owned land. Schedule 3 of the SEPP requires traffic generating development to be referred to the RTA. Workshop Way is an unclassified local road. Council is the roads authority for this road and others in the area. The RTA has no objections to or requirements for the proposed development.

4.7.5 Lower Hunter Regional Strategy

The proposed development meets the aims of the Lower Hunter Strategy by promoting a development for the region that improves the urban environment, provides an orderly and economic development of the land, and reinforces the role of the Newcastle City Centre as the Regional City.

4.7.6 Newcastle City Centre LEP 2008

The proposed development meets the aims of the Newcastle City Centre LEP 2008 by promoting the economic revitalisation of the Newcastle city centre and contributes towards creating a mixed-use place with activity during the day and sometimes in the evening so that the city centre is designed to be safe, attractive, inclusive and efficient for its local population and visitors alike. The proposal meets the 'B4 Mixed Use' zone objectives in the LEP in terms of providing cultural facilities close to public transport, retaining view corridors, and protecting the character of a special area within the Newcastle city centre.

4.8 OTHER PLANS AND POLICIES

4.8.1 Newcastle City Centre DCP 2008

The proposed adaptive reuse of the heritage-listed Honeysuckle Workshops generally meets the objectives and controls for heritage items and the Honeysuckle Special Area with regard to specific urban design guidelines under the Newcastle City Centre DCP. The one exception is the objective for increased pedestrian permeability between buildings. The new link building would limit opportunities for pedestrians to walk between the three workshop buildings to only those willing to enter the Museum in opening hours. However, these passageways are not identified as significant pedestrian paths and the new link building would not cause a significant impact on pedestrian pathways in the city.

4.8.2 Section 94 and Other Contributions

Clause 25J(3)(m) of the *Environmental Planning & Assessment Regulation 2000* states that the costs of any adaptive reuse development of a heritage item is to be excluded when determining the estimated cost of development to apply the s94A levy. As such, a contributions levy for the Honeysuckle Railway Workshops proposal is not applicable.



Figure 4 Perspective drawing showing the proposed Link (centre-right) joining the existing workshops — FJMT

5 ASSESSMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The DGRs and following key issues were considered in the Department's assessment of the applicant's Environmental Assessment:

- Built Form & Urban Design
- Heritage
- Fire Safety and a place of public entertainment
- Open Space and Landscaping
- Traffic, Access and parking
- Residential Amenity
- Site Contamination
- Social & Economic Impacts
- Suitability of the Site
- Public Interest

5.1 BUILT FORM & URBAN DESIGN

The proposed works will not physically alter the buildings apart from extending an arched internal opening down to floor level. The appearance of the buildings would change to the extent that they would be linked by a modern structure of a subordinate scale. By designing the link to be lower than the eaves of the existing buildings, the scheme responds appropriately to the built form of the heritage buildings.

The new link would be the most significant change to the public spaces around the heritage buildings. The landscape works consist of relatively minor adjustments to existing parking, paving and green areas to suit the activation of the site as a public museum between open public spaces and thoroughfares.

5.2 HERITAGE

The Civic Railway Workshops are listed on the State Heritage Register (SHR 00956 1999) and are also listed as a local heritage item within the Newcastle City Centre Heritage Conservation Area under the Newcastle City Centre LEP 2008. The State Heritage Register lists the workshops' significance as:

Civic Railway Workshops is one of the outstanding industrial workshop sites in the State and are excellent examples of a Victorian workshop group that display continuity, excellence in design and execution and add to the townscape of Newcastle as well as play an important role in the history of the railway in the area. The whole group is of highest significance in the State. Construction of workshops in Newcastle was brought about for two reasons: separation of the Great Northern lines from the main system from 1857 to 1889; and in recognition of the exclusive facilities and rolling stock required to handle coal traffic.

The overhead rolling Craven crane in the Boiler Shop is a nationally rare industrial machine. It moves along overhead rails operated by a pulley.

The Heritage Branch provided a letter of conservation advice at the time of giving DGRs. The Heritage Branch recommended that significant fabric should be protected and conserved, that internal partitions should be light weight so as to be reversible, that the new Link structure be self-supporting so as not to damage the workshops, that an interpretation plan be carried out, and that the archaeological potential be considered in the heritage impact statement. All of this advice has been carried out in the Environmental Assessment or the proponent's Statement of Commitments. The conditions of approval carry out this advice in greater detail.

5.2.1 External Relationship between the Proposed Link and the Heritage Items

The Museum proposal would allow the external form of the subject railway workshops to remain as three substantial industrial brick buildings on an orthogonal grid. The only real change to the form of the buildings is the Link building joining the three together. As a low-scale in-fill building, the Link is compatible with the guidelines of the Honeysuckle Public Domain Strategy, 2000 (by Newcastle Council, DUAP, HDC). The Link is designed to be subordinate to the existing buildings, with its highest points kept below the eaves of adjacent existing buildings. The predominantly glazed walls would be shaded by the roof and existing buildings most of the time, and so be transparent to allow views through to the original buildings.

The form of the Link is boldly modern, using an assembly of steel beams in a wave pattern responding to the sawtooth roof of the 1920 Erecting Shop. The proposed roofing structure has a more organic design than that of 1920, but integrates clerestory windows and concealed guttering to similar effect. The Link uses framed glass as its wall element, contrasting with the load-bearing brickwork of the existing workshops, and touching the brickwork to the minimum extent. The Link's structure is an independent system designed to minimise impacts on the existing buildings.

The plan of the Link's foyer has been designed to touch the existing buildings only at doorways. Again, this minimises impacts on the workshops appropriately, and also keeps the external parts of the workshops as outside elements. The Link's temporary gallery encloses the east-west passage with a taller space under the eaves that retains the visibility of the workshops' facades, and is acceptable subject to careful detailing.

The services have been designed to minimise change to the form. Air-conditioning units have been enclosed under the roof planes using louvers in the same roof plane, aligned to match the corrugations of the roof sheeting. Two small-scale service structures would be built south of the Erecting Shed to house an electrical substation and waste. The waste facility is screened in views from the west by a line of brush box trees and is therefore acceptable.



Figure 5 Perspective drawing of the proposed Link with its own sawtooth roof — FJMT



Figure 6 Section perspective of the Temporary Gallery up against the Erecting Shed — FJMT

5.2.2 Internal Spaces

The Museum fitout would make minor reversible changes to each of the interior spaces of the subject workshops. The original spaces in the two older, northern buildings would be clearly discernible with the new fitout. New partitions would generally be discrete elements kept away from the load-bearing walls and allow the cast iron columns to be visible. The existing ablutions in the Wheel House and Boiler Shop detract from the purity of the space, but would be retained with minor alterations to minimise the wastage of resources. A new plant room would be constructed on top of these toilets without obstructing the movement of the very significant Craven crane overhead.

The more extensive works to the Erecting Shed are appropriate here because this building has experienced more changes, and is therefore a little less significant than the other 2 buildings. The 1990s works to strengthen the Erecting Shed after the Newcastle Earthquake put a reinforced concrete perimeter frame and high-level ambulatory into the building, and also replaced the steel roof structure. The design consists of several new levels of galleries.

5.2.3 Impacts on the Building Fabric of the Workshops

The only impact of any significance on the original fabric of the 3 workshops is the proposed extension downwards of an arched window at the southern end of the internal brick wall between the Wheel Shop and the Blacksmiths Shop which is to become a doorway. This small adverse heritage impact is acceptable to assist in an unconstrained circulation pattern through the adapted buildings. It is recommended that the bricks that become available from these works are stored on site for or future conservation works.

Services throughout the workshops would be carried through the concrete floor wherever possible to minimise the visibility of services and because the floor was constructed in the second half of the twentieth century over the former service trenches of the railway workshops. The excavation for steel columns in the Link Building in the north-south breezeway may expose remains of the traverser. A condition of approval is recommended so that if excavation works expose archaeological resources made before 1945, work is to stop and the Heritage Council is to be consulted. It may then be necessary to adjust the work programme.

The existing timber doors would be kept in their open position to enable new glazed doors in new framing systems to be fixed into the openings. Bolting through mortar joints would be acceptable so that brick surfaces are not damaged. The new doors designed to the east façade of the Boiler Shop would be placed asymmetrically in the arches. It is recommended that the new doors be redesigned to be symmetrical in the arches in accordance with the heritage advisor's recommendation so that the symmetrical nature of the building is respected.



Figure 7 Perspective drawing of the proposed BHP Gallery inside the Erecting Shed — FJMT

The Link Building is largely self-supporting but needs to be braced to the external brickwork of the workshops. The details are not resolved, but bolting through surface mortar joints would be acceptable. The Link Building roof glazing needs to be flashed into the existing brickwork. It would be acceptable to chase out the mortar from a continuous horizontal mortar joint to do this. Vertical chasing through pre 1945 brickwork for any other work would not be acceptable. (see condition D1) Neither the new steel framing nor the existing buildings are expected to be vulnerable to vibration from the operation of the nearby railway line since both were designed to absorb the vibration of passing trains and impact machines operating nearby.

The Proponent has committed to provide interpretation displays about the workshops in their railway context. An Interpretation Plan is to be completed to the satisfaction of the Department of Planning before works may commence on site. The Proponent must commit to construct and maintain the Interpretation.

5.2.4 Heritage Conclusion

The Museum adaptive reuse proposal is an appropriate scheme to conserve the 3 affected Honeysuckle Workshop buildings in the continued ownership of Newcastle City Council. The scheme retains the form of the buildings with a subordinate new Link building. The Link building would have an independent structure and be removable. The Link is necessary for the function of the Museum and is designed as an innovative contemporary response to the workshops. The Museum use will contribute to the long-term maintenance of the buildings. The impacts on the heritage fabric are minor. The impacts of the proposed works on the heritage significance of the building will be minimal and is considered to be an appropriate response to the site.

5.3 FIRE SAFETY AND A PLACE OF PUBLIC ENTERTAINMENT (PoPE)

The Proponent's Environmental Assessment included a request for approval as a Place of Public Entertainment (PoPE) to enable functions to be held within the finished Museum. These functions could include a dinner for 600 people, standing event in the Boiler Shop for 2,000 people or a theatrical production, trade show or other private/cultural events. The State Environmental Planning Policy (Temporary Structures and Places of Public Entertainment) 2007 aims to ensure public safety for venues with likely high population densities and complex operations associated with public entertainment, to enable the adaptation of buildings as places of public entertainment and also to encourage employment in the entertainment industry.

The Proponent has applied for a place of public entertainment for the finished buildings including 2,000 people in the Boiler Shop and 335 people in other spaces. Considering the fluid nature of the spaces and the need to use interconnected toilets, it is recommended that the maximum number of patrons permitted at functions in the Museum be limited to the largest number permitted in any room — 2,000 patrons. Up to 45 staff would also be permitted.

The Proponent submitted a Fire Safety Strategy Report with their Environmental Assessment, and this outlined the 'alternate solution' approach to providing fire safety in the event of the Museum becoming a place of public entertainment. While the NSW Fire Brigade have endorsed the general strategy of the Fire Engineered Brief, the NSW Fire Commissioner has not endorsed the project to date, as would be necessary for a Category 3 fire safety provision in a building with a floor area of more than 2,000sqm. The regulations require that a consent authority must refer such an alternate solution to the Fire Commissioner for approval. This cannot be deferred to the Certifying Authority for the Certifying Authority's approval as part of a Construction Certificate approval.

It is understood that insufficient detail has been provided to the Fire Commissioner for endorsement of the project to be given. The Department has had many discussions with the Proponent, their fire services engineers and the NSW Fire Brigade between December 2008 and March 2009 in an effort to resolve this matter efficiently. A condition has been placed requiring the design of the fire hydrants to comply with the Building Code of Australia's deemed to satisfy provisions if the NSW Fire Commissioner does not approve the alternate solution, before the site may be used as a place of public entertainment.

5.4 OPEN SPACE AND LANDSCAPING

Approximately half of the site is landscaped area, either paved or grassed, and containing 3 rows of trees. The landscape works would retain the major open space elements, while making minor adjustments for the site to become a museum with some outdoor displays addressing the adjacent pedestrian thoroughfares. The significant avenues of Canary Island palm trees (*Phoenix canariensis*) on the east and west of the workshops would all remain. A relatively recent avenue of brush box trees (*Lophostomon confertus*) would have 2 specimens removed to make space for new car parking. Three pathways in the south-west section of the site would be reconfigured, mostly reusing pavers on the site. Some robust museum items such as a railway locomotive would be displayed outside. The external display of historic industrial items would be appropriate to these buildings. A recently made area of garden of approximately 120sqm would be converted to a grassed and paved display area.

It is recommended that the 2 brush box trees to be removed be replaced by the planting of 2 additional specimens of the same species on the site or in its vicinity. The landscape works are otherwise acceptable because no significant material would be removed and the outdoor display space would be useful to the Museum and have public amenity as a small park. The northern public space would remain unchanged with the retention of the steel-framed canopies above masonry paving.

5.5 TRAFFIC, ACCESS & PARKING

5.5.1 Traffic and Access

The private car would continue to be the predominant mode of transport for visitors coming to the Newcastle Regional Museum, despite the Museum being relocated to a site with better public transport links and higher densities of people nearby. Two buses per day carrying school children are also expected. Museum traffic and parking demand would tend to occur between peak traffic periods considering the 10am opening time and 5pm closing time. Major exhibitions would close from 4pm. By analysing patterns of visitation in the previous Museum in 2006 and the annual visitation increasing from 85,000 to 120,000 people, the consultants Mark Waugh P/L forecast in their 2006 Traffic Report that the Museum would be likely to attract 100 cars per day. Mark Waugh P/L forecast that 70-80% of the Museum's traffic would come from Hannell Street to the west. The other access point to the Honeysuckle development area is the level crossing over the railway on Merewether Street. The Proponent's findings that the surrounding roads are satisfactory for the Museum use are credible. The roads surrounding the Museum are local roads and the responsibility of Newcastle City Council.

Functions using the site as a place of public entertainment would occur after 5 pm when the Museum closes. Traffic associated with functions is expected to occur predominantly after the evening peak period of traffic. The site has been used as a place of public entertainment under section 68 of the *Local Government Act, 1993*, which is no longer in force. The Proponent argues that a place of public entertainment approval under different legislation would not constitute a new use of the site. Conditions are necessary to limit adverse impacts on the flow of traffic and parking (see 5.5.2 Parking below) considering the extensive development in the Honeysuckle precinct in recent years. A condition has been imposed that functions having more than 200 patrons should provide means for patrons to get to the site without parking in the vicinity. A 'park and ride' scheme using buses and the bus set-down spaces could be used for large functions.

The Museum use of the Honeysuckle Workshops is proposed to be served by a medium-rigid delivery trucks using either the roadside of Wright Lane on the western side of the building or an access way with an unloading area on the eastern side of the building, off Merewether Street. The Proponent has demonstrated that the proposed service road arrangement can accommodate single-direction vehicle movements for medium rigid vehicles. The driveway crossing has been designed to be extended for medium-sized trucks undertaking side loading into the Boiler Shop. Smaller deliveries would be made from Wrights Lane to the Museum reception, and then to the kitchen if required. The Proponent anticipates that twice a year there will be demand for unloading or loading from larger articulated vehicles using the roadside, and special permits would need to be obtained from Newcastle City Council in these situations. The parking area and layout are to be in accordance with Australian Standard AS 2890.2 – 2002.

There is some potential for vehicular/pedestrian conflict where the proposed delivery access way would use an existing public promenade area. In order to minimise any potential conflict, a condition of the Project Application requires the Proponent to limit the use of large delivery trucks off the roads on the site, as follows:

- 6.00 AM — 8.00 AM
- 10.00 AM — 12.00 PM (midday)
- 2.00 PM — 4.00 PM

The above times ensure that service delivery vehicles have minimal conflict with pedestrian activities along Merewether Street and the public forecourt area.

5.5.2 Parking

The proposed Museum development would include the following parking and loading provisions:

- 10 new regular parking spaces dedicated for Museum use only;
- 2 new parking spaces for disabled persons in close proximity to the Museum; and
- 4 new bicycle parking racks located by the south-western corner of the Erecting Shed.

There is a considerable amount of existing on-street parking along Honeysuckle Drive, although there is increasing competition for these spaces as development is completed in the area. The existing Wright Lane car park has specified parking profiles, such as 2 hour or 4 hour parking. The site is within close proximity to the Newcastle CBD and public transport services. The Civic Railway Station is adjacent and NSW State Transit buses operate nearby on the south side of the railway line. The Proponent envisages that a large number of visitors will arrive by foot from the CBD or on public transport. It is not intended to allow vehicles to set-down or pick-up passengers along Workshop Way because this would cause traffic congestion in a relatively narrow street.

Mark Waugh P/L surveyed traffic movements relevant to the Newcastle Museum in its Hunter Street location in 2006, prior to its closure. At that time the Museum's parking demand profile was 30 spaces for staff and patrons together. The Museum was attracting approximately 85,000 people per annum then, but Council anticipates the new Museum will attract 120,000 people per annum. Approximately 100 cars are expected to be attracted to the site each day, but the Proponent finds that 26 spaces will satisfy this. The Museum is unlikely

to have more than 10 employees present on site. With 12 spaces to be provided on site, more than half of the public parking demand would need to be met by spaces in the vicinity.

No on-site parking for buses has been provided for, but two set down spaces for the temporary stopping of buses would be located on Wright Lane. This is the same as the number of school buses expected each day. While there are no parking spaces for trucks servicing the Museum, restricted-hours loading is provided for to the east of the Boiler Shop on what would normally be a footpath between the CBD and the waterfront along Merewether Street.

Considering the modest needs for off-site parking that the Museum has been found to require, the reliance on a combination of on-site and public car parking is considered acceptable and will not have significant adverse impacts on the locality. Clause 4.1.8 in Element 4.1 of Newcastle DCP for parking for major traffic generating proposals within the CBD allows consideration based on the merit of the proposal. There are approximately 264 public parking spaces within proximity of the Museum. The proposed parking measures adequate for the development.

The use of the premises as a place of public entertainment for up to 2,000 patrons would create a demand for more parking in the area after regular business hours. Due to the extensive development in the area since the last place of public entertainment approval was made in 2006, controls to limit parking pressure in the vicinity of the site are necessary to protect the mixed-use amenity of the area. As stated above, a condition would require functions of more than 200 patrons to provide a means of patrons getting to the premises without using car parking facilities in the vicinity of the Museum.

5.6 RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

Arup Acoustics, the Proponent's acoustic consultant has undertaken a noise impact assessment of the Museum buildings, focussing on the impacts that might arise from the Museum being used as a place of public entertainment. Noise measurements taken in 2007 demonstrated that the building fabric attenuates internal sounds by 35 decibels when sound reaches the outside. The dominant background noise in the precinct consists mainly of road traffic, followed by the horns of the harbour and railway traffic. The nearest residential building is the Crowne Plaza Hotel across Workshop Way. The sound measurements taken in 2007 were applicable to the buildings having loose fitting timber doors. The finished buildings would have new doors with better sound attenuating properties. A condition of the Project Application requires the Proponent to consult with their acoustic consultant in the design of plant equipment.

Controls have been placed to ensure that the noise created by mechanical equipment and functions held as a place of public entertainment do not exceed the background noise level by more than 5dB(A), and must not be audible within any dwelling. Amplified music would be permitted within the finished buildings only, and be limited to the house amplifier. The Proponent has indicated that rock concerts and functions requiring more noise would not be appropriate in a cultural facility such as the Museum. The recommended conditions would ensure that very loud events such as rock concerts could not held at the Museum.

The use of the Museum spaces for functions after hours within proximity of residential development would be appropriate in the HDC mixed-use precinct subject to conditions. The lifestyle and amenity envisaged for the HDC precinct includes mixed use development and as such it is expected that residential, cultural and entertainment uses will be located within proximity to each other to enable this renewal and activation to grow and prosper. Recently constructed residential developments in the HDC precinct also have ground floor commercial uses, reflecting the mixed use environment of the area. Recommended conditions to ensure the reasonable residential amenity include limiting the place of public entertainment to the interior spaces, having a plan of management to control the use of sound systems, doors, use of outdoor spaces, cleaning up noise and limiting functions Sunday to Thursday to finish by 10:00 pm. A complaints register would also be required to be kept with several communication modes of being accessed.

5.7 SITE CONTAMINATION

RCA Australia have found isolated contaminant deposits of heavy metals and petroleum hydrocarbons in two areas of the site and significant contamination in a third area of the site. A strategy has been recommended to

control the spread and human contact with the contaminants. A management protocol is recommended by RCA for the contaminated areas apart from the eastern side of the site. The eastern side of the site requires the removal of the top 1m of soil to licensed landfill and the remediation on site of the 0.5–1.0m of soil material.

As discussed in Section 4.7.3 of this report, in accordance with SEPP 55, the site can be made suitable for the proposed Museum uses. RCA Australia recommend that the site is suitable for the Museum use if the contaminant remedial action plan is adopted for the site works, as prepared by RCA Australia, dated March 2007.

5.8 SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS, THE PUBLIC INTEREST

The site and Honeysuckle Workshops are generally considered suitable for a museum with possible functions after hours for the following reasons:

- Precinct enlivened with a new cultural facility;
- City centre location within a mixed use precinct, located adjacent to the Newcastle CBD;
- Proximity to public transport (immediately adjacent to the railway station);
- Access to nearby public foreshore promenade;
- Adaptive reuse and opportunity for interpretation of a heritage building;
- Reactivation of government infrastructure at a vacant inner city site; and
- Economic and social benefit to local area.

The proposal is in the public interest and will deliver a number of social and economic benefits, including:

Culture — the relocation of the Museum closer to public transport and the city centre is likely to raise the profile of this regional cultural facility. The inclusion of the BHP related industrial displays will expand the display and make it more representative of the Newcastle region. Newcastle City Council will be better able to hold integrated cultural events using the capacity of the nearby Civic Theatre and the Newcastle City Hall with the relocated Museum.

Heritage Conservation — the historical, social, technical and aesthetic importance of the former Honeysuckle Railway Workshops will be conserved through a sensitive adaptive reuse of the buildings. A museum use would enable better opportunities for interpretation of the workshops.

Jobs — 30 new full-time equivalent construction jobs and 8 new full-time equivalent operational jobs will be had during the construction and on-going operational phases of the development.

Urban density — relocating the Regional Museum adjacent to public transport and the city centre is expected to increase the visibility and use of the Museum, and augment the status of the central business district as a cultural destination. The proposed development will generate use on under utilised parcels of government owned land, which will have positive social and economic impacts to the community as outlined above.

6 CONSULTATION AND ISSUES RAISED

6.1 PUBLIC EXHIBITION

The major project application was exhibited from 27 October 2008 to 25 November 2008 for 30 days and was published in the *Newcastle Herald*. The EA was made available to the public in the Department's Information Centre in Sydney and Newcastle, and at the Newcastle City Council's City Administration Centre office.

6.2 SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED ON ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

During the public exhibition period the Department received one public submission, and 2 from public authorities, namely Hunter Water and the RTA. The issues raised are summarised below.

6.2.1 Hunter Water

Hunter Water support the project and advised the Department that the development would place only small increases in demand for water and sewer services which are expected to be met with Hunter Water's current infrastructure.

6.2.2 RTA

The RTA did not raise any objections to the proposal. The RTA suggested that a bus pick-up and drop off space for two buses should be accommodated, and that the bicycle parking racks be located closer to the main entrance. These suggestions have been accommodated in the revised drawings received 12 February 2009. The RTA reminded the approval authority of the relevant Australian Standards for driveways.

6.2.3 Public submissions

One public submission was received by email from an individual with an unspecified address. The submission endorses the Newcastle Regional Museum project and urges it to be undertaken. Given that no issues were raised by the public, the public exhibition process has not contributed to any need for a Preferred Project Report. Recommended conditions will nonetheless be imposed in this approval.

7 CONCLUSION

The Department has assessed the EA and considered the submissions in response to the proposal. No key issues were raised in the submissions from the advertising period. The Department determined that the Proponent need not respond to the submissions. The Draft Statement of Commitments can be accepted.

Key features of the Project Application include the adaptive reuse of the existing heritage buildings, and the works to prevent unsafe contact between people and the site's contaminants. The public benefit of the Museum redevelopment is highly desirable, with opportunities for heritage interpretation of an underutilised set of industrial buildings with free access to the public. A place of public entertainment subject to conditions and reduced hours is appropriate in the mixed-use Honeysuckle precinct.

The Project Application has demonstrated general compliance with the aims and objectives in the relevant environmental planning instruments and has given adequate consideration to the site's capability to accommodate this type of development. The intent of the proposal meets the objectives identified for the site in the Newcastle City Centre LEP 2008.

The Department has determined that the site is suitable for the proposed development and is in the public interest. Accordingly, the Department recommends that the Project Application be approved, subject to conditions.

8 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Director General, as delegate of the Minister:

- (A) consider the findings and recommendations of this report;
- (B) approve the project application, subject to modifications, under section 75J *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979*; and
- (C) sign the Instrument of Approval (tag A).

Prepared by:
Brad Vale
Senior Planner (Heritage)


Endorsed by:
Shayne Watson
Planning Assessment Manager
Government Lands



Michael Woodland
Director
Urban Assessments

Jason Perica
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