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Building 19
Royal North Shore Hospital

Supplementary Heritage Impact Statement



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Introduction

1.0

1.1 Context of the Report

This Heritage Impact Statement (HIS) has been prepared to accompany the *Royal North Shore Hospital Concept Plan & Project Application Core Health Precinct*. This Report supplements the *Royal North Shore Hospital Concept Plan Heritage Impact Statement* prepared by Godden Mackay Logan in May 2006. It has been prepared for the InfraShore Partnership (ABN AMRO, Thiess Contractors, Thiess Services and Wilson Parking) to partially satisfy Condition C2 of the Department of Planning's approval of Major Project No. 06_0051.

Demolition approval for the Mortuary component of Building 19, on this site, has been excluded from the overall Concept Plan approval pending the submission of additional information to demonstrate why it cannot be retained and integrated into the redevelopment proposal.

Condition C2.2 requires:

Every effort should be made to retain the subject items as long as possible and demonstrate why they cannot be retained and integrated into the subsequent redevelopment proposal. Further details shall be submitted to the Director, together with design documentation, in order to demonstrate the need to demolish these items. Should approval be granted to demolish these items, archival recording must take place in accordance with NSW Heritage Office Guidelines.

1.2 Report Objective

The main objective of this report is to demonstrate the element of Building 19 that is of heritage significance is to be retained in the proposed development.

1.3 Authorship

This Heritage Assessment has been prepared by Gail Lynch, Senior Heritage Consultant, and reviewed by Graham Brooks, Director, of Graham Brooks and Associates. Unless otherwise noted all of the photographs in this report are by Graham Brooks and Associates.

1.4 Report Limitations

This report is limited to the investigation of the European history of the site. Plans for the construction, additions and alterations to the building, held by the Hospital archives were not available for viewing during the preparation of this report. Therefore, recommendations have been made on the basis of the plans available at the NSW Department of Commerce

archives, secondary sources available, previous reports prepared for the site and physical inspection of the existing fabric.

1.6 Site Identification

Building 19 is located in the north east section of Royal North Shore Hospital, St Leonards, at the corner of Eileen and Herbert Streets.

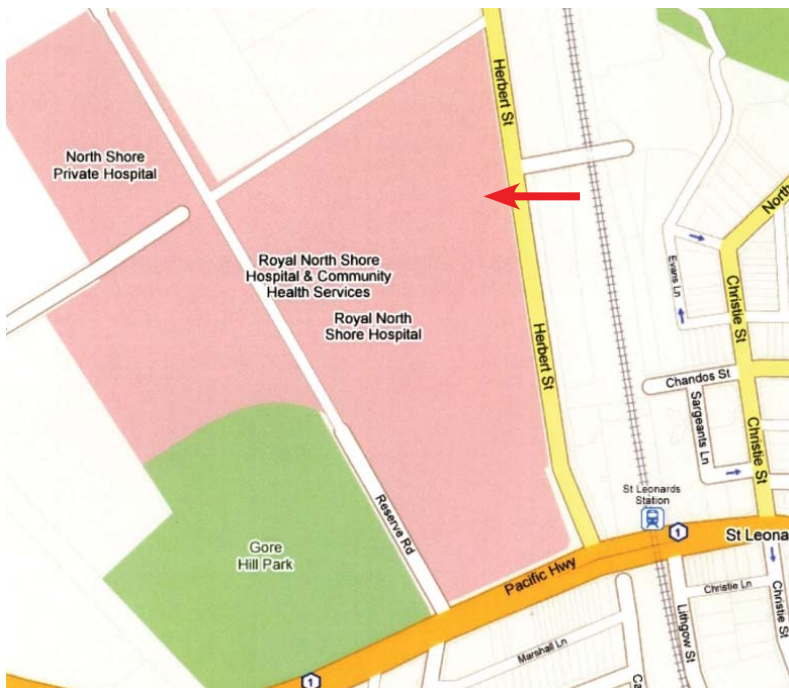


Figure 1-1
Map showing the approximate location of Building 19 on the Royal North Shore Hospital site

Source: www.maps.google.com.au/maps



Figure 1-2
Aerial photograph showing the location of Building 19 on the Royal North Shore Hospital site

Source: www.maps.google.com.au/maps

Building Description

2.0

Building 19 is comprised of two components: the 1925 former Mortuary and the circa 1959 Laundry. The plan in Figure 2-1 shows the former Mortuary building shaded red, with its eastern addition coloured grey, and the later Laundry building shaded in blue.

The former Mortuary is a small single storey brick building with a hipped roof clad with terracotta tiles, and timber framed windows. Detailing includes exposed timber eaves, timber shingling on the western elevation, and a large skylight window over the post mortem room. There is an enclosed verandah on the south west corner of the building.

A driveway to the west of the former Mortuary allows access to the lower floor of the Laundry building, located at the rear.

An addition to the east of the former Mortuary links it to the Laundry, which is constructed in close proximity to its northern facade.

The Laundry is a mostly two storey building designed in the Postwar Functionalist style and constructed in face brick and concrete, with tile and metal roof cladding. It is built to the Herbert Street boundary and is entered via the south and west elevations. Doors and a metal stair on the northern elevation provide additional egress.

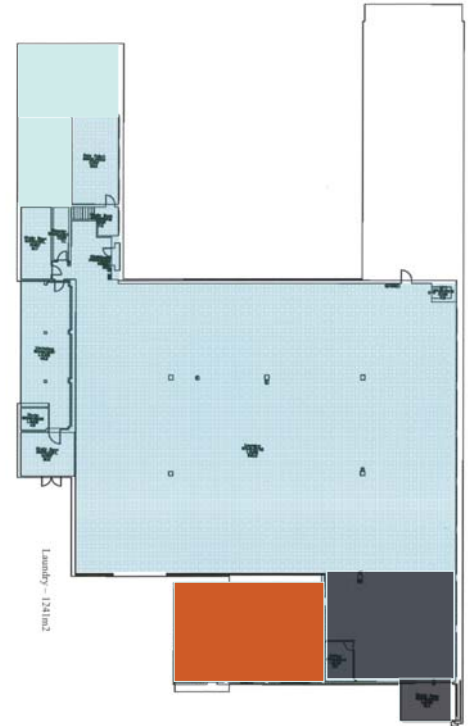


Figure 2-1

Plan of the Building 19 footprint with the 1925 Mortuary Building coloured red and the Laundry and additions coloured blue



Figure 2-2

View of Building 19 from Herbert Street, with the single storey addition to the former Mortuary on the left



Figure 2-3

West elevation of the Laundry Building



Figure 2-4
North elevation of the Laundry



Figure 2-5
North elevation of the former Mortuary (on the right) and the south elevation of the Laundry (on the left)



Figure 2-6
View of the south elevation of the former Mortuary, showing the closed in verandah and the enlarged skylight



Figure 2-7
South elevation of the eastern addition to the former Mortuary with the top floor of the Laundry visible at the rear



Figure 2-8
South and east elevation of the former Mortuary, with the ramp access to the eastern addition visible on the right



Figure 2-9
Office fitout of the former Mortuary verandah



Figure 2-10
The former chapel space has been renovated for office use



Figure 2-11
Shows the western wall of the extension to the former Mortuary which was the exterior eastern wall



Figure 2-12
View through to the former Cool Room space of the Mortuary, now fitted out for office accommodation



Figure 2-13
Office fitout of the former post mortem room

Historical Summary of Building 19

3.0

3.1 Initial Construction of The Mortuary

The first hospital Morgue was located on the other side of Eileen Street, opposite Building 19.¹ Plans for a new Mortuary Block were prepared by the Department of Public Works Government Architects Branch in 1924. The new building facilities included space for a mortuary, post mortem room, cool room, and chapel. Ramps on the northern and southern side of the building provided access. The northern entrance opened to a vestibule which was adjacent to the chapel, mortuary and post mortem room. The southern entrance provided direct access from the verandah to the mortuary.²

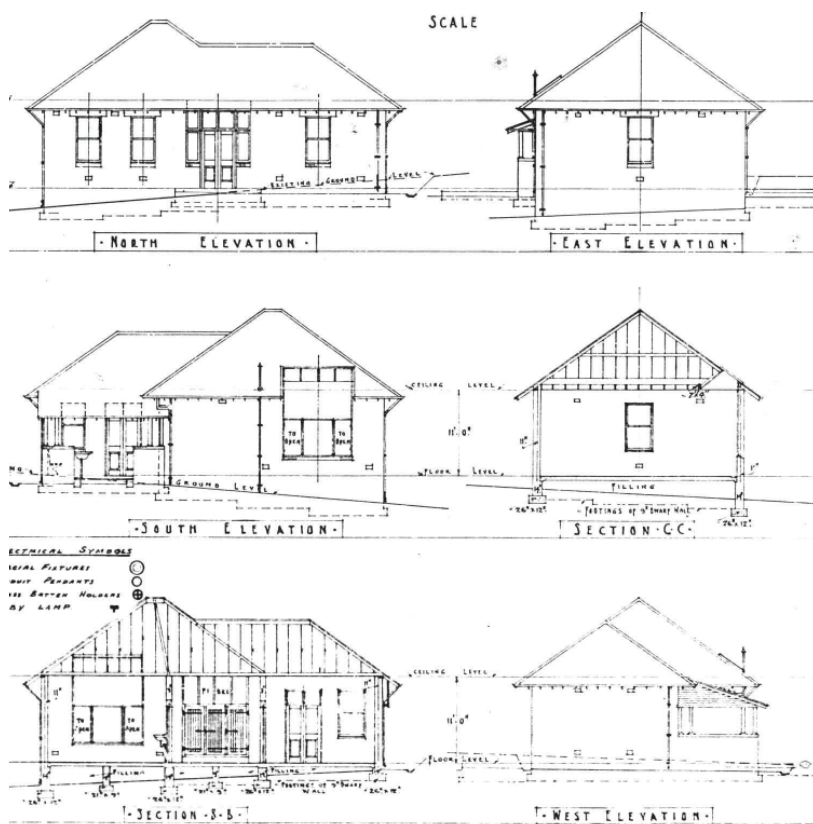


Figure 3-1

Plan showing the elevations of the former Mortuary building which is now part of Building 19

Source: NSW Department of Commerce Archives PH163/12

1 1914 Site Plan of North Shore Hospital, NSW Department of Commerce Archives, PH163/15

2 1924 Plan of the Royal North Shore Hospital Mortuary Block, NSW Department of Commerce Archives, PH163/12

3.2 Additions and Modifications to the Building

The *Royal North Shore Hospital, St Leonards Heritage Assessment*, February 2005, (City Plan Heritage) notes the Mortuary was made redundant following the completion of the new hospital buildings and the new boiler house building constructed in 1958-1960, as views of post-mortem procedures were readily available from the new buildings through the mortuary's enlarged skylight.

The Laundry block was constructed, immediately adjacent to the building, in 1959. The construction date of the eastern extension to the former Mortuary building, linking it with the Laundry, is not known. It is not shown on 1965 plans for internal modifications to the Laundry and is visible in the 1976 aerial photograph, reproduced in Figure 3-3.

The interior of the former Mortuary Building was extensively altered for its use as the laundry office. Comparison of the original floor plan and that existing show the modifications made to the building layout.

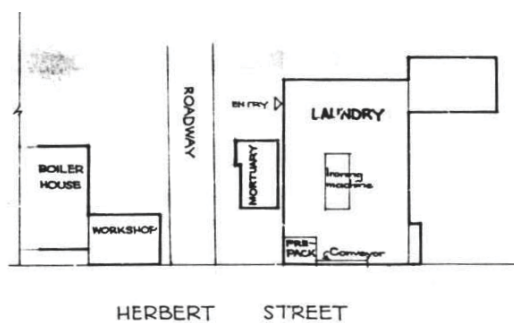


Figure 3-2
1965 plan of the Mortuary and Laundry

Source: NSW Department of Commerce Archives PH163/191

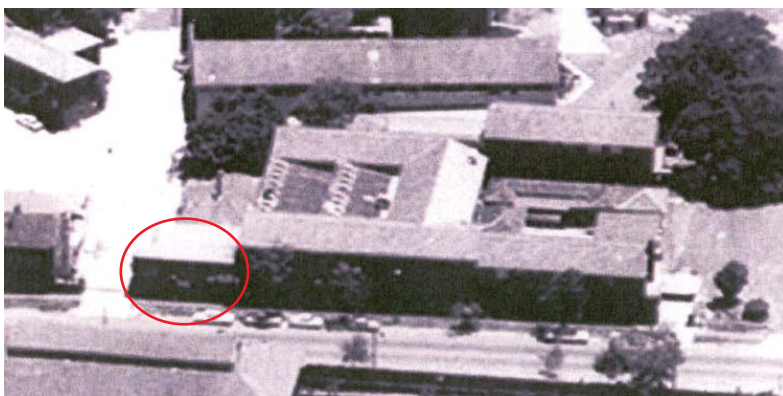


Figure 3-3
1976 aerial photograph showing the eastern addition to the former Mortuary circled

Source: RNSH Archives

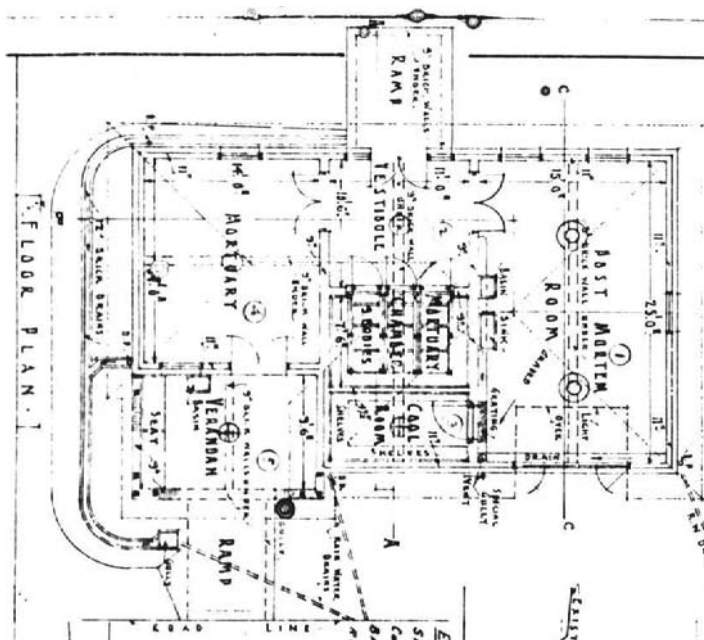


Figure 3-4
Original floor plan of the Mortuary building

Source: NSW Department of Commerce Archives PH163/12

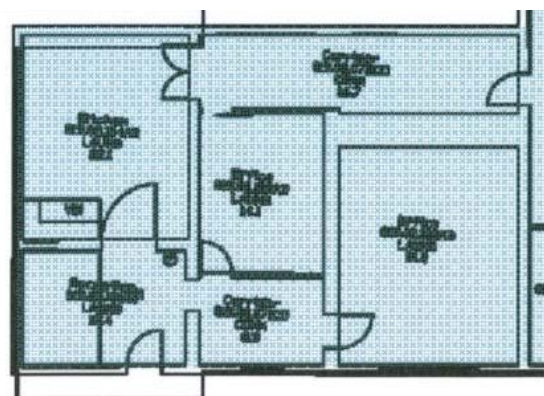


Figure 3-5
Existing floor plan of the former Mortuary building component of Building 19

Assessment of Significance

4.0

4.1 Introduction

The *Royal North Shore Hospital, St Leonards Heritage Assessment*, February 2005, (City Plan Heritage) concluded that the Mortuary building component of Building 19 is of Moderate heritage significance at Local Level and the Laundry building is of Little significance. The *Royal North Shore Hospital Concept Plan Heritage Impact Statement* (Godden Mackay Logan, May 2006) concurs with this finding, as do Graham Brooks and Associates.

The following detailed heritage assessment and statement of significance for the former Mortuary Building is reproduced from the *Royal North Shore Hospital, St Leonards Heritage Assessment*, February 2005, (City Plan Heritage).

4.2 Evaluation of the Criteria

Criterion (a) – An item is important in the course, or pattern, of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area)

The mortuary building at Royal North Shore Hospital is representative of the pattern of development of the hospital complex, being part of the land resumed in the 1920s for greater expansion of services. It is a building form that is increasingly becoming threatened by site redevelopment across New South Wales, and relatively few examples of early interwar morgues remain. The Royal North Shore Hospital mortuary retains its key architectural characteristics and form to make its former function readily identifiable, although its interior has been modified for new uses.

Criterion (b) - An item has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area)

The building has some degree of association with the generations of hospital staff involved with the Royal North Shore Hospital, but has little association with individuals of particular significance to the Hospital or community.

Criterion (c) - An item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in NSW (or the local area)

The Mortuary building has, in its exterior presentation, a readily discernible form and function through its architecture. While it does not demonstrate a high degree of achievement, it has retained clear characteristics of its genre.

Criterion (d) - An item has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in NSW (or the local area) for social, cultural or spiritual reasons

The Mortuary has associations with the hospital community.

Criterion (e) - An item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area)

The land directly beneath the morgue may provide information relative to the nineteenth century cottages on the site prior to its construction. Surrounding land, however, is not expected to retain any archaeological potential given its excavation and the construction of the laundry in the late 1950s.

Criterion (f) - An item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area)

The mortuary is an example of a now uncommon and endangered architectural form the early interwar period.

Criterion (g) - An item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSW's cultural or natural places; or cultural or natural environments (or a class of the local area's cultural or natural places; or cultural or natural environments)

The mortuary is a good example of a functional, early interwar hospital building that functioned outside the sphere of 'patient care'. It has the key characteristics that typify this period of morgues, with its extensive skylight window for the carrying out of procedures; although its interior has been extensively altered, the majority of the exterior remains to document its former function.

4.3 Statement of Significance

The former mortuary building at Royal North Shore Hospital presents a good exterior remnant example of a simply constructed, early interwar hospital 'services' building, with its square timber shingles and extensive windows and skylight openings. Its 1922 design was, for the time, state of the art, with refrigeration chambers and provision for a chapel, and is representative of key hospital facilities that are often overlooked in favour of prominently located patient wings and administration buildings.

It occupies a site close to the original RNSH morgue site along the Eileen Street alignment, in keeping with the hospital's policy in relation to disposal after death, with Eileen Street considered a convenient and discreet location from which to convey corpses for burial.

The building has historical and architectural value, with its distinctive skylight windows highlighting the building's purpose. Externally, the building is in fair but neglected condition, and is encroached upon by the hospital laundry. Internally, the mortuary has little integrity due to renovations for its use as the laundry office.

4.4 Archaeological Potential

The *Royal North Shore Hospital, St Leonards Archeological Assessment*, 2006, prepared by Godden Mackay Logan, identifies areas of archeological potential within the site. This Report shows there are areas of potential Low to Medium significance to the north and south of Building 19. It notes the following in relation to Building 19 itself

Analysis of the historical plans indicates that there were no cottages on this land prior to the construction of the Morgue building. Building 19 has been converted to an office and evidence of its function as a morgue largely removed. This conversion indicates that it is unlikely that occupation deposits or relics relating to the buildings use as a morgue survive. It is considered this area has No archaeological potential.

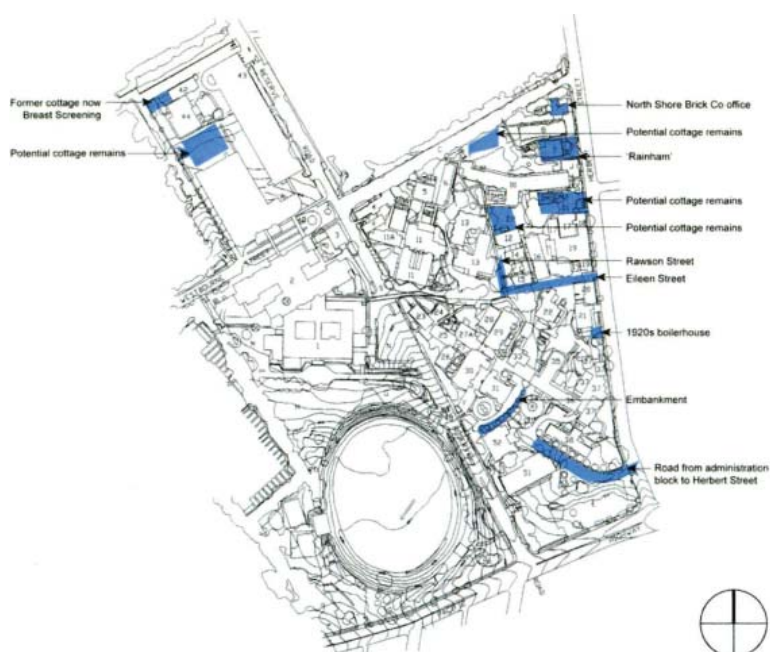


Figure 4-1

Plan showing the areas of archaeological potential of Low to Medium significance marked in blue

Source: *Royal North Shore Hospital, St Leonards Archeological Assessment*, Godden Mackay Logan, 2006

4.5 Grading of Significance

The former Mortuary Building has been assessed to determine a relative grading of significance into five levels. This process examines a number of factors, including:

- Relative age
- Original design quality
- Degree of intactness and general condition
- Extent of subsequent alterations
- Association with important people or events
- Ability to demonstrate a rare quality, craft or construction process

Grading reflects the contribution the element makes to overall significance of the item (or the degree to which the significance of the item would be diminished if the component were removed or altered).

EXCEPTIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

Includes rare or outstanding building fabric that displays a high degree of intactness or can be interpreted relatively easily.

HIGH SIGNIFICANCE

Includes the original extant fabric and spaces of particular historic and aesthetic value. Includes extant fabric from the early phases of construction.

MODERATE SIGNIFICANCE

Includes building fabric and relationships which were originally of higher significance, but have been compromised by later, less significant modifications.

LITTLE SIGNIFICANCE

Includes most of the fabric associated with recent alterations and additions made to accommodate changing functional requirements. These are components generally of neutral impact on the site's significance.

INTRUSIVE

Recent fabric, which adversely affects the significance of the site.

Grading has been established as a valuable tool, to assist in developing appropriate conservation measures for the treatment of the building and its various elements. In general, good conservation practice encourages the focussing on change, or upgrading of, an historical building/site to those areas or components, which make a lesser contribution to significance. The areas or components that make a greater or defining contribution to significance should generally be left intact or changed with the greatest care and respect.

SITE ELEMENTS	GRADING OF SIGNIFICANCE
There are no elements of the former Mortuary considered to be of Exceptional significance	EXCEPTIONAL
There are no elements of the former Mortuary considered to be of High significance	HIGH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall form of the building • Access from the building to Eileen Street • Brick facades • Timber shingle detailing • Skylight opening • Timber window joinery 	MODERATE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-original window in southern wall of former cool room • Internal layout and fit out 	LITTLE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eastern addition • The enclosed verandah on the south west corner of the building 	INTRUSIVE

Assessment of Heritage Impact

5.0

5.1 The Proposed Development

It is proposed to demolish the Laundry component of Building 19 and construct a new Community Health Building in its place.

The retained building plan from the *Royal North Shore Hospital Amended Concept Plan and Preferred Project Report*, reproduced in Figure 5-1, confirms the former Mortuary Building component is to be retained in the proposed redevelopment.

The *Royal North Shore Project Application* is consistent with the approved Concept Plan. The former Mortuary Building component of Building 19 is to be retained and adaptively reused as a Community Facility.

Plans for the adaptive reuse of this building will be prepared in the detailed design phase of this project.



Figure 5-1

Plan of the Royal North Shore Hospital site showing the existing buildings to be retained marked in green. The location of the former Mortuary component of Building 19 is indicated with a red circle.

Source: *Royal North Shore Hospital Amended Concept Plan and Preferred Project Report*

5.2 Heritage Impact Assessment

The NSW Heritage Office has published a series of criteria for the assessment of heritage impact on either a heritage item or an item in the vicinity of a development.

The 'questions to be answered' in relation to new development adjacent to a heritage item are:

- *How is the impact of the new development on the heritage significance of the item or area to be minimised?*
- *Why is the new development required to be adjacent to a heritage item?*
- *How does the curtilage allowed around the heritage item contribute to the retention of its heritage significance?*
- *How does the new development affect views to, and from, the heritage item? What has been done to minimise negative effects?*
- *Will the additions visually dominate the heritage item?*
- *How has this been minimised?*
- *Will the public, and users of the item, still be able to view and appreciate its significance?*

The impact of the proposed development has been minimised by the design and siting of the new Community Health Building.

The limited space available within the Hospital site requires that the new development be constructed adjacent to the heritage items within the site.

The existing buildings on the site are constructed in close proximity to each other and the small single storey former Mortuary Building is somewhat overwhelmed by its eastern addition and the existing development in its vicinity.

The proposal provides open space between the new Acute Hospital and the Community Health Building. As the new Community Health Building has a greater set back, from the west, than the existing Laundry,

This will enhance views to the former Mortuary Building, from within the Hospital site.

The adaptive reuse of the former Mortuary will ensure its survival and on-going use. This will allow public appreciation of the place and its former function.

Conclusions and Recommendations

6.0

6.1 Conclusions

- The Minister for Planning approved the *Royal North Shore Hospital Amended Concept Plan and Preferred Project Report*, November 2006 as major project No. 06_0051 in April 2007.
- Demolition of Building 19 (Mortuary), on this site, has been excluded from the overall concept Plan approval, under Condition C2, pending the submission of additional information to demonstrate why it cannot be retained and integrated into the redevelopment proposal.
- As the *Royal North Shore Project Application* demolishes only the Laundry component of Building 19, and retains the Mortuary Building component it is consistent with the Concept Plan approval.
- The Laundry component of Building 19, that is to be demolished, has been assessed as being of Little heritage significance.
- The former Mortuary Building component of Building 19, assessed as being of Moderate heritage significance, is to be retained.
- Plans for the adaptive reuse of this building will be prepared in the detail design phase of this project. It is envisaged it will be incorporated into the facilities of the Community Health Building.
- The impact of the proposed partial demolition of Building 19 and construction of the Community Health Building immediately to the North of the former Mortuary Building is considered acceptable in heritage terms.

6.2 Recommendations

- Options for the adaptive reuse of the former Mortuary building should be developed in consultation with a Heritage Consultant.
- The use of the former Mortuary Building should be recognised in the site wide Heritage Interpretation Plan.
- The Intrusive eastern addition to the former Mortuary Building should be demolished.
- A Conservation Works Schedule, and On-going Maintenance Schedule, for the former Mortuary should be prepared to accompany the detail design application for this project.