

**HAKOAH CLUB
61- 67 HALL STREET
BONDI**



BRIEF HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

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Architects
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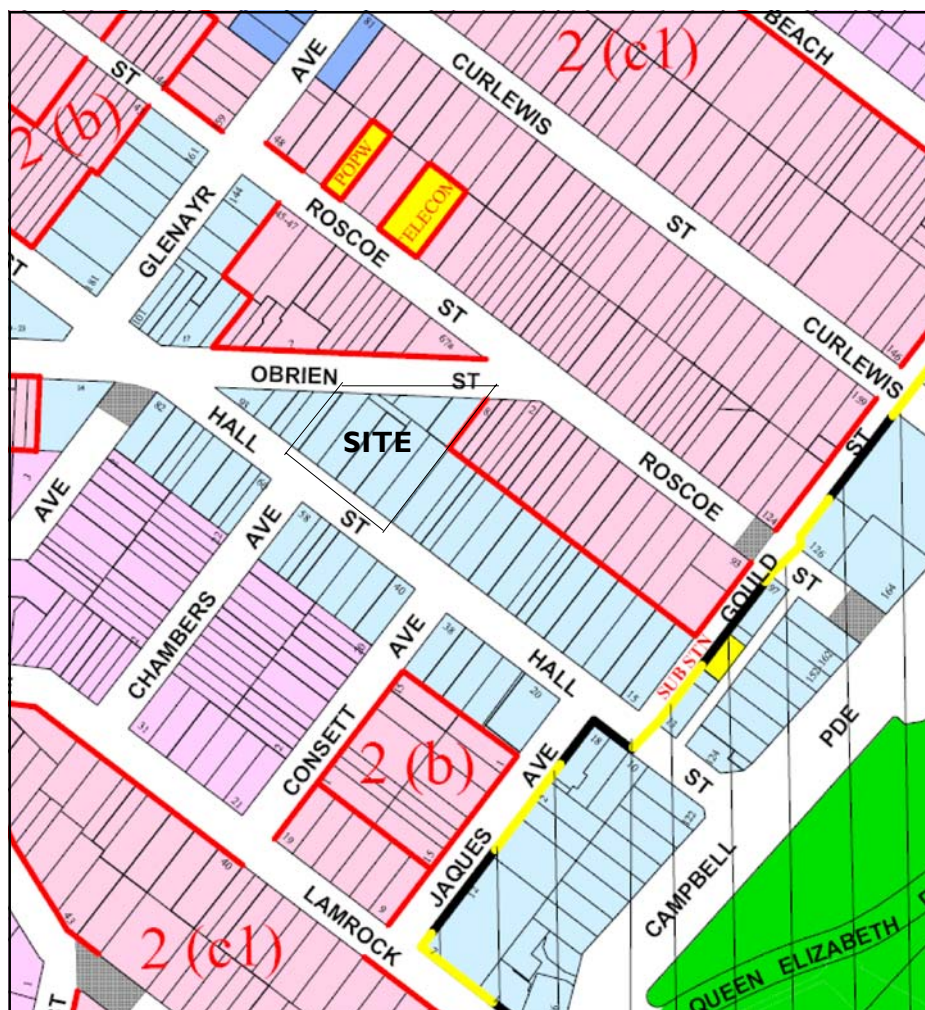
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I.0 INTRODUCTION

This brief heritage assessment has been prepared in regard to the Hakoah Club in Hall Street, Bondi.

The building is not listed as a heritage item at a local, state or national level and there is no statutory planning requirement that a heritage assessment be prepared.

This study has been prepared at the request of the Toga Group. The location of the site in question is shown on the extract from the Waverley Council zoning map below.



2.0 HISTORIC OUTLINE

This brief history, which outlines the chronology of the development of the Hakoah Club in Hall Street, Bondi, has been compiled from the more comprehensive publication: Hakoah Club Sydney, 1938-1994 by Rosalind Taylor and Peter Morrison published by the club.

The Sydney Hakoah Club is one of a number of Jewish sporting clubs throughout the world, modelled on the original Hakoah club formed in Vienna, Austria in 1909. The idea to promote sporting prowess amongst Jewish men had developed in the 1880s when it was recommended at the first Zionist Conference in Basel that *'the young generation of Jews should strengthen their bodies and compete with the gentiles in order to prove to be equal'*.¹ The term Hakoah was adopted for the sporting club which is the Hebrew word for strength. The initial range of sports included football (soccer), hockey, track and field events and wrestling, with other sports such as swimming, skiing, table tennis and skating added in the 1920s. Chess was also played. In 1938 Austria came under the control of the Nazi Regime, the Vienna Hakoah Club was banned and their sporting facilities commandeered. The club was reformed immediately after the war.

The Sydney Hakoah club was not the only club based on the Viennese model; Hakoah clubs had also been established in Melbourne (1927), New York (circa 1928) and Tel Aviv (1938), with migrants from Austria playing a large role in the formation of each club. In Sydney the main focus of the Hakoah sporting club was initially football (soccer), with the Sydney Hakoah Football Club formed in February 1939. Social games were already being played at Rushcutters Bay by recent arrivals from Europe. Following the war a broader range of sports was introduced.

- I. Rosalind Fisher and Peter Morrison,
Hakoah Club Sydney, 1938-1994, p. 9

Initially the Sydney Hakoah Club did not have its own club rooms or sporting facilities, with the training held in a number of venues, most of which were in the Eastern Suburbs. Swimming was held at Redleaf Pool and tennis at Wellington Street, Bondi, a facility eventually purchased by the club in 1960. This club is currently the home of the Maccabi Tennis Club. Soccer was initially played at Queens Park. In 1947 cricket was introduced, as a means of keeping the soccer players fit between seasons. Table Tennis was also introduced, for both men and women, played at the NSW Table Tennis Academy. Sportsmen, and more occasionally sportswomen, began to compete in state and interstate competitions. Weekly social nights were also held, bridge and chess were keenly played and occasional special events such as end of season balls held.

PENKEVIL STREET CLUBROOMS

In May 1954 club rooms were opened in Penkevil Street, Bondi however social events continued to be held at other premises including card parties at the Regal Restaurant in Pitt Street and supper dances at the Maroubra Congregation Hall. Film nights and annual end of season balls were also held, at venues such as the Grace Brothers Broadway Auditorium. Not all of the events were staged in Sydney, Mountain Card parties were held on an annual basis in the Blue Mountains.

In 1960 discussions were held regarding the formation of a separate social club, to be run along similar lines to the numerous Rugby League clubs across NSW. Attempts by the Hakoah to purchase the Randwick Golf Clubhouse in 1962 fell through. In 1964 plans were submitted to Waverley Council for a club house containing an auditorium/games room, card room, members lounge and car parking in Bondi Road however the club was unable to obtain a liquor licence and the project did not proceed. The social club continued to arrange functions in different Sydney venues including the Chevron Hilton Hotel, Macleay Street, Potts Point, where the club's 25th Anniversary Ball was held. Plans in 1967 to lease clubrooms at Bondi Junction also did not proceed.



THE FORMER KINGS THEATRE

In 1968 a number of supporters of the Hakoah Club purchased premises in Roscoe Street, Bondi that contained the former Kings Theatre and six shops. These premises were leased back to the Hakoah club so that they could be used as a social club. In October 1969 the long term lease for the King Theatre was signed and an inspection was held in November, as part of the AGM. The leased premises, it was *hoped*, 'would provide the kind of atmosphere and surroundings to make it a favourite gathering place for the sports loving members of the Jewish Community'.²

The Kings Theatre was one of the series of Kings Theatres erected or remodelled by the architects Crick and Furse in suburban Sydney during the 1930s. The theatre at the eastern end of Roscoe Street had began life as a dance hall. Photographs of the exterior and the foyer show how Crick and Furse remodelled the building to give it the streamlined Art Deco character that distinguished the Kings cinema chain in Sydney. The Bondi Beach Kings Theatre operated as a cinema from 1937 until 1969. The complex operated briefly as a discoteque before being remodelled for the Hakoah Club in the early 1970s.

View of the Kings Theatre at Bondi Beach in its heyday
Waverley Council Local History webpages

2. Rosalind Fisher and Peter Morrison,
Hakoah Club Sydney, 1938-1994, p. 60



Foyer of the former Kings Theatre with a sign announcing that the new Hakoah Club would be opening soon.

Hakoah Club 1938-1994 p. 81

The newly elected Board of Directors, particularly the chairman Frank Lowy, were instrumental in the purchase of the site in Hall Street and were the driving force behind the erection of a purpose built club house as well as the modifications required to the former Kings Theatre which was to serve as the club house in the interim. The board of directors had donated the funds for the lease of the Roscoe Street clubhouse and had lent additional funds so that the premises could be renovated. The plans for the renovations were approved by Waverley Council in February 1970 and included a board room, club rooms, an auditorium and bar, a dining room, a sauna, a games room and a coffee and snack bar. The alterations to the Kings Theatre and the adjacent shops were designed by Zoltan Kosa and work was underway by July 1970. Although the works were complete by November 1970 it was not until January 1971 that the club obtained its liquor licence.



Club members playing cards in the former Kings Theatre.

Hakoah Club 1938-1994 p. 74

THE NEW HAKOAH CLUB IN HALL STREET

At the first AGM held in the completed club rooms the chairman noted that it was already evident that 'Hakoah needed to secure land to build larger premises to accommodate the growing number of members'.³ Plans for a more substantial club house were published in the Australian Jewish News on the 20th of April 1972. The club announced that it proposed to build a new 1 million dollar club house in Hall Street, Bondi where it had recently purchased land. By July the DA had been approved however the foundation stone was not laid until December of the following year.

3. Rosalind Fisher and Peter Morrison, Hakoah Club Sydney, 1938-1994, p 78



Architect Henry Kurzer and Project Manager Robert Sardy reviewing contract for construction of the new clubhouse with the builder.

Hakoah Club 1938-1994 p. 13

The new club was intended to contain sporting facilities on the upper level including a swimming pool, sauna, gymnasium and a basketball court. The basketball court was omitted in favour of a large function room.

The new premises at 61-67 Hall Street, Bondi were designed by Henry Kurzer, with a soft opening, including a gala dinner, held in October 1975. At the time of its opening the new premises was described as being '*a magnificent club, one of the finest in the world*'.⁴ The new clubrooms included a restaurant, a bistro, the short lived young members coffee lounge and a rooftop barbeque terrace, the club's five kitchens serving between 800 and 1,000 meals per day. Roof top terraces were once common feature in Sydney's beachfront hotels, including to Campbell parade, however few such facilities survive today. The club's restaurants specialised in continental style dishes and pastries.

Changes to the layout of the club were made to suit the members. A separate restaurant was established (Jaffas) with its own dance floor. Photographs of Jaffas restaurant taken in 1982 show the layout of the restaurant, the cut out motif to the ceiling and the numerous chandeliers. Additional rooms were added for TV viewing, reading and cards, replacing the coffee lounge which had not proved popular. The younger members preferred the main bistro.



This is the way architect Henry Kurzer saw the completed new clubhouse at 61-67 Hall Street, Bondi due to open in October 1975, with a gala opening celebration the following month.

Hakoah Club 1938-1994 p. 87



Going up, the clubhouse in Hall Street nearing completion.

Hakoah Club 1938-1994 p. 14

4. Rosalind Fisher and Peter Morrison, Hakoah Club Sydney, 1938-1994, p. 90



This was the glamorous Jaffas restaurant back in 1982 where members and guests dined in elegance on excellent Continental cuisine.

Hakoah Club 1938-1994 p. 111

The club also began to cater for functions, particularly weddings, engagements and barmitzvahs. A separate entrance was created to the function room, allowing kosher functions to be separate from the gambling areas (i.e. the poker machines).

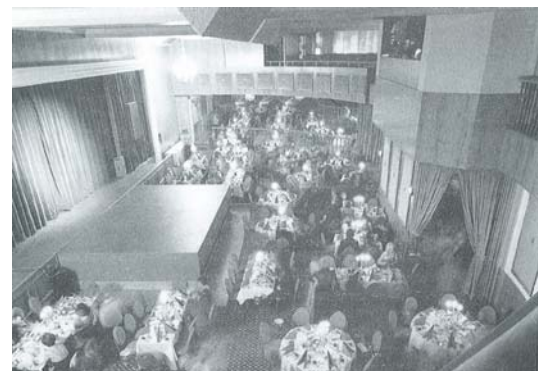
In 1976 the name was changed to reflect that the club was now recognised as 'the social club of the community, not just a soccer club'. Although it operated as a social club the Hakoah club was one of the targets of an anti-semitic bombing campaign carried out in December 1982. A bomb planted in a car left in the carpark exploded however there was little damage to the club and no injuries to patrons. The Israeli Consulate had been bombed a few hours earlier. The social club remained popular however the soccer club was in decline, eventually being disbanded in the mid 1980s. The last match was played in March 1987.

A substantial remodelling of the club occurred in the mid 1990s, including the addition of a new mezzanine within the auditorium and the creation of the King David function room. The card room was relocated and new administration facilities created. Upgrading of the sports facilities was also proposed. Original features such as the roof top barbeque were infilled to create additional space. In 2007 the Hakoah Club was sold to the Toga Group who intend to redevelop the property as retail (at ground level) with apartments above.



Long gone is the original barbecue terrace at the back of the Hall Street clubhouse. The building was extended many years ago, again providing additional and valuable interior space and facilities.

Hakoah Club 1938-1994 p. 112



In the early days of the new clubhouse in Hall street, the theatre-style auditorium featured international-style live entertainment along with dining and wining [sic].

Hakoah Club 1938-1994 p. 111



3.0 HERITAGE STATUS:

The Hakoah Club in Hall Street, Bondi, which dates from the mid 1970s, is not considered to be a heritage item and does not appear in statutory heritage listings at a local, state or national level. There are no heritage items in the immediate vicinity.

State Heritage Inventory and Register:

The Hakoah Club is not listed on the State Heritage Register (SHR). Two buildings in Hall Street are listed in the State Heritage Inventory (SHI) by virtue of their having been listed in the LEP Heritage Schedules (Schedule 5) namely:

The Post Office, 18 Hall Street (shown on the heritage map as 20 Hall Street)

The Commonwealth Bank, 31-33 Hall Street,
circa 1938

RAIA Twentieth Century Heritage Register:

The Hakoah Club is not listed in the RAIA. The listings for Hall Street are:

The ANZ Bank, Hall Street Bondi 1967,
Joseland and Gilling,

The Commonwealth Bank, 31-33 Hall Street, 1940,
architect not listed

4.0 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

A number of early to mid 1970s buildings have been listed by the RAI A on their Twentieth Century list, the majority of which are private houses including:

- the Feinberg House II by Bruce Rickard,
- two houses by Glen Murcutt (Marie Short Farmhouse and the Hetherington House),
- the Honner House by Philip Cox (Cox, Richardson and Taylor)
- Sutor residence by Brian Sutor
- Gazzard Residence by Don Gazzard.

Two community and sporting facilities are listed:

- The Gosford Shire Library by Alan Williams (1973),
- The Sydney University Sports Union Lodge
(architect not listed)

These buildings have been listed primarily for their architectural merit and are generally the work of NSW's most well known architects.

The Hakoah club has occupied a number of premises since its inception and it is the continuity of the organisation, and its growth and change to meet member needs that is of a far higher degree of significance than the current premises (which are not considered to be of architectural merit). The former Kings Theatre had a far higher degree of aesthetic significance, and like the Hakoah Club was significant in the Bondi area as a well known social venue.

The Hakoah Club's role in the development of sport amongst the Jewish community is also of significance however this significance is attached to the organisation generally rather than the Hall Street premises.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS:

Interpret the following themes related to the historical development of the Hakoah Club:

- the origins of the club, including the European origins of Hakoah sporting clubs
- the formation of the original club in Vienna and its forced closure.
- the relationship between the social club and the soccer team,
- the former club premises including use of the former Kings Theatre.
- the design and use of the Hall Street premises .

The club's own publication contains a number of images of the previous club rooms and additional photographs of the former Kings Theatre are held in the Waverley Library. This material could be used in interpretation

The Hakoah club has a number of long standing members whose memories of the club could be recorded using oral history techniques and could supplement the published history.

Additional documentary material such as plans and photographs is likely to survive regarding the past use of the Kings Theatre as a dance hall, cinema and social club,