

Mr Jonathan Kerr  
Senior Planning Officer, Infrastructure Assessment  
Department of Planning and Environment

By email: [jonathan.kerr@planning.nsw.gov.au](mailto:jonathan.kerr@planning.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Mr Kerr

**Comment on M7 Motorway (Mod 6 Widening) modification, Western Sydney Orbital (SSI-663-Mod-6)**

Thank you for your referral dated 3 August 2022 inviting comments from the Heritage Council of NSW on the above State Significant Infrastructure (SSI) proposal. It is noted that the M7 Motorway Modification Report is on public exhibition from 3 to 23 August 2022.

The proposed development modification includes:

- widening of the existing Westlink M7 median between the Kurrajong Road bridge at Prestons (south) to Richmond Road in Oakhurst/Glendenning (north), excluding the M4 Motorway/Westlink M7 Motorway Light Horse interchange
- widening of some existing Westlink M7 bridges into the median
- relocation, upgrade and establishment of drainage infrastructure
- upgrades and modifications to noise wall infrastructure
- temporary ancillary facilities.

The proposed SSI affects the State Heritage Register (SHR) item Upper Canal System (Pheasants Nest Weir to Prospect Reservoir) (SHR 01373), which is a subsurface structure running underneath the development footprint. The Upper Canal System is significant as a major component of the Upper Nepean Scheme, which has functioned as part of Sydney's main water supply system since 1888. The SHR item Blacktown Native Institution (SHR 01866) is located adjacent to the proposed development. Within the vicinity are SHR items Government Depot Site (former) (SHR 00345) and The Rooty Hill (SHR 01756).

The following reports were considered in our assessment:

- *Non-Aboriginal Heritage Impact Assessment: Technical Report* (AECOM, July 2022)
- *Westlink M7 Widening Modification Report* (TfNSW, August 2022).

As delegate of the Heritage Council of NSW, the following comments on the modification reports:

- The implementation of a robust Unexpected Finds Procedure(s) is supported.
- The heritage assessment methodology supporting the proposal is considered suitable (*Technical Report*, section 3.2).
- There is the potential for indirect vibrational impacts to the Upper Canal System during construction works. The recommended mitigation measure of vibration modelling and determining site specific minimum working distances is supported.

- It is unlikely that there will be direct or indirect impacts to the Upper Canal System, including the No. 4 Shaft. The Cecil Hills tunnel section of the SHR item is at least 30m below the existing motorway and the proposal would involve excavations of c. 1m depth. Underneath the modern above-ground access point of the No. 4 Shaft is c. 1.5m of ballast fill, laid above the original timber and brick air shaft (*Technical Report*, section 5.1). The fill is assessed as non-significant and it is concluded that the fabric of the No. 4 Shaft would not be impacted by the proposed works (i.e. *Technical Report*, pgs. 51, 56). However, it is noted that the ballast fill is supported by “timber beams that have been present since its 1888 construction” (*Technical Report*, pg. 49). It therefore appears that these timbers may constitute original and potentially significant fabric of the SHR item. If this is the case, the assessment that “weathering of these beams may eventually result in their deterioration” would not diminish the significance of the timbers (*Technical Report*, pg. 49; SMEC Australia Pty Ltd, 2019, pg. 9). This matter is addressed by the recommended SEARS below.

It is recommended that the following SEARS is included for the modification:

#### Heritage and archaeology

- a) An addendum Statement of Heritage Impact (SOHI) for the Upper Canal System (SHR 01373) should be prepared by a suitably qualified heritage consultant in accordance with the guidelines in the NSW Heritage Manual. The addendum SOHI should include:
  - revised heritage significance assessment, including the significance of the timber beams associated with the ballast fill and No. 4 Shaft, considered within the context of the SHR item
  - revised assessment of the impacts of the proposal on the SHR item, including consideration of the timber beams as (potential) *in situ* elements
  - revised discussion of the attempts to avoid and/or mitigate the impact on the heritage significance or cultural heritage values of the SHR item
  - revised discussion for any changes to the heritage fabric including any options analysis, including consideration of the timber beams
  - compliance with the relevant Conservation Management Plan(s).

As the proposed SSI is in the vicinity of items listed on the Blacktown LEP 2015, advice should be sought from the relevant local council.

If you have any questions regarding the above comment for SSI-663-Mod-6, please contact Dr Hana Lewis, Senior Assessments Officer, Major Projects at Heritage NSW on 9585 6323 or [Hana.Lewis@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Hana.Lewis@environment.nsw.gov.au).

Yours sincerely

*Rochelle Johnston*

Rochelle Johnston  
 Senior Manager – Major Projects  
 Heritage NSW  
 Department of Planning & Environment  
**As Delegate of the Heritage Council of NSW**  
 19/08/2022