

20 November 2020

Department of Planning,
Industry and Environment
12 Darcy Street
Parramatta, 2150

To whom it may concern,

TRINITY GRAMMAR SCHOOL HCA, 46-52 SEAVIEW STREET, ASHFIELD

BACKGROUND

Urbis has been engaged to provide the following letter regarding several properties located within the draft Trinity Grammar School Estate Heritage Conservation Area. This information is provided to support State Significant Development (SSD) Application (SSD-10371).

The conservation area comprises the properties Nos 28 to 54 on the south side of Seaview Street between Victoria Street and Prospect Road (some of which have now been demolished), as well as the properties adjoining them on the west at Nos 140-142 Victoria Street and on the east at Nos 109-117 Prospect Road. These are located to the north of the Trinity Grammar School and opposite the Victoria Square Conservation Area.

It must be noted that this draft Heritage Conservation Area is the result of a Heritage Study undertaken in 1993. The inventory sheet is not dated, and it is not clear what currently accepted methods of heritage assessment have been adopted to prepare the sheet.

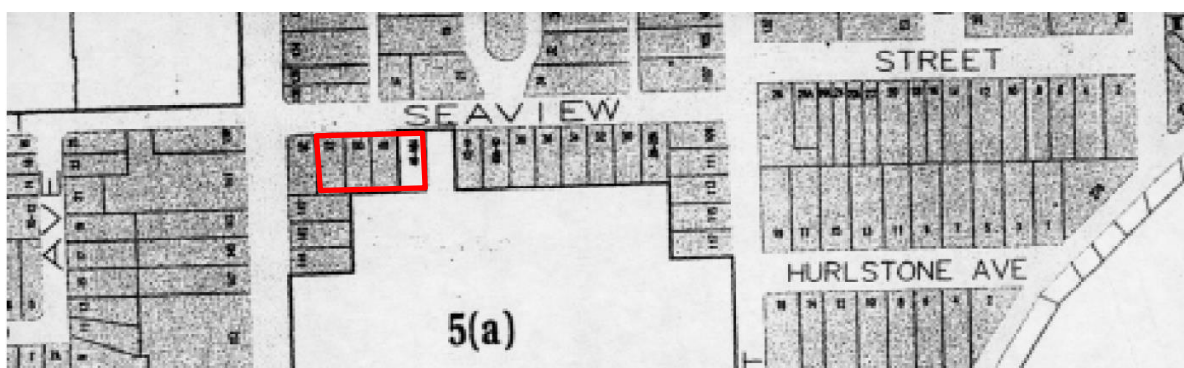


Figure 1 – Detail of the Ashfield planning scheme map showing the extent of the Conservation Area, subject properties indicated in red (146-52 Seaview Street, Ashfield).

Source: Inner West Council

Several properties within the above boundaries (outlined in Figure 1) are proposed for demolition as part of a State Significant Development (SSD) Application (SSD-10371), seeking consent for redevelopment of new teaching and educational facilities associated with Trinity Grammar School (south of the subject HCA). The lots are proposed to be brought back into consolidation with the school. The following letter addresses the potential heritage significance of the following properties which have been considered for their intactness, architectural style, and overall contribution to the existing streetscape character.

- 46 & 46A Seaview Street, Ashfield
- 48 Seaview Street, Ashfield
- 50 Seaview Street, Ashfield and;
- 52 Seaview Street, Ashfield.

The above properties have been previously assessed by Inner West Council assessed using a methodology adopted from the 1993 Ashfield Heritage Study, detailed in succeeding sections of this letter. The methodology ranks according intactness as an indicator of significance relative to the character of the area as a whole.

AREA DESCRIPTION

The following excerpt has been reproduced from the data sheet for Trinity Grammar School Estate Heritage Conservation Area, prepared by Inner West Council. The data sheet is undated.

This linear precinct of dwellings is framed between the northern gateway of Trinity Grammar in Prospect Road at one end, and by the School property in Victoria Road at the other end. Most of the properties address Seaview Street between these framing elements. Those at the two street intersections have boundaries chamfered at the corners to provide angled entrance gates.

The architecture of the area is unpretentious, pleasantly varied, and modest in scale. Most of the buildings contribute to the homogeneous character of the place by virtue of these qualities and the materials, textures and colours constituting them. Some later additions, as noted in the ranking schedule, are unworthy of this character.

Behind these residences, forming a kind of backdrop, there are school buildings, mostly taller and bulkier than the houses. Their greater mass is modified by their comparative uniformity and by the screening effect of the street trees. The westernmost school building is the Delmar Gallery structure, which is built with its lower floor level below street level, and is thereby in accordance with the streetscape scale, as compared for instance with the more dominant upper-storey enlargement at the rear of No 54 Seaview Street.

The Gallery and Society of the Arts building is a most interesting component of this conservation area. Its eclectic architectural style and detailing make a contrast with the residences, but the building suits the street scene because of its scale, the use of traditional forms and materials, and the predominance of solid over void. Its location also marks the end of the conservation area by offering a transition to the open space of the schoolground.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The following excerpt has been reproduced from the data sheet for Trinity Grammar School Estate Heritage Conservation Area, prepared by Inner West Council.

46 & 46A Seaview Street

46 and 46A Seaview Street have apparently always been owned as a pair. The first owner of the vacant land was Charles Inman, builder, of Hanks Street. It was still unimproved in 1934 and valued at £270. In 1943 the building was described as 'a pair of bungalow flats', owned by Mrs Elizabeth Bailey, of Bartlett Street. Their improved valuation was then £1,750. Trinity bought them for £6,500 from the estate of the late Elizabeth Bailey in 1962.

48 Seaview Street

48 Seaview Street was vacant allotment in 1934, owned by William Toothill, accountant, of Sydney. Its valuation was then £270. By 1943 there was a house and garage on the site, owned and occupied by Mr James Page, traveller, and Mrs Gweneth Page. Its improved valuation was £1,600. In 1987 the owner was recorded as Turner Shoes Pty Ltd (possibly as mortgagor). In 1993 the property was bought by Mr J L Page. The school purchased the property in July 2002.

50 Seaview Street

50 Seaview Street was a vacant site valued at £270 in 1934, and was owned by Francis Mitchell, teacher, of Ashbury. By 1943 there was a house there, owned but not occupied by Leonard Cain, confectioner, of Camperdown. Its improved valuation was then £2,000. In 1987 the property was owned by Mr P and Mrs S Caruna. The school purchased the property in November 2019.

52 Seaview Street

In 1943, this site was unimproved, owned by William Kinsbury, builder, of Croydon and valued at £270. In the same year a two-storeyed house and a garage were built. They were owned and occupied by Norman Wilson, company manager. The improved valuation was then £2,450. Trinity purchased the property from Mrs D R Wilson in 1983.

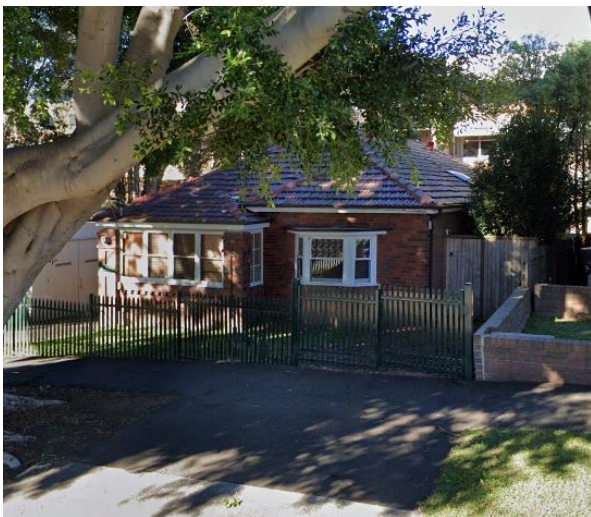


Figure 2 – 46 and 46A Seaview Street.



Figure 3 – 48 Seaview Street.



Figure 4 – 50 Seaview Street.



Figure 5 – 52 Seaview Street.

CHARACTER STATEMENT

The following character statement was formulated by Inner West Council.

The overall character of the area derives in the first instance from its history as an Inter-War subdivision, whereby all the houses were built within a short time-span, resulting in a pleasingly limited palette of traditional styles, scale, materials, textures, and colours. This character prevails despite modifications some of which are inappropriate.

With one exception the allotments hold single houses or semi-detached pairs, separated from the street and from each other by open space. The exception is the lot about halfway along Seaview Street, which has become the broad entrance to the School of Science, an attractive access as well as a punctuation mark in the streetscape offering a view of the larger School building within. Most houses

are single-storeyed, but the two-storeyed buildings are saved from the appearance of being over-scaled by the presence of the street trees and their expansive canopies.

Prospect Road slopes gently upwards from Seaview Street past the School gateway. Seaview Street is almost level from Prospect Road along to Victoria Square, from where it rises noticeably until it reaches Victoria Street. The Victoria Street sites are set well below street level. These undulations and differences add visual interest to the area.

The south side of Seaview Street, containing most of the houses, has a wide nature strip marked by a magnificent line of very large, mature *Ficus Hillii* trees. This contrasts with the narrow footpath on the north side of the street and gives the conservation area a distinctive sense of separation and containment as well as providing foliage screening. As most of the properties have off-street parking, there is comparative freedom from street-parked vehicles.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The following statement of significance was formulated by Inner West Council.

This is one of many subdivisions which together demonstrate the evolution and variety of suburban residential development in Ashfield. It has a distinctive and unusual history relating to that of Trinity Grammar School. Its architectural character reflects the comparatively short period in which its buildings were erected. The streetscape significance of the conservation area is high by virtue of the scale, traditional forms, harmonious materials and pleasingly limited palette of architectural styles displayed by the buildings, and the presence of an impressive row of street trees.

METHODOLOGY

Inner West Council has identified the subject buildings as having potential contribution to the proposed Trinity Grammar School Estate Heritage Conservation Area in accordance with the following methodology adapted from the 1993 Ashfield Heritage Study. As shown in Table 1 below, the ranking figures measure intactness as an indicator of significance relative to the character of the area as a whole. Table 2 outlines the subject properties, their identified styles and ranking.

Table 1 – Definitions of rankings

*	A building already included as an item of the heritage of Ashfield
**	A building now recommended for listing as an individual item of the heritage of Ashfield.
1	A building with a high degree of intactness which contributes importantly to the character of the area in the terms given in the definition of a Conservation Area.
2	A building which contributes to the character of the area but whose significance has been reduced by the loss of original material or detail, unsympathetic additions, or inappropriate decorative treatment. An item so ranked is considered to possess the potential to achieve a higher ranking.

3	A building whose impact on the heritage character of the area is neutral.
4	A building which has an adverse impact upon the character of the area because of its scale, design, assertiveness, materials, or the like, or because its original qualities have been mutilated or removed.

Source: Trinity Grammar School Estate Conservation Area data sheet, via Inner West Council

Table 2 – Schedule of significance

Property	Architectural Style	Ranking	Comments	Urbis Assessment
46 & 46A Seaview Street	Arts and Crafts/California Bungalow, modified	2	Two occupancies in the one building(?) Carport: 4	3
48	International	1	Two-storeyed house	3
50	California Bungalow/Art Deco, modified	2	'Hilltop' Carport in front: 4	3
52	International	3	Substantial two-storeyed house	3

Source: Trinity Grammar School Estate Conservation Area data sheet, via Inner West Council with Urbis additional column

DISCUSSION OF SIGNIFICANCE

The properties located at 46-52 Seaview Street, Ashfield are considered pedestrian examples of their identified styles and make little contribution to the existing streetscape character of Seaview Street. Though the existing subdivision pattern possesses some relationship to the school and is associated with evolution and variety of suburban residential development in Ashfield, the dwellings hold little significance as items of a potential Heritage Conservation Area.

In the schedule above Council has attributed different levels of contributory value of the properties to the conservation area. The schedule suggests that three of the four properties have significance or contributory value. The residential subdivisions of school sites to raise money is not a rare occurrence in Sydney. Further the subdivision does not have significance warranting retention of dwellings which were constructed a substantial period after the subdivision. In this instance, it must be noted that all four dwellings were constructed at least 20 years after the 1912 subdivision. The dwellings are

therefore not representative of the period in the school's development where it required additional funds and are therefore not significant from a historic perspective.

Council suggested that the subdivision pattern may be significant for its relationship with the school's raising of funds to offset debt. While the subdivision does represent a minor phase in the school's development it can be more appropriately considered that the amalgamation of the lots back within the school as originally intended is a more faithful treatment of these lots. Further, construction of new school fabric as proposed in place of the existing dwellings of no aesthetic significance (discussed below) would architecturally unify the site again as originally intended.

The Heritage Study presents a confused description of the character of each of the dwellings within the site. This is understandable as all dwellings are of such low design quality that they are not clearly representative of any particular style. It is considered that they are all most accurately described as basic mid century dwellings.

46 & 46A

46 & 46A Seaview Street, Ashfield were constructed in 1943 originally as a pair of bungalow flats. The original bungalow form has been modified such that the verandah has been filled in with timber framed windows. Though much of the original brickwork, setbacks and architectural forms remain unchanged the dwelling is a highly restrained expression of the style. It does not employ rare or technically innovative construction methods and showcases simple, modest features of its typology. The dwelling bares no historical or associative significance other than its relationship to existing subdivision patterns.

Trinity Grammar School purchased the dwelling in 1962. Though the dwelling is representative of the Bungalow typology, it lacks commitment to the style. It does not contain noteworthy features of the Bungalow typology and is considered a mundane, lacklustre expression of its form. The data sheet pertaining to the Trinity Grammar School Estate Heritage Conservation Area identifies the dwelling as a modified "Arts and Crafts/California Bungalow" with a ranking of 2. The site does not contain features typical of a California Bungalow and certainly not the style of Arts and Crafts.

At best, the dwelling reflects baseline features of the Bungalow typology and is limited in any worthwhile contribution to the existing streetscape character. It is considered that the item is within the curtilage of the subject heritage item by virtue of its being owned by the school (and therefore part of the same lot) rather than it being of significance.

It is noted that the property is included in item 608, Trinity Grammar School. The dwelling has no historical or aesthetic relationship to any of the buildings comprised within the school. There is further no mention of the dwelling on the State Heritage Inventory sheet for the item. It is considered that the property is listed by virtue of its inclusion within the ownership of the school rather than its heritage significance.

48

48 Seaview Street, Ashfield was constructed sometime after 1934, before 1943. The two-storey dwelling is identified as Post War International Style. Though the dwelling does reflect some characteristics typical of the style such as prismatic forms and a horizontal panel of contrasting brickwork, it is so highly restrained in its expression that attributing it to Post War International Style is an unduly generous descriptor. It is rather assessed to be a pedestrian, residential dwelling with remnant features of the 1940s such as the iron balustrade on the ground floor, stepped brick fence, and the aforementioned brickwork of the principal façade.

The dwelling has been awarded a ranking of 1. This is assessed to be a liberal ranking which speaks to the context of Seaview Street as 'pleasantly varied' rather than the merit of the individual building. The dwelling has no justifiable significance in terms of historical merit; it remains a simple, two-storey brick dwelling of the 1940s with limited ability to contribute to a draft heritage conservation area.

50

50 Seaview Street was constructed by 1943 and is identified as a modified "California Bungalow/Art Deco" dwelling by council. The Bungalow form has been modified such that the verandah has been filled in, and an awning constructed over the bay window. Victorian filigree detailing has been added to principal façade as well as a non-original balustrade and light fixtures. Overall, the dwelling has retained a discernible Bungalow profile including setbacks and chimney. The dwelling does not possess innovative or noteworthy features of its typology. The Bungalow is a pedestrian example of the style; its contribution to any streetscape is vested in baseline features such as a pitched roof, asymmetrical massing, and a heavy brick base. The building is modest and simple in design and is limited in its capacity to contribute to any meaningful, streetscape character.

52

52 Seaview Street was constructed in 1943 and is identified as Post War International style by Council. The two-storey dwelling is a pedestrian example of the style, featuring some brick detailing across the principal façade with large upper and lower windows. The overall form does showcase a general prismatic quality; however this is not exclusive of the International Style. Most of the windows have been replaced, and now feature aluminium frames or sliding screen doors. The brick pier fence separating the dwelling from Seaview Street remains intact, however is a very simple continuation of the other Post War brick fences along the street.

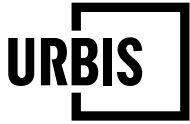
The overall profile of the building remains intact, however, does not demonstrate the characteristics of its type well. It is limited in its ability to contribute to any meaningful streetscape character that may exist along Seaview Street. It is not clear on what basis it has been attributed the International Style. It cannot be considered for any contribution beyond baseline features (pitched roof, asymmetrical massing etc). Like the other dwellings addressed in this report, the site bares no historical significance and little architectural or aesthetic merit.

CONCLUSION

The four sites addressed in this report have been identified by Inner West Council as potential contributory items of the draft Trinity Grammar School Estate Heritage Conservation Area. It is noted that the heritage study undertaken, while undated, appears to have been prepared a substantial period of time ago and there is no evidence that it has been prepared with reference to the current NSW Heritage Manual.

It is not clear why the Conservation Area was never formally gazetted however following the above assessment it can be surmised that it is because at least some of the buildings within it (the buildings addressed in this report) are pedestrian, substantially altered items with little aesthetic relationship to one another. It is unclear why Council require that the applicant refer to impact on a draft conservation area which was never pursued. It is understood that the demolition of a number of properties (32-44 Seaview Street) subject to this draft conservation area were demolished following a decision of the Land and Environmental Court in favour of Trinity Grammar School.

The statement of significance, formulated by Inner West Council, cites "scale, traditional forms, harmonious materials and a pleasingly limited palette of architectural styles" as key drivers of the aforementioned HCA. The above attributes cannot be considered markers of any meaningful



streetscape character. It is not considered that the inventory sheet demonstrates that any of the buildings within the subject area are worthy of retention.

All dwellings (46-52 Seaview Street) are of such low design quality that they are not clearly representative of any particular style. It is considered that they are all most accurately described as basic mid-century dwellings and none have any heritage significance. These are not in Urbis' opinion worthy of retention. It is considered that the amalgamation of the lots back into the school, architecturally represented through the proposed SSDA works would be appropriate and would partly reinstate the original boundaries of the school.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require anything further.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alexandria".

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