

16 October 2025

J6329\_04

**Attention: General Manager**

Wollongong City Council  
Wollongong DC NSW 2500

**Re:** Heritage Response to Request for Information from Department Planning, Housing and Infrastructure to the SSDA – 73910208.

**Nos 6-8 Popes Road, Woonona, New South Wales, Former Woonona Uniting Church.**

This Statement of Heritage Impact (SoHI) has been prepared to accompany a request for Information (RFI) for the State Significant Development Application (SSDA), SSD-73910208 for alterations and additions to the site at Nos 6-8 Popes Road, Woonona, New South Wales.

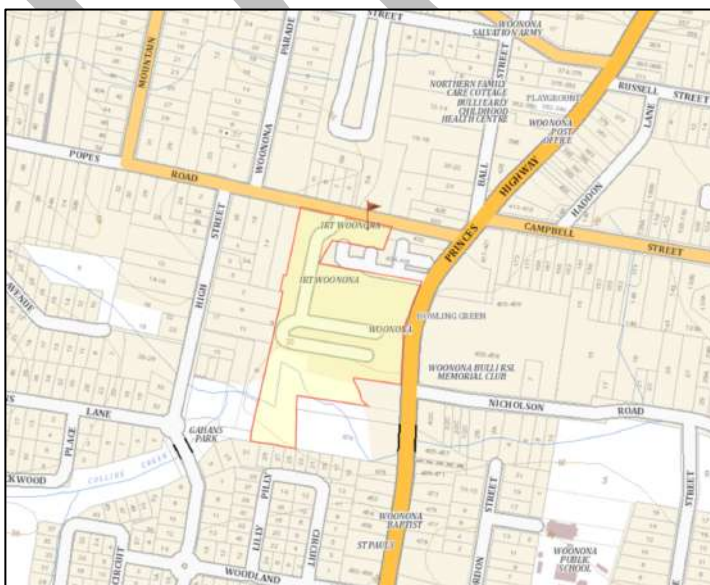
Wollongong City Council issued an RFI (Ref:DE-2025/70) provided by the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) dated 25/08/2025.

There is an existing approval for the site under DA-2023/808: *Staged demolition – Aged Care Facility – demolition of existing buildings (excluding Flametree Residential Aged Care Facility, Camelia Lodge and the Church), including some hardstand demolition and tree removal*. This DA is designed to integrate with the original approval as they are pre-construction minor works.

The site is located within the Wollongong City Council. The principal environmental planning instrument for the site is the *Wollongong Local Environmental Plan 2009 (LEP 2009)*. The site contains a heritage item (“Former Woonona Uniting Church”) and lies within the vicinity of other heritage items listed by Schedule 5 Part 1 of the *LEP 2009*.

## Site Location

Nos 6-8 Popes Road, Woonona, is located on the south side of Popes Road and the west side of Princes Highway. The site is identified as Lot 71, Deposited Plan 1160947. Refer to Figure 1.



**Figure 1: Nos 6-8 Popes Road. The site is outlined in red.**  
SIX Maps 2024

## The Site

Figure 2, an aerial photograph over the site, annotates the existing structures (1-6) on the site. This RFI principally responds to proposed works to building 1. 'Blue Gum Sanctuary' (Heritage Item – 'Former Woonona Uniting Church'). This is a c. 1909 former church. No works are proposed to it.



**Figure 2: Aerial photograph over the site (outlined in red and shaded yellow).**  
SIX Maps 2024; overlay by WPH&P

The site is an irregular allotment containing several buildings of varying age, described separately below, and with frontage to Popes Road (north) and Princes Highway (east). The site is bound to the east by a metal palisade fence; there is a remnant sandstone fence with pillars in front of part of the fence. The site is primarily accessed via an asphalt paved driveway on Popes Road which travels south to a parking area on the southeast side of the site. Landscaping comprises lawn with established trees, particularly on the northeast and south sides of the site, as well as brick paved paths. There are several metal sheds and cargo containers throughout the site.

The site contains multiple elements as follows:

1. **'Blue Gum Sanctuary' (Heritage Item – 'Former Woonona Uniting Church').** This is a c. 1909 former church. No works are proposed to it.
2. **'Flametree Residential Aged Care Facility'.** This is a c. 2005 building that lies within the curtilage of the heritage item. Minor internal works are proposed.

# Weir Phillips Heritage and Planning

3. **'Former Shop and Dwelling'**. This is an Inter-War period building. It is approved for removal under DA-2023/808.
4. **'Ribbonwood Residential Aged Care Facility'**. This is a c. 1980s building. It is approved for removal under DA-2023/808.
5. **'Camelia Lodge'**. This is a c. 1990s building. No works are proposed to it.
6. **'Blueberry Ash Apartments'**. This is a c. 1980s building. It is approved for removal under DA-2023/808.

Refer to Figures 3 to 7 which illustrate the former Woonona Uniting Church.

## **'Building 1: Blue Gum Sanctuary' (Heritage Item - 'Former Woonona Uniting Church').**

External photos of the former Church.



**Figure 3: Photo of existing former Church setting** looking southwest from the Princes Highway. WPH.



**Figure 4: Photo of existing former Church setting** looking south

# Weir Phillips Heritage and Planning

from the Princes Highway. WPH.



**Figure 5: Photo of existing former Church setting** looking west from the Princes Highway. WPH.



**Figure 6: Photo of existing former Church south** looking northeast WPH.

# Weir Phillips Heritage and Planning



**Figure 7: Photo of existing former Church south elevation looking north.**



**Figure 8: Photo of existing former Church west elevation looking northeast**



**Figure 9: Photo of existing former Church west and south elevations.**

# Weir Phillips Heritage and Planning



Figure 10: Photo of existing former Church west and south elevations.



Figure 11: Photo of existing former Church south elevations.

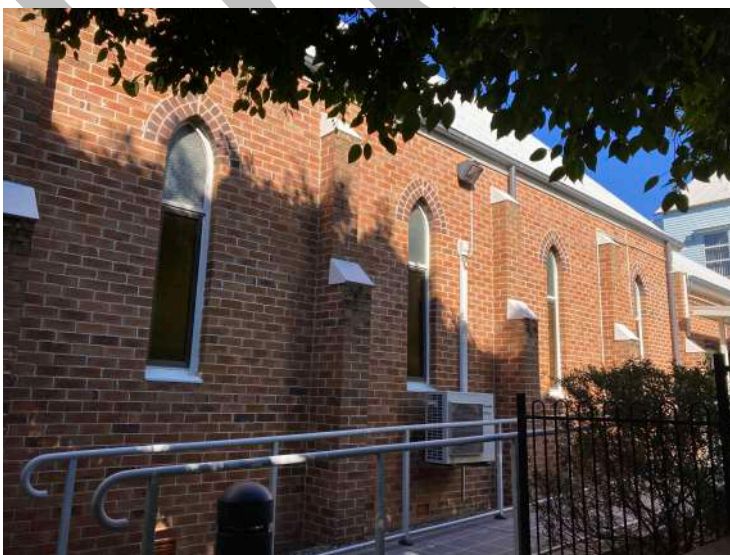


Figure 12: Photo of existing former Church north elevation. WPH.

# Weir Phillips Heritage and Planning



Figure 13: Photo of existing former Church north elevation. WPH.



Figure 14: Photo of existing former Church north elevation. WPH.



Figure 14: Photo of existing former Church contemporary door to be removed and infilled with like brickwork, recessed slightly back from the door opening. WPH.

# Weir Phillips Heritage and Planning

## Internal Photos of the former Church



**Figure 15:** Photo of existing former Church Principal Hall, looking east to front of building.



**Figure 16:** Photo of existing former Church Principal Hall, looking west toward the secondary hall of the building.

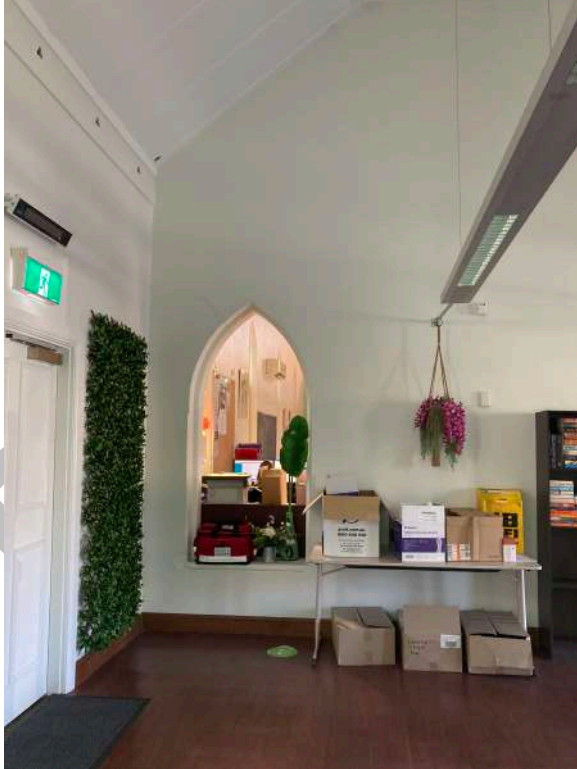


# Weir Phillips Heritage and Planning

**Figure 17:** Photo of existing former Church Principal Hall, looking south.



**Figure 18:** Photo of existing former Church Secondary Hall, looking north.



**Figure 19:** Photo of existing former Church Secondary Hall, looking west to rear.

# Weir Phillips Heritage and Planning



**Figure 20:** Photo of existing former Church Secondary Hall, looking west to rear.



**Figure 21:** Photo of existing former Church Secondary Hall.



**Figure 22:** Photo of existing former Church Secondary Hall.



**Figure 23:** Photo of existing former Church Secondary Hall.

## **Brief Historical Outline**

The site originally formed part of the grounds of the 'Woonona Methodist Church', which was constructed c. 1909. Later additions included a school hall (1923), church hall (1930) and a timber manse (1963). These structures can be seen below in a c. 1965 aerial photograph in Figure 24.



**Figure 24 1965 aerial photograph over Woonona. The heritage overlay boundaries are outlined in red.**

NSW Historical Imagery

When the site was gazetted as a local heritage item, it was given a lot boundary curtilage defined as the original boundaries, as outlined in red. This curtilage was retained when the site was purchased by the Illawarra Retirement Trust in 1999 and the lots consolidated. Sometime after 2005, both manse and school hall were demolished and the existing 'Flametree Residential Aged Care Facility' building constructed within the heritage curtilage.

## **Significance**

For the following, refer to Figure 25, an aerial photograph showing the heritage overlay for the site.



**Figure 25: Aerial photograph over the site. The site is outlined in green. The heritage overlay is outlined in red and shaded brown.**

Mecone Mosaic, 2024

As indicated by Figure 9, the curtilage includes the former church, as well as part of the 'Flametree Residential Aged Care Facility', which lies within the footprint of the manse and school hall that were demolished c. 2005. The other structures on the site do not form part of the heritage item.

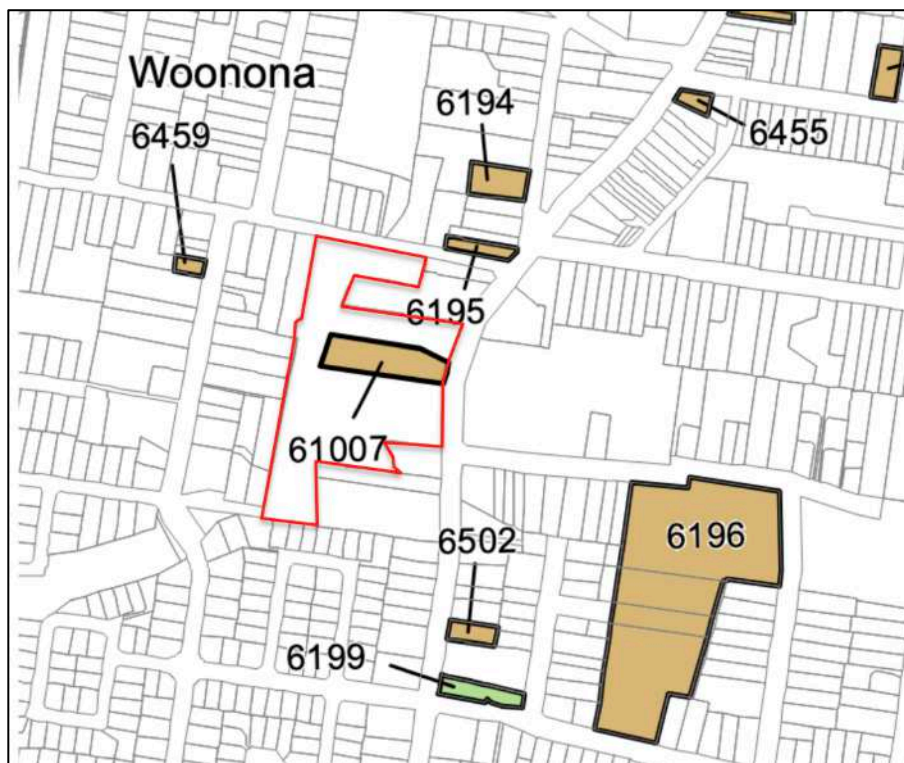
The State Heritage Inventory provides the following Statement of Significance for the 'Former Woonona Uniting Church':

*Woonona Uniting Church is of significance for the local area for historical and aesthetic reasons, for social significance that it has for its congregation, and as representative of Interwar period church buildings. The building is an important element in the streetscape of Woonona providing a visual link in the historical development pattern of the village. It is demonstrative of the evolving history of the Methodist/Uniting Church congregation. Being the third building of the congregation (the earlier two have been lost) it indicates the growth and development of the congregation. As an active place of public worship, this location continues to be a substantial part of village life in Woonona over the last 90 years. The building makes an important contribution to the streetscape and the site presents a local landmark.*

This Statement is adopted for the purposes of this assessment.

## Heritage Items Within the Vicinity

Refer to Figure 26, a map showing heritage items in the vicinity of the site. In this map, heritage items are coloured brown and numbered. The subject site is outlined in red, while the heritage item on it is coloured brown and numbered '61007'.



**Figure 26: Map showing heritage items in relation to the site. The site is outlined in red while the heritage item on it is coloured brown and numbered '61007'.**

*Wollongong LEP 2009; overlay by WPH&P*



There are two heritage items listed by Schedule 5 Part 1 of the *Wollongong LEP 2009* in the vicinity of the site. These are as follows:

**Table 1: List of heritage items.**

Item	Description
'Woonona Industrial Co-Operative Society', Nos. 20-22 Ball Street, Woonona  Listed on the <i>Wollongong LEP 2009</i> , Item No. 6194. <sup>1</sup>	This item is located to the north of the site and is separated from it by a distance of at least 75m. The setting of the item includes single-storey 20 <sup>th</sup> century period buildings and two and three-storey infill.  The principal view corridor towards the item is from directly outside on Ball Street.  There are no existing views at ground level between the item and the subject site.

<sup>1</sup> 'Woonona Industrial Co-Operate Society', Heritage NSW State Heritage Inventory ID No. 2700057.

# Weir Phillips Heritage and Planning

	
<p>'Woonona post office', No. 430 Princes Highway, Woonona Listed on the <i>Wollongong LEP 2009</i>, Item No. 6195.<sup>2</sup></p>	<p>This item is located to the north of the site and is separated from it by a distance of at least 20m. The setting of the item includes single-storey 20<sup>th</sup> century period buildings and two and three-storey infill. The principal view corridor towards the item is from directly outside on either Princes Highway or Popes Road. There are existing limited views at ground level between the item and the subject site.</p>
	

## View Corridors

The principal view corridor towards the item is from directly outside on Princes Highway, where the front elevation to both the 'Blue Gum Sanctuary' and 'Flametree RACF' can be seen. Both buildings can also generally be seen on approach from the north, except where obscured by vegetation and contemporary buildings. Views from the south are limited due to intervening buildings. Refer to Figures 27 and 28 which illustrate view corridors towards the area of the proposed works.



**Figure27: Looking towards the area of the proposed works from the north on Princes Highway.**  
Google Maps

<sup>2</sup> 'Woonona Post Office (Former)', Heritage NSW State Heritage Inventory ID No. 2700528.



**Figure 28: Looking towards the area of the proposed works from the south on Princes Highway.**

Google Maps

### **Scope of Works to the Former Woonona Uniting Church**

The following should be read in conjunction with the plans prepared by Breathe that accompanies this response to the DPHI.

It is proposed to:

Internal modifications to the former Church for change of use to a restaurant including:

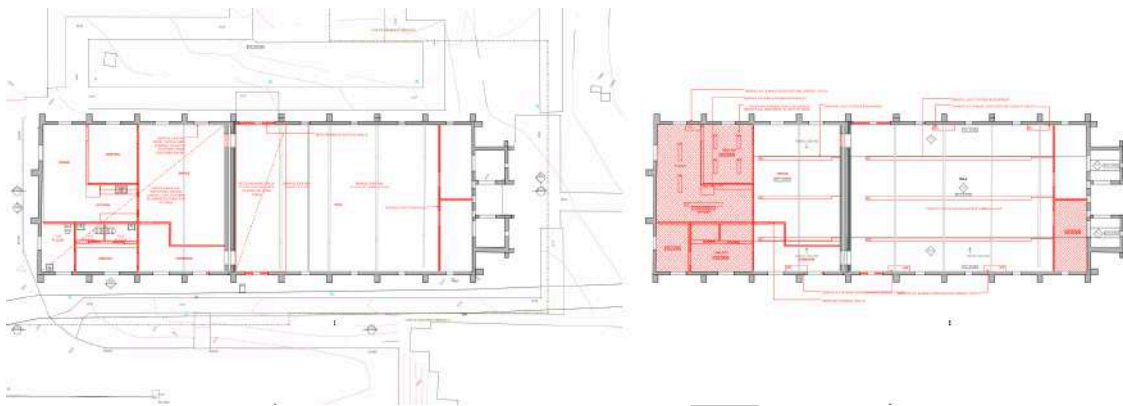
- A bar, dining area, private dining room, commercial kitchen, bathrooms.
- New internal lighting, joinery and services.

External modifications including:

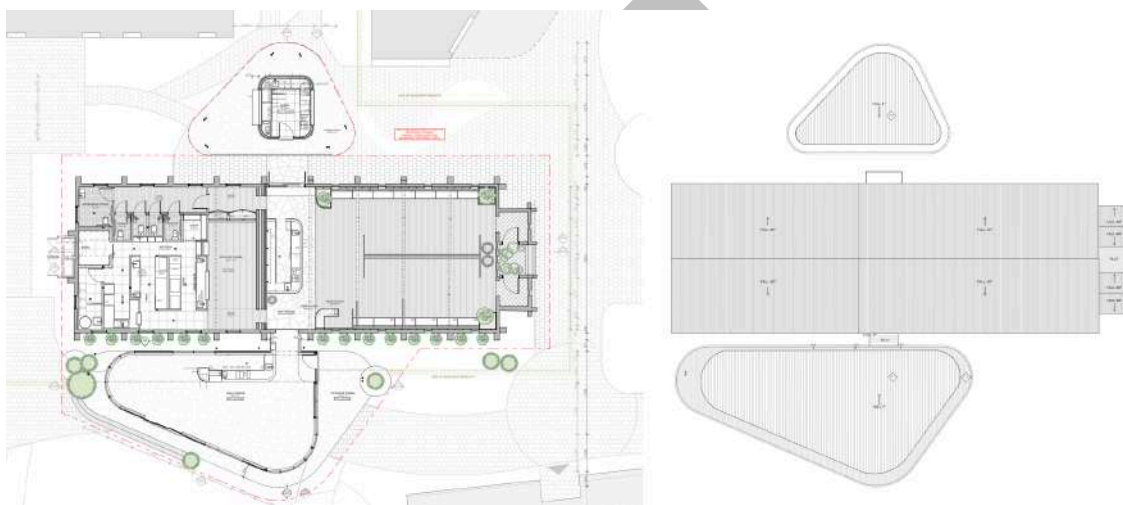
- Remove two windows and modify the openings to enable access to the linked and separate pavilions, adjacent to the north and south elevations of the former Church.
- Install a small service cupboard on the rear, western elevation of the former church.
- Install a louvres grille on the rear, western elevation of the former Church to service the proposed exhaust requirements of the commercial kitchen.

Refer to Figure 29 which reproduces the demolition and proposed plans and elevations.

# Weir Phillips Heritage and Planning



**Figure 29:** Proposed demolition. Breath Architecture.



**Figure 30:** Proposed Floor and roof plan. Breath Architecture.



**Figure 31:** Proposed east and north elevations. Breath Architecture.



# Weir Phillips Heritage and Planning

- Any proposed new electrical services will utilise existing cables, cavities or services run where possible to reduce any impact on the heritage fabric.
- Self-supporting stud walls will be constructed adjacent to the significant heritage walls to enable the installation of new joinery, hydraulic and electrical services to prevent any physical impact on the heritage walls.
- The proposed fitout will be removable with as little impact to the heritage fabric as possible.

## Secondary Hall

- The secondary hall has been previously modified with a lowered ceiling and internal rooms to half of the hall.
- The proposed ceiling will extend the existing lowered ceiling to all of the secondary hall with the more significant raked ceiling retained above.
- The removal of the internal layout and joinery is contemporary and not significant. It will be carefully removed to ensure no damage to the heritage fabric.
- Self-supporting stud walls will be constructed adjacent to the significant heritage walls to enable the installation of new joinery, hydraulic and electrical services to prevent any physical impact on the heritage walls.
- The proposed fitout will be removable with as little impact to the heritage fabric as possible.

## Visual impact of proposed new pavilions.

The proposed pavilions will have an acceptable and minimal impact on the former church for the following reasons:

- The pavilions are much lower in height than the side walls of the church and well below the buttress, gutter line and gable apex of the former church to help reduce any visual impact of the pavilions.
- The pavilions are minor in scale, height and bulk in comparison to the former church building and are visually recessive to the former church.
- The architectural design is light, restrained and finely articulated to provide a simple and modest form that is visually recessive to the more decorative. And solid style of the former Church building.
- The proposal includes the removal of existing, architectural ordinary, large and more bulky buildings either side of the former church and replaces them with modestly proportioned pavilions that enable greater views and less visual clutter toward the heritage item.
- The larger senior housing structures either side of the former church have been modified in location, orientation and form to enable more open space and curtilage to enable wider view corridors and greater visibility and presence to the heritage item.

# Weir Phillips Heritage and Planning

Request for Information from Department Planning, Housing and Infrastructure to the SSDA – 73910208.

- As an outcome of a significant redevelopment of the site, it is also anticipated that a Schedule of Conservation Works to the Church Building is prepared and provided, and this is implemented as a condition of consent. The Schedule should be based on a condition report of the building and identify works such as roofing repairs, window reinstatement and replacement of unsympathetic aluminium windows (as noted in HIS), demolition of half wall, gutter upgrades, repointing, flooring works, painting etc. that should be undertaken to ensure monetary benefits can be tied to the conservation of the Church from any future approval.*

## **Heritage Response**

A schedule of Conservation Works can be provided in any condition of consent

Request for Information from Department Planning, Housing and Infrastructure to the SSDA – 73910208.

- A Schedule of Ongoing Maintenance Works should also be prepared and updated following completion of the Conservation Works, to be tied to the ongoing operation of the Senior Housing facility through a Positive Covenant on title, or other mechanism in the operational plan. This Schedule should be provided and advice on how it will be implemented as an outcome of this development. As noted in the HIS - "Consent is sought for alterations and additions to the existing heritage item which will help to conserve the item by providing a viable use for it that will raise the necessary funds required for its long-term maintenance." The conservation outcome and long term maintenance is required to be demonstrated in the proposal.*

## **Heritage Response**

A schedule of ongoing maintenance can be provided in any condition of consent

## **Conclusion**

This Statement of Heritage Impact Letter has been prepared to accompany a Request for Information from Department Planning, Housing and Infrastructure to the SSDA – 73910208 for the site at Nos 6-8 Popes Road, Woonona, New South Wales. The SoHI letter has specifically addressed the proposed works to the former Woonona Church on the site.

The site is located within the Wollongong City Council. The principal environmental planning instrument for the site is the *Wollongong Local Environmental Plan 2009 (LEP 2009)*. The site contains a heritage item ('Former Woonona Uniting Church') and lies within the vicinity of other heritage items listed by Schedule 5 Part 1 of the *LEP 2009*.

The proposed works to the former Woonona Church will have an acceptable impact for the following reasons:

- The proposed works are minor in scale and will remove as little significant fabric as possible.
- The proposed restaurant fitout, joinery and services will be removable without any damage to significant fabric.

# Weir Phillips Heritage and Planning

- Stud walls will be installed to carry services and joinery installation to ensure there is no damage to significant fabric.
- The proposed removal of the two arched windows to create new openings to the pavilions, will be carefully stored on site.
- The proposed openings will mirror the overall height and transom height of the arched windows to enable an interpretation of the windows.
- The pavilions are much lower in height than the side walls of the church and well below the buttress, gutter line and gable apex of the former church to help reduce a visual impact of the pavilions.
- The pavilions are minor in scale, height and bulk in comparison to the former church building and are visually recessive to the former church.
- The architectural design is light, restrained and finely articulated to provide a simple and modest form that is visually recessive to the more decorative. And solid style of the former Church building.
- The proposal includes the removal of existing, architectural ordinary, large and more bulky buildings either side of the former church and replaces them with modestly proportioned pavilions that enable greater views and less visual clutter toward the heritage item.
- The larger senior housing structures either side of the former church have been modified in location, orientation and form to enable more open space and curtilage around the former Church to provide wider view corridors and greater visibility and presence of the heritage item.

Please do not hesitate to contact me on (02) 8073 5317 if you require further information.

Yours faithfully,



**James Phillips** | Principal