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MEMORANDUM

Date: 21 June 2017
To: Georges River Council
Attention: Rita Vella, Coordinator – Strategic Planning
Subject: Penshurst Public School
Proposed redevelopment

I have reviewed the documents forwarded including Concept Plans, draft SoHI and letter from dfp Planning Consultants dated 29 march 2017. I have also reviewed the State Heritage Inventory (SHI) report for the subject site. To follow is advice from a heritage point of view:

COMMENT:

- 1) The subject site is listed in Schedule 5 of Hurstville LEP 2012. The statement of significance in the SHI report is as follows:

Penshurst Public School is of local significance as an Inter-War period education establishment providing educational facilities to the area since its establishment in 1925. The main building maintains its original scale and form as well as fenestration and is a landmark within the streetscape. It is a representative example of public education and reflects the growth of the area following WW1. The site also has a long association with the development of the Penshurst area and the resultant increase in population. It has particular associations with the Second World War, when the cricket pitches were replace with air raid shelters (on the present grassed area). There was a rise of special needs education and Opportunity Deaf (OD) classes commenced in the 1940s after an outbreak of rubella as there were many children born with a hearing impairment.

The SHI report recommends the building (original 1925 building) should be **retained and conserved**. I would suggest the early (1927) addition should also form part of the Schedule 5 listing.

- 2) The letter from dfp Planning Consultants notes that of the various options considered for the redevelopment of the subject site, demolition of the heritage item is recommended by the Department of Education. Detailed justification for the above decision has not been provided in the documents reviewed.
- 3) The SoHI provides comparable analysis of other public schools in the Georges River Council area. From the above it can be confirmed that:

- The subject heritage item is not the earliest extant public school in the Georges River LGA. Mortdale, Hurstville, Sans Souci and Hurstville South Public Schools all have extant buildings which predate Penshurst P.S.
- The comparable schools and the subject heritage item would have similar historic, social, scientific and representative conservation values at a Local level of significance.
- Aesthetically, it would appear the subject heritage item is comparable to Peakhurst Public School (1928) with respect to stylistic influence. While the SoHI and the SHI reports do not identify the architectural style of the subject heritage item, it would probably fall within the Inter-War Free Classical style as described in *Identifying Australian Architecture, Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on a review of the documents provided, there is no support for the demolition of the subject heritage item (including the early two-storey addition) from a heritage point of view. To gain potential support the following additional information is required:

- i) Credible justification from a community benefit point of view by the Education Department as to why the heritage item (and early addition) cannot form part of the redevelopment of the site.
- ii) Further comparable analysis in the SoHI to:
 - confirm (or otherwise) that Peakhurst Public School (or any other Inter-War P.S. in the Georges River LGA) displays equal or superior Inter-War Free Classical stylistic influence to the subject heritage item, and;
 - that there are other institutional buildings in the Georges River LGA with equal or superior Inter-War Free Classical stylistic influence to the subject heritage item.

Please contact me should further information or clarification with the above be required.

James Stephany
Georges River Heritage Advisor