



SCEGGS Darlinghurst Masterplan

215 Forbes Street, Darlinghurst

SEARs Request – Heritage Considerations

Prepared for
SCEGGS Darlinghurst

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Report

This report has been prepared to accompany a SEARs request to the NSW Department of Planning and Environment for the masterplan and redevelopment of the SCEGGS Darlinghurst school site. The proposed masterplan provides a long term vision for staged development of the school site including new buildings which accommodate contemporary learning spaces and other associated school functions.

To support the request for the SEARs, this report provides an overview of the proposed masterplan, sets out the heritage management context and identifies the likely key heritage issues associated with the proposal.

This report identifies the heritage issues associated with masterplan, with particular regard to:

- Proposed demolition of the *Barham* additions (1907-1922), *Chapel Building* additions (1909-1926), *Old Gymnasium* (1925), *Wilkinson House* (1926) and the *Science and Library Buildings* (1967/1970);
- Proposed reconstruction of *Barham*;
- Connections from the new multi-purpose buildings to *Barham* and *Chapel Building*;
- New Wilkinson House Building

The report has been prepared on behalf of SCEGGS Darlinghurst, and makes reference to the masterplan drawings prepared by Tanner Kibble Denton Architects, November 2017.

1.2 Author Identification

This document was prepared by Sarah-Jane Zammit, Heritage Specialist and was reviewed by George Phillips, Practice Director, both of Tanner Kibble Denton Architects.

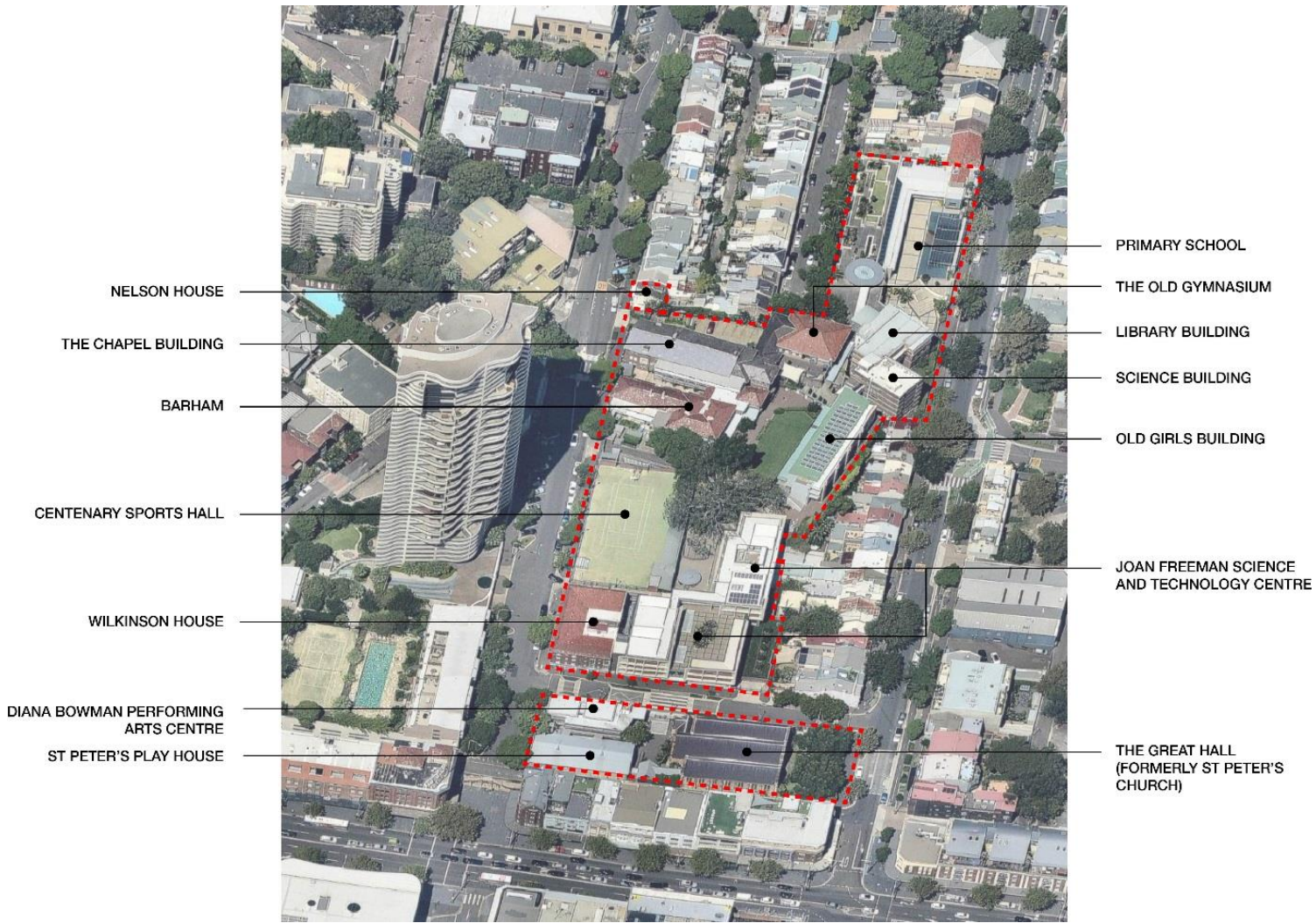
1.3 Site Description

SCEGGS Darlinghurst is located east of the Sydney CBD in the inner-city suburb of Darlinghurst, in a predominately residential area, largely comprising Victorian terrace houses and interwar apartments. The school is bound by St Peter's Lane to the north, Forbes Street to the east and Bourke Street to the west. The campus is intersected by St Peters Street, which is used by the school as a thoroughfare during school hours to access the *Diana Bowman Performing Arts Centre* and the School's *Great Hall* (formerly St Peter's Church).

SCEGGS is comprised of a Secondary and Primary School, with the Secondary School accessed from Forbes Street. There are two entrances on Forbes Street – the Green Gate which is the formal School entrance and the Jacaranda Gate, located further north between *Barham* and the *Centenary Sports Hall*. There is a secondary entrance on Bourke Street which is also serves as the Primary School entrance.

There are 14 buildings within the whole SCEGGS Darlinghurst campus. Built at various times prior to and during the School's occupation of the site (see Sections 3.2), most of the buildings are multi-purpose academic buildings, with the others housing staff and administration, sporting and performance spaces.

The buildings which are the subject of the proposed works of this masterplan include *Barham*, the *Chapel Building*, the *Old Gymnasium*, the *Science and Library Blocks* and *Wilkinson House*.



1 Aerial photograph of the SCEGGS Darlinghurst site.
Source: Nearmaps with TKD Architects overlay, 2017.



Site Address	Legal Description	Existing Development
165-215 Forbes Street, Darlinghurst	Lot 100 in DP 1151279	Main School Site including Wilkinson House, Joan Freeman Science Building, Centenary Sports Hall, Yellow Building, Barham Building, Chapel Building, Old Gym
	Lot 18 in DP131188; Lot 8 in DP 253598; Lots 9, 10, 11 in DP 52048; Lots 17-18 in DP53158;	Library Building and Science Building
159-163 Forbes Street, Darlinghurst	Lot 1 in DP 557311	St Peter's Church; The Playhouse; Diana Bowman Performing Arts Centre
165-215 Forbes Street, Darlinghurst	Lots 1-5 in DP 11394996; Lot 1 in DP707816	Primary School
224 Bourke Street, Darlinghurst	Lot E in DP 108903	
226 Bourke Street, Darlinghurst	Lot D in DP 108903	
217 Forbes Street, Darlinghurst	Lot 1 in DP586075	Forbes Street terrace

2 HERITAGE MANAGEMENT CONTEXT

2.1 Heritage Listings

SCEGGS Darlinghurst is locally listed, and is within the C13 East Sydney Special Character and Conservation Area. The School's assets include the State listed St Peter's Church Precinct.

Item	SHR	Sydney LEP
St Peter's Church and Precinct, Bourke Street	00148	I300
Sydney Church of England Girls Grammar School group including Barham, Chapel Building and Wilkinson House and their interiors and grounds, 215 Forbes Street	–	I301
'Nelson House', including interior, 217 Forbes Street	–	I301

2.2 Neighbouring Heritage Items: Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012

	Item	Item no.
Forbes Street	Chard Stairs, Forbes Street	I298
	Former St Peter's Rectory including interiors, 188 Forbes Street	I302
	Terrace house, including interior, 219 Forbes Street	I304
	Terrace group, including interiors, 221-227 Forbes Street	I305
	Terrace house, including interior, 229 Forbes Street	I306
	Terrace group, including interiors, 231-233 Forbes Street	I307
	Terrace house, including interior, 235 Forbes Street	I308
	Terrace group, including interiors, 237-239 Forbes Street	I309
	'Belgrave Terrace', including interiors, 238-252 Forbes Street	I310
	Terrace group, including interiors, 241-243 Forbes Street	I311
	Terrace house, including interior, 245 Forbes Street	I312
	Terrace group, including interiors, 247-253 Forbes Street	I313
Bourke Street	Terrace group 'TeRoma Penda House' and 'Waratah House', including interiors, 164-164C Bourke Street	I218
	Terrace group, including interiors, 176-188 Bourke Street	I219
	Flat building, 'Aston Hall', including interiors, 185 Bourke Street	I220
	'William Terrace', including interiors, 219-229 Bourke Street	I221
Thomson Street	Cliff face and retaining wall, Thomson Place	I472
	Terrace group, including interiors, 2-6 Thomson Street	I473
	'Aberfoyle', including interior, 8 Thomson Street	I474
	Terrace group, including interiors and street rear brick fencing, 10-14 Thomson Street	I475
	Terrace group, including interiors, 16-18 Thomson Street	I476
	Terrace house, including interior, 20 Thomson Street	I477
	Terrace house, including interior, 22 Thomson Street	I478
	Terrace group, including interiors, 24-26 Thomson Street	I479
	Terrace group, including interiors, 28-30 Thomson Street	I480
	Terrace house, including interior, 32 Thomson Street	I481
	Terrace group, including interiors, 34-36 Thomson Street	I482
Liverpool Street	Terrace house, including interior, 38 Thomson Street	I483
	Terrace house, including interior, 40 Thomson Street	I484
	'Claremont Lodge', including interiors, 248 Liverpool Street	I351
	Terrace group and interiors, 250-252 Liverpool Street	I352
	Terrace house and interior, 254 Liverpool Street	I353
	Terrace group, including interiors, 256 Liverpool Street	I354
	Terrace house, including interior, 258 Liverpool Street	I355
	Terrace house, including interior, 260 Liverpool Street	I356
First Church of Christ Scientist, including interior, 262 Liverpool Street	I357	



2 Relationship of the subject site to the adjacent heritage items and Heritage Conservation Areas
 Source: Nearmaps with Tanner Kibble Denton Architects overlay.

3 HISTORY

3.1 Overview History of SCEGGS and the SCEGGS Site

Sydney Church of England Girls Grammar School (now SCEGGS) was established 17 July 1895 in a modest terrace on Victoria Street, Darlinghurst, with one pupil, teacher and the Headmistress Miss Edith Badham. Within the next 5 years, the school's population doubled, and in 1900 the SCEGGS school council purchased *Barham* on Forbes Street, a stately home designed by renowned architect John Verge, on a sizable block of land, on which the school could continue to expand and grow.

Barham is located on the site of an original lands grant made by Sir Ralph Darling in 1830 to Edward Deas Thomson. Located on what was known as Woolloomooloo Hill, *Barham* took advantage of its hilltop setting, with commanding views over Woolloomooloo and Sydney Harbour.

Built in 1833, Thomson commissioned architect John Verge to design *Barham*. Verge was to be later recognised for his prominent contribution to Colonial architecture within the establishing colony of New South Wales and Sydney, designing many significant and grand domestic buildings, of which many were commissioned for the Woolloomooloo Hill ridge, running from what is now Darlinghurst to Potts Point. *Barham* is one of fourteen Verge buildings which still remain, out of the over eighty buildings constructed in New South Wales.

Shortly after the purchase of *Barham* in 1900, the *Chapel Building* was commissioned. It was built at the same time as the eastern extension to *Barham*, and completed in 1901, as a purpose-built federation school building, providing extra classrooms and administration spaces for the growing school, as well as the first Assembly Hall, known as 'The Main Hall' – now used as 'The Chapel'.

Since the school's founding and final relocation to its existing site, the school has expanded to include a school gymnasium (now the old gym – and used as classrooms), primary school, classroom blocks, Assembly Hall, science and library block, auditorium, Centenary Sports Hall and the purchase of Gwydir Flats in 1962 (for use as a Boarding House – now used as classrooms) and the St Peter's Church and Playhouse in 1993.



3 Barham, by G E Peacock, 1845
Source: SCEGGS Darlington Archives.



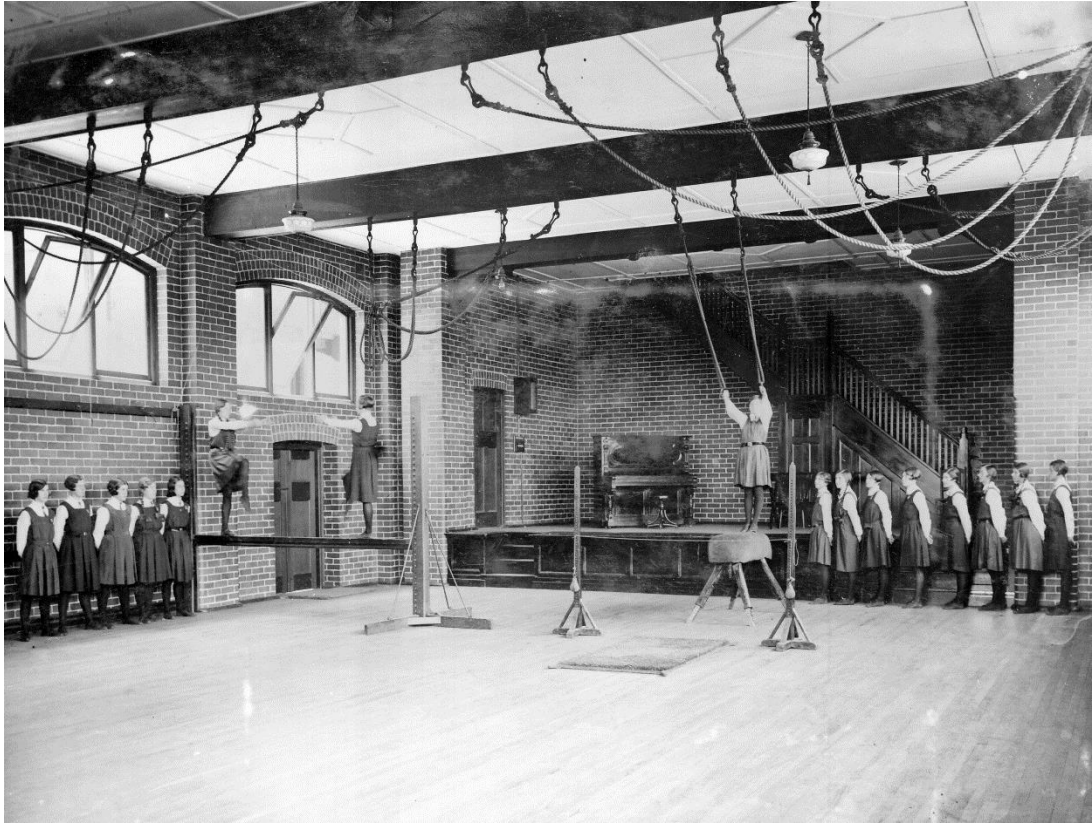
4 The main entrance to Barham, with open two sided verandah. The Chapel Building can be seen in the background, c1908.
Source: SCEGGS Darlington Archives.



5 The Chapel Building and eastern extensions to Barham, c1901.
Source: SCEGGS Darlington Archives.



6 1911 and 1922/1926 extensions to the Barham and Chapel Buildings with Old Gymnasium and upper floor classrooms in the background, c1927.
Source: SCEGGS Darlington Archives.



7 Internal view of the Old Gymnasium, c1930.
Source: SCEGGS Darlington Archives.



8 Wilkinson House, formerly Gwydir Flats, after its purchase and conversion into a Boarding House for the School, c1965.
Source: SCEGGS Darlington Archives.

3.2 List of Current SCEGGS Buildings

Below is a summary list of the buildings at SCEGGS identifying their dates of construction and the dates of major alterations and additions, where known.

School Building	Date of Construction	Date of alterations/additions
Barham	1833	1900, 1907-1911, 1922
The Great Hall (formerly St Peter's Church)	1867	
St Peter's Play House (formerly St Peter's Hall)	1870	
Nelson House	1880	
Chapel Building	1901	1909-1911, c1925
The Old Gymnasium	1925	1982
Wilkinson House	1926	1962, 2001
Old Girls Building (formerly the Yellow Building)	1952	
Science Block	1967	
Library and Auditorium Block	1970	1985, 1992
Centenary Sports Hall	1995	
Primary School	2001	
Diana Bowman Performing Arts Centre	2007	
Joan Freeman Science and Technology Centre	2012	

4 HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The following has been extracted from the State Heritage Inventory Listing for the school:

SCEGGS has developed on the Darlinghurst site since 1900, the year the School purchased Barham. All phases of the School's development are of contributory historic significance to the School. There are two culturally significant phases of the site. The first phase is the grand residential estate of Barham and secondary, the 1900-1926 phase representing the establishment of a major girls' school in Sydney.

Barham is the most significant building on the School site for its historic, aesthetic and social value. It has remained the focus of development of the School and retains many of its original features and includes the Morton Bay figs in the front garden. Barham is historically significant as it's associated with the prominent architect John Verge and is one of this few surviving buildings. The house is also associated with the Colonial Secretary of 1837, Edward Deas Thomson, the original owner of the building and founding member of SCEGGS. The building is associated with the historical development of SCEGGS Darlinghurst on the site and continues to be the focus of the School. It plays an important role in the social development of the School and its appreciation of the traditional role of SCEGGS. Barham is aesthetically significant for its quality of architectural detail and design. It is representative of early colonial domestic architecture in NSW. Significant elements include original configuration and timber joinery, 19320s light fittings and verandah.

The Chapel Building is historically significant as the first purpose built building on the School site. The Chapel on the first floor is aesthetically and historically significant. It has local significance to the Darlinghurst area and is representative of a purpose-built school building. Significant elements include Chapel to the first floor, stained glass windows with the School crest and verandah to the top floor, the original entrance and foundation stone.

Wilkinson House: Originally named the Gwydir Flats, Wilkinson House is significant at a local level primary for its historic, aesthetic and social values. In a prominent location, the building makes a positive contribution to Forbes and St Peters Streets and to the Heritage Conservation Area. It is notable for its continuing residential use over the last 75 years and provides evidence of the residential flat building boom of the 1920s that permanently changed the residential pattern of Darlinghurst.

Wilkinson House is associated with the early stages of the career of the prominent early twentieth-century architect, Emil Sodersten, and could be, if not the first commission, then perhaps the last remaining of his early buildings in Sydney.

As a boarding house, the building has been associated with the historical development of SCEGGS Darlinghurst over a forty year period, playing an important role in the life of past and present boarders and staff. It continues to provide a focus of memories of their time at the school as well as being associated with traditions that contribute to the continually developing sense of the School's identity.

Although not constructed to the original level of detail, Wilkinson House is representative of the construction of apartment buildings during the 1920s and of the use of an eclectic collection of architectural styles, displaying references to Inter-War Mediterranean, Spanish Mission and Georgian Revival influences.

Wilkinson House is significant for its continuous use since it was built for accommodation and for the long association with SCEGGS boarders and their strong attachment to the building as their 'home'. The building has historic social significance for its association with SCEGGS boarders. The building is historically significant for its association with Emil Sodersten, a key architect of the inter-war period in Sydney. Significant elements include original plaster ceilings to the majority of the building and ability to interpret the original apartment configuration, the intact entry foyer and lobby.

5 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed State Significant Development (SSD) comprises a Concept Development Application (Concept DA) made pursuant to section 83B of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* for building envelopes, building locations and land uses, and a Detailed Proposed Development Application (DA) for the first stage of works being the demolition of *Wilkinson House* and the detailed design and construction of one building with the Concept DA.

The Concept DA provides a long term vision for staged development of the school site. The objective of the proposal is to provide new learning and administration spaces within contemporary facilities that meet the growing expectations of the school community and contemporary teaching practices. This proposal also seeks to improve the overall legibility of the site, and useability for the existing school population.

As such the proposal includes envelopes and the detailed design for new buildings principally in place of existing buildings across the site. This proposal does not seek to increase the site area of the SCEGGS Darlinghurst campus nor significantly increase the intensity of the site.

The following sections provide an indicative breakdown of what elements of the school will form part of the concept and detailed approvals.

This proposal seeks **concept approval** for the following works:

- Demolition of the following:
 - *Wilkinson House* fronting Forbes Street;
 - *Library and Science Building* fronting Bourke Street;
 - *The Old Gymnasium* at the northern end of Thomson Street;
- The partial demolition and redevelopment of the existing *Barham* building fronting Forbes Street;
- Construction of the following:
 - Four storey school building at the corner of Forbes and St Peters Street;
 - Approximately six storey multi-purpose building fronting Bourke Street;
 - On-site vehicular drop-off with associated car parking as part of the multi-purpose building;
 - Approximately three storey administration building fronting Forbes Street and enhancement of the Forbes Street entry to the school.

The final uses in the multi-purpose building have not yet been fully determined but may include a 25m swimming pool, library or a childcare facility which will accommodate a maximum of 90 children. Whilst the key objective of the masterplan is not to increase student numbers or site area, numbers will increase if an early learning centre is proposed.

The concept approval component of the development will not provide consent for any physical works other than those specifically requested as part of the Detailed Proposal DA.

Detailed approval is sought for all works to support the demolition of *Wilkinson House* and the construction, fit-out and operation of a new school building to be located on the corner of Forbes Street and St Peter's Street. It is envisaged that these works will include:

- Demolition of *Wilkinson House*;
- Lateral excavation of the existing basement to create a full useable floor level;
- Construction of a new school building for new teaching and education spaces with direct connections to the adjacent Joan Freeman Science Building.

6 HERITAGE CONSIDERATIONS

This section provides an outline discussion of potential heritage issues arising from the proposed masterplan of the SCEGGS Darlinghurst site, having regard for the City of Sydney LEP and DCP provisions and the Heritage Assessment for SCEGGS Darlinghurst (1999). Preliminary comments on potential heritage impacts are provided for each building, as well as recommendations to avoid or mitigate adverse impacts.

6.1 Barham

Barham is assessed in the 1999 Heritage Assessment as having exceptional heritage significance. The building was designed as a detached two storey dwelling, with its main facades facing its expansive grounds to the north and west. Although the house was originally constructed without a verandah, it is thought that the verandah was added shortly after its completion in 1833. The verandah was enclosed as part of the School's occupation of the building (c1914).

The original and significant fabric has been modified over time to allow for School facilities, with major additions constructed c1900 to the east (laundry and kitchen wing) and between 1907-1911 and 1922 to the south (Headmistress' wing and connection to the *Chapel Building*).

The accretions are utilitarian in character and are significant insofar as they demonstrate the historical adaptation of the building for school use. Their demolition may be justified by the opportunity to largely reconstruct *Barham* to its original 1833 form, and have this significant era of construction more readily understood.

The works to *Barham* should:

- avoid removal, damage or alterations to significant original elements and details, including windows, doors and chimneys in the demolition of the eastern and southern additions;
- retain extant historic fabric externally and internally where possible, including window and door joinery, fireplaces, plaster and timber mouldings;
- ensure the adaptive reuse works utilise materials and construction methods which are compatible with the historic fabric;
- ensure that reconstruction works are based on physical and documentary evidence.

6.2 New Administration Building

The new administration building is proposed to be located to the east of *Barham* fronting Forbes Street. The building is part of the proposed revitalisation of the main School entry. The building also proposes a ground and first floor connection to the rear of *Barham*. The administration building should:

- avoid alteration of the significant exterior fabric and form of *Barham*;
- be designed so that it is not more visually overwhelming than the existing building on *Barham*, the entry space, the Forbes Street streetscape or the Heritage Conservation Area;
- be designed to complement the historic form and materials of *Barham*;
- be designed so that any connections to *Barham* are setback from the north and south facades.

6.3 Chapel Building

The *Chapel Building* is assessed in the 1999 Heritage Assessment as having high heritage significance. The original building form has been modified, with a 3-storey addition to the east, completed c1911 fronting Forbes Street. Further alterations took place in 1925 where the 2-storey western section of the building (date unknown) was extended to a third storey and modified to connect to the *Old Gymnasium*.

The western section is proposed to be demolished: further historical research and analysis is required to determine the provenance and significance of this area of the building. Demolition of the western section may be justified by the greater benefits to the School through the reconfiguration of this area as part of the proposed new multi-purpose building.

The proposed works should avoid the removal, damage or alteration to original elements and details of the *Chapel Building*, including windows, doors, chimneys and the original stairwell.

6.4 Old Gymnasium

The *Old Gymnasium* is assessed in the 1999 Heritage Assessment as having moderate heritage significance. Constructed in 1925, the original building form has been modified with the addition of a terrace and stair to the north, which are intrusive to the building's original free standing architectural composition. Internally, the original gymnasium has been adapted into class rooms, however original fabric such as the sprung timber floor and windows have been retained within the adapted spaces. Overall, the physical integrity of the exterior fabric and many of the internal classroom and staff spaces is generally low.

Recommendations contained in the 1999 Heritage Assessment permit the demolition of buildings of moderate significance. The removal of the *Old Gymnasium* may be justified by the greater benefit to the staff and students of the School through the provision of a new facilities and spaces which better serve the current and future needs of the School community.

Prior to demolition it is recommended that a photographic archival report is undertaken to document the building.

6.5 Science and Library Buildings

Demolition

The *Science* and *Library Buildings* are assessed by the 1999 Heritage Assessment as having moderate heritage significance. Constructed in 1967 and 1970 (with a 1992 Auditorium extension to the *Library Building*), the buildings are generally in good condition and have not been modified externally.

The *Science* and *Library Buildings* street alignment is angled to the street, providing a poor contribution to the Bourke Street streetscape. The buildings inefficiently use the school's constrained site area, and due to their misaligned floor levels, do not meet contemporary access requirements.

Demolition of the *Science* and *Library Buildings* will not have adverse heritage impacts. The demolition of these buildings provides the opportunity to develop a new building which better serves the School and community. Their demolition is also justifiable for the potential to provide a building which better addresses the Bourke Street heritage context.

6.6 New Multi-Purpose Building

The new multi-purpose building is proposed to be located to the west and south of the *Chapel Building* and replaces the *Old Gymnasium, Science and Library Blocks*. Connections to the *Chapel Building* are proposed at all levels. The new multi-purpose building should:

- avoid substantial alteration of the significant exterior form and fabric of the *Chapel Building*;
- retain the building's ability to be understood as a detached form;
- retain vistas to the front elevation of the *Chapel Building*;
- relate the height of the proposed new building to the eaves height of the *Chapel Building*;
- relate to the *Chapel Building*, Forbes Street streetscape and Bourke Street streetscape.

6.7 Wilkinson House

Demolition

Wilkinson House, formerly Gwydir Flats, is assessed in the 1999 Heritage Assessment as having moderate heritage significance, and is a contributory item within the Heritage Conservation Area. Constructed 1926 and designed by Emil Sodersten, the building's original form is intact, however internally, the building retains little of its original layout, having been modified to serve as classrooms in 2001. The entry hall, stairwell and some decorative features such as plaster ceiling mouldings are extant.

The building does not adequately serve the School's requirements, as the residential floor plan and traditional construction of the building does not accommodate flexible teaching spaces or other school functions. The existing plan incorporates small rooms, bathrooms, lightwell and small indented balconies which do not meet contemporary learning needs and cannot be adaptively reused for the School's requirements.

Accepting the limitation of the structure and the constrained nature of the SCEGGS site, demolition of the building will allow for a replacement building which will permit the construction of a building with contemporary school spaces to better serve the needs of the School in the long term.

The replacement Wilkinson House building should:

- be built to the street property boundaries at Forbes and St Peters Streets (as per the present building);
- be designed to complement its surroundings;
- retain 'Wilkinson House' as its name.

6.8 Neighbouring Heritage Items

Located in a Heritage Conservation Area, the school has many neighbouring locally and state heritage listed items. The new building should aim to:

- provide a better architectural presentation to Bourke Street than the current buildings;
- minimise visual and physical impacts on properties in Thomas Street and Thomas Lane.

7 CONCLUSIONS

Located on Forbes Street in the heart of a Heritage Conservation Area, the SCEGGS Darlington site comprises a number of significant items including *Barham*, the *Chapel Building*, the *Old Gymnasium* and *Wilkinson House*. The School site is capable of new development, including the demolition of buildings and accretions of lesser significance and the construction of new buildings which meet the more flexible requirements of contemporary learning.

Considered from a heritage perspective, the masterplan and proposed new development at SCEGGS Darlington should:

- retain the exceptional and high significant buildings of *Barham* and the *Chapel Building*;
- allow for the reconstruction of the external form and fabric of *Barham* to its nineteenth century appearance;
- allow for the sympathetic incorporation of *Barham* and the *Chapel Building* into new development; and
- accommodate new buildings which respond to the heritage context and environs of the School and the surrounding streetscapes.