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David Gibson
Social Infrastructure Assessments
Department of Planning & Environment
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Attention: Mr Brent Devine

Dear Mr Gibson

RE: Heritage Division comments on Forensic Pathology and Coroners Court, Lidcombe (SSD7545)

I refer to your letter dated 20 July 2016 inviting comments on the above State Significant Development application for the construction of a Forensic Pathology and Coroners Court including:

- earthworks and site excavation to accommodate the proposed building footprint;
- construction of a three storey building comprising identification and waiting rooms, mortuary and laboratories, body transfer and back-of-house facilities (ground floor); conference rooms, court registry, forensic administration, offices and staff amenity facilities (first floor); and courtrooms, court waiting areas, interview rooms and Coroner's office (second floor);
- the provision of public access via Main Avenue and separate secure access for staff and deliveries via Weeroona Road;
- a total of 188 car parking spaces comprising 71 public car parks and 117 staff car parks; and
- associated tree removal, landscaping, security fencing, utilities and infrastructure connections.

I provide the following heritage comments:

- The majority of the proposed development site is outside the State Heritage Register curtilage of the Lidcombe Hospital Precinct (SHR 01744), except the crossovers from Main Avenue. The focus of conservation at the Lidcombe Hospital Precinct is the historic core, however it is important to recognise the significance of Main Avenue as the key approach to the historic precinct and for its landscape qualities.
- Whilst the proposed crossovers into the subject site from Main Avenue are not ideal as they would impact significant early fabric (kerb and guttering), a precedent has been set for this type of intrusion into Main Avenue with crossovers constructed for the adjacent Botanica residential development. The proposal would retain avenue tree plantings which is supported as it conserves significant landscape elements. The crossovers would not obscure significant views along Main Avenue. Brick kerbing to be removed should be salvaged and stored securely on site for use in future repairs along Main Avenue. The retention of the slip road is considered positive from a heritage perspective.

- The extant garden beds along Main Avenue are not original, although similar gardens beds are evident in the 1943 aerial. Historically there was far more vegetation along Main Avenue, however the recent conservation approach focusses on the tree planting and therefore the removal of non-original garden beds is not considered to have an adverse impact on significance.
- Whilst significant Main Avenue planting would be retained, some mature landscaping would be removed. The removal of mature vegetation is generally discouraged in the heritage context, however in this instance it is outside the SHR curtilage and therefore would not generate a negative heritage impact on the primary significance of the Lidcombe Hospital Precinct.
- The adaptive reuse of the subject site for use for forensic pathology and coronial work is considered to be sympathetic to the history of the site as part of the former Lidcombe Hospital complex and is supported.
- Despite the fact that the four former doctor's cottages are not protected by a heritage listing, the earliest two residences were determined to have high significance in the Lidcombe Hospital Site Stage 1 Conservation Plan prepared by Godden Mackay Logan (June 2002); this report recommended the two significant dwellings be retained and conserved. I understand that the demolition of all four cottages has been approved under a Part 5 Approval process without heritage assessment. Consideration should have been given to the adaptive reuse of these cottages however as demolition has already been approved, all four cottages should be archivally recorded prior to demolition. This request has been separately communicated to Health Infrastructure.
- The 2002 CMP for Lidcombe Hospital site policies states that new development adjacent to the boundaries of the heritage precinct should be screened by vegetation. The landscape plan shows a landscaped setback from both Joseph Street and Main Avenue, however consideration should be given to additional screening vegetation within these zones to screen the large scale proposal from views along Main Avenue and Joseph Street. Similarly, fencing should be as unobtrusive as possible. It is important that views to the guard house from both Joseph Street and Main Avenue are not obscured.
- Whilst the proposed development on the subject site would not obscure views along Main Avenue, signage could have an adverse impact on views and the character of the place and should be limited. Special consideration should be given to the design, size and location of proposed signage along Main Avenue to ensure it respects the character of the Lidcombe Hospital Precinct. Ideally the proposed large sign on Joseph Street would be removed from the proposal as it would interrupt the vegetation screening of the development on this frontage, and the main sign on Main Avenue should match the extant Botanica sign on the adjacent corner of Main Avenue and Joseph Street.
- To connect the history of the subject site with that of the Lidcombe Hospital Precinct, a planting schedule which respects the character of the Lidcombe Hospital Precinct should be employed which references significant plant types and species.
- No heritage interpretation has been proposed, however it is pertinent considering the historical connection between the subject site and the Lidcombe Hospital Precinct. Interpretation helps convey the history and significance of a place and should be integrated into the subject proposal through various devices including signage and landscaping.

The following conditions of consent are recommend:

- Prior to commencement of works, a photographic archival recording of the subject site is to be undertaken and submitted for review and approval by the Heritage Division. The archival recording must be prepared by a suitably qualified and experienced heritage consultant in accordance with the Heritage Division guidelines entitled, *Photographic Recording of Heritage Items using Film or Digital Capture*. Special attention is to be paid to landscape elements to be removed (trees and kerb/ gutter).
- Signage along Main Avenue should be limited. Consideration should be given to using only the sandstone wall on the corner of Main Avenue and Joseph Street for major signage, and be of a complementary character and scale to the adjacent Botanica signage. Any additional directional signage must be carefully designed and located to not impact any views along Main Avenue.

- Signage should not be installed along Joseph Street, to limit the visual intrusion on the streetscape.
- An interpretation strategy should be developed to help convey the history and significance of the site as part of the former Lidcombe Hospital and submitted for approval to the Secretary, Department of Planning and Environment and the delegate of the Heritage Council of NSW. The approved interpretation strategy should be implemented prior to project completion and occupation of the facility.
- A landscape plan with plants that reference and respect the cultural landscape of the Lidcombe Hospital Precinct is to be employed across the site. Additional vegetation is also required in the vegetation buffers along Joseph Street and Main Avenue to screen the development. Planting along Joseph Street is not to obscure views to the guard house. To this end a revised landscape plan should be developed and submitted for approval to the Secretary, Department of Planning and Environment and the delegate of the Heritage Council of NSW.
- Brick kerbing to be removed is to be carefully salvaged and securely stored on site for use in future kerb repairs along Main Avenue. Details of proposed secure storage should be provided for approval to the Secretary, Department of Planning and Environment and the delegate of the Heritage Council of NSW.
- If any archaeological relics are uncovered during the course of the construction, all work shall immediately cease in that area and a written assessment of the nature and significance of the resource, along with a proposal for the treatment of the remains shall be submitted for the approval of the Secretary, Department of Planning and Environment and the delegate of the Heritage Council of NSW.

If you have any questions regarding the above advice, please feel free to contact Anna London, Heritage Assets Officer at the Heritage Division, Office of Environment and Heritage, on 9873 8608 or via email, anna.london@environment.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



19/08/2016

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