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Building 19
Royal North Shore Hospital

Heritage Impact Statement



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Introduction

1.0

1.1 Context of the Report

This Heritage Impact Statement (HIS) has been prepared to accompany a request to modify Project Application MP08_00172 for development at Royal North Shore Hospital to allow demolition of the Mortuary component of Building 19. It has been prepared for the InfraShore Partnership (Royal Bank of Scotland, Thiess, Thiess Services and Wilson Parking).

Demolition approval for the Mortuary component of Building 19, on this site, has been excluded from the overall Concept Plan approval (Major Project No. 06_0051) pending the submission of additional information to demonstrate why it cannot be retained and integrated into the redevelopment proposal.

Condition C2.2 of the Concept Plan approval for this project (Major Project No. 06_0051) requires:

Every effort should be made to retain the subject items as long as possible and demonstrate why they cannot be retained and integrated into the subsequent redevelopment proposal. Further details shall be submitted to the Director, together with design documentation, in order to demonstrate the need to demolish these items. Should approval be granted to demolish these items, archival recording must take place in accordance with NSW Heritage Office Guidelines.

1.2 Report Objective

The main objective of this report is to assess the heritage impact of the demolition of the Mortuary component of Building 19.

1.3 Site Identification

The remaining component of Building 19 on the Royal North Shore Hospital, St Leonards, site is the former Mortuary, and an addition to its east. It is located in the north east section of the hospital site, at the corner of Eileen and Herbert Streets, as shown in Figures 1-1 and 1-2.

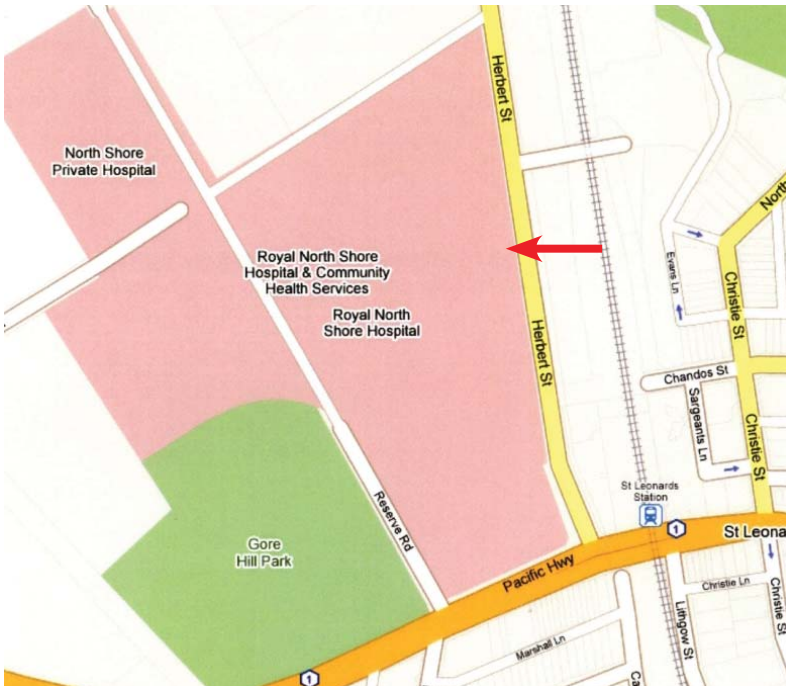


Figure 1-1

Map showing the approximate location of Building 19 on the Royal North Shore Hospital site

Source: www.maps.google.com.au/maps



Figure 1-2

Aerial photograph, taken prior to the demolition of the Laundry, showing the location of Building 19 on the Royal North Shore Hospital site

Source: www.maps.google.com.au/maps

1.4 Heritage Management Framework

The subject building, the former Mortuary component of Building 19, is not listed on any statutory or non-statutory heritage list. It has been identified as an element of Moderate heritage significance in the *Royal North Shore Hospital, St Leonards Heritage Assessment*, prepared by City Plan Heritage in February 2005.

1.5 Methodology and Structure

This Heritage Impact Statement has been prepared in accordance with guidelines outlined in the *Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance*, 1999, known as *The Burra Charter*, and the New South Wales Heritage Office publication, *NSW Heritage Manual*.

The Burra Charter provides definitions for terms used in heritage conservation and proposes conservation processes and principles for the conservation of an item. The terminology used, particularly the words *place*, *cultural significance*, *fabric*, and *conservation*, is as defined in Article 1 of *The Burra Charter*. The *NSW Heritage Manual* explains and promotes the standardisation of heritage investigation, assessment and management practices in NSW.

1.6 Authorship

This Heritage Assessment has been prepared by Gail Lynch, Senior Heritage Consultant, and reviewed by Graham Brooks, Director, of Graham Brooks and Associates. Unless otherwise noted all of the photographs in this report are by Graham Brooks and Associates.

1.7 Report Limitations

This report is limited to the investigation of the European history of the site. Recommendations have been made on the basis of the plans available at the NSW Department of Commerce archives, secondary sources available, previous reports prepared for the site and physical inspection of the existing fabric.

Historical Summary of Building 19

2.0

2.1 The First Hospital Mortuary

The site plan in Figure 2.1 shows the first hospital Morgue was located in the north east corner of the hospital site, on the southern side of Eileen Street.

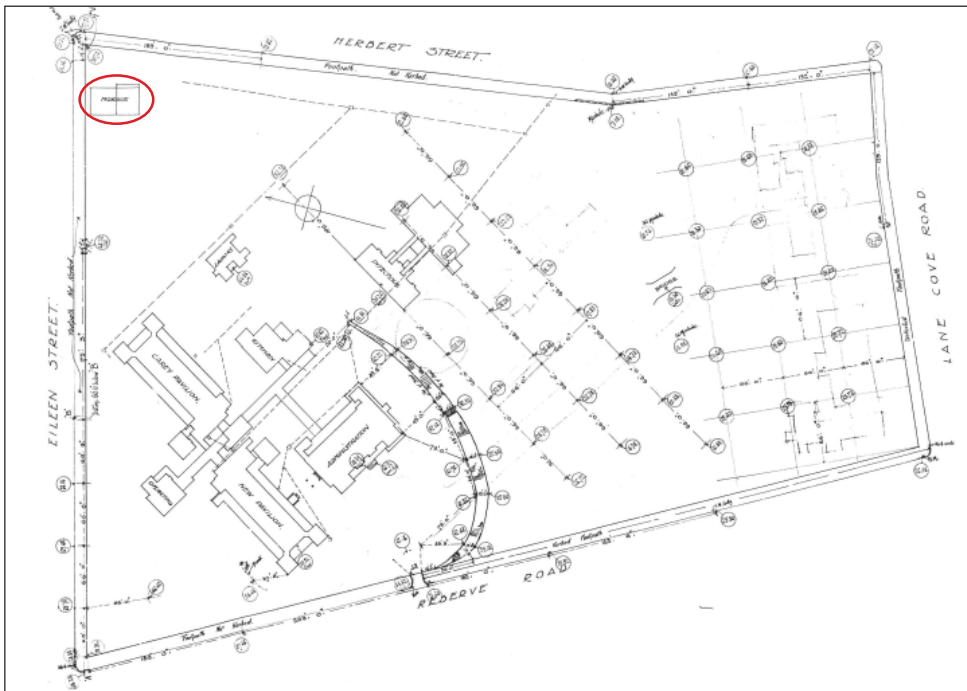


Figure 2-1
1914 Site Plan of North Shore Hospital showing the location of the first morgue.

Source: NSW Department of Commerce Archives, PH163/15

The poor state of the original mortuary facilities is remembered by former staff¹:

The Morgue was just an old shed and conditions were almost indescribable - in this shed were several wooden table - the bodies leaving the wards ... were taken down on trolleys,, with just a gray blanket covering them and placed on one of the tables, then covered with a tin cover. Great care had to be taken that the cover was put on properly and fitted firmly , as the place was infested with rats.Post mortems were done in this place. A nurse always accompanied the wardsman to the mortuary - it was really a horrifying place.

¹ Extracts from 'Miss K E Sturt's Reminiscences written in the 1950s', in General Medical Superintendent's Special Collection, cited in Sherington, *A Century of Caring*, page 45

2.2 Initial Construction of The Mortuary Component of Building 19

Plans for a new Mortuary Block were prepared by the Department of Public Works Government Architects Branch in 1924. The new building facilities included space for a mortuary, post mortem room, cool room, and chapel. Ramps on the northern and southern side of the building provided access. The northern entrance opened to a vestibule which was adjacent to the chapel, mortuary and post mortem room. The southern entrance provided direct access from the verandah to the mortuary.²

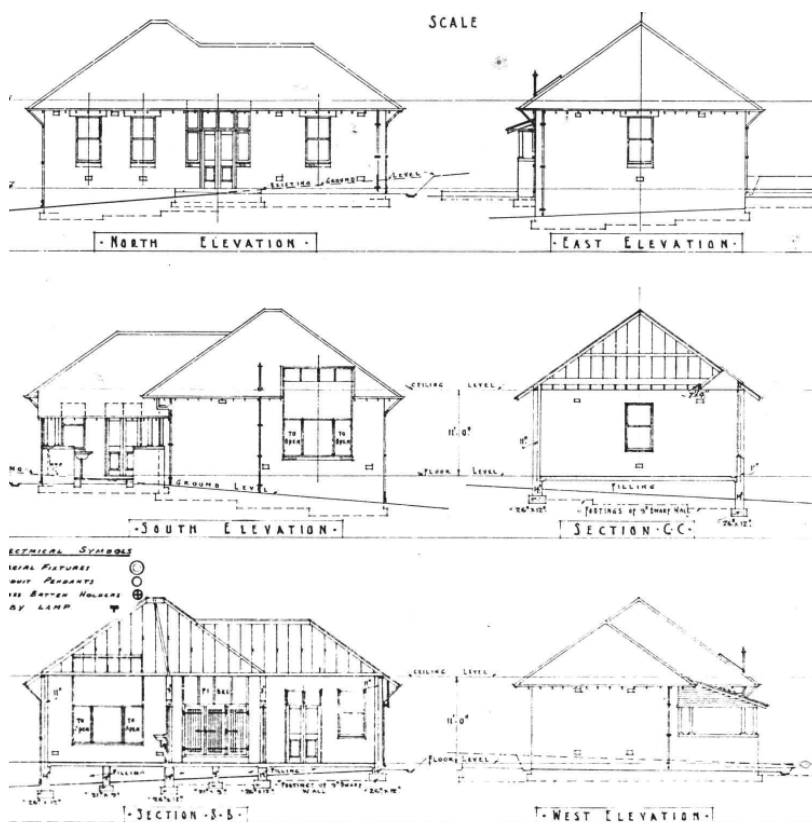


Figure 2-2
Plan showing the elevations of the former Mortuary building which became part of Building 19

Source: NSW Department of Commerce Archives PH163/12

2 1924 Plan of the Royal North Shore Hospital Mortuary Block, NSW Department of Commerce Archives, PH163/12



Figure 2-4
1943 site plan showing the location of the Morgue

Source: NSW Department of Commerce Archives PH163/115

2.3 Additions and Modifications to the Building

The *Royal North Shore Hospital, St Leonards Heritage Assessment*, February 2005, (City Plan Heritage) notes the Mortuary was made redundant following the completion of the new hospital buildings and the new boiler house building constructed in 1958-1960, as views of post-mortem procedures were readily available from the new buildings through the mortuary's enlarged skylight.

The Laundry block was constructed, immediately adjacent to the building, in 1959, preventing access to the building from the north. The construction date of the eastern extension to the former Mortuary building, linking it with the Laundry, is not known. It is not shown on 1965 plans for internal modifications to the Laundry and is visible in the 1976 aerial photograph, reproduced in Figure 2-6.

The interior of the former Mortuary Building was extensively altered for its use as the laundry office. Comparison of the original plans

and the existing building show the following modifications have been made:

- Enclosing of the southern verandah space
- Insertion of internal walls
- Insertion of a door in the east elevation and a window in the south elevation
- Removal of the entry ramps
- Blocking in of window openings in the east and north elevations, and the door opening in the north elevation
- Removal of the interior fitout including the mortuary chamber and cool room
- Removal and replacement of internal doors

The Laundry and the former Mortuary were known collectively as Building 19 of the Royal North Shore Hospital complex. The Laundry component of the building has recently been demolished as part of the approved Concept Plan site works, leaving the former Mortuary and its undated eastern addition. The plan in Figure 2-7 shows the former Mortuary building shaded red, the later Laundry building shaded in blue and the eastern addition to the Mortuary coloured grey.

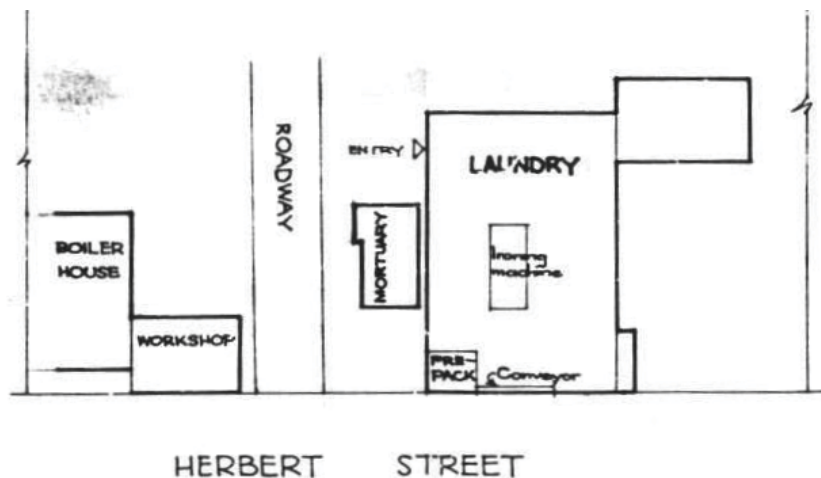


Figure 2-5
1965 plan of the Mortuary and Laundry

Source: NSW Department of Commerce Archives PH163/191

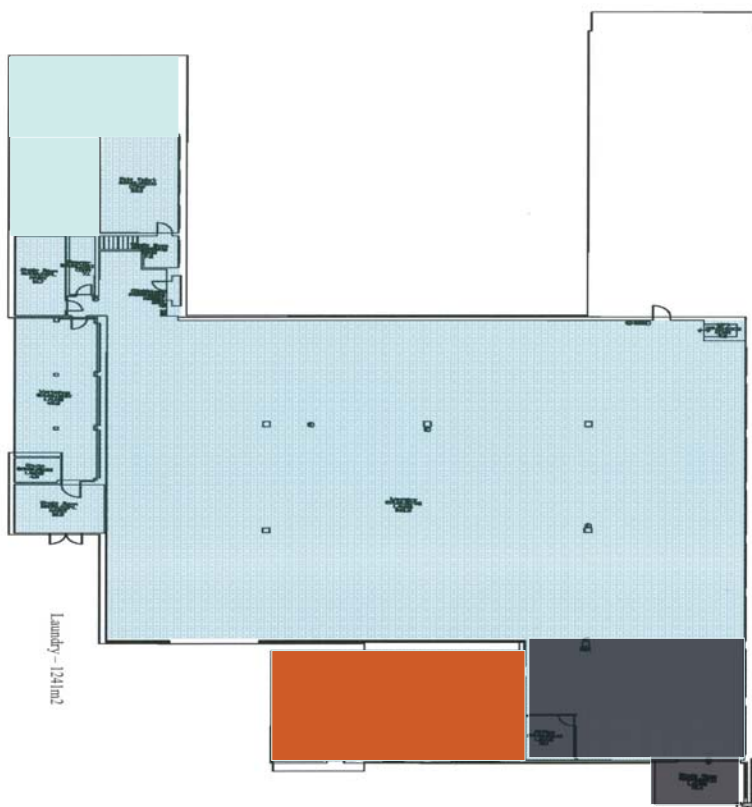


Figure 2-7

Diagram of the Building 19 footprint with the 1925 Mortuary Building coloured red and the Laundry and additions coloured blue and grey. The blue components have recently been demolished as part of the approved Concept Plan site works.

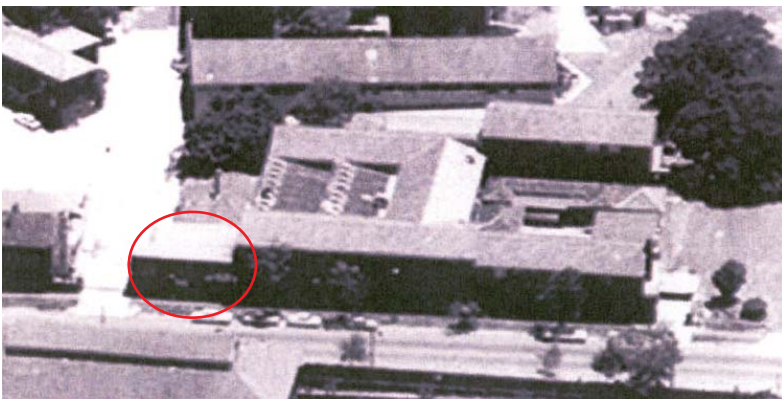


Figure 2-6
1976 aerial photograph showing the eastern addition to the former Mortuary
circled

Source: RNSH Archives

Building Description

3.0

Building 19 of the Royal North Shore Hospital complex comprised two components: the 1925 former Mortuary, with its post 1965 addition, and the circa 1959 Laundry. The diagram in Figure 2-7 shows the circa 1959 Laundry shaded in blue. This building has been demolished as part of the approved Concept Plan site works.

The remaining building comprises the former Mortuary and its post 1965 eastern addition. The former Mortuary is a small single storey brick building with a hipped roof clad with terracotta tiles, and timber framed windows. Detailing includes exposed timber eaves, timber shingling on the western elevation, and a large skylight window over the former post mortem room. There is an enclosed verandah on the south west corner of the building. The addition to the east of the former Mortuary linked the building to the Laundry. The addition is a single storey flat roof structure of brick construction with metal cladding to the southern elevation, and a concrete floor. Entry is by way of a roller door at the eastern end of the southern elevation, which is accessed via a concrete ramp.

The building is in a poor state of repair with damaged and missing roof tiles allowing water ingress, broken and missing window panes, and damage to the brickwork of the western elevation which may be the result of a past vehicle collision.

Earlier interior refurbishment for use as the Laundry office removed evidence of the building's former use, and little original fabric remains evident.



Figure 3-1

View of the south elevation of the former Mortuary, showing the closed in verandah and the enlarged skylight in the former post mortem room

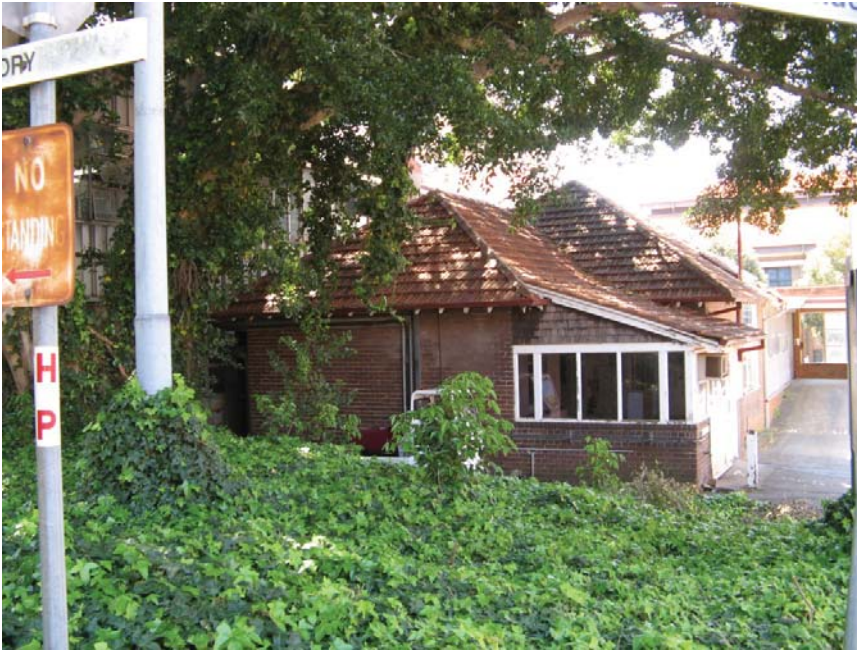


Figure 3-2
South and west elevation of the former Mortuary, with the ramp access to the eastern addition visible on the right



Figure 3-3
South elevation of the eastern addition to the former Mortuary with the top floor of the Laundry (since demolished) visible at the rear



Figure 3-4
Herbert Street elevation of the eastern addition to the former Mortuary and the adjoining Laundry, prior to its demolition



Figure 3-5
Shows the western wall of the extension to the former Mortuary which was the original exterior eastern wall of the Mortuary



Figure 3-6
North elevation of the former Mortuary (on the right) and the south elevation of the Laundry before its demolition (on the left)



Figure 3-7
North elevation of the former Mortuary



Figure 3-8
Office fitout of the enclosed space of the former Mortuary verandah



Figure 3-9
The former mortuary chamber has been renovated for office use



Figure 3-10
View from the former mortuary chamber through to the former Cool Room space of the Mortuary, adapted for office accommodation



Figure 3-11
Office fitout of the former post mortem room



Figure 3-12
Shows the modifications to the northern side of the building which include the insertion of a partition wall (on the right) and the blocking in of the northern entrance doors (on the left)

Previous Assessment of Significance

4.0

4.1 Introduction

The *Royal North Shore Hospital, St Leonards Heritage Assessment*, February 2005, (City Plan Heritage) concluded that the Mortuary building component of Building 19 is of Moderate heritage significance. The *Royal North Shore Hospital Concept Plan Heritage Impact Statement* (Godden Mackay Logan, May 2006) concurs with this finding. This building has been vacant since these reports were prepared and has suffered from a lack of maintenance which has impacted on its integrity and diminished its significance.

The detailed heritage assessment and statement of significance for the former Mortuary Building contained in this Section is reproduced from the *Royal North Shore Hospital, St Leonards Heritage Assessment*, February 2005, (City Plan Heritage).

4.2 Evaluation of the Criteria

Criterion (a) – An item is important in the course, or pattern, of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area)

The mortuary building at Royal North Shore Hospital is representative of the pattern of development of the hospital complex, being part of the land resumed in the 1920s for greater expansion of services. It is a building form that is increasingly becoming threatened by site redevelopment across New South Wales, and relatively few examples of early interwar morgues remain. The Royal North Shore Hospital mortuary retains its key architectural characteristics and form to make its former function readily identifiable, although its interior has been modified for new uses.

Criterion (b) - An item has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area)

The building has some degree of association with the generations of hospital staff involved with the Royal North Shore Hospital, but has little association with individuals of particular significance to the Hospital or community.

Criterion (c) - An item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in NSW (or the local area)

The Mortuary building has, in its exterior presentation, a readily discernible form and function through its architecture. While it does not demonstrate a high degree of achievement, it has retained clear characteristics of its genre.

Criterion (d) - An item has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in NSW (or the local area) for social, cultural or spiritual reasons

The Mortuary has associations with the hospital community.

Criterion (e) - An item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area)

The land directly beneath the morgue may provide information relative to the nineteenth century cottages on the site prior to its construction. Surrounding land, however, is not expected to retain any archaeological potential given its excavation and the construction of the laundry in the late 1950s.

Criterion (f) - An item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area)

The mortuary is an example of a now uncommon and endangered architectural form the early interwar period.

Criterion (g) - An item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSW's cultural or natural places; or cultural or natural environments (or a class of the local area's cultural or natural places; or cultural or natural environments)

The mortuary is a good example of a functional, early interwar hospital building that functioned outside the sphere of 'patient care'. It has the key characteristics that typify this period of morgues, with its extensive skylight window for the carrying out of procedures; although its interior has been extensively altered, the majority of the exterior remains to document its former function.

4.3 Statement of Significance

The former mortuary building at Royal North Shore Hospital presents a good exterior remnant example of a simply constructed, early interwar hospital 'services' building, with its square timber shingles and extensive windows and skylight openings. Its 1922 design was, for the time, state of the art, with refrigeration chambers and provision for a chapel, and is representative of key hospital facilities that are often overlooked in favour of prominently located patient wings and administration buildings.

It occupies a site close to the original RNSH morgue site along the Eileen Street alignment, in keeping with the hospital's policy in relation to disposal after death, with Eileen Street considered a convenient and discreet location from which to convey corpses for burial.

The building has historical and architectural value, with its distinctive skylight windows highlighting the building's purpose. Externally, the building is in fair but neglected condition, and is encroached upon by the hospital laundry. Internally, the mortuary has little integrity due to renovations for its use as the laundry office.

4.4 Archaeological Potential

The *Royal North Shore Hospital, St Leonards Archeological Assessment*, 2006, prepared by Godden Mackay Logan, identifies areas of archeological potential within the site. This Report shows there are areas of potential Low to Medium significance to the north and south of Building 19. It notes the following in relation to Building 19 itself

Analysis of the historical plans indicates that there were no cottages on this land prior to the construction of the Morgue building. Building 19 has been converted to an office and evidence of its function as a morgue largely removed. This conversion indicates that it is unlikely that occupation deposits or relics relating to the buildings use as a morgue survive. It is considered this area has No archaeological potential.

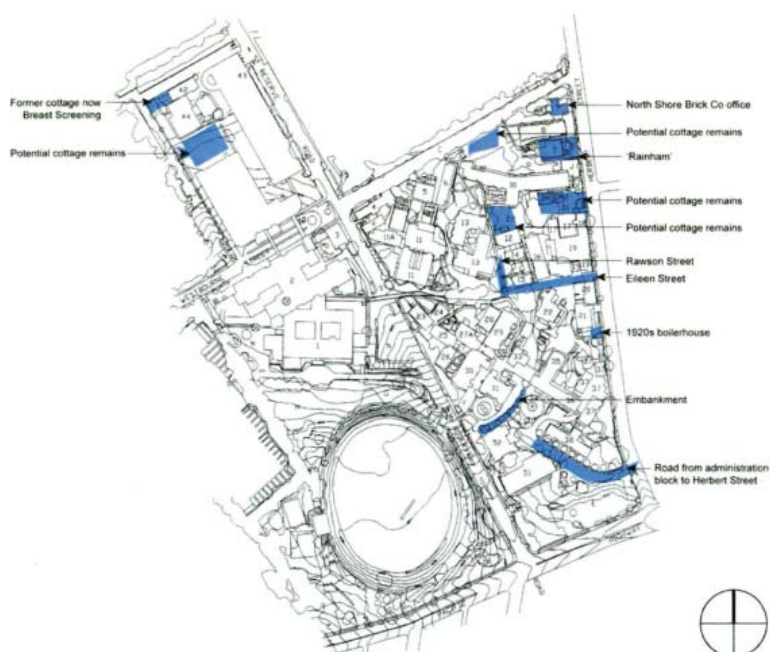


Figure 4-1

Plan showing the areas of archaeological potential of Low to Medium significance marked in blue

Source: *Royal North Shore Hospital, St Leonards Archeological Assessment*, Godden Mackay Logan, 2006

4.5 Grading of Significance

The former Mortuary Building has been assessed to determine a relative grading of significance into five levels. This process examines a number of factors, including:

- Relative age
- Original design quality
- Degree of intactness and general condition
- Extent of subsequent alterations
- Association with important people or events
- Ability to demonstrate a rare quality, craft or construction process

Grading reflects the contribution the element makes to overall significance of the item (or the degree to which the significance of the item would be diminished if the component were removed or altered).

EXCEPTIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

Includes rare or outstanding building fabric that displays a high degree of intactness or can be interpreted relatively easily.

HIGH SIGNIFICANCE

Includes the original extant fabric and spaces of particular historic and aesthetic value. Includes extant fabric from the early phases of construction.

MODERATE SIGNIFICANCE

Includes building fabric and relationships which were originally of higher significance, but have been compromised by later, less significant modifications.

LITTLE SIGNIFICANCE

Includes most of the fabric associated with recent alterations and additions made to accommodate changing functional requirements. These are components generally of neutral impact on the site's significance.

INTRUSIVE

Recent fabric, which adversely affects the significance of the site.

Grading has been established as a valuable tool, to assist in developing appropriate conservation measures for the treatment of the building and its various elements. In general, good conservation practice encourages the focussing on change, or upgrading of, an historical building/site to those areas or components, which make a lesser contribution to significance. The areas or components that make a greater or defining contribution to significance should generally be left intact or changed with the greatest care and respect.

SITE ELEMENTS	GRADING OF SIGNIFICANCE
There are no elements of the former Mortuary considered to be of Exceptional significance	EXCEPTIONAL
There are no elements of the former Mortuary considered to be of High significance	HIGH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall form of the building • Access from the building to Eileen Street • Brick facades • Timber shingle detailing • Skylight opening • Timber window joinery 	MODERATE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-original window in southern wall of former cool room • Internal layout and fit out 	LITTLE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eastern addition • The enclosed verandah on the south west corner of the building 	INTRUSIVE

Assessment of Heritage Impact

5.0

5.1 The Proposed Development

The Minister for Planning approved the *Royal North Shore Hospital Amended Concept Plan and Preferred Project Report* (November 2006) as Major Project No. 06_0051, in April 2007.

Demolition of the Mortuary component of Building 19, on this site, has been excluded from the approval, under Condition C2, pending the submission of additional information to demonstrate why it cannot be retained and integrated into the redevelopment proposal.

Options for the retention, and adaptive reuse of the former Mortuary building, in conjunction with the new Acute Hospital and Community Health Facility, have been explored. The building is not considered suitable for this purpose as the on-grade levels do not permit easy access for mobility restricted patients, or members of the public, and there are concerns for pedestrian safety associated with the use of this building, located in close proximity to Eileen Street which is being reopened to vehicular traffic from Herbert Street.

It is now considered necessary to demolish this building as it has been found to contain large amounts of asbestos. The presence of this building, containing hazardous material, in such close proximity to the new hospital and health facility is of concern to NSW Health.

Consequently, it is proposed to demolish the former Mortuary component of Building 19. Approval for the demolition of the eastern addition to this building component was given as part of Major Project Application MP08_00172.

5.2 Heritage Impact Assessment

The NSW Heritage Office has published a series of criteria for the assessment of heritage impact for the demolition of heritage items.

The 'questions to be answered' in relation to demolition of a building or structure are addressed in the table below:

Heritage Office Question to be Answered	Response
<i>Have all options for retention and adaptive re-use been explored?</i>	Yes.
<i>Can all of the significant elements of the heritage item be kept and any new development be located elsewhere on the site?</i>	There are no significant elements remaining in the former Mortuary building.

<p><i>Is the demolition essential at this time or can it be postponed in case future circumstances make its retention and conservation more feasible?</i></p>	<p>Postponing the demolition of this building will not make its retention and re-use more feasible as the presence of hazardous building material is incompatible with the provision of Health services.</p> <p>Postponing the demolition will probably result in further deterioration of the building as repair and maintenance work is not likely to be undertaken until a new use is found.</p>
<p><i>Has the advice of a heritage consultant been sought? Have the consultant's recommendations been implemented? If not, why not?</i></p>	<p>Yes. The proposed development at Royal North Shore Hospital is based on consultation and detailed heritage analysis by specialist heritage consultants (regarding built heritage, historic archaeology).</p> <p>Retention of the former Mortuary was identified as desirable but it has now been found that it is not possible to integrate this building into the new Hospital development for operational and safety reasons.</p>

The impact of the proposed demolition of the former Mortuary will be minimised by the preparation of an Preliminary Interpretation Strategy, which has already been completed, and an Archival Photographic Recording.

Conclusions and Recommendations

6.0

6.1 Conclusions

- The Minister for Planning approved the *Royal North Shore Hospital Amended Concept Plan and Preferred Project Report*, November 2006 as Major Project No. 06_0051 in April 2007.
- Demolition of the former Mortuary component of Building 19, on this site, has been excluded from the overall Concept Plan approval, under Condition C2, pending the submission of additional information to demonstrate why it cannot be retained and integrated into the redevelopment proposal.
- Options for the retention, and adaptive reuse of the former Mortuary building, in conjunction with the new Acute Hospital and Community Health Facility, have been explored. The building is not considered suitable for this purpose due to safety issues associated with its location and built fabric.
- The former Mortuary Building component of Building 19 has been assessed in earlier reports as being of Moderate heritage significance. It has been vacant since these reports were prepared and has suffered from a lack of maintenance which has impacted on its integrity and diminished its significance.
- The building is in a poor state of repair and has been subject to extensive internal alteration since its initial construction.
- The adverse heritage impact of the proposed demolition of the former Mortuary component of Building 19 will be mitigated by the preparation of a Preliminary Interpretation Strategy (already completed) and an Archival Photographic Recording of the building.
- In the context of serving the public interest with the provision of improved Hospital facilities the demolition of the former Mortuary component of Building 19 is considered to be acceptable from a heritage perspective.

6.2 Recommendations

- That the proposed demolition of the former Mortuary component of Building 19 be approved.
- An Archival Photographic Recording of the building and its context should be prepared prior to demolition.