

MINUTES OF HERITAGE REFERENCE COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY, 3 APRIL 2025

- Present: Councillor K Wheatley (Chairperson) (Wahroonga Ward)
Councillor I Balachandran (Deputy Chairperson) (Gordon Ward)
Mr Robert Moore – National Trust
Ms Lorna Watt – Ku-ring-gai Historical Society
Ms Zeny Edwards – Local Historian and Community Member
Mr Chris Bluett- Community Member
- Staff Present: Director Strategy and Environment (Andrew Watson)
Manager Urban & Heritage Planning (Antony Fabbro)
Team Leader Urban Planning (Craig Wyse)
Heritage Specialist Planner (Claudine Loffi)
Strategic Planner Heritage (Philippa Hayes)
- Others Present: Councillor C Kay - Ku-ring-gai Council
Councillor B Ward - Ku-ring-gai Council
Councillor S Ngai - Ku-ring-gai Council
Councillor M Smith - Ku-ring-gai Council
- Apologies: Ms Margaret Skilbeck – Australian Institute of Architects

The Meeting commenced at 12:30 PM

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor I Balachandran – heritage listed property.

MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

NOTING OF MINUTES

Minutes of Heritage Reference Committee

File: CY00413/12

Meeting held 5 December 2024

RESOLVED:

The circulated and adopted minutes were noted.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Low and Mid Rise housing SEPP changes

File: CY00413/13

Vide: GB.1

The Committee discussed the State Government rezonings under the Low and Mid Rise Housing State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) as it relates to heritage. The Committee noted the majority of Ku-ring-gai's heritage conservation areas and setting of heritage items were impacted, with no previous precedent for such zoning density increases in heritage conservation areas before the housing SEPPs.

The Committee noted the failure of the SEPP to address the typology and heritage significance of heritage conservation areas that is heavily reliant on the existing building typology pattern. The Committee noted terraces are not appropriate in listed areas of free-standing houses. The Committee noted the disregard for state guidelines for contextual design for "better fit". The Committee commented this appears to challenge every effort of the National Trust since the 1980s to conserve heritage conservation areas.

Further issues discussed included the relationship of this SEPP with the designated TOD areas, the NSW history of listing conservation areas and items, demolition risk, dual occupancy, and the non-discretionary development standards.

RESOLVED:

The Heritage Reference Committee receive and note this report and provide comments.

Her-story Project Update

File: S13598

Vide: GB.2

The Committee discussed the progress and priorities for Ku-ring-gai's online inventories uploaded to the State Heritage Inventory. The Committee commended the project.

RESOLVED:

The Heritage Reference Committee received and noted the heritage items with updated online inventories.

Heritage strategy ongoing projects update

File: CY00413/13

Vide: GB.3

The Committee noted and discussed the reported strategic heritage projects underway, including the forthcoming heritage awards and grants currently open for applications.

RESOLVED:

The Heritage Reference Committee received and noted the report.

Transport Oriented Development and Council Alternative proposal update

File: CY00413/13

Vide: GB.4

The Committee discussed the Transport Oriented Development (TOD) State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) as it relates to heritage, and Council's proposal for an alternative preferred scenario. Staff confirmed corrections to the 13 heritage conservation areas impacted by the preferred scenario rather than the reported 9. Issues discussed include the state significant development applications (SSDs), SSD isolation of heritage items and lack of consideration in documentation for heritage impacts, the treatment of items in Council's preferred scenario, potential for item delisting and economic considerations for heritage item owners, and impacts of lost amenity on heritage items and areas.

Councillor Balachandran sought committee advice on Council's powers to delist heritage items, help owners seeking delisting or isolated by SSD, help owners ensuring an economic return on heritage items. The Committee and staff advised on limits of Council powers for SSD, listing under NSW standards and systems and private market matters. Staff advised on Council's initiatives for heritage item owners in the preferred scenario. Councillor Ngai posed increasing floor space ratios in certain conservation areas where some sections are upzoned and some are not. The Committee noted this matter with no further comment. Examples of past heritage item amalgamated sites developments were discussed.

Staff alerted the Committee members to complete the preferred scenario online survey on exhibition for public feedback open until 22 April 2025.

RESOLVED:

The Heritage Reference Committee received and noted the report and provided comments.

OTHER BUSINESS

NSW Government Pattern Book

File: S14848

Vide: OB.1

The Committee was verbally briefed by staff and shown the Discussion Paper NSW Housing Pattern Book Planning Pathways for Council comments. The Committee objected to the proposed streamlined DA approval pathway applying to heritage conservation areas. The Committee noted that the development of the patterns did not show evidence that heritage considerations had been incorporated into the designs for acceptable heritage impacts in a heritage context. The Committee noted the fundamental lack of commitment to conserving heritage conservation areas. The Committee also noted the absence of requirements for building orientation for solar access standards. The Committee observed the pattern book would remove the diversity of housing for good examples of historic house and gardens represented in Ku-ring-gai's heritage conservation areas. The Committee concluded the significance and amenity of heritage conservation areas would be negatively impacted by the proposed pattern book designs and associated approval pathways.

RESOLVED:

The Heritage Reference Committee received and noted the update and provided comments seeking removal of the proposed pattern book application to heritage conservation areas.

The Meeting closed at 1:55pm