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Mr Chris Bluett
Manager Strategic Planning
Woollahra Municipal Council
536 New South Head Road
Double Bay NSW 2028
chris.bluett@woollahra.nsw.gov.au

Dear Chris,

**RE: ROSE BAY UNTING CHURCH AND WESLEY HALL, 518A OLD SOUTH HEAD ROAD
ROSE BAY**

On behalf of our clients the Sydney Presbytery of the Uniting Church NSW and ACT and Endeavour Property Advisory we write in response to the Rose Bay Uniting Church and Wesley Hall Group Heritage Significance Assessment Report of March 2018 by RAM Architects and Heritage Consultants.

The recommendation of the RAM Report is the inclusion of the property at 518a Old South Head Road on the Woollahra Municipal Council LEP Heritage list as a property of local Heritage significance to Woollahra and we understand that this is currently under consideration.

We acknowledge the Robert A Moore (RAM) report has been undertaken in accordance with good heritage practice and broadly agree with its assessment and findings. We agree with a majority of the listing criteria identified in the RAM Report (based on the criteria of the NSW Heritage Office). This criteria has been used to support the finding that the site has local heritage significance. We note that the assessment against each of the Criterion as to whether the site meets the threshold guidelines for inclusion or exclusion is based on the opinion and interpretation of the author Robert A Moore.

In our work on the Rose Bay site we have followed a robust process based on consideration of the Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter articles and process. Our initial heritage assessment and advice outlined in the Heritage Advice Report (Conrad Gargett Ancher Mortlock Woolley April 11, 2017) was the basis from which the design was developed and this document formed part of the consultation with Woollahra Council Planners Nick Economou, Eleanor Smith and Heritage officer, Catherine Coleville. This advice included undertakings from the Sydney Presbytery of the Uniting Church NSW and ACT that they intended to treat the 1905 section of the Church as if it were Heritage listed in any future development.

We consider that the original 1905 Church encapsulates the heritage values of the place as assessed and outlined in the RAM assessment report.

The retention and reuse of the 1905 (original) Church building adequately acknowledges the cultural heritage significance and the embedded values within this site. The significance criteria identified in the Heritage Advice Report April 2017 supports retaining the 1905 original Church and its 1924 entry addition. This approach retains the aesthetic significance, landmark and streetscape values and the Church's connection with important persons and groups (through the retention and conservation of the stained glass windows and plaques).

The embedded values and significance identified in the RAM report in the Section 6 Assessment (NSW Assessment Guidelines) can be retained and represented in our approach of retaining the 1905 Portion of the Church as follows:

<p>Criteria</p>	<p>Excerpt from RAM report – Section 6.0 Heritage Significance Assessment (italics) and Discussion on retention of assessed significance in the retained 1905 Portion</p>
<p>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)</p>	<p>Excerpt from RAM report – Section 6.0 Heritage Significance:</p> <p><i>One of the first churches built in the Rose Bay area, and the first Methodist church of this locality, the Rose Bay Methodist church was astutely developed in the context of consolidating residential subdivision. First apparent as an isolated statement of faith, it was soon extended to meet the expanding Methodist activities that were evidence of the growth and development of the Rose Bay community and the denomination. It reflects this early history and the history and endurance of the Church and its use of the site for over 70 years, documented in its fabric and the parish (Circuit) records.</i></p> <p>The retention of the 1905 Church would retain the physical fabric and form of the original Church embodying the place’s importance as the first Methodist Church in this location in the residential context. The 1924 Church extension and 1927 Wesley Hall demonstrate the stages of growth and development of the Rose Bay Community and Methodist (Uniting Church) denomination. This aspect of significance could be adequately conveyed through appropriate archival recording and on site interpretation. This could include photos, drawings and plans including a site development plan showing the key stages of development with the context of the broader development of Rose Bay.</p>
<p>Criterion (b)—an item has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in the cultural or natural history of NSW (or the cultural or natural history of the local area)</p>	<p>Excerpt from RAM report – Section 6.0 Heritage Significance;</p> <p><i>The Rose Bay Uniting (former Methodist) Church and Wesley Hall group is the work of a series of important, successful early Twentieth-Century architects - A & GL McCredie & Sons, Dallas E Walsh and Byera Hadley. The McCredies’ Church of 1905 brought a strong architectural design statement to a local landmark corner for a church community intent on establishing a clear local presence with a building design based on the functionality, modesty and economy reflective of their faith. The successive phases of the Church and Hall reflect the attitudes and practices of early 20th Century architecture, of ecclesiastical architecture within the period, and the successively involved architects, with Walsh carefully altering the McCredie Church, and Hadley realising a supporting meeting hall and school complex, in an ambitious but complementary marriage of design and practical construction.</i></p> <p><i>The establishing committee of the Church included prominent Methodists including Ebenezer Vickery, MLA, and E.G. Waterhouse, later Prof. of Languages at the University of Sydney, a renowned horticulturalist and client of architect William Hardy Wilson for the outstanding residence “Eryldene”.</i></p> <p><i>For architects, the design of the Wesley Hall by Byera Hadley has a particular association of interest, for his importance as the</i></p>

	<p><i>benefactor of a rare, major travelling scholarship for architects.</i></p> <p><i>The high associative significances of The Rose Bay Uniting Church and Wesley Hall group with these architects and the Methodist community of Rose Bay is enhanced by the associated substantiating documentation and archives of the Church and its remaining moveable heritage of site-specific furniture and memorials.</i></p> <p>The retention of the 1905 Church and 1924 Entry structure would retain the physical connection to the notable associated Architects and their design intent for this site. The retention of the commemorative stained glass window would retain the connection to the Church’s founding Committee member Ebenezer Vickery, MLA.</p> <p>Additional on-site interpretation including information panels, artefacts, plaques and furniture (moveable heritage) could provide additional material to inform visitors and scholars of the evolution of the development of the site by the successive architects to realise the complimentary design for the successive alterations and additions.</p>
<p>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)</p>	<p>Excerpt from RAM report – Section 6.0 Heritage Significance;</p> <p><i>Through its architectural design, integrity of construction and employment of modest materials in an architectural design language current in Australia across the times of its phased construction, the group exerts a landmark streetscape presence and aesthetic qualities that remain evident to visitors, the local community, and passers-by. The harmonious, compatible elements of the group’s composition weld together stages of growth that the respective architects could contribute to the gradual realisation of the complex, respecting their predecessors’ work and the needs of their clients, with which as architects of experience and skill they were both familiar and capable of reconciling.</i></p> <p><i>The aesthetic impact of the church complex is supported by the modest curtilage, fence and garden, featuring a single specimen of a Western Red Cedar (Thuja plicata) tree, typical of memorial plantings of the era.</i></p> <p><i>The group’s local aesthetic significance is enhanced by the associated archive of drawings and specifications, Church records and documents, and the moveable heritage of site-specific furniture in situ, including the altar table, communion rail, reredos, Pulpit, Choir Rails, pews, marble font, hymnal board and flower stands. (pages 41 and 42 RAM March 2018 Heritage Significance Assessment Report</i></p> <p>The retention of the 1905 Church would retain the streetscape and landmark qualities of the place. Site line studies and analysis show that the landmark qualities are experienced through the views of the 1905 Church from Old South Head Road and Dover Road. The 1924 extension and 1927 Wesley Hall are recessive are not required to retain the landmark</p>

	<p>qualities of the place. The elements of the group’s composition (including the 1924 Church extension and 1927 Wesley Hall) demonstrating the stages of growth that the respective architects contributed to could be adequately conveyed through appropriate archival recording and on site interpretation. This could include photos, drawings and plans including a site development and evolution plan.</p> <p>The aesthetic significance could be supported by access to the archive of drawings and records as well as the reuse of moveable heritage items and plaques. Moveable heritage is of significance and would need to be appropriately managed through identification and inventory. Items identified as being of high significance could be retained and reused on site.</p>
<p>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</p>	<p>Excerpt from RAM report – Section 6.0 Heritage Significance;</p> <p><i>The Rose Bay Uniting (former Methodist) Church and Wesley Hall group has held strong social, cultural and spiritual associations for the Rose Bay Methodist and Uniting Church community. The Methodist community was an identifiable group who built and paid off the church over 60 years, engendering it with a particular local community affiliation. It was the centre of that local church community’s social, cultural and spiritual life. Submissions received by Council regarding the future of the group by members of the current broader community, suggest that it remains of social and community significance. The Church group appears to hold significance for the wider community, members of whom have known and used the group as a long-standing local day care centre, dance studio and venue for local community meetings, and other uses.</i></p> <p><i>The group also has an interest and relevance for architects and students of architecture and society, as a good representative example of the work of McCredie and Sons, Walsh and Hadley, whose works lost and enduring are representative of architecture and its community role in the late 19th Century and early 20th Century, now significantly reduced in number, increasingly rare, and relatively poorly recognised. Their individual and collective practice outputs are reflective of the many public buildings and churches designed by architects in this period. Hadley is well known to architects through his endowment of the Byera Hadley Scholarship.</i></p> <p><i>The corner location of the group and its associated records, moveable heritage and furnishings, some furniture and furnishings of the highest quality, lend both a landmark prominence and sense of place and identity, and appear to support a strong attribution of relevance of the group to the wider community.</i></p> <p>The retention and reuse of the 1905 church as a focal point for the community would ensure the social and community significance is retained.</p>

	<p>The retention of the 1905 Church and 1924 Entry structure would retain the physical connection to the notable associated Architects and their design intent for this site. The retention of the commemorative stained glass window would retain the connection to the Church's founding Committee member Ebenezer Vickery, MLA.</p> <p>Additional on-site interpretation including information panels, artefacts, plaques and furniture (moveable heritage) could provide additional material to inform visitors and scholars of the evolution of the development of the site by the successive architects to realise the complimentary design for the successive alterations and additions.</p>
<p>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)</p>	<p>Excerpt from RAM report – Section 6.0 Heritage Significance;</p> <p><i>The Church and Wesley Hall group <u>may</u> have local significance against criterion (e), through its potential to reveal more about itself as a place (through both documentary and physical investigation) and as the focus of the local Methodist community's evangelism and community development.</i></p> <p><i>Additional work is required to address this. Its relative integrity may make it an important reference example of its type. On the basis of current evidence, it is not considered that the group has State level significance against this criterion.</i></p> <p>Currently the Rose Bay Uniting Church does not meet the threshold for Local Listing criteria.</p>
<p>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)</p>	<p>Excerpt from RAM report – Section 6.0 Heritage Significance;</p> <p><i>The Rose Bay Uniting (former Methodist) Church and Wesley Hall group, as an under-utilised former place of worship is at risk of being replaced by redevelopment of its site for another purpose. It is similar in this to other church properties owned by other denominations which have become redundant or excess to Church requirements. It is rare that such places retain a high level of integrity and authenticity, and demonstrate their history and the intent of the community that caused its creation - which the Rose Bay group does.</i></p> <p><i>The Rose Bay Uniting (former Methodist) Church and Wesley Hall group <u>may</u> have local significance against criterion (f), but further examination is required. With the current information available it is not considered that a State level of significance will be attributed to the group against this criterion.</i></p> <p>Currently the Rose Bay Uniting Church does not meet the threshold for Local Listing criteria.</p>
<p>Criterion (g)—an item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSW's (or a class of the local</p>	<p>Excerpt from RAM report – Section 6.0 Heritage Significance;</p> <p><i>As has been argued in criterion (b), the successive phases of the Rose Bay Uniting (former Methodist) Church and Wesley Hall reflect the attitudes and practices of early 20th Century architecture, of ecclesiastical architecture within it, and the successively involved architects - with Walsh carefully altering the McCredie Church, and Hadley realising a supporting meeting</i></p>

<p>area's): cultural or natural places; or cultural or natural environments</p>	<p><i>hall and school complex in an ambitious but complementary marriage of design and construction. The Church group is representative of ecclesiastic architecture and its community role in the late 19th Century and early 20th Century. With its intactness, authenticity and integrity, and supporting documentary evidence and movable heritage, it can demonstrate its significance. It is therefore an important exemplar of its type in multiple dimensions.</i></p> <p>As for Criterion (b) the retention of the 1905 Church and 1924 Entry structure would retain the physical connection to the notable associated Architects and their attitudes and practices for this site. Additional on-site interpretation including information panels, artefacts, plaques and furniture (moveable heritage) could provide additional material to inform visitors and scholars of the development by the successive architects to realise the multiple dimensions of this site.</p>
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We object to the need to locally list all of the buildings on the site and note there has not been a previous local listing for this site. The Rose Bay Uniting Church and Wesley Hall were not included on the LEP 2014 Heritage List, while many other local Churches are included on this list. We understand that the recommendation for listing of current Church sites on the LEP 2014 Heritage List for Woollahra was based on the outcomes of previous heritage studies and assessments including the 1984 Hughes Trueman Ludlow "Woollahra Heritage Study" which does not identify the Rose Bay Uniting Church. The document provided by Woollahra Council Library containing the *Woollahra Council Heritage Study* (Hughes Truman Ludlow, 1984) was reviewed and a reference to the Rose Bay Uniting Church was not found, or a recommendation for a Local or State listing.

We support the listing of the site on the local Woollahra LEP Heritage List but request consideration that this listing be limited to the 1905 (Original) Church only (with the 1924 entry porch).

Our reasons for objection to the Local Listing of the 1924 and 1927 extension are listed below:

1. The Church has not been used as a place of worship for over 10 years with the last service held on the 26th of August 2007. This differs from the findings of the RAM report (Page 5 of the RAM report states that the Church has had continued use for Church Functions until 2017, which is not correct – refer to the attached record of the last service);
2. Educational uses run by the Church ceased in the early 1980's or earlier when the Sunday School ceased operation;
3. The site is no longer financially viable:
 - a. There is an independently quantifiable amount of \$1,905,015 to be spent on the Church over the next 10 years on Annual and Lifecycle maintenance;
 - b. Existing members of the Church, who paid for the 1970's work and still pay for the monthly costs to repair and maintain the Church, can no longer support its costs for repair and maintenance. The rentals obtained from the Ballet School are negligible to the longer term running costs of the Church;
 - c. There are hazardous materials on the site including the (Asbestos) roof sheeting, the costs of removal of this material and reinstatement is not financially viable for the local parishioners who now attend services at Vaucluse;

This situation is not sustainable in the long term and by doing nothing the place will need to be closed off to all public access in the near future.

4. The Church has only been used by a small number of community groups. The only group that currently uses the 1905 component of the Church is a Ballet School with classes since 2007;

5. The 1924 Church extension and the 1927 Wesley Hall are of some cultural significance. The loss of significance from the physical removal of these structures can be managed. While these structures demonstrate the later development and evolution on the site, appropriate archival recording and onsite interpretation can adequately convey this understanding without the need to retain all of the physical built fabric. The approach would include providing a photographic and measured archival record together with the implementation of a site interpretation strategy that would include the moveable heritage (In accordance with the requirements of the NSW Heritage Office). This approach can retain the significance though, telling the story of the place to locals, visitors and scholars alike. This would include its history, site development and former uses, its connection to the history of Methodism and the development of the surrounding area and its connection to key people including the two associated architectural practices;
6. An Archival Record and Interpretation Plan would be lodged with Woollahra Council, the Local Library as well as a local historical society (if required). This would provide an understanding of the history and significance to interested parties and academics;

The RAM report of March 2018 also recommends providing a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for the place. We confirm that to date we have followed a best practice Burra Charter process to date with guidance and advice informed by an understanding of history, assessment of physical building fabric and significance. This could form the basis of a future CMP which is supported by the Sydney Presbytery of the Uniting Church NSW and ACT. Our client fully supports undertaking a detailed significance assessment and formalising policies as part of a CMP process to inform the balanced retention and reuse of the buildings and building fabric on the site.

We appreciated the opportunity to have a constructive meeting last week on Friday 20th with Alan Coker, Catherine Coleville and Robert Moore to discuss the RAM Report findings, our response (as above) and the need for a balanced approach to the reuse and development of this important site. This approach requires the retention of the heritage significance embedded in the physical fabric of the site balanced with the need for new well designed built form to enable new commercial uses and provide an appropriate setting for the place.

Yours sincerely



David Gole
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