

Item No: R1 Recommendation to Council
Subject: **Street Name Inlays**
Author: Amelia Parkins, Strategic Heritage Officer
File No: 448.G
Reason for Report: To report on the review of street name inlays and the appropriateness of adding footpath street names to the Woollahra Local Environmental Plan 2014 heritage schedule.

Recommendation:

That a planning proposal be prepared to list the collection of 493 street name inlays identified in Annexure 1 of the report to the Urban Planning Committee, dated 23 February 2015, as an item of local heritage significance in the Woollahra Local Environmental Plan 2014.

1. Background

1.1 Council decision

Council made a decision on 29 November 2010:

- 1. That the list of early street names in footpaths throughout the municipality that the Woollahra History and Heritage Society Inc prepared in 1988 be reviewed and updated with photographic records of each item.*
- 2. That a report be prepared as to the appropriateness of adding these items to Woollahra Council's heritage register.*
- 3. That the current standard condition and the implementation of the standard condition be reviewed.*

In response to this decision an investigation into street names was carried out as time allowed in the context of other projects and priorities in Council's Strategic Planning program. The investigation included identifying all existing street name inlays and a study of their condition, heritage significance and existing management strategies.

1.2 History of street name inlays

Some of Sydney's older suburbs have had their street names set into the concrete footpaths and kerbs, believed to be part of a civic beautification scheme of the 1930s. These works are thought to have been carried out using surplus labour following the Great Depression, creating the dual benefits of gainful employment and municipal improvements.

As part of this civic beautification scheme, an extensive program of inlaying street names in footpaths, kerbs and gutters was undertaken throughout the Woollahra Municipality of the time which excluded Paddington¹. Over 600 were established.

Other suburbs where street name inlays can be found include the former Municipality of Petersham (now Petersham, Lewisham and Stanmore in Marrickville Municipal Council area), Chatswood (in Willoughby Council area), Burwood, Strathfield, Ashfield and Leichhardt Council areas.

¹ Paddington was originally part of the City of Sydney Local Government Area, within which a street name inlay program was not adopted.

1.3 Purpose of the study

In 1988 an investigation into the street name inlays throughout the Woollahra Municipality was carried out by the Woollahra History and Heritage Society. This resulted in the preparation of the document '*Signs Underfoot: Street name inlays in footpaths, kerbs and gutters of Old Woollahra*' which catalogued the number and location of the majority of inlays in the municipality in 1988. Council sought a review of the 1988 study and to identify if the street name inlays have heritage significance.

As identified through the heritage inventory sheet (**Annexure 1**) the street name inlays in the Woollahra municipality have historic and social significance, and contribute to the aesthetics and character of the areas in which they feature.

1.4 The study

In September and October 2014 comprehensive fieldwork was undertaken to prepare an inventory of all remaining street inlays in the Woollahra Municipality. This inventory identified how many street name inlays are remaining, potential threats facing them and their condition, including location, photographs and a brief condition description.

The first phase of the study was the identification and condition assessment of street inlays. This involved:

- Preparation of maps based on those documented in the 1988 study '*Signs Underfoot: Street name inlays in footpaths, kerbs and gutters of Old Woollahra*' prepared by the Woollahra History and Heritage Society;
- Fieldwork:
 - Locating existing street name inlays identified on the maps
 - Notating where inlays are missing
 - Photographing existing inlays.
- A comparison of the findings of the 1988 study with the 2014 fieldwork and identifying the types of changes that have occurred to the inlays over the last 25 years.
- Preparation of an inventory of street name inlays in 2014, including a photograph, location and brief condition description.

The second phase of the study (**Annexure 2**) was the identification of potential situations where the street inlays may be at risk of damage, who is responsible for managing changes to the inlays and what measures are in place to protect them. This phase involved:

- Meetings with different Council departments including:
 - Development Control
 - Engineering Services
 - Trees and Open Space
 - Capital Projects
 - Building and Compliance
 - Civil Operations.
- Review of the existing management strategies (including internal policies, procedures and standard DA conditions) relating to street name inlays;
- Identifying options to improve existing management strategies for the protection of street name inlays.

1.5 Study findings

The 2014 fieldwork revealed a variety of typologies of street name inlays. These include variations in the mortar mixes and resultant colour of the letters, and whether the inlays were mounted in the footpath, in the kerb or on the face of walls and gutters.

The 1988 investigation identified 615 examples of street name inlays. The 2014 fieldwork found a total of 493 street name inlays in a range of conditions. Some of the inlays identified in 1988 have since been removed and some additional inlays were identified in 2014 that were not picked up in the 1988 study.

The majority of the inlays identified were located in footpaths near intersections.

The table below describes the types of inlays discovered in the 2014 fieldwork:

Type	Number
Footpath	402
Kerb	71
Gutter	15
Other	5

The fieldwork indicates that the majority of inlays remain in a good condition. Where the street name inlays remain insitu, some of them have been damaged by:

- Partial or entire covering with bitumen
- Complete or partial removal as part of footpath upgrade works, in some cases the inlay has been cut out, stored and reinstated
- Partial or complete replacement, or
- Deterioration, particularly in kerbs.

The fieldwork identified that the greatest threat to the existing street name inlays relates to footpath upgrade or repair works. Other areas of work that have the potential to impact the existing street name inlays include:

- Development works
 - Driveways and crossovers
 - Construction traffic and machinery
- Road openings
- Hoarding and scaffolding
- Landscaping
 - Street tree maintenance, replacement or removal
- Access for service companies, such as electricity companies.

2. Heritage listing

Part 2 of Council's resolution from 29 November 2010 required an investigation into the appropriateness of heritage listing the street name inlays. In NSW the procedure for assessing heritage values, heritage listing sites and managing heritage places is a well-established process guided by the *Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter*² (Burra Charter) and the NSW Heritage Division.

² The Burra Charter, 2013, The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance

The standard process for heritage listing involves three main phases, which formed the foundation for the study described in Part 1.4 of this report:

- Investigation- Carry out fieldwork to identify the item, context or study area and investigate the history and fabric of the item;
- Assessment- Make an assessment against the NSW heritage assessment criteria³ and determine an appropriate level of heritage listing (local or state). This forms the foundation of the inventory sheet.
- Management- Make recommendations for appropriate processes for the conservation and management of the item/s.

2.1 Woollahra Local Environmental Plan 2014

The heritage significance of the street name inlays has been investigated and assessed and is described in the inventory sheet (**Annexure 1**). The collection of street name inlays provide evidence of a large scale civic beautification scheme that was adopted by many local councils during the 1930s. The introduction of the street name inlay scheme throughout Woollahra is an indicator of civic pride. The program has social and historical significance as it reflects the use of surplus labour following the Great Depression for civic beautification schemes.

The collection of street name inlays are of a consistent character that is aesthetically distinctive and recognisable throughout Woollahra and other local government areas in NSW. Although construction techniques vary, the colour, size and font used for the inlays demonstrates the consistent and recognisable style used by Councils that adopted a street name inlay scheme during the 1930s.

The result of the assessment was that the collection of street name inlays are of local heritage significance for their historical, social and aesthetic values. They provide a representative example of the use of Depression-era labour for municipal improvements and the large scale civic beautification programs that were carried out in the municipality during the 1930s and subsequently should be listed as items of local environmental heritage in the Woollahra LEP 2014.

Existing management strategies have been found to be insufficient in protecting the street name inlays. Over 100 inlays have been lost since the 1988 survey. Heritage listing the 493 street name inlays would help to address this by increasing awareness and recognition of the inlays. It will also place a greater emphasis on the management and maintenance requirements for the street name inlays.

Heritage listing the street name inlays would provide greater protection but would not result in increased assessment or administrative processes. In particular, clause 5.10 (3) of the Woollahra LEP 2014 allows works to be carried out to a heritage item without consent where Council is satisfied that the works are of a minor nature or for the maintenance of the item and Council has notified the applicant of this in writing. In the case of street name inlays, a formal procedure could be prepared, by Council's Capital Works and Civil Operations teams, that describes how to manage works in the vicinity of an inlay. The formal procedure, if accepted by Council's heritage staff, would allow works to be carried out to footpaths without consent.

³ As described in the Heritage Office publication '*Assessing Heritage significance*'

3. Management strategies

It is important to recognise that a statutory listing alone will not protect the inlays and should be supplemented by appropriate management strategies to ensure that the heritage significance of the street name inlays are conserved.

The existing management strategies relating to the street name inlays are discussed in **Annexure 2** of this report. There is scope to improve these strategies as set out below.

3.1 Immediate actions

The following measures will be introduced to provide greater control over the protection of street name inlays across different council departments:

- Mapping on Council's GIS system- An additional layer has been created to identify the locations of the remaining inlays. This will increase the awareness within Council of the existence of street name inlays throughout the municipality.
- Standard DA conditions- In response to part 3 of the Council's resolution from 29 November 2010, the existing standard conditions have been updated and a new condition that responds to the need to either temporarily or permanently remove and relocate a street name inlay has been drafted.
- Development assessment- A reference to the DCP controls for inlays will be added to the Development Application Report template used by Council's Assessment Officers.
- Compliance permits- A reference to the standard conditions will be included in the standard template used for hoarding and scaffolding permits.
- Council's Engineering Services staff will check the GIS system in the weekly Development Application Review Committee meeting and apply the relevant standard condition.

3.2 Opportunities for future investigation

The following areas have been identified as options for future investigation for the ongoing protection and maintenance of street name inlays:

- Capital works- The specification currently in use by the Capital Works team could be reviewed with the intention of adding a section relating to the maintenance and repair of street name inlays.
A comprehensive inventory of the existing street name inlays, including photographs, location and a brief condition description has been compiled to monitor the inlays and provide a benchmark for ongoing maintenance. A sample from the inventory is provided at **Annexure 3** of this report.
- Civil operations- A procedure and specification for any works to a footpath in the vicinity of a street name inlay could be prepared to guide future work and facilitate the appropriate protection of inlays.

4. Conclusion

A study of street name inlays and an inventory documenting the existing inlays within the municipality was finalised in October 2014. The street name inlays were assessed against the industry standard criteria and found to have historic and social significance for their construction in the 1930s as part of a civic beautification scheme that is thought to have taken advantage of surplus labour following the Great Depression. It would be appropriate to formally recognise this heritage significance through a local heritage listing.

In addition to heritage listing, future management strategies have been considered to limit damage to the inlays that is within Council's control. The heritage listing and resultant management processes outlined in this report will greatly increase awareness and recognition of the significance of street name inlays throughout the community and Council and provide them with greater protection.

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Annexures:

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| Annexure 1 | Heritage inventory sheet |
| Annexure 2 | Existing provisions for the protection of inlays |
| Annexure 3 | Sample from the inventory of street name inlays |