

GADEN HOUSE
2A Cooper Street
Double Bay NSW

Comments on Heritage 21 report on Proposed Heritage Listing

1.0 Introduction

This report has been prepared by Anne Warr Heritage Consulting following a request by Woollahra Municipal Council to review the document 'Gaden House. Proposed Heritage Listing' prepared by Paul Rappoport of Heritage 21 dated 7th August 2018.

2.0 Abbreviations

H21 Heritage 21
 AW Anne Warr Heritage Consulting
 GH Gaden House

3.0 Comments on Heritage 21 Report

H21 comments	AW response
<i>H21 acknowledges that GH meets requisite standards for significance at a local level (H21 2018: 1).</i>	Agreed.
<i>The values for local listing include 'presentation of the building to the street, particularly the façade' (H21 2018: 1).</i>	GH includes significant interiors, as well as a significant façade. A significant portion of the original custom designed internal finishes survive intact, making the building of historic, technical and aesthetic importance for its interiors as well as external facade. The fact that a large portion of the original architectural detailing survives internally elevates the building to a level of state significance for Criteria (e) – the item having potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of NSW's cultural or natural history.
<i>H21 includes Local Theme 3 as part of Local significance.</i>	Agreed. This omission should be rectified in AW report.
<i>'...the commercial buildings within Double bay sought to serve the local community</i>	Just because an item is important to a local community, doesn't preclude it from being of State significance.

<p><i>and is tied to the local development of the commercial precinct of Double Bay.'</i></p>	
<p><i>'However, the comparative analysis provided by Anne Warr indicates that mixed-use buildings constructed during a similar period, such as Liner House, also sought to challenge the traditional forms and introduced creative detailing. Gaden House has been prominent within the Double Bay commercial precinct, receiving local recognition for its contribution to the civic centre and the commercial precinct of Double Bay.'</i></p>	<p>Not sure what H21 is disputing here.</p> <p>The fact that other buildings at the time, such as Liner House, sought to challenge traditional forms and introduce creative detailing should not preclude Gaden House from being listed for its similar significance.</p> <p>According to the NSW Heritage Division Guidelines: 'An item is not to be excluded from listing at local or state levels on the ground that items with similar characteristics have already been listed at local or state levels.'</p>
<p><i>Gaden House was designed by prominent architect Neville Gruzman, a prominent figure within the local community.</i></p>	<p>Gruzman's work was held in high esteem by the wider NSW architectural community during his lifetime, as evidenced by the two exhibitions held in 1959 and 1983 by the NSW chapter of the RAI to recognise his work, by his Order of Australia in 1984, and by his membership of the Prime Minister's Urban Design Taskforce in 1993.</p>
<p><i>Known for his residential buildings, Gaden House led the way to Gruzman then designing two other commercial buildings located on Bay Street, Double Bay.</i></p>	<p>Gruzman was known for much more than his residential buildings.</p> <p>Gruzman & Goad (2006) provide a list of Gruzman's Opus, 1949 to 2003, at the end of the book. This list reveals that Gruzman designed 87 houses, 30 commercial buildings, 4 apartment blocks, 4 schools and participated in 6 major urban design projects; - proof that Gruzman was known for a wide opus of work, which included commercial as well as residential buildings. Purnell Motors, a commercial building completed in 1955, was one of Gruzman's earliest, finest and most acclaimed buildings.</p>
<p><i>However, in assessing its contribution to the economy and the development of retail within New South Wales, Heritage 21 believes that its contribution is at a local level at best, but certainly not elevated into the echelons of State significance. In this regard, we believe that the Anne Warr report inaccurately conflates local themes with state themes.</i></p>	<p>H21 seems to be basing their assessment of significance purely on grounds of the number of NSW Historic State themes that the building qualifies under. Analysis of the State Historic themes is not sufficient to determine if a building is significant or not.</p> <p>No arguments are put forward to dispute the analysis of Gaden house under the 5 assessment criteria provided in Anne Warr's Assessment, which conclude that the building is of local and state significance.</p>

<p><i>The significance of the architectural style of the building, whilst creative and progressive for the period in which it was constructed, is closely associated with the architect, Neville Gruzman. Gruzman's work was confined mainly to the suburbs of Sydney - the majority of which was in houses as opposed to commercial buildings.</i></p>	<p>The fact that a building is located in the suburbs does not preclude it from state significance. This argument would imply that only buildings in the CBD can therefore be considered of state significance, and buildings designed in the suburbs can only ever be of local significance; - a flawed argument not substantiated by Heritage divisions guidelines on state significance.</p> <p>The fact that Gruzman may have designed 87 houses and only 30 commercial buildings does not mean that his commercial buildings are any less significant. Even if GH was the one and only commercial building designed by Gruzman, that would not necessarily preclude it from listing at State level – it may, in fact, be the very factor to warrant its inclusion at State level on the grounds of rarity.</p>
<p><i>Gruzman's buildings were not constructed all over the state of NSW. They were confined mainly to the Eastern suburbs of Sydney and the North Shore. As such, the significance of the subject building is tied to its contribution to the local economy and prominence within the commercial precinct of Double Bay.</i></p>	<p>This is a very spurious argument. NSW Guidelines for State significance do not require that an architect have designed buildings all over the state before any of their structures can be considered of state significance. Harry Seidler did not design buildings all over NSW. Quantity and location are not a test of significance.</p>
<p><i>State Themes:</i></p> <p><i>H21 list 6 state themes that they believe GH qualifies for.</i></p>	<p>Agree that GH qualifies under the 6 state themes identified by H21. In addition, GH qualifies under the theme 'Commerce' and 'Cultural Landscape'. GH is a commercial building and this should be the foremost theme it is listed under. In all, there are 4 National Themes and 5 state themes GH qualifies under; - a significant number.</p>
<p><i>Heritage 21 would agree with Anne Warr that a Conservation Management Plan should be written for the site.</i></p>	<p>This is a major concession from H21. A CMP would not normally be required to be undertaken for a building of only local significance. CMPs are generally reserved for places of state significance.</p>

General Comments on H21 report

The H21 report argues that GH is only of local significance, not of state significance, for the following reasons:

- The building's values 'are attributed to the presentation of the building to the street, particularly the facade' (H21: 1). **This analysis fails to recognise the importance of the original internal detailing, a large proportion of which survives intact, including the circular staircase, perspex dome, custom-designed ceiling system, aluminium door system etc.**

- Gruzman is only ‘a prominent figure within the local community.’ **Not true.**
- Gruzman’s work was ‘mainly confined to the suburbs of Sydney.’ **Not relevant**
- The majority of Gruzman’s work was ‘in houses as opposed to commercial buildings’. **Not relevant**
- ‘Gruzman’s buildings were not constructed all over the state of NSW’. **Not relevant.**
- Because Gruzman’s buildings were ‘confined mainly to the Eastern suburbs of Sydney and the North Shore...the significance of the subject building is tied to its contribution to the local economy and prominence within the commercial precinct of Double Bay’. **Locality is not a determinant of significance.**

The H21 report seems to be arguing that if a building is located in a suburb, then it can only be of local significance, and that an architect’s buildings need to be located across the state in order to be of state significance. Clearly these are fallacious arguments. The location of a building does not necessarily determine its level of significance, with buildings of state significance being located in suburbs, in rural areas as well as in central Sydney. An architect is not required to have a body of work located across the state, or a body of work in commercial buildings for a commercial building to be considered of state significance.

Anne Warr’s Assessment highlights Criteria (c) for demonstrating GH as being of Exceptional significance at a State and Local levels.

Criteria (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 NSW Heritage Office document, ‘Assessing Significance’, gives the following guidelines for inclusion of an item at state or local levels for Criteria (c):

Guidelines for INCLUSION	GH compliance
• shows, or is associated with, creative or technical innovation or achievement	The building experimented with materials and technology, as evidenced by the precast concrete and glass spiral staircase, the circular ceiling system incorporating lighting and air-conditioning, and the external metal clad louvres which were both functional and aesthetically pleasing.
• is aesthetically distinctive	The whole building, as assessed by leading architectural historian, Dr Philip Goad, is a ‘startling piece of large-scale environmental sculpture, modelled and lit at night as a giant public ornament’ (Gruzman & Goad 2006: 28). The building incorporated the sculpture of a leading Australian sculptor, Michael Kitching, which although no longer extant, could be accurately reconstructed.
• has landmark qualities	The construction of Gaden House on the site in 1971 was a creative leap, transforming what had been a pragmatic suburban subdivision with a motor garage on the corner

	through the first half of the 20 th century, into a sculptural object at the junction of three streets in the increasingly sophisticated and cosmopolitan post-war shopping centre of Double Bay.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exemplifies a particular taste, style or technology 	The Architect's determination to elevate the building above the ordinary, to make a contribution to the urban setting, to ensure that the external design was both functional and aesthetically pleasing, and to specially commission a sculpture that would flow through the building from the entrance foyer up the staircase to finish at the perspex dome, demonstrates a creative endeavour of the highest order and a contribution to Australia's cultural life both at the time and through to the present. Although the Kitching sculpture is no longer extant, surviving archival documentation would enable an accurate reconstruction to take place.

The Sydney Morning Herald of 13th August 2018, featured an article regarding a plan by the City of Sydney 'to preserve some of its most prominent modernist architecture', highlighting the lack of protective listing for many of Sydney's important post-war modern buildings. The full article is included in the Appendix to this report.

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28th August 2018.

Appendix – SMH 13 August 2018.

Towers of concrete and glass are among buildings that will be saved from the wrecking ball under a City of Sydney council plan to preserve some of its most prominent modernist architecture.

The council is proposing to heritage list office blocks, a church and playground sculpture as examples of Modern Movement design that should be protected from the city's development rush.

Among them is the MLC Centre in Martin Place and the former Sydney County Council building on George Street, as well as the brutalist buildings of Town Hall House and the Sydney Masonic Centre.

The proposal also takes in lesser known examples including St Peter Julian's Catholic Church and Monastery in Haymarket and Anita Aaron's *Earth Mother* play sculpture in Cook and Phillip Park.

The plan is set to revive the debate over preserving the city's modern architecture that was sparked by the [push to save Sydney's most famous brutalist building, Sirius in the Rocks](#), from destruction.

Modern Movement architecture produced some of the 20th century's most important architecture, including styles known as modern, brutalist and Sydney school, the Heritage Council of NSW said.

A heritage study, commissioned by the council, has recommended nine sites for heritage listing on Sydney's local environment plan.

The Ausgrid building on George Street in Sydney, formerly the Sydney County Council building, is among modernist buildings Clover Moore's council wants to preserve.

The listing would ensure any future development took the building's heritage into account as part of the application process, in a bid to retain significant building features and maintain its character.

Councillors called for the study "in response to increasing development pressure on central Sydney's post-war architecture of potential heritage significance", the report said.

Sydney lord mayor Clover Moore said the Modern Movement era was an important chapter in the city's architectural history and should be preserved.

“Sydney is home to many rare examples of post-war modern architecture, built while the city was experiencing major change in the decades after World War II.

“Architects of the Modern Movement were reformers, responding to the social, political and economic upheaval caused by industrialisation and world wars and this architecture reflects a key moment in Sydney’s history.”

Cr Moore said many buildings from that period had "sadly been demolished or modified beyond recognition".

"It is essential we preserve these important contributions to our city’s architecture for future generations.”

Only five Sydney buildings erected in the post-war period between 1945 and 1975 had been listed on state, national or world heritage lists, she said. That included the Opera House, which gained world heritage status in 2007.

The Central Sydney Planning Committee, made up of representatives from the state government and City of Sydney, will consider the proposal at a meeting next month.

If approved, the plan will be weighed by the Greater Sydney Commission and put on public exhibition.

The director of heritage conservation in the faculty of architecture, design and planning at the University of Sydney, Cameron Logan, said while some people viewed modernist architecture as "an attack on the civic decorum of the city" or "just plain ugly", it had gained greater acceptance.

"I think what is fundamentally important, and has often been missed, is that many buildings of this period had a strong civic intent and presence, and Town Hall House is an excellent example.

"We need to reimagine or redefine our past in terms of citymaking, it can't be a dead letter, fixed idea."