

Item No: R2 Recommendation to Council
Subject: **ROSE BAY UNITING CHURCH AND WESLEY HALL GROUP**
Author: Catherine Colville, Strategic Heritage Officer
Approvers: Anne White, Team Leader - Strategic Planning
Allan Coker, Director - Planning & Development
File No: 18/62304
Reason for Report: To respond to Council's resolutions of 18 December 2017 to investigate the heritage listing of Rose Bay Church and Wesley Hall at 518a Old South Head Road, Rose Bay.

Recommendation:

- A. THAT Council prepare a planning proposal to list the Rose Bay Uniting Church and Wesley Hall Group at 518a Old South Head Road, Rose Bay as a heritage item in the *Woollahra Local Environmental Plan 2014*.
- B. THAT the planning proposal describes the item as follows: *Rose Bay Uniting Church and Wesley Hall Group - church and interiors (including moveable heritage, vestry and 1924 additions), Wesley Hall and interiors.*
- C. THAT the planning proposal be forwarded to the Greater Sydney Commission requesting a gateway determination to allow public exhibition.
- D. THAT when requesting a gateway determination for the planning proposal, the Council seek delegation of the plan-making steps under section 3.36 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

1. Background

On 18 December 2017 Woollahra Council adopted the following two Notices of Motion:

Item No: 11.2

THAT Council explore the Heritage Listing of Rose Bay Church and Hall on the corner of Old South Head Road and Dover Road, Rose Bay.

The following background information accompanied this notice of motion:

The Church was built in 1904 in the gothic style and is one of the earliest community buildings in Rose Bay

Item No 11.3

THAT Council requests staff to prepare and submit a report including a heritage assessment and draft inventory sheet for Rose Bay Uniting Church and Wesley Hall (having their primary address at 518a Old South Head Road, Rose Bay) to the Urban Planning Committee to facilitate the Rose Bay Uniting Church and Wesley Hall (and its elements) being:

- I. Included in the Woollahra Local Environmental Plan as a heritage item; and*
- II. Listed as a heritage item of State significance on the NSW State Heritage Register*

The following background information accompanied this notice of motion:

The Rose Bay Uniting Church and Wesley Hall serve as a visual gateway to Rose Bay, located at an entry point to the suburb on the corner of Old South Head Road and Dover Road, a tree lined avenue with views to Sydney Harbour. It offers the pleasure of viewing Rose Bay and its history by both pedestrian and motoring visitors.

The architecture of the buildings holds significant heritage value for Rose Bay. The Church, in particular, is one of the last remaining buildings along Old South Head Road, located near the old tramline. It is a visual focus point, central to the character of Rose Bay, linking the suburb's present to its early beginnings. The Church and Hall represent a good example of some of the earliest community buildings in Rose Bay, built to cater for what was expected to be the schooling and pastoral care needs of the growing population that would move in once the tramline was established in the suburb.

Culturally the Church and its attached Hall are significant for providing a living history (as they have been used continuously as a community facility since they were built) between modern day Rose Bay and its colonial past.

The properties are a focal point for the community for their historic, social and aesthetic significance. The Church and Hall have continuously provided a venue for everything from Sunday school classes to ballet, martial arts, meditation and other classes, affordable childcare and other support services to families and disadvantaged members of the Rose Bay community.

Notably, the preschool/childcare has been running since the Church was built. This usage has been true to the intent of the benefactor of the land, Ebenezer Vickery, a famous Sydney philanthropist who dedicated the land site, as well as some money to the building construction, for use by the people of Rose Bay.

The Church and Hall, and their setting have potential State heritage significance for their aesthetic values, including high quality architectural elements



Figure 3: Aerial photograph showing the subject site outlined in red .

Church buildings occupy the majority of the site, with two small areas of lawn and landscaping on either side of the church building and a play area at the rear adjacent to the Hall (see the aerial image of the subject site in Figure 3). The complex is surrounded by a brick and roughcast fence fronting Old South Head Road and Dover Street, and a timber paling fence along Dover Lane and the South boundary. The subject site is not listed on the NSW State Heritage Register (SHR), nor is it included in *Schedule 5: Environmental heritage of the Woollahra Local Environmental Plan 2014* (Woollahra LEP 2014). The site is not in the vicinity of a listed item.

3. Heritage Significance Assessment

In response to the decisions from 10 December 2017, Woollahra Council appointed *Robert A Moore: Heritage Architect and Heritage Consultant* to prepare a Heritage Significance Assessment (HSA) for the Rose Bay Uniting Church and Wesley Hall group at 518a Old South Head Road, Rose Bay. The HSA was carried out in accordance with the New South Wales Heritage Manual - heritage assessment criteria to:

- Prepare a summary statement of significance for the property.
- Make a recommendation as to whether the property should be listed as a local or State heritage item in Schedule 5 of Woollahra LEP 2014.
- Make a recommendation as to whether the property should be listed as an item on the State Heritage Register under the Heritage Act 1977.

A copy of the HSA dated March 2018 is attached at **Annexure 1**, and the accompanying Heritage Data Form/Heritage Inventory Sheet is attached at **Annexure 2**. The HSA concludes the following:

This assessment of the heritage significance of the Rose Bay Uniting (former Methodist) Church and Wesley Hall group, with its associated collection of moveable heritage, concludes that the property as a whole clearly meets the threshold of local heritage significance. As a large property in a rapidly redeveloping part of Sydney it will come under increasing pressure for adaptive reuse, or redevelopment, and this Heritage Significance Assessment provides the necessary basis on which to plan appropriate heritage outcomes.

It is the notable local history of the group, written clearly in the physical fabric of its staged construction, and supported by the documents and associated moveable heritage collection, which together record its construction and development, that its local heritage values are founded.

The care and ongoing use of the site will require sensitive consideration of these values and their consequences in planning a strategy for its deserved conservation

This report concludes that the property meets the threshold for LEP heritage listing on historical, associational, aesthetic and social values, and that it is a representative of the type of property once well represented and common, but now becoming uncommon on a local level. Further research and analysis may also identify research and rarity values. However, in the context of the evidence available for this report it is considered that the Church and Hall group are not of State heritage significance.

It is recommended that the property be added to the heritage schedule of the LEP as a property of local heritage significance to Woollahra and that a Conservation Management Plan be prepared to guide its conservation and potential adaptive reuse.

To reflect the HSA and the Inventory Sheet, the listing in Schedule 5 of the Woollahra LEP 2014 would consist of the following:

Suburb	Item name	Address	Property description	Significance	Item No
Rose Bay	Rose Bay Uniting Church and Wesley Hall Group - church and interiors (including moveable heritage, vestry and 1924 additions), Wesley Hall and interiors.	518a Old South Head Road, Rose Bay	Lot 37: Sec: A in DP 4567	Local	680



Figure 4: Wesley Hall and North elevation of Church from Dover Road (Source: RA Moore, February 2018)

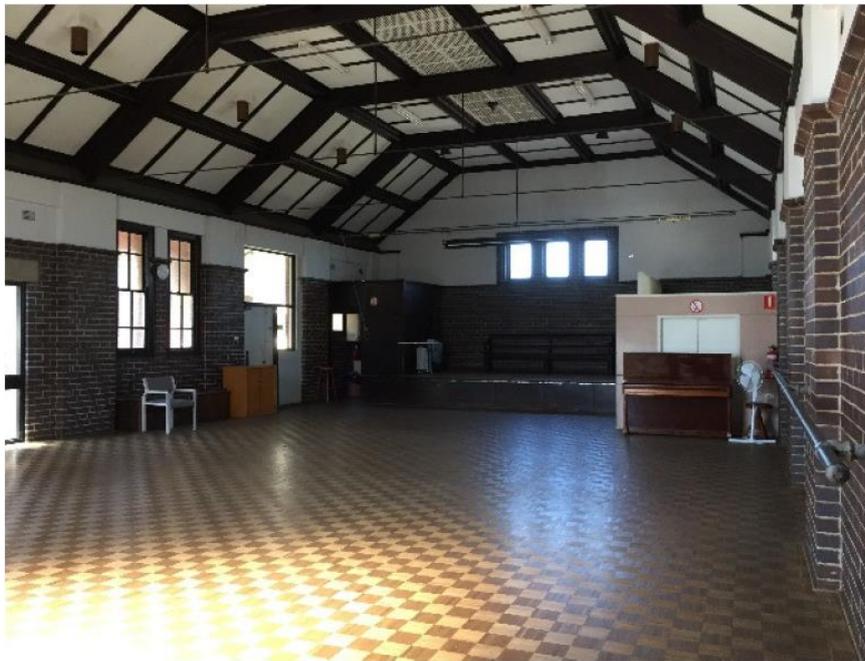


Figure 5: Interior, Wesley Hall, Rose Bay (Source: RA Moore February 2018)

4. Consultation with landowner

In accordance with Council’s standard practices, a copy of the HSA was sent to the landowner for comment. A submission dated 24 April 2018 was made to Council on behalf of the owners of the land by *David Gole, Principal Heritage Architect at Conrad Gargett*. Further, a meeting with Council staff, Robert Moore and the land owner’s consultants being Christopher O’Connor from *Endeavour Property Advisory*, Dale Swan and Dave Gole from *Conrad Gargett* took place on Friday 20 April 2018. A copy of the submission is attached at **Annexure 3**. The landowner acknowledges that the HSA has been undertaken in accordance with good heritage practice, and generally agrees with the assessment. However, the landowner, whilst supportive of the heritage listing of the Church and vestry (entry porch), objects to the listing of all the buildings on the site. The landowner requests that the listing be limited to the original church building and vestry. The following table summarises the reasons provided by the landowner:

Landowner Comments	Staff response
<p>1. Objects to the local listing of all the buildings on the site and notes 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.</p>	<p>When Talbot J of the Land & Environment Court brought down his judgement on the property ‘Leamington’ at 48 Darling Point Road, Darling Point, which was not heritage listed, he noted – <i>“The identification and listing of heritage items is an ongoing process which evolves over time as relevant information is gathered.”</i> and <i>“No matter how laudable the project might be, a council cannot be expected to have adequate resources that would enable it to investigate every building in its area at the one time.”</i> (Terry George Andriotakis v. Woollahra Municipal Council [1998] NSWLEC 124)</p> <p>The fact that a property has heritage significance is not diminished because it is not a listed heritage item. The heritage significance assessment has now been undertaken and determined that the property (including all buildings within the site) meet the criteria for local listing.</p>
<p>2. The Church has not been used as a place of public worship for over 10 years (contrary to the HSA which identifies the last service was held in 2017)</p>	<p>Detailed information regarding church services and the use of the church and hall were not made available to Robert A Moore in preparing the HSA, despite several attempts to request this information from the landowner.</p> <p>Regardless, this objection relates only to the listing criteria d) Social Significance. The Hall itself meets several other criteria for listing including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Criteria a) Historical Significance</i> – the Hall was built as an extension to the Church and its activities to meet the expanding Methodist activities that were evidence of the growth and development of the Rose Bay community and the denomination.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Criteria b) Historical Association Significance</i> – the Hall was designed by important, successful early Twentieth-Century architect, Byera Hadley. For architects, the design of the Wesley Hall by Byera Hadley has a particular association of interest, for his importance as the benefactor of a rare, major travelling scholarship for architects. • <i>Criteria c) Aesthetic Significance</i> - The Hall is a harmonious, compatible element when paired with the Church building and is indicative of the architect’s respect for his predecessors’ work on the Church which results in a cohesive complex/group. • <i>Criteria g) Representativeness</i> - Wesley Hall (along with the Church building) reflects the attitudes and practices of early 20th Century architecture, of ecclesiastical architecture within it, and of the architects involved (Hadley realised a supporting meeting hall and school complex in an ambitious but complementary marriage of design and construction). • <i>Criteria Integrity</i> - The Wesley Hall can be interpreted by the drawings and specifications contractually relied upon for its construction. It is remarkably intact, with only minor additions dating from the 1970s that were made to provide modern amenities to support the use of the complex. The Hall space itself remains close to its original configuration, with only very minor alterations. The building retains features consistent with the early detailing, furniture, fixtures and fittings which assists its understanding. <p>Note: These criteria are also relevant to 1. above)</p>
<p>3. Educational uses run by the Church ceased in the early 1980s.</p>	<p>Detailed information regarding the associated uses of the Church and Hall were not made available to Robert A Moore in preparing the HSA, despite several attempts to request this information from the landowner.</p> <p>This objection relates only to <i>Criteria d) Social Significance</i>. Regardless, as detailed above, the Hall itself meets several other criteria for listing (refer to 2. above).</p>
<p>4. The site is no longer financially viable – long term maintenance is required; the rent from the Ballet School use are negligible to the long term running costs of the Church; there are hazardous materials on the site (asbestos); the current situation is not sustainable or viable long term.</p>	<p>Heritage listing does not preclude adaptive reuse, changes (including contemporary changes) or demolition (where appropriate and justified).</p>

5. The church is used by a small number of community groups.	This objection is not applicable to heritage significance assessments or to heritage listing. Notwithstanding, the use of the place, the Church and Hall meet several Criteria for Listing at a local level. Heritage listing does not preclude adaptive reuse or a change of use.
6. The 1924 Church extension and the 1927 Wesley Hall are of some cultural significance. The loss of this significance can be managed with Archival Recording and onsite interpretation (Interpretation Plan) without retaining the physical fabric.	This objection is not applicable to heritage significance assessments or to heritage listing. These decisions are matters that can be determined at the development application stage and are dependent entirely on the type and nature of development proposed.

The landowner has not provided any additional information or research that indicates that the 1924 Church extensions or the 1927 Wesley Hall are not of heritage significance (within the Criteria for Listing) or have been incorrectly assessed. Accordingly, it is recommended that the Church (including its interiors, moveable heritage, vestry and 1924 additions), and the Wesley Hall (including its interiors) be included in the heritage listing for the property.

5. Next steps

If Council supports the recommendation of this report, the next steps in the process are:

- Notify the landowner of Council's decision;
- Prepare a planning proposal to list the property as a heritage item in the Woollahra LEP 2014 under section 3.33 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act);
- Submit the planning proposal to the Greater Sydney Commission (GSC) requesting a gateway determination under section 3.34 of the (EP&A Act). Including requesting delegation of the plan-making steps under section 3.36 of the EP&A Act.
- Receive a gateway determination from the Department;
- Carry out public consultation in accordance with the gateway determination (this will include notification letters to landowners and adjoining properties and notification published on a weekly basis in the *Wentworth Courier*).

Note: The public consultation period includes an opportunity for the landowner to make a further submission regarding the planning proposal;

- Report the findings of the public exhibition to the *Environmental Planning Committee* (the landowner will be notified and will be invited to address the committee);
- Notify the landowner of Council's decision;
- Subject to Council's decision on whether to proceed, request the Parliamentary Counsel to prepare a draft LEP to amend the Woollahra LEP 2014;
- Council makes (approves) the LEP, subject to obtaining delegations from the Minister, otherwise the Minister makes the LEP;
- Gazettal of the LEP.

6. Conclusion

The heritage significance of the Rose Bay Uniting Church and Wesley Hall Group at 518a Old South Head Rose, Rose Bay has been assessed in accordance with the NSW heritage best practice guidelines.

The HSA prepared by *Robert A Moore: Heritage Architect and Heritage Consultant* identifies that the property meets the threshold for LEP heritage listing on historical, associational, aesthetic and social values and that it is representative of the type of property once well represented and common, but now becoming uncommon on a local level. The Heritage Inventory Sheet identifies the following elements are of local heritage significance: *Rose Bay Uniting Church and Wesley Hall Group - church and interiors (including moveable heritage, vestry and 1924 additions), Wesley Hall and interiors*. The Church and Hall group are not of State heritage significance.

We seek a decision of the Council to:

- Prepare a planning proposal to list the Rose Bay Uniting Church and Wesley Hall Group at 518a Old South Head Road, Rose Bay as a local heritage item in the Woollahra LEP 2014.
- Forward the planning proposal to the GSC for a gateway determination. The determination will enable the planning proposal to be placed on public exhibition.

Annexures

1. Heritage Significance Assessment prepared by Robert Moore (March 2018) [↓](#)
2. Heritage Inventory Sheet – 518a Old South Head Road, Rose Bay [↓](#)
3. Submission from Conrad Gargett on behalf of the land owner (24 April 2018) [↓](#)