

Application Referral Cultural Heritage - Response

From:	Sarah Waight, Cultural Heritage Officer
Recommendation:	Proposal is acceptable subject to conditions.
Date Completed:	
Address:	379 ELIZABETH STREET, NORTH HOBART 367 - 375 ELIZABETH STREET, NORTH HOBART 29 STRAHAN STREET, NORTH HOBART 31 STRAHAN STREET, NORTH HOBART ADJACENT ROAD RESERVE
Proposal:	Partial Demolition, Alterations and Extensions to Existing Buildings, New Development for Business and Professional Services, General Retail and Hire, Multiple Dwellings, and Community Meeting and Entertainment, Signage, Change of Operating Hours, Changes to Parking and Access, and Works in Road Reserve
Application No:	PLN-16-768
Assessment Officer:	Michelle Foale,

Referral Officer comments:

This site is heritage listed in Table E13.1 of the Scheme. The property is also located within Heritage Precinct North Hobart 6 and also within an area covered by the North Hobart Local Area Plan.

The properties listed in Table E13.1 include 367-373 Elizabeth St - former Soundy's Building and 375 Elizabeth St (now part of 367-375 Elizabeth Street). The adjacent property (currently used by the Union), is also the subject of this application, but it is not part of the heritage listed site, however all of the properties are within the heritage precinct.

North Hobart 6:

This precinct is significant for reasons including:

1. The fine quality and quantity of Old Colonial, mid to late Victorian, Federation and Inter War commercial/residential buildings demonstrate its original mixed use nature
2. Intact individual houses that are representative examples of Old Colonial and Federation residential architecture.
- 3. The continuous two storey (mostly brick) facades, general uniformity of form and scale together with a distinctive nineteenth century subdivision pattern that create a consistent and impressive streetscape.** (This is the relevant significance statement.)
4. The front gardens of a few properties south of Burnett Street, and more recent street art are important aesthetic features that reinforce its mixed use character.

The proposal is for demolition and development within a listed building and demolition and development of a building within a heritage precinct. Clauses E13.7.1, E13.7.2, E13.8.1 and E13.8.2 apply.

One representation was received expressing concerns about the signage, dominating the site, being a distraction as well as commenting on the lack of information about the details of the signage.

The extent of demolition of the State Cinema is confined to extending an opening on the north west wall on the ground floor as well as a doorway between the new build and the historic building on the first floor. Historic photographs show a door and window at ground level as well as a chimney were on the side wall at different times showing a gradual evolution and series of minor changes over time. The side toilets and small cinema on the north west side of the property are not significant elements. Therefore, the amount of demolition within a listed place is considered minor, it is located on the side where gradual and small changes have occurred over the history of the building, in the vicinity of pre-existing openings, such that there will not be the loss of significant fabric that contributes to the significance of the place. In summary, the proposed demolition is not considered contrary to E13.7.1.

The proposal is for the continued conversion of space below the original main auditorium and alterations to the circulation space to the existing cinemas. This is a function of the continued ad hoc approach to the development of the site leading to the 'rabbit-warren' like arrangement of corridors and cinemas. Advice has been previously provided that a conservation management plan (CMP) would be warranted to guide development and ensure that the heritage values of the listed buildings is protected. It is noted that advice has again been provided by the Tasmanian Heritage Council 'Notice of Heritage Decision' for this proposal that a CMP for the site is highly desirable.

The proposed development is for a glazed link and tower on the site of the listed buildings. The glazed link will mirror (in a general sense) the glazed link on the opposite side of the State Cinema building where it connects to the Soundy's building. This area is currently used as an entrance and part of the foyer. The tower is three storeys high and 3.53 metres wide, the top level being a large illuminated sign on three sides. The nature of the sign is discussed in greater detail later in this report. One of the dominant features of the listed buildings on the site is that they present as two storey buildings with decorative detailing above in the form of elements such as a parapet, entablature or pediments. This is a recurring pattern along Elizabeth Street. (Refer to drawing figure F.2.3 from the North Hobart Local Area Plan). Clause E13.7.1 P1 (a) states that there must not be the loss of historic cultural heritage significance through incompatible height. Therefore limiting the height of this element would be a more satisfactory heritage outcome and ensure the proposal satisfies this clause. Clause E13.7.2 P2 states that development must be designed to be subservient and complementary to the place through scale, bulk, built form. The three storey tower element, would be more in conformity with the provisions of the Scheme if there were to be a reduction in height in order to 'complete' the streetscape and be a contemporary interpretation of the parapet or pediment form of the State Cinema building or the Soundy's building. This could be achieved by a condition of permit whereby the tower is no higher than the batten screen on building 3.

The tower is a circulation space with displays of memorabilia and film related objects. Also included are digital images that are likely to be displayed. While this may be considered appropriate in the context of a cinema, it also needs to be considered in terms of whether or not this is illuminated or moving images and whether it is visible from the street, adding to the general 'noise' of the street at the second storey level where the general continuous pattern of traditional frontages. The introduction of additional moving and illuminated images within the tower could result in detracting or incompatible elements into the street. As such it is recommended that a condition of permit be included to restrict the positioning of these elements so as not to face the street.

The proposal also involves the demolition within a Heritage Precinct and therefore clause E13.8.1 applies. The demolition is described as above. It is not considered that there will be a loss of elements of cultural heritage significance and therefore this clause is satisfied.

The proposal must be assessed against E13.8.2. The statements of significance refer to the continuous two storey facades. The new building on the site of the existing union building (referred to in the application as buildings 2 and 3) includes two elements, a glazed link and a

facade with a battened screen on the first floor. This building has a roof top studio set back and behind the main facade. Buildings 2 and 3, with an increase in solid to void ratio, will satisfy the development standards for buildings within a heritage precinct. Next door, the glazed tower element (Building 1) is a departure from the strong two storey streetscape and therefore a detracting element (especially with the sign on top) and assessed, in its current form, to be detrimental to the historic heritage values of the precinct. However, a minor reduction in the height of the tower and reduction in the size of the signage as described above would reduce the detracting nature of this element. This could be achieved by a condition of permit where the tower would be no higher than the batten screen on Building 3.

On this basis with appropriate conditions, it is considered that the proposal would satisfy clauses E13.7.1, E13.7.2, E13.8.1 and E13.8.2 and the proposal would meet the performance criteria of the heritage code of HIPS.

As already mentioned, the proposal also includes a sign and must be assessed against clause E17.7.2 Standards for Signs on Heritage Places or within Heritage Precincts.

On the left of the State Cinema building when facing it from Elizabeth Street is a side extension (Building 1) that includes two new cinemas, toilets and circulation space which presents as two glazed elements to the street, the tower projecting in front of the other new elements. The tower is proposed to have a 'wunderkammer' or display cabinet containing movie, film and State Cinema memorabilia including digital presentations. On top is a 'sign' in the form of multiple LED screens on the three sides (street, north west and south east) elevations.

The signs code of the Scheme requires that all nine sub-clauses of E17.7.2 P1 are satisfied.

The provisions are as follows:

E17.7.2 P1

A sign on a Heritage Place listed in the Historic Heritage Code or within a Heritage Precinct or Cultural Landscape Precinct must satisfy all of the following:

(a) be located in a manner that minimises impact on cultural heritage significance of the place or precinct;

Response: The proposed signage is on top of a new glazed tower. It is recognised that this element is central to the State Cinema redevelopment, however, what is being proposed is somewhat unclear, with the applicant's submission describing it as a series of moving images on three sides of the tower in the form of a projected or LED screen. The applicant's drawings show this as two rows of images of film type posters which wrap around the tower. Annotations to the drawing describe it as a moving series of images, with up to 36 different images shown. No details about when the sign will be operational are given. For example, will the signage only be visible or switched on at night as is suggested by the drawings which show the building in a photomontage at night-time. This sign is large; (Elizabeth Street frontage is 2.7 m x 3.53 m) and then 2.7 m x 6.72 m on the north west and the south east elevation. This would be a total of 45.819 m² of signage on three sides. As such there is nothing similar in size or scale in North Hobart, let alone, Hobart. In this form it will be 'eye-catching' and yet at the same time dominate the street, especially at night-time if that is the only time it is envisaged it will operate. As a result it is considered that the sign is overly large and should be reduced in size to limit the visual and distracting impact of it as a result of its size and location. The proposed sign is on the heritage listed site of the Soundy's building, State Cinema building and within the North Hobart Heritage Precinct 6. A reduction in the size could be achieved by a condition of permit.

(b) be placed so as to allow the architectural details of the building to remain prominent;

Response: The proposed signage is located within the title of the listed site and yet it is positioned on the new 'tower' element that is next to the State Cinema facade when viewed

from Elizabeth Street. It is physically separated from the State Cinema building by a lower two storey glazed element. The separation will mean that the sign does not directly obscure the State Cinema building, but by the very nature of the scale and movement in the sign, will be more prominent than adjacent buildings, (heritage listed and others) and stand out in the streetscape. It is recommended that the sign is limited in size (height in particular) as well as be limited to non-moving images and does not have moving images such as trailers, movies or rapidly changing or rotating still images. This could be achieved by a condition of permit.

(c) be of a size and design that will not substantially diminish the cultural heritage significance of the place or precinct;

Response: The precinct is described as being significant for its continuous two storey buildings. Traditionally, signage would have been limited to awnings and below awnings. This proposed sign is large, with a total area of 45.819 m² of moving illuminated signage. It is one of the largest signs in North Hobart and most likely in Hobart and located in a place not usually used for signage. The State Cinema is a landmark cultural institution, the use of which continues today and it is acknowledged that the sign and the circulation tower is a key feature of the Cinema redevelopment. However, its size and design will result in it dominating the area and being a departure from the traditional form. A reduction in size and design would ameliorate any detracting elements and this could be achieved by a condition of permit.

(d) be placed in a location on the building that would traditionally have been used as an advertising area if possible;

Response: Signage is not traditionally located on a tower on three sides, however this is a new building, an extension to the listed State Cinema, positioned to the side of the listed place. This sub-clause is not relevant.

(e) not dominate or obscure any historic signs forming an integral part of a building's architectural detailing or cultural heritage values;

Response: The proposed sign does not dominate or obscure any historic signs. This sub-clause is satisfied.

(f) have fixtures that do not damage historic building fabric, including but not restricted to attachments to masonry and wood, such as to using non-corrosive fixings inserted in mortar joints;

Response: The new sign is atop a new extension and therefore does not damage historic building fabric. This sub-clause is satisfied.

(g) not project above an historic parapet or roof line if such a projection impacts on the cultural heritage significance of the building;

Response: The proposed sign does sit higher than the historic parapet and roof line of the adjacent State Cinema building and will appear as a 'additional' floor albeit in the form of a glazed tower. This is when viewed directly from Elizabeth Street. Even though the tower is separated from the State Cinema building by a 2.45 metre wide contemporary glazed link, it will partially obscure the side and north west corner of the State Cinema building when viewed obliquely from the New Town end of Elizabeth Street. However, the proposed sign will not directly project above an historic parapet. This sub-clause is satisfied.

(h) be of a graphic design that minimises modern trademark or proprietary logos not sympathetic to heritage character;

Response: The proposal is for the signage to relate to the current screenings and while it may be possible that the trademarks and logos associated with the film industry to appear, it is likely that this will be incidental to the message. This sub-clause will be satisfied if a condition of permit is included on the permit that limits the use of logos and trademarks.

(i) not use internal illumination in a sign on a Heritage Place unless it is demonstrated that such illumination will not detract from the character and cultural heritage values of the building.

Response: The sign is proposed to be either a back projection or illuminated by LED. It is therefore internally illuminated. As a large moving sign it has the potential to be detracting and

a 'busy' element in the streetscape and detract from an appreciation of the heritage building, however as the signage is proposed to relate to cinema, a large screen would, in fact reflect, the cultural values of the building as a cinema. However, this needs to be balanced against the existing streetscape which does not have signage at this height or position on any buildings in the locality, with the exception of two large billboards, one on the Republic Bar and Hotel and the Eaglehawk/Winston Hotel and Bar.

It is recommended that conditions be included in a permit issued that:

- restrict the signage to only relate to the cinema (ie not become advertising for products or services off the cinema site, including the new building and tenancies as part of this project.)
- restrict the sign so there are no moving or changing images.
- restrict the height of the tower to be no higher than the batten screen on building 3, and therefore restrict the height of the sign, but not to a point so it appears as one dimensional or a 'billboard'
- restrict the hours of operation to the opening hours of the cinema.
- restrict illumination so it does not illuminate adjacent residential accommodation.
- require further drawings showing the revised sign

Sarah Waight
Cultural Heritage Officer
9 December 2016