

Application Referral Cultural Heritage - Response

From:	Nick Booth
Recommendation:	Proposal is acceptable subject to conditions.
Date Completed:	
Address:	125 BATHURST STREET, HOBART
Proposal:	Partial Demolition, Alterations and Redevelopment for General Retail and Hire, Food Services and 34 Multiple Dwellings
Application No:	PLN-18-530
Assessment Officer:	Tristan Widdowson,

Referral Officer comments:

The proposal relates to 125 Bathurst Street, a gabled commercial/light industrial unit constructed with a brick built two storey front element fronting a facade in the between the wars modern style with elements of simplified art/deco motifs. Used as a Car Windscreen Replacer, the building forms part of a small but notable group of two storey detached buildings including the former Ambulance Station at No.129 Bathurst Street which either sit directly onto or just back from the roadside, creating a regular pattern of similar scaled properties.

The site is not Heritage Listed but does share common boundary with a single storey Heritage Listed property at No.126 Murray Street which is set back and up from the street with a late 20th century retail unit built onto the highway edge. The site is also located within the zone of Historical Archaeological Potential. A Statement of Archaeological Potential, Impact Assessment and Method Statement prepared by Austral Tasmania has been submitted as part of the proposal

Permission is sought for the demolition of the rear warehouse element of the building, the retention of the brick built front element, the remodelling of the interior, and the erection of a podium style development consisting of a 5 storey element set beyond the front element with roof terrace above, with a further set back 5 storeys above this.

Adjacency Considerations Relating to Height

The site of the proposed development stands within the Central Business Zone and as such is subject to the Development Standards relating to height. Under 22.4.12, building height must not, among other requirements, unreasonably impact on historic heritage character.

It is noted that the proposal fails to comply with the acceptable standard A5 in that the proposal would clearly exceed the height of the façade of the neighbouring Heritage Listed Building by more than 1 storey or 4m. As such, the proposal is therefore required to satisfy Performance Criteria P5 which states that development must not unreasonably dominate existing buildings of cultural heritage significance; and not have a materially adverse impact on the historic cultural heritage significance of the heritage place.

It is noted that the Macquarie Dictionary description of the word 'dominate' includes 'to tower above; overshadow; to occupy a commanding position'. With regard to the above, it is considered that the ability for development to 'unreasonably dominate' can be set by a number of factors, including the relative height difference between the two buildings; relative positions

within the street or townscape to each other; the strength or robust nature of the two architectural styles to either compliment or take a submissive role relative to each other; or the wider context in which the Heritage Building is viewed. However, given the definitions as set out above, it is clear that the proposed development would clearly 'tower above' and 'occupy a commanding position' to the single storey Heritage building. As such, the issue is not whether the proposal would dominate over the adjacent site (which it clear would), but rather it would 'unreasonably' do so.

It is noted that the Heritage Building in question has a number of distinct street and townscape features that mark it out for special consideration. The building appears to have been built in a series of stages with elements clearly visible on the Sprent's 1840's Survey of the City. The building, which according to the survey was constructed of weatherboard, occupied an elevated position within the street, and was set back from both the Murry and Bathurst street frontages. Later plans from the turn of the century clearly show a set of significant steps leading from the corner of the junction of the street up to the property, which at that point had been extended at either end. Whilst the use of the building is not certain, it seems likely that it contained some commercial element and may have partially operated as a boarding house. Importantly however, over its history, the building appears to have been partially re-made in brick and was subject to substantial expansion in first half of the 20th Century through the provision of new two storey element in the modernist style added to the Murray Street frontage in a form very similar to the two storey element of the application site, and then over two separate periods of development, two single storey elements used as a retail unit onto the Bathurst Street frontage. As such, effectively, by the mid-1960's, the original Heritage Building had been almost entirely enveloped by later buildings so that only small elements of it are still visible from the public realm, primarily glimpsed up the access lane that runs along the boundary between No.125 Bathurst and the Heritage Building. Whilst the roof form is still clearly visible from parts of Murry Street, it is considered that the original parts of the building have largely been submerged by later development.

Whilst the importance of the building in terms of original fabric, contribution to the understanding of the development of the city and its ability to demonstrate the various chapters of its commercial development through the various architectural structures that have been built around it are still of cultural significance, its contributory role from a street and townscape perspective has clearly been largely eroded. Given the above, the context in which the building is viewed is clearly of reduced significance and thus the relative ability of the proposed development to 'unreasonably' dominate over the Heritage Building given the limited role of context is similarly reduced.

In view of the above, it is therefore considered that in this instance, whilst the proposed development would clearly have a dominating impact upon the Heritage Listed Building, it would not do so to an unreasonable degree, in compliance with the performance criteria of the scheme. As such, it is considered that the proposal would not detract from those characteristics of the place which contribute to its historic cultural heritage significance.

Archeology

This site is also located within a place of historical archaeological potential. A Statement of Archaeological Potential, Impact Assessment and Method Statement prepared by Austral Tasmania have been submitted as part of the application. The report is considered to be thorough in its assessment and sound in its methodology.

It is reported that much like the neighbouring Heritage Site, the original development of the site occurred relatively early in the history of the city in the form of a small weatherboard cottage. It was also located on an elevated pieces of land above the roadside. However, over the course of the next 120 years, this was replaced by a larger residential property with associated stables and out buildings, which again was replaced by the current building which stands on

the site. Importantly, during the construction of the current building, significant excavation and flattening out of the site occurred, essentially removing any potential remnants or artefacts that may have been retained on the site. However, the small access lane which runs between the later warehouse and the adjoining Heritage Listed building appears to have largely remained undisturbed by the later works and whilst there would appear to be no evidence of any structures standing on this land, its use as an access lane is long standing. As such, there may be elements of early surface treatment below the current surface, such as cobbles, as well as both early drainage guttering and fragments of detritus discarded over the years.

The report goes on to make a number of recommendations based on a watching brief during works relating to the access lane. The recommendations are considered reasonable and should form a condition should approval be granted.

Conclusion

It is therefore considered that subject to the following condition, the proposal would comply with the Heritage Provisions of the Scheme.

Suggested Condition

All onsite excavation and disturbance within the area identified as being of moderate archaeological potential within Fig.23 of the Statement of Archaeological Potential produced by Austral Tasmania, dated 30 July 2018 must be monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist. Should any features or deposits of an archaeological nature be discovered on the site during excavation or disturbance:

- All excavation and/or disturbance must stop immediately; and
- A qualified archaeologist must provide advice and assessment of the features and/or deposits discovered and make recommendations on further excavation and/or disturbance; and
- All and any recommendations made by the archaeologist engaged in accordance with (2) above must be complied with in full; and
- All features and/or deposits discovered must be reported to the Council with 3 days of the discovery; and
- A copy of the archaeologists advice, assessment and recommendations obtained in accordance with paragraph (2) above must be provided to Council within 10 days of receipt of the advice, assessment and recommendations.

Excavation and/or disturbance must not recommence unless and until approval is granted from the Council.

Reason for condition

To ensure that work is planned and implemented in a manner that seeks to understand, retain, protect, preserve and manage significant archaeological evidence.

Nick Booth
Heritage Officer
18 October 2018