



DOC19/150203

Attention Gordon Clark
Russ Pigg
General Manager
Shoalhaven City Council
PO Box 42
NOWRA NSW 2541

Dear Mr Pigg

I am writing to you again regarding the Interim Heritage Order (IHO) request for 17 Hawke Street, Huskisson.

The Heritage Council's State Heritage Register Committee (Committee) first considered this request on 7 November 2018 and resolved to recommend that the Minister place an IHO over the four lots bounded by Hawke, Bowen and Currumbene streets for a period of 12 months (letter from the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) to Shoalhaven City Council sent 21 December 2018).

As forecast in that letter, the matter was returned to the Committee for further consideration on 6 February 2019, so that additional information provided to OEH since November could be considered. At this meeting the Committee also heard presentations from the initiators of the IHO and the site proponent.

On 6 February 2019, the Committee decided not to recommend an IHO to the Minister for Heritage, the Hon. Gabrielle Upton. This decision was made after much discussion, with the conclusion being that this site is not likely to be of state heritage significance but is highly likely to be of local heritage significance. As local heritage is the responsibility of the local council, the Committee determined to write to the Shoalhaven City Council to strongly encourage you to consider the heritage significance of the site when reviewing any development proposals.

The Committee heard from the proponent and Save Husky Church and each provided historical information. At times this information was in conflict, indicating areas where further investigation may be required. The Committee believes there are a range of issues that require further consideration at a local level, including:

Indigenous history:

- while the Aboriginal due diligence report is itself useful information, the *National Parks and Wildlife Act* is not an appropriate framework for considering more contemporary Aboriginal cultural heritage issues;

- we agree with the previous assessment of this report by the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH), and the recommendation that further investigation and consultation with the local Aboriginal people take place;

Church history:

- the 1931 Cyril Blackett church is likely to be of local heritage significance;
- there are two conflicting versions of how the c1890 church has moved across the site over time. An understanding of the original location of the c1890 church and its subsequent relocation requires more work;

Landscape:

- we note this is a rare green space within the growing centre of Huskisson;
- arborist reports indicate the potential rarity and landscape quality of these trees;
- the heritage reports do not consider the plantings as part of the sesquicentenary celebrations in 1938 – this information could contribute to likely local significance of the trees;

Ground-Penetrating Radar:

- this report is inadequate as the site survey was partial and it used technology better adapted to other purposes.

We ask that Shoalhaven City Council (Council) review the information available to them via both parties and consider:

- whether other areas of the site require investigation for the presence of graves, and review the techniques that would be best employed;
- whether the Cyril Blackett church could be retained in its current location;
- whether any development that proceeds, could provide an opportunity for the interpretation of those graves and of Aboriginal heritage in the area;
- the heritage value of the landscape and plantings and the importance of this open green space to the local community in a town that is so rapidly developing.

We note your previous correspondence and again ask you to revisit Council's decision to consider development of the site without further public consultation or investigation of the site's potential cultural values. We understand that this is a polarising issue in the community, and further consultation, especially with the local Aboriginal people, could go some way towards reuniting the planning requirements of a developing coastal area and the local community's aspirations.

Yours sincerely



Frank Howarth

Chair
Heritage Council of NSW