



3 Marist Place
Parramatta NSW 2150

Locked Bag 5020
Parramatta NSW 2124
DX 8225 PARRAMATTA

Telephone: 61 2 9873 8500
Facsimile: 61 2 9873 8599

heritage@heritage.nsw.gov.au
www.heritage.nsw.gov.au

Contact: Alice Brandjes
Phone: (02) 9873 8560
Fax: (02) 9873 8550
Email: alice.brandjes@heritage.nsw.gov.au
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Mr Sam Haddad
Director-General
Department of Planning & Infrastructure
GPO Box 39
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Mr Haddad,

Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy

Thank you for advising the Heritage Council of NSW of the exhibition of Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy.

The Heritage Council received an informative presentation on Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy from Josephine Wing of your Department at its meeting on 8 March 2013.

The Heritage Council also considered a report on Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy at its meeting on 10 April 2013. The report was prepared by Heritage Branch staff following a site visit to Newcastle and a meeting with staff the Department of Planning and Infrastructure. A copy of the report is attached for information.

On behalf of the Heritage Council I wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge the good work undertaken by the Department in preparation of Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy to protect and promote heritage in Newcastle. The Heritage Council believes, however, that it is important to carry the protection and promotion of heritage through the Strategy in planning controls relating to building heights, setbacks, conservation incentives including adaptive reuse and car parking. The Heritage Council does not support facadism.

At its meeting on the 10 April 2013 the Heritage Council resolved to:

1. compliment the Department of Planning and Infrastructure (DoP&I) on its work to date in the preparation of the Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy;
2. advise the Department of Planning & Infrastructure:
 - a. that the Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy should not promote facadism as a response to the adaptive reuse of heritage items. The Strategy should clearly identify items of local and State heritage significance, conservation areas and contributory items in conservation areas in Newcastle City and state that opportunities exist for adaptive reuse. The Strategy should further emphasise conservation incentives that may be used to avoid facadism such as reduction of car parking requirements. The Heritage Council does not support facadism - heritage items are robust and can support a variety of adaptive reuses.

- b. that it is difficult to adaptively reuse railway stations such as Newcastle and Civic Railway Stations. It may be more appropriate for the railway line to be stopped at Hamilton or to go to Civic. Nevertheless, any adaptation works should be fully reversible in the event that future decisions are made to reinstate the original use and function of Newcastle and Civic Railway Stations. Interpretation of the original railway use should be incorporated in any adaptive reuse of Newcastle Railway Station.
- c. that a map overlay of local items, conservation areas including contributory items in those areas and State Heritage Register listed items should be prepared and included in the Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy.
- d. that building heights and setbacks in the Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy should be reviewed to ensure that new development does not visually dominate or impact the setting and character of heritage buildings. Specifically the 6 metre setback for towers above heritage items proposed in the Urban Renewal Strategy is considered to be insufficient to allow Newcastle's long streetscapes to be viewed and should be increased to a minimum of 10 to 12 metres. Building height controls in the Strategy should also be reviewed so that they respond appropriately to the heritage significance of heritage items, conservation areas and the local topography.
- e. that the archaeological significance and potential for significance of land within the strategy area and the findings of the Archaeological Management Plan be included in, and inform, the Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy.

For further information about this matter, please contact Alice Brandjes at the Heritage Branch of the Office of Environment and heritage on (02) 9873 8560 or email alice.brandjes@heritage.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lawrence Nield', written over a horizontal line.

Professor Lawrence Nield
Chair
Heritage Council of NSW