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## SHORT-FORM HERITAGE IMPACT STATEMENT—40 The Corso, Manly

### 1 Purpose

This short-form Heritage Impact Statement has been prepared on behalf of the lessee of the basement tenancy at 40 The Corso, Manly, which accommodates the *Old Manly Boat Shed*, a live music and comedy venue (subject space). The subject building—a substantial late Federation period mixed-use brick design referred to as *Darley Flats* (inclusive of nos 38–42 and 2D Darley Road)—is listed as an individual heritage item (I106) and also situated in the Town Centre [Heritage] Conservation Area (C2). This document accompanies a Development Application (DA) for the replacement of a non-significant entry door.

The author of this report is an experienced and independent built heritage practitioner. Terminology and principles in this document are based on sound values-based heritage management approaches as set out within *The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance*, *The Burra Charter* (rev. 2013).

### 2 Heritage Status

The subject property—legally identified as 7 and 16/SP18046—is located at the corner of The Corso and Darley Road, with the basement tenancy accessed from The Corso.

As noted, it is included under Part 1 (*Heritage Items*), Schedule 5 of the still in-force *Manly Local Environmental Plan 2013* (MLEP) as part of a serial listing that applies to the majority of buildings that flank The Corso, with the following details:

Item name	Address	Property Description	Significance	Item no.
Group of commercial buildings	All numbers, The Corso, Manly	-	Local	I106

The Council-adopted Statement of Significance for this group (I106), extracted from the NSW Heritage Inventory, reads:

*The group is of major significance for its contribution to the streetscape of The Corso and as extant 19<sup>th</sup> century commercial architecture.*

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However, the most relevant Statement of Significance for the subject place (*Darley Flats*) is associated with the heritage item at its rear (I119), addressing Darley Road but part of the same building, and is reproduced from the NSW State Heritage Inventory below:

*This item is of local cultural significance for its ability to demonstrate the pattern of development of Manly and in particular the Corso. The Corso formed part of Henry Gilbert Smith's grand plan for Ellensville. This building is a good and relatively intact example of a substantial early 20<sup>th</sup> century residential flat building. It reflects the popularity and growth of apartment dwelling in the 1920s and is associated with the growth of Manly as a commuter suburb. Designed in the Federation Free style, it has a strong corner presence and contributes to the overall cultural heritage significance and character of the Corso.*

The subject place is also located in the locally significant (*Manly*) Town Centre (*Heritage*) Conservation Area (HCA) (C2), which is a medium-sized urban precinct that includes The Corso. Its Statement of Significance (NSW Heritage Inventory) reads:

*The Manly Town Centre Conservation Area (TCCA) is of local heritage significance as a reflection of the early development of Manly as a peripheral harbour and beachside village in the fledgling colony of New South Wales. This significance is enhanced by its role as a day-trip and holiday destination during those early years, continuing up to the present time, and its association with H G Smith, the original designer and developer of the TCCA as it is today. The physical elements of the TCCA reflect this early development and its continued use for recreational purposes, most notably the intact promenade quality of The Corso and its turn of the century streetscape, as well as key built elements such as hotels, and remaining original commercial and small scale residential buildings.*

*The beautiful natural setting of the TCCA has provided a solid foundation for its picturesque qualities. The cultural landscape, including plantings, monuments and open spaces, reflects the continued enhancement of the TCCA over time, in order to attract and sustain visitors to the area, which in turn has provided great support to the local economy. The many historic vistas which remain to this day enhance the visitor experience of the TCCA and assist with providing an interpretation of the TCCA as it has changed over time.*

*The TCCA maintains a high level of social significance, as a popular destination for local, national and international tourists, as well as through its encapsulation of the Australian beach culture.*

Another Statement of Significance for The Corso itself is provided by the *Manly Development Control Plan 2013* (MDCP) (Part 5.1.2):

- i) *The Corso is a most impressive formal street, with a central avenue planting of mature Phoenix palms and Moreton Bay figs. It has its own unique streetscape shaped by an uncommon grouping of fine late 19<sup>th</sup> century to early 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings. Despite varying levels of intactness and some less aesthetic and sympathetic development, the group as a collective whole contributes to the historic streetscape. The overall character is created by a wide vista defined on either side by pleasantly low-scaled and detailed buildings; the vertical emphasis of the plantings; monuments; pedestrian arcades; shop awnings; and framed views of the sea. The Corso has additional social significance generated by a strong collective community experience and memory of it as a visitor destination, linked to Manly's historical function as a resort.*
- ii) *The nature of The Corso as an important public pedestrian space means it is invariably experienced in 'serial vision' from eye-height level as one walks through the street. This experience reveals particular important attributes: an overall change in building scale from higher to lower as one moves from Manly Cove to the Ocean Beach; the particular scale and character generated by the ability to read the parapet details of the street façades (or, in some cases the related roof form) as silhouetted against the sky and background trees rather than against other buildings; and then, looking closer, building facades that are restrained but finely-detailed.*

- iii) *St Matthew's Church, located on the intersection of Darley Road with its tower as a focal point, together with the oblique intersection of Sydney Road are important interruptions to the linear form of The Corso. At each end The Corso is open and merges into spaces with good outward views. The gradual visual progression from Manly Cove to the Ocean Beach with the surf revealed behind a screen of Norfolk Pines is the essence of Manly's unique quality.*

The extent of The Corso itself is also subject to an individual landscape heritage listing:

Item name	Address	Property Description	Significance	Item no.
Street trees	The Corso (from Whistler Street to Sydney Road)	-	Local	I104

Its Statement of Significance (NSW Heritage Inventory) follows:

Part of earliest planting [*Moreton Bay Figs and Canary Island Date Palms*] on The Corso c. 1850's by H.G. Smith. Historic and aesthetic importance to the streetscape.

Updated: 13 February 2002

As required under cl. 5.10(1)(a)(b) of the MLEP, a central consideration for the consent authority in determining the proposed works is the significance of the relevant heritage places—namely item I106, HCA C2, and other nearby heritage items. The Statements of Significance outlined above, together with the further analysis provided in this report, establish the baseline understanding of *why, how, and what* is significant. This in turn enables an informed appraisal of heritage impacts, consistent with the principles of Article 27 ('Managing Change') of the *Burra Charter*.

Refer to HER\_005 for heritage mapping.

### 3 Place Summary

*Darley Flats* were constructed circa 1915 (*Sands Directory*), with the building portrayed in a 1924 advertisement as comprising '5 large shops and offices, 4 basement rooms, 8 flats complete' (NSW Heritage Inventory entry). Its upper elevations remain generally intact, with the metal balustrade to the projecting balconies the only major external modification. The suspended awning is also an original element, albeit it may comprise introduced fabric. Ground-floor shopfronts and fabric are all contemporary.

The subject space ('Old Many Boatshed', est. 1987) is accessed from The Corso via a recessed late 20<sup>th</sup>-century double-leafed white-painted timber door, styled in the manner of a ship's cabin door with a porthole window. Its timber architrave is broad and solid and appears to be a hardwood with a natural finish. The tiled threshold is also modern. Surmounting the door is an arched fanlight. Either side of the doors are two piers; the larger eastern section is tiled, while the narrower western member is an extension of the architrave. Above the entrance is a nautical-themed semi-circular canvas awning. Stairs lead to a basement level that includes a bar and seating zones, a stage, a commercial kitchen, and bathroom facilities. This door and signage (semi-circular awning and to the fascia of the suspended verandah awning) form the subject space's only visual relationship to The Corso (HCA C2), noting, however, that the venue is a contemporary cultural marker for the locality, as a long-running live music venue.

See Figure 1 below.

### 4 Assessment of Heritage Impact

#### **New work**

The new work is outlined in an architectural drawing prepared by Studio Pulp, dated 27 August 2025 (Rev\_05). This report should be read in conjunction with this document and others submitted with respect to this DA.

In summary, the works are modest and highly resolved, consisting of a replacement of the extant door fabric to enhance the entry sequence to the venue and its discernibility to The Corso. The new double timber door would be in the exact location as the existing one and comprise decorative raised-and-fielded panels with reclaimed hardware. A robust fluted architrave, moulded cornice detail, and delicate arched fanlight (with dividing muntins and Cathedral glass) would frame the door,

imparting depth and a traditional visual hierarchy. Timber elements would be finished in a walnut stain. The flanking sections of wall would be finished in a Verde mosaic wall tile to dado height, defined by a bullnose detail (continuing to the door), with timber flush panelling above, carrying through to the suspended verandah awning.

A small bronze branding plate would be affixed to the eastern section of wall.



**Figure 1.** Existing subject entrance, proposed for replacement.  
(Source: courtesy of the Applicant, August 2025)

### Heritage Policy

As the scheme would affect an individual heritage item and a property situated in a HCA, the MLEP at cl. 5.10(2)(a)(i) and (iii) requires that Northern Beaches Council ‘consider’ the potential impact of the scheme on the articulated significance of

the relevant heritage places, particularly their ‘associated fabric, settings and views’, cl. 5.10(1)(b). Clause 5.10(5)(c) also allows the consent authority to consider the impact of new work ‘in the vicinity’ of the subject place. The overall objective is to ‘conserve the environmental heritage’ of the municipality, cl. 5.10(1)(a).

This HIS, prepared by a heritage specialist, constitutes the required expert material and opinion to support the consent authority in understanding the extent of the new work’s heritage impact and making informed, substantiated decisions.

While the following section of this report adopts a performance/issue-based assessment model, it is recognised that the statutory heritage objectives of the MLEP are the focal point for the Council’s decision-making, assisted by the non-mandatory guidance/preferences of the MDCP.

### **Review of Heritage Impact**

As the affected fabric dates from the recent past, it makes no substantive contribution to the significance of the subject building (the late Federation-period *Darley Flats*) or the acknowledged heritage values of The Corso.

Given this, the key matter is whether the replacement elements are assessable as visually compatible with the existing and desired built character of the subject place and its immediate setting—The Corso (HCA C2).

In the view of this report, this is clearly the case. The proposed framed entryway would use high-quality and attractive materials (stained [not painted] timber, reclaimed hardware, green-glazed ceramic mosaic tiles, aged bronze) in a manner that draws from traditional sources (arched fanlight, deeply panelled doors, prominent architraves and cornice, and a recessed opening framed by solid piers with differentiated upper/lower finishes). The visual outcome would be a cohesive design that emphasises authenticity and craft, bestowing a sense of formality, symmetry, and permanence—all aspects that align in a non-derivative manner with the historic and desired sense of place for The Corso.

Within the confines of the existing narrow entryway/shopfront, this scheme satisfies the MDCP’s preferences, particularly Part 5.1.2.13 (*‘Shop-fronts are to be Reinstated’*).

While the longstanding faux nautical-themed aesthetic of the existing entrance to the subject space may possess a degree of incidental charm, this fabric is not ascribed with heritage significance. Its replacement, for the reasons discussed, would constitute a finely crafted addition and sit harmoniously alongside the other heterogeneous shopfronts of The Corso—respectful of its historic setting yet appropriately distinguishable.

On balance, the impact of the new works would be a positive for the presentation and significance of the subject place, encompassing HCA C2, and nearby heritage items.

As such, from a heritage management perspective, it is recommended that the Council approve these works in their current form.

Please contact this office if you have any queries in relation to the above.

Yours faithfully,

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