

Heritage Referral Response

Application Number:	DA2021/0164
Date:	10/06/2021
To:	Gareth David
Land to be developed (Address):	Lot 113 DP 6937 , 91 Florida Road PALM BEACH NSW 2108

Officer comments

HERITAGE COMMENTS
Discussion of reason for referral
<p>The proposal has been referred to Heritage as the subject property is within a heritage conservation area and adjoins a heritage item</p> <p>Florida Road Heritage Conservation Area - 79-97 Florida Road</p> <p>"The Moorings" (house) - 93 Florida Road</p>
Details of heritage items affected
<p>Details of the item as contained within the Pittwater inventory is as follows:</p> <p>Florida Road Heritage Conservation Area</p> <p><u>Statement of Significance</u></p> <p>The Florida Road Heritage Conservation Area includes a group of houses representing an early phase of residential development in Palm Beach. The street is an anthology of local architectural styles. The area is associated with local prominent figures including Lawrie Gallagher, who built Kookaburra and Florida House. "The Moorings" and "Back O'Moon" are also associated with the early work of the well-known architecture office Peddle & Thorpe.</p> <p>Contributory ranking: Number 91 - Contributory</p> <p><u>Physical Description</u></p> <p>Florida Road in Palm Beach is a winding, leafy street with a high (west) and a low (east) side caused by the slope of the land. As a consequence of this slope, many of the houses on the low side are not clearly visible from the road.</p> <p>The houses in the street are a mix of sizes and date from a variety of periods and appear to be a mixture of holiday and permanent homes. Many are now two storey. These are generally early to mid twentieth century buildings.</p> <p>Numbers 79-97 form the Florida Road Conservation Area and include Florida House built by Lawrie Gallagher when working for Albert Verrills. The set backs of the residences from the street vary along Florida Road. The result is a combination of a series of larger open spaces and buildings close to the building alignment. This contributes to the leafiness of the area as do the many mature trees and gardens. The absence of many fences contributes to a feeling of unrestrained space. Some properties have small natural stone retaining walls at the street which creates a stepped back landscape.</p>

The Moorings

Statement of Significance

The Moorings at 93 Florida Road in Palm Beach, completed in 1919 to the design of the well-known Sydney architect James Peddle, has historic and aesthetic significance as a holiday house typical of the early Pittwater subdivisions.

The architectural heritage of the area is characterised by this house form which, in Pittwater, evolved as a structure subordinate to the landscape and which utilised natural materials to harmonise with the surroundings and lessen their visual impact. The existing thicket of palms and paperbarks in the front garden provide landscape value.

The dwelling is representative of the popularity of cottage retreats in Pittwater built of local natural materials (stone and timber) to simple designs with traditional construction techniques.

Physical Description

This house is located on an elevated site block. It is a one-storey stone house on a stone base with garage underneath featuring low pitched metal deck roof, creosoted slab and batten walls. Of notable interest is the thicket of palms and paperbarks in the front garden.

Other relevant heritage listings

Sydney Regional Environmental Plan (Sydney Harbour Catchment) 2005	No	
Australian Heritage Register	No	
NSW State Heritage Register	No	
National Trust of Aust (NSW) Register	Yes	Part of Bungalows Group - 89, 91, 93, 95 Florida Road
RAIA Register of 20th Century Buildings of Significance		
Other		

Consideration of Application

The proposal seeks consent for alterations and additions to an existing dwelling. The proposal was referred to an external heritage advisor for comment. The advisor provided the following comments

Background

The history of No. 89-91, earlier known as "Tidapa", is pretty well understood, along with that of its neighbours which are together the reason for the recognition and maintenance of the Florida Road Conservation Area. The Conservation Plan prepared for No. 93 "The Moorings" by Robertson & Hindmarsh Architects provides good background and importantly, a perspective for how decisions about a place like "Tidapa" should be made.

Heritage Matters

In statutory terms the house is identified within a HCA and is therefore subject to Clause 5.10 of the LEP requiring that Council consider the impacts on the HCA from any activity arising at the property. It is also adjacent to a Heritage Item No. 93 and its impacts on that house should be considered.

No. 89-91 was reportedly recommended to be listed as an Item by the consultants who prepared the Pittwater Heritage Study (1988). Why it was not so listed may be discoverable in Council's files, but in my opinion, having regard to what we now know about these early cottages of Palm Beach and Pittwater, and having regard to the current circumstances of many of them, the inclusion just within the HCA was not enough recognition of this house, and not enough of an indication of the need for appropriate conservation planning.

I have read the Heritage Impact Statement by Urbis supporting the proposal, and am somewhat perplexed that the heritage interest of the cottage in so many dimensions can be acknowledged, but none of it approaches a degree supporting listing as an Item. I am not comfortable with the assessment offered nor the conclusions that the proposal, which involves substantial changes to key, distinctive aspects of the cottage, is all ok.

The importance and indeed, sophistication of the cottages like No. 91 is not always understood. The article by James Peddle (quite possibly the architect who designed "Tidapa") published in the influential magazine "The Home", in September 1920 shows how considered and intentional the rustic design of the houses was and remains. While over the years changes have been made to many of them - including "Tidapa" - these have tended to be minor compared to what is frequently proposed now.

When major change is proposed, the affect on the heritage interest of these buildings needs to be very carefully considered. The design of the cottages is not casual, their primary features are more considered than may be apparent. The degree to which they may be adapted without cost to their significance needs to be very carefully established.

Considerations

In my opinion it is apparent that the siting of "Tidapa", well set back for the height and view, and perched upon the live rock shelf where it emerges from the site, was very considered as were the expressed timber structural elements and materials - the cladding, lattice enclosures - with all contributing to the response of the cottage to the site, its context, and the idea behind its creation. They are features which partner its neighbours, No. 93 in particular.

The importance of the siting off the cottage, its setback and open foreground space have been appreciated and informed the current proposal, but building in front of the cottage, altering its original presentation and its siting on the rock shelf across the site is not in my opinion, consistent with its significance - its history, development, design and aesthetic intent. The conclusions reached about there being potential for development behind the cottage (the proposed garage and studio) and some limited potential concealed underneath the cottage, are in my opinion supportable. Altering the front of the cottage is not.

Similarly there is also potential for some very careful change to the interiors, as has been proposed. Kitchens and bathrooms are elements which change, but their relationship with the cottage should, again, be very carefully considered. A "large" contemporary kitchen would be greatly out of keeping with the ethos of this little building, where a priority was intentionally placed upon simplicity and modesty. These are concepts which self-evidently, are awkward when considered against the current monetary value of the property, but they are why the HCA was created, and why Council has sought to manage the diverse interest of the owners of these properties, over almost two decades since their recognition.

These circumstances have usually devolved to schemes which augment the cottages involved through discreet pavilion additions, behind the original as may be possible. These can provide extra accommodation and facilities, but leave the original, significant building minimally altered or affected.

This was the conclusion for No. 93 “The Moorings”, and appears preferable for “Tidapa”.

Conclusions

As discussed on site and shown in the application drawings, the works as currently proposed would substantially alter the most visible and characteristic part of the house, losing features which both individualise the house and connect it with its typology. This will both diminish the house and the group of which it is part, which in turn form the backbone of the HCA. Together “Tidapa” and “The Moorings” are a very strong authentic pair, which still demonstrate their original intentions and design ethos.

An alternative proposal which avoids adverse impact must be found, to support the ongoing life of the cottage while enhancing its use for the current owners, and those who follow them.

Based on the advice from the external heritage advisor and the impacts upon the conservation area, Heritage cannot support the proposal and recommends amended plans.

Consider against the provisions of CL5.10 of PLEP.

Is a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) Required?

Has a CMP been provided?

Is a Heritage Impact Statement required? Yes

Has a Heritage Impact Statement been provided? Yes

Further Comments

COMPLETED BY: Brendan Gavin, Principal Planner

DATE: 10 June 2021

The proposal is therefore unsupported.

Note: Should you have any concerns with the referral comments above, please discuss these with the Responsible Officer.

Recommended Heritage Advisor Conditions:

Nil.