

7 June 2024

General Manager
Northern Beaches Council
PO Box 82
Manly NSW 1655

HERITAGE MEMORANDUM—S4.55 Application | 63-67 The Corso, Manly

This heritage memorandum has been prepared on behalf of Initium Management for 63-67 The Corso, Manly (subject place), a highly modified former retail premise constructed for Woolworths in 1935. My practice previously prepared a Heritage Impact Statement, dated 20 April 2023, for the subject building from which this document draws.

This brief report accompanies a Section 4.55 application for DA2023/0849, which permitted a proposed retail fit-out. It seeks to revise the approved scheme in a minor manner.

The subject place is identified as part of a serial heritage listing (*Group of commercial buildings*) known as item I106 under Part 1, Schedule 5 of the *Manly Local Environmental Plan 2013*. It is also included in the Town Centre HCA (C2) and adjacent to the *New Brighton Hotel* (I110). Refer to HER_005 (MLEP) for heritage mapping.

No Council-adopted Statement of Significance for the subject building is known, but as part of the above-mentioned HIS, the following discussion of the building's heritage value was prepared:

As a former purpose-built retail premise for Woolworths—an important local commercial venture—constructed to what was then the district's preeminent commercial strip, the subject building would likely satisfy the requisite threshold for historical significance (Criterion A).

Its scale and original, exuberant architect-prepared design expression (albeit diminished by modifications) attest to the liveliness of interwar trade conducted along The Corso and contemporary shopping patterns at the local level. The subject building is a good and prominent example of a late interwar period commercial building; however, accumulative alterations to the upper façade and the complete replacement of the original shopfronts have dramatically reduced its intactness and integrity.

The loss or obfuscation of its original pared-down and sleek Moderne/Art Deco-influenced detailing and changes to the stepped parapet, in particular, have diminished its finesse and aesthetic or representative potential. Further consideration and a municipality-wide comparative study would be required to establish whether the place still meets the requisite threshold for the aesthetic (Criterion C) or representative (Criterion G) significance.

The Section 4.55 works are set out in drawings prepared by Antoniadis Architects, dated 27 May 2024 (Rev A). It is proposed to retain the three approved retail tenancies but reconfigure their shopfront designs and internal layouts/fit-outs. The amendment to the shopfront is minor, namely to replace the approved new western door with a three-paned automated sliding door. Additionally, the previously approved western display window would be reduced in size to allow for the establishment of a statutorily-required hydrant booster.

As the scheme is non-exempt work and would affect an individual heritage item and a property situated in a HCA, the MLEP at cl. 5.10(2)(a)(i)(iii) requires that the consent authority 'consider' the impact of the new work on the identified significance of the relevant heritage listings, particularly their 'associated fabric, settings and views', cl. 5.10(1)(b). The overall objective is to 'conserve the environmental heritage' of the municipality, cl. 5.10(1)(a).

This memorandum, prepared by an independent heritage specialist, constitutes the required expert material and opinion to support the Council in understanding the new work's heritage impact and making informed decisions.

Given that no significant fabric exists below the verandah/awning roof or internally, the only relevant heritage consideration is the visual compatibility of the amended scheme with the architectural character of the modified subject building and the encompassing historic but mixed commercial streetscape.

In this sense, the revised shopfront design is consistent with the previous approval and—positively—maintains its sympathetic and interpretive aspects, namely, an appropriate solid-to-void ratio for a commercial context, traditionally balanced framing divisions, and a respectful material palette for a late interwar building (metal framing, tiled surfaces, and clear glazing).

The presence of the hydrant booster doors (double-leafed) is unavoidable, and their dimensions have been rationalised as much as possible. It is noted that the proposed location is as discrete as achievable within the shopfront. Further, it is recommended that the Council, should they accept the modification, develop a condition that stipulates the hydrant booster doors have a neutral/recessive material and finish to ensure they manifest as unobtrusively as conceivable.

Accordingly, the outcome would be a 'good fit' for The Corso, being fittingly distinguishable as an active contemporary ground floor but being broadly in keeping with the key characteristics of remnant early 20th-century commercial shopfronts in the streetscape. It remains an improved presentation to that existing at the subject building (extensive, unbroken glazing).

Having regard to the above discussion, it remains my view that the scheme has paid due regard to the significance of the subject place and its setting and avoids an adverse heritage impact. The revised plans are recommended for approval on heritage grounds.

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

Yours faithfully,

Patrick Wilson

PATRICK WILSON

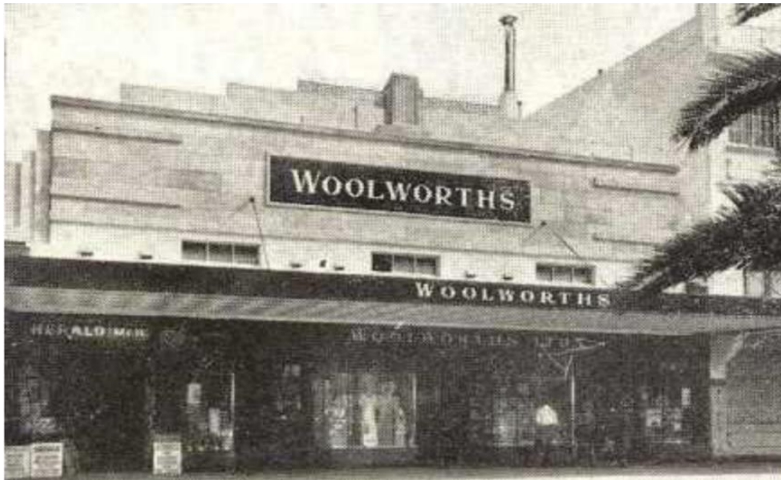
Director—Principal Heritage Consultant and Professional Historian

Touring the Past Pty Ltd

B.A (Hist Hons), M. Cult Heritage

M. ICOMOS, Pro Hist PHA (NSW & ACT + VIC), SAHANZ, APT, IAIA, Interps Aus, Nat Trust (NSW)

APPENDIX A—PHOTOGRAPHS



Close-up of the subject façade from The Corso, interwar years. Note what appears to be a pressed metal soffit to the underside of the awning. (Source: *Wool's, Corso, no 63-67*, Manly Local Studies via History hub)



Subject site from The Corso. (Source: Touring the Past, November 2021)



The subject frontage, since altered, shows plain contemporary sheeting on the soffit of the suspended awning. (Source: Touring the Past, November 2021)