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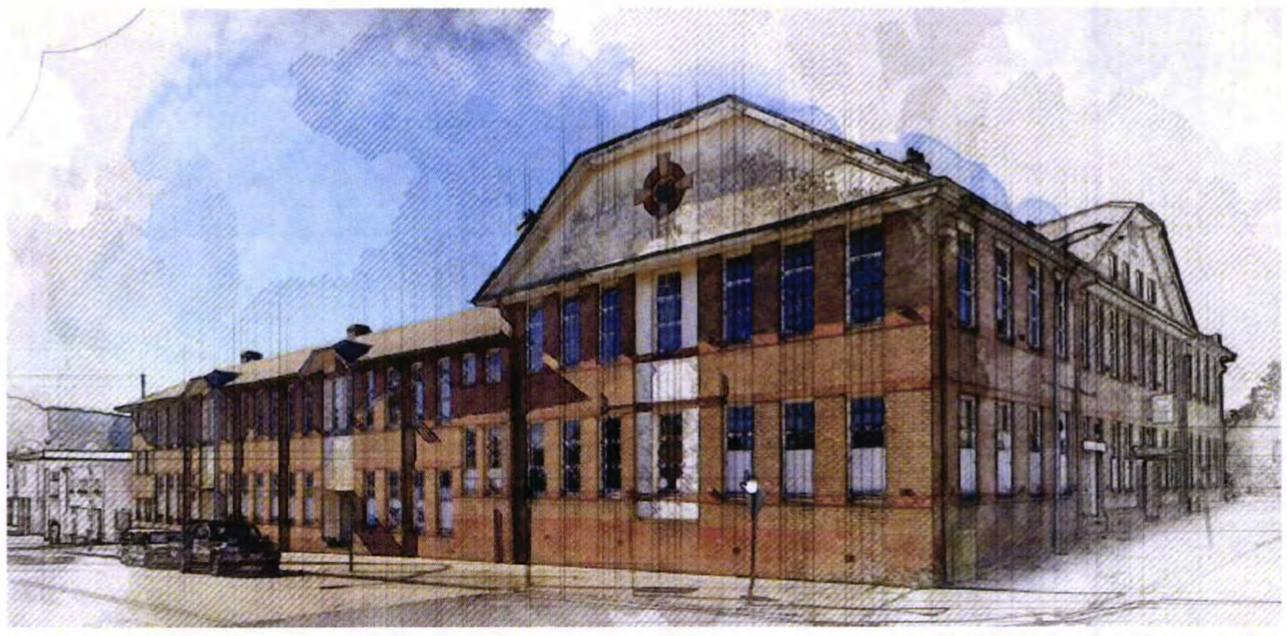

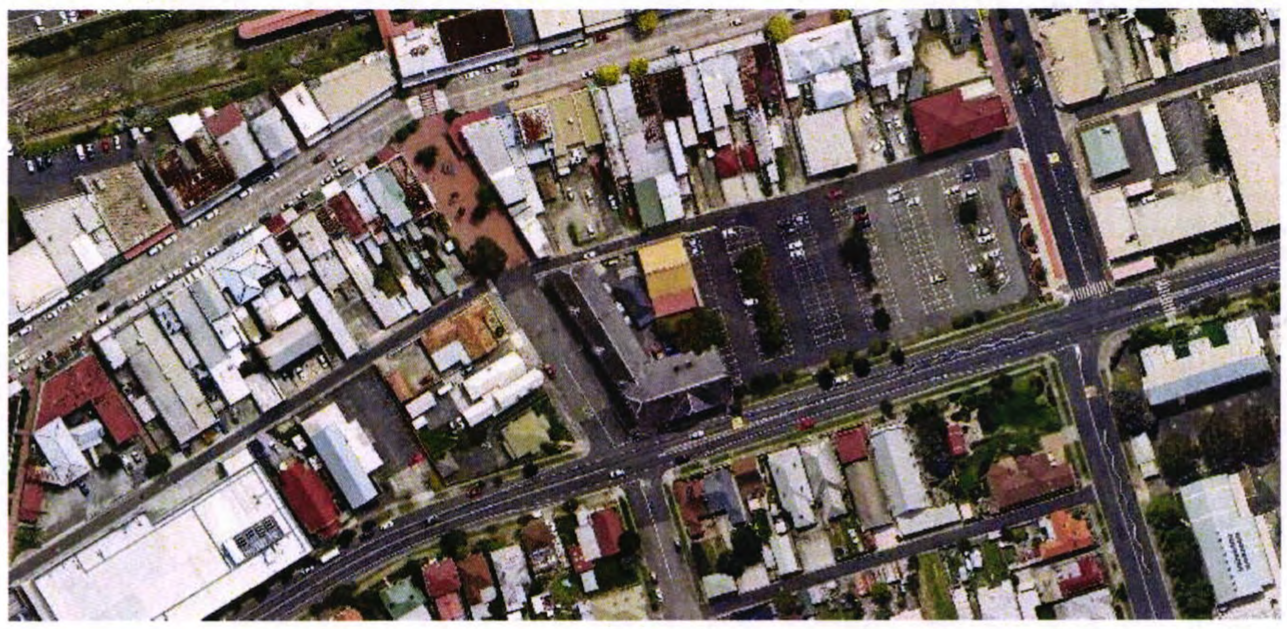

Former TAFE

Corner Mort and Cook Streets, Lithgow

May 2020

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 PROPOSAL

This report accompanies a Development Application to Lithgow City Council for the adaptive re-use of the former main building into Specialised Disability Accommodation and demolish the ancillary building to ensure there is adequate space for carparking and green space. The strongly designed and detailed main brick building has remained relatively unchanged since its construction. The building has unfortunately been deteriorating for many years without a use. Support of the development would once again let Lithgow show that it values its heritage and strives once more to be a major urban location. Council's approval of the proposed development is requested.

INTRODUCTION

1 BACKGROUND

1.1 SITE LOCATION

The site is located at is on the corner of Cook and Mort St Lithgow Lots 9-11, Section 2 Deposited Plan 2308. The allotment is occupied by a two storey L-shaped brick building as well as two sheds, one is fibro with a metal roof the other is brick and metal. The total area of the site is approximately 2007 m^2. The map reference is Latitude -33.481684 Longitude 150.15769.

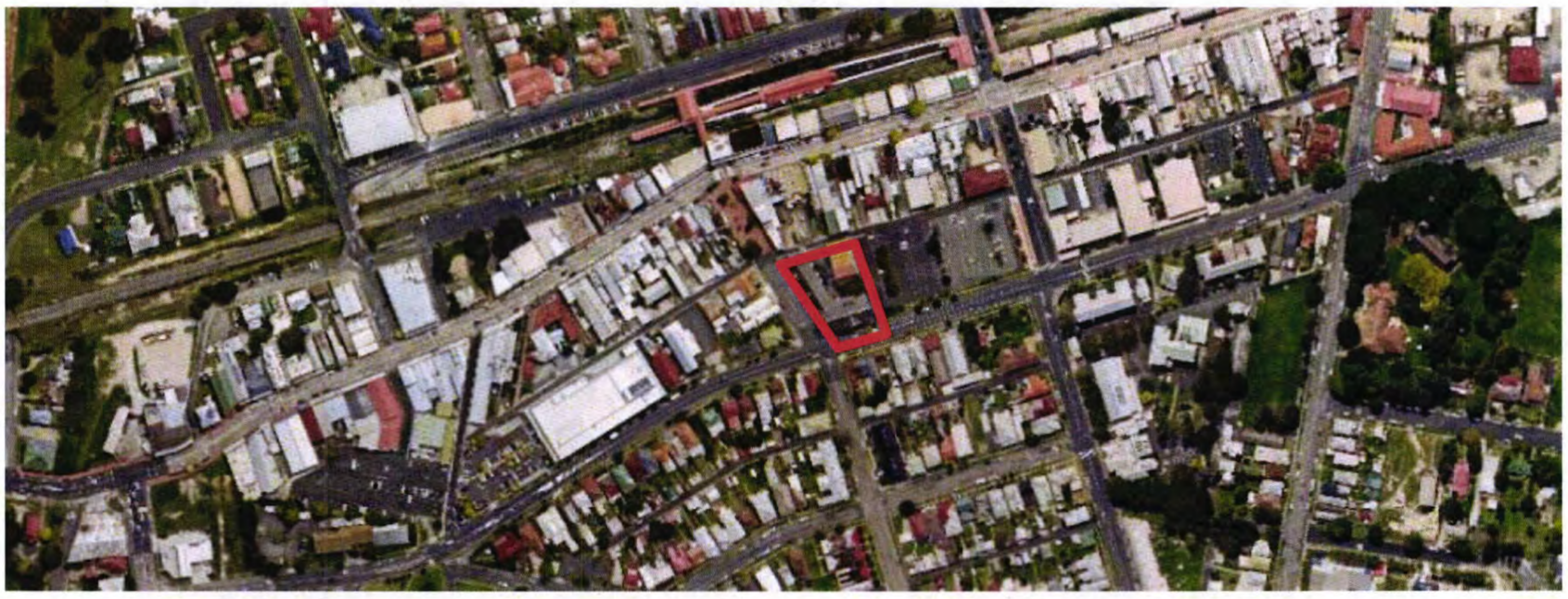

Figure 1: Location of site and context within Lithgow

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Figure 2: Closer view of site

2 ZONING

The proposal site is zoned B2 Local Centre, under the Lithgow City Council Local Environmental Plan 2014 (LEP). The site is also listed as a heritage item within Lithgow Main Street Heritage Conservation Area. The site is not below Council's adopted flood planning level. The site is not mapped as bush fire prone land.

The proposal site is zoned B2 Local Centre, under the Lithgow Local Environmental Plan 2014 (LEP). The proposed development is permitted within the zone as Residential Units.

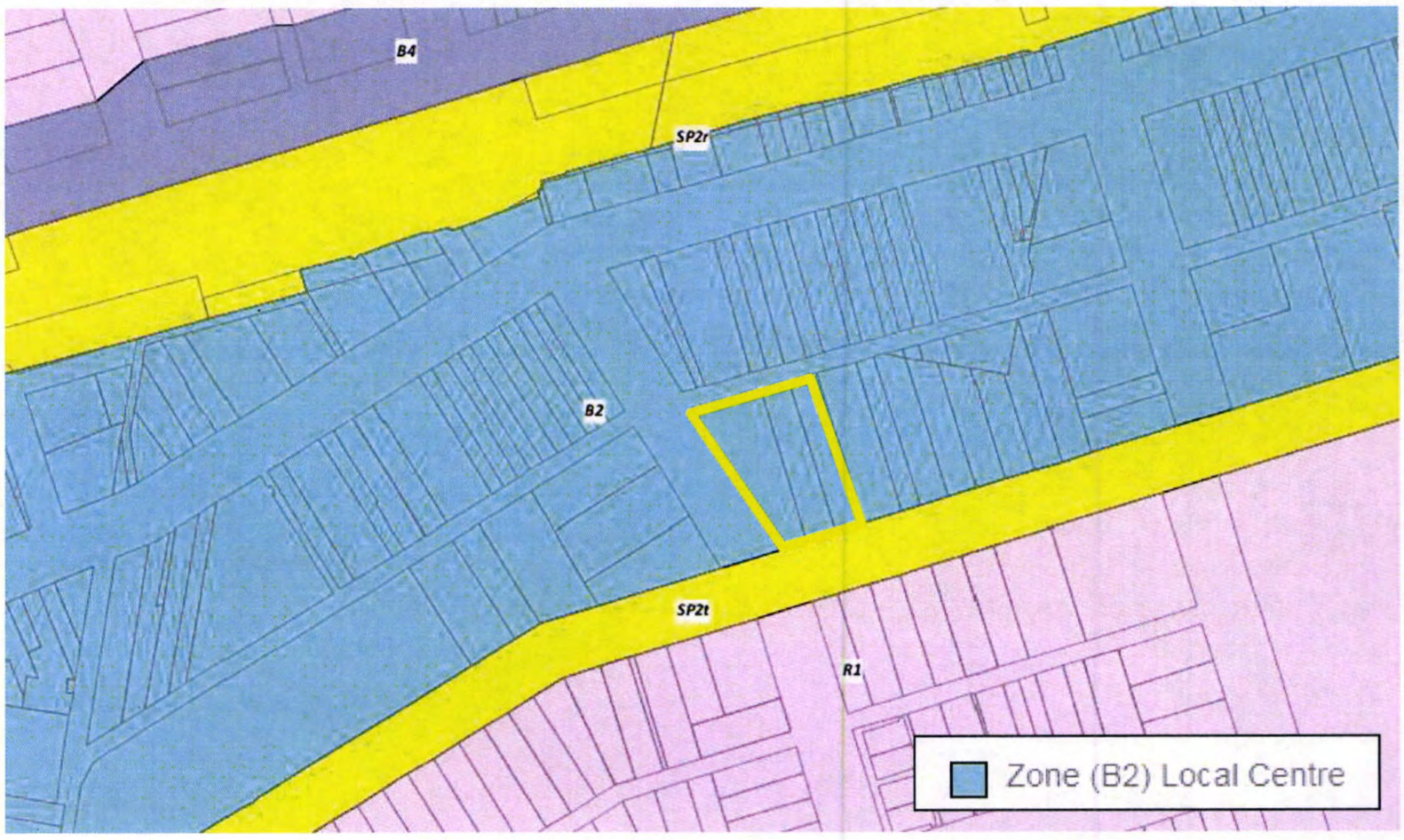

Figure 3: Zoning map

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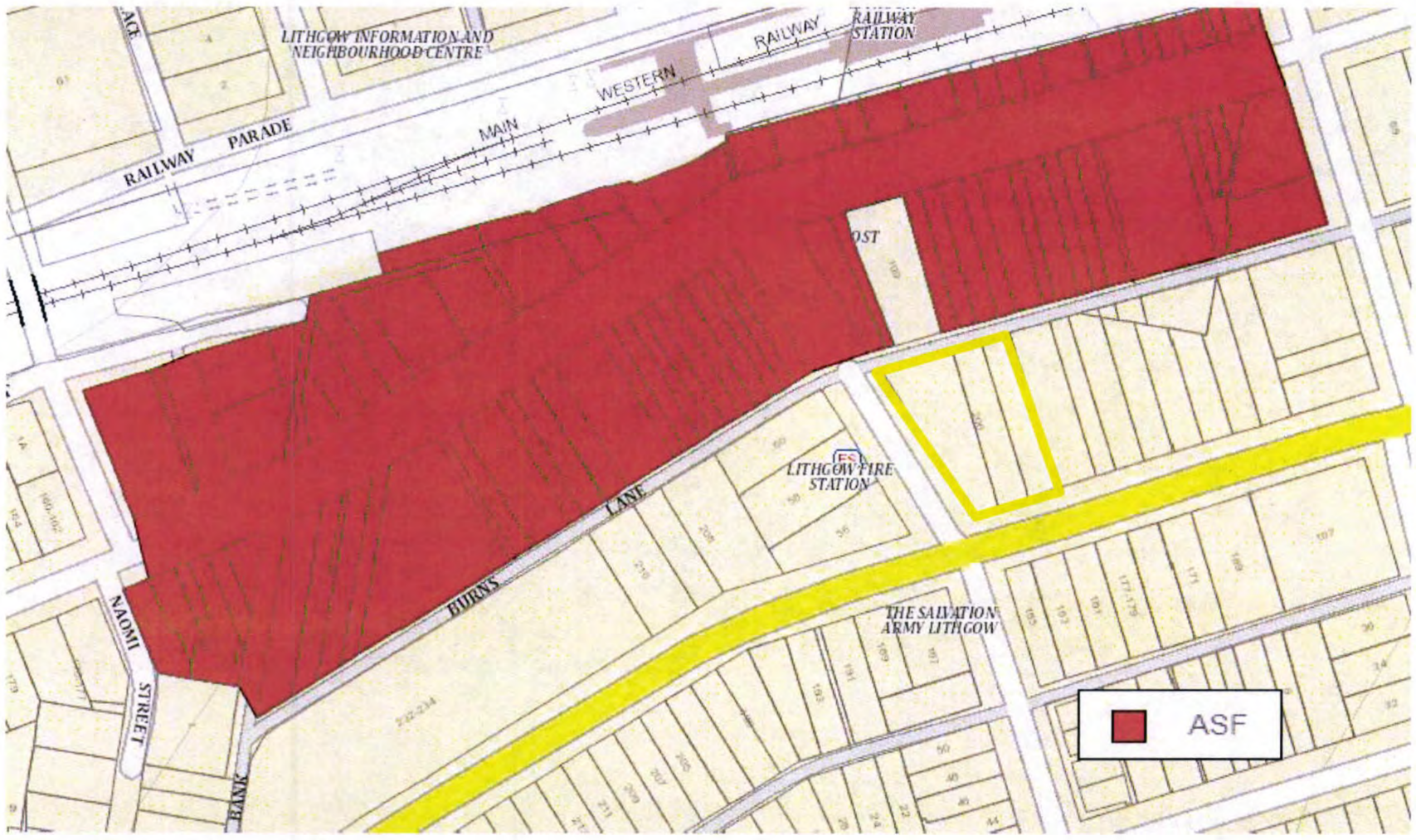

Figure 4: Active street frontage map

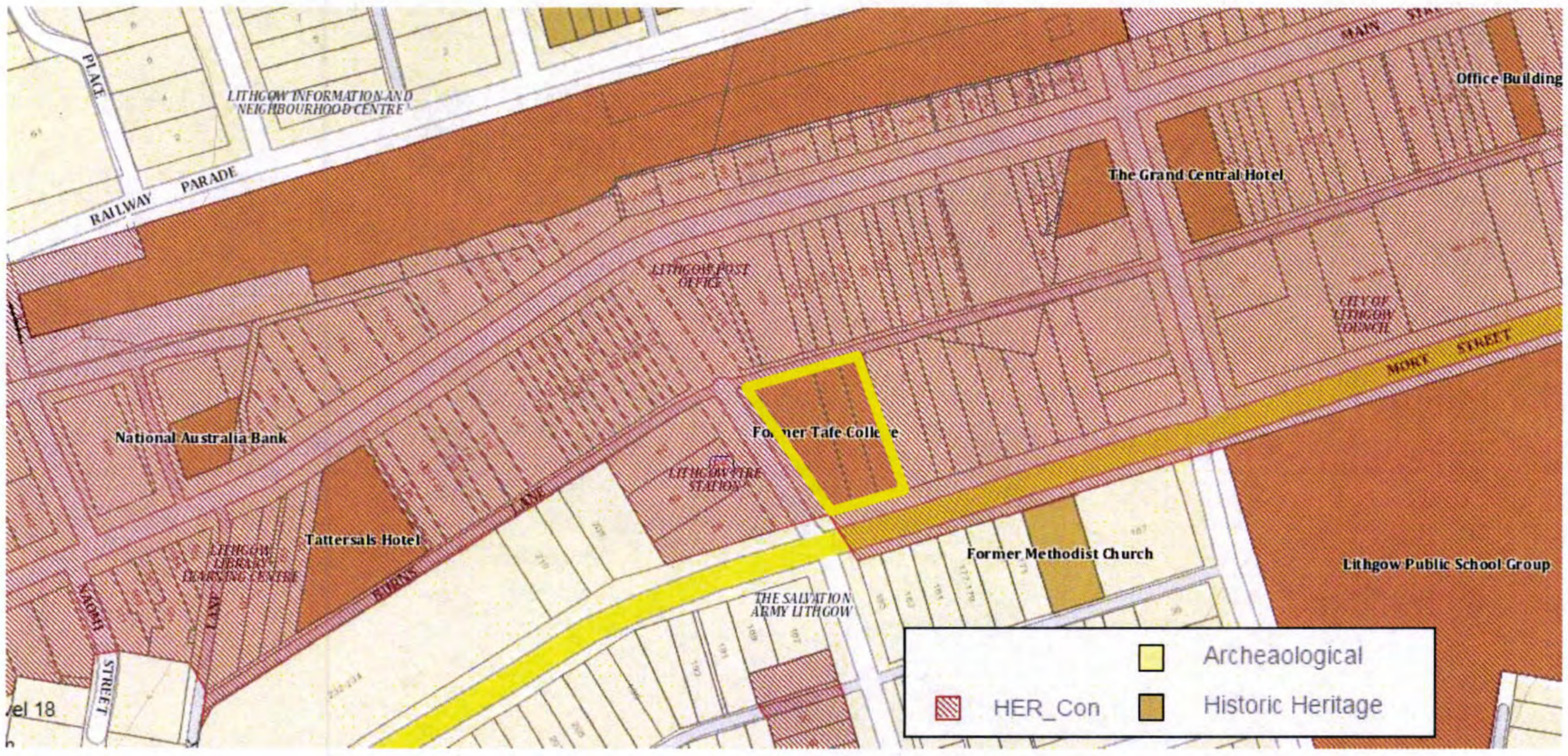

Figure 5: Heritage Map (two maps joined), site -highlighted in yellow- within context of Lithgow[1]

[1] http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/map/4870_COM_HER_002GB_010_20140721.pdf?id=b7278daf-d364-4f80-b440-820931355850

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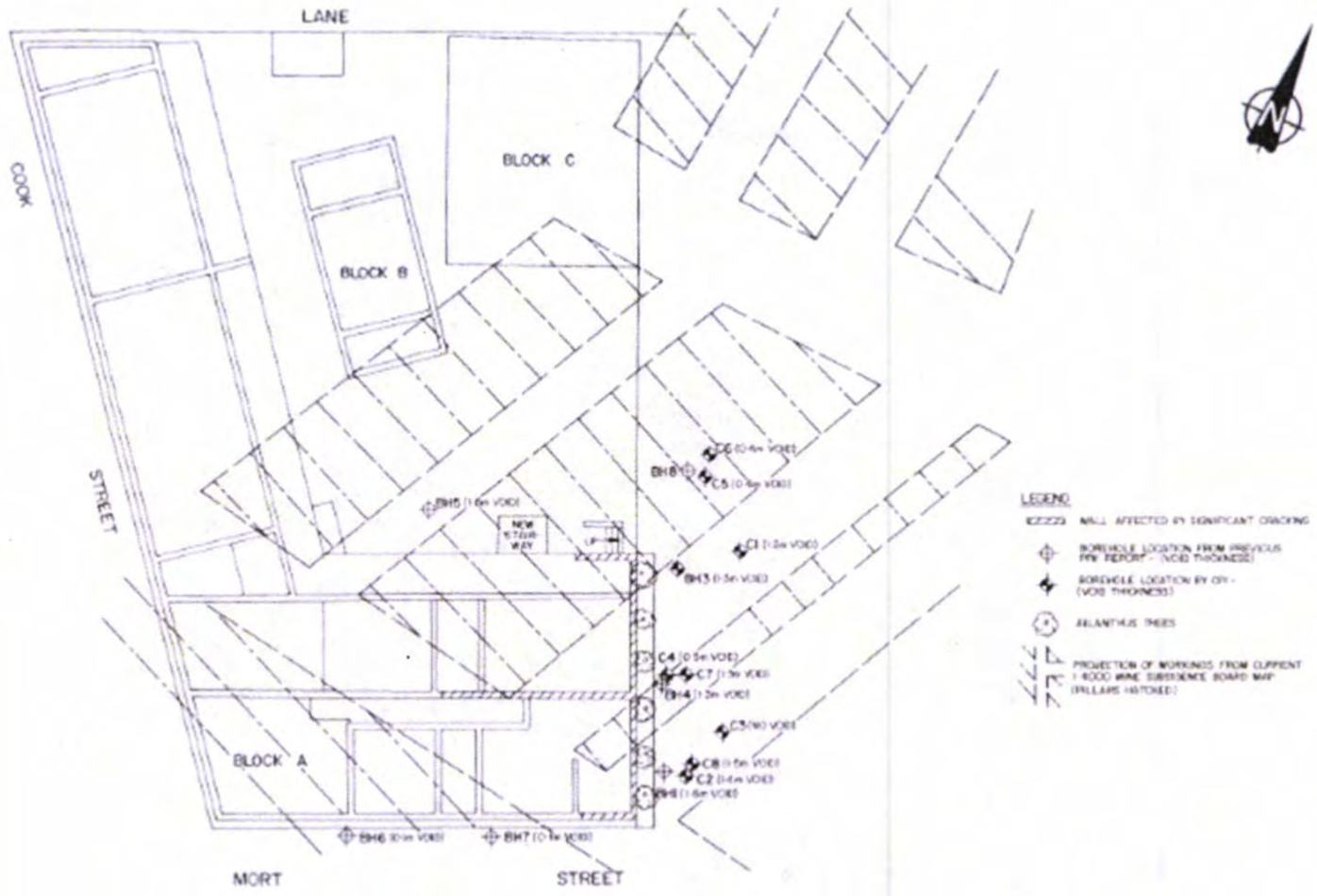
Mine subsidence



While the building is in the Mine Subsidence District, the existing cracking has been examined and found to be unrelated to mining.

2.1 SITE FEATURES

The former Lithgow TAFE is a two storey L-shaped brick and iron building. There are also other buildings on the site, one is on lots 9 - 10 which is fibro with a metal roof the other is on lots 10 - 11 and is brick and metal. The building is located in a highly visible position in the Lithgow CBD on the corner of Cook and Mort Streets.

To the north is Cook St Plaza with a cafe and a tobacconist on the western side of the plaza and the post office with associated external PO boxes on the eastern side of the plaza. Further north is Main St. To the west of the subject site is the Lithgow Healing Centre, the Fire Station and a house. The south is a mix of commercial and residential development.

Current legal statutory situation

The property was built as an educational establishment prior to any planning approval being required. It operated as a state owned entity and was protected from local requirements. Therefore the use could be continued in the same manner that a previous consent could be operated.

When the property was sold the new owner obtained a development consent. Although the building was occupied, with Council knowledge, formal occupation was never granted due to many consent infractions. Therefore that consent was never formally in operation as it could not be considered to have been taken up.

The unit which exists at present was unauthorised by Council. It is understood the unit was built by the previous owner, who progressed through an application for the unit. As he did not complete the necessary works on the unit or balance of the building he was unable to legally occupy.

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2.2 CURRENT PLANS

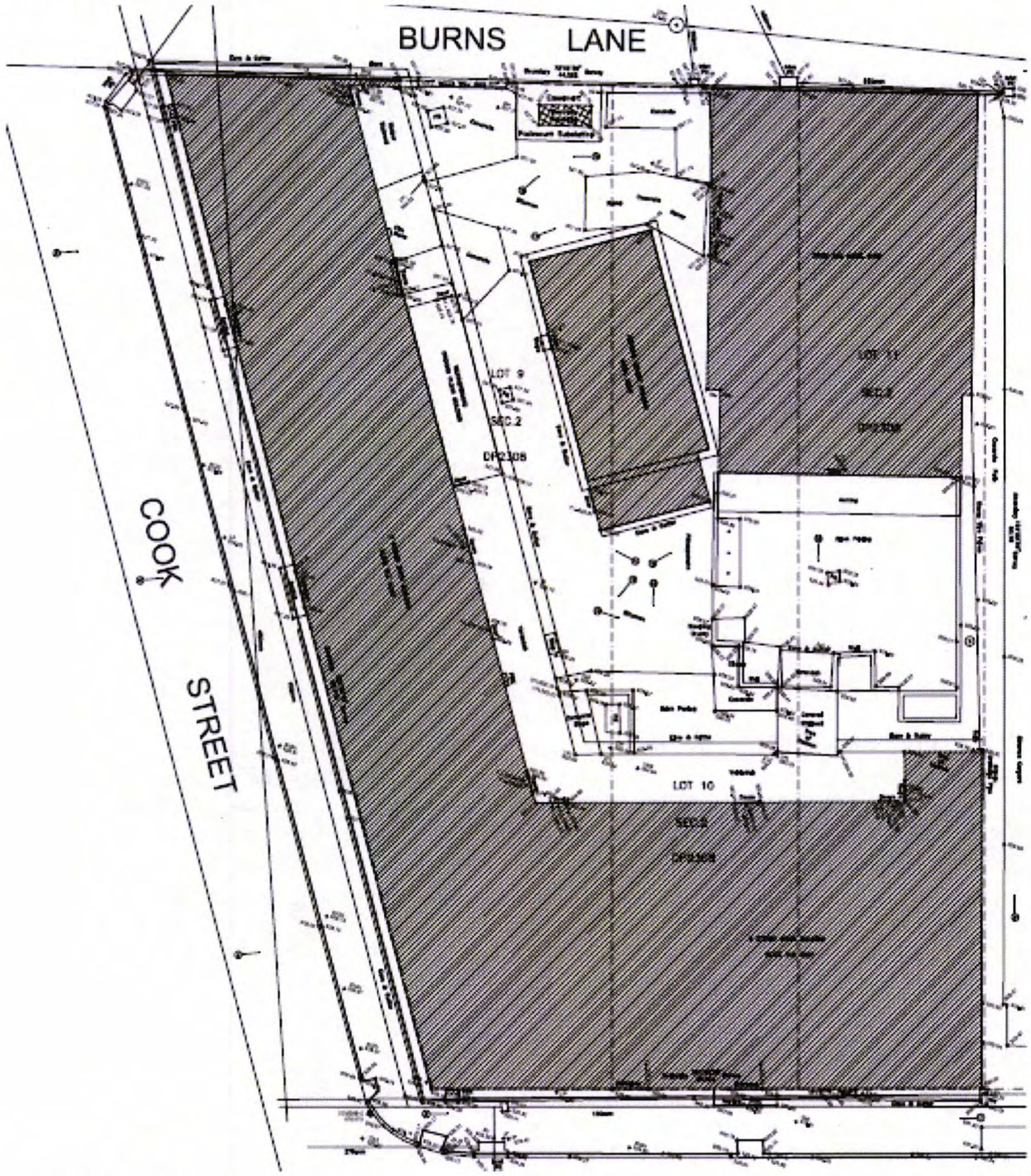

Figure 6: Current site plan as surveyed

The original building is well laid out around the edge of the major streets. Much use is made of balcony access for the building. The later buildings are simply fitted into the available space and added to as required at the time.

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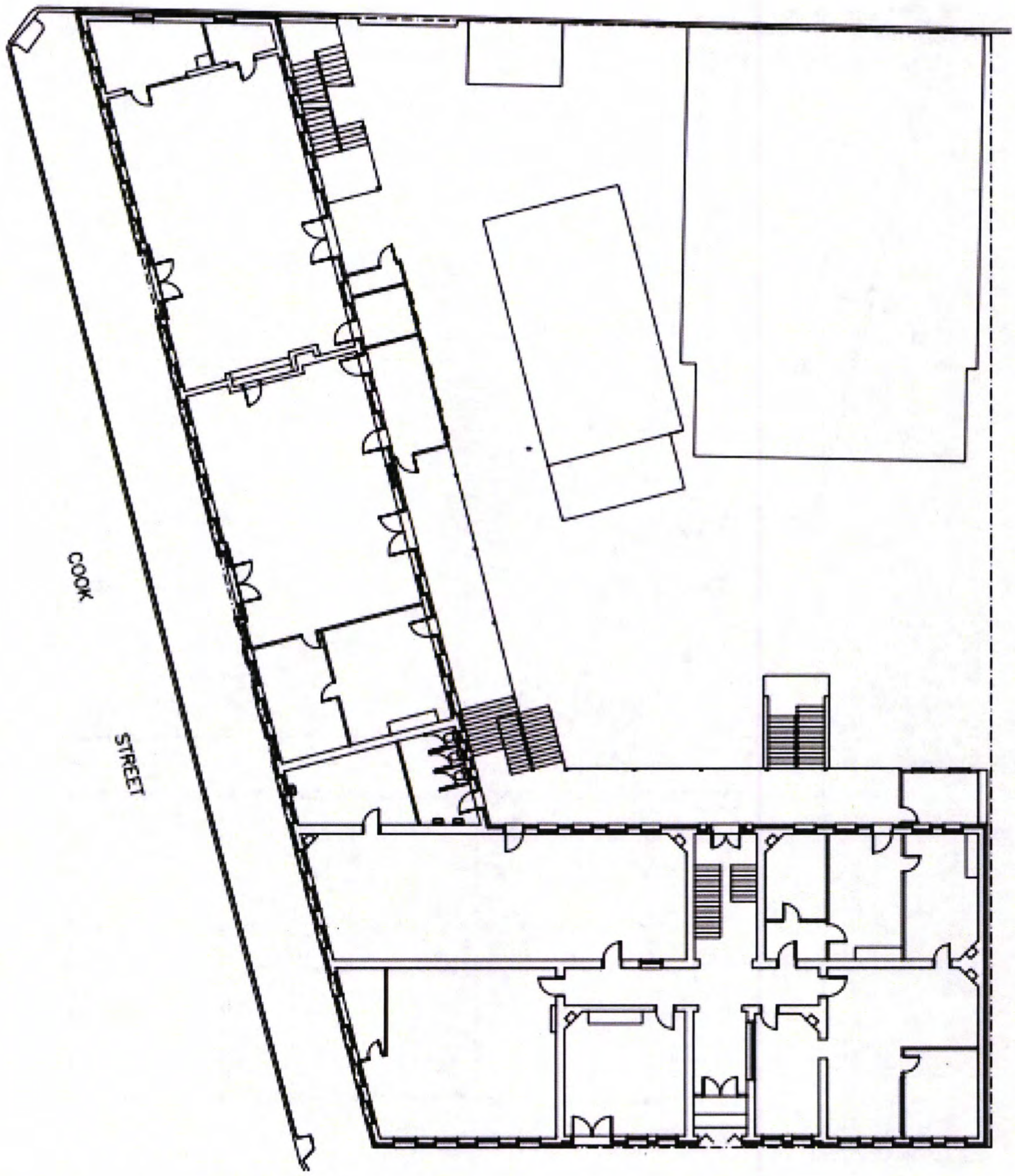

Figure 7: Current ground floor plan

Note the many partitions in the earlier spaces that remain. The study of the plans has shown how the classrooms were repurposed continually through the life of the building as a teaching facility. The many structural supporting walls, and the many windows in the walls supplied opportunities to subdivide the spaces as needed for the uses at the time.

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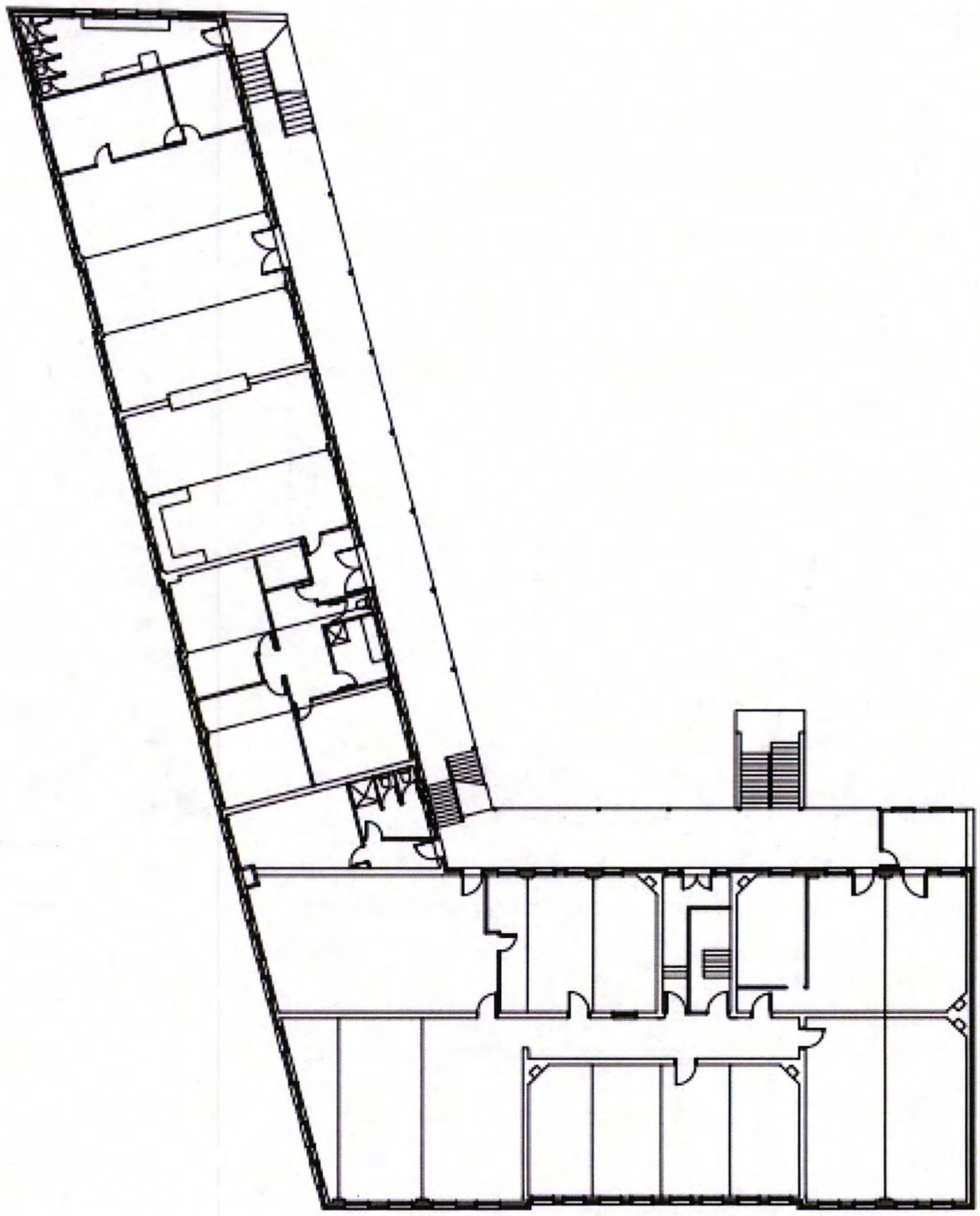

Figure 8: Current first floor plan

Note the rolled steel joists, to support the upper floor joists and boards, are shown as single lines across the rooms.

Prior to the current ownership, recent construction of a separate flat was undertaken. It is understood that this work was unauthorised. These details are clear from the designer's plans of the building as it currently exists. There is also part finished framing and minor demolition evident. These issues will be highlighted in the fabric investigation of the individual spaces.

2.2.1 Previous Council Main Street report

The area at the rear of the units has been considered by Council in the recent Lithgow CBD Revitalisation Action Plan. A few years ago the laneway was also marked to allow pedestrian

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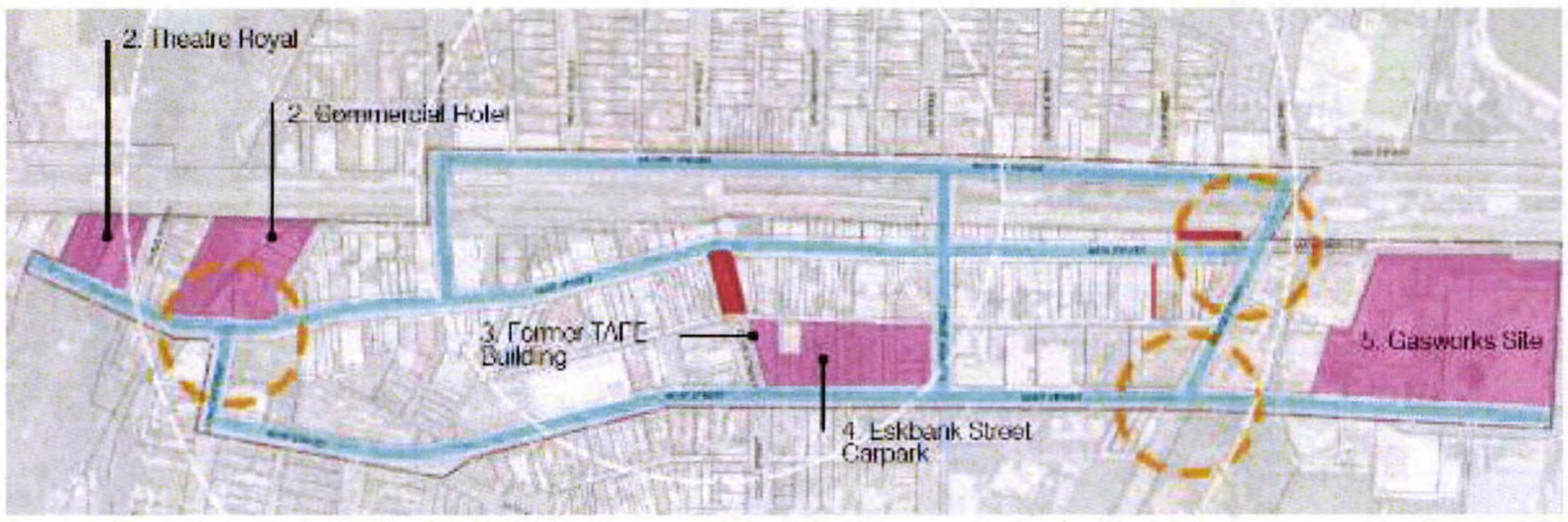
movement from the car park to Cook Plaza. This area has fallen into disrepair, and the previous ramp has been replaced by a very steep almost roll type kerb. However the roll kerb, apparently instituted for the long time loading area at the post office, shows damage from vehicle movements and is unsuitable in accessibility terms.

The revitalisation design had the following extracts regarding the TAFE building:

5. Redevelopment opportunities
Former TAFE building

• Redevelopment/adaptive reuse of the site with a combination of new residential/ niche retail functions that retains the authentic patina of the building's inherent 1920's architectural heritage
• Creation of rental or strata residences with a unique heritage appeal
• Inclusion of niche retail spaces on the ground floor including food/café experience within the existing shed building opening onto sheltered courtyard space
• Creation of small scale creative practitioner office spaces serviced by a collective administration centre
• Potential to "trade down" on-site car parking requirements with reactivation of the building, proximity to public car parking and public transport connections
• Potential for reactivation/redevelopment of the sites Main St Laneway and Eskbank St car park frontages
• Create destination appeal for the site by supporting interim activation projects including pop up shops and galleries and market experiences

CBD study area- Key site locations:



Mort Street
Mort Street has several buildings at its east end of heritage significance, along with the TAFE building at Cook Street. Between these are relatively poor commercial buildings from the 1960's-80's, and cottage residential dwellings to the south side of the road.

4.0 Key site assessment
3. Former TAFE Building
Strengths

• Iconic and visually land marking heritage building located in the heart of Lithgow town centre
• High volume of passing traffic via Mort St frontage
• Central location close to highest foot traffic areas along Main St
• Strong connectivity to key Main St commercial and retail destinations, taxi rank and Lithgow railway station via Cook St Plaza.
• Three street frontages provide varying degrees of accessibility
• Frontage to major public car park
• Relatively sound building condition with much original construction detailing in place
• Separate ancillary buildings within site area
• Strong public interest in ensuring the building is reactivated and repurposed

Weaknesses

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- *Costs associated with building repairs and removal of asbestos etc*
- *Costs associated with achieving code access and fire safety standards*
- *Re-establishing the destination appeal of the site within the Lithgow town centre*
- *Finding "pioneer" tenants for potential new retail/commercial space*[2]

Comment: This proposal responds positively to many of the issues raised in the Lithgow CBD Revitalisation Action Plan. For instance, the proposal seeks the adaptive reuse of the site with a combination of new residential functions that retains the authentic patina of the building's inherent 1920's architectural heritage.

The proposal also considers the iconic and visually land marking heritage building located in the heart of Lithgow town centre. The proposal also responds to the Main Street by effectively turning the entry of the building to face the Main Street and detailing the pedestrian entry and carparking to that frontage. There is already a painted pedestrian route from Cook Plaza to the carpark which, although dilapidated is still active. The proposal also recognises the strong public interest in ensuring the building is reactivated and repurposed. We believe it is very much in the public interest to have this purpose built disability housing available in a regional area such as Lithgow.

The proposed development even takes on the 'weaknesses' outlined in the plan such as absorbing the costs associated with building repairs and removal of asbestos and with achieving access and fire safety standards. The proposal will also re-establish the destination appeal of the site within the Lithgow town centre. There would also be no impediment for home businesses and the like being established, effectively part of the shopping centre.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3 PROPOSED USES AND WORKS

This report accompanies a Development Application to Lithgow City Council for the adaptive re-use of the former main building into Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) and demolish the ancillary building to ensure there is adequate space for carparking and green space. As well as the obvious benefits to this high profile heritage building which has long lain vacant and vandalised in the CBD, the benefits to people with a disability cannot be understated.

A recent study has found that there is a shortage of disability housing:

> *A newly published study has found the existing supply of SDA needs to grow by 60% to house the 28,000 people the NDIS expects to fund…*
>
> *..The report identified another 33,200 people with very high support needs who "may require SDA on top of the 17,500 already in this form of housing. Of these 33,200 people, 6,200 people are under 64 residing in aged care."*
>
> *These are among the insights revealed in the government-funded report by the Summer Foundation, the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) and SGS Economics & Planning.*[3]

In addition, there is even less availability of housing for people with a disability in rural and regional areas as stated by People with Disability Australia:

> ***People with disability are in need of more accessible and affordable housing in NSW.*** *17% of us live in poverty[1], and because demand for social housing outstrips supply, we are compelled to rent privately or become homeless. We then face discrimination and a shortage of accessible properties[2]. Affordable private housing is poorly located outside metropolitan areas, with limited accessible public transport, local services and employment opportunities.*
>
> ***Institutional housing options, such as group homes, cluster housing and large residential centres, remain and do not provide genuine community living for***

---

[2] Lithgow CBD Revitalisation Action Plan January 2016

[3] La Trobe University website: https://www.latrobe.edu.au/news/articles/2018/release/ndis-shortfall-in-disability-housing

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> ***people with disability***. *Some of us with psychosocial disability face homelessness or are forced to remain in acute hospital settings rather than in the community. Our choice and control is limited when disability support services are tied to accommodation service providers.*[4]

Many people with a disability do not prefer the institutional or group home models of accommodation, many young disabled people live in aged care homes which are not appropriate for their needs. This points to the need for specialised apartment accommodation where people can live in their own home with easy access to support.

The SDA information required is covered in a separate report.

Residential units

The original main building, built as a Trades School, had many large classroom spaces that were divided by lightweight construction to be able to be changed as per the changing requirements of education. This process is proposed to continue with the building being returned to its original 1925 form and the internal divisions providing the individual units. The units are shown with the photographs of the existing rooms in the building so that direct comparison can be made with the plans.

Demolition

As noted in the CMS and HIS, the original main brick building holds the major significance for the site. The later buildings being the fibro clad classroom and the large brick and metal shed have little significance to the site at all. Similarly, the weatherboard and fibro additions to the verandahs are disruptive to the building. The damage to the remains of the original wall to the lane also degrade that significantly, although the remaining undamaged face bricks are valuable for repairs to the existing building.

Parking

Personal vehicles will be parked in the apartment. As show on the plans, beside each bed is an electric vehicle parking and charging. These vehicles have a typical range of over 20km and a typical top speed of 8-15km/hr. Give the proximity of the proposed residence to the centre of town most parts should be wheelchair accessible in minutes and probably faster than driving to the location, park and then still travelling from the car park to the location they are visiting.

On-site parking - SDA standards

The need for on-site parking may be reduced according to the SDA standards (and the unrelated SEPP 65[5]) as public transport is easily accessible. The train station is under 100m away, the ground between the subject building and trains station only has a slight gradient. The train station has a lift. The nearest bus stop is also under 100m away. The ready availability of powered chairs also provides access to virtually all shops in Lithgow, even to high physical support persons.

The maintenance of the painted pedestrian access in the lane by Council would be appreciated by all people using the Council carpark as well.

There is not much easily accessible green space nearby, especially for those with high dependency disabilities. For example Alexandria Park is flat, close by - adjoining the train station - but it only has park benches and a single table with attached bench seating. This is unsuitable for those with a high dependency disability. In addition the park is very exposed and does not have much in the way of shade. The more suitable green space such as Queen Elizabeth Park is some distance away and could need the assistance of a carer. One of the many benefits of the private green space on site would be that it is accessible for those with a high dependency disability.

---

[4] People with Disability Australia website: https://pwd.org.au/our-work/elections/election-archive/nsw-election-2019/housing-jobs-and-transport/

[5]Car parking requirements in SEPP 65: https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/-/media/Files/DPE/Other/car-parking-requirements-in-SEPP-65.pdf?la=en

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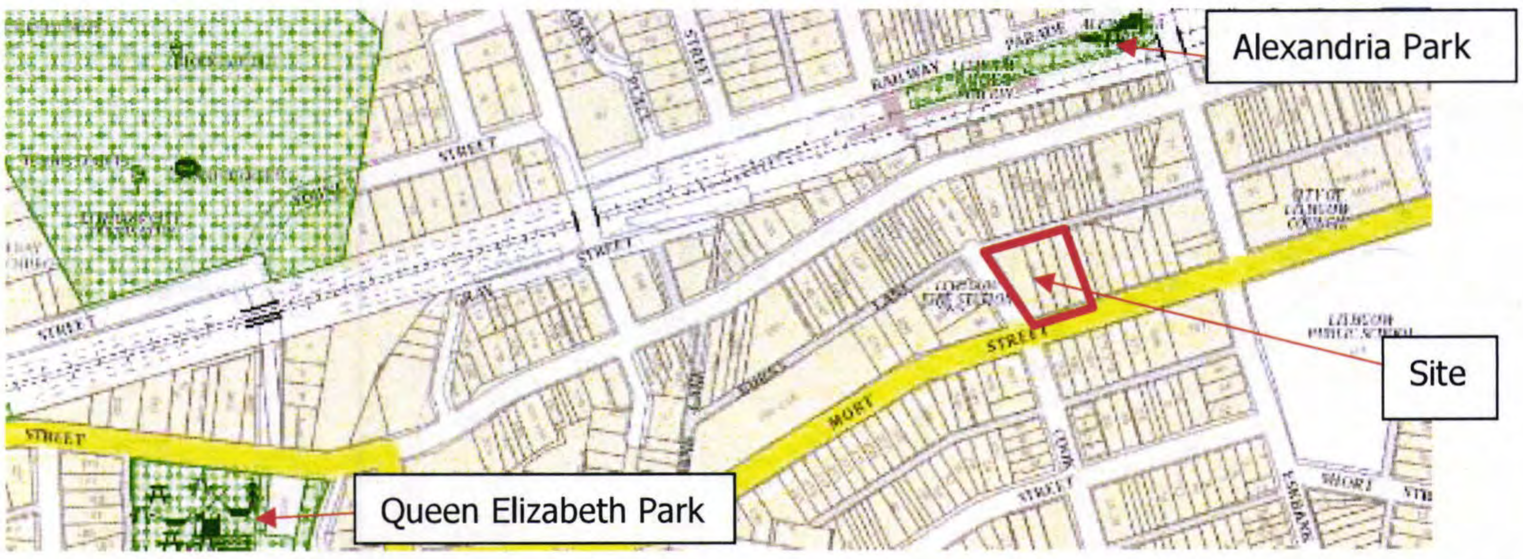

Below is some information on green spaces impact on the mental and physical health. From study "The importance of greenspace for mental health":

> *Given the current prevalence and costs of worldwide mental ill-health and the concurrent rise in global urbanisation, there is a need for greater interdisciplinary collaboration. It is important to incorporate greenspace into the design of buildings... Green spaces provide vital health services as well as environmental services; they are equigenic, reducing socioeconomic health inequalities, facilitating activity and promoting better mental health and well-being. The integration of biophilic design may provide a cost-effective public health intervention, which promotes the evident positive links between green spaces and mental health.*[6]

Below is some information on green spaces impact on physical healing and pain. From study "Quality Green Space Supporting Health, Wellbeing and Biodiversity: A Literature Review":

> *Physical healing and pain*
>
> *Several studies have demonstrated that access to natural landscapes, through nature experiences or even views of nature, can assist physical healing (e.g. faster surgical recovery and patient healing) and are associated with higher pain thresholds in hospitals (Wolf and Robbins 2015). A seminal research study conducted by Ulrich (1984) found that hospital patients in rooms with a view of a green setting recovered faster from surgery than patients with a view of a brick wall. This may be due to nature serving as a distraction resulting in increased pain tolerance and improved coping (Ulrich 1999), or that exposure to nature reduces stress levels (Kaplan 1983), with higher levels of stress associated with negative health outcomes (Varni and Katz 1997).*[7]

Proposed Landscaping

Unfortunately the existing trees on the site are mainly *Rhus,* a highly toxic, allergy-causing tree. It causes severe dermatitis on contact with skin. It was once commonly planted in Australian gardens because of its brilliant autumn foliage. It became problematic in the Sydney region in the 1980s. A straggly eucalypt has likely seeded beside the building, and a malformed cherry with root suckers completes the tree cover. None of these trees are of any age or significance.

The landscape plan incorporates different types of green space, all of which have sensory elements. The plants and their locations have been carefully selected. The gardens can also provide short term refuge to animals in a bushfire. Another benefit other than sensory stimulation is that there is reduced food cost to residents and reduced waste in terms of lack of packaging.

Some of the benefits of sensory gardens for those with a disability are as follows:

> *...engagement with sensory gardens can allow access to unique sensory inputs, nature and sunlight. This can increase sensation or dull hypersensitivity to affected limbs...*
>
> *It allows for a calm and private space for reflection and meditation, as well as family discussion... natural sounds, and the smells of edible and floral plants will influence these*

---

[6] National Center for Biotechnology Information website: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5663018/
[7] Quality Green Space Supporting Health, Wellbeing and Biodiversity: A Literature Review: https://www.healthyactivebydesign.com.au/images/uploads/Green_Spaces_Evidence_Review_-_FINAL_website.pdf

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calming sensations. Relaxation and the release of any stresses can then convert into physical benefits such as reduced blood pressure.

Growing and caring for plants and living organisms, especially those edible and able to be used for cooking, can create new interests which improve happiness and … overall sense of achievement.

Sensory gardens have been proven to decrease fatigue and increase mental clarity… Sense of smell for example, uses stored memory and increases neural activity.[8]

Another benefit other than sensory stimulation is that there is reduced food cost to residents and reduced waste in terms of lack of packaging.

The proposed landscape echoes elements of an English cottage garden which were popular in the 1920's when the building was constructed, and indeed today. Part of the reason for the popularity - especially in the Lithgow area - is that many English plants thrive in the cool climate. Additionally, there is the appeal of having a garden which includes form and function, edible plants as well as ornamental, some of which are both. The other reason that gardening in general was popular in the 1920's, was the notion of a 'victory garden' where private citizens would grow their own food to reduce pressure on the public food supply during WWI.

The major trees are favourites of Paul Sorensen, the famous landscape gardener who did notable designs and garden construction in Lithgow. Probably his best and most significant design was for Hoskins Church Lithgow. They are deciduous, for sunlight in winter and shade in summer, only losing leaves in one short period in autumn, not all year round like many trees commonly used in development. They would be semi mature at planting time, to give a great impression at time of finishing the site works. This approach worked well with the plantings in the first Main Street works, and also Woolworths.

We have designed elevated garden area which is an appropriate height for wheelchair users, beside an accessible sealed area with sensory and culinary plants. These beds will include, Chives, Rosemary, Fruity sage, Thyme, Oregano and Nasturtiums. All these plants are edible, decorative, have interesting textural elements, they all flower and have a distinct smell and taste. Meyer Lemon trees line the north side of the beds, Meyers are only 2m at maturity and do not have thorns on branches and trunks like other varieties.

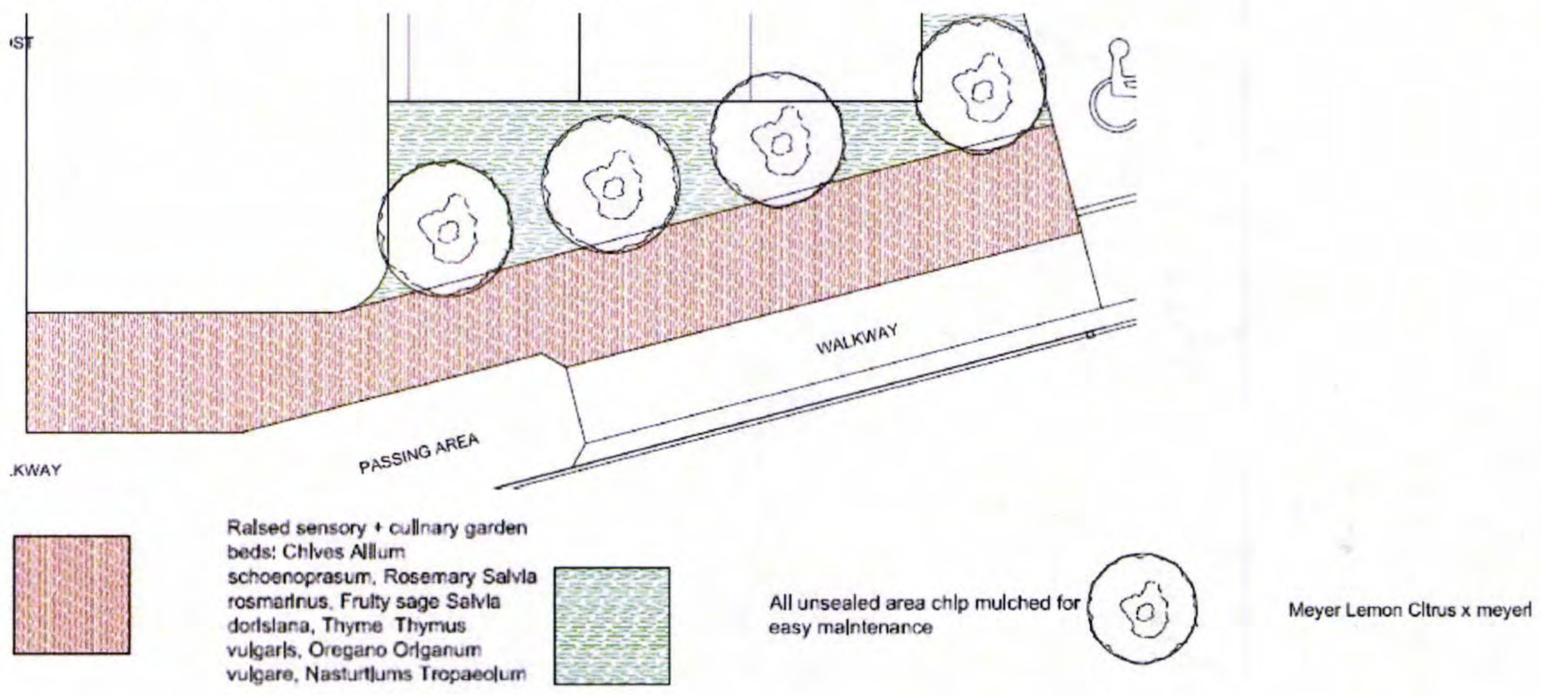

Figure 9: Elevated sensory garden area, lemon trees

A flower garden in the vein of the English cottage garden is located on the west side of the landscaped area. It contains edible flower varieties being Butterfly Lavendar, Cornflower, Hollyhock, and Native violet. They are conventionally used on top of cakes and in salads.

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[8] SAcare website: https://www.sacare.com.au/news/8-cool-benefits-of-a-sensory-garden-in-the-lives-of-people-with-disability

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Hollyhock are tall and can therefore have been planted behind the other plants and still have the same visual impact. The Hollyhock has been placed along the walls as that is their preferred position. Cornflower is an annual plant - meaning it dies off - but it also self geminates and will come back the next year. As some of the flowering plants bloom in spring and die off in the winter, the Native violet will spread and the Lavender foliage will remain. Lavendar lines the pathway, it has calming therapeutic properties, even when simply brushing past or crushed in the hand to release the smell of the oils. The flowers are all attractive cut flowers, therefore their sensory benefits can be extended from the garden to inside the units. Many of these flowers also attract butterflies.

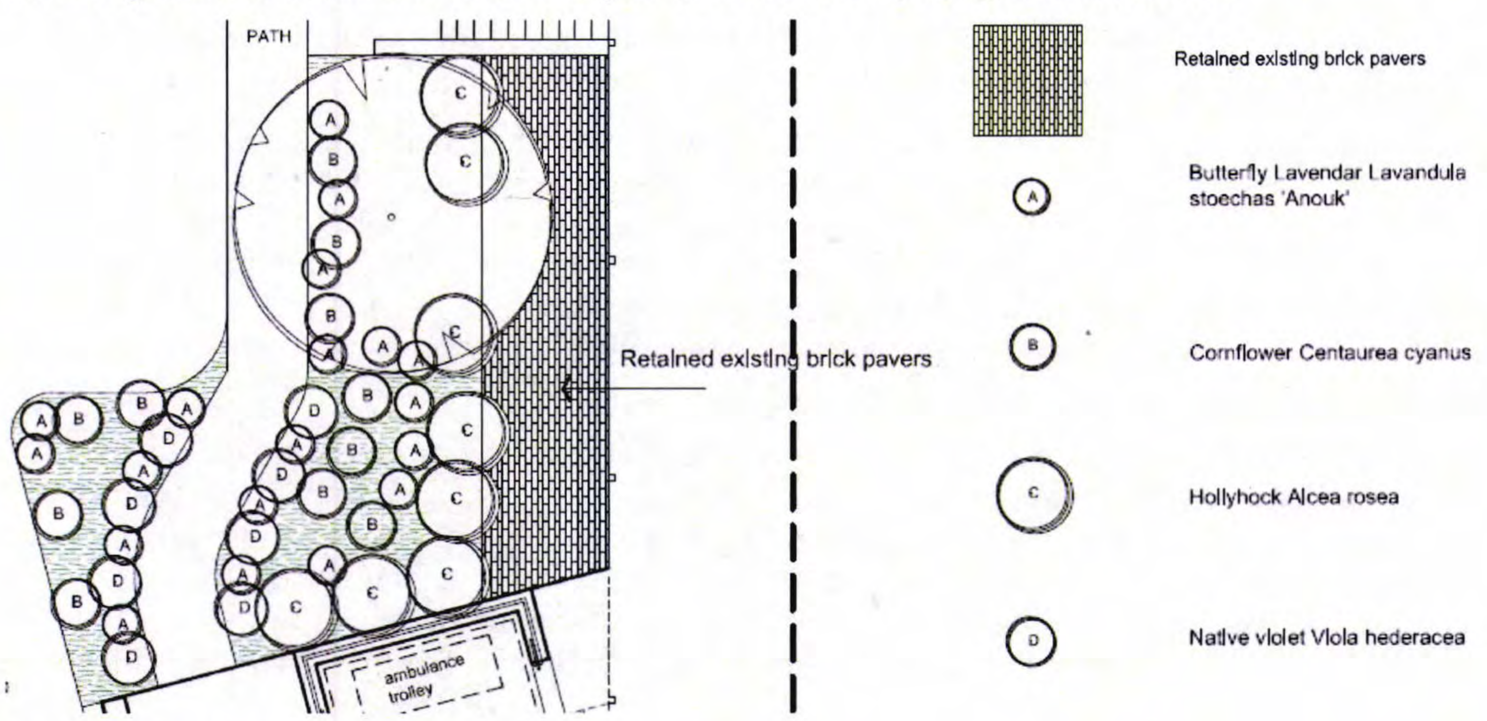

Figure 10: Flower garden

Some pathways are planted with purple fountain grass, an Australian native which grows in clumps and does not spread like lawn grass with delicate soft feathery tips. The grass provides sensory stimulation visually, including through movement and also through touch, as the grass will grow high enough for wheelchair users to touch.

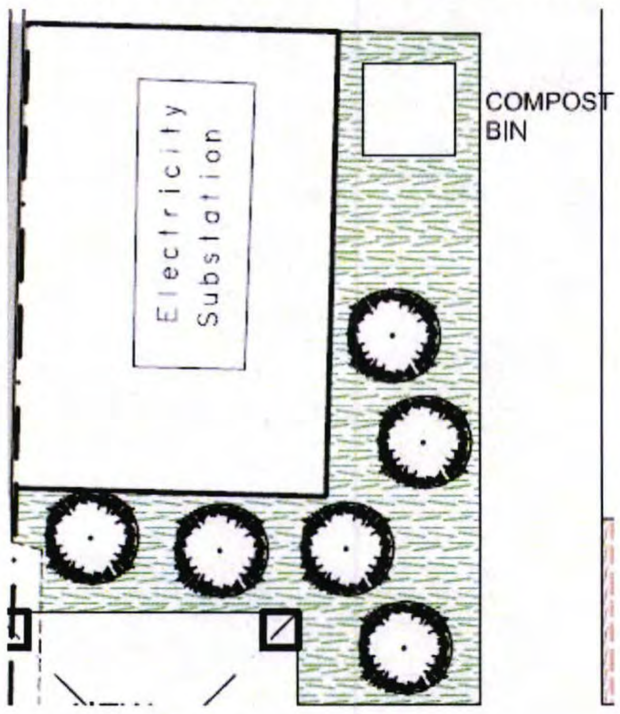

Figure 11: Purple fountain grass

The mature trees proposed –Tulip tree and Flowering ornamental Peach - for the balance of the landscaped area will shade the parking areas as well as some pathways. The trees are deciduous as is appropriate for Lithgow's cool climate, with leaves and flowers blooming in the warmer months for shade, and bare branches in the cooler months to let warming light in. The changes to foliage and flowers throughout the year can provide visual sensory stimulation as well as marking the passage of time.

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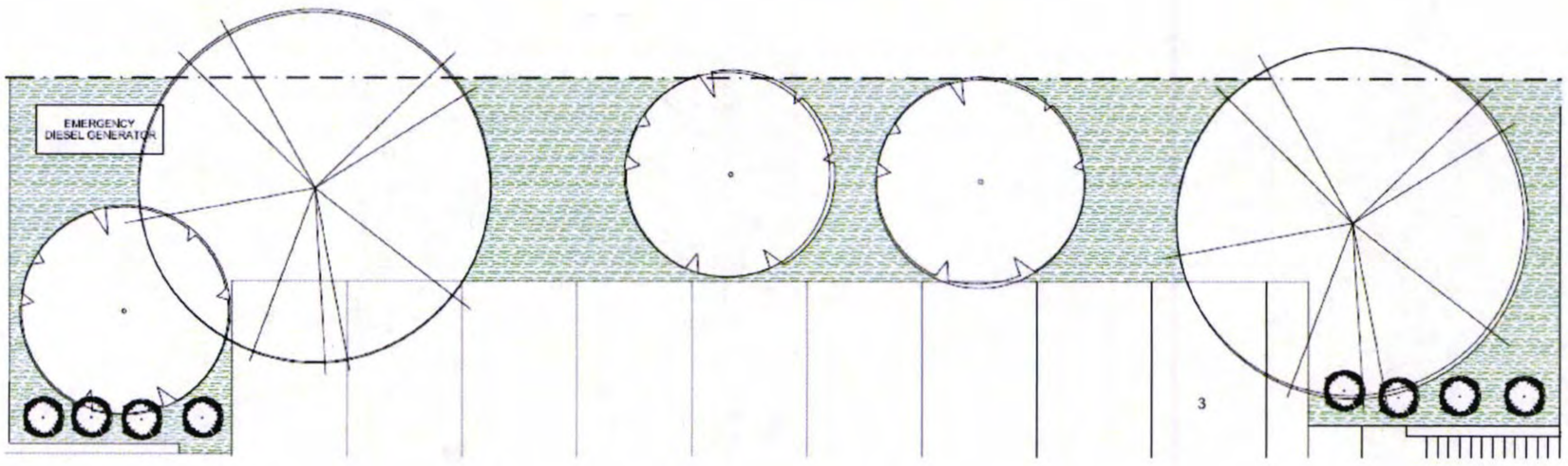
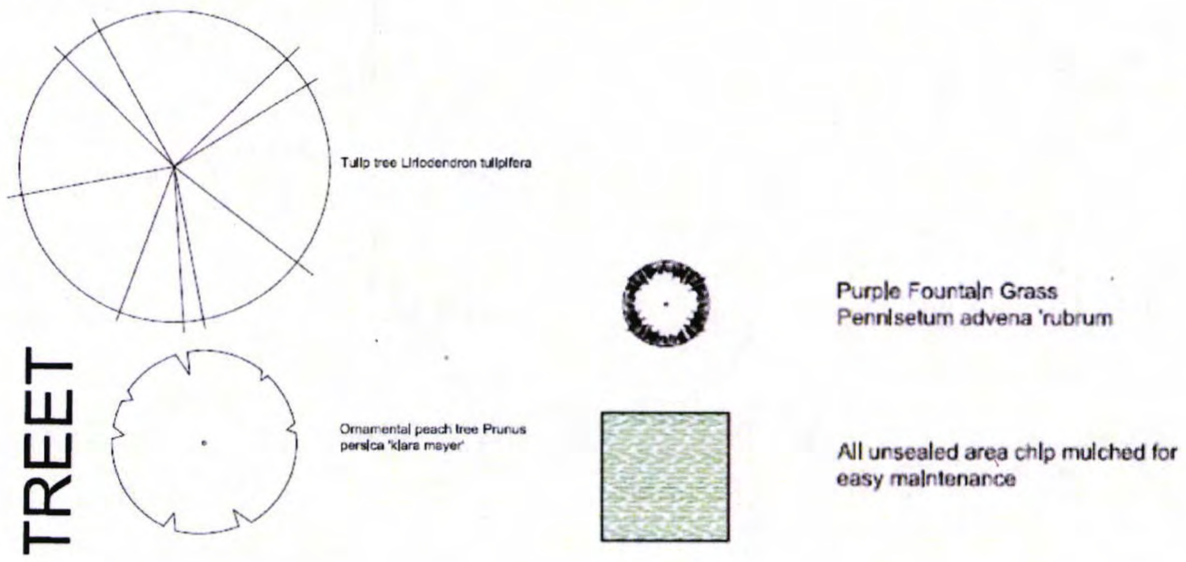


Figure 12: Tree area



3.1 PROPOSED PLANS

3.1.1 Site plans

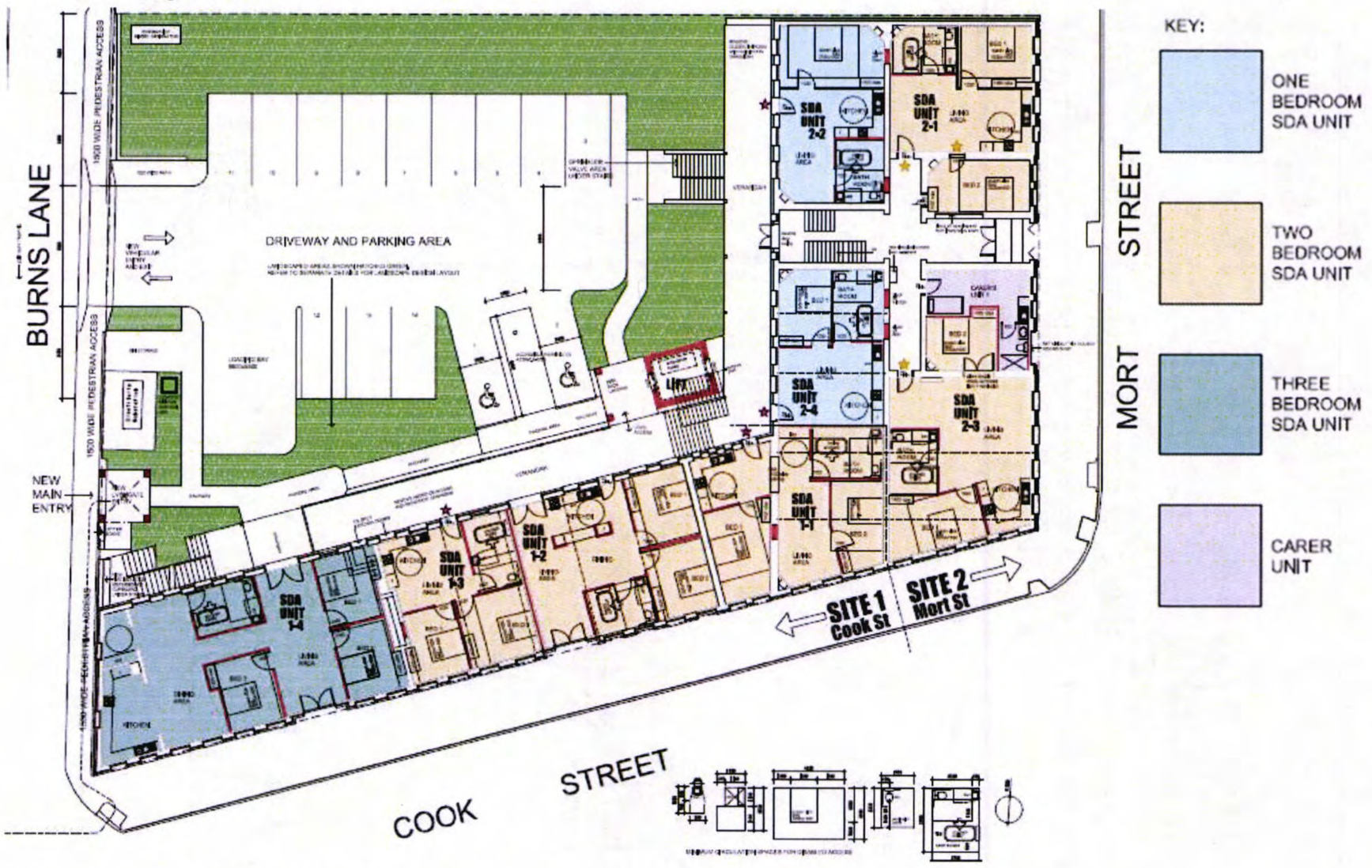


Figure 13: Proposed ground floor plan

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Figure 14: Proposed first floor plan

3.1.2 Elevations

Figure 15: Internal courtyard eastern elevation

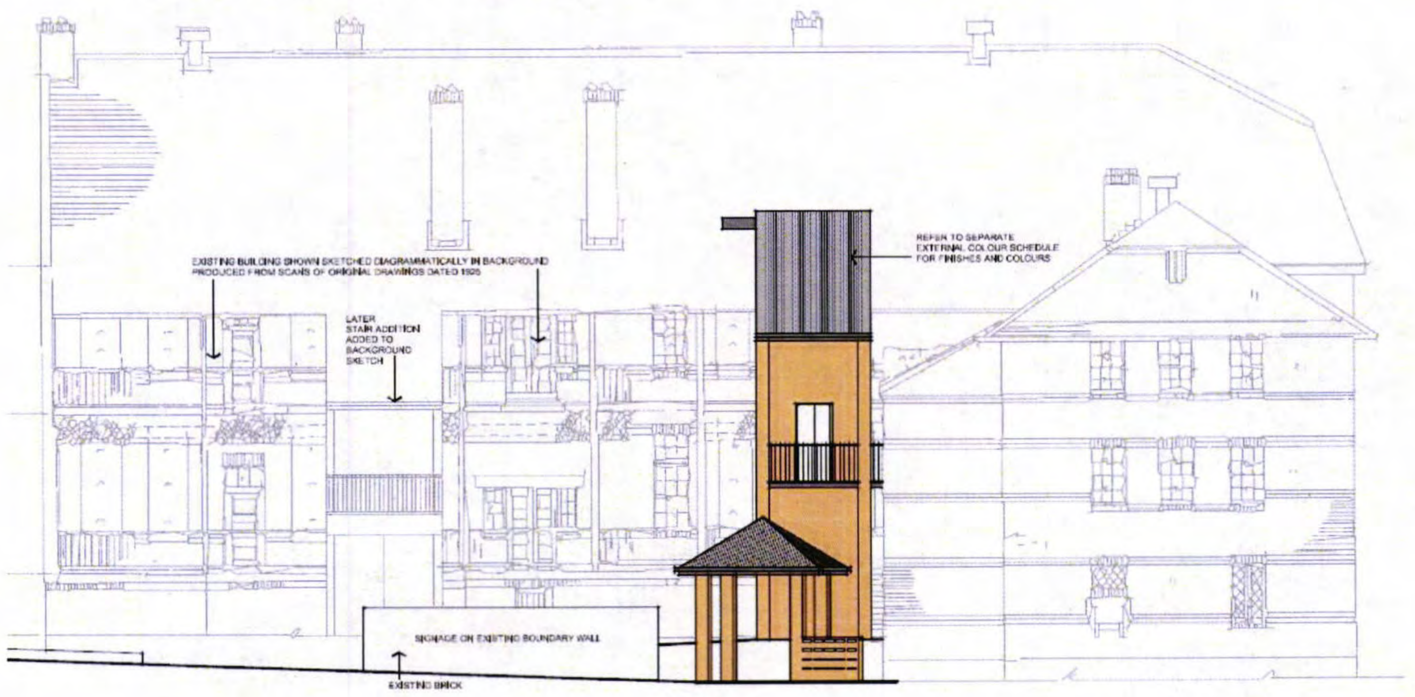

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Figure 16: Burns Ln elevation

3.1.3 Demolition plans

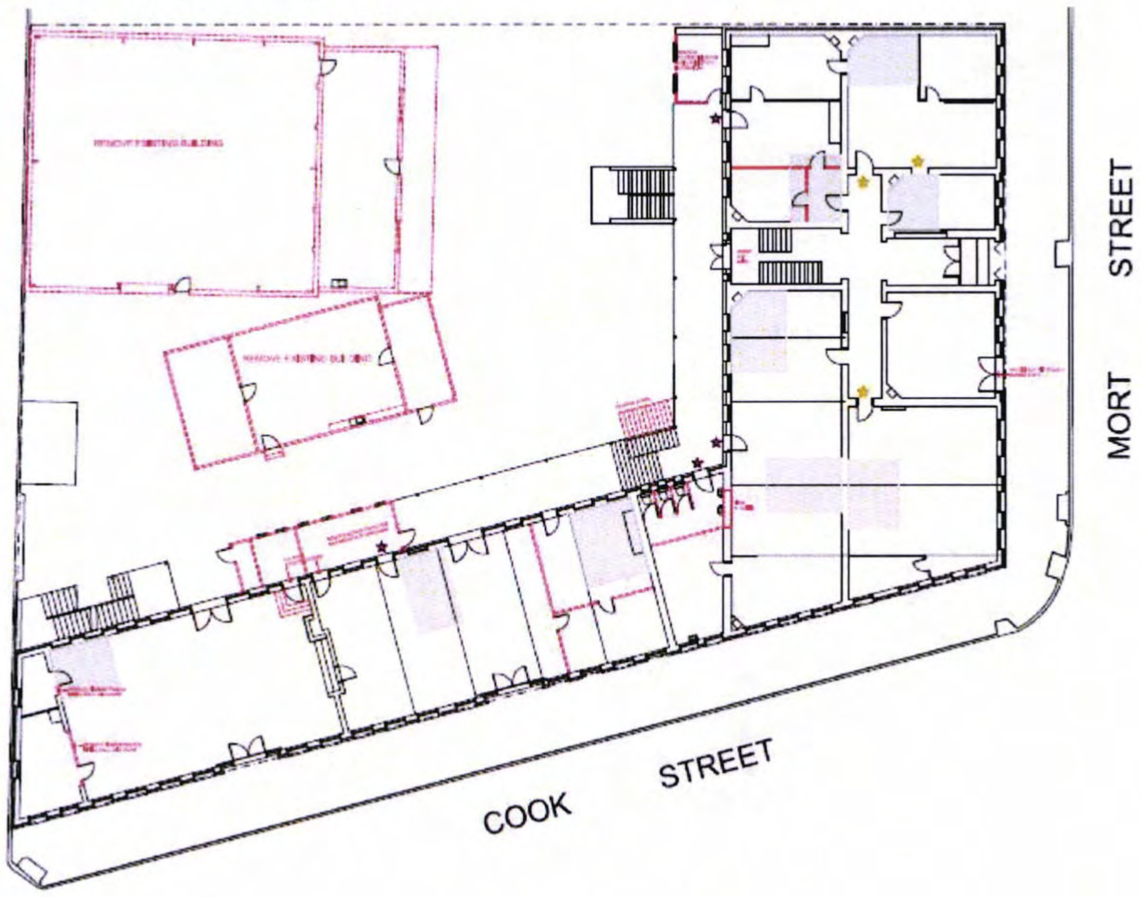

Figure 17: Demolition plan - ground floor

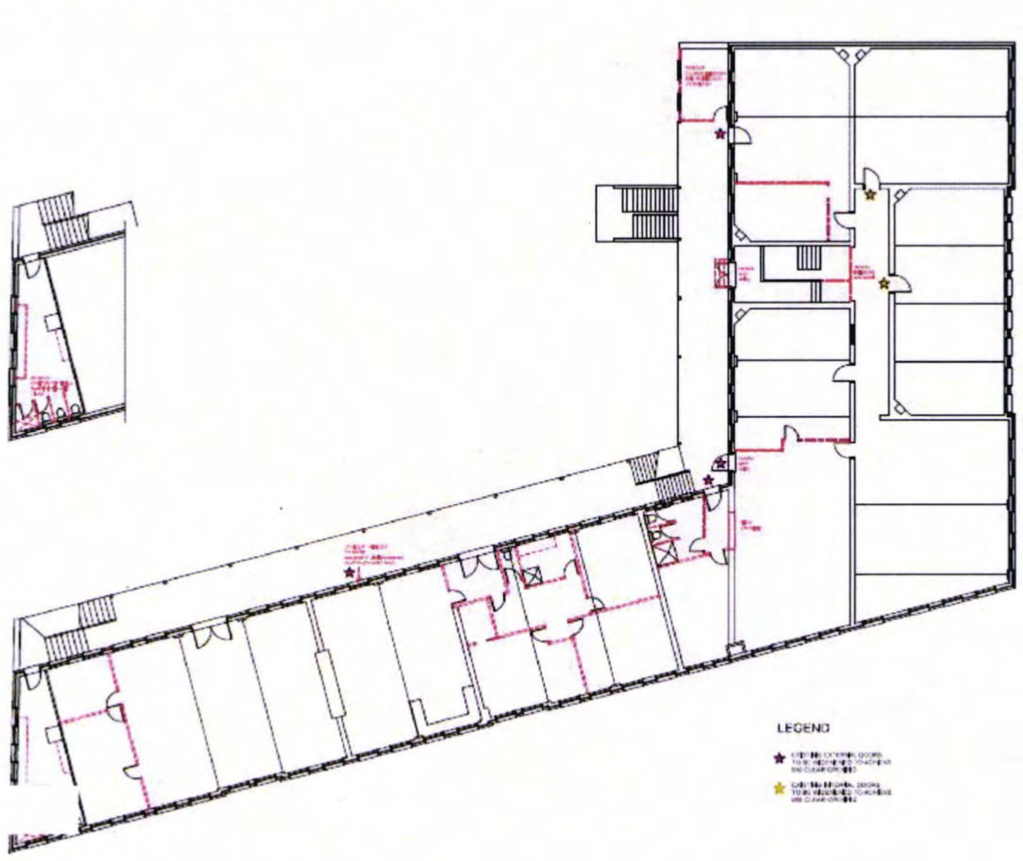

Figure 18: Demolition plan - first floor

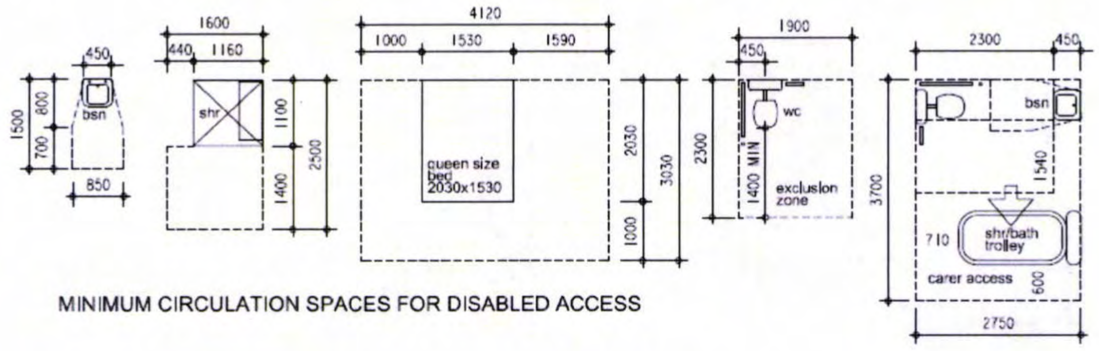

Figure 19: Minimum circulation spaces for disabled access

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3.1.4 Waste management

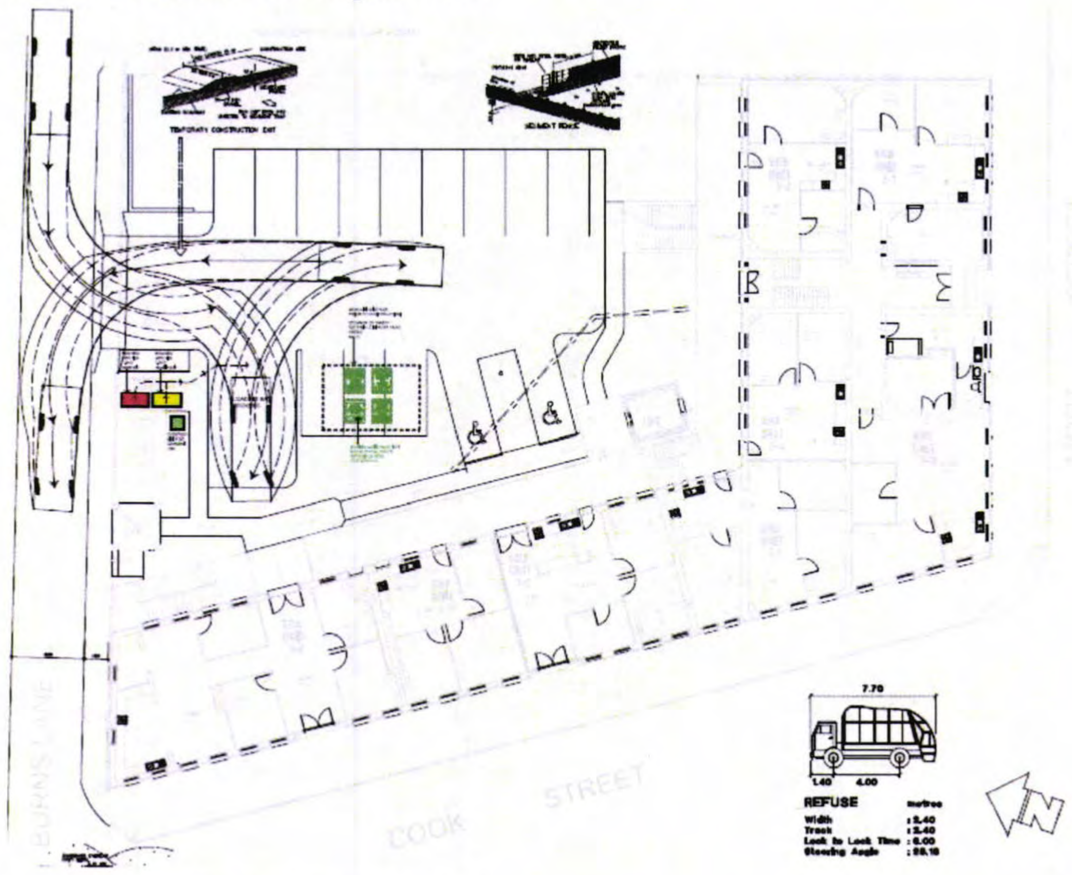
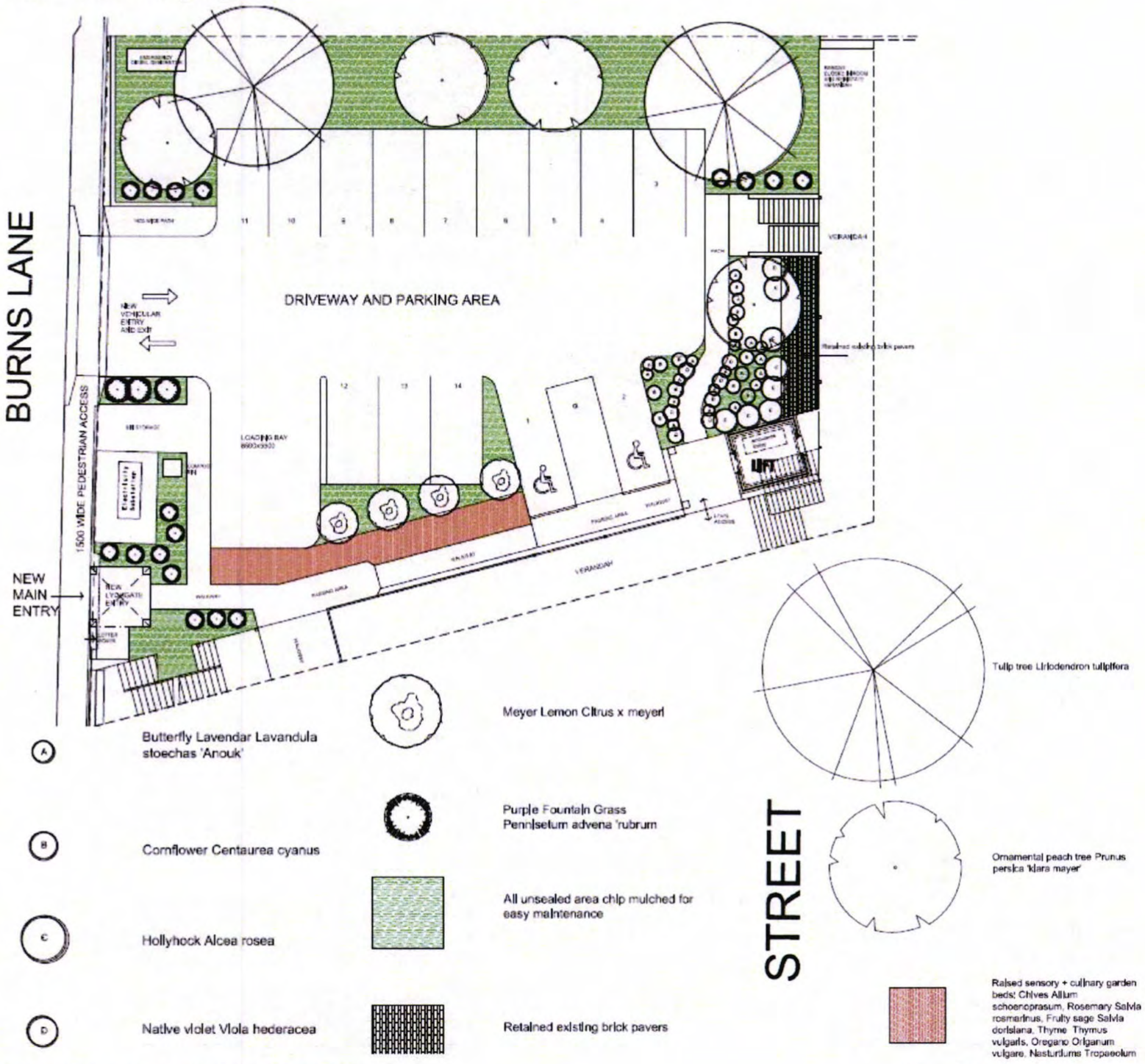


Figure 20: Waste management plan

3.1.5 Landscape plan



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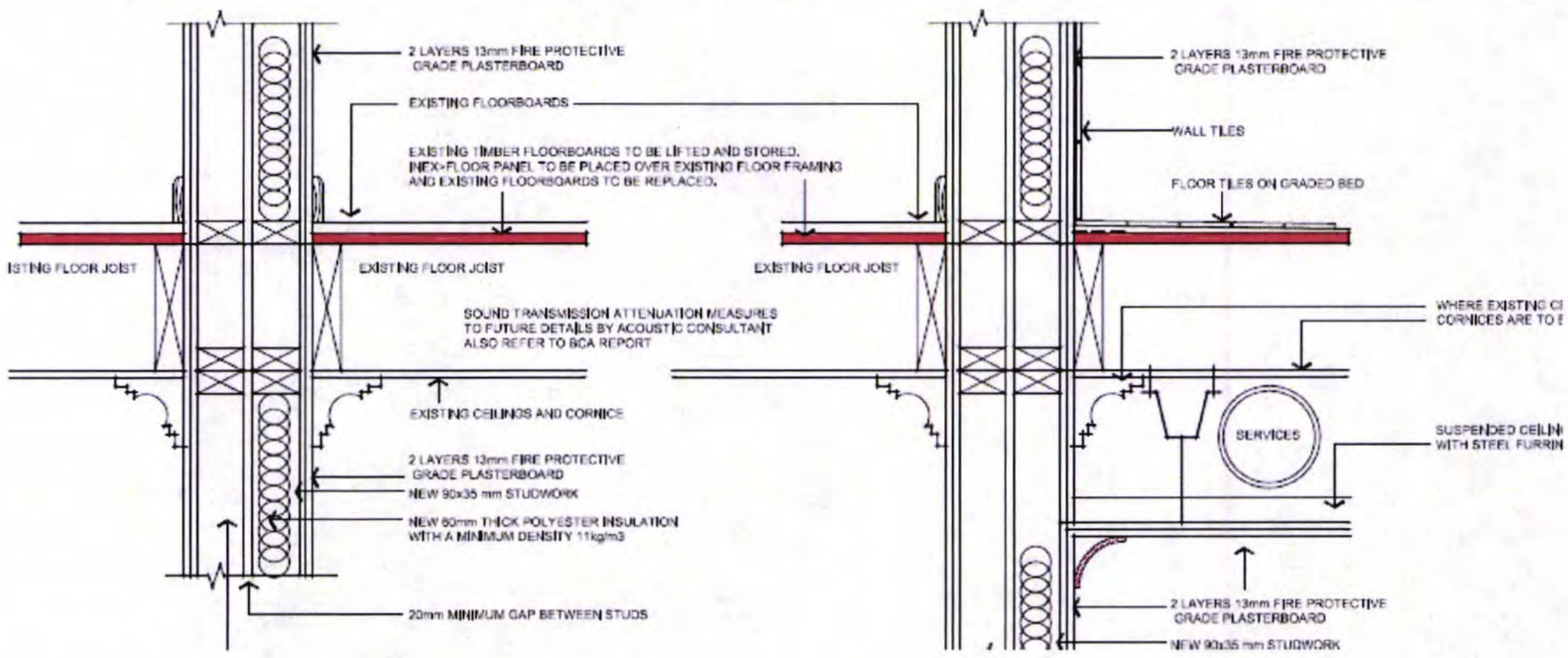
Services

Initial reports from Building Consultants basically required all the ceilings of the ground floor to be covered with fire retardant material. While such a result would have "buried" the original detail securely, it would have hidden all the existing boarded ceilings and cornice details. Further investigation was pressed, and fire protection can now be provided at flooring level.

However, the downside of this approach requires all first floor drainage to be located on the ceiling of the ground floor rooms. Bulkheads are proposed to cover the pipework. The designer's solution is shown on the plans. While the design, surfaces and finishes for the bulkheads could be matched to the ceilings for aesthetic reasons, we consider they be simple as possible to make it clear to the observer that they are not part of the original building. The drawing is simply an example – refer to the full plans for details as designed specifically for each location.



Fittings

Layout and fittings are required to comply with NDIS Specialist Disability Accommodation Design Standard. This basically codifies design requirements that are almost universal in making any residence more easily habitable, but especially for high dependency persons.

The existing building has readily accessible under floor and roof space. The division of the building is being achieved with timber framed walls. The first floor boards are being removed to allow insertion of a fire safe material. The great bulk of any wiring that is required for power and lighting should be able to be fitted through these cavities. Where specifics require that any chasing is needed through masonry, this should be minimised. If this is an exposed brickwork situation, where wiring is unavoidable, it should be fitted into the mortar joint.

Energy efficiency requirements

In response to concerns over global warming, the Australian Government announced in July 2000 that agreement had been reached with industry and State and Territory Governments to adopt a two-pronged approach to reducing greenhouse gas emissions from buildings. The first approach was the introduction of mandatory minimum energy performance requirements through the Building Code of Australia (BCA), and the second approach was the encouragement of best practice voluntary initiatives by industry. Industry was supportive of this two-pronged approach, taking the view that building-related matters should be consolidated in the BCA wherever possible.

Energy efficiency requirements are incorporated in the Building Code of Australia. In Volume 1, it is Section J, hence "Section J Report".

The Section J report has been submitted separately. The report, its requirements and directions is for Council to consider. The specialist consultant initially proposed that a separate set of false windows and walls be provided, which he maintained would solve likely insulation problems.

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From a heritage viewpoint however, this would change the appearance and feel of the building particularly for the inside viewer. There would also be some privacy screening required, such as blinds or curtains anyway.

From our perspective, our Lithgow office has large picture windows, for admiring the garden and view. We use ceiling to floor curtains with insulating properties. In cooler months in Lithgow they are perfect for absorbing sunshine, and in the heat of summer or cold in winter they are infinitely variable. They can also be tracked over walls as well, as we do, as illustrated below.

On discussion, the consultant has prepared a new report.

Electrical, Hydraulics and Dry Fire documentations etc

Please refer to the separate reports, as supplied by the owner, where these issues are covered. They are attached to the overall application.

Heating and cooling

Initially a centralised system for heating and cooling was considered but discounted on heritage grounds due to the requirement for a plant room and major heat exchange facilities required to be outside the building. This would also require major ducting to be provided throughout the building. Having a centrally controlled system would also in our opinion make the apartments feel more institutional.

Any external change is difficult to manage on a building viewed in the round like this. Virtually the only space not in full view would be at the top of the walls under the verandah roofs.

Individual units for each apartment are now proposed. This could minimise substantial ducting throughout the building. The downside is that external heat exchange units, although smaller, are required for each unit.

Internally the typical units are located high on a wall. The advantage of these locations is that they are out of the normal eyesight level. Indeed, viewed in an elevation they would be inconspicuous.

On discussion, the consultant has prepared a new report.

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3.1.6 Air conditioning plans

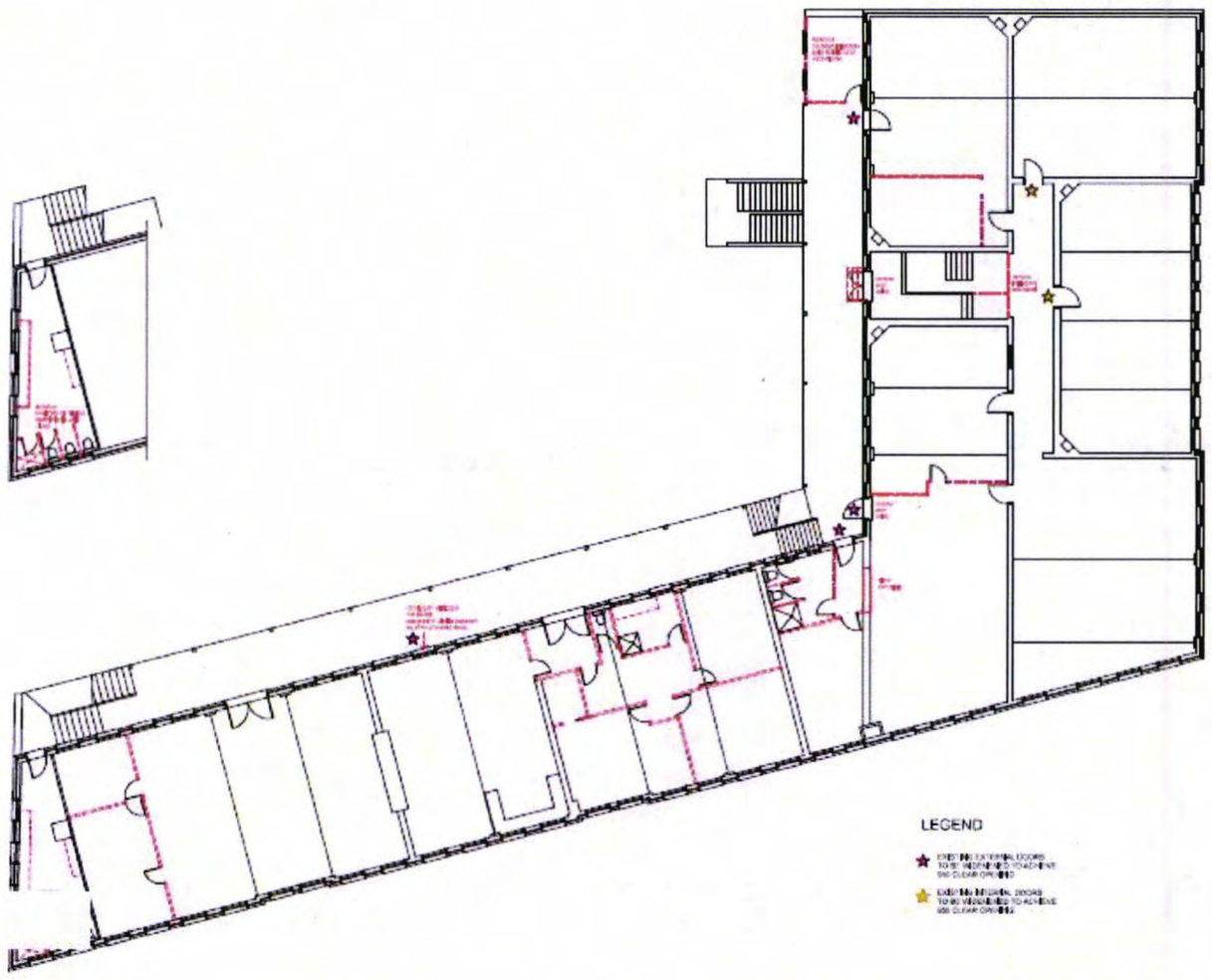

Figure 21: First Floor air conditioning plan

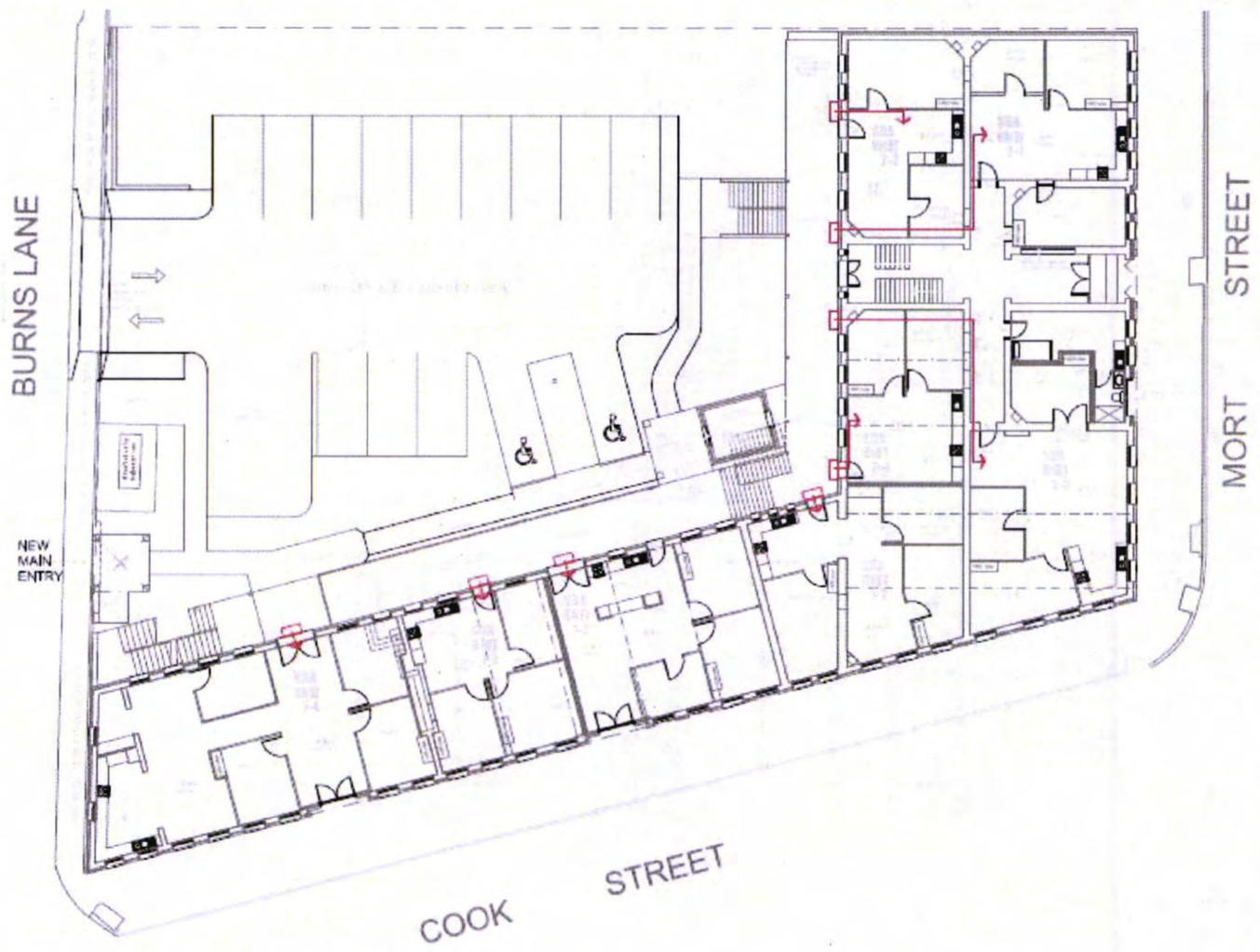

Figure 22: Ground Floor air conditioning plan

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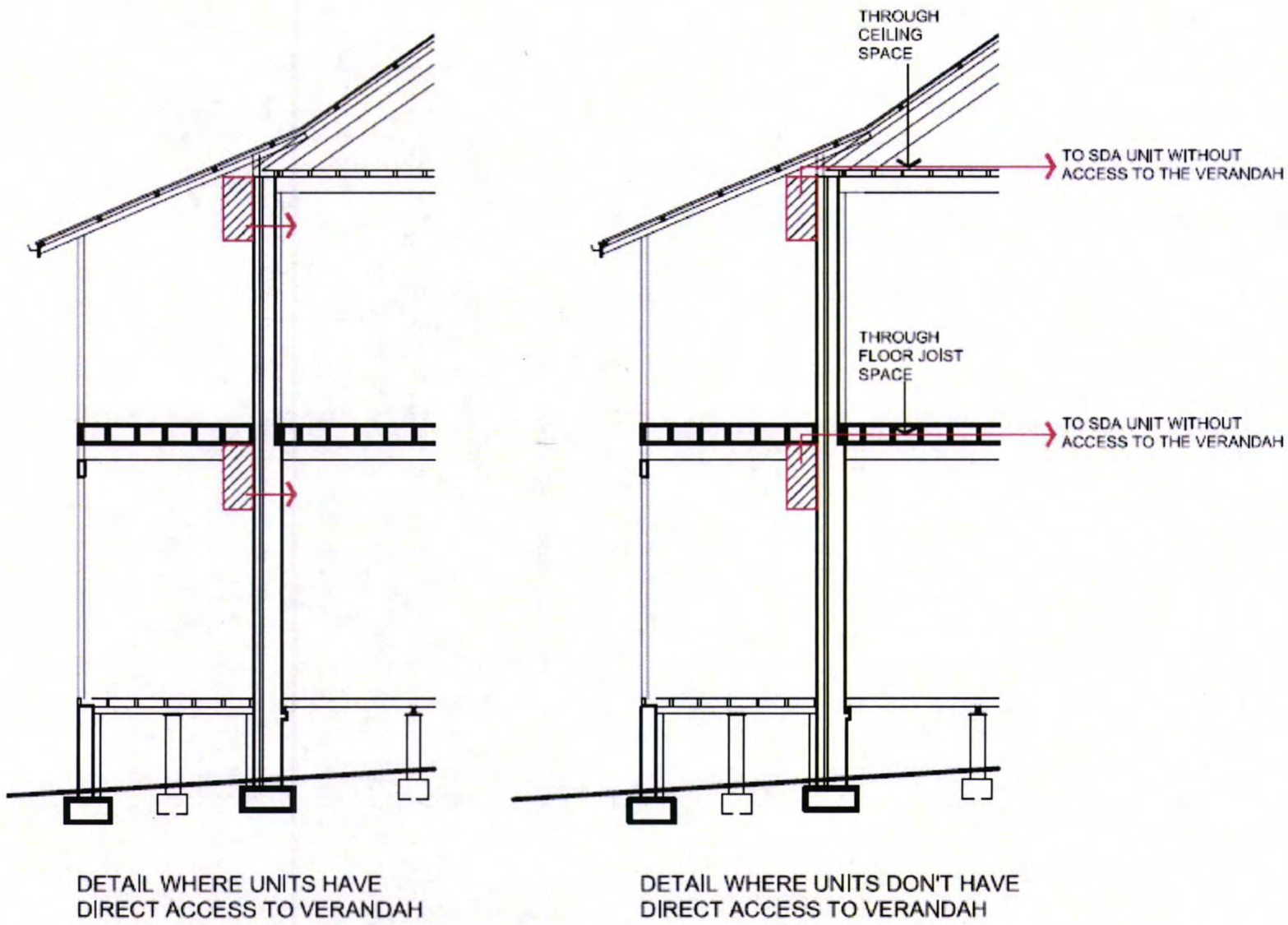

Figure 23: Air conditioning plan details - section

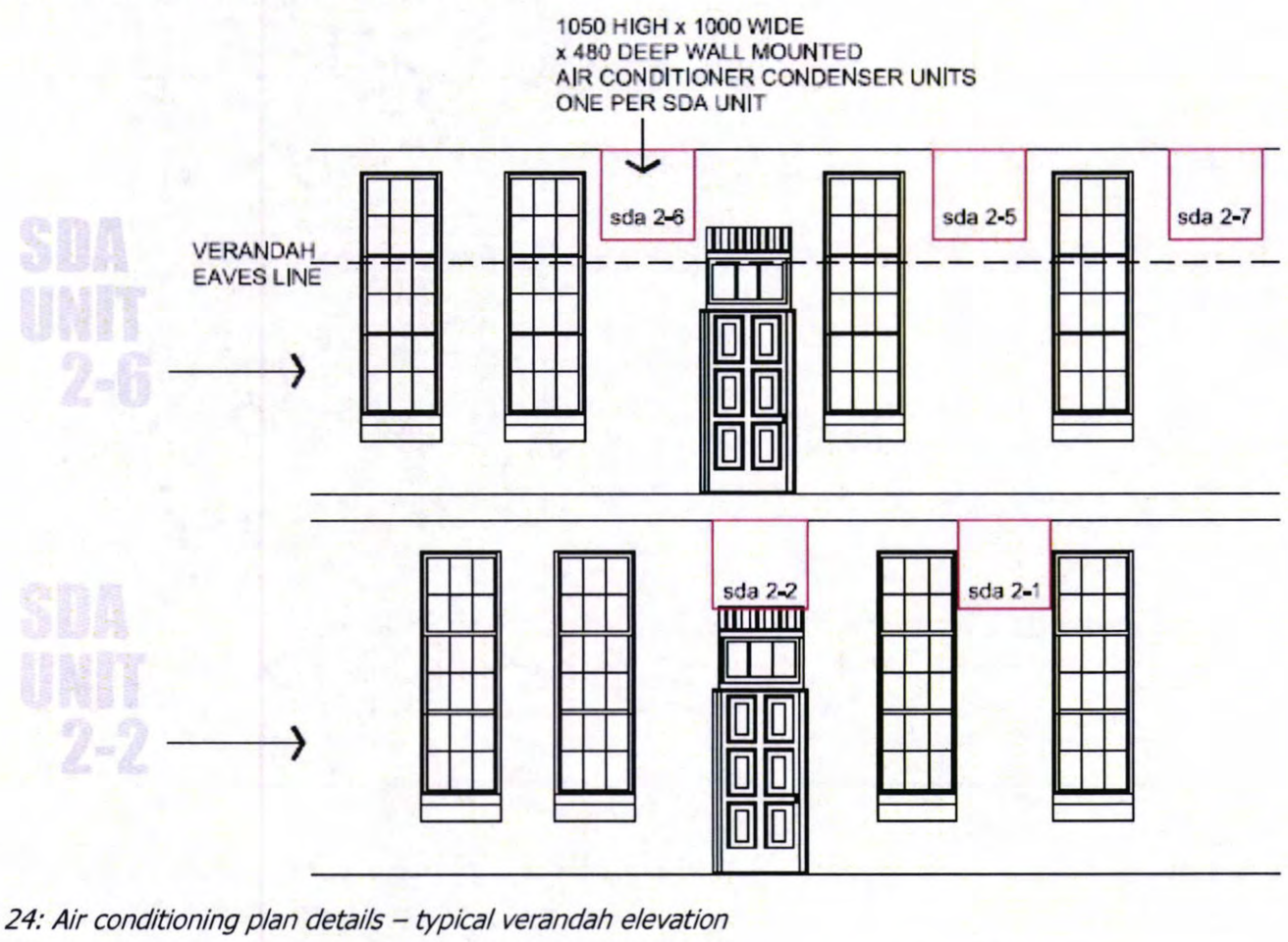

Figure 24: Air conditioning plan details – typical verandah elevation

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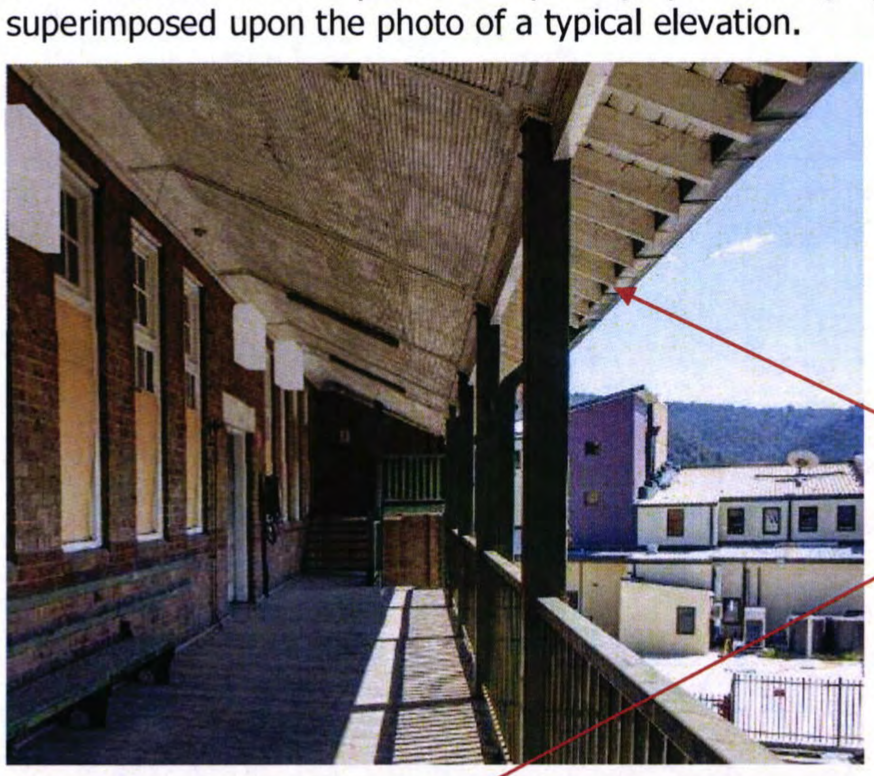
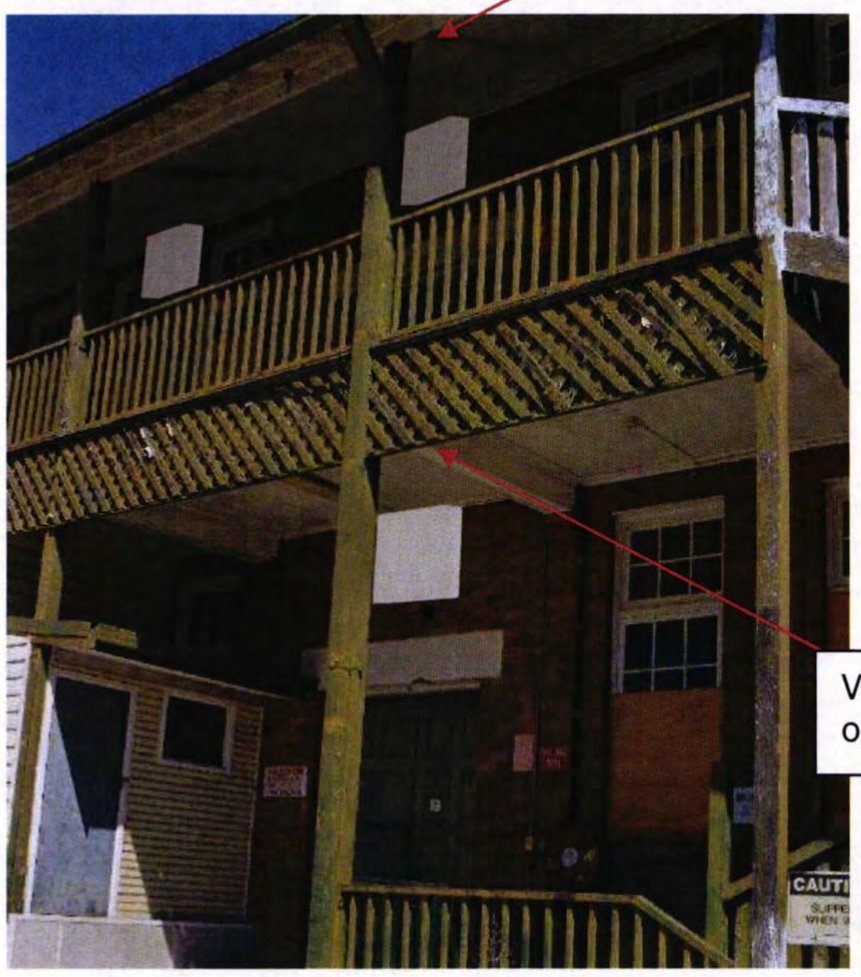
Any external change is difficult to manage on a building viewed in the round like this. Virtually the only space not in full view would be at the top of the walls under the verandah roofs. Indeed, viewed in an elevation they would be less conspicuous. The advantage of these locations is that they are out of the normal eyesight level. The designer has provided locations for condenser units on the plan extract below. This particular section of elevation is a worst case scenario of the number of units on an elevation. We have provided a photograph with a graphic representation of a scaled condenser superimposed upon the photo of a typical elevation.



View of air conditioning units obscured by verandah roof



View of air conditioning units obscured by lattice

Although the colour is standard as shown adjusted for shadow, we consider that with a large order, a colour more matching the grey of the brickwork will be possible from the chosen supplier.

Internally the fan housing would be located high on a wall out of the general view line. The general colour of the internal fan mechanism is typically close to the Regency White shown in our colour scheme.

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3.1.7 Buildings

The main building appears to be in reasonable overall condition for a building of its age. While it has been essentially disused for many years at least it was secured reasonably well and its corner location ensured it received passive surveillance by the public and neighbours.

This very large building, one of the largest at the time in Lithgow, is built in structural brickwork. The brick is Lithgow grey mix for the body of the walls and horizontal banding of selected red brick at sill, window and door head levels. Simple soldier courses at door and window heads would indicate steel flat section supporting the brickwork. The mortar appears to be reasonably hard, with a proportion of cement, but still appears to have lime in the mixture, considering the aging appearance of the mortar.

Figure 25: Elevation to Mort Street

The roof was originally slate but parts may have been replaced due to storm damage. Especially the Cook Street wing roof appears to be a faux slate, but of a good quality material which has lasted a couple of decades so far at least.

Figure 26: Cook Street elevation

The loading doors to the larger heavier industrial class rooms are prominent to the frontage, with their oddly sized steps, not for general pedestrian use, and even possibly as an aesthetic device to reinforce the point as being a door.

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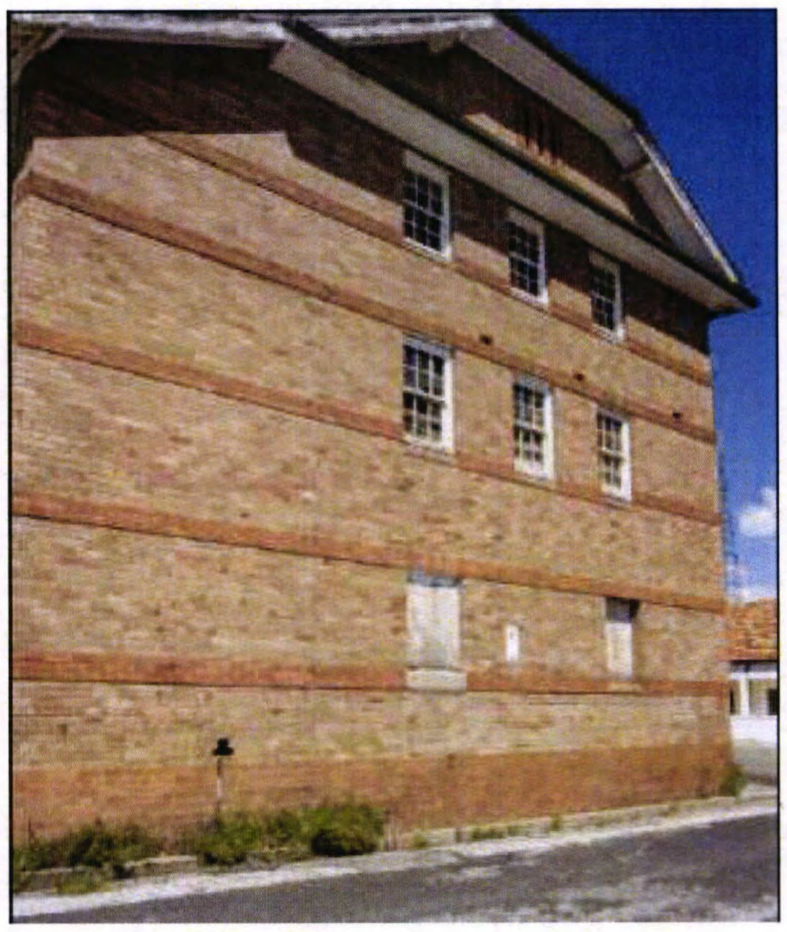

Figure 27: Roundel with date on roof vent, Cook Street gable and lane elevation

Possibly the finest work on an overall quality building is this roundel, with its sandstone Maltese cross. Along the laneway the "iron store" and "fuel store" (coal or coke) were accessed. These points have now been infilled.

Figure 28: Lane elevation showing access, and yard buildings

The temporary classroom type building, last used for pottery classes, can be seen through the gate. The brick wall to the lane was built as a secure boundary wall. A heavy timber gate with pedestrian entry (wicket) was shown on the plan, but it is unknown whether it was provided to that detail. If so it has been removed, and only a part of the fence is left, some incorporated into the metal shed at the north east corner.

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Figure 29: Eastern elevation adjoining carpark

No detailed records have been found of this gabled metal and brick building. It is marked on one plan as for "drain laying" and has been verbally referred to as the plumbing building. The gable is offset, and it sweeps down to a skillion roofed building, understood to have been built and used as a canteen at one stage.

Figure 30: Eastern elevation of main building from the adjoining carpark.

Due to the elevation difference, mostly roofs are viewed from the adjoining carpark. Across them can be viewed the upstairs verandahs of the main building. An interesting detail is the "fossil" of the earlier terraced buildings adjacent when the Trades School was built. The red banding has been discontinued at the building juncture, and staining due to moisture build up or gutter refuse can be seen.

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Verandahs

All the external verandahs are used for access into the separate rooms. This design provided the opportunity for cross ventilation and in most cases natural light from both sides of the rooms.

All verandahs are constructed from timber it would appear although the floors and ceilings are covered. The flooring is 100mm nominal hardwood tongue and groove floor boarding, dipping a few degrees to drain rainwater away.

Figure 31: Verandahs and details

The ceilings are sheeted in 25mm pitch corrugated iron, known as ripple iron and commercially now as Mini Orb, but used traditionally. Fluorescent lighting has been attached to the ceiling, with power supplied in conduits over the corrugated iron. The 1" pitch iron ceilings do not withstand damage well, tending to bend and lose fixings to the ceiling joists. Indications of damage assist in the understanding of usage in the building over time.

A large timber bench seat has been applied to the wall. The verandah railings on the edge of the verandahs have been replaced with welded steel balustrading. The original detailing survives in the timber balustrades to the ends of the verandah, possibly retained as protected from the worst of the weather. Doors are original, with many partially damaged by vandals during the long period of disuse.

Figure 32: Northern facing verandah - top floor east wing

The northern verandah has the same overall construction and finishes. An additional set of stairs has been provided in the 1970-80 era. Care has been taken at the time to blend the exterior of the new construction into the original building, even though reinforced concrete has been used for the stair treads, and a tubular steel handrail.

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Figure 33: Northern verandah ground floor

3.2 MAIN BUILDING ROOMS AND PROPOSED ALTERATIONS.

The plans for the units of each wing of the building are grouped with the current photos of the rooms affected. From these it is clear how the junctions of new walls and existing align. For actual detail of these junctions please see the full architectural plans. The individual rooms retain many of the original features of the school. Most have hardwood timber strip tongue and groove flooring although some have been carpeted or a sheet vinyl floor covering.

Walls are plastered over the brickwork in most rooms. In the rooms in the Cook Street wing, being designed for heavier industrial teaching, painted brickwork has been used. A heavy timber skirting block, chamfered and painted covers the join to the flooring. As in many public buildings with high usage, a high incised dado line provides an area below which usually a darker colour was used to obscure marking. Wider than normal picture rails have been used, probably for strength as often large maps and charts were hung on walls.

Ceilings are timber strip tongue and groove boarding in the main, with decorative mouldings on the wall and ceiling junction, and further detail timber mouldings set in from the walls on the ceilings. Pressed and pierced metal air vents have been used on the upper floor. As far as can be seen the fireplaces are not functioning, many being still sheeted over or missing parts and appearing to be blocked in many cases. In general, the power supplies and fire protection sensors have been installed over the original finishes.

Where rooms have been subdivided, the insertion of the relatively temporary nature of the partitions has generally respected the existing trim and been attached around the intricate mouldings. This can also be seen in rooms where the plans show earlier partitions which have been removed. Even the unauthorised flat has been constructed in this manner. In this way, the different uses for each room over the years has allowed for changes in the internal layout while retaining the original rooms.

It is clear from the different uses noted on the successive plans that all rooms have been adapted for purposes necessitated by the courses to be accommodated at the time. While the building was designed for specific purposes all the rooms have been used variously, likely more even than noted on the plans. Partitioning, lighting, plumbing and drainage have been inserted depending on the uses.

During the years of little use the external windows at street and verandah level suffered vandalism, as is usual with effectively deserted buildings. The windows, already degraded by the lack of maintenance and painting, were covered with plywood sheeting. The owners report they have had continual trouble with vandalism and illegal entry. Otherwise, the building appears to be in remarkably good condition.

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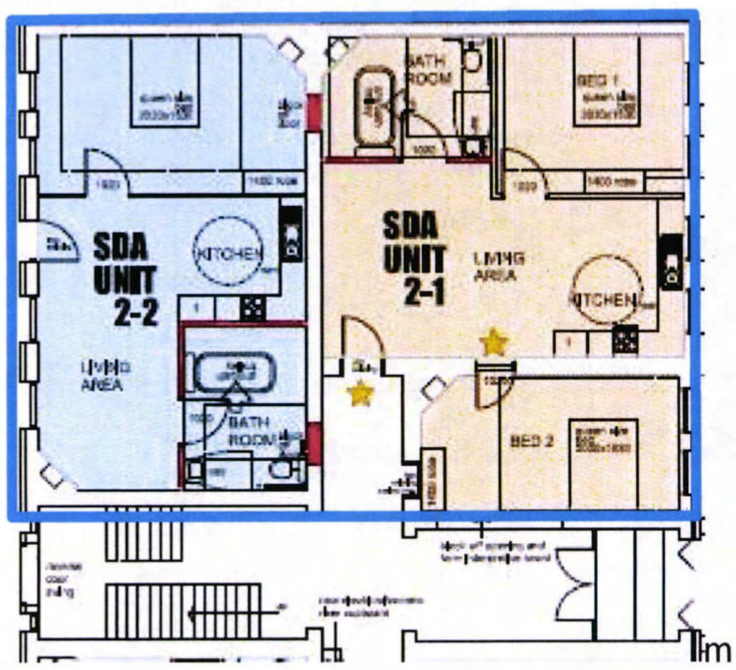
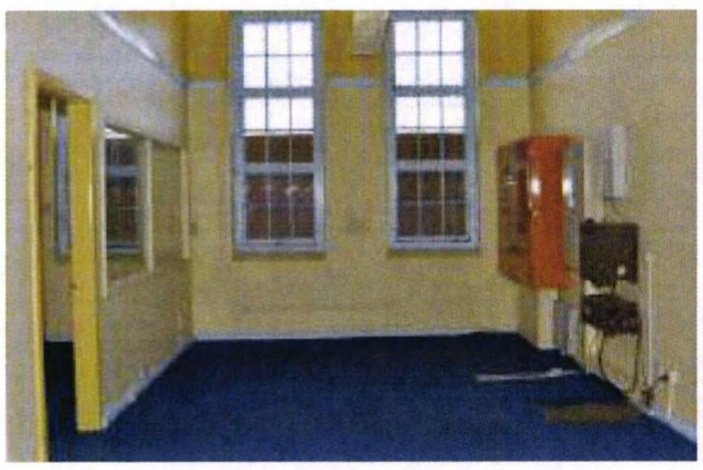
3.2.1 Ground floor Mort Street wing

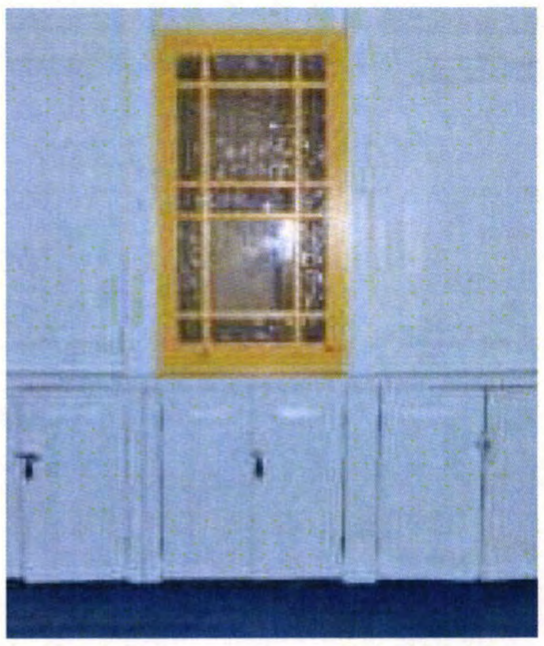
Units 2-1 and 2-2

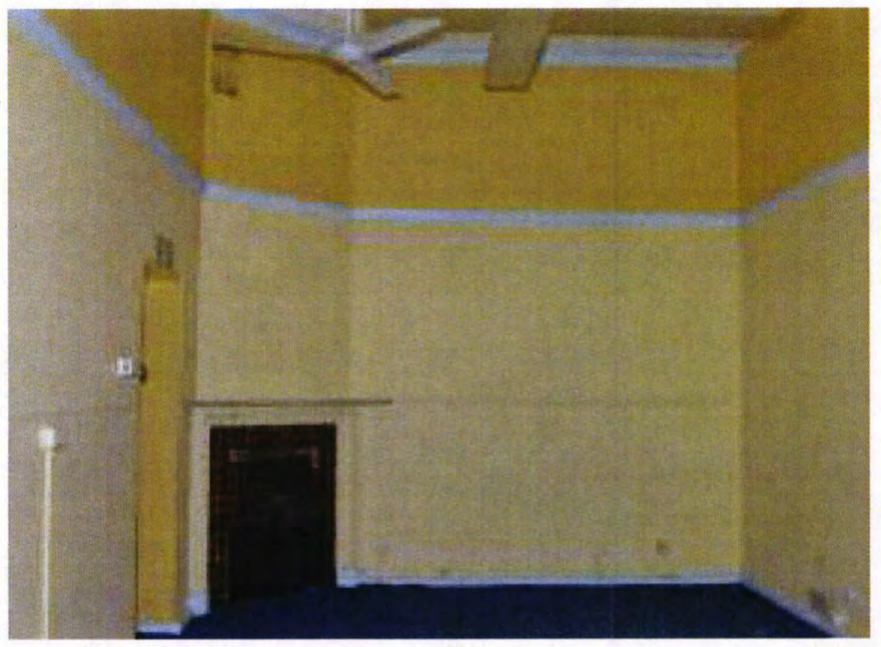


The administration section of the building is in generally good condition. It appears it was repainted shortly before the building was vacated by the TAFE.



A number of the original walls have viewing windows between. This has been carried on with new timber framed wall when the rooms were subdivided.





The administration section has been subdivided into sections likely in the 1970-80s. In general the work has been carried out sympathetically and mouldings have been matched, probably too well in some respects as it is not clear in visual terms which rooms are original and which added after the earliest building plan and construction.

Original doors have been retained in many cases, and new doors are generally well made timber doors. New security hardware has been fitted.

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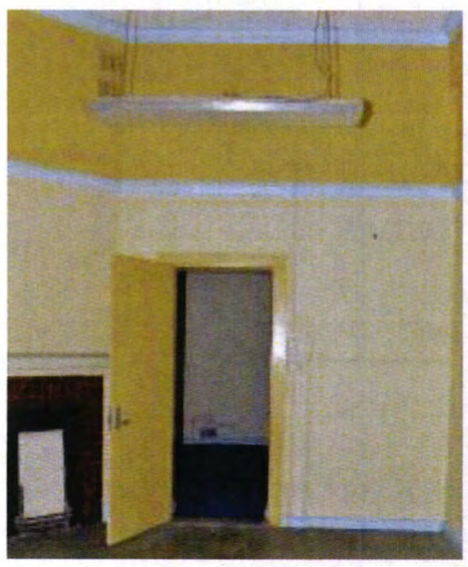
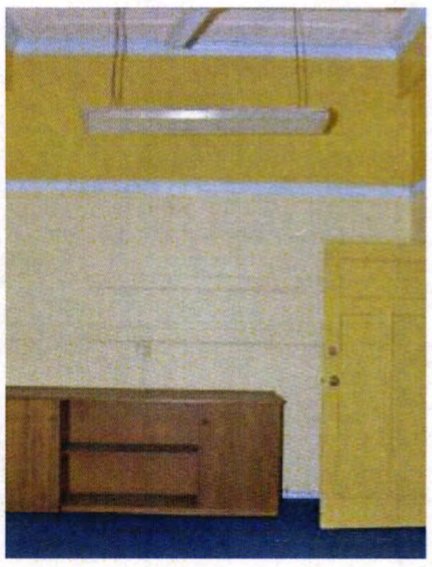
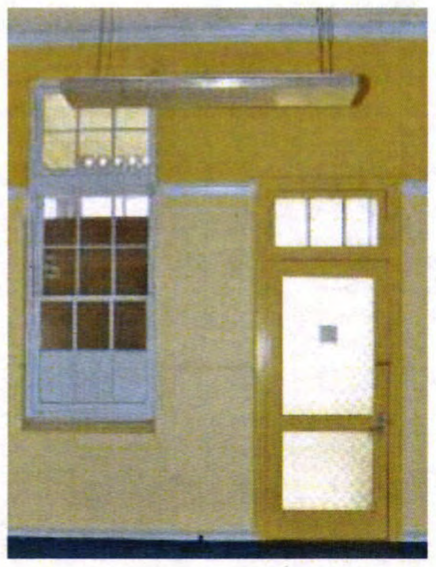
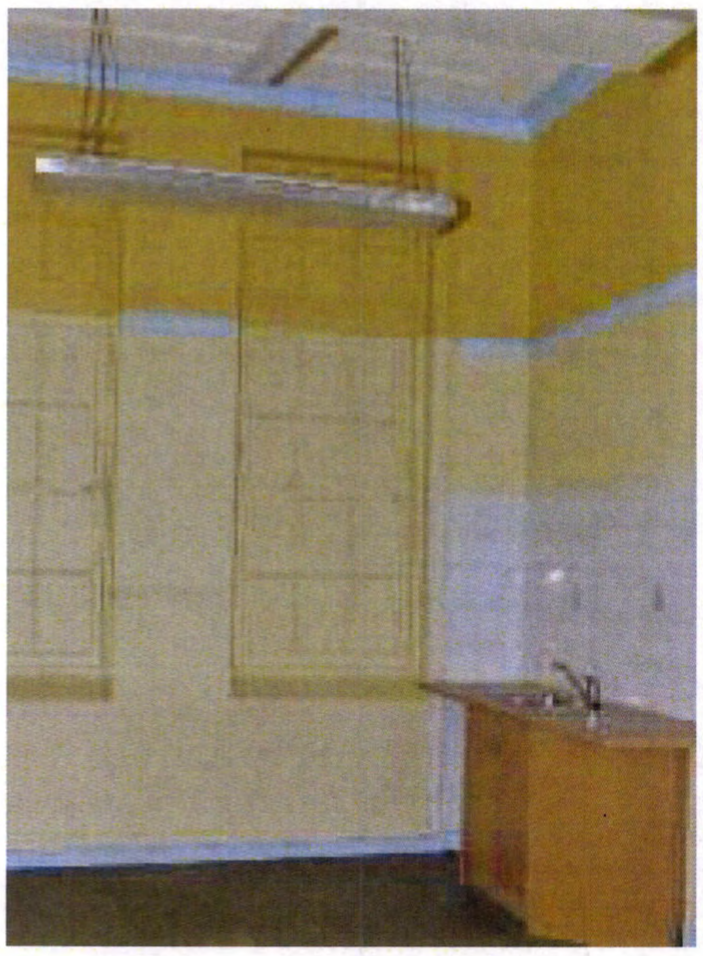




The section is well supplied with fireplaces and they have been best retained in this area.

The small built in verandah behind this point has necessitated the painting over of the windows unfortunately. The advantage of this is at least the timberwork is visible, and the work easily reversible.



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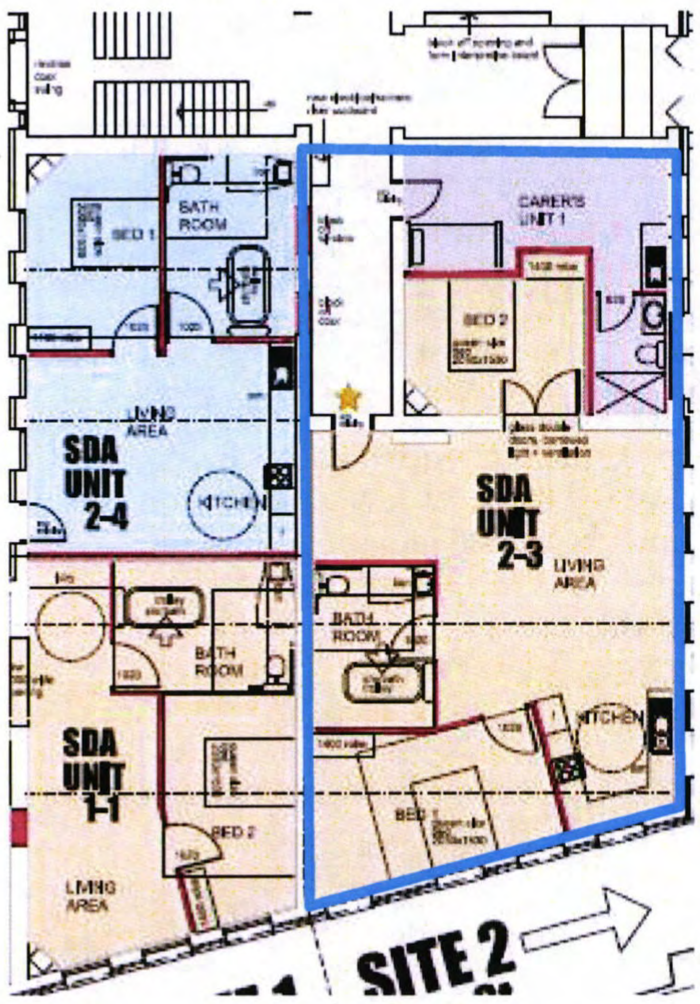
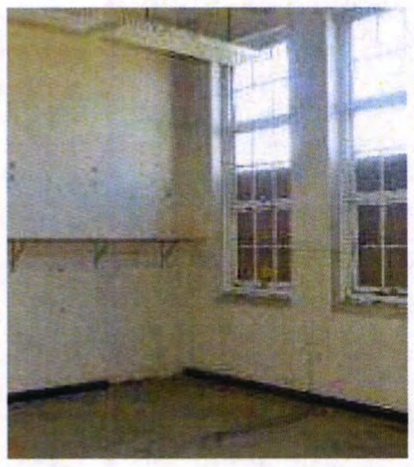
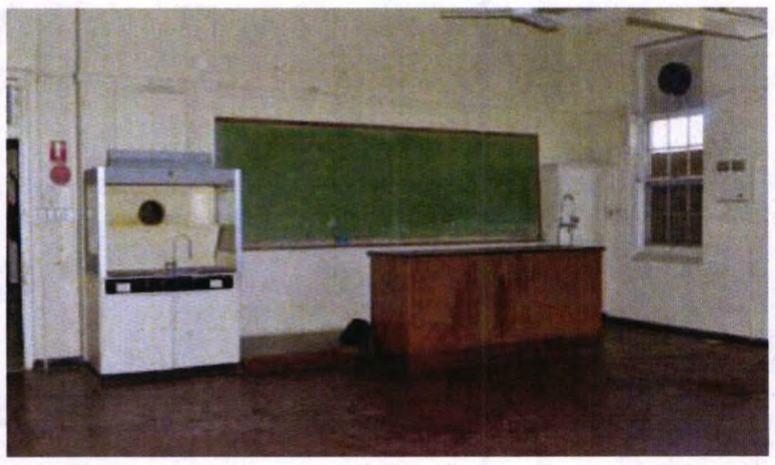
Unit 2 - 3



Originally noted as a storeroom, this space has a large, double loading door to Mort Street. At one stage it was used as a library, staff room and possibly other uses not documented.

Of the two small windows to Mort Street above the doors one has been replaced with a large exhaust fan. Recent additions to the room include a sink and cabinet, and some lightweight bookshelves.





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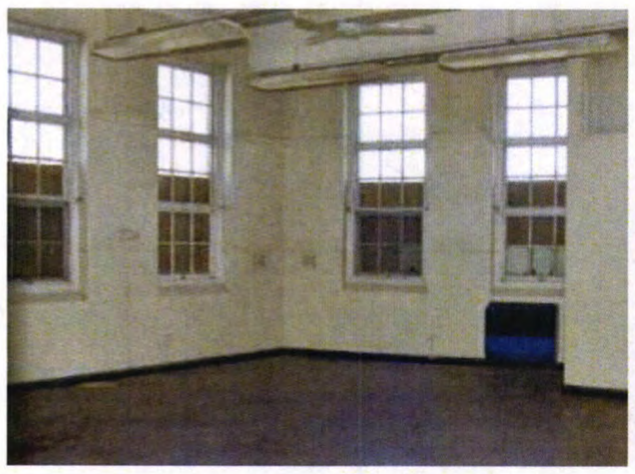
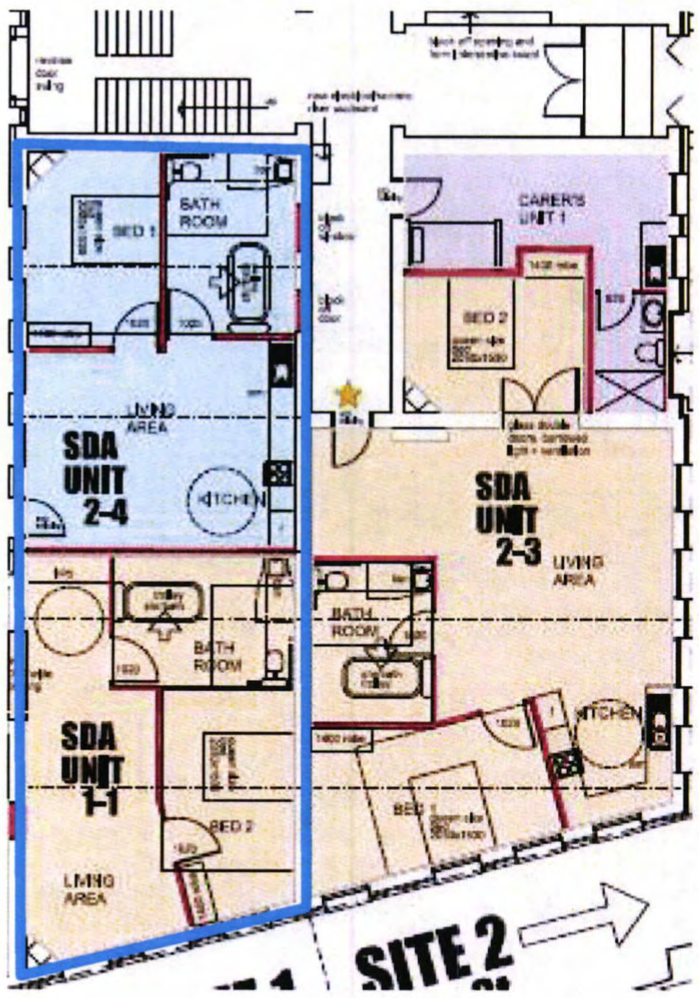
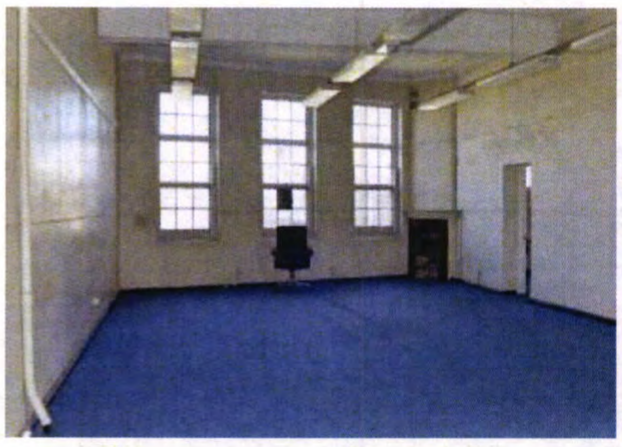
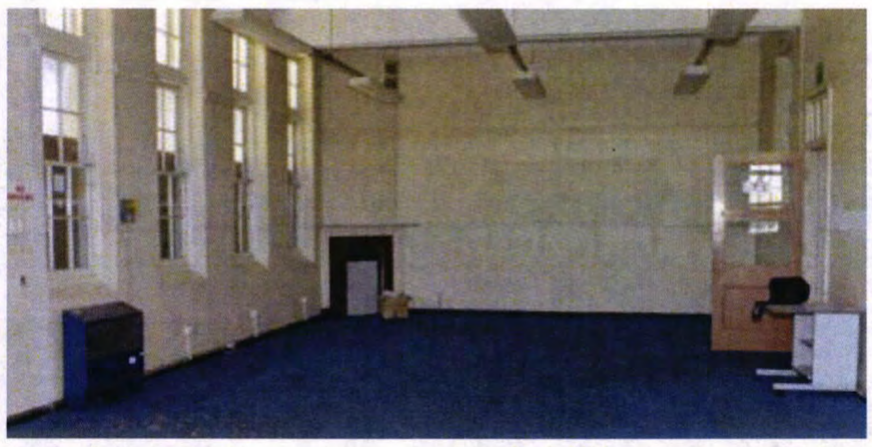


Here another fan has been placed in lieu of an opening sash. A small storage room has been constructed in the corner. A lino/vinyl floor has been laid over the timber strip floor. It has retained existing chalk boards and plywood cabinets, with a fume cupboard vented into the adjoining disused fireplace. The sink probably dates from the staff room period.

Units 2 -4 and 1 -1







This large room was once subdivided and used as the library and a separate audio visual room. The Library has further been extended into an area (previously the rear of the toilets and change area)

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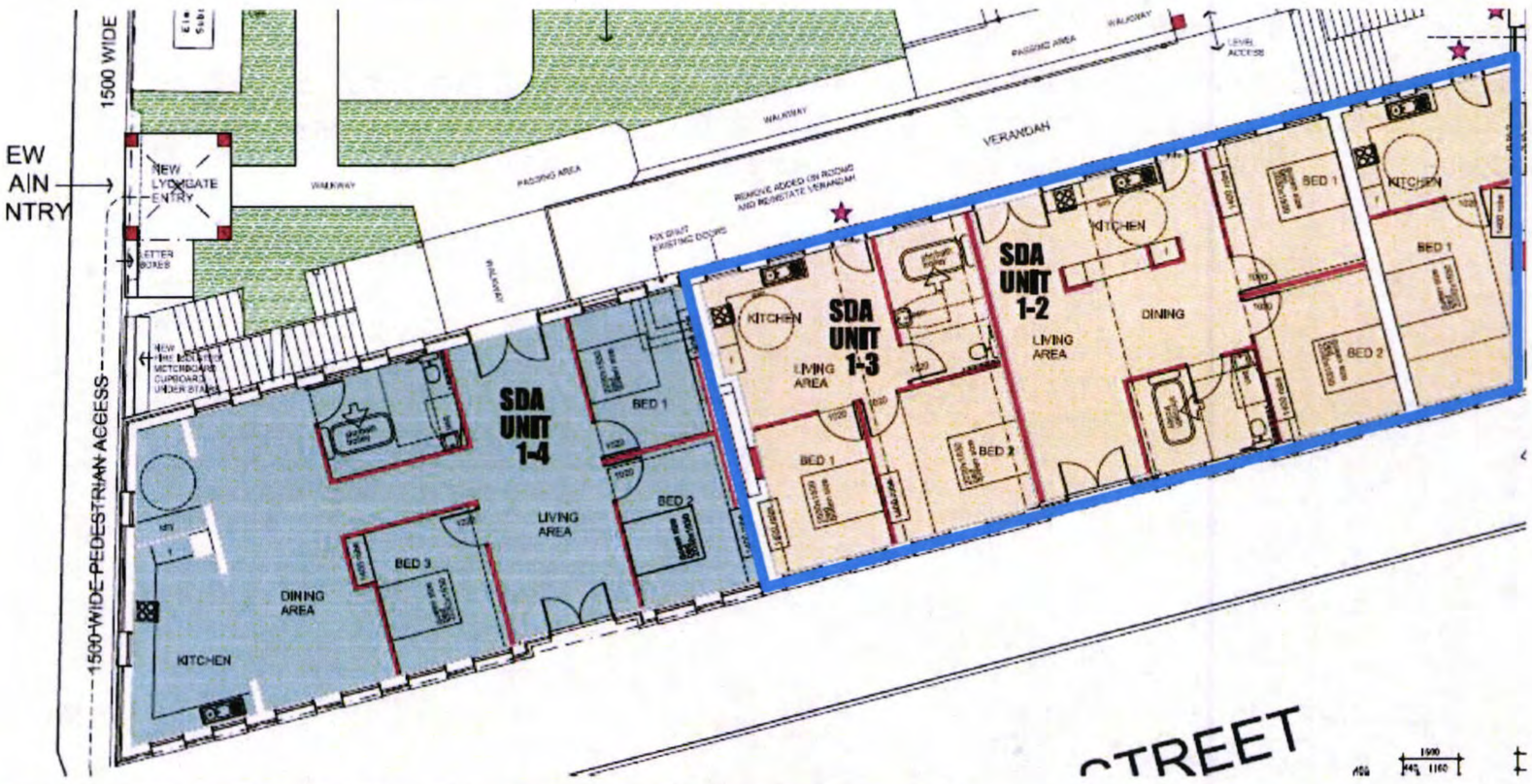
and used as a separate office, which can be seen through the door on the right of the photo. The timber floor has been carpeted.

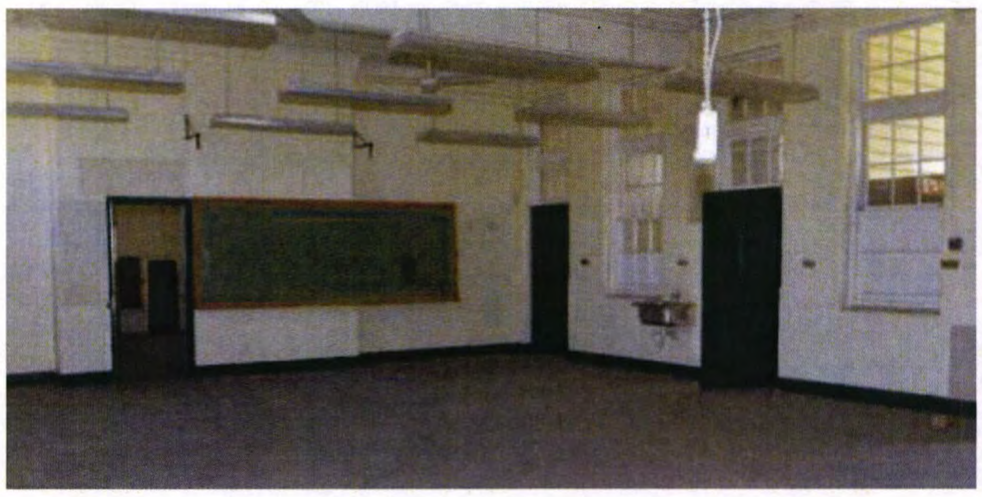
This shows the eastern end of the library with windows to the northern verandah. Door appears to be a later modification incorporating viewing panes.

3.2.2 Ground floor Cook Street wing.

The rooms on this side were originally marked for heavy industrial teaching being boiler making and machinery, and so were constructed with suspended concrete floors for strength and loadbearing nature. They have greater ceiling heights than other teaching rooms presumably for the exhaust of fumes and smoke. Both rooms have loading doors direct to Cook Street, to enable the ingress of large items, also at an elevated level to facilitate loading.

Units 1 -2 and 1 -3





Through the windows the closed in verandah extension can be seen. This was done in two stages from timber with weatherboard. Uses included storage and student amenities.

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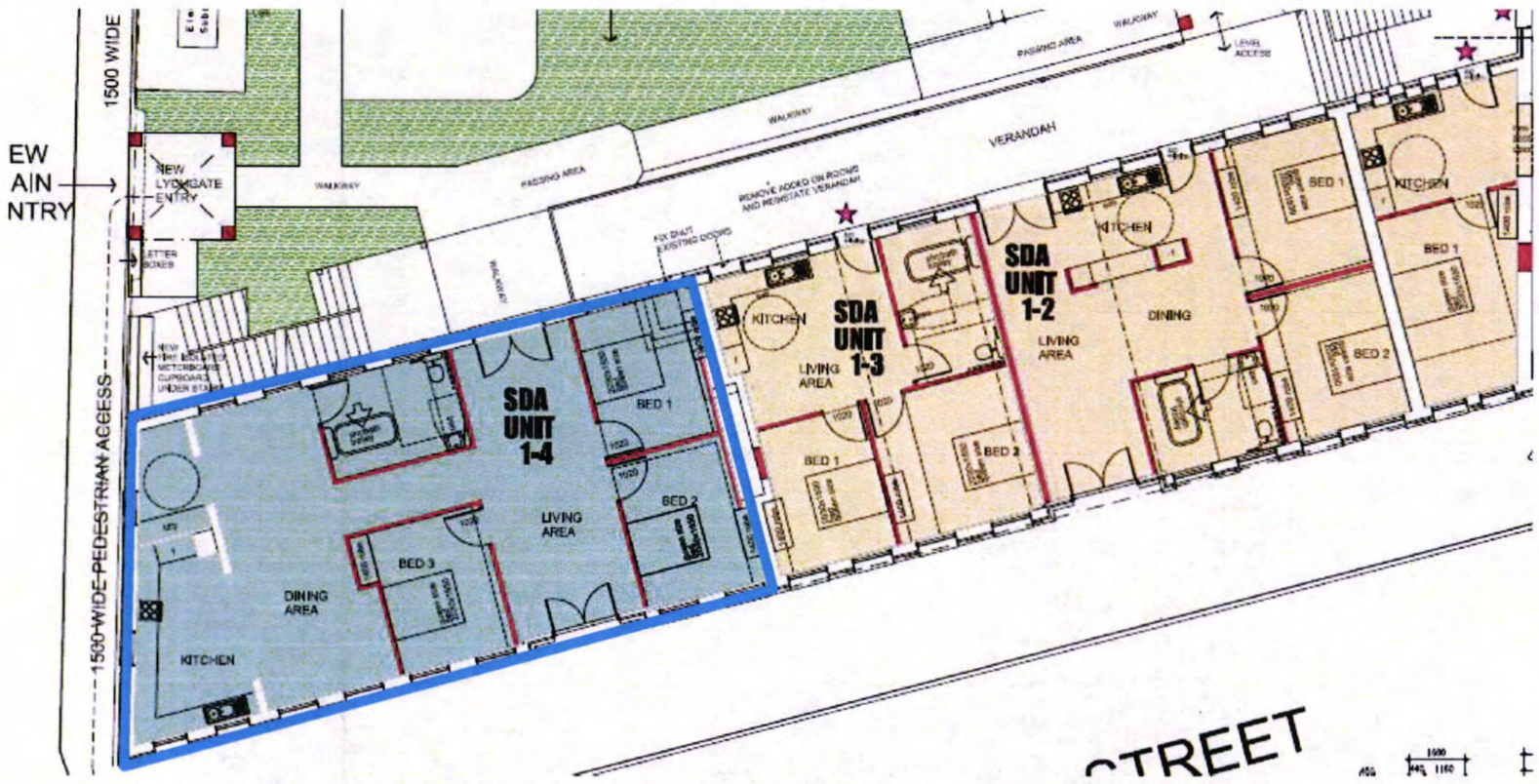
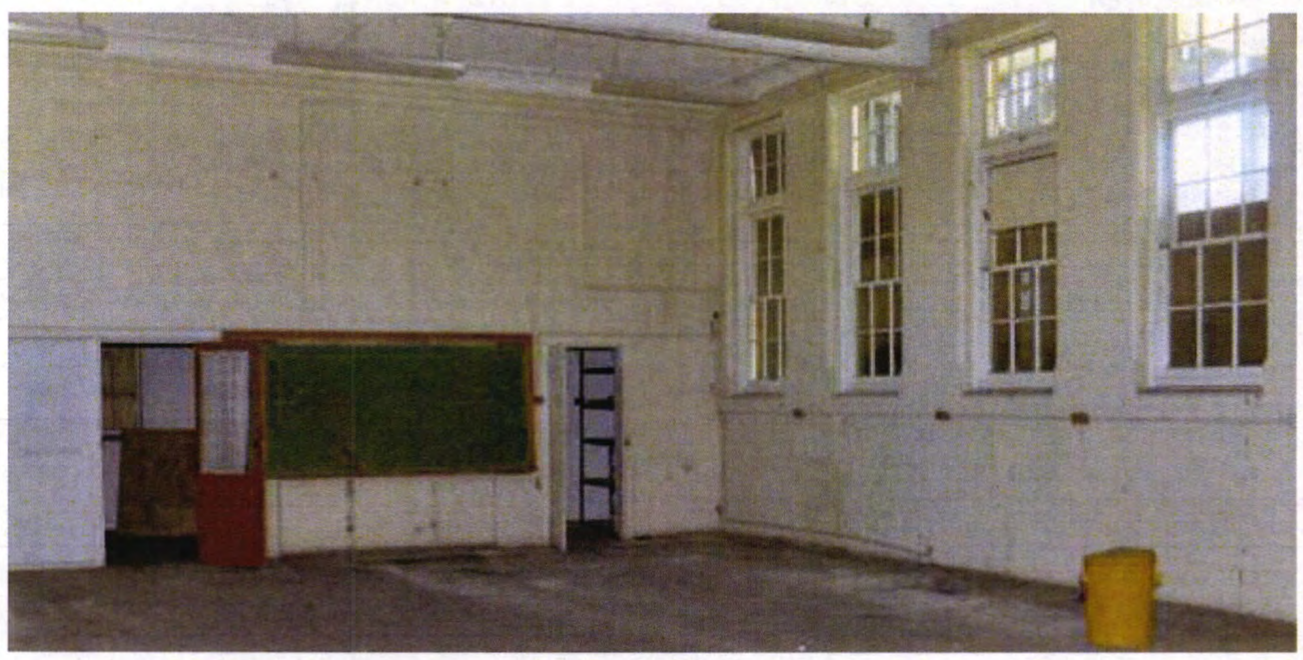
This is a good (but undesirable) example of the internal fitting of waste water service on the inside wall. The door on the left has been inserted in a window and the wall cut through below. This may have been an early adaptation as it appears to be early materials.

This view toward the outside wall shows the damage to the windows on the street side of the building. They have been boarded over recently to minimise vandalism. In general, the power supplies and fire protection sensors have been installed over the original finishes.

Unit 1 - 4





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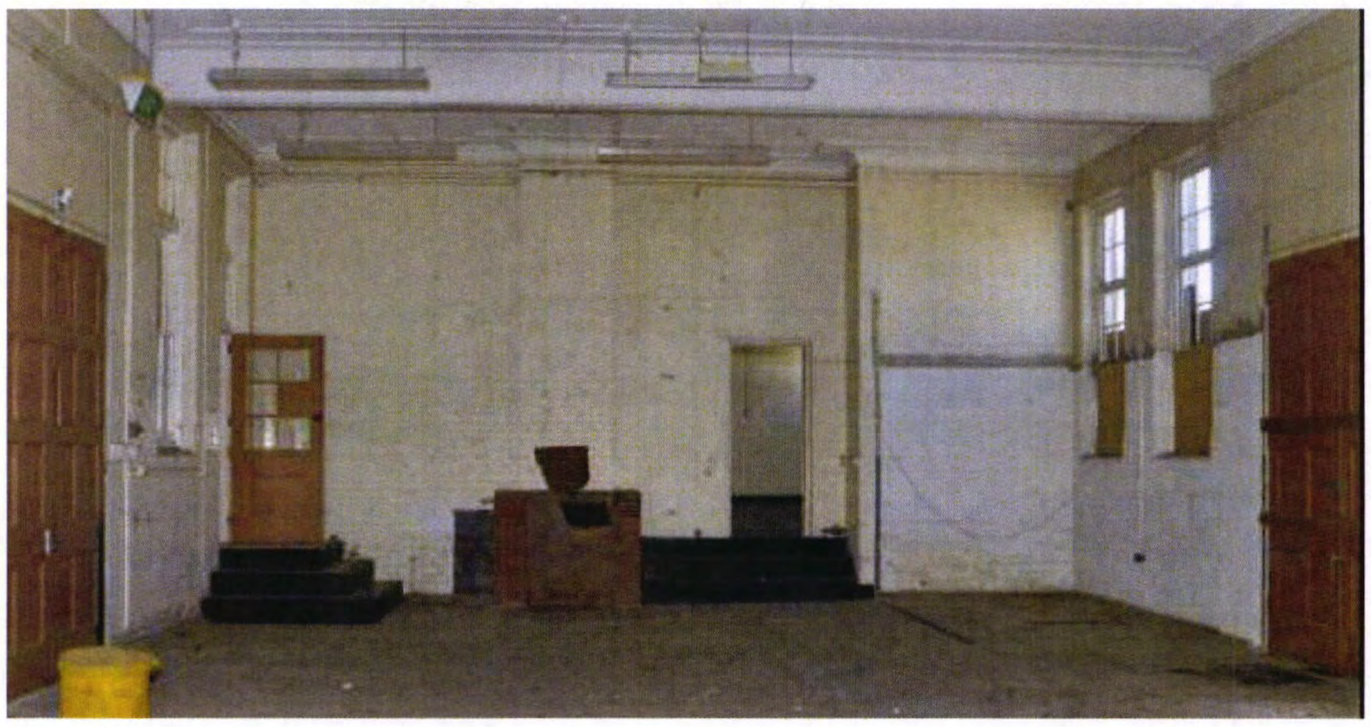
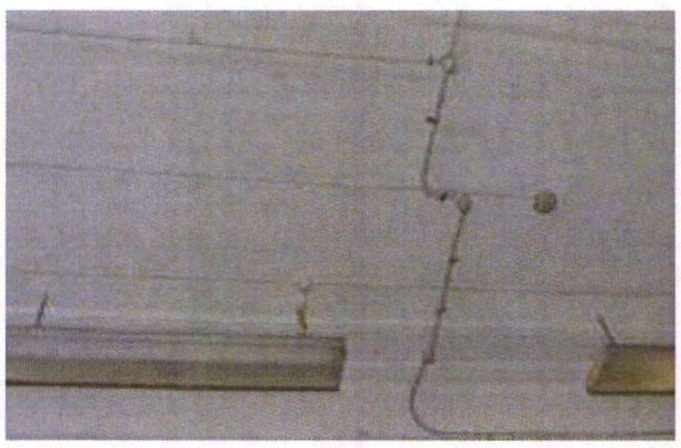
The northernmost classroom, originally for boiler making and blacksmithing teaching has a concrete floor, painted brick walls and access to the iron and fuel stores.



This room has been rather battered over the many years of heavy use. Large doors face Cook Street on the right, and the yard on the left, to facilitate the loading of large items such as steel and machinery. Utilising the fall of the land, this room has a higher ceiling and larger loading doors than the other rooms.



This fireplace alteration has failed and been poorly repaired. As usual, the lighting and fire protection fittings have been installed over the timber ceilings and detail.

Although the raised lettering is hard to pick out in this photo, this beam is printed with LANARKSHIRE STEEL COMPANY SCOTLAND 16x7. The State government was importing steel to Lithgow at the peak of the town's own steel plant production. Hoskins, the owners, did the same with his own Memorial Church.

Internal corridors and stairs

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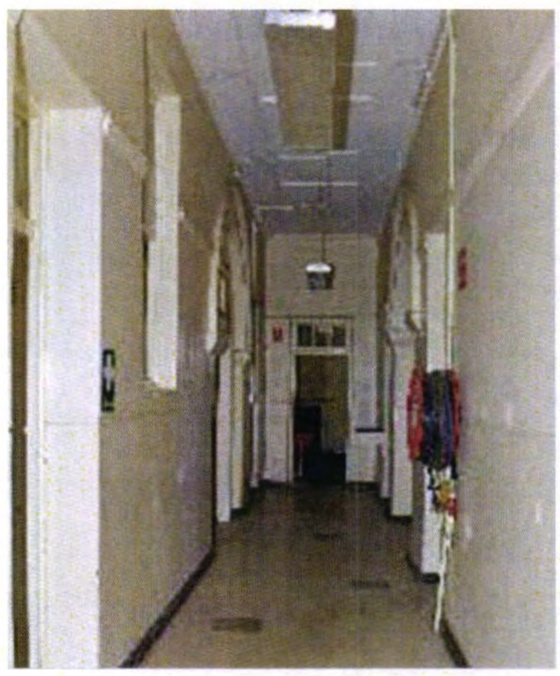

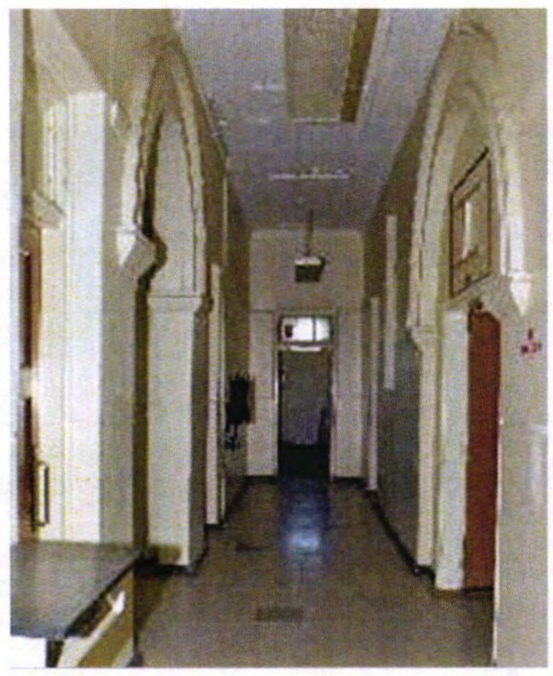

A short flight of stairs leads from Mort Street. A concertina steel gate provides for extra security and a glazed entry with timber doors leads on to the reception area. A sash window marked "Office" in simple stained glass work opens onto the reception desk. The vestibule and entry doors are well detailed and in good condition.

Rendered masonry arches lead into the corridors and then the stairs. A set of extra doors close off the stairs, likely as part of an earlier fire requirement. Corridors lead off either side to access the classrooms. The floors are sheeted in vinyl tiles over the original timber strip flooring. All the detailing has design consistency and simple, solid lines.

Toilets (incorporated into Unit 1-4)

All the toilets in the building have been modernised over the years of occupation of the TAFE and likely later.

In the toilet above can be seen one of the few problems with the building. The exterior rainwater head has apparently been blocked and then the downpipe fallen away after a period of time. Down the wall can be seen the damage caused from the water building up and transferring through the building structure.

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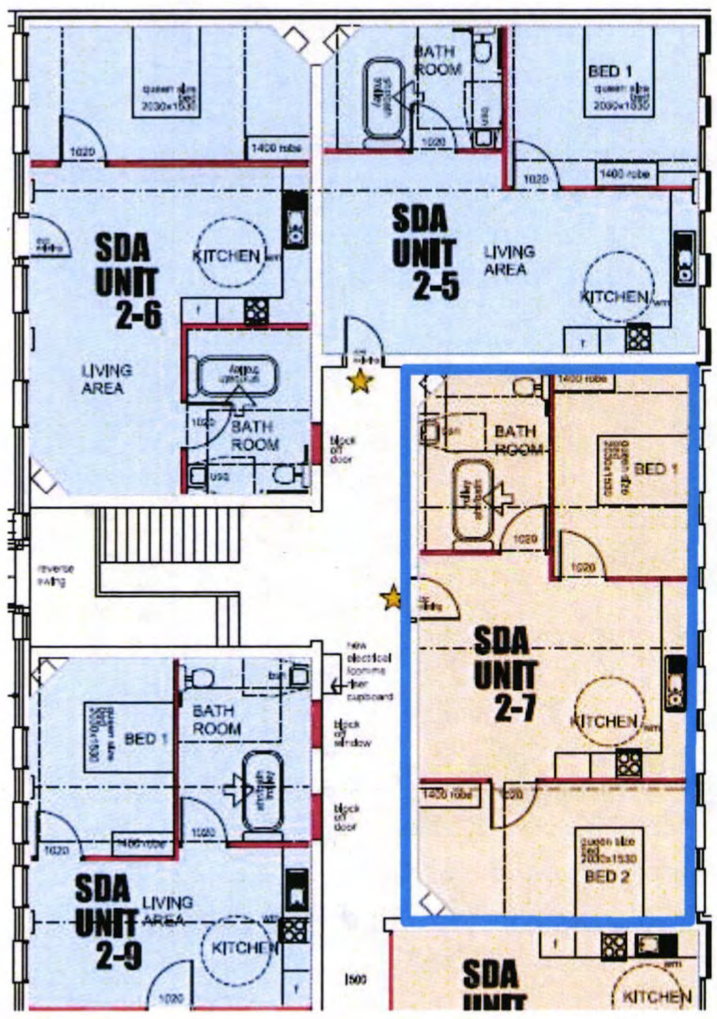
The original building fabric appears to remain behind the accretions of modern bathroom items. There is very little of early fittings remaining, if any. Various drainage problems need to be rectified.

3.2.3 First Floor Mort Street wing

Unit 2 - 7



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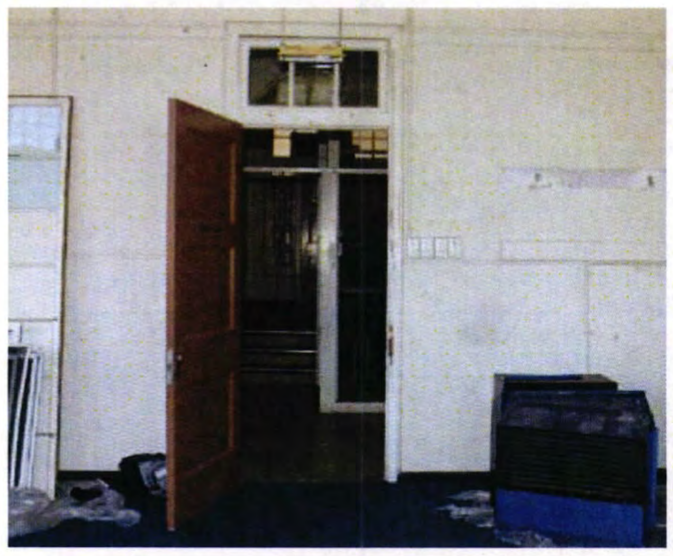
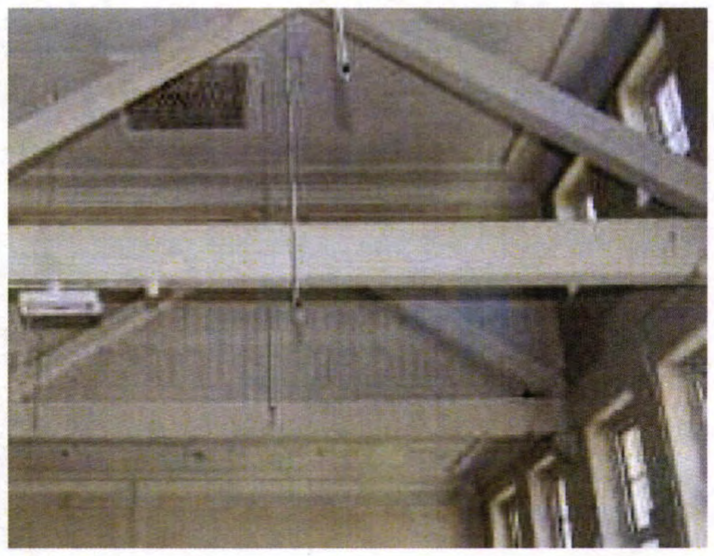
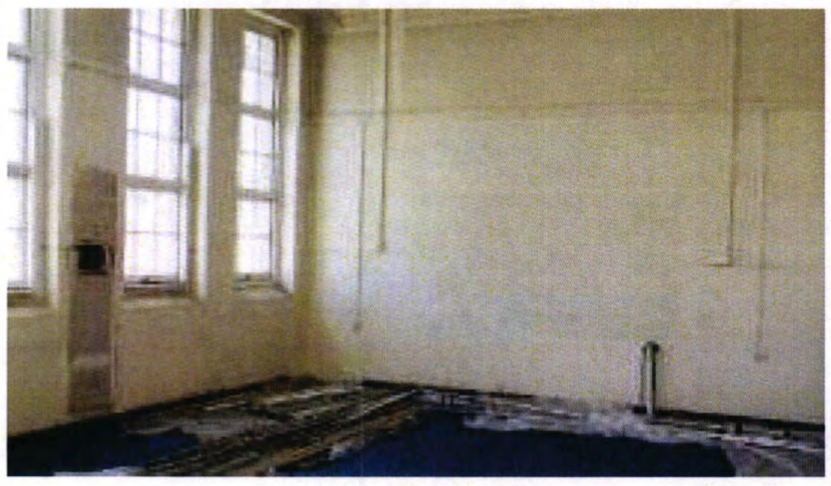
This room has extra height windows facing southwards, providing perfect natural light for the original uses of the room for dressmaking and also mathematics.





The ceilings protrude into the spaces for the roof trusses, within the hipped dormer to Mort Street. The room has had a number of alterations as can be seen in the historic series of plans. This has led to the loss of some trim detail.



Many power and communications conduits mar the actual walls themselves. Cupboards originally attached to the walls have been removed, shown by their "shadows" of bare render on the walls.

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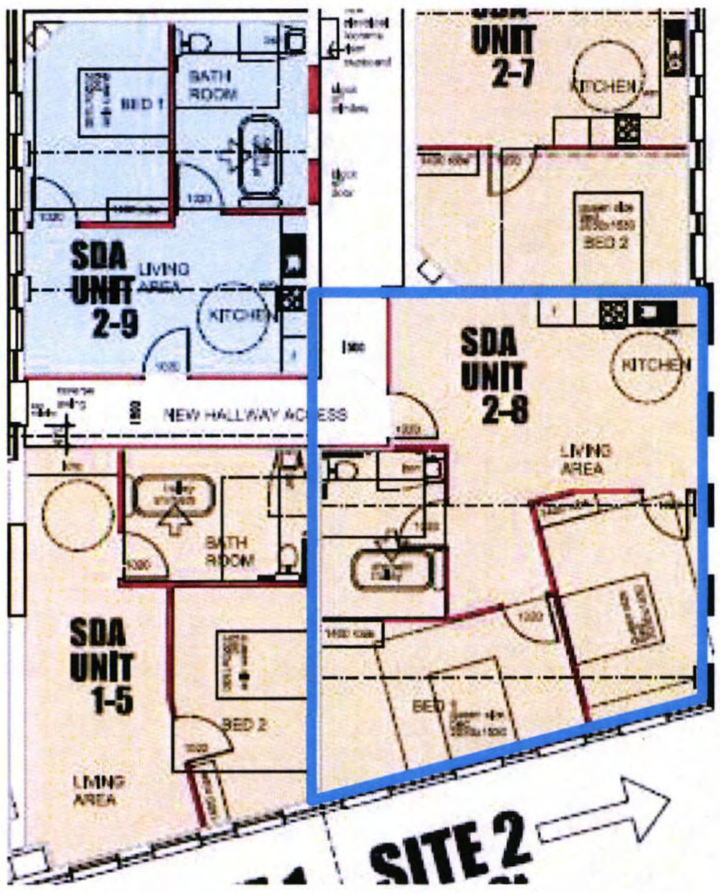
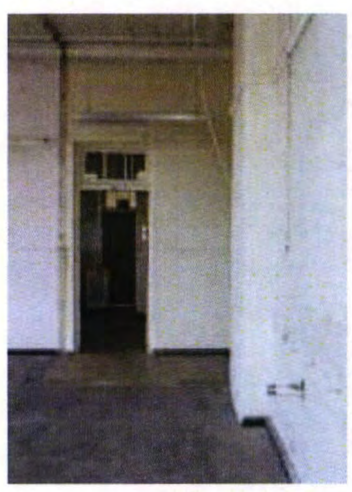
Unit 2-8



This room with its abundance of natural light was used for technical drawing and later for dressmaking. The usual conduits and piping mar the wall and ceiling surfaces. This classroom does not have a fireplace.



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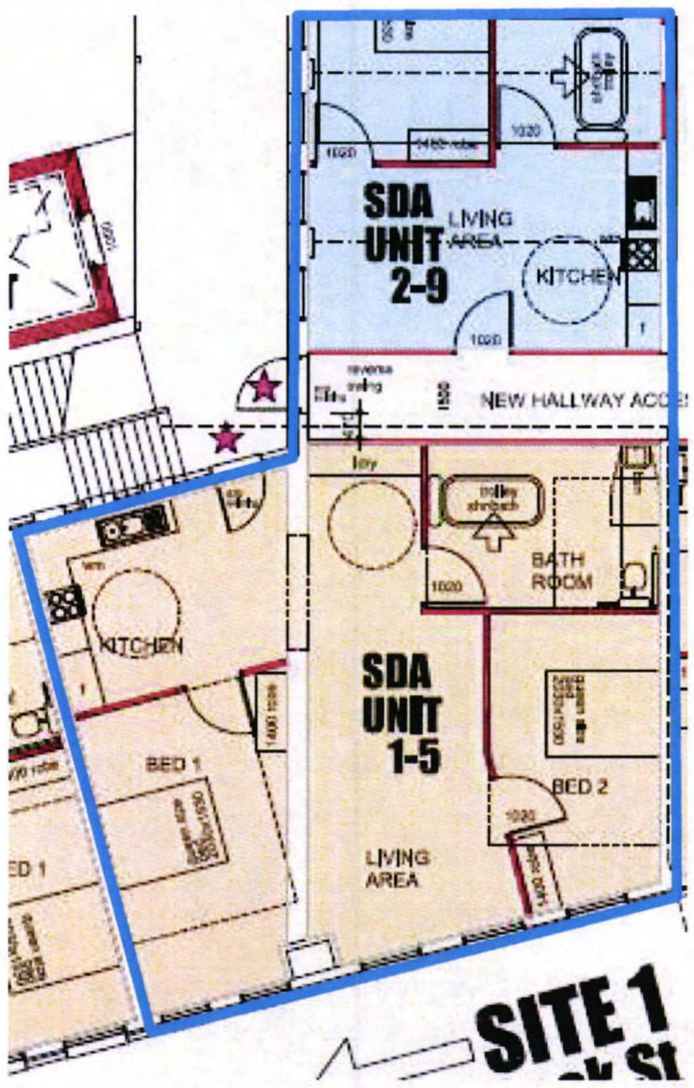
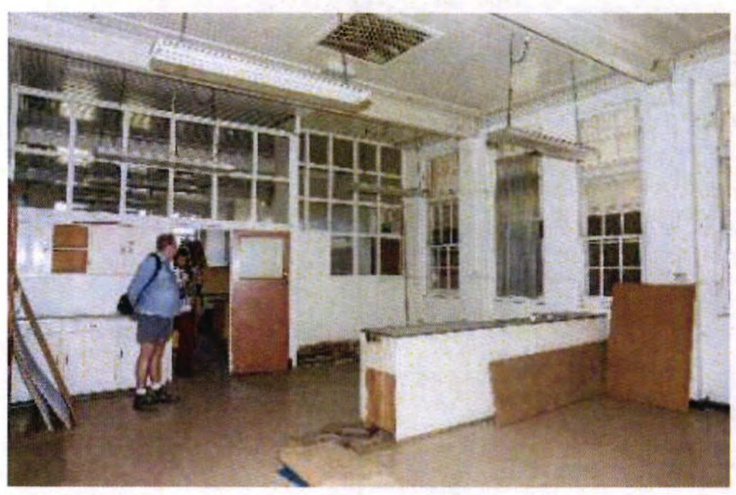
Unit 2 - 9 and 1 - 5





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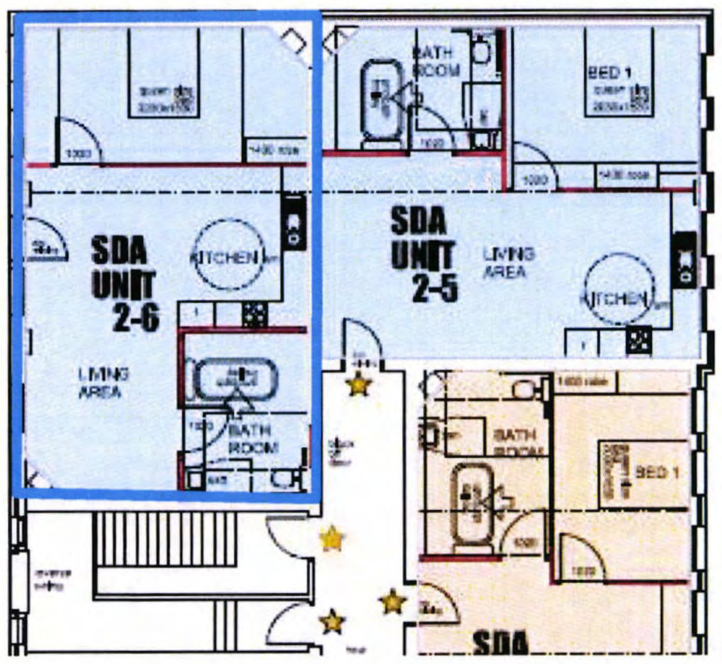
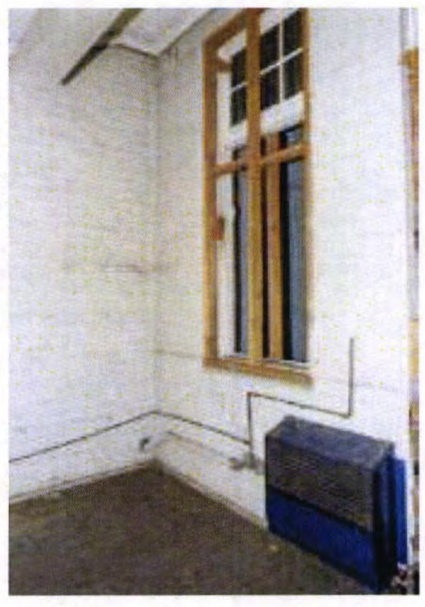
Unit 2-6



This room has had more unauthorised work carried out. Some framing has been erected and a window has been knocked through to make the external verandah room accessible from inside the building. At one stage it was fitted with a false ceiling over the original detail. This detailing is now exposed.



Preparations have been made for stud framing for a doorway and plaster boarding the original window. The window frames have been removed but may still be in storage within the building, or can be replicated if the originals have been lost.

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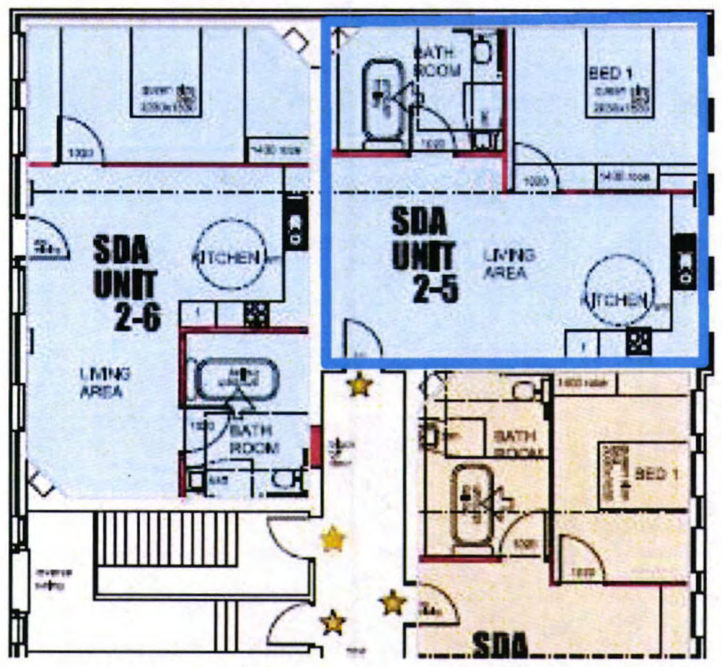
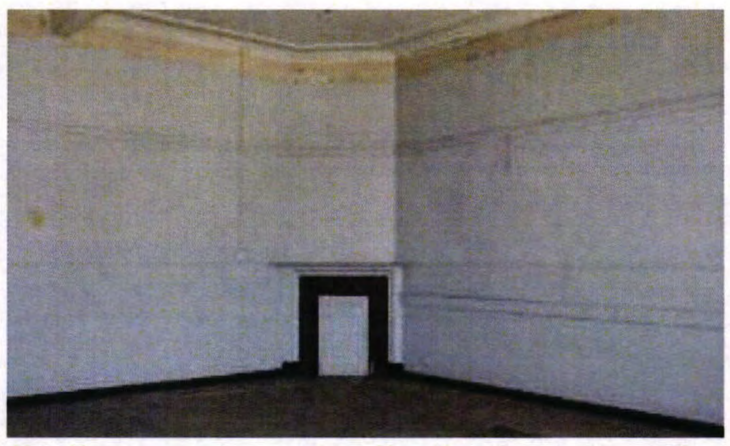
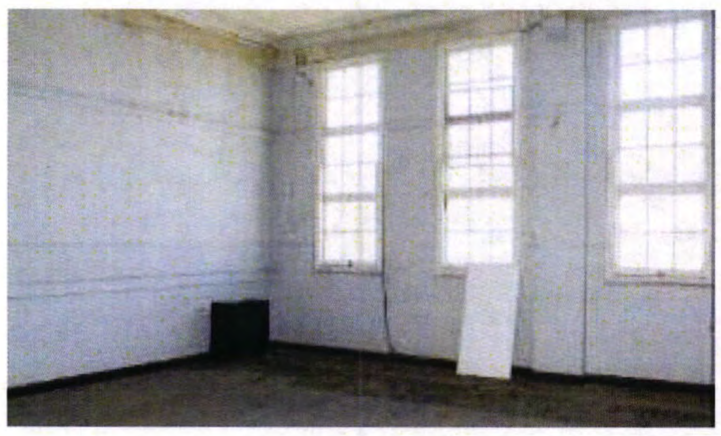
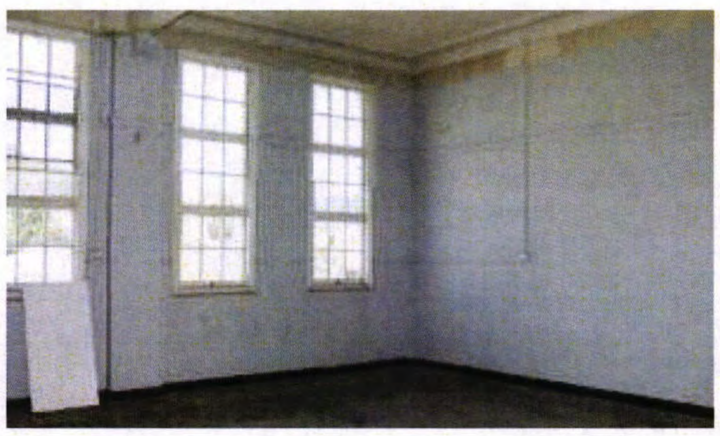
Unit 2 - 5





This room was previously fitted with a false ceiling. The usual conduits mar the surfaces. Most timber detailing remains.





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Internal corridors and stairs

The internal stairs from the entry and administration are original timber construction and finishes. Vinyl flooring has been installed over the timber flooring. The first floor entry from the verandah to the internal original stairwell is suitably detailed with leadlight windows to indicate its primacy as the main internal access from the verandahs.

This level of detailing to the doorways and entrances matches the ground floor. The exit to the verandah effectively provides access through the building to the verandahs and thence to all the rooms. Glazed partitioning has been installed as part of a previous fire safety system shown on the 1987 plans.

The doors have been damaged by vandals to force entry. Repairs to the stile and lock area are required.

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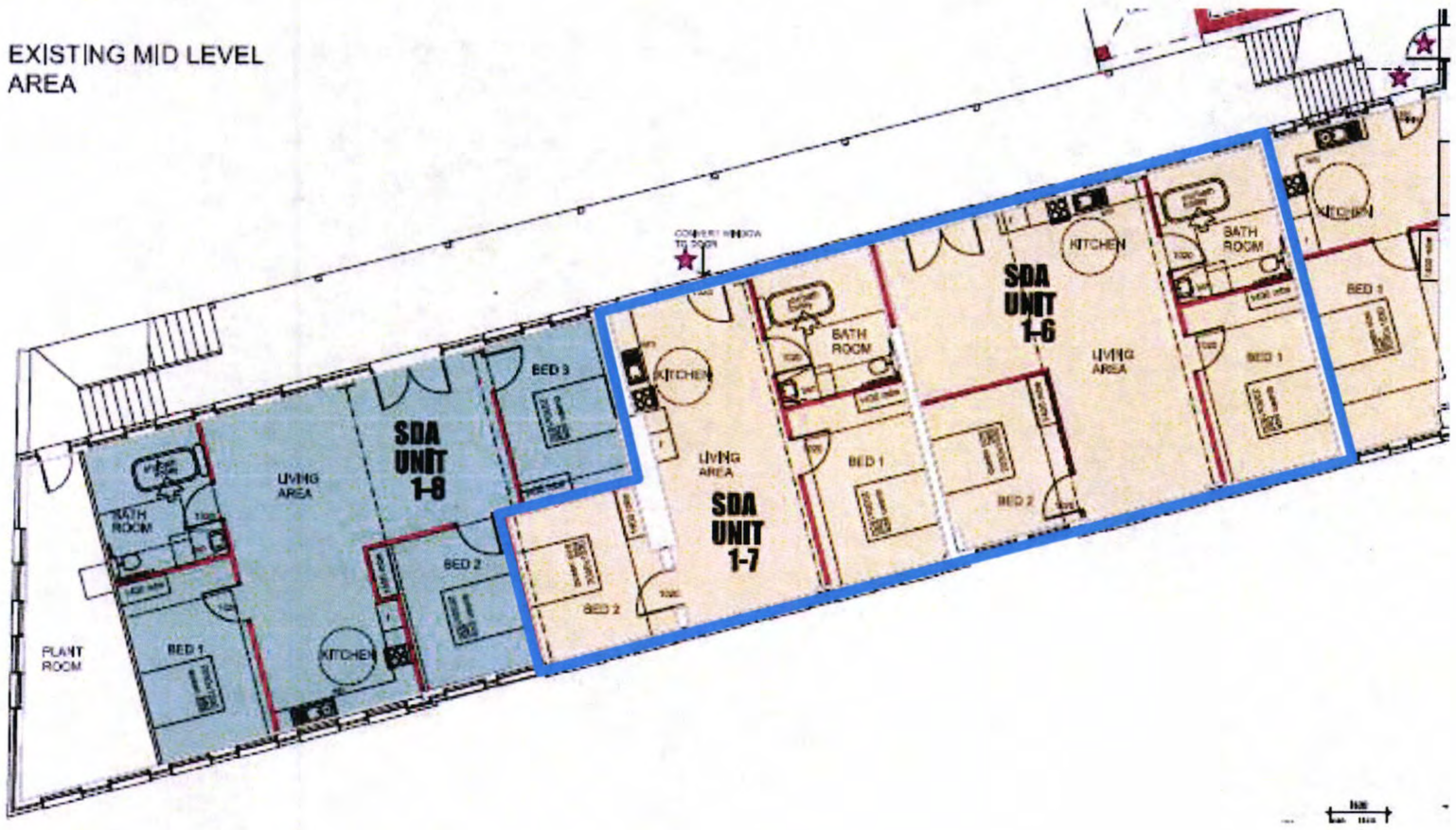
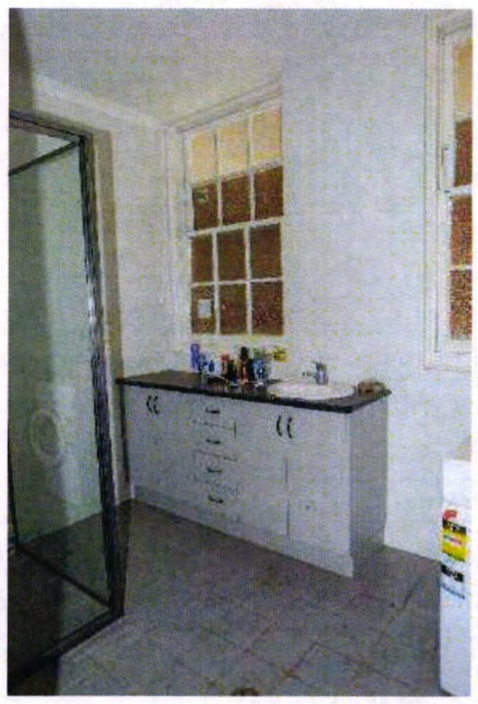
3.2.4 First Floor Cook Street wing
Unit 1-7 and 1-6





The unit which exists at present was unauthorised by Council. It is understood the unit was built by the previous owner, who progressed through an application but did not complete the necessary works on the balance of the building, and was so unable to legally occupy. Council records will need to be examined for this reason in conjunction with any application that may be required for use of the building.

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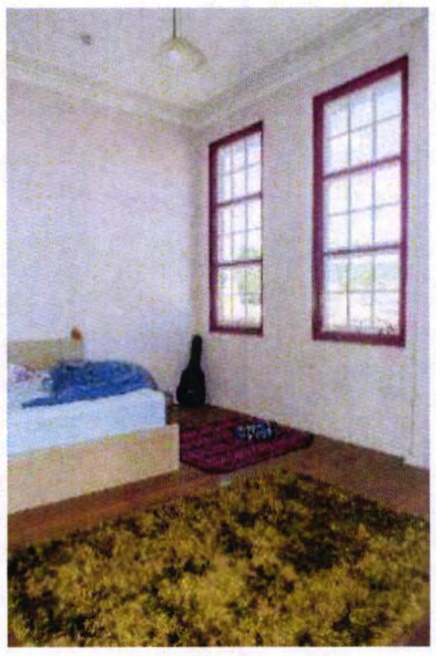
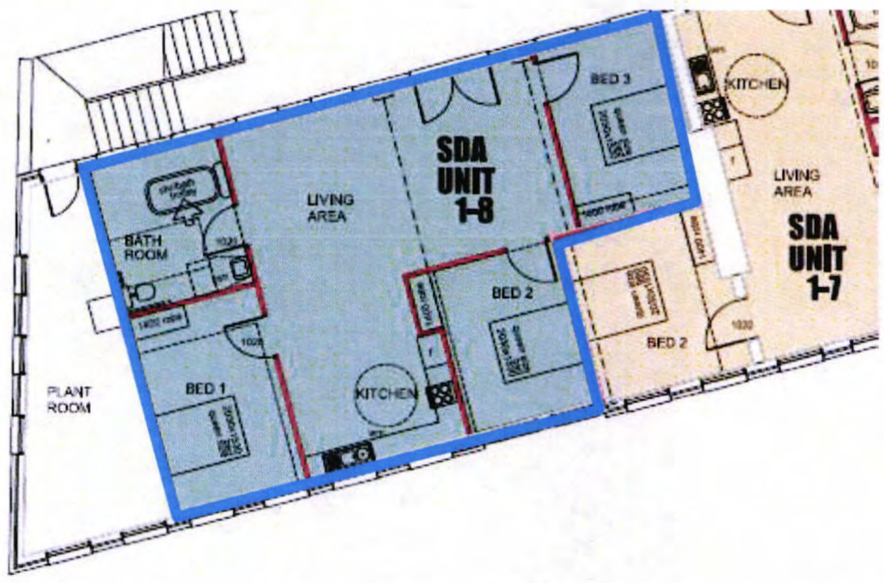


The unit is very large, particularly in terms of the living area for the single dwelling. As can be seen the polished original boards and high ceilings and windows are a feature of the unit.

Internal dividing walls have been fitted over the wall and ceiling detail so that the original trim is retained. Walls could be removed or relocated where usage and approval requirements dictated. This technique is the same as used by the original users of the building when uses of the classrooms changed.

Unit 18 and 1-8



Originally for plumbing, this room has been used for a number of uses including carpentry and typing. This room also has painted brick walls given the original use for plumbing and likely damage to rendered surfaces.

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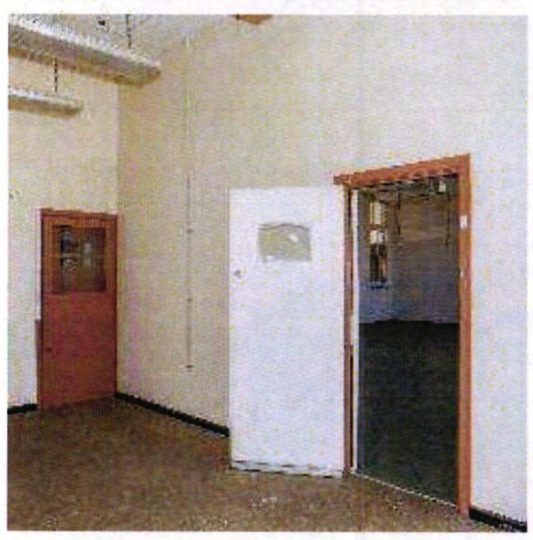
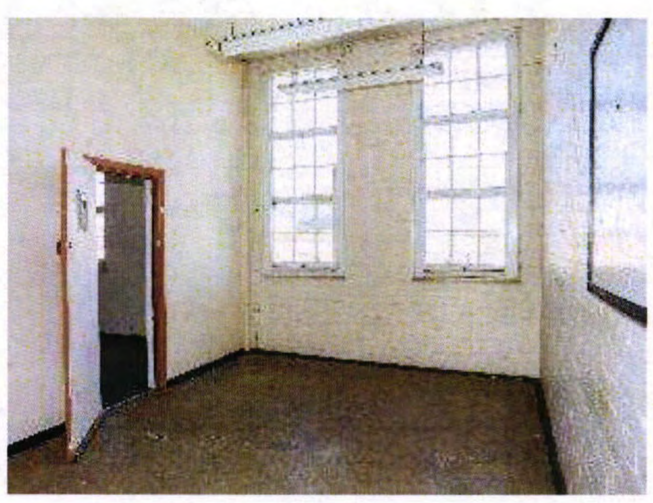
This room still retains its lowered ceiling, although missing a few tiles. The timber ceiling and detail above appears in good condition above the ceiling except for the usual damage due to fixing wiring and lighting.





Two small interconnected rooms at the northern end correspond to a tool store and lecture room when used for a plumbing classroom.

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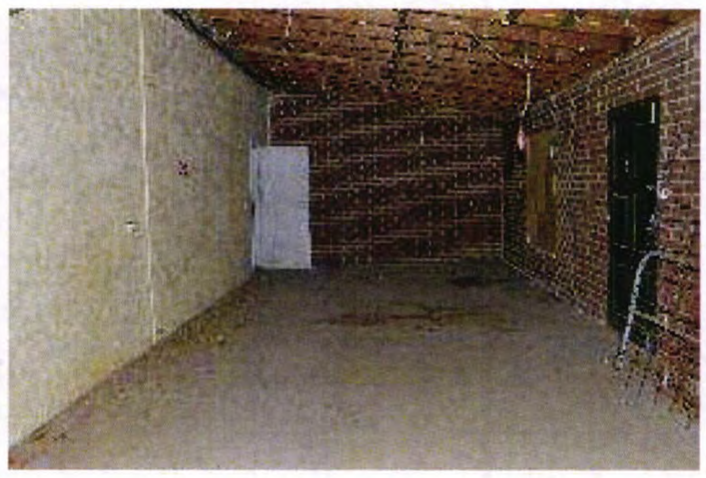
Drain laying yard building.

This overall area is shown on early plans as the drain laying yard. It is understood to have been used for practising drainage construction in sand. On later plans when the larger building is shown, after possibly being constructed in the 1980s, it is still referred to as the drain laying yard.

The drain laying building is constructed with steel frame and sheeted in painted steel. It incorporates part of the early brick wall for the Trades School yard, and additional brickwork has been added.



The southern extension had not been built by the late 1980's going by the plans found. The mid 1990s plans show the room as student amenities, later a storeroom. Neither of these buildings have particular nor long term history with the site.

The remnant of wall to the lane is solid brickwork, in colonial or garden wall bond. When the large shed was built, the bonding of the wall was continued into that brickwork. However when a corner was damaged beside the gate it was repaired in simple stretcher bond. The wall has been damaged further by vehicles scraping down the lane side. While a part of the original design and building, its main value besides some level of security is possibly a source of bricks to colour match with any repairs needed to the original building brickwork.

In the above photograph can also be seen a painted pedestrian way at grade with the lane surface, which presumably Council constructed to give better pedestrian access to the Council carpark from Cook Plaza. We support that solution, but for greater pedestrian protection we feel Council should upgrade it to a concrete pathway and also provide an access suitable ramp at the corner of Burns and Cook, with a corresponding suitable ramp into the Plaza.

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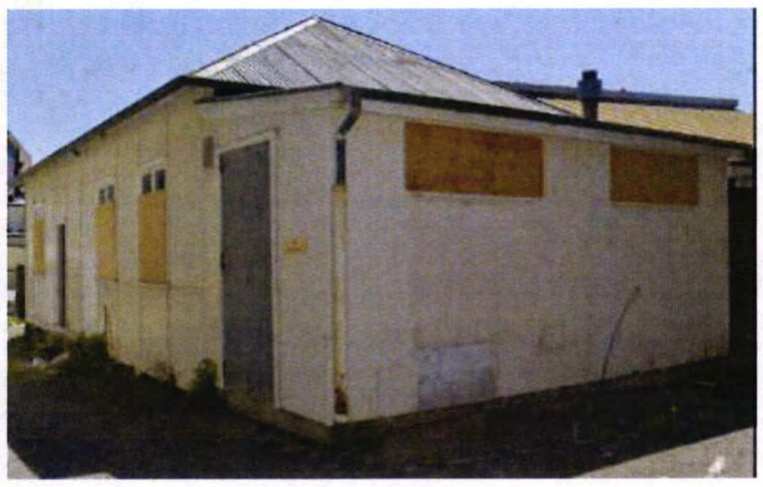
Classroom

These two photos indicate the haphazard nature of the yard planning. The fibro and iron ceramics classroom was likely placed there earlier than the larger metal shed, partly as the concrete ramp to the loading door has been diverted around it.



This building was used for the teaching of ceramics. It is timber framed and sheeted in fibrous cement sheeting with timber cover strips. It has a hardwood timber boarded floor on timber bearers and joists on brick pad footings. A small skillion extension has been added to the southern end with a concrete floor, likely required to support the heavy "portable" ceramics kilns which still remain in the building, although they have been stripped of many details.

The windows are casements and have been boarded up to reduce vandalism. The materials of the building are likely original, possibly dating from the 1940s. The building likely contains asbestos and will need to be demolished in accordance with the usual requirements.

3.3 LANDSCAPE

The existing building has minimal landscaped area. The existing trees on the site are mainly *Rhus,* a highly toxic tree which causes severe dermatitis on contact with skin. A straggly eucalypt has likely seeded beside the building, and a malformed cherry with root suckers completes the tree cover. None of these trees are of any age or significance.

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3.4 STREETSCAPE

There will be a positive effect on the streetscape posed by the proposal as the building will be essentially unchanged architecturally, it will be refurbished and improved. This will have a positive impact on the building and surrounds.

Figure 34: View east along Mort St of former TAFE (left) and mix of property types opposite (right)

Figure 35: View north along Cook St of former TAFE (right) and mix of property types opposite (left)

Figure 36: View south along Mort St of former TAFE (right) and mix of property types surrounding

Figure 37: View of former TAFE looking west on Mort St, car park on right

Given that the building is on the main road through the centre of the town it will greatly improve the image of the town when completed.

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STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

Under the provisions of the Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979, the following deals with matters relevant to the proposed development (s. 79C).

4 PLANNING INSTRUMENTS S. 79C (A)

The provisions of:

(i) any environmental planning instrument, and

(ii) any proposed instrument that is or has been the subject of public consultation under this Act and that has been notified to the consent authority (unless the Director-General has notified the consent authority that the making of the proposed instrument has been deferred indefinitely or has not been approved), and

(iii) any development control plan , and

(iiia) any planning agreement that has been entered into under section 93F, or any draft planning agreement that a developer has offered to enter into under section 93F, and

(iv) the regulations (to the extent that they prescribe matters for the purposes of this paragraph), that apply to the land to which the development application relates.

4.1 STATE ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING POLICY (INFRASTRUCTURE) 2007

The Infrastructure SEPP refers to development beside major roads as follows:

Cl.102 Impact of road noise or vibration on non-road development

(1) This clause applies to development for any of the following purposes that is on land in or adjacent to the road corridor for a freeway, a tollway or a transitway or any other road with an annual average daily traffic volume of more than 40,000 vehicles (based on the traffic volume data published on the website of the RTA) and that the consent authority considers is likely to be adversely affected by road noise or vibration:

(a) a building for residential use…

Comment:

The RMS website does not publish any data for the traffic volume in this area. However the road clearly does not have an annual average daily traffic volume of more than 40,000 vehicles. Therefore the acoustic requirements of the SEPP do not apply.

4.2 STATE ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING POLICY (SYDNEY DRINKING WATER CATCHMENTS) 2011

The proposal is located within the catchment of the upper Coxs River and is therefore subject to State Environmental Planning Policy (Sydney Drinking Water Catchments) 2011. The relevant extract from the plan is:

Cl.10 Development consent cannot be granted unless neutral or beneficial effect on water quality

(1) A consent authority must not grant consent to the carrying out of development under Part 4 of the Act on land in the Sydney drinking water catchment unless it is satisfied that the carrying out of the proposed development would have a neutral or beneficial effect on water quality.

Comment:

The proposal is sewered. There will be no increase in roof area or sealed area on the site. Standard Council anti-pollution requirements will be met in the development of the site. Council can be confident that either the proposal has no identifiable potential additional impact on water quality or that the development will contain any such impact on the site of the development and prevent it from reaching any watercourse, waterbody or drainage depression on the site or in the area.

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4.3 STATE ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING POLICY (HOUSING FOR SENIORS OR PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY) 2004

This policy would appear at first glance to apply to this development, which is permissible in the zone as residential units. It is simply units which are specially adapted for high dependency disabled people.

The main thrust of the State policy was to allow such development in zones that did not allow such development. The policy was brought in at a time when zoning controls were typically more insular and restrictive, rather than inclusive and responding to more performance controls, which many Councils now use.

In any event, our development mirrors the requirements in the SEPP.

4.4 LITHGOW CITY COUNCIL LEP 2014

B2 Local Centre, under the Lithgow City Council Local Environmental Plan 2014 (LEP).The site is also listed as a heritage item within Lithgow Main Street Heritage Conservation Area. Relevant sections are quoted from the LEP in *italics,* with clause numbers noted where necessary.

4.4.1 Zoning

The site is zoned **B2 Local Centre**. The objectives for this zone are as follows:

- *To provide a range of retail, business, entertainment and community uses that serve the needs of people who live in, work in and visit the local area.*

Comment:
The proposal will provide a residential use to the community, at a location very close to the Lithgow CBD and public transport.

- *To encourage employment opportunities in accessible locations.*

Comment:
Employment will be created in the short term in the process of converting the building from a former TAFE to residential units and in the long term for maintenance of the building. The subject site is very close to the Lithgow CBD, public transport and is accessible from Cook St as well as Mort St which turns into the Bells Line of Road (B59).

- *To maximise public transport patronage and encourage walking and cycling.*

Comment:
The building can be accessed easily from public transport as the train station is less than 100m away and the nearest bus stop is also less than 100m away. The building has easy pedestrian access from high traffic pedestrian areas such as Cook St Plaza, Mort St and Main St as well as from the train station and bus stop.

- *To maintain the built integrity of the area by enabling development that is sympathetic to the heritage character and significance of the area and surrounding streetscapes and features.*

Comment:
The proposed conversion and adaption of the building will maintain the built integrity of the CBD as well as Main St, Mort St and Cook St as a whole. The building will retain its heritage character, as it is a very high profile building in size and within the community.

- *To maintain or improve the water quality of receiving water catchments.*

Comment:
The water quality of receiving catchments will be maintained.

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4.5 PERMISSIBILITY OF USES

Land use table

2 Permitted without consent

Roads

3 Permitted with consent

Boarding houses; Child care centres; Commercial premises; Community facilities; Educational establishments; Entertainment facilities; Function centres; Information and education facilities; Medical centres; Passenger transport facilities; Recreation facilities (indoor); Registered clubs; Residential flat buildings; Respite day care centres; Restricted premises; Service stations; Shop top housing; Tourist and visitor accommodation; Water recycling facilities; Water reticulation systems; Any other development not specified in item 2 or 4

4 Prohibited

Agriculture; Air transport facilities; Airstrips; Animal boarding or training establishments; Biosolids treatment facilities; Boat building and repair facilities; Boat launching ramps; Boat sheds; Camping grounds; Caravan parks; Cemeteries; Charter and tourism boating facilities; Correctional centres; Crematoria; Depots; Eco-tourist facilities; Electricity generating works; Environmental facilities; Exhibition homes; Exhibition villages; Extractive industries; Farm buildings; Forestry; Freight transport facilities; Heavy industrial storage establishments; Helipads; Highway service centres; Industrial retail outlets; Industrial training facilities; Industries; Jetties; Marinas; Mooring pens; Moorings; Mortuaries; Open cut mining; Places of public worship; Recreation areas; Recreation facilities (major); Recreation facilities (outdoor); Research stations; Residential accommodation; Resource recovery facilities; Rural industries; Sewage treatment plants; Storage premises; Transport depots; Truck depots; Vehicle body repair workshops; Vehicle repair stations; Veterinary hospitals; Warehouse or distribution centres; Waste disposal facilities; Water recreation structures; Water storage facilities; Water treatment facilities; Wharf or boating facilities; Wholesale supplies

Within the definitions to the LEP:

residential flat building means a building containing 3 or more dwellings, but does not include an attached dwelling or multi dwelling housing.

The use for **residential flat building** of the main brick building is permissible with the consent of Council.

boarding house was suggested by Council as a definition of the proposal, however we believe that **residential flat building** fits the proposed development well.

4.5.1 Lithgow City Council LEP2014 – Heritage Items Protection

The relevant clauses under LEP2014 are considered in the Heritage Impact Statement which accompanies the application documents. Policy & Guidelines for Residential Unit Development

This development within an existing heritage listed building does not relate with the general idea behind residential development in business areas, but certain issues raised by the policy will be addressed.

4.5.2 Density

The design of the units and therefore the density has really been determined by the form and structure of the building and the site, to best retain the external appearance and structural form of the building for reasons given in the heritage report to the application.

4.6 CARPARKING

Actual car parking for the site is affected by a number of parameters.

Residents

The development is specifically for high physical dependency persons. They are unlikely to be able to drive a normal passenger vehicle.

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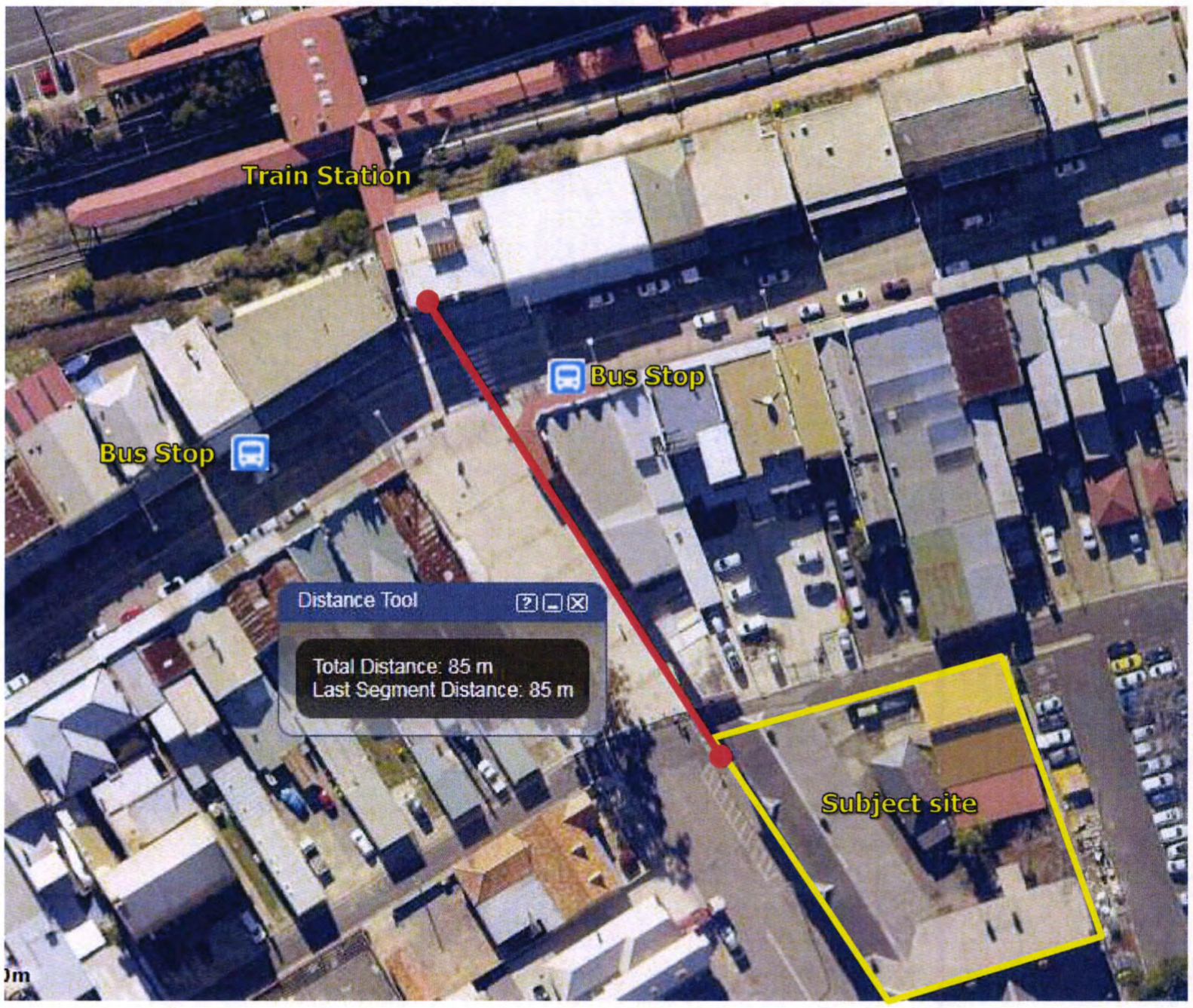
Much of the design parameters are based on wheelchair movement. The current production and design of wheelchairs mean that most will be powered. These vehicles have a typical range of over 20km and a typical top speed of 8-15km/hr. Such vehicles will be parked in the apartment. As shown on the plans, beside each bed is an electric vehicle parking and charging location. Given the proximity of the proposed residences to the centre of town most parts should be wheelchair accessible in minutes and probably faster than driving to the location, parking and then travelling from the car park to the location they are visiting. The use of these mobility vehicles and their ability to be parked within the residence significantly reduces requirements for car parking.

4.6.1 Proximity of public transport



It would be hard to find a site better served by public transport. The annotated photo speaks for itself.

4.6.2 Various Parking Requirements

Roads and Maritime Services

Below is an excerpt from is from the RMS current Guide to Traffic Generating Developments Version 2.2:

Subsidised development:
Self-contained units:
1 space per 10 units (residents) plus.
1 space per 10 units (visitors).

Hostels, nursing and convalescent homes:
1 space per 10 beds (visitors) plus.
1 space per 2 employees plus.
1 space per ambulance.

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Note:
The reference to employees indicates the number of staff on site at any one time during the peak operating period. It is advisable that suitable parking provision be made when shifts overlap. Recommended parking provisions at subsidised developments are based on the RTA's research. In the case of resident funded developments, the recommended parking provisions are based on observations and experience of planners involved in this type of development. The overall resident parking demand of 2 spaces per 3 units represents the average parking needs of resident funded developments.

Visitor parking spaces must be clearly designated and readily accessible. Appropriate signposting should be provided at the entrance to the site.

Lithgow City Council

Councils previous parking DCP has been repealed but did relate to "subsidised" applications in referring to them as "Crown applications":

SELF CONTAINED DWELLINGS	NOT LESS THAN THE SUM OF NUMBERS CALCULATED BY THE FOLLOWING - - SMALL (<55m²) 0.5 SPACES PER DWELLING - MEDIUM (55-85m²) 0.85 SPACES PER DWELLING - LARGE (>85m²) 1.0 SPACE PER DWELLING CROWN BASED APPLICATIONS FOR SELF-CONTAINED DWELLINGS SHALL PROVIDE NO LESS THAN 1 PARKING SPACE PER 5 DWELLINGS

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) standards

The standards relating to parking in this instance are shown below:

Part B Spatial Planning – Dwelling Elements

Car Parking Provisions

Not all developments will provide occupant car parking, depending on the location, proximity to public transportation and town planning requirements.

In developments where resident car parking is provided as a standard inclusion for all occupants, including accessible car parking supports equal opportunity for a person with disability i.e. he or she is not excluded from car ownership.

Comment:

At design discussion stage only 7 carparking spaces were proposed. The development falls under the "subsidised development" category of the RMS "Guide to Traffic Generating Development Version 2.2" as the NDIS subsidises 90% of funding. The RMS parking requirements were accepted by Council at the pre-DA meeting. The owner has now decided to provide more parking on site given that there is opportunity more than any demonstrated need.

According to the RMS requirements this building would require a minimum of 4 car spaces but the proposal has included 14 car spaces (2 of which are exclusive disabled access spaces).

In any event, the building was initially constructed and used for approximately 300 persons including staff. The location of the building just metres from the station, within the Main Street shopping area and easy walking distance to the Lithgow Valley complex. Therefore we maintain the overall parking demand is met by the implied credit that the building had when used as a Trades School and later TAFE.

Furthermore, the previous council main street report under Redevelopment opportunities Former TAFE building states "Potential to "trade down" on-site car parking requirements with reactivation of the building, proximity to public car parking and public transport connections." Nevertheless, the

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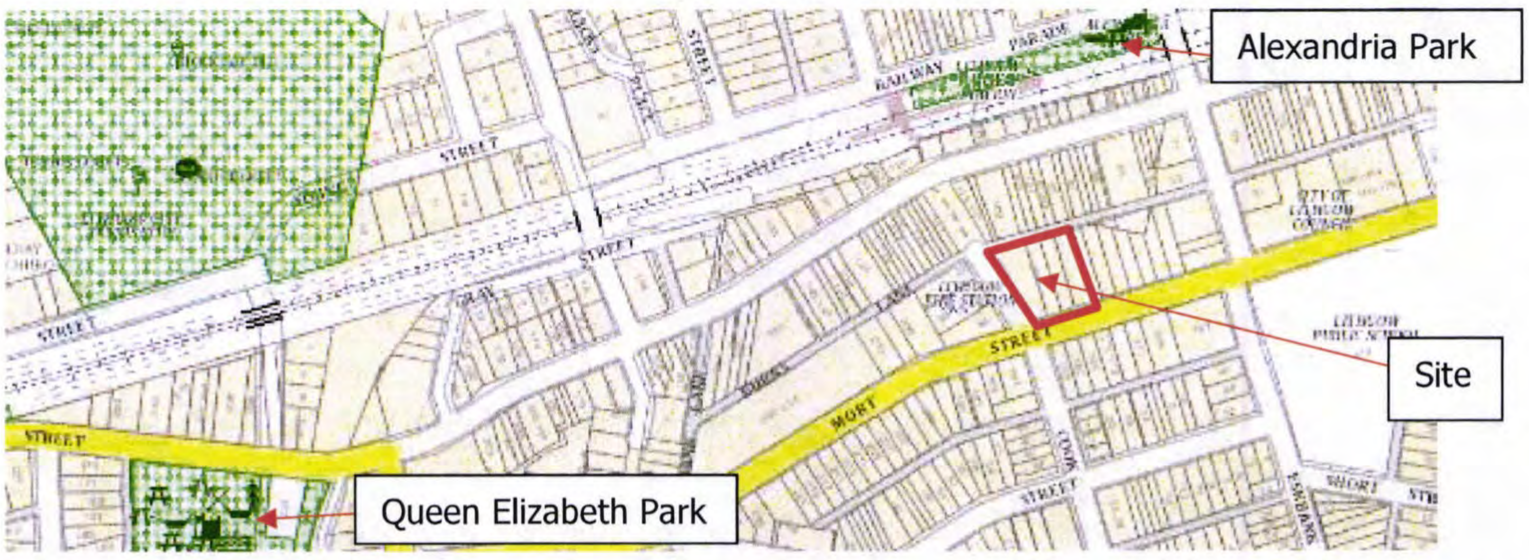
proponent does not require the use of this clause given that their proposal exceeds RMS requirements anyway.

Therefore, the development provides ample carparking.

4.7 LANDSCAPING

There is not much easily accessible green space nearby, especially for those with high dependency disabilities. For example Alexandria Park is flat, close by - adjoining the train station - but it only has park benches and a single table with attached bench seating. This is unsuitable for those with a high dependency disability. In addition the park is very exposed and does not have much in the way of shade. The more suitable green space such as Queen Elizabeth Park is some distance away and could need the assistance of a carer. One of the many benefits of the private green space on site would be that it is accessible for those with a high dependency disability.



Below is some information on green spaces impact on the mental and physical health. From study "The importance of greenspace for mental health":

> *Given the current prevalence and costs of worldwide mental ill-health and the concurrent rise in global urbanisation, there is a need for greater interdisciplinary collaboration. It is important to incorporate greenspace into the design of buildings... Green spaces provide vital health services as well as environmental services; they are equigenic, reducing socioeconomic health inequalities, facilitating activity and promoting better mental health and well-being. The integration of biophilic design may provide a cost-effective public health intervention, which promotes the evident positive links between green spaces and mental health.*[9]

Below is some information on green spaces impact on physical healing and pain. From study "Quality Green Space Supporting Health, Wellbeing and Biodiversity: A Literature Review":

> *Physical healing and pain*
>
> *Several studies have demonstrated that access to natural landscapes, through nature experiences or even views of nature, can assist physical healing (e.g. faster surgical recovery and patient healing) and are associated with higher pain thresholds in hospitals (Wolf and Robbins 2015). A seminal research study conducted by Ulrich (1984) found that hospital patients in rooms with a view of a green setting recovered faster from surgery than patients with a view of a brick wall. This may be due to nature serving as a distraction resulting in increased pain tolerance and improved coping (Ulrich 1999), or that exposure to nature reduces stress levels (Kaplan 1983), with higher levels of stress associated with negative health outcomes (Varni and Katz 1997).*[10]

Proposed Landscaping

Unfortunately the existing trees on the site are mainly *Rhus,* a highly toxic, allergy-causing tree. It causes severe dermatitis on contact with skin. It was once commonly planted in Australian gardens

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[9] National Center for Biotechnology Information website: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5663018/
[10] Quality Green Space Supporting Health, Wellbeing and Biodiversity: A Literature Review: https://www.healthyactivebydesign.com.au/images/uploads/Green_Spaces_Evidence_Review_-_FINAL_website.pdf

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because of its brilliant autumn foliage. It became problematic in the Sydney region in the 1980s. A straggly eucalypt has likely seeded beside the building, and a malformed cherry with root suckers completes the tree cover. None of these trees are of any age or significance.

The landscape plan incorporates different types of green space, all of which have sensory elements. The plants and their locations have been carefully selected. The gardens can also provide short term refuge to animals in a bushfire. Another benefit other than sensory stimulation is that there is reduced food cost to residents and reduced waste in terms of lack of packaging.

Some of the benefits of sensory gardens for those with a disability are as follows:

> *...engagement with sensory gardens can allow access to unique sensory inputs, nature and sunlight. This can increase sensation or dull hypersensitivity to affected limbs...*
>
> *It allows for a calm and private space for reflection and meditation, as well as family discussion... natural sounds, and the smells of edible and floral plants will influence these calming sensations. Relaxation and the release of any stresses can then convert into physical benefits such as reduced blood pressure.*
>
> *Growing and caring for plants and living organisms, especially those edible and able to be used for cooking, can create new interests which improve happiness and ... overall sense of achievement.*
>
> *Sensory gardens have been proven to decrease fatigue and increase mental clarity... Sense of smell for example, uses stored memory increase neural activity.*[11]

Another benefit other than sensory stimulation is that there is reduced food cost to residents and reduced waste in terms of lack of packaging.

The proposed landscape echoes elements of an English cottage garden which were popular in the 1920's when the building was constructed, and indeed today. Part of the reason for the popularity - especially in the Lithgow area - is that many English plants thrive in the cool climate. Additionally, there is the appeal of having a garden which includes form and function, edible plants as well as ornamental, some of which are both. The other reason that gardening in general was popular in the 1920's, was the notion of a 'victory garden' where private citizens would grow their own food to reduce pressure on the public food supply during WWI.

The major trees are favourites of Paul Sorensen, the famous landscape gardener who did notable designs and garden construction in Lithgow. Probably his best and most significant design was for Hoskins Church Lithgow. They are deciduous, for sunlight in winter and shade in summer, only losing leaves in one short period in autumn, not all year round like many trees commonly used in development. They would be semi mature at planting time, to give a great impression at time of finishing the site works. This approach worked well with the plantings in the first Main Street works, and also Woolworths.

We have designed elevated garden area which is an appropriate height for wheelchair users, beside an accessible sealed area with sensory and culinary plants. These beds will include, Chives, Rosemary, Fruity sage, Thyme, Oregano and Nasturtiums. All these plants are edible, decorative, have interesting textural elements, they all flower and have a distinct smell and taste. Meyer Lemon trees line the north side of the beds, Meyers are only 2m at maturity and do not have thorns on branches and trunks like other varieties.

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[11] SAcare website: https://www.sacare.com.au/news/8-cool-benefits-of-a-sensory-garden-in-the-lives-of-people-with-disability

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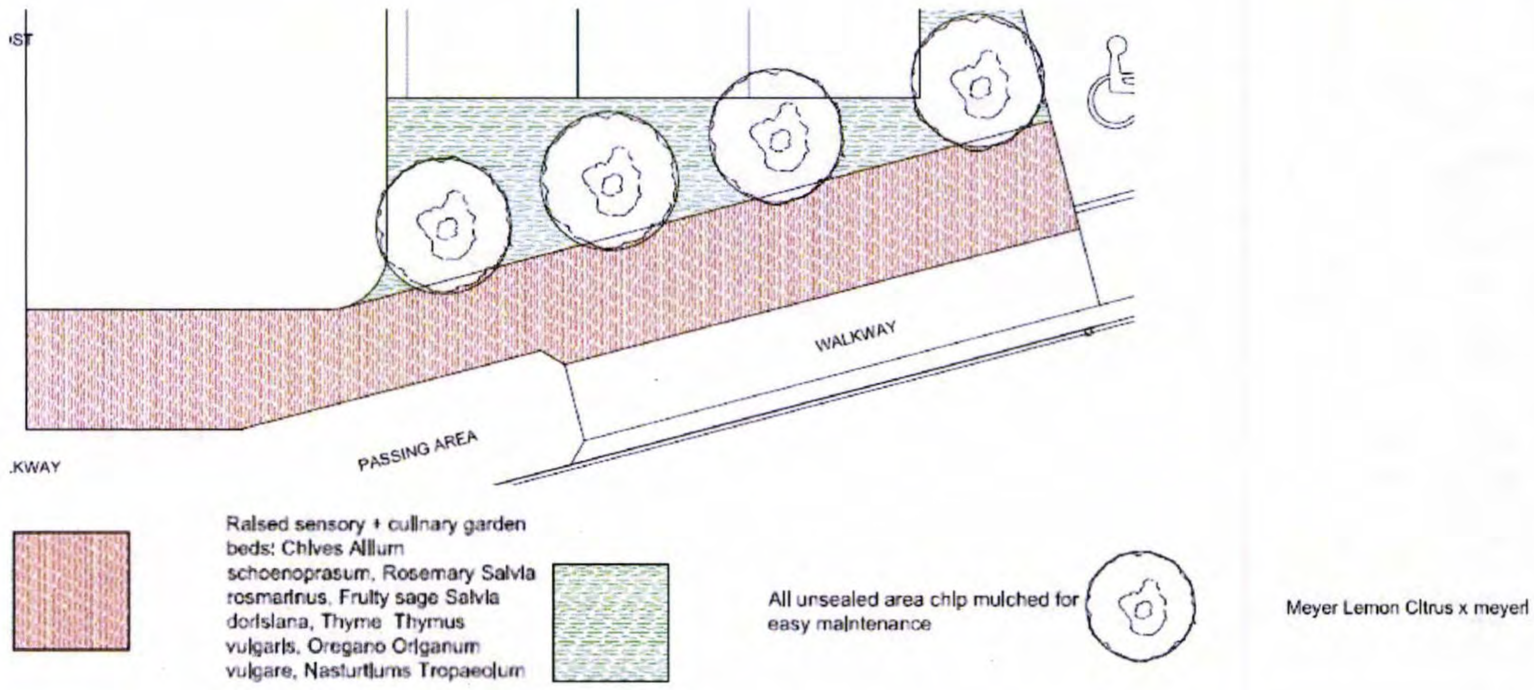

Figure 38: Elevated sensory garden area, lemon trees

A flower garden in the vein of the English cottage garden is located on the west side of the landscaped area. It contains edible flower varieties being Butterfly Lavender, Cornflower, Hollyhock, and Native violet. They are conventionally used on top of cakes and in salads.

Hollyhock are tall and can therefore have been planted behind the other plants and still have the same visual impact. The Hollyhock has been placed along the walls as that is their preferred position. Cornflower is an annual plant - meaning it dies off - but it also self geminates and will come back the next year. As some of the flowering plants bloom in spring and die off in the winter, the Native violet will spread and the Lavender foliage will remain. Lavender lines the pathway, it has calming therapeutic properties, even when simply brushing past or crushed in the hand to release the smell of the oils. The flowers are all attractive cut flowers, therefore their sensory benefits can be extended from the garden to inside the units. Many of these flowers also attract butterflies.

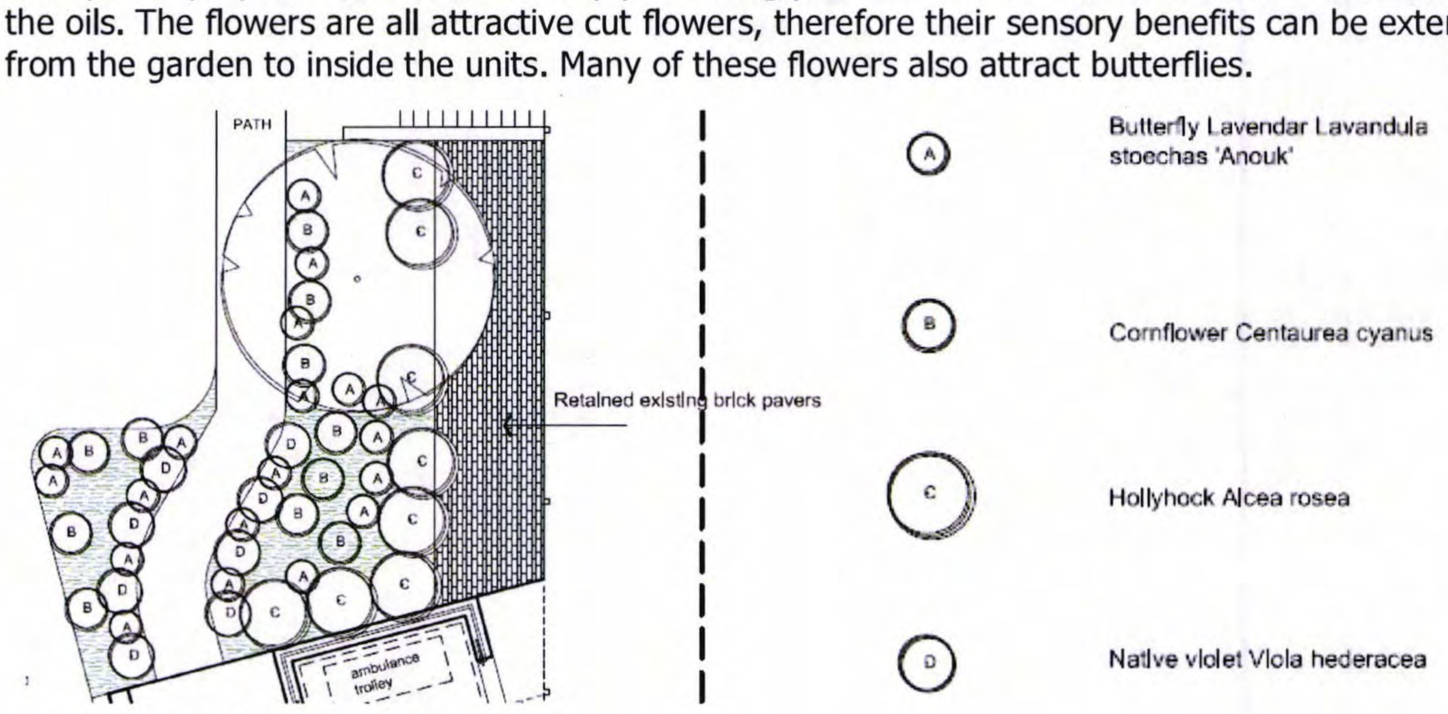

Figure 39: Flower garden

Some pathways are planted with purple fountain grass, an Australian native which grows in clumps and does not spread like lawn grass with delicate soft feathery tips. The grass provides sensory stimulation visually, including through movement and also through touch, as the grass will grow high enough for wheelchair users to touch.

The mature trees proposed –Tulip tree and Flowering ornamental Peach - for the balance of the landscaped area will shade the parking areas as well as some pathways. The trees are deciduous as is appropriate for Lithgow's cool climate, with leaves and flowers blooming in the warmer months for shade, and bare branches in the cooler months to let warming light in. The changes to foliage and flowers throughout the year can provide visual sensory stimulation as well as marking the passage of time.

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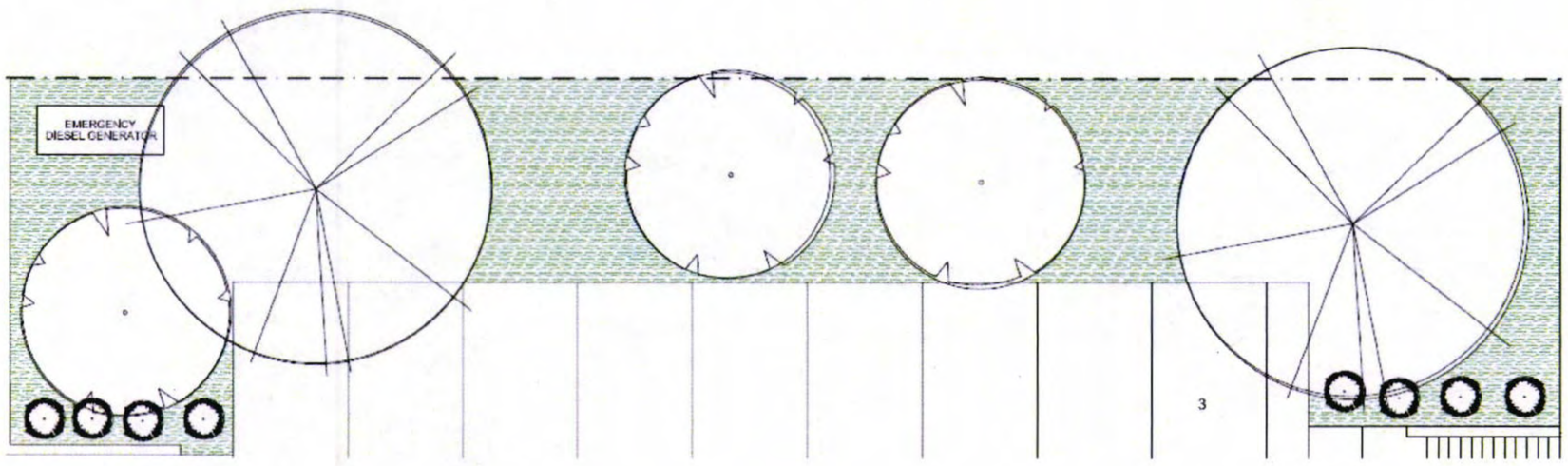
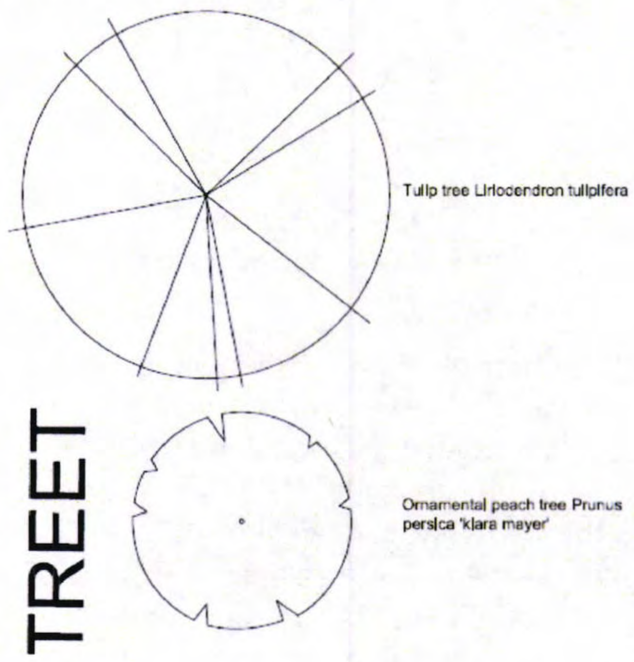


Figure 40: Tree area



Comment:

We consider the landscaping to be most suitable for the site in terms of suitability in a developed urban area, responsive to the heritage values of the building and most of all a sensory delight for the residents and the passing public.

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5 IMPACTS - S. 79C (B)

the likely impacts of that development, including environmental impacts on both the natural and built environments, and social and economic impacts in the locality,

Biodiversity and Weeds

There is little to no formal original landscaping, and environmental weeds are to be removed. The proposed development includes mature trees, already large at planting stage.

Stormwater

The existing site stormwater collection and discharge system will be upgraded as per the details on the architectural and engineering plans.

Streetscape and character

The property is an important part of the existing streetscape and is integral to its character. The proposed development will conserve the existing fabric and improve the quality of its street presentation.

Cultural Heritage

The proposal will have positive impact on the significance of the heritage item. See separate reports.

Landscaping

The landscape of the area will be significantly improved to the benefit of the streetscape.

Bushfire

The subject land is not mapped as bushfire prone on Council's maps.

Services

All services are available.

Wastewater

All wastewater will be discharged to the sewer.

Vehicular access, parking & roads

All vehicles will enter and leave the site in a forward direction.

Amenity

The proposal will have a positive effect on the amenity of the locality as discussed above.

Apart from the statutory requirements of the considerations of the DCP, as discussed above, other matters are considered. The proposed development will have minimal impact on the environment, neighbourhood and locale. The likely impacts of the development are further expanded in the following table.

Context and Setting	The proposed development will be located within an established residential and commercial area and will have no major impact on the context and setting of the area. The development complements existing features of similar development in the area.
Access, Transport and Traffic	Occupation of the development will have no major impact on the traffic, especially given that the access is existing and the suitability of the sight distance can be ascertained easily.
Public Domain	The development will in no manner impact on the public domain.
Utilities	Water, sewerage, drainage, electricity, gas and telephone are available to the site.
Heritage	The site is listed as a heritage item in the 2014 LEP, and is within a conservation area with some heritage items nearby.
Other Land Resources	The development will not impact on the value of the land in terms of agricultural potential, mining, etc. as it is not viable for such.

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Water	There will be no significant impact on water resources.
Soils	The proposed development will have no significant impact on soils. Erosion & sediment control measures will be provided during construction. There is no reason to believe the site would be affected by acid sulphate soil or contamination problems.
Air and Microclimate	There will be no significant impact on air or microclimate.
Flora and Fauna	There will be no significant impact on flora and fauna. Landscaping of the site will provide nesting and feed for small bush birds. The site does not contain any flora or fauna of significance.
Waste	Suitable waste provisions are existing.
Energy	Energy conservation principles have been incorporated into the design and use of the dwellings.
Noise/Vibration	There are no nearby sources of noise or vibration that would impact detrimentally on residents of the proposed dwellings. Noise from Mort St and Cook St will be buffered by noise mitigating measures of curtaining within the building. The proposed development will not cause any noise issues.
Natural Hazards	The site is not bush fire prone. It is not below the adopted flood level.
Technological Hazards	No technological hazards pose a risk to the proposed development.
Safety, Security and Crime Prevention	Satisfactory safety, security and crime prevention measures are proposed in that adequate lighting will be provided to the site.
Social Impact	The proposed development will have a significant and positive social impact allowing new residents into the vacant site.
Economic Impact	The development will have a positive impact on the locale and will not detrimentally affect property values.
Site Design and Internal Design	The site and internal design are considered to be satisfactory, given the proposed adaption and conversion of the existing building.
Construction	The construction involved in the building adaption and conversion will have no adverse effects on the land.

6 THE SUITABILITY OF THE SITE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT - S. 79C (C)

The proposed use of the site is suited to the existing architecture and streetscape. The environmental and social impacts of the proposal are negligible.

Does the proposal fit the locality?	The proposal is considered to fit the locality well.
Are site attributes conducive to development?	The site attributes are considered appropriate for the development.

7 THE PUBLIC INTEREST - S. 79C (D)

The development will have minimal impact on public infrastructure and the surrounding neighbourhood. The development will also not significantly affect any neighbouring properties in terms of privacy, overshadowing or amenity. The proposal will only have a positive effect on the area and therefore be in the best interests of the surrounding property owners and residents.

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8 CONCLUSION

The strongly designed and detailed main brick building has remained relatively unchanged since its construction. The large spaces of the individual classrooms were adapted for various educational uses as needs changed in the technical educational system. Rooms were partitioned off, general in a manner that respected the original finishes and details of the school, with the understanding that those uses would change and different partitioning would be required. This proposal simply extends that internal process.

The additional minor infills to the verandahs will be removed and the original building will shine through. The overall external design and appearance will be restored. Removal of the less significant buildings in the yard will allow for vehicle parking and landscaping while having minimal impact upon the residential uses nor shopping community nearby.

As shown in this Statement, the proposal is permissible within the zone. It also facilitates the conservation of the heritage item. It is reasonably consistent with all objectives and development standards applicable to the site provided by Council. All issues pertinent to the development have been addressed by this report. All issues raised by Council in early discussions have been addressed and resolved.

The building has unfortunately been deteriorating for many years without a use. Support of the development would once again let Lithgow show that it values its heritage and strives once more to be a major urban location. Council's approval of the proposed development is requested.

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9 APPENDIX

9.1 STATE & REGIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Number	State/regional policy	Compliance	Comment
SEPP No. 1	Development Standards	N/A	
SEPP No. 4	Development Without Consent and Miscellaneous Complying Development	N/A	
SEPP No. 6	Number of Storeys in a Building	N/A	
SEPP No. 10	Retention of Low-Cost Rental Accommodation	N/A	
SEPP No. 14	Coastal Wetlands	N/A	
SEPP No. 15	Rural Land-Sharing Communities	N/A	
SEPP No. 19	Bushland in Urban Areas	N/A	
SEPP No. 21	Caravan Parks	N/A	
SEPP No. 22	Shops and Commercial Premises	N/A	
SEPP No. 26	Littoral Rainforests	N/A	
SEPP No. 29	Western Sydney Recreational Area	N/A	
SEPP No. 30	Intensive Agriculture	N/A	
SEPP No. 32	Urban Consolidation (Redevelopment of Urban Land)	N/A	
SEPP No. 33	Hazardous and Offensive Development	N/A	
SEPP No. 36	Manufactured Home Estates	N/A	
SEPP No. 39	Spit Island Bird Habitat	N/A	
SEPP No. 41	Casino/Entertainment Complex	N/A	
SEPP No. 44	Koala Habitat Protection	N/A	
SEPP No. 47	Moore Park Showground	N/A	
SEPP No. 50	Canal Estate Development	N/A	
SEPP No. 52	Farm Dams and other works in Land and Water Management Plan Areas	N/A	
SEPP No. 53	Metropolitan Residential Development	N/A	
SEPP No. 55	Remediation of Land	N/A	
SEPP No. 59	Central Western Sydney Economic & Employment Area	N/A	
SEPP No. 60	Exempt and complying Development	N/A	
SEPP No. 62	Sustainable Aquaculture	N/A	
SEPP No. 64	Advertising and Signage	N/A	
SEPP No. 65	Design Quality of Residential Flat Development	N/A	
SEPP No. 70	Affordable Housing (Revised Schemes)	N/A	
SEPP No. 71	Coastal Protection	N/A	
SEPP (Building Sustainability Index: BASIX) 2004		N/A	

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Number	State/regional policy	Compliance	Comment
SEPP (Housing for Seniors or People with a Disability) 2004		N/A	See report
SEPP (Infrastructure) 2007		N/A	See report
SEPP (Kosciuszko National Park – Alpine Resorts) 2007		N/A	
SEPP (Major Projects) 2005		N/A	
SEPP (Mining Petroleum Production Extractive Industries) 2007		N/A	
SEPP (Sydney Region Growth Centres) 2006		N/A	
SEPP (Temporary Structures Places of Public Entertainment) 2007		N/A	
SEPP (Affordable Rental Housing) 2009		N/A	
SEPP (Sydney Drinking Water Catchments) 2011		Yes	See report
Sydney REP No. 5	Chatswood Town Centre	N/A	
Sydney REP No. 6	Gosford Coastal Areas	N/A	
Sydney REP No. 7	Multi-Unit Housing Surplus Gov't Sites	N/A	
Sydney REP No. 8	Central Coast Plateau Areas	N/A	
Sydney REP No. 9	Extractive Industry (No. 2)	N/A	
Sydney REP No. 10	Blue Mountains Regional Open Space	N/A	
Sydney REP No. 11	Penrith Lakes Scheme	N/A	
Sydney REP No. 13	Mulgoa Valley	N/A	
Sydney REP No. 14	Eastern Beaches	N/A	
Sydney REP No. 16	Walsh Bay	N/A	
Sydney REP No. 17	Kurnell Peninsula	N/A	
Sydney REP No. 18	Public Transport Corridor	N/A	
Sydney REP No. 19	Rouse Hill Development Area	N/A	
Sydney REP No. 20	Hawkesbury Nepean River (No. 2 – 1997)	Yes	
Sydney REP No. 21	Warringah Urban Release Areas	N/A	
Sydney REP No. 24	Homebush Bay Area	N/A	
Sydney REP No. 25	Orchard Hills	N/A	
Sydney REP No. 26	City West	N/A	
Sydney REP No. 27	Wollondilly Regional Open Space	N/A	
Sydney REP No. 28	Parramatta	N/A	
Sydney REP No. 29	Rhodes Peninsula	N/A	
Sydney REP No. 30	St. Marys	N/A	
Sydney REP No. 31	Regional Parklands	N/A	
Sydney REP No. 33	Cooks Cove	N/A	
Sydney REP 2005	Sydney Harbour Catchment	N/A	

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