

# Heritage Impact Assessment for Construction of new dwellings 210-214 Main Street Lithgow NSW 2790



**Date:** 16 October 2024

**Heritage ID:** 1961130

**Address and property description:**

210-214 Main Street

Lithgow NSW 2790

Lot 5 DP 19238; Lot 10 DP 131092 & Lot 1 DP 308160

**Prepared by:**

Ray Christison

High Ground Consulting

116 Hassans Walls Road

Lithgow NSW 2790

0419 438609

**For:**

Dean Civil

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## Introduction

High Ground Consulting has been engaged by Dean Civil, to provide a Statement of Heritage Impact for the construction of a new block of residential terrace houses on a vacant block adjacent to the Theatre Royal in Main Street. A Statement of Heritage Impact is required as the property is located within the Lithgow Main Street Heritage Conservation Area (HCA) C07. It is also adjacent to the Theatre Royal, which is located at 208 Main Street, Lithgow.

The cultural heritage significance of the Theatre Royal has been assessed as follows:

*A good representative late Victorian theatre building and one that has served multi purposes as a place of entertainment, a theatre, movie house and concert hall but is also important as a venue for Union matters. Aesthetically an impressive building contributing to the streetscape and an 'entry' to the (sic) Lithgow with its painted façade with classical decorative parapet, large central arches (sic) windows and the 'Theatre Royal' in relief. Associated with persons such as Albert Edward Gledhill who worked at the theatre for 12 years and was well known as a film exhibitor, and with Billy Coleman, a colourful local character, local blacksmith and wrestler, and referee for wrestling matches. Located within the Lithgow Conservation Area.*

The Lithgow Main Street Heritage Conservation Area includes three principal eras of development:

- Late Victorian 1880-1900
- Edwardian 1900-1915
- The Twenties & Thirties 1915-1940

The Cultural Heritage Significance of the Lithgow Main Street Heritage Conservation Area is defined as follows:

*The Main Street HCA provides strong evidence growth of Lithgow from as far back as the mid 1800's through its well-preserved shops, pubs and hotels which have been repurposed over time. The Main Street HCA encompasses the length of main street bounded by Bridge Street and Hassans Walls Road in addition to adjoining streets where there are visual, functional and use connections including parts of Railway Parade, Cook Street, Mort Street and Eskbank Street. This section encompasses the majority of the Central Business District of Lithgow and includes the Cook Street Plaza area.*

This report will address the following:

- Compliance of the proposed development with the guidelines of the Lithgow Main Street HCA;
- Potential impact the proposed works on the cultural heritage significance of the Theatre Royal;
- What measures can be used to mitigate negative impacts;
- Why more sympathetic solutions were not viable.

## Location

The proposed development is located at 210 to 214 Main Street, Lithgow It is adjacent. It covers the following properties:

- Lot 5 DP 19238;
- Lot 10 DP 131092
- Lot 1 DP 308160



Figure 1: Aerial view showing the location of the property. (Six Maps)

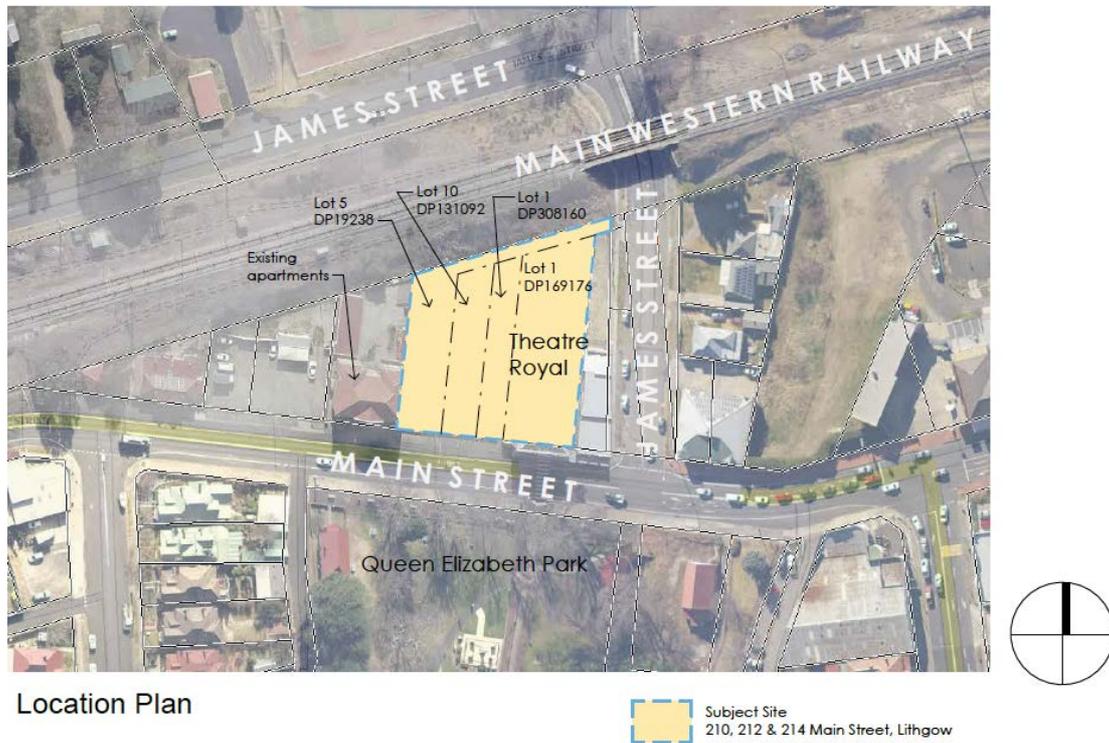


Figure 2: Location Plan. (HavenhallandMatheer Concept Plan SK.00)

### Author of this report

This report was prepared by Ray Christison BA (Hons), historical archaeologist of High Ground Consulting. Ray is an acknowledged expert in the history of the Australian iron and steel industry, the Australian coal industry and the history of Lithgow. Ray is principal heritage consultant to the Australian Rail Track Corporation and Heritage Advisor to Hilltops LGA and Narrabri Shire. He has researched and authored a number of histories of Lithgow and been engaged by various government agencies to research aspects of regional history.

## Description of the site

The site of the proposed development is located on the northern side of Main Street opposite Queen Elizabeth Park. The buildings adjoining the subject allotments were all constructed in the early to mid Twentieth Century and represent three distinct architectural styles:

- Lynton Court - Modernist style flats constructed by Lithgow Amusement Company in 1941,
- Theatre Royal – Inter-War Free Classical style,
- Gang Gang Gallery (former Café) – Art Deco style. Possibly constructed in the 1920s.



View west along Main Street showing the Gang Gang Gallery, Theatre Royal and Lynton Court. The development site is located between the Theatre Royal and Lynton Court. (Ray Christison 12.10.2023)



View north across Main Street to the development site. (Ray Christison 12.10.2023)



View west along the Main Street frontage showing the partially collapsed retaining wall. (Ray Christison 12.1.0.2023)



View south across the development site towards Main Street. The trees are in Queen Elizabeth Park. (Ray Christison 12.1.0.2023)

## Conservation Policies

All work should be undertaken in accordance with the principles of the Burra Charter, which guides all cultural heritage management practices in Australia. It establishes the following principles for the management of heritage places, including heritage buildings:

### *Burra Charter Hierarchy of interventions*

The Burra Charter recommends the following hierarchy of interventions in the management of heritage places:

- *Conservation* is the preferred option. *Conservation* means all the processes of looking after a *place* so as to retain its *cultural significance*. It generally involves taking efforts to retain the existing fabric of the place or building.
- *Maintenance* means the continuous protective care of the *fabric* and *setting* of a *place*, and is to be distinguished from repair. Repair involves *restoration* or *reconstruction*.
- *Preservation* means maintaining the *fabric* of a *place* in its existing state and retarding deterioration.
- *Restoration* means returning the existing *fabric* of a *place* to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by reassembling existing components without the introduction of new material.
- *Reconstruction* means returning a *place* to a known earlier state and is distinguished from *restoration* by the introduction of new material into the *fabric*.
- *Adaptation* means modifying a *place* to suit the existing use or proposed use.

The fundamental principle is to do as much as necessary, as little as possible.

## Lithgow Main Street Heritage Conservation Area

The property is located within the Lithgow Main Street Heritage Conservation Area. The Important Values of this HCA are defined within the Lithgow DCP 2021 as follows:

- The most significant feature of Lithgow's Main Street is the visual strength, unity and extensiveness of its historic architectural fabric which not only has considerable potential for physical restoration/reinstatement to its earlier lively character.
- The architectural character of the street has a notable harmony despite the variety of periods and styles, this being due to the fact that many buildings were erected in a relatively short period of times and the fact that even where of different periods their architectural characters share a number of important characteristics including masonry wall construction, use of parapets, sharing of a common repertoire of building forms and the use of vertically proportioned timber framed windows.

The Objectives of the HCA are as follows:

1. To retain and where possible to recover and enhance the heritage attributes of the precinct.
2. To ensure the consistency of building form and scale to add interest and rhythm to the street view.
3. To ensure that any infill development respects the consistency of built form, materials and detailing of the original shops in the precinct.
4. To ensure new shop fronts are traditional in their form.
5. To locate the majority of parking space outside of Main Street.
6. To encourage the reuse and adaption of existing buildings.

The HCA Controls include specific guidance relevant to the proposed development:

- **Street Alignment and Setbacks** - Alignment of building fronts to the street and consistency of alignments with adjacent buildings to ensure harmony within the streetscape.
- **Building Height** - Building height should be consistent and harmonious with existing patterns.

- **New Materials** - New materials should relate to the existing range of materials in the locality.
- **Building Form**
  - Building form should relate to the context with adjacent contributory buildings.
  - New work should retain a simple form with detailing that is consistent with contemporary building but using traditional material types and approaches to design.
- **Roofs** - The use parapets is an overriding character of the precinct and is appropriate for new development.
- **Infill Development** – New development should;
  - Follow existing development patterns.
  - Not cut and fill bench sites but rather set floor levels above ground level and seen in existing buildings.
  - Not be dominated by garages or roadways.
  - Integrate with the existing landscape.
  - Comply with other controls.
- **Subdivision and Site Amalgamations** - New boundary alterations are not to obscure or degrade the existing subdivision pattern or streetscape.

### Archaeology - unexpected finds

The following protocols should be observed during excavation and in the case of the unanticipated discovery of substantial potentially significant relics:

- **Unanticipated discovery of substantial or potentially significant relics.** The unanticipated discovery of substantial or potentially significant relics should be reported immediately to a designated archaeologist. Work should cease in the affected area until it can be inspected and recorded by the archaeologist. Note: Section 146 of the Heritage Act 1977 states that the accidental discovery of relics should be reported immediately to the NSW Heritage Office (Heritage Act 1977, section 146).
- **Identification of Aboriginal artefacts.** The identification of any Aboriginal artefacts, or deposits likely to contain Aboriginal artefacts, during the archaeological investigation or otherwise, will be reported to the Director General of the NSW Office of Environment & Heritage (National Parks & Wildlife Service) and the relevant permits should be obtained under section 91 of the National Parks and Wildlife Service Act 1974.

## Proposed works and guidelines

Dean Civil has engaged Haven and Mather Architects and Planners to design a block of four terrace dwellings to be constructed on the subject property. This group of structures has been designed to reflect the character of surrounding buildings and the Lithgow Main Street Heritage Conservation Area (HCA). The following design characteristics are consistent with the context:

- Building frontages aligned to the Main Street property boundary,
- Buildings designed to provide shared access from James Street along the northern boundary,
- Materials, style and form to be consistent with the general character of the Main Street HCA.
- Building heights consistent with adjacent structures.



Figure 3: Site plan and proposed layout of the terrace dwellings. (HavenandMather Concept Design SK.02)



Figure 4: Proposed south elevation of the terrace dwellings. (HavenandMather Concept Design SK.05)

## Heritage Impact Assessment

### Matters for consideration

The following issues have been considered in relation to the proposed works and relevant assessments provided.

Matter considered	Assessment
Do the proposed works include removal of unsympathetic alterations and additions?	The new dwellings will be constructed on a former carpark. This site is sealed with asphalt and retains some remnant footings of former residential buildings. Retaining walls along Main Street boundary of the blocks are collapsing and unsafe. The This site is currently unsightly and detracts from the presentation of the Theatre Royal. The new development will fill a gap in the streetscape and remove this unsightliness.
Do the proposed works affect the setting of the heritage item, including views and vistas to and from the heritage item and/or a cultural landscape in which it is sited? Can the impacts be avoided or mitigated?	The new development will take place adjacent to the western wall of the Theatre Royal. This wall has no window openings and no significant vistas. The new building will be approximately two metres from the Theatre Royal. The impact on views to the Theatre Royal from the west will be insignificant.
Are the proposed works part of a broader scope of works?	No.
Are the proposed works to a heritage item that is also significant for its Aboriginal heritage values?	Not applicable.
Has the applicant checked if any other approvals or a separate process to evaluate the potential for impacts is required?	Yes.
Do the proposed works trigger a change of use classification under the National Construction Code that may result in prescriptive building requirements?	Not applicable.
If the proposed works are to a local heritage item, are the requirements of the development control plans or any other design guidelines that may apply to the site considered?	The proposal complies with the requirements of the Lithgow Development Control Plan 2021 (DCP), particularly the guidelines included in Part 4 of the DCP.
Will the proposed works result in adverse heritage impact? If so, how will this be avoided, minimised or mitigated?	The works will have no direct impact on the Theatre Royal but will have some minor impact on its setting. It expected that this impact will be largely positive.

### Alterations and additions

Matter considered	Assessment
Do the proposed works comply with Article 22 of the <i>Burra Charter</i> , specifically <i>Practice note article 22 – new work</i> ?	The proposed design of new works on this property has been considered and it is recommended that it meets the requirements of Article 22 of the Burra Charter in the following ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The assessed significance of the HCA focuses on the character of the Main Street precinct created by development in the periods prior to 1940. Every effort will be made to ensure the new development reinforces elements of character and objectives of the HCA.</li> </ul>

Matter considered	Assessment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposed new construction has been planned to sit comfortably within the existing streetscape. It will have no direct impact on adjoining properties.</li> <li>• The setting of the streetscape will be maintained by ensuring consistency with the dominant scale and setbacks of neighbouring buildings.</li> </ul> <p>The proposed materials and style of the new dwellings make them readily identifiable as new work. Modern elements are clearly distinct from neighbouring buildings but have been sited to establish a harmony within the precinct.</p>
<p>Are the proposed alterations/additions sympathetic to the heritage item. In what way (eg form, proportion, scale, design, material)?</p>	<p>The proposed new development has been designed to sit within the existing streetscape. Harmony in the streetscape will be maintained through designed form and scale of the dwellings, and their presentation to Main Street. Colours will be chosen to complement the neighbouring buildings.</p>
<p>Will the proposed works impact on significant fabric, design or layout, significant garden setting, landscape and trees or on the heritage item’s setting or significant views?</p>	<p>The proposed works will have no impact on the fabric, design and layout of the Theatre Royal. No significant setting or landscape will be impacted.</p>
<p>How will the impact of the alterations/additions on the heritage item been minimised?</p>	<p>Not applicable.</p>
<p>Are the additions sited on any known or potentially significant archaeological relics? If yes, has specialised advice from archaeologists been sought? How will the impact been avoided or mitigated?</p>	<p>The site is considered to have little archaeological potential.</p>

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