

6 October 2020

12 NOV 2020

Jamie Brennan  
Nominated architect  
six b design  
Via email: [sixb@bigpond.com](mailto:sixb@bigpond.com)

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Dear Mr Brennan,

**Re: Letter of Advice with Heritage Impact Statement with regards to the proposed development of Lithgow Library Façade; at 157 Main Street, Lithgow NSW 2790: (Niche Ref #6014).**

In response to six b design's requirement for a Heritage Impact Statement (HIS) for the proposed modification of the façade of the Lithgow Library building at 157 Main Street Lithgow (the Subject Area), Niche Environment and Heritage (Niche) has completed this Letter of Advice with Heritage Impact Statement, to support a development application (DA) to be submitted to Lithgow City Council.

The Subject Area is located at Lot A/-/DP344745 and B/-/DP344745; 157 Main Street, within the Lithgow City Local Government Area (LGA) and consists of the current Lithgow library building, which has a façade onto the historic Main street of Lithgow. This property was owned by Woolworths Limited during the 1950s, prior to its current use as a library. The building's previous awning and parapet was assessed to be structurally unsound and has been subsequently demolished. The Development Application (DA) that this HIS assesses describes the proposed new façade design for this property.

Niche has undertaken searches of the following heritage registers and listings: *the World Heritage List* (WHL); *the National Heritage List* (NHL); *the Commonwealth Heritage List* (CHL); the (non-statutory) *Register of the National Estate* (RNE); *the State Heritage Register* (SHR); the *s.170 NSW State Agency Heritage Register* (s.170 Register); and the *Lithgow Local Environmental Plan 2014* (Lithgow LEP 2014). Table 1 and show the results of these searches.

**Table 1: Heritage Item LEP Listing Details**

Item Name	Item address	Level of Significance	Item number	Suburb
Lithgow Main Street Heritage Conservation Area	N/A (includes 157 Main St)	Local	C7	Lithgow

The Subject Area is within the "*Lithgow Main Street Heritage Conservation Area*" (Item #C7 Lithgow DCP 2014) which is in the historic centre of Lithgow. This conservation area is listed on the *Lithgow LEP 2014*. There are currently no Development control plans which apply to the Lithgow LGA, however guidance for development related to heritage conservation within this LGA are described on the Lithgow City Council webpage.

This guidance outlines that development must be 'sympathetic' in order to be considered acceptable changes to heritage items. Sympathetic development is explained to be "*undertaking changes to an item or place whilst maintaining its heritage significance*" (Lithgow City Council 2018). To ensure that heritage significance is maintained, Lithgow council requires the preparation of a heritage document (which could be a HIS) when: "*considering changes to a heritage item or to a property in the vicinity of a heritage item or*

place or within a heritage conservation area" (Lithgow City Council 2018). A HIS is therefore required for this DA. Lithgow City Council is the current approval authority for this proposed development.

### **Heritage Impact Statement**

The following points are outlined by the Lithgow Council DCP 2011 as required in a Heritage Impact Statement:

- (a) a statement demonstrating the heritage significance of a heritage item or heritage conservation area, and*
- (b) an assessment of the impact that proposed development will have on that significance, and*
- (c) proposals for measures to minimise that impact.*

### **Statement of Significance**

The Subject Area has been listed as a component of the Lithgow Main Street Conservation Area. The Lithgow Main Street Study, which was completed in 1991 for Lithgow City Council assesses the cultural significance and heritage value of the Subject Area. The range of shopfronts from No.153 to 175, including 157 are described as being of "non-contributory" value, and the following statement was provided in support of this description:

*A group of undistinguished single storey shops, mostly finished with featureless straight edged (or simply gabled) parapets of varying heights in painted rendered or face brickwork, ribbed cladding or as with Woolworths, covered with a large painted sign.*

*The buildings generally detract from the character of the street (because of their scale and poor architectural quality) and, with the exception of 167 which has some two tone brickwork to its parapet, they have little or no significant early detail (either above or below awning detail).*

*The prominent signage to No 153 and especially No 157 are also incompatible with the streetscape's important historic character. (Lithgow Main Street Study, 1991)*

The study recommended redevelopment form most sites with appropriate new infill in accordance with the general recommendations. In order to provide clear direction to new development in areas of heritage sensitivity, Paul Davies Pty Ltd completed a Heritage Areas Review for Lithgow City Council in 2010. The following recommended action was given for development of building façades:

*Many above awning facades as well as some below awning facades (where shopfronts are not used) remain with a high level of intactness. However, many buildings have some level of change to their facade, often comprising infilling of verandahs or balconies; changing window joinery; painting; covering of sections of the early façade; infilling openings with brickwork or other materials. The policy that should be adopted is:*

- 1. Facades of contributory buildings should be retained or recovered to their significant form where the opportunity arises.*
- 2. Original joinery, verandahs, etc should be retained or recovered. Nonpainted surfaces should not be painted.*
- 3. Original materials, where they require replacement should be replaced like for like.*
- 4. Infilled openings should be opened up with matching original joinery.*

5. *Verandahs should be recovered or reinstated.*
6. *Applied claddings should be removed and the early facade form recovered where possible.*

*A key design element of infill buildings is the design of the main facade (and return facades on side streets). New facades should:*

1. *Use articulation of materials to create a predominant vertical pattern and rhythm to buildings.*
2. *Proportion openings to reinforce a vertical rather than horizontal proportion.*
3. *Use traditional built elements and forms such as dry pressed brickwork and modulate facades with devices such as engaged pilasters, recessed panels, shaped parapets, etc.*

In addition, the following advice was given about verandahs, awnings and balconies:

*Street verandahs (usually with posts and often two or more storeys in height) and later cantilevered or hung awnings characterise commercial and retail developments in the precinct. Nearly all original verandahs have been replaced with more modern awnings. The following policies control both new and reinstatement verandahs and awnings:*

1. *Existing awnings should be retained to provide shelter and protection unless they are to be replaced by reconstruction of earlier known verandahs or awnings.*
2. *Key heritage buildings, such as corner buildings or visually prominent buildings that had street verandahs should as a priority have those verandahs reinstated. Associated work such as reinstating doors from upper floors should also take place.*
3. *Replacement verandahs should be based on accurate research and design.*
4. *New elements need to comply with structural codes that may require self-supporting structural elements.*
5. *Awnings or verandahs on new infill buildings should be provided to development fronting streets. commercial the design should be compatible with the character of the new building and the setting.*

### ***Nature of the Proposed Development and Impacts***

The proposed development consists of a new façade which uses materials which are in keeping with the industrial nature of Lithgow's heritage. The existing entry doors and west street windows will be retained, and the fibre-cement cladding removed and replaced with CorTen material, with brick veneer being used to rebuild the side of the facade. The Library parapet and signage has been redesigned to ensure a rhythm and proportionality with the heritage structures along the Main Street visual catchment. The awning will be reinstated with supporting posts which match the recent upgrades elsewhere in Main Street. The design drawings and perspectives provide more detailed information and are provided below as Attachment A.

These changes will remove some original fabric of this structure, as well as modifying the materials, form and aspect of the awning, signage and parapet of the original structure. The streetscape and visual catchment of heritage items along Main Street will be altered by the development of this structure's replacement façade. There is a possibility that a new façade could be considered an intrusive element, or physically overshadow the existing nearby structures. This could irreparably alter the character of the surrounding heritage conservation area. the representativeness of the Main Street Conservation Area could be harmed by the introduction of unsuitable materials and designs. In order to mitigate the potential for any negative impacts, the proposal put forward by six b design has incorporated measures which curtail these impacts.

**Mitigative Measures to minimise Impacts to Heritage Value.**

The NSW Guideline *Statements of Heritage Impact* (NSW Heritage Manual) suggests several key questions which outline the severity of potential impacts to heritage items, as well as the effectiveness of any proposed mitigative measures. However, while 157 Main Street is within a heritage conservation area, it is not listed as a heritage item, and is considered a neutral or non-contributory element. Therefore, the standard questions are not suitable to discuss the impacts caused by development of this item, which will mainly affect those structures of heritage significance nearby. The following questions and responses for the proposed 157 Main Street development in Table 2 provide a discussion of the proposed design on the streetscape of Main Street:

**Table 2: Heritage Impact Questions and responses**

Potential Impacts to Heritage Significance:	Responses for 157 Main Street development
New Façade design and form is not the original form of the building or is potentially an intrusive element?	As the original façade was considered to not contribute to the heritage value of the streetscape, a new design was preferred. The shape of the new façade references the shapes found on heritage structures along Main street, but the parapet does not seek to reproduce older designs. The new awning with supports similar to elsewhere in Main street developments provides commonality with the character of the street. The new design will retain the major structural elements of windows and doors and will restore the glass panel window of the current library to its original form.
Materials chosen for the design are not original or are potentially intrusive?	The materials chosen for the design are not the same as the intrusive materials of the original 1950s structure, which are intrusive elements which detract from the character of the street. These modern materials reference elements of Lithgow’s industrial heritage, while not detracting from the heritage structures nearby. The new materials also do not attempt to engage in modern reproduction of heritage structures and building techniques.
The prominent location on Main Street and the new design could dominate the existing heritage structures?	The design is muted in form and while attractive does not seek to dominate the surrounding streetscape. The shape of the parapet and overall design of the new façade references the surrounding heritage structures whilst blending into the modern design trope which the continued redevelopment of Main Street is expounding. The socially significant purpose of this building as a public library further mitigates any attention which the new design of signage or façade draws.
The overall streetscape will suffer a loss of heritage value from the development?	The overall streetscape has several structures with heritage significance interspersed by structures of neutral or negative heritage value. These non-contributory facades, including the former façade of 157 Main Street, are characterised by several iterations of design without reference to aesthetic or social value, or heritage significance. Most have no connection with original forms which could contribute any value or understanding to the history or significance of Main Street to Lithgow’s history.  The new façade is required as the old façade is no longer in place – after it was considered structurally unsound and the awning and parapet removed. This design will provide a positive enhancement to the neutral structures which have dominated this streetscape, while not overshadowing the structures which contribute heritage value to Main Street. The Lithgow Main Street Conservation Area will benefit from the design and renovation of this structure’s façade.

### **Summary of Impacts**

The design of the proposed new façade for Lithgow Library, 157 Main Street Lithgow will not have a detrimental impact on the heritage value of the Subject Area, or the Lithgow Main Street Heritage Conservation Area.

The design will enhance the existing structures by adding additional utility and continued use to this structure, while providing a modern, and respectful alternative to the neutral and intrusive elements which previously existed at this site. The design and the materials selected are in keeping with the original streetscape while not seeking to provide an insincere reproduction of either the original intrusive fabric, or heritage building methods which did not form a part of this structure's history.

The heritage value of this conservation area largely resides in the frontage and general streetscape of which 157 Main Street is a contributing part. This streetscape is hampered by the several neutral or intrusive facades which are interposed between those of heritage significance. The streetscape will not suffer a loss of heritage value by the proposed development. Rather the materials chosen will provide a modern but respectful enhancement which will be a positive contribution to the streetscape as a whole.

### **Recommended actions**

Based on the above analysis, the following recommendations have been developed:

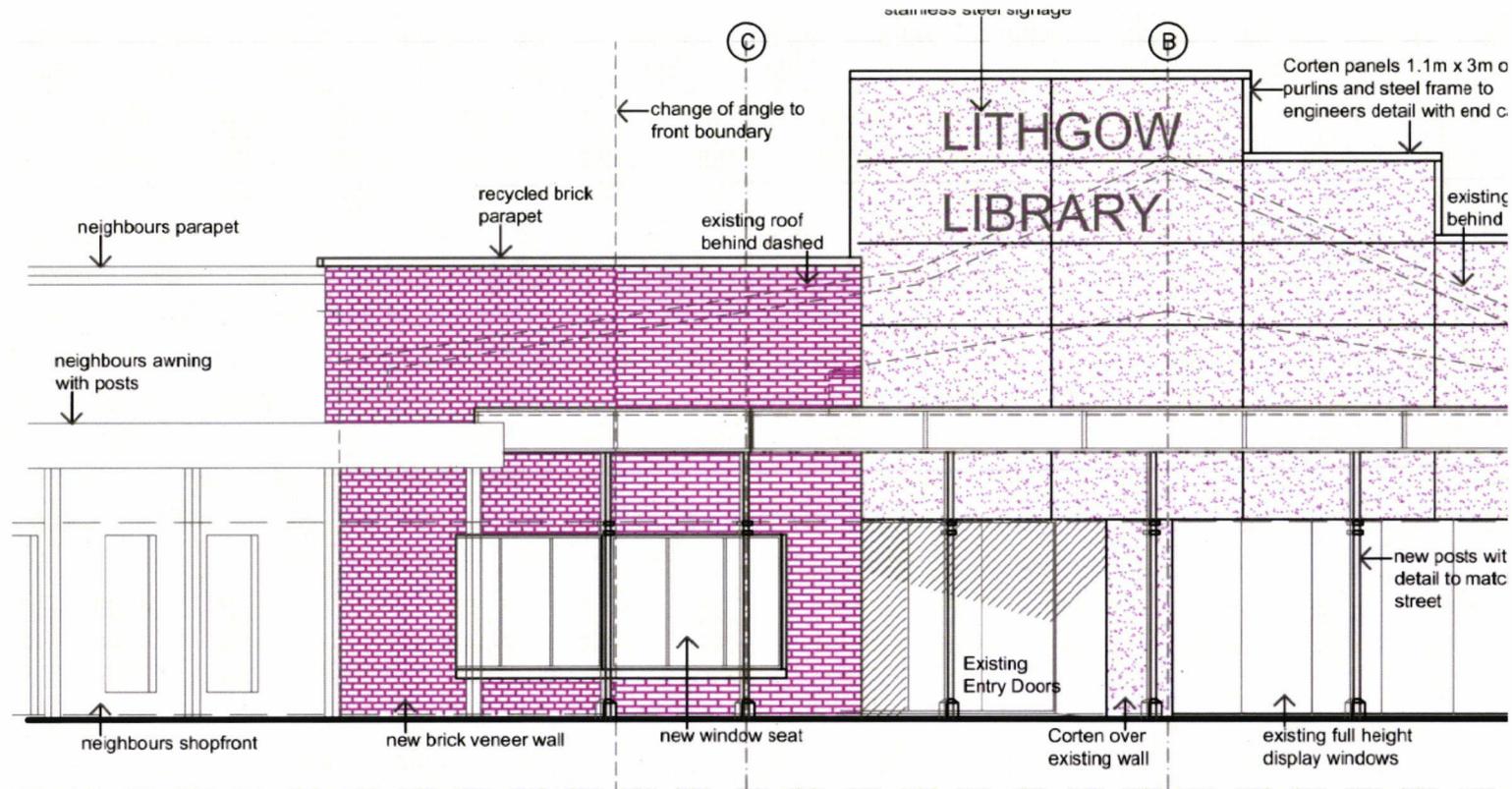
- That this design complies with the requirements set out for heritage development in the documentation approved by Lithgow Council and the principals set out in the Heritage Act 1977 and the Burra Charter. Therefore, that this Letter of Advice with HIS should be submitted in support of the development application for this proposed development;
- That the proposed development be undertaken with caution to ensure that the original fabric of the structure is preserved where possible, and that the choices of material, paint and design made during this construction are made to enhance, where possible, this original fabric;
- That, in the event that unexpected archaeological finds are made during construction, that work is halted, and the finds are immediately reported to Specialist Services: Heritage NSW and Lithgow City Council, and their advice is followed.

Yours sincerely,



Samuel Ward  
Heritage Consultant  
Niche Environment and Heritage

**Attachment A: Detailed design drawings and perspectives for the proposed development at 157 Main Street, Lithgow.**



North Elevation - Main Street

**NOTES:**

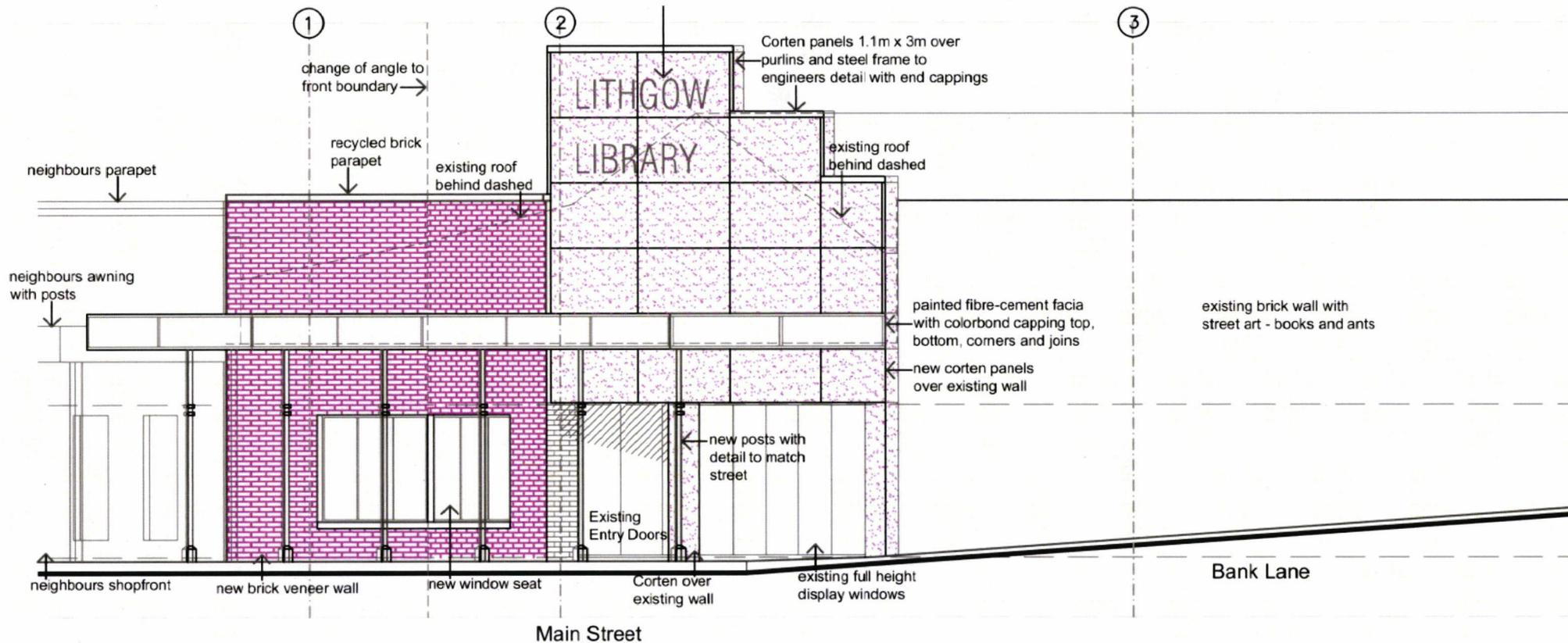
- DO NOT SCALE DRAWINGS. USE FIGURED DIMENSIONS ONLY. CHECK & VERIFY LEVELS AND DIMENSIONS ON SITE PRIOR TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF ANY WORK, THE PREPARATION OF SHOP DRAWINGS OR THE FABRICATION OF COMPONENTS
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# Lithgow Library

157 Main Street, Lithgow  
Lot A & B, DP 344745

drawing title:

**North  
Elevation**



West Elevation - Bank Lane

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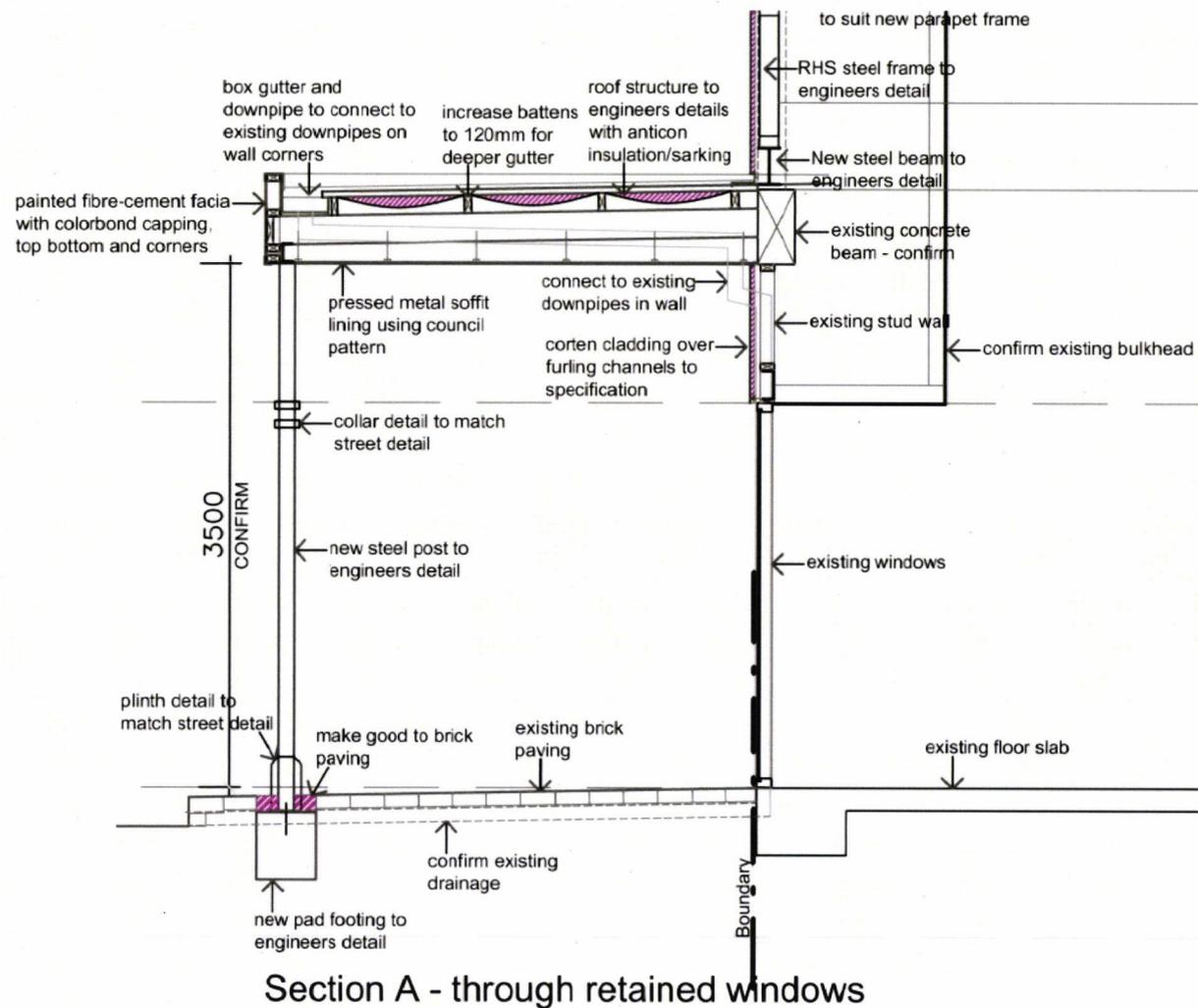
# Lithgow Library

157 Main Street, Lithgow  
Lot A & B, DP 344745

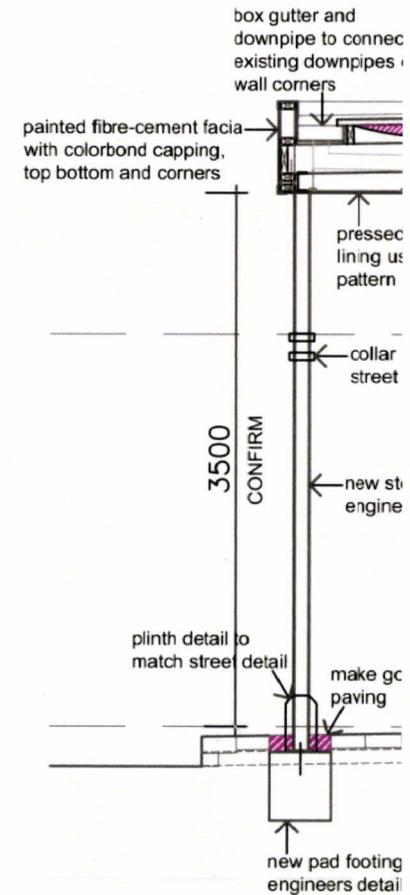
drawing title:

**West  
Elevation**





Section A - through retained windows



Section I

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# Lithgow Library

157 Main Street, Lithgow  
Lot A & B, DP 344745

drawing title:  
**Sections**

# IMAGES



AERIAL VIEW





(1)

**Main Street, Lithgow, looking east.**

Library on the right, with signage pylon, façade and awning  
(Before demolition)



(2)

**Main Street, Lithgow, looking west.**

(Before demolition)



(3)

Signage pylon, parapet and awning before demolition (September 2019)



(4)

After demolition (December 2019)

**Attachment B: LEP Curtilage Map showing the Lithgow Main Street Conservation Area (#C7)**



# Lithgow Local Environmental Plan 2014

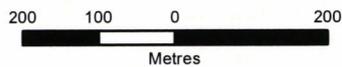
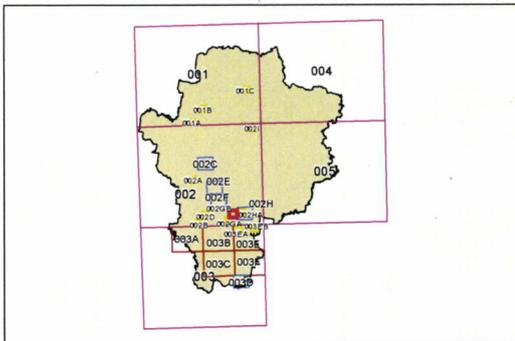
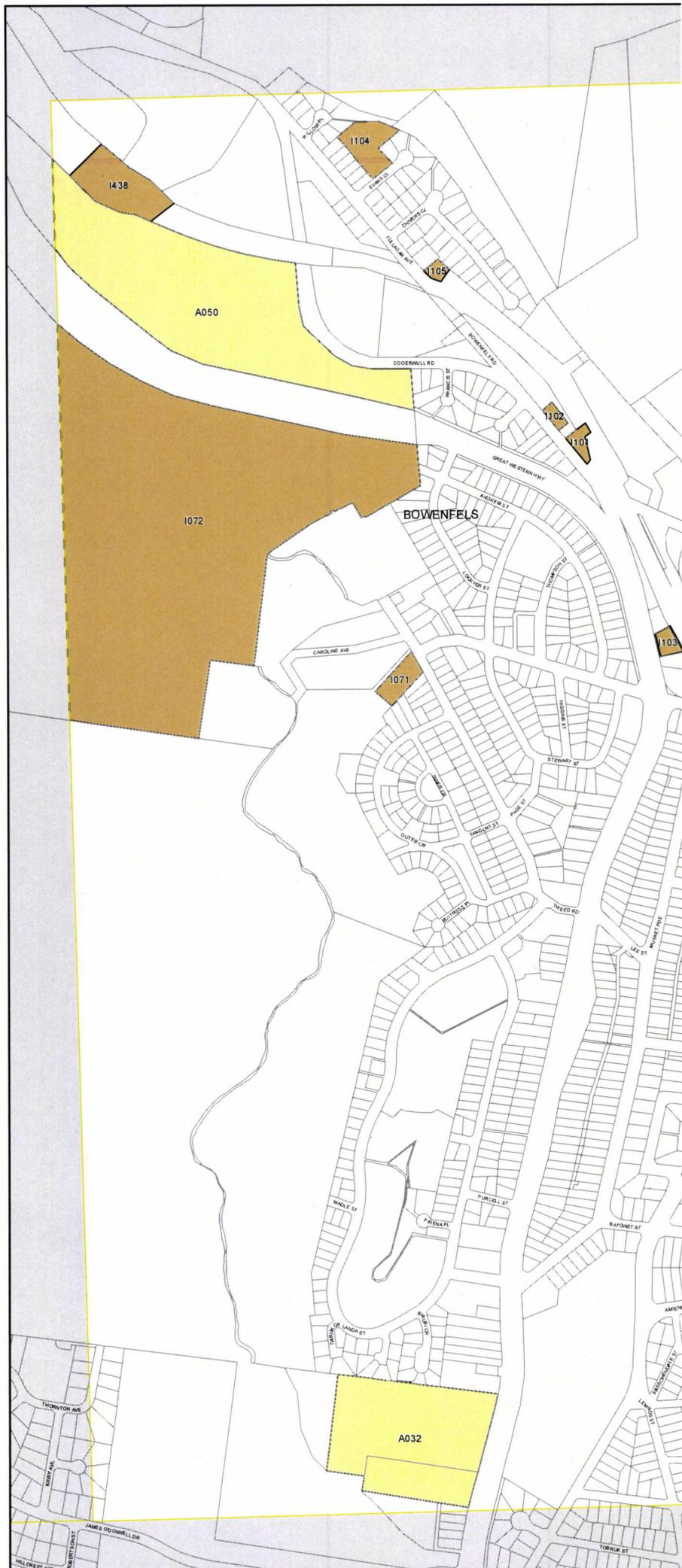
## Heritage Map Sheet - HER\_002GB

### Heritage

- Conservation Area - General
- Item - General
- Item - Archaeological

### Cadastre

- Cadastre 16/04/2013 © Land and Property Information (LPI)



Projection: GDA 1994  
MGA Zone 56

Scale: 1:10,000 @ A3