

**HERITAGE COUNCIL OF NSW
MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING**

Meeting Number 349

1st July 2009

Heritage Branch
Department of Planning
Parramatta



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- PRESENT** Gabrielle Kibble (Chair), Tom Gellibrand (Department of Planning), Russell Couch (for Director-General Department of Environment and Climate Change), Tina Jackson, Danny Chapman Julie Bindon, Peter Mould (Government Architect), Rosemary Annable, Petula Samios (for Director General, Department of Planning), John Neish
- APOLOGIES** Sharon Sullivan (Deputy Chair), David Logan, Ross Fitzgerald
- ALSO PRESENT** Michael Clarke (SHR Committee)
Heritage Branch Staff: Tim Smith, Cameron White, Colleen Klingberg

1. Opening – Welcome

The Chair opened the meeting at 9.00am.

1.2 Confirmation and Timing of Agenda

The agenda was confirmed.

1.3 Declarations of Interest

Pecuniary Interests	Nil
Non Pecuniary Interests	Nil
Conflicts of Interest	Nil

2.0 Matters for Consideration and Decision

2.1 M.V. Baragoola – Recommendation to de-list

The members received a report on the recommendation to de-list the Ex-Manly Ferry, "*mv Baragoola*". The vessel currently moored at Coal Loader Wharf, Waverton, is a double ended steel-hulled diesel electric former Manly ferry. The vessel is currently owned by the 'They Group' Pty Ltd.

Tim Smith provided the members a presentation on the history of the vessel, the condition reports received and submissions received following the advertisement of the Intention to Consider De-listing. New members were also advised of previous discussions and decisions from Heritage Council meetings. The presentation also included information on comparative vessels such as *mv North Head* and the State Heritage Register listed *South Steyne*.

Members were advised that the present owner of the *mv Baragoola* historic ferry has written to the Heritage Branch to seek Heritage Council consideration to de-list the vessel from the State Heritage Register (9 April 2009). The owner's representative, Adrian Thompson ("They Group" Pty Ltd.) purchased the vessel in November 2008 and contends that the vessel is beyond salvation and no longer warrants listing as an item of State heritage significance, due to its poor condition and lack of integrity.

Following this request, an Intention to consider de-listing was advertised for comment for 14 days: 16 May 2009 to 1 June 2009. The advertising period was extended for a further 3 weeks until 22 June 2009 (5 weeks total). Letters were issued to all known stakeholders and notices published in the Sydney Morning Herald, Daily Telegraph, and Manly Daily newspapers.

A visual inspection by the Heritage Branch in December 2008 confirmed the deteriorated condition of the vessel. This report was substantiated by an independent professional naval surveyor's assessment conducted in February 2009 by Boat Check. This condition survey was instigated at the request of the Heritage Council and funded by the Department. Importantly, the report identifies that significant new replacement work (in the vicinity of 65% of original fabric) may be required of the hull, decks and upper works, to maintain a seaworthy and stable condition. This is considered a conservative estimate and does not include the below deck machinery and plant items which are also in an advanced state of deterioration and no longer operable, nor areas of structure not visually accessible. The vessel was previously converted to a 'dumb barge' (unpowered) with removal of propellers and sealing of shafts.

Members also received a copy of a peer review report prepared by P.J.P. Marine on the condition survey by Boat Check. The P.J.P. Marine report also funded by the Department, advised that the Boat Check report is seen as a present condition report of the vessel and does clearly demonstrate that the vessel is in poor condition. It also advises that whilst the report does cover the overall condition of the vessel's hull, deck and machinery systems on the vessel, it also provided a brief past history of its operation of the vessel as a Sydney ferry.

P.J.P. Marine concluded that the Boat Check report provided information that they in agree with and fully support the view that this vessel is presently in imminent danger of sinking at its berth. P.J.P. Marine concurs with the assessment by Boat Check and therefore advises that immediate action is required to determine the future of the *mv Baragoola*.

Members were advised that the Heritage Branch has identified that de-listing might be warranted due to the advanced deterioration of original fabric and the amount of change that would be required to sustain the item. This could be deemed to affect the original listing on integrity grounds, reducing its State heritage significance. De-listing would not compromise future potential projects aimed at reconstructing the vessel with substantive replacement of materials. It would mean that Heritage Council approvals would not be required for future works, including relocation and rebuilding.

Presentations

The members received a presentation from the present owner of the *mv Baragoola* Mr Adrian Thompson of the 'They Group' Pty Ltd. Mr Thompson advised that he found the *mv Baragoola* on the web for sale, prior to the sale he had a brief meeting with the boat broker on the boat and only had a short time to inspect the upper decks of the vessel. After purchasing the vessel he was able to make a fuller

inspection at which time he came to the conclusion that the vessel is beyond its use-by date.

Mr Thompson advised work carried out previously was mainly cosmetic and to repair the vessel could cost up to \$15 million. Mr Thompson advised that he did not have access to funds to carry out this work and make it a viable business.

Mr Thompson advised that he operates the Port Stephens Ferry Service having four vessels under his management. He also advised that his initial plan for the vessel was to move it to Port Stephens, anchor the vessel in the harbour and utilise it for a viewing platform to watch dolphins. The vessel would have also provided a mooring location for other boats and had the potential to house a shop like kiosk and be fitted out with 15-20 cabins.

Mr Thompson advised that if the vessel was de-listed he would be looking at scrapping the vessel. He has already placed it on Ebay with no real interest – but has not tried a public auction due to the costs involved.

The members thanked Mr Thompson for presenting to the meeting. Mr Thompson left the meeting.

The members received a presentation from Mr Richard Pool on behalf of P.J.P. Marine who carried out the peer review on the Boat Check report. Mr Pool advised that he is a Marine Engineer and Archaeologist, with over 35 years experience in heritage conservation, development and management including adaptive reuse of historic buildings and structures.

Mr Pool advised that the Boat Check report is the result of a visual inspection and is not a record resulting from a marine survey where structural or other deficiencies would be fully detailed. He agreed with the Boat Check in the matter of oils remaining on board and the potential risk of environmental pollution should the ship sink.

Mr Pool advised that he did visit the vessel at its current mooring on the 17th Nov 2008. The exterior of the ship was in a visually poor state, a state that he would understand as being the result of lack of any recent maintenance. The steel hull was clearly showing signs of deterioration with metal corrosion evident throughout. The state of hull is of concern and indicates a prolonged lack of maintenance that will result in continued and increasing water infiltration and ultimately hull failure. The ship's hull requires urgent attention and without which, there is real danger that the vessel will sink at its berth.

He advised that the current practice of intermittent ship keeping and bilge pump out is unsatisfactory and offers no real protection for the ship especially in the event of a major structural component failure to the ship's hull. Concern also was raised over the possible chemical leakage from failed batteries which would find its way into the bilges where these liquids could stimulate corrosive reactions, possibly form dangerous gases and be a pollutant risk should the ship sink.

As the vessel is not in commercial survey and has not been for some time, the owners are not subject to statutory obligations of a vessel in survey requiring ongoing maintenance to meet certification. A vessel that is not properly maintained will deteriorate and over time will result in becoming a total loss.

In summary Mr Pool advised that based on the reports and observations from his visit in November, his knowledge of the vessel, marine engineering practice and experience in heritage conservation and restoration; that the vessel exhibits hull

deterioration throughout and the vessel is in real danger of sinking at its berth. He also advised that preservation of our maritime heritage is a costly business both in time and money. All heritage projects require a coherent plan that sets out clearly the objective and how preservation is to be achieved. He also advised that the restoration of *James Craig* took over 20 years and at a cost of some \$20M. This was achieved with a detailed development plan, public and corporate support and the contribution of hundreds of volunteers. Mr Pool advised that the *mv Baragoola* is a Heritage Item, very much an important part of Australia's oldest urban transport system. The vessel's conversion from steam to diesel/electric power is a very important part ship building history in Sydney.

The members thanked Mr Pool for his level and balanced presentation. Mr Pool left the meeting.

The members received a presentation from Mr Lance Lyon on behalf of the 'Baragoola Preservation Association'. Mr Lyon advised the members of the following.

The heritage significance of the *mv Baragoola* is that it is the sole remaining Balmain built vessel from Mort's Dockyard & Engineering Company of its type in Sydney. The largely unaltered vessel displays large scale Australian ship building techniques & materials from the 1920's. It is the only remaining vessel in near original "as built" design of six near-identical large vessels built for the Port Jackson & Manly Steamship Co and is a surviving example of the type of vessel that opened up the North Shore & Manly areas in the early part of the 20th century.

Removal of Heritage Listing from the vessel may leave it open to destruction by scrapping or further neglect resulting in the destruction of a unique, remaining icon of Sydney's maritime fabric & heritage and large scale shipbuilding industry, a loss to future generations of our maritime past

In response to the Heritage Council report they feel that the examination of the vessel was cursory without proper investigative procedures and has led the Heritage Branch to believe that restoration of the vessel will require at least 65% of the vessels fabric to require replacement, thus negating the heritage value of the vessel. Without a full "out of water" inspection in a controlled & neutral environment, unaffected by commercially driven requirements, they feel that this cannot be used as the basis for delisting.

The group presented their proposal for restoration of the vessel. They feel that the vessel should be removed from private ownership thus mitigating the chance of destruction for purely commercial gain. In conjunction with the Heritage Council and Marine Archaeologists, a suitable long term management plan should be enacted to stabilise, conserve and restore the vessel to a functional condition. They would develop a business plan sympathetic to the vessel's history and suitable to the future usage of the vessel in both an historic and contemporary interpretation setting. They advised that currently their organisation is discussing the availability of a suitable and sympathetic site to begin immediate conservation work.

The following ideas were proposed for the future use of the vessel: Interpretive centre for Sydney's maritime history; Functional cruising vessel; Floating convention centre with related facilities; Use by community groups; Hospitality facilities or other commercial uses (e.g. office & display space).

In conclusion Mr Lyon advised the members that the role of their organisation and website includes providing a single point of contact for all interested parties (e.g. media organisations, corporate sponsors, volunteers etc). The website allows the

publicising of the organisation and their aims, promoting the vessel in a sympathetic light and keeps the vessel and its current situation in constant public awareness. It also allows coordinated responses to public commentary in relation to the vessel, regular factual updates on the vessel and provides historical information and images of the vessel.

The members thanked Mr Lyon for his enthusiastic presentation. Mr Lyon left the meeting.

The members discussed the reports, submissions and presentations that had been received. The members agreed that the *mv Baragoola* is in a poor physical state and will ultimately suffer a catastrophic failure.

It was agreed that without a major capital injection the vessel may not be viable to restore. However, the members agreed that interested parties require more time to develop a viable business and management plan demonstrating that the vessel could be conserved into the future.

The members agreed to provide time to the interested parties and to review the matter at the October 2009 meeting.

Resolved:

That the Heritage Council of NSW:

- 1. notes the report and presentations received;**
- 2. notes that from the independent advice and review of this advice that the *mv Baragoola* is in very poor structural condition which poses a potential serious risk to the item and the environment;**
- 3. given the historic, aesthetic and social significance of the vessel and the potential risk outlined above, the Heritage Council would like to provide a period of no more than 3 months for those interested in retaining the vessel to develop a viable community / private business and management plan which provides evidence that the vessel can be conserved into the future;**
- 4. requests the Heritage Branch to report to the Heritage Council at each meeting on progress and report back to the October 2009 meeting.**

2.2 Request to Vary a Heritage Agreement - Former Dubbo RAAF Base Dubbo

The members received a report advising that a request had been received from the receivers of the Former RAAF Base at Dubbo for the Heritage Council to not require the relocation and re-erection of two "Igloo Hangers" and two "Bellman Hangars" located on the site, as stated in the current Heritage Agreement.

The members advised that the former RAAF Stores Depot at Dubbo, is a complex of 1940s military storage buildings, is significant as a large and intact example of NSW's participation in the network of military bases that were erected in strategic locations around Australia during World War II.

Members were advised that the Heritage Agreement was negotiated and signed by a previous Minister allowing the retention and reuse of 3 of the 5 large Igloo Hangers on site, and the removal, relocation and reconstruction of the remaining 2

Igloo Hangers off site. The agreement also provided for the relocation of 2 Bellman Hangers and their re-erection.

In addition the agreement provided for the retention of one Bellman Hanger (since destroyed by fire), the retention of a Rabaul Store fronting the Highway, allowing new bulky goods development fronting the Highway, residential development throughout the centre of the site and the retention of some open space.

Development of the site in accordance with the Heritage Agreement has never proceeded.

Receivers for the site are seeking the views of the Heritage Council for the demolition of 2 Igloo Hangers and 2 Bellman Hangars. They maintain that the requirement to re-erect the buildings is onerous and is negatively impacting on the ability to sell the overall site.

Members were advised that the Igloo Hangers are of exceptional significance.

The members discussed the request received and possible future uses for the buildings and agreed that prior to any agreement allowing the demolition of Igloos 4 and 5, the market be tested by the receivers to confirm if there is any interest for the removal and adaptive reuse of the structures. The members also agreed that it is preferred to explore with the receivers opportunities to retain the Bellman Hangars on site as they are the last examples.

Resolved:

That the Heritage Council of NSW requests the Heritage Branch to advise the receivers for the Former RAAF Base Dubbo:

- 1. that it wishes to work with them and any subsequent owner to obtain a commercially viable adaptive reuse for the site which safeguards its long term future; and,**
- 2. that it would consider allowing the demolition of Igloos 4 and 5 where Mentha Korda was able to confirm via an expression of interest to the market that there was no commercial interest in either reusing the structures on site or relocating and re-erecting them off-site; and**
- 3. that retention of the two single Bellman Hangers on site is preferred due to the previous destruction by fire of the double Bellman Hangar.**

3.0 General Business

3.1 Sydney Icons Announcement

The members were advised that Planning Minister, Kristina Keneally MP announced on 28 June that the Heritage Council has been asked to list three major Sydney landmarks on the State Heritage Register. The Queen Victoria Building, Sydney Town Hall and Luna Park will be considered for listing on the State Heritage Register by December 2009.

The members were advised that the Heritage Branch has begun discussions with the owners of the three sites and that reports will be submitted to the Heritage Council at a later date.

That the Heritage Council of NSW
1. note the report.

3.2 Sydney Metro Project

The members asked if there had been any consultation at this stage with the Heritage Branch on the Sydney Metro Project which is a part 3A matter and to what extent. The members were advised that the Heritage Branch had been consulted and at this stage had raised concerns over possible impacts to the State listed Central Railway Station. The project team have also offered to make a presentation to the Heritage Council on the proposal. Members requested that this presentation be arranged as soon as possible.

That the Heritage Council of NSW:

- 1. requests the Heritage Branch to arrange a presentation on the Sydney Metro Project to the Heritage Council as soon as possible;**

3.3 Referrals from Department of Planning

The members raised concerns over the inconsistency of consultation with the Heritage Council in relation to major projects and requested the Chair to write to the Director General of the Department of Planning requesting that in all matters where there are State heritage listed items or other significant heritage issues, that the Heritage Council be consulted early in the process.

That the Heritage Council of NSW:

- 1. requested the Chair to write to the Director General of the Department of Planning to request the earliest possible involvement of the Heritage Council on matters being considered by the Department (including Part 3A) which raise state significant heritage issues.**

There being no further business the meeting closed at 12:00pm.