



HERITAGE COUNCIL OF NSW

OUT OF SESSION MEETING MINUTES – Approvals Committee

Tuesday, 20 February 2024 | 9:00 AM – 10:45 AM

via teleconference

ATTENDANCE

Members

Mr Ian Clarke	Chair
Dr Caitlin Allen	Member
Ms Vanessa Holtham	Member
Ms Julie Marler	Member
Mr Bruce Pettman	Member

Apologies

Dr Nicholas Brunton	Deputy Chair
Dr Danièle Hromek	Member
Mr David McNamara	Member
Mr David Burdon	Member
Mr Frank Howarth AM PSM	Heritage Council Chair / Alternate Member

External Presenters

Ms Lucy Irwin	Heritage Specialist, Transport for NSW (item 2)
Mr Matthew Cameron	Senior Program Manager, Transport for NSW (item 2)

Heritage NSW

Mr Tim Smith	Director Heritage Assessments
Ms Rochelle Johnston	Senior Manager Major Projects
Mr Jakob Ruhl	Senior Assessments Officer
Ms Elizabeth Thomas	Senior Secretariat Officer

1. Welcome and formalities

The Chair, Ian Clarke, opened the meeting at 9:00 AM.

- The Chair welcomed attendees.
- Apologies were noted for this meeting.
- It was confirmed that a quorum had been met.

1.1 Conflict of Interest Declarations

There were no conflicts of interest (COI) declared for this meeting.

2. SHR DECOMMISSION – LITHGOW AREA RESIGNALLING – Section 60 Applications

2.1 Lithgow Coal Stage Signal Box – HMS 5635 and Eskbank Signal Box – HMS 5637

The Committee received a report from Heritage NSW and a presentation from Transport NSW (TfNSW) for two section 60 applications that relate to the Lithgow Area Resignalling (LAR) project (TAHE – Sydney Trains) and have the potential to materially affect the heritage significance of the *Lithgow Coal Stage Signal Box* and the *Eskbank Railway Station Group*.

The LAR project aims to enhance train operations and system reliability by replacing the current life expired signalling equipment with a new signalling system. The two section 60 applications will have cumulative impacts on asset types, such as signal boxes, mechanical interlocking equipment, relay huts, semaphore signals, and overhead gantries.

The *Lithgow Coal Stage Signal Box* is an individual listing, and the Lithgow Yard is part of a broader Eskbank Railway Station Group listing

TfNSW outlined the scope of works, options analysis and impact assessments completed to enable these listings to continue to meet the threshold for inclusion on the SHR with their historic, associative, aesthetic, research, rarity and representative values retained.

TfNSW noted the mitigation measures proposed including preparation of Heritage Asset Maintenance Strategies, Moveable Heritage audits, a Heritage Interpretation Strategy and a Relay Hut Strategy as well as modelling for future operational needs and vibration modelling studies.

The Committee thanked TfNSW for their presentation and welcomed their efforts to achieve good heritage outcomes whilst addressing the operational needs of the Sydney Trains network.

Following the presentation, members discussed the vulnerability and potential for fire risk and vandalism in the rail corridor and emphasised the importance of ongoing maintenance including the need for fire safety measures and the commitment and associated funding required of TAHE (owner) and Sydney Trains (operations) to ensure these significant remnant heritage assets are protected and conserved.

The Committee thanked Heritage NSW for their comprehensive report and positive engagement with TfNSW to ensure the matter was expedited in a timely manner.

Resolution 2024-06

The Heritage Council Approvals Committee:

1. **Notes** the information provided in these papers and the presentation from Transport for NSW (TfNSW) (Tab 2.1 and 2.2A).
2. **Recognises** the need to decommission the signalling system, but considering the high significance and rarity of the items **reiterates** its concerns regarding the long-term management and retention of their heritage values of these redundant items.
3. **Agrees** that Heritage NSW exercise delegation in relation to the two section 60 applications, HMS 5635 (Lithgow Coal Stage Signal Box) and HMS 5637 (Eskbank Railway Station Group),

after taking into consideration any comments about the draft conditions (Sections 8 in Tab 2.1B and Tab 2.2C; Tab 2.1 and 2.2D) and any submissions, subject to:

- a robust and ongoing maintenance plan and condition reporting
- audio visual recording to complement photographic records for both the fabric and social heritage values, and
- options for retention of the Eskbank Signalling System in its entirety and for it to remain intact given its significance and rarity.

4. **Support** the proposed location and design of the new Eskbank Signal Box within the SHR curtilage.

Moved by Caitlin Allen and seconded by Bruce Pettman

3.0 Meeting Close

There being no further items of business, Ian Clarke, Chair, declared the Approvals Committee meeting closed at 10:45 AM.



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Mr Ian Clarke
Chair, Heritage Council Approvals Committee
Date: 5 March 2024