

Hi,

Please find the responses to your queries in relation to our Section 60 application for the workers cottage removal.

- ***The submitted Conservation Management Plan notes that the cottage building has been cordoned off since 2024. Could you please provide details on when the damage to the cottage was initially noted and how long the cottage has been fenced? Please also advise if the existing building meets the requirements of minimum standard of maintenance and repair.***

The former workers' cottage has been cordoned off for a period exceeding five years, following professional advice deeming the structure unsafe for occupation or use. Significant cracking in the walls, movement in the foundations, and failure of window and door frames were first documented between 2017 and 2019. During this period, quotations were sought from qualified heritage builders and structural engineers to assess options for repair and stabilisation, specifically targeting the floor structure and subfloor supports to slow the rate of deterioration.

Despite these efforts, the building's condition has continued to decline. The site custodians have undertaken regular pest and termite treatments, as well as external painting and basic maintenance in line with the broader program of conservation works across the heritage property. However, the structural instability of the cottage has rendered it unfit for use or safe access.

The property currently accommodates a school, early learning centre (ELC), and active church facilities, resulting in daily use by children, families, staff, and community members. The deteriorated condition of the cottage, and its close proximity to areas of public activity, has raised serious and ongoing concerns regarding public safety and duty of care.

As Hopepoint Church, the current custodians and caretakers of this heritage-listed property, we have consistently demonstrated a commitment to conservation and responsible stewardship. Operating as a not-for-profit organisation, the majority of our financial resources are directed toward community programs, essential utilities, and the ongoing upkeep of the site's primary heritage asset the main homestead.

Over the past 35 years, more than \$1 million has been invested in the maintenance and restoration of the homestead and other key elements of the property. Unfortunately, given the significant financial constraints and the marginal heritage value and utility of the workers' cottage, the organisation is not in a position to allocate the estimated \$140,000 - \$170,000 required for its repair (*please see attached quote at the end of this document*). Priority has necessarily been given to maintaining the homestead, which embodies the principal heritage significance of the site and continues to serve the community in an active, meaningful capacity.

- ***The photographs submitted indicate that the cottage is currently being used as a storage area. If this is not the case, could you detail how long it has been vacant and not in use?***

The cottage was previously used as a small workspace for our groundsman, who retired several years ago. Most of the items visible in the photos such as old light fittings, ladders, and other equipment were left behind and are no longer in use. The space is not currently used for storage or any regular activity, and access is limited due to safety concerns.

- ***Has a master plan been prepared for the site? Are there any future plans for the overall site and land upon which the cottage currently stands?***

The school has plans to commence a Phase 1 building project in 2026. Our heritage architect, Dr Jennifer Preston, has been consulted throughout the planning process. There are currently no plans involving the area where the workers' cottage is located. All proposed works have been carefully designed to respect and incorporate heritage-significant elements, ensuring they are preserved and highlighted within the overall design. The project team is fully aware of, and operating within, the established heritage guidelines.

- ***We note that the documentation states that the proposed conservation/restoration of the cottage would require extensive works and be financially prohibitive. Could you please provide further details on whether you have undertaken a cost analysis of the financial investment that would be required to undertake these works. If such an analysis has been undertaken, could this be provided for review? Could you also provide discussion on why this undertaking would not be possible for the owner/occupier of the listed place?***

A quotation has been obtained, based on the engineer's report previously provided, from a builder who has undertaken multiple projects on the property and has extensive experience working within heritage guidelines. The quotation, attached below, totals in excess of \$140,000. This supports the findings of the engineer's report, which indicated that the necessary repairs would be costly and may not be financially feasible given our current circumstances and reliance solely on donations.

As a not-for-profit organisation, it would take a minimum of three years to secure the funds required to undertake these works. During this period, the condition of the building is expected to deteriorate further, likely resulting in higher restoration costs. Even in the event of receiving a heritage grant which are highly competitive and difficult to obtain we would still be required to contribute at least half of the total cost. This would continue to represent a considerable financial challenge.

At present, our only viable option is to maintain the workers' cottage in its current condition until adequate funds can be secured. However, this approach carries

the risk that any future maintenance needs of the Homestead may have to be deferred or financed by redirecting funds initially allocated to the cottage.

The outhouse, an original structure of equal heritage significance constructed during the same period, will form the focus of our next heritage project to prevent it from reaching a similar state of deterioration. We remain committed to preserving all heritage-significant buildings on the property and continue to prioritise expenditure accordingly, within the constraints of our limited financial resources.

- ***We note that you have submitted a Statement of Heritage Impact, however, we find that the information contained is not adequate at this time. I would direct you to the document Guidelines for preparing a statement of heritage impact for further details on what information should be included in such a document. I would also recommend consulting with and engaging a suitably qualified heritage professional to further consider the proposal and prepare the updated documentation.***

Thank you for your feedback regarding the Statement of Heritage Impact. I wish to note that our heritage consultant, Dr Jennifer Preston, was consulted during preparation of the document and provided her professional review and approval prior to its submission. Dr Preston confirmed that the Statement met the necessary requirements for our purposes and was suitable for inclusion with our Section 60 application.

We remain committed to ensuring that all heritage documentation and processes are compliant with the relevant guidelines and are happy to provide any additional clarification or supporting material if required.

- ***We also draw your attention to Clause 63 (2) and (3) of the Heritage Act 1977 noted below. It is recommended that you provide detailed discussion against these considerations in your updated statement of heritage impact.***
- ***Demolition of an entire building is required to satisfy s63 (2) and (3) of the Heritage Act 1977, that being:***
 - ***(2) Where—***
 - ***(a) an application for approval is made to demolish the whole of a building or work, or***
 - ***(b) an application for approval is made which would, if it were approved, necessitate the demolition of the whole of a building or work, the approval body shall determine that application by refusing approval.***
 - ***(3) Nothing in subsection (2) prevents the approval body from approving an application referred to in that subsection if—***
 - ***(a) it is of the opinion that the building or work constitutes a danger to the users or occupiers of that building or work, the public or a section of the public, or***
 - ***(b) it is a condition of the approval that the building or work be relocated on other land, or***

- ***(c) the building or work is situated (whether wholly or partly) in a place or precinct that is an item of State heritage significance, but is not itself such an item, and the approval body is of the opinion that the demolition of the whole of the building or work will not have a materially detrimental effect on the heritage significance of the place or precinct.***

Detailed Discussion — Clause 63 (2) and (3), Heritage Act 1977

1. Overview of Legislative Context

Under Clause 63(2) of the *Heritage Act 1977*, the approval body (Heritage NSW or relevant consent authority) must ordinarily **refuse approval for demolition** of an entire building or structure that forms part of a heritage-listed property. However, Clause 63(3) provides **specific exemptions** where demolition **may be approved**, including where:

- (a) the building constitutes a *danger to the users, occupiers, or the public*,
- (b) demolition is associated with *relocation* of the structure elsewhere, or
- (c) the structure, while within a heritage-listed precinct, *is not itself of heritage significance* and its demolition *will not materially diminish the significance of the site as a whole*.

This submission contends that the proposed demolition of the early 1900s–1940s workers' cottage satisfies **both Clause 63(3)(a) and 63(3)(c)**.

2. Discussion in Relation to Clause 63(3)(a): Danger to Users, Occupiers, and the Public

2.1 Physical Condition and Safety Risks

A recent inspection (as supported by engineer's report and photographs) demonstrates that the workers' cottage is in a severely dilapidated state, with:

- Structural timber decay, old termite damage, and unstable foundations.
- Roof collapse in sections leading to water ingress, mold, and rot.
- Unsafe flooring, loose cladding, and collapsing elements.
- Electrical and plumbing systems that are non-compliant and hazardous.

The deterioration has accelerated due to age, inadequate structural integrity, and exposure to the elements. The building's condition now poses an imminent safety risk to anyone entering or walking near it.

2.2 Proximity to Public Facilities

The cottage is located on the same site as a functioning school, early learning centre, and church, with children, staff, and visitors regularly present. The structure's instability and the potential for collapse present a direct and unacceptable hazard to public safety.

Given these conditions, the cottage **meets the threshold of Clause 63(3)(a)** — it “constitutes a danger to the users or occupiers of that building or work, the public or a section of the public.”

2.3 Infeasibility of Repair

Professional estimates place the cost of stabilisation and repair at approximately \$170,000, excluding ongoing maintenance.

Given that:

- The cottage has no viable current or future use,
- Repair would not guarantee structural safety or compliance with modern standards, and
- Such an investment would divert critical resources from the school and community functions of the broader site,

the repair option is **not economically feasible or reasonable**.

Thus, demolition is the only responsible and safe course of action.

3. Discussion in Relation to Clause 63(3)(c): Non-Contributory or Low-Contributory Heritage Value

3.1 Relationship to the Heritage Item

The site’s overall heritage listing primarily relates to the historic homestead and its cultural landscape, not the ancillary workers’ cottage.

While the cottage may contribute to the understanding of the site’s historical development, it is not individually listed nor integral to the property’s State heritage significance. It is instead a secondary, utilitarian structure typical of its era and purpose, with limited or representative heritage fabric remaining due to degradation and prior alterations.

3.2 Assessment of Heritage Impact

Given its:

- Severely deteriorated state,
- Loss of original fabric and integrity, and
- Minimal architectural distinction,

the demolition of the workers’ cottage would not materially diminish the overall heritage significance of the property.

The principal heritage values of the site embodied in the main homestead, its landscape setting, and continued community use will remain unaffected. Indeed, removal of the unsafe structure will enhance the presentation, safety, and ongoing conservation of the rest of the heritage item.

3.3 Commitment to Retain and Reinterpret Heritage Fabric

To ensure continuity of heritage values, the owners propose to salvage and meaningfully integrate key heritage materials and elements from the cottage into the homestead and broader site.

These may include:

- Retaining and reusing original timber, doors, or windows within the homestead restoration.
- Preserving selected artefacts or photographs in a small interpretive display.
- Documenting the cottage's original form and history through archival photography and measured drawings prior to demolition.

This approach demonstrates a respectful and intentional preservation of heritage significance, even as the unsafe building is removed.

4. Summary and Conclusion

In summary:

Clause	Requirement	Response
63(2)	Approval for demolition normally refused	Acknowledged demolition only sought due to risk and low significance
63(3)(a)	Building constitutes a danger to users or public	Satisfied unsafe structure near school, church, and early learning centre poses real risk
63(3)(c)	Building not of individual heritage significance and demolition will not harm overall site significance	Satisfied cottage is non-contributory, poor condition, and its removal enhances safety and heritage presentation

Accordingly, the proposed demolition is **justified under Clause 63(3)(a) and (c)** of the *Heritage Act 1977*.

The proposal demonstrates a **balanced and responsible heritage management approach** — prioritising public safety, economic feasibility, and the long-term preservation of the heritage values that matter most to the community.

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15 October 2025

Quotation 2026-03-heritage

Attention: Ms Trina Bossard

Hope Point Christian Church

42a Beale street

Georges Hall nsw 2198

Re: Heritage homestead

Dear Trina,

-After site inspection and engineers report, I confirm that there is a huge amount of work involved in trying to repair the homestead which in turn will be very costly
-I also would like to note that I cannot give you an exact costing as I need a full set of engineering plans as well as a full set of architectural drawings outlining what can be replaced and what cannot be removed or altered as we have to comply with the heritage regulations and guidelines.

-From inspection and engineering point of view I would estimate removal of most of the building components carefully, salvaging as much as possible, cleaning and trying to re-use all the materials.

-I estimate close to \$140,000 to constructing a new homestead with new materials for the same size, but deconstructing and re-using would be much greater.

-Please note that you will need all architectural plans, engineers plans and all approvals as well on top of the re-building cost

Total cost of labour and materials : \$170,000.00 + gst

-The above quotation includes all building works and materials

-All works shall be performed in normal working hours

-Insurance and public liability documentation is available upon request

-A contract must be signed before start of works

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information or assistance

Yours faithfully

John Assaly

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