



HERITAGE COUNCIL OF NSW

MEETING MINUTES – Approvals Committee

Tuesday, 2 December 2025 | 1:45 PM – 4:25 PM

Meeting Room 11, Level 11, 4PSQ, 12 Darcy Street, Parramatta

ATTENDANCE

Members

Dr Nicholas Brunton	Chair
Dr Caitlin Allen	Member
David Burdon	Member
Alan Croker	Member
Julie Marler	Member
Bruce Pettman	Member
Sally Barnes	Alternate Member

Apology

Mr David McNamara	Member
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External presenters

Item 3.1 Walsh Bay

Brian Bass	Architect, Popovbass
Kate Paterson	Heritage Consultant, Urbis
Olivia Page	Planner, Gyde
Jonathan Downs	Project Manager, Gallager Jeffs

Item 3.2 Sydney Opera House

Daniel Filetti	Executive Director, Infrastructure & Procurement, Sydney Opera House
Kya Blondin	Executive Director, People & Government, Sydney Opera House
Alan Croker	Heritage Specialist, Director, Design 5 Architects
Laura Matarese	Heritage Manager, Sydney Opera House
Peter Doyle	Statutory Planner, Sydney Opera House

Heritage NSW

Tim Smith OAM	Director Assessments
Rochelle Johnston	Senior Manager Major Projects (<i>item 3.1</i>)
Tempe Beaven	Senior Assessments Officer (<i>item 3.1</i>)
Rebecca Zulaikha	Senior Assessments Officer (<i>item 3.1</i>)
Rajeev Maini	Manager Assessments (<i>item 3.2</i>)

Committee Services

Olgica Lenger	Manager
Linda Bugarin	Policy Officer
Kristina Veljkovic	Graduate

1. Welcome and formalities

Dr Nicholas Brunton, the Chair, opened the meeting at 1:45 PM, welcomed attendees, and delivered an Acknowledgement of Country.

An apology was noted from David McNamara, and it was confirmed that a quorum was present.

1.1 Conflict of Interest Declarations

Item 1.3.1 197 Church Street, Parramatta

- **Dr Nicholas Brunton** – standing declaration of interest.

Item 3.2 Sydney Opera House, handrails on monumental steps – s60

- **Dr Caitlin Allen** advised that she is a member of the Sydney Opera House Conservation Council. Dr Allen has not provided technical comments or held any decision-making role in relation to this project. The Chair confirmed that this does not represent a conflict of interest. However, it was agreed that Dr Allen would participate as an observer and abstain from decision making.
- **Alan Croker** has declared a conflict of interest regarding this agenda item. As an external presenter, Mr Croker will be present during the external presentation part of the item, after which he will exit the meeting. Additionally, the papers corresponding to this agenda item have been redacted from Mr Croker.

1.2 Out-of-session decisions

The Approvals Committee noted the decision from its out-of-session meeting held on 21 November 2025 (Resolution 2025-45), regarding State significant archaeology at 197 Church Street, Parramatta.

1.3 Minutes from Previous Meeting – 30 September 2025

Resolution 2025-46
The Approvals Committee: 1. Confirms the minutes of the previous ordinary meeting (Tuesday, 30 September 2025) as a complete and accurate record of that meeting.
Moved by Julie Marler and seconded by Bruce Pettman

1.3.1 Minutes from OOS Meeting – 21 November 2025 (197 Church Street, Parramatta)

Resolution 2025-47
The Approvals Committee: 1. Confirms the minutes of the previous ordinary meeting (Friday, 21 November 2025) as a complete and accurate record of that meeting.
Moved by Bruce Pettman and seconded by Caitlin Allen

1.4 Matters Arising

Nil.

1.5 Action Report

The Committee noted the action report.

2. Matters for consideration

Nil.

3. External Presentations

3.1 Walsh Bay Wharves Precinct (SHR 00559) – Infill Development, 14 Hickson Road – Pre lodgement comments

The Approvals Committee received a report from Heritage NSW and a presentation from the proponent on the proposed scheme for a multi-level development at 14 Hickson Road, Dawes Point. The proposal comprises a four-storey mixed-use building, rooftop outdoor space, and three levels of basement parking.

The Committee discussed the importance of integrating the heritage buildings with the new infill development to conserve the heritage significance of the former 1914 ablutions block.

Members noted that the proposed communal open space on the roof is out of character with the industrial precinct. They raised concerns about the visual impact and necessity of the rooftop communal space and the lift overrun. The Committee advised that alternative solutions for rooftop design and access should be further explored.

Resolution 2025-48

The Approvals Committee resolves to:

1. **Note** the presentation by Popov Bass Architects.
2. **Support** in principle the proposed infill development at 14 Hickson Road, Dawes Point including the conservation and adaptive reuse of the former 1914 ablutions block.
3. **Not support** the lift to the proposed rooftop garden.
4. **Provide** the following comments to the proponent:
 - a. The Approvals Committee has concerns that the proposed rooftop design will have an adverse impact on the views and industrial character and setting of the Walsh Bay Wharves Precinct ensemble. Options should be explored that complement this significant and rare rooftop vista vantage point from Lower Fort Street.
 - b. Include with any future application:
 - i. A Statement of Heritage Impact that addresses the endorsed CMP.
 - ii. Detailed architectural and landscape plans, including sections and elevations.
 - iii. Visual impact assessment, including photomontages from key viewpoints.
 - iv. A Schedule of Conservation Works for the former ablution block.
 - v. An archaeological assessment.
 - vi. A heritage interpretation strategy for the site and its historical context.
5. **Agree** that Heritage NSW should exercise delegation in relation to the Integrated Development Application for this proposal.

Moved by Julie Marler and seconded by Alan Croker

3.2 Sydney Opera House - Handrails on the Monumental Steps

The Approvals Committee received a report from Heritage NSW and presentation from the proponent to seek preliminary comments on a proposal to temporarily install intermediate handrails on the main section of the Monumental Steps.

Alan Croker left the meeting after the presentation.

The Committee noted that the design of the temporary handrail was well-considered and consistent with the overall materiality of the Opera House. However, the Committee expressed concerns that the installation of handrails would have adverse impacts on the exceptional significance of the site as a World Heritage place.

The Committee requested that alternative non-intrusive options, including sympathetic modifications to existing handrails, be further explored and tested.

Resolution 2025-49

The Approvals Committee resolves to:

1. **Thank** the Sydney Opera House Trust for the presentation to the Approvals Committee.
2. **Note** that the Monumental Steps are rated as being of exceptional significance, having a low tolerance for change, and should be retained unaltered.
3. **Advise** that it does not support the proposal as it would:
 - a. have adverse impacts on the exceptional significance of the Monumental Steps and the setting of the Sydney Opera House as an item of Local, State, National and World heritage significance; and
 - b. be inconsistent with the policies of the Sydney Opera House Conservation Management Plan.
4. **Recommend** that further detailed statistical data be gathered about visitors and patrons using the Monumental Steps (including, but not limited to numbers, age groups, time and behaviour of use) over a minimum twelve-month period, noting that it was reported that modifications have only recently been made to the steps to improve the consistency of their rise/fall and to address misalignment of the treads. The data should be correlated to the number of incidents that occur on the Monumental Steps within that period. This information should inform the level of risk and the need for any intervention on the Monumental Steps.
5. **Recommend** that further nonintrusive options should be explored to reduce risks at the Monumental Steps, and that any initial trial should involve sympathetic modifications to existing handrails.

Moved by David Burdon and seconded by Julie Marler

Alan Croker left the meeting following the external presentation.

Caitlin Allen abstained from voting and attended this item as an observer.


4.0 General Business

4.1 Forward agenda

The Approvals Committee noted the forward agenda.

5.0 Meeting Close

There being no further items of business, the Chair, Dr Nicholas Brunton, declared the Approvals Committee meeting closed at 4:25 PM.



..... Thankyou 😊

Dr Nicholas Brunton

Chair, Approvals Committee

Date: 4 February 2026

