24 August 2018

Richard Arkell
Head of Operations
Meriden Anglican School
10-12 Redmyre Road
Strathfield NSW 2135

REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS – HUDSON LIBRARY FIT OUT FOR MERIDEN SCHOOL, STRATHFIELD NSW

This Heritage Impact Statement (HIS) has been prepared to accompany a Review of Environmental Factors (REF) for and on behalf of Meriden Anglican School (the School). The HIS has been prepared to assess the potential heritage impacts of the proposed fit out in the Hudson Library.

1. SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The School is located in Strathfield, approximately 13 kilometres (by direct line) west of the Sydney Central Business District (CBD). The School comprises three campuses, listed as follows:

- The Senior Campus, fronting Redmyre Road;
- The Junior Campus, fronting Vernon Street; and
- The Lingwood Prep School, fronting Margaret Street.

Figure 1 – Meriden School Campuses

Source: Allen Jack + Cottier Architects, 2018
This HIS and REF refer to minor internal fit out works on the Senior Campus only, located at 10-28 Redmyre Road, Strathfield and legally described as Lot 101 in DP 862040.

Figure 2 – Aerial diagram

Location of proposed minor fit out works on the first floor

Source: Nearmaps 2018

Figure 3 – Location of the Wallis Building within the Meriden School Senior Campus (highlighted in red)
2. HERITAGE CONTEXT

The School’s Senior Campus is identified as a heritage item of local significance (Item 187) under the Strathfield Local Environmental Plan 2012 (the SLEP). The listing description of the heritage item in the SLEP is “Meriden School”, and the heritage map (see below) shows that the curtilage of the heritage item extends across the whole of Lot 101 in DP 862040. Therefore, the whole of the Senior Campus is considered to be the ‘heritage item’.

Notwithstanding this listing description, the Senior Campus contains a range of buildings and landscapes from various periods. There are school administration buildings, classrooms and sporting facilities dating from various period throughout the twentieth century.

The Wallis Hall building, within which the Hudson Library is contained (and where the proposed fit out works are therefore located) is a building which has been heavily altered over time. Originally, this building was a late Victorian villa called Riccarton. Riccarton was built in c.1885 as a private villa, before being purchased in 1888 and renamed The Briars.

The Briars was purchased in 1926 for use by the Meriden School, which had until that time, operated out of an adjoining Victoria Villa (which was later demolished). In 1935/36, The Briars was substantially modified and extended to provide an assembly hall, chapel and sleep-out accommodation for school boarders. The remodelling works enveloped The Briars, retaining some internal areas while others were demolished. The end result being that The Briars was no longer discernible, and the remodelled building presented as a large uniform interwar brick building.
Figure 5 – The Briars in c.1920s, view looking east at the western elevation

Bay window form evident at far left – still remains today enveloped by the 1930s Wallis Hall building

Source: Paul Davies Pty Ltd 2013, Heritage Assessment, Meriden Anglican School for Girls, Senior Campus, p.7

Figure 6 – The Briars in c.1929, view looking west at the eastern elevation

Source: Paul Davies Pty Ltd 2013, Heritage Assessment, Meriden Anglican School for Girls, Senior Campus, p.8
In 2016, the School undertook major alterations and additions to the Wallis Hall, including partial demolition, and construction of a whole-of-school auditorium adjoining the building to the west. These works necessitated the demolition of part of the interwar portion of Wallis Hall, and the construction of a multi-storey western addition. The auditorium’s seating area extends into the western end of the Wallis Hall ground floor. Above, the Hudson Library area extends across the first floor of this western portion of Wallis Hall, and extends to the west and south into the new extension area. The Hudson Library space has previously been entirely refurbished and presents as a contemporary space behind the former Wallis Hall façade, with later partitions and fit-out.

The Heritage Assessment, Meriden Anglican School for Girls prepared by Paul Davies Pty Ltd in 2013 states that the significance of Wallis Hall is as follows:

“Wallis Hall has been extensively altered and extended at the rear in the 1990s. The majority of the building is considered to be of little/neutral significance, with the remnants of the c.1885 house The Briars at the eastern end of the building being of moderate significance, and the Chapel fitout and stained glass windows considered to be of high significance on historical, aesthetic and social criterion.”

The above statement was prepared prior to the 2016 auditorium works which demolished the Chapel portion of the building. The Wallis hall building has been substantially altered since the above 2013 heritage assessment was undertaken.
3. **PROPOSED WORKS**

The proposed works are for minor fit out works to the Hudson Library, which is located on the first floor of *Wallis Hall*, and extends into the 2016 new build extension (which extends to the west and south, as shown on the location plan below).

The proposed works for this REF are entirely internal and relate to the removal of a later fit out to accommodate a more flexible education space. The purpose of the proposed works is to create a flexible distributed library space plus new history classroom.

The scope of works is described as follows:

- Removal of later fit out fabric, including later light-weight plasterboard partition walls, later doors and later toilet fixtures. No significant fabric will be removed or obscured. There are no alterations to the significant façade or remnant significant rooms or spaces.

- Installation of new light-weight, reversible partitions to create new flexible work environments including a reconfiguration of learning commons, classrooms and staff room. All partitions will be light-weight in material and will not intervene with any significant fabric. New partitions will be built around existing remnant masonry walls of *Wallis Hall*, and will not remove this fabric.

The proposed works will result in the removal of the following existing later spaces within the Hudson library:

- Staff rooms;
- Staff toilet;
- Later existing doors;
- Internal library partitioning; and

The new fit out will convert the existing library space into:

- New library lobby;
• Three small classrooms;
• A new staff room;
• Two learning commons spaces (study areas);
• Two study areas; and
• Several library resource and utility areas.

The following plans show where later light-weight partitions are being removed, and where new light-weight partitions are being installed to facilitate new flexible working spaces.

Figure 10 – Extract of proposed removal of later partition plan

Source: AJ+C Architects
Figure 11 – Extract of proposed new light-weight partition plan

Source: AJ+C Architects

Figure 12 – View of Hudson Library looking south showing recent refurbishment and fabric

Source: Urbis

Figure 13 – View of Hudson Library looking north west showing recent refurbishment and fabric

Source: Urbis
4. **IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

This impact assessment has had regard to the potential heritage impacts of the proposed fit out works, on the significance and significant fabric of the listed heritage item ‘Meriden School’ under SLEP 2012. The works overall are considered to be minor and will not have any detrimental impact on the heritage significance of the broader ‘Meriden School’ heritage item.

The works are entirely internal, contained to the Hudson Library portion of *Wallis Hall*. This is an extremely modified area of this building, being a modern refurbishment of a late interwar school building – there is limited original fabric remaining. The proposed removal of later fit out elements will not damage or remove any elements of heritage significance from the interwar building. The installation of new light-weight partitions will not detract from the ability to understand or read the space, however it is worth noting that the space is not original, and is a highly modified and contemporary space with limited original fabric remaining.

The former Victorian villa portion of the building, which was enveloped by the late interwar *Wallis Hall*, will not be impacted. Significant spaces within this earlier portion of the building are generally limited to the ground floor principal rooms and stair hall, which do not form part of this refurbishment area. There are no original spaces from this period within the proposal area, and therefore the proposed works will have no impact on the understanding of this phase of development.

All proposed fit out including light-weight partition walls, joinery units and services including printers etc, will be entirely reversible and removable. The space will retain its later suspended ceiling fabric, with new services and lighting extending from existing later services. Air conditioning is already reticulated throughout the space. The space will be able to be restored to a clear span space in the future with the removal of this fit out. Installation of new fit out fabric will not require any intervention into significant fabric that would remove or damage significant fabric or spaces.

5. **CONCLUSION**

The proposed works will be discreet, located entirely within the existing (modified) building envelope, and will be completely reversible. The works will have no detrimental impact on the significance of the
Wallis Hall building, the broader 'Meriden School' heritage item, vicinity heritage items surrounding the property, or proximate heritage conservation areas.

The proposed works are considered minor and acceptable, and are supported from a heritage perspective.

Yours sincerely,

Ashleigh Persian
Senior Heritage Consultant