CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

for the

FORMER MASONIC TEMPLE
81 Lakeview Street
SPEERS POINT

North east view from Lakeview Street

Client: Lake Macquarie City Council
Mr David Carr

Prepared by:

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1.0 Introduction

This Conservation Management Strategy is for the former Masonic Temple located at 81 Lakeview Street, Speers Point.

The strategy enunciates how to retain and recuperate the remaining elements that ascribe cultural significance to the former Masonic Temple, providing for the building’s security, maintenance and future viable uses.

This involves:
(i) The establishment of the level of cultural significance of the place through review of literature, physical examination and assessment of fabric,
(ii) The determination of the constraints arising from the Statement of Significance, including the owner’s expectations and the external expectations and
(iii) The formulation of a conservation strategy, clearly defining details of stabilisation, conservation, restoration and/or reconstruction and maintenance as defined in the Burra Charter.

For this, an historical and contextual study of the building and its site has been prepared. As the Masonic Temple was later converted into a theatre, the various phases of reuse of the building are also addressed.

1.1 Limitations

The depth of this study has been limited by the available records and documentation pertaining to the history of the building and its former uses and the accessibility of and extent of significant fabric that remain.

1.2 Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge the assistance and support afforded by Mr David Carr, Ms Ulrike Hora of Lake Macquarie City Council and the Lake Macquarie City Library (Information Services) and in particular Mr Glenn Wardman.

1.3 Authorship

This report was prepared by Stephen Booker
B.Sc. (Arch), B.Arch. UNSW, M. Hert. Cons. USYD AIA, AAA, APTI
Registered Architect 4613
Conservation Architect and Heritage Consultant

Sylvia Azzi BSc(Arch), BArch

Neelam Pradhananga BArch

carste STUDIO pty ltd
34 Clarke Street, Wallsend 2287

1.4 Abbreviations

Abbreviations used in this document are as follows:

CMP Conservation Management Plan
CMS Conservation Management Strategy
DCP Development Control Plan
LEP Local Environment Plan
NSW New South Wales
UGL United Grand Lodge
2.0 General Historical Development of the Site

The following history was taken from the publication entitled ‘Lake Macquarie: Past and Present’ and the photos from the Lake Macquarie City Council website.

2.1 Name Origin
Speers Point was named after William Speer, an Alderman of the Council of the City of Sydney. He is understood to have bought the 1280 acres of land in 1870 from what was the original Government grant offered to William Brooks in 1828. The Aborigines had called the spot Milloba or Biddaba and the original grantee Brooks, had named his property Lochend. These names were forgotten while Speers' name remained.

2.2 Early Land Grants
William Brooks selected 1280 acres in 1828 (Kahibah Parish). He did not receive the title deeds to his grant until 1839. The grant was on the eastern bank of Cockle Creek and encompassed the present day townships of Boolaroo and Speers Point. He called it Lochend. William Speer (also known as Spier or Spear) a wealthy businessman and an alderman from Sydney, acquired part of Brooks' 1280 acres in 1870. Speers' section stretched from the present Main Road down to Fairfax Road and his residence was erected near the corner of Main Road and Park Road, i.e. opposite the present Council Administration Centre.

2.3 Early Subdivisions
The first subdivision was in 1902 and created allotments bounded by Main Road, Council Street, Albert Street, Lakeview Street and the Esplanade. Further subdivisions followed from First to Fairfax Road, and in 1912 a subdivision occurred which joined Speers Point with Boolaroo between Council and Seventh Streets.

2.4 Early Settlers
The earliest known settler was R. Sadleir who occupied the land before Brooks took up his grant. William Brooks selected his grant in 1828 but did not receive the title deeds until 1839. In 1887 a Mr. Ryan, the manager of Speer's estate was the only resident in the area.
2.5 Early Industries
In 1843 Mr. Brooks opened the Lochend Colliery and began mining coal at the foot of the hills at the top end of the present Hopkins Street. The coal was carried by trolleys on a line to a jetty at Speers Point.

In 1916, T.D.H. Rhodes opened the Speers Point Gully mine. Soon after 1870 William Speer built a dairy. Prior to 1874 a citrus orchard was cultivated near the lakeside. Other major industries in the area include the former Pasminco aluminium smelter that operated from 1896 up until 2003.

2.6 Early Transport
Steam trams were introduced in 1912 but ceased in 1930 for financial reasons. This service connected to the Newcastle-West Wallsend tramline at Brush Creek (Edgeworth). In 1920 Harry Linsley began a ferry service by rowing boat across Cockle Creek. He expanded his service to include ferries and hire boats. A footbridge over the Creek was built in 1928.

A private bus service commenced in 1931. It was not allowed to go further than Broadmeadow, where it met the trams. In 1937 the government bus service took over and operated two routes from Speers Point to Newcastle; one through Cardiff and one through Charlestown. In 1938 a bus service was provided to heavy industries at Port Waratah.

2.7 First Post Office
The first Post Office opened on 2 October 1916 and was closed 8 October 1976. The first Postmaster is unknown but various members of the Oughton family were in charge until 1940.

2.8 First School
The first Public School opened in January 1957. Speers Point East Public School was opened in January 1959.

2.9 Town
The winner of the first Sydney to Hobart yacht race, a 35-foot cutter named "Rani", was built just after the Second World War at Speers Point by Les Steel.

The present park site at Speers Point was originally applied for in 1887 by Mr. E. Abell. The park was vested in the Wallsend and Plattsburg Councils until 1910 when it was transferred to the Lake Macquarie Council. It was used particularly by coal miners and their families on Eight Hour Day picnics and regatta days.

Many photographs of picnic days at Speers Point by Plattsburg and Wallsend businesses remain as a marker to this phase.

The beginnings of the suburb’s popularity as a residential suburb commenced in 1902 when the first subdivision creating allotments of land fronting the Main Road and new streets known as First Street (Council Street) to Fifth Street (Albert Street) were beginning to be established.

Further subdivisions continued with the construction of housing and development of industry which in turn lead to the necessity of various infrastructure; 1912 saw the commencement of a steam tram line service in the area, a private bus service later replaced the steam train in 1931. In 1937 Government buses were servicing two routes in the area. Speers Point progressed in settlement over the years but it was not until the end of WWII that building activity became rather extensive.

Today Speers Point is a popular residential suburb in the Lake Macquarie Local Government area.
3.0 Specific Historical Development of the Area

3.1 The Lake Macquarie Council Chambers
In 1913, the Lake Macquarie Land Company donated land at the corner of Main Road and Council Street, Speers Point, for a Council Chambers. On 30th June 1914, Council accepted a tender from Messrs Southon and Waller in the sum of £2,299 for the construction of a Shire Office and Council Chambers. The Lake Macquarie Council Chambers moved from Cardiff to the new premises in 1915.

The first Council meeting held in those chambers was on Saturday 8 May 1915, and the building was officially opened on 6 June 1916. These offices were used until 1955 when Council Administration moved to a new building on the corner of Main Road and Parks Street, Speers Point. The new Council Chambers and Shire Office building was erected in 1955 at the corner of Main Road and Park Street, Speers Point, opposite the former Council building, The Hon J B Renshaw MLA, Minister for Public Works and Local Government, officially opened the new building on 5 November 1955.

The present Administration Centre was completed in two stages and occupied in 1977 and 1979 respectively. The 1955 Council Offices have been variously used by Government Departments including the Mine Subsidence Board until the building was recently sold and renovated.

In February 1976, the Council commissioned Civil and Civic Pty Ltd to undertake the first stage of the design of a new administration building. Council subsequently appointed the company as managers to complete the design and supervise construction. Wills, Denoon, and Partners were appointed the Project Architects.

In October 1977, the Council accepted a tender from Civil and Civic Pty Ltd in association with Wills, Denoon, and Partners Pty Ltd to design and construct Stage II in four phases.

The Premier of NSW, the Hon. Neville Wran QC MLA, officially opened stage 1 of the new Administration Building on 12 August 1977. The Minister for Local Government and Minister for Roads, the Hon H F Jensen MP, opened Stage II of the building on 31 August 1979. The Administration Building was built at a cost of approximately $4.5 million.

The Shire of Lake Macquarie was proclaimed as a Municipality from 1 January 1977 and became a City on 7 September 1984.
4.0 History of Development of Freemasonry

4.1 The building as a Masonic Temple
There is little documentation of the architectural aspects of Masonic Temples in Australia. Therefore, this report will extend its outlook to Masonic Temples in other parts of the world, in particular, the United States, to obtain a general understanding of the Masonic Temple as an architectural form.

In New York, the 1930s saw a Masonic Temple designed by architectural firms such as Osgood and Osgood of Grand Rapids, Michigan. It was noted during the dedication ceremony of one such temple, “Just as a church stands for spiritual life, the school for educational, the factory for commercial, and the residence for the home, so does this New Temple have a peculiarly definite significance in the community…This building…stands for certain spiritual factors; that is, for better manhood“ (Moore 2006; p 119).

New York State’s Freemasons used architecture, interior design and material culture to construct masculine identities for themselves in the years between 1870 and 1930 (Moore 2006; p 119). An examination of the representative buildings housing Masonic ritual spaces demonstrate that as Freemasonry prospered, the fraternity’s buildings evolved from temporarily equipped rental quarters to spectacular purpose-built Temples. The shape and grandeur of these meeting spaces were determined by the local economic realities and the national Masonic culture of the period with resonances being forged between Temple building activities and the construction of Solomon’s Temples, which formed the central motif of their ritual.

Although each Masonic community reached its own solution to the fraternity’s requirement for ritual spaces, four basic strategies emerged.

1) Rented Rooms
2) Temples with commercial spaces
3) Purely Masonic Temples
4) Buildings designed and built purely for Masonic purposes

4.1.1 Rented Rooms
At the beginning of the period under examination (1870-1930), most Masonic organisations met as tenants in rented or leased spaces within buildings owned and occupied by non-Masonic commercial ventures. Masonic Lodge rooms were located in various sorts of commercial buildings, but theatres and bank buildings in particular were often rented to Masonic groups.

In most cases, when Masons used spaces within commercial buildings, they simply acted as tenants. In several instances within New York State, however, individual members of the fraternity, who were in the process of erecting buildings for their own personal business use, contracted with the local lodge to incorporate an extra floor into the building for its fraternal purposes. For many lodges, years of tenancy within an edifice culminated with the purchase of the structure.

4.1.2 Temples with commercial spaces
The erection of temples was viewed as beneficial to the organisation because it fulfilled the fraternity’s destiny as the spiritual successor to the guilds of stonemasons. “Nothing gives greater stability and independence to our lodges,” the editor of New York City’s Masonic Standard wrote in 1908, “nothing will give them a higher standing or more influence in the communities in which they exist, than the possession of solid and substantial buildings of their own. Ours is an order of builders, the most ancient and honourable in the world, and it is beneath the dignity of our Lodges to eke out a comfortless existence in rented flats.” There are remaining examples of this practice in Newcastle such as the former Bank at 280 High Street, Maitland, the upper floor being set aside for lodge use.

In most cases between the 1870s and the first decade of the twentieth century, Masonic Temples were designed and built to house stores and offices on the street level and spaces for Masonic organisations, such as lodge rooms, drill halls, banquet rooms, and armories on the upper floors. The object of the stores and offices was to provide additional revenue to care for the upkeep of the building without burdensome taxation of the lodge members. The addition of office space to fraternal buildings that could be rented at a high figure, helped to make the plan self-supporting,
often solving the problem of maintenance and making possible location of these Temples in crowded centres where otherwise taxes would be prohibitive.

The fraternal character of most of these buildings was expressed in an understated manner. However, some Masonic Temples of mixed use erected were magnificent neoclassical buildings. The Masonic Temple in Rochester is one such example where four massive Corinthian columns below a triangular pediment formed a colossal portico above the main entrance to this seven-story. A dentilled cornice ran along the base of an attic story, while the roofline was adorned with a series of stylised terra-cotta acanthus leaves. An exterior sheathing, of smooth-faced, course-granite ashlers on the first two floors and pressed brick above, masked an internal steel frame. Although written accounts, newspaper illustrations, and the architects’ rendering of the proposed building all illustrate twin Masonic columns flanking the building’s main entrance, these symbols of Solomon’s Temple do not appear in photographs of the completed structure.

4.1.3 Purely Masonic Temples

Beginning in the 1890s, freemasons in New York State converted existing structures and built new Temples devoted entirely to Masonic purposes. By the turn of the century, when the growth and prosperity of the fraternity allowed them the luxury of making such distinctions, many Masons viewed commerce within Masonic Temples as degrading to the sacred quality of the fraternity.

Many Masonic organisations desired to move their meeting spaces out of rented rooms and into “purely Masonic” buildings but were without the financial resources to erect new structures. Lodges in this quandary frequently acquired prominent buildings in their communities and transformed them into Masonic structures by reconfiguring the interiors into lodge rooms, anterooms, armories, banquet halls, and other necessary spaces. Schools, churches, and residence, in particular, frequently were reshaped into Masonic buildings.

At the time that the buildings were purchased, these lodges may have been attracted by the restrained classicism of their designs or by the solidity of their construction. As the twentieth century advanced, however, the lodges came to appreciate the prestige associated with inhabiting historically significant structures. Moreover, as these lodges celebrated their hundredth anniversaries, the buildings’ cobblestone construction, a regional vernacular technique of the first half of the nineteenth century, came to speak of Freemasonry’s historic roots within these communities. Churches frequently were purchased and reshaped into Masonic Temples. In many cases, the fraternity purchased homes of prominent local citizens.

4.1.4 Buildings designed and built purely for Masonic purposes

By the final decade of the nineteenth century, the population of Masons in the state’s larger cities often was vast enough and commanded sufficient financial resources that the fraternity could erect new buildings designed specifically for Masonic purposes and could operate them without non-fraternal, commercial income. While many Masonic Temples were built in a neoclassical style, architects also looked to other models for inspiration. Some examples of Masonic Temples using various styles of architecture during this period include (i) Brooklyn Masonic Temple – Greek (Neoclassical style) (1907-1909) (ii) Ithaca Masonic Temple – Egyptian influence (1925-1926) (iii) Johnstown Masonic Temple – Georgian Domestic Architecture (iv) Herkimer Masonic Temple - early Modern England (v) Rochester’s second Masonic Temple – revivalist styles.
4.2 The Masonic Temples and its Architectural Style

Masonry has no distinctive and readily recognisable form of architecture. As can be seen from the preceding examples, no single architectural style dominated the design of Masonic Temples with Colonial, Gothic, Tudor, Neoclassical and Egyptian design vocabularies, among others all featured.

In 1926, however, the brewing debate within the fraternity was summarised as follows:

“It is impossible to say what is ‘deemed most appropriate’ because unfortunately no one tradition obtains, at least in this country; a visitor about the land will encounter every conceivable style, and often no style at all but a meaningless architectural hodge-podge. Speaking academically, and in the light of the past, Gothic would appear to be most suitable for Masonic uses, not alone because the first known Lodges were organised among Gothic builders but also because that style, aspiring as it is as religion and filled with mystery, best expresses the spirit of Masonry. Second, in choice, perhaps, would stand any of one of those Five Orders referred to in a certain part of one of the Degrees. Next afterwards would come the Egyptian, partly because it was probably the main inspiration behind the style of Solomon’s Temple, partly because, like the Gothic, it is instinct with religion and mystery, and also because, more than any other architecture, it suggests that antiquity which is so vital and moving a thing in our Craft.”

4.2.1 Characteristics of Masonic Temples

Masonic ritual spaces were designed to allow the fraternity to enter an alternative dimension loosed from a single temporal reality. They were a physical forum for manifesting the Masons’ mythic concept of time and space in which all Freemasons throughout history existed simultaneously. When Masonic Lodges’ rooms existed within ‘profane’ commercial spaces, the lodge room door, complemented by a steep set of stairs in most cases, acted as the first transition between the separating prosaic material life and the mythic fraternal cognitive framework.

This however changed when the fraternity began to erect buildings and the revivalist external details of the structures aided in removing the membership from their ordinary temporal frame. Since Freemasonry was posited to have existed in all times and places throughout western civilisation, architects were free to argue over the merits of Egyptian, Corinthian, Ionic, Colonial or Gothic styles. Architectural and historical particularities were of little importance. Significance lay not in any particular time frame but in the building’s ability to assist the membership in forgetting the details of day-to-day existence and in focussing upon the transcendent ‘mystic chain’ of brotherhood that stretched back into the mists of eternity.

4.2.2 Space Requirements for Masonic Temples

Some of the spaces required in Masonic Temples include the following:

1) Lodge Rooms – were usually ornamented extravagantly

2) Drill Halls – these rooms were private spaces not necessarily aesthetically appealing, designed as a large open space for the order’s military activities, such as marching practice. “Within their drill rooms, individual Knights worked to subordinate their own will to the good of their organization. The ideas of self-mastery and self-control were inherent in this martial concept as well, since individuals had to be able to control their own will before they could cede power to an outside authority.”

Occasionally these spaces were also used to host concerts and theatrical performances.

3) Banquet Rooms.-. were the areas reserved for the Knights Templar.

4) Armories – were private spaces as additional spatial requirements to store various uniforms and equipment for the different ranks associated with the various ceremonial requirements. These spaces were associated with the drill hall spaces and housed mass produced lockers for storage of equipment.

5) Anterooms – Gathering spaces used to assemble before procession into the main functional spaces.

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Moore, William D Masonic Temples: Freemasonry, ritual architecture, and masculine archetypes., P62
4.2.3 The Form of the Lodge and its Symbolism

One of the fundamental principles in the teachings of Freemasonry is the use of symbols. (Maguire 1947). Much of the teachings and many of the symbols of Masonry have been passed down by various channels from very ancient times - from the time of Adam, also from Ancient Egypt and other early schools of philosophy. Among these symbols thus inherited is the “Symbol of the Temple”.

The building of the first Lodge brought together two different and widely separated religions or doctrines. One being that of Solomon and his father, David, who conceived and planned the Temple to house the Ark of the Convenant, where God was to dwell visibly, with their followers, the children of Israel. The other doctrine represented is that of Hiram, King of Tyre who assisted King Solomon with men and materials. The Dionysians were the great builders and practically had a monopoly on the erection of all Temples, palaces, stadia, etc. They were the only people who possessed the knowledge of architecture and building, and they jealously guarded that knowledge. They practiced a doctrine called the Dionysian Mystery, which had many striking resemblances to Masonry, it is known in contemporary times.

Symbolism guides the form of a lodge or Masonic Temple. Some of these details follow:

1) The Fraternity’s defining twin pillars/columns – Jachin and Boas regularly appeared, in some manifestation, on the façade or surround the entrance of Masonic Temples in New York State. These markers indicated that the structure was a physical representation of Solomon’s Temple and that the inhabitants of the building were the heirs of the sacred craftsmen who had erected Jehovah’s Temple on Mount Moriah. These pillars served as a touchstone reminding the membership that each time they entered the building they traversed a threshold into a realm of symbolic thought and action.

2) Masonic Temples were often built as a Double Cube or an Oblong Square. This is largely due to the fact that most ancient Temples were built as miniatures of the Universe. A map of the ancient world occupies roughly a double or oblong square. To the majority of people at that time, the earth was flat, four cornered and stationary.

3) Similarities between the ancient world and the form of the lodge are evident in the covering of the lodge, which is a celestial canopy even as the heavens, meaning to represent the sky and the immensity of space.

4) At the western end of that world can be found the Straits of Gibraltar, the gateway of that world, guarded north and south by the twin pillars of Hercules, just as the twin pillars of brass guard the entrance to Masonic Temples in the west.

5) The north, beyond the mountains of Southern Europe, was forbidding country of snow and blizzards, and the eternal night of a frozen winter. The north is still the place of darkness in the Lodge.

6) To the east existed all the culture, learning and civilisation of that day, in such places as Alexandria, Thebes, Tyre, Jerusalem, Babylon, Ninevah, Athens, Troy, etc. More so, the sun rose in the morning supplying light and warmth. Thus Masonic Temples faced their Temples due east.

7) The positions and duties of the Master and his Wardens derives from the rising and setting of the sun.

8) Ashlars have symbolic meaning for freemasons and those in Masonic schools used as a metaphor for states of progress. In Freemasonry, Ashlar comes in two forms. The rough ashlar represents rough, unprepared or undressed stone, and is an allegory of the uninitiated Freemason prior to his discovering enlightenment. The smooth ashlar represents the dressed stone as used by the experienced stonemason.

9) Winding stair is based on a mythical story and it symbolically represents the process that an Apprentice undergoes. The apprentice begins the ascent, if he is true to his principles, until he reaches the summit, ‘the treasures of knowledge’ await him.

The number of steps in the stair is also of significance. Three steps teach the threefoldness of the universe: God, His Creation and His Child. The flight of five steps is primarily the symbol of the five types of architecture used in building the great Temples of the ancient world. Seven, among the ancients and in the Bible, is the symbol of completeness, also the symbol of the seven liberal arts and sciences. The seven steps also teach the sevenfoldness of the universe. The odd numbers of steps is symbolic of perfection.
Dr MacKay’s word’s in relation to this is insightful:

“It is as a symbol and a symbol only that we must study this beautiful legend of the Winding stair. If we attempt to adopt it as an historical fact, the absurdity of its details stares us in the face, and wise men will wonder at our credulity. Its investors had no desire then to impose upon our folly: but offering it to us as a great philosophical myth, they did not for a moment suppose that we would pass over its sublime moral teachings to accept the allegory as an historical narrative, without meaning and wholly irreconcilable with the records of Scripture and opposed by all principles of probability. To suppose that 80,000 craftsmen were weekly paid in the narrow precincts of the Temple chambers is simply to suppose an absurdity. But to believe that all this pictorial representation of an ascent by a winding stair to the place where the wages of labour were to be received was an allegory to teach us the ascent of the mind from ignorance, through all the toils of study and the difficulties of obtaining knowledge, receiving here a little, and there a little, adding something to the stock of ideas at each step, until, in the middle chamber of life – in the final fruition of manhood – the reward is obtained, and the purified and elevated intellect is invested with the reward, in the direction how to seek God and God’s truth; to believe this is to believe and to know the true design of speculative Masonry, the only design, which makes it worthy of a good or a wise man’s study. Its historical details are barren, but its symbols and allegories are fertile with instruction.”

10) Light in Freemasonry is the symbol of Truth and Knowledge. It enables them to realise the meaning of knowledge, the difficulties encountered in its pursuit and its inestimable value when attained. An absence of light is a condition termed darkness, so is the absence of knowledge a condition we term ignorance.

11) Of all the symbols found in Masonic lodges, the point within a circle is one of the most interesting and perhaps the most antique. In all regular well formed constituted Lodges there is a point within a circle round which the Brethren cannot err; this circle is bounded between North and South by two grand parallel lines. Here the circle represents the course a Freemason must travel in his daily life. He should be prevented from straying from the path of rectitude by the precepts of those grand parallel lines and by the moral teachings laid down.
4.3 Historical development of the Masonic Temple in New South Wales/Newcastle

The first lodges in the colony, apart from the itinerant Lodges attached to military regiments, were formed under the Irish constitution dating from 1820 (See attached timeline above). Eight years later the English constitution became established with the Scottish constitution following suit in 1844. All three constitutions flourished, and as the colonies developed there grew up in some quarters a desire for independence in Masonic matters as well as in government.

This form of nationalism led, in 1877, to the formation of the Grand Lodge of New South Wales. Most of the Lodges under the Irish constitution then transferred their allegiance to the new constitution, as did several Scottish Lodges that had their Charters cancelled by the Grand Lodge of Scotland because they had helped to found the new constitution. For some years afterwards feelings between the rival Constitutions ran high, with the English and Scottish constitutions refusing to recognise the New South Wales Constitution and with the last mentioned simultaneously striving to expand and to achieve unification of the Constitutions under its own terms.

Before unification in 1888 with the formation of the United Grand Lodge of New South Wales, there were 18 lodges of varying constitutions. It appears that most Masonic Temples in Newcastle had problems when it came to holding their meetings. Most Masonic Temples, such as Lodge Fidelity, follow the stages that Masonic lodges underwent in the United States. Lodge Fidelity started by renting a hall (Latham’s Hall) in 1887. This was followed by a move in 1891 that is synonymous with the second stage – moving into a building with other commercial uses. Fidelity lodges moved to Lodge Harmony’s Masonic hall at Newcomen Street in 1891 and then subsequently to Lodge St George in Perkins Street in 1895. The fourth move occurred in 1907 with the Lodge moving into the Lodge Harmony building on Wolfe Street.

The proposal that Lodge Fidelity build its own Temple suffered many vicissitudes, the details of which will not be entered here. However, it is important to note that the Masonic Temples of NSW and Newcastle in particular, were not of the same scale as that in the United States. Most of the lodges either rented rooms or shared a building with other commercial uses.
4.3.1 Lakeview Street Masonic Temple

Location Map: Boolaroo and Speers Point

Site Map: 81 Lakeview Street, Speers Point
4.3.2 Historical Aspects
From the turn of the nineteenth century various attempts were made to form a Lodge at Speers Point, but want of a suitable premises was the stumbling block on these occasions. It was not till after World War I that a serious attempt was made and eventually succeeded and a Temple was constructed in Lakeview Street, Speers Point.

The laying of the foundation stone ceremony took place on the 16th September 1924 headed by RL. Worshipful Brother Dugal Dobie.

Brother A.H, Lawrey – Shire Engineer of the Council Chambers, Lake Macquarie Shire, Speers Point, generously drew the plans of the Temple without the lodge incurring any expense.

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Due to the efforts of Very Worshipful Brother E. Lideman a proposed management committee was formed in 1966. The Committee undertook the responsibility of all rentals, hiring, maintenance and alterations to the building. It also paid all the rates, insurances and electricity accounts.

Lodge Speers Point paid the same rent to the Committee as the other Lodges that met in the building. Through the formation of the Management Committee the roof was renewed, seats in the Temple were replaced, the Temple was carpeted, tables were made to replace the trestles in the south, fans were installed in the Temple, the electrical wiring in the Temple was renewed and a loan of $800 was paid back to Lodge Teralba.

The Lodges that met in the Speers Point Temple and paid rent to the Committee were:
- Lodge Speers Point No 538
- Lodge Teralba No 823
- Speers Point Mark Master Masons Lodge No 90
- Speers Point Royal Arch Chapter No 94
- Speers Point Royal Art Mariners Lodge No 90
- Doric Cryptic Council No 20
- Speers Point Chapter of the DeMolay Order

Due to strong interest of Lake Macquarie Council and for reasons of economy, the Temple was sold to Council in November 1986 and the place of meeting was moved to the Masonic Hall at Cardiff. The first meeting of the Lodge in Cardiff was on Saturday 15th November 1986.
4.3.3 Architectural Aspects

The Masonic Temple is of the late Federation Freestyle typology (City of Lake Macquarie Heritage Study).

The building displays architectural styles of Federation Free Style and Inter-War Romanesque, although its construction post dates this period. It is considered as typical of a style of building for Freemasons halls/temples built throughout the State in the early part of the century and through to the Second World War.

The front elevation of the building, constructed of exposed brickwork is the oldest. There are later additions extending to the rear. The main gable end faces east, and is typical of the symbolic characteristic of the Freemason's, facing their Temples east to the light of day representing civilisation and learning.

It appears the main entrance is to the side (north), through double timber framed externally opening swing doors.

The brick building consists of 6 structural bays with brick pilasters supporting roof frames. The walls are brick with inset pebbledash decorative panels on ornate gable ends. This is distinctive of the style to use strongly contrasting materials and textures to accentuate the visual contrast. It can also be argued that the inset of pebble dash or undressed stone outlining shapes of windows and doors is an allegory of the uninitiated Freemason prior to his discovering enlightenment.

The gable roof is of corrugated AC sheet laid on the roof with timber trusses. The parapeted gable is accented with a “chimney top” eliminating a pointed apex. The windows located high in the wall are 4-pane timber frame hoppers.

The 1924 Temple, with its elaborate Romanesque gable, clearly belongs to the same design school as the 1955 Shire Council Chambers, which were formerly, next door. The Temple was probably designed to be complementary to its neighbour and was obviously intended to be a local landmark. It is unclear as to whether the corrugated asbestos cement roof sheeting is original.

4.3.4 Adaptation of the building to Theatre use

The Lake Macquarie Heritage Study notes that modifications had taken place to the building to facilitate use as a theatre. It is unclear when this took place. The original doors and windows on the east (gable) end were bricked up and new side doors and access ramps installed. Large non-matching gable-roof extensions were added to the rear of the building and the original roof sheeting has probably been replaced.

4.3.5 Historical Context

The current Masonic Temple is located at 81 Lakeview Street, Speers Point. The zoning maps of the Local Environment Plan show that this vicinity is largely a residential area (urban living). An area to the south is zoned as a Business Area - Urban Centre.
# 5.0 Comparative Analysis of Masonic Temples in Newcastle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Masonic Temple, Brown St, Wallsend</th>
<th>Masonic Temple, Gen St, Belmont</th>
<th>Masonic Temple, Lakeview Street, Speers Point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Street Elevation</td>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Masonic Temple, Brown St, Wallsend" /></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Masonic Temple, Gen St, Belmont" /></td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Masonic Temple, Lakeview Street, Speers Point" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground Floor Plan</td>
<td><img src="image4" alt="Ground Floor Plan" /></td>
<td><img src="image5" alt="Ground Floor Plan" /></td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Floor Plan</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td><img src="image6" alt="Upper Floor Plan" /></td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Period - Built</td>
<td>1901-1925</td>
<td>1920s – 1930s</td>
<td>Continuous to late 1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usage</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
<td>Continuous to late 1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date Built</td>
<td>1909</td>
<td>Exact date not known (around 1926)</td>
<td>1924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials</td>
<td>Red brick</td>
<td>Brick</td>
<td>Brick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roof</td>
<td>Straight gable</td>
<td>Gable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windows</td>
<td>Arched head timber frames in front</td>
<td>Hopper style timber frames</td>
<td>Hopper style timber frames</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architectural Style</td>
<td>Bungalow cottage</td>
<td>Not discernible</td>
<td>Federation Freestyle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interior</td>
<td>Pressed metal ceilings</td>
<td>Rendered brickwork/fibro sheeting, timber architraves, masonite sheeting</td>
<td>Substantially altered in the theatre adaption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modifications</td>
<td>Additions made in front in 1923 and recent additions on the east with a skillion lean-to section</td>
<td>Refurbishments carried out in 1932 and minor modifications in 1987/1988</td>
<td>Western additions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 6.0 Assessment of Significance

The following assessment employs the NSW heritage assessment criteria outlined in the NSW Heritage Office’s publication *Assessing Heritage Significance (2001)* published by NSW Heritage Office and DUAP.

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carste STUDIO pty ltd  November 2009
In order to provide a standardised approach to the assessment of these values of ‘items’ and of individual elements within or contributing to items, the NSW Heritage Office has defined a series of criteria that will be used by the Heritage Council of NSW as an assessment format within NSW.

The seven criteria address:

a) An item is important in the course, or pattern, of NSW’s cultural or natural history, (or the cultural or natural history of the local area);

b) An item has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in NSW’s cultural or natural history, (or the cultural or natural history of the local area);

c) An item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in NSW, (or the local area);

d) An item has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in NSW, (or the local area), for social, cultural or spiritual reasons;

e) An item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of NSW's cultural or natural history, (or the cultural or natural history of the local area);

f) An item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of NSW’s cultural or natural history, (or the cultural or natural history of the local area);

g) An item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSW's
   - Cultural or natural places;
   - Cultural or natural environments or a class of the local areas
   - Cultural or natural places; or cultural or natural environments

Where relevant, the individual contribution of separate elements of a place may be evaluated according to a five–stage grading system, where:

Exceptional indicates that is a rare or outstanding element, contributing directly to the assessment of an item’s significance at the appropriate level

High indicates that an element exhibits an advanced degree of original fabric and is a key element in the assessment of an item’s significance at the appropriate level;

Moderate indicates that an element has been modified or degraded, with little individual heritage value, but that makes an interpretive contribution in the assessment of an item’s significance at the appropriate level;

Little indicates that an element has been modified or has degraded to a degree that detracts from the assessment of an item’s significance at the appropriate level; and

Intrusive indicates that an element is damaging in the assessment of an item’s significance at the appropriate level;

In order to provide a ready reference to the degree of significance or the distinctiveness of an item in general terms, the item may be described as being either ‘Rare’ or ‘Representative’ within its community/cultural/geographical level.

The final denominator of significance is the level of significance of an item. Level is assessable in two classifications pursuant to NSW Heritage Office (2002) depending upon the breadth of its identifiable cultural, community, historical or geographical context. This recognition of an item at:

Local Level identifies the item as being significant within an identifiable local and/or regional cultural and/or community group and/or historical/geographical heritage context; and

State Level identifies the item as being significant within an identifiable Statewide cultural and/or community group and/or historical geographic heritage context;

### 7.0 Heritage Assessment

a) An item is important in the course, or pattern, of NSW’s cultural or natural history, (or the cultural or natural history of the local area);

The Masonic Temple at Speers Point is the only surviving building that reflects the early period of Lake Macquarie’s municipal history and development. It is located on Lakeview Street in close proximity to the main street and has been shown to have a significant association with the community and the local area.

The Masonic Temple is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSW’s cultural or natural places, and its significance has been assessed at the local level.
proximity to the site of the former Lake Macquarie Council Chambers. These two buildings provided a memorable civic precinct. The subject site has also maintained continuity of use since it was built albeit as a theatre in its latter years.

b) An item has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in NSW's cultural or natural history, (or the cultural or natural history of the local area);
The Masonic Temple at Speers Point is historically significant due to its association with the establishment of formal Mason fraternity development in Lake Macquarie.

c) An item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in NSW, (or the local area);
The Masonic Temple at Speers Point is of the late Federation Freestyle. The Romanesque gable is elaborate with brick detailing. The external façade of this Masonic Temple has a higher aesthetic value in comparison with other Masonic Temples in Newcastle, such as the Wallsend (Brown Street) and in Belmont (Gen Street) and later examples in Cardiff, due to the detailing of workmanship.

d) An item has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in NSW, (or the local area), for social, cultural or spiritual reasons;
The Masonic Temple at Speers Point was an important place to Freemasons. It is a Temple that was used by the Masons from its establishment in 1924 till 1986 when the Temple was sold to Lake Macquarie City Council. It was also the meeting place for a number of other lodges including Lodge Speers Point No 538, Lodge Teralba No 823, Speers Point Mark Master Masons Lodge No 90, Speers Point Royal Arch Chapter No 94, Speers Point Royal Art Mariners Lodge No 90, Doric Cryptic Council No 20 and Speers Point Chapter of the DeMolay Order.

e) An item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of NSW’s cultural or natural history, (or the cultural or natural history of the local area);
The Masonic Temple at Speers Point could possibly yield information on the early development of masonry in the Lake Macquarie area. The building embodies principles of Masonic symbolism that can be interpreted.

f) An item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of NSW’s cultural or natural history, (or the cultural or natural history of the local area);
Masonic Temples are not rare, but this building appears externally to be one of the better preserved local Masonic Temples.

g) An item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSW’s cultural or natural places;
- Cultural or natural places;
- Cultural or natural environments or a class of the local areas
- Cultural or natural places; or cultural or natural environments
The building does not fulfil the criteria for significance in this category

The Masonic Temple is listed in Lake Macquarie City Council’s Local Environmental Plan as an item of local heritage significance.

The 1993 Heritage Study identifies the heritage significance of the locality in terms of individual buildings, curtilages and settings.

7.1 Statement of Significance for the Masonic Temple
The Masonic Temple at Speers Point is historically significant due to its association with the establishment of the formal Mason fraternity development in Lake Macquarie. The building reflects the importance it once had to the Freemasons of the past by its architectural form and detailing together with principles of Masonic symbolism that can be interpreted, such as the oblong square in plan of the building inherited as the “symbol of the temple”, together with the revivalist use of classical detailing to the exterior of the gable end.

The Temple is an indicator of the sense of community and the “spreading of the fellowship” where participation in Masonic activities was seen as a confidence builder and as a way of assessing
“the values and ideas, the profound principles of religion, morality and honour for which Masonry stands.”

“This Temple is the only surviving building that reflects the early period of Lake Macquarie’s Municipal history and development. It is unfortunate that the 1915 Council Chambers have been so recently demolished. Together, the two buildings could have provided a memorable civic precinct. The grand conception of this building’s elaborate gable end is now unmatched elsewhere in the city, except perhaps on the Co-op store buildings at West Wallsend (WW-26).”

The heritage study recommended that the Temple building would respond well to restoration of its former entrance and front windows. Removal of the latter additions on the west would restore the buildings’ undoubted landmark qualities.

The building is noted as being of moderate regional significance and high local significance.
7.1.1 Condition, Integrity and Impact

This section addresses matters that combine with the assessment of significance to allow a Conservation Management Plan to be devised.

*Condition* considers the physical state of the fabric of the resource and its potential for survival. *Integrity* observes the degree to which the residual material evidence is an appropriate representation of the resources in its original form. *Potential Impact* assesses the nature and extent to which the resources will be modified as a result of projected development.

The condition of heritage resources and/or individual elements that have been identified above is assessed on a five-stage scale:

(i) *Intact*, where the material evidence allows a complete recording of the resource without hypothesis.

(ii) *Substantially intact*, where the material evidence is incomplete but the recording of material evidence will be sufficient to allow an accurate reconstruction, with hypotheses based on the existing record only

(iii) *Standing ruin*, where the material evidence is incomplete and the recording of material evidence will be sufficient to define the footprint of the resource and some of its elevations and features but will be insufficient to allow an accurate reconstruction of the resource without hypotheses based on the physical record and on a range of outside sources

(iv) *Ruin*, where the material evidence is incomplete and the recording of material evidence may be sufficient to define part or whole, or the footprint of the resource but will be insufficient to allow a reconstruction of the resource/its features.

(v) *Archaeological site*, implying a mostly sub-surface residue, where the material evidence suggests the former presence of an archaeological resources that cannot be defined without sub-surface investigation

The integrity of the physical resources and/or individual elements that have been identified above is assessed on a five-stage scale:

i) *Intact*, where the resource has remained virtually unchanged and its form and/or design and/or function can be totally discerned from the material evidence

ii) *Minor Modification*, where the resource has been modified or deteriorated cosmetically and/or in a manner, that does not inhibit the discernment of its form and/or design and/or function by interpretation of the material evidence

iii) *Material Modification*, where the resource has been modified so that its form and/or design and/or function cannot be discerned except by interpretation of the physical fabric and without reference to external sources

iv) *Major Modification*, where the resource has been so modified that attempted discernment of its form and/or design and/or function cannot be achieved by interpretation of the material evidence and requires a heavy reliance on external sources and in circumstances where discernment of one or more elements may be equivocal

v) *None*, where the integrity of the resource has been completely destroyed and the evidence for its form and/or design and/or function is totally external
### 7.1.2 Assessment of Remnant Fabric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Assessed Significance</th>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Integrity</th>
<th>Comparative Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Original building, later addition and remaining curtilage</td>
<td>Some local significance</td>
<td>Substantially intact</td>
<td>Minor modification</td>
<td>Although there are other Masonic Temples in Newcastle, the external fabric of the Masonic Temple is well preserved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Elements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Original building</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External surfaces and features of building</td>
<td>Some local significance</td>
<td>Intact</td>
<td>Intact</td>
<td>Good detailing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building/structure foundations</td>
<td>Some local significance</td>
<td>Intact</td>
<td>Intact</td>
<td>Common design and construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room function</td>
<td>Some significance</td>
<td>Substantially intact</td>
<td>Major modifications</td>
<td>Common design and construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal finishes and features</td>
<td>Some significance platform and stages</td>
<td>Substantially intact</td>
<td>Major modifications</td>
<td>Common design and construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Later addition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External surfaces and features of building</td>
<td>No significance</td>
<td>Intact</td>
<td>Intact</td>
<td>Common design and construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building/structure foundations</td>
<td>No significance</td>
<td>Intact</td>
<td>Intact</td>
<td>Common design and construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room function</td>
<td>No significance</td>
<td>Intact</td>
<td>Intact</td>
<td>Common design and construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal finishes and features</td>
<td>No significance</td>
<td>Intact</td>
<td>Intact</td>
<td>Common design and construction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Assessment of remnant fabric

A detailed assessment of the fabric has been undertaken and the following changes need to be undertaken immediately:
### Exterior Works: Former Masonic Temple

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Note No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Detail</th>
<th>Cost estimate EX-GST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Remove asbestos Roof and replace with zincalume custom orb. Old temple section at east only.</td>
<td>New roof, guttering and downpipes</td>
<td>$23,990.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Remove asbestos contaminants from ceilings etc.</td>
<td>Asbestos removal only</td>
<td>$29,253.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Demolish rear section of building. Reconstruct including toilets M and F, Disabled toilet. Kitchen and Laundry. Reuse flooring if possible.</td>
<td>No new construction allowed, demolition only.</td>
<td>$35,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Remove and replace gutters and downpipes with deep quad profile and circular cross section downpipes. Check stormwater drains.</td>
<td>New as per item 1, checking and modification to stormwater only</td>
<td>$5,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Strip fascias and eaves of lead based paint, reprime and paint.</td>
<td></td>
<td>$4,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Remove no 2 trees from adjacent east wall and overgrown ground covers. Cultivate and mulch after providing treated garden edging.</td>
<td></td>
<td>$6,600.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Remove asbestos containing eaves linings and replace with fibre cement. Repaint.</td>
<td>Removal included as item 2</td>
<td>$6,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Remove exterior lights (allow no.6) and extraneous surface mounted wiring to east façade. Replace with exterior bollard fittings and up lights to east façade of building.</td>
<td></td>
<td>$5,900.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Remove former timber sign to north east corner of east façade and patch former fixings locations</td>
<td></td>
<td>$550.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Brick cleaning and mural removal recommended in future stage when budgets available.</td>
<td></td>
<td>$9,700.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Replace northern pair of escape doors to ramp. Finish complete with new escape hardware.</td>
<td></td>
<td>$4,800.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Amount</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Reglaze windows allowing putty resprigging to 6 windows and replacement of glazing panes to 10 panes.</td>
<td>$5,600.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Replace top hinges to all windows. Prepare and repaint windows internally and externally.</td>
<td>$13,500.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Replace wall vents on south to match those on north. Replace no 2 terra cotta wall vents on north with matching element.</td>
<td>$1,600.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Repair damaged brickwork at base of wall.</td>
<td>$800.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Repair damaged brickwork to pier.</td>
<td>$800.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Provide new handrail and kerb to northern access ramp in accordance with AS1428. Ramp gradient to be tapered to 1 in 14.</td>
<td>$4,800.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Remove concrete from immediately adjacent the exterior wall base on north and south facades.</td>
<td>$10,100.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Repair concrete lintels where cracked over window heads</td>
<td>$7,200.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Retuck pointing to east face is a desirable future project.</td>
<td>$18,000.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20A</td>
<td>Prelims, scaffold, site setup, insurances, OH&amp;S</td>
<td>$9,300.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 7.1.4 Interior Works: Former Masonic Temple

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Note No. Refer to attached Key Plan 01</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Detail</th>
<th>Cost estimate EX-GST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Remove light blackout boxes from all windows complete. 12 off. Make good to fixing locations</td>
<td></td>
<td>$4,800.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Remove suspended ceiling from east end of building and make good to ceiling generally</td>
<td></td>
<td>$4,800.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Repair and reinstate cornice in Hall.</td>
<td></td>
<td>$4,200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>Repaint walls, skirtings, architraves, windows and frames and ceiling complete after removal of lighting rails and repairing penetrations.</td>
<td></td>
<td>$16,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>Allow for new lighting in the Hall. There is ample power with power points located in regular intervals across the whole ceiling.</td>
<td></td>
<td>$10,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>Remove hardboard from entire floor. Patch as necessary. Punch all nails, fill holes and sand floor. Finish with Tung oil</td>
<td></td>
<td>$16,300.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>Remove malthoid from floor of plinths. Remove nosing and replace as necessary. Allow 100%. Finish as for floor.</td>
<td></td>
<td>$9,800.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>Demolish two small cubicles as shown. Each approx 2400 high.</td>
<td></td>
<td>$5,300.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>Rationalise switching to lights for ease of use.</td>
<td>Included as per item 25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>Replace the western doors to the Hall Solid timber and glass</td>
<td></td>
<td>$5,800.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8.0 Constraints and Opportunities

8.1 Statutory Controls
The following is a list of statutory compliance issues considered relevant for this site.

The relevant clauses of the Lake Macquarie City Council LEP 2004 Part 6, Heritage Provisions include:

43 Objectives
The objective of this Part is to protect and conserve archaeological site and places of Aboriginal, natural or European cultural significance. It does this by making provisions that conserve the remaining fabric, relics, settings and views, and evidence of the cultural significance of heritage items and the environment of heritage conservation areas.

44 Protection of heritage items and heritage conservation areas
The following development may be carried out only with development consent:

a) demolition of, or movement of the whole or a part of, a heritage item
b) alteration of, or any addition to, a heritage item that makes substantial structural or non-structural changes to its exterior, such as to its detail, fabric, finish or appearance,
c) alteration of a building, a structure, work, relic, or tree within a heritage conservation area by making substantial structural or non-structural changes to its exterior, such as to its detail, fabric, finish or appearance
d) alteration of a heritage item by making substantial structural changes to its interior,
e) disturbance or excavation of a place of Aboriginal heritage significance or an archaeological site while knowing, or having reasonable cause to suspect, that the disturbance or excavation will or is likely to result in a relic being discovered, exposed, moved, damaged or destroyed
f) erection of a structure on, or subdivision of, land on which a heritage item is located or which is within a Heritage Conservation Area

47 Assessment of Heritage Significance

1) Before granting consent required by this Part, the consent authority must assess the extent to which the carrying out of the proposed development will affect the heritage significance of the heritage item or heritage conservation area concerned.

2) In the case of proposed development that would affect a heritage item, that assessment must include consideration of a heritage impact statement that addresses:

a) the heritage significance of the item as part of the environmental heritage of Lake Macquarie City local government area,
b) the impact that the proposed development will have on the heritage significance of the item and its setting, including any landscape or cultural features,
c) the measures proposed to conserve the heritage significance of the item and its setting,
d) whether any archaeological site or potential archaeological site will be adversely affected by the proposed development.

e) the extent to which the carrying out of the proposed development will affect the form of any historic subdivision

48 Development Requiring Notification

1) A development application proposing the following development requires notification in accordance with Lake Macquarie Development Control Plan No 1 – Principles of Development:

a) the demolition of a heritage item

b) the carrying out of any development allowed by clause 53 (Conservation Incentives)
51 Development affecting known or potential archaeological sites or relics of European heritage significance

1) Consent must not be granted for development that will be carried out on an archaeological site or potential archaeological site or a relic that has European heritage significance (whether or not it is also the site of a relic or potential relic of Aboriginal significance) unless the consent authority has considered a heritage impact statement explaining how the proposed development would affect the conservation of the place or site and any relic known or reasonably likely to be located at the place or site

2) Except where the proposed development is integrated development, the consent authority must provide a copy of the development application and heritage impact statement to the Heritage Council within 14 days of receipt of the application

3) Consent must not be granted to any such application unless the consent authority has taken into consideration any comments received by it from the Heritage Council within 28 days after the application and the statement are sent in accordance with subclause (2)

4) This clause does not apply if the proposed development does not involve disturbance of below ground deposits and the consent authority is of the opinion that the heritage significance of any above ground relics would not be adversely affected by the proposed development

53 Conservation Incentives

Consent may be granted to the use of a building that is a heritage item, or of the land on which such a building is erected (even though the use would be otherwise prohibited by this plan) if the consent authority is of the opinion that:

a) the retention of the heritage item depends on the granting of the consent, and
b) the proposed use will be in accordance with a conservation management plan which has been prepared to the satisfaction of the Council, and
c) the granting of consent to the proposed use will ensure that all necessary conservation work identified in the conservation management plan is carried out, and
d) the proposed use will not adversely affect the heritage significance of the heritage item or its setting, and
e) the proposed use will not adversely affect the amenity of the surrounding area

14.0 Lake Macquarie Development Control Plan No. 1 – Principles of Development (Revision 2), (Abbreviated as DCP No. 1)

14.01 The DCP No. 1 also notes that all development involving identified heritage significant property or suspected heritage significant property should address the Lake Macquarie City Council Heritage Guidelines (2004).

8.2 Owners Requirements

The owners of the property propose to continue to undertake affordable conservation management works to ensure the longevity of the structures and improve their current level of interpretability and provide a venue for an ongoing financially viable use.

The owners are provided with a fabric assessment internally and externally outlining the significant fabric and the necessary works to be undertaken to ensure the longevity of the building and its significance to the community of Lake Macquarie and beyond.

8.3 Other Stakeholders

Past and present Freemasons represent the broader cultural, social, historical, and aesthetic/urban design issues. Possible concerns and or issues: Maintaining the iconic value of the Masonic Temple at Speers Point.

8.4 Opportunities

Social values, new uses, interpretation, archival recording of the building and oral histories to contribute to the data held about the place. This building represents a place where friendships and associations formed through the Masonic activities, practices and celebrations.
9.0 Conservation Policy

9.1 Definitions
Conservation means all the processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance.

The Burra Charter states, “Think of the place as an historical document that keeps its history in its fabric, use, setting, association and meanings, as well as in the records of the place.”

Preservation means maintaining the fabric of a place in its existing state and retarding deterioration. All places and their components change over time at varying rates. The role of preservation is to slow the rates of change.

Interpretation means all the ways of presenting the cultural significance of a place. Interpretation can mean promoting the place or building off-site, but it can also mean the simple act of removing “intrusive” elements to allow for better interpretation of surviving original fabric.

9.2 Implications of the Level of Significance
The building is recognised as being a significant LOCAL item of environmental heritage in the Lake Macquarie Local Environmental Plan 2004.

For any adaptive reuse work to be undertaken on this site, utilising the conservation incentives clause within the Local Environmental Plan, requires the preparation of a Conservation Management Plan that indicates that the proposed adaptive or new use is appropriate for the site.

9.3 Implications of the Physical Evidence and Condition
As an item of local heritage scheduled in the Local Environmental Plan, the property owner is required to ensure the conservation of all fabric, protecting it against fire and keeping it secure to avoid potential damage from other sources.

Protection against weather damage, providing adequate fire protection, protection against vandalism and a programme of ongoing maintenance and repair is required. Protection of the potential user public through contaminant containment and removal.

9.4 Policies

9.4.1 Photographic Recording
Detailed photographic recording has been carried out of the building, as a part of the fabric assessment, which forms part of this Plan. It is recommended that the exterior of the buildings be recorded photographically when the conservation work is completed to enable monitoring of further deterioration from that established baseline.

9.4.2 Uses of the Place
In consideration of the Statement of Significance, it is clear that any new use of the building and site should enable the most significant elements, such as, the decorative front façade with it’s gable end, the curved ceiling cornices and the high positioned four paneled timber awning windows, are to be retained.

Endeavours should be made to incorporate the plinth and dias in any adaptive re-use. If these elements are physically incompatible with the new use their interpretability needs to be incorporated. For example, use of stained timbers, where the floor is lowered, is a way of outlining the original architectural and Masonic features.

There are possibilities for the adaptive reuse of the building for residential apartment living, art gallery, picture theatre, a sports hall or a community function centre or preschool that incorporates an appropriate selection of these possible uses. As an art gallery, picture theatre or sports hall/gymnasium or preschool, changes and impact to the internal spatial volume could be minimal. Conversion to residential apartments would have a greater impact to the interior and exterior modifications, as the building would require to be refitted for contemporary living requirements based on current regulations and standards. Provision for parking will be a difficulty in all cases.
9.4.3 Access/Egress

Access for vehicles onto the site is via a concrete driveway off Lakeview Street. There are limitations to the number of cars able to park at tandem due to the physical limitations created by the later additions consisting of the single storey weatherboard additions to the Masonic hall.

The building, at present, is not accessible to the public due to the presence of asbestos, reported in the Hazardous Materials Survey.\(^5\) The building has been fenced off and is off limits at present. When the hazardous materials have been removed, public access to the site can be attained.

In the context of the surrounding area of Speers Point, there would be few other potential uses that would make a positive contribution to the site and the area. The possibility of the building adapted as a picture theatre, would reflect an aspect of it’s former use and is considered as having little physical impact on the overall appearance of the buildings and its potential future interpretation as a social hall for the community. Consideration should be given to the fact that there is already an ‘art house' cinema in Speer's Point.

In the event of demolition, of any of the recently added sections to the main masonry hall the materials and form, of any new intervention, need to be complementary and retain the essential form of the main building as an identifiable element.

The original entrance is to the north, facing Lakeview Street. It is considered appropriate that any future re-use and adaptation to the building could introduce an entrance from the street or from the eastern main façade. If this to take place the works should be undertaken in a sensitive manner and clearly indicate that it is new work and not intended to mimic the style of the past. It is understood that the east was the preferred aspect for the Freemasons to face their buildings and is the direction to “enlightenment”.

9.4.5 Short-Term Interventions

The building at present is vacant and is in need of immediate repairs as it is deteriorating over time. It is understood that the immediate and short-term intervention is to remove all asbestos materials safely from the site to allow for approved demolition works and improvements to the site and building. This is seen as low impact intervention, essentially remediation and making good.

A schedule of works for the exterior and interior of the building has been provided in this report and should be followed to restore the building to a safe environment ensuring the well being of the general public and potential users of the building and site. The durability of the building is paramount and is recommended for the asbestos contaminated materials to be removed in their entirety and replaced with appropriate materials and detailing undertaken with professional workmanship.

9.4.6 Longer-Term Interventions

The planning for the option of apartments for residential use for adaptive reuse of the site should not detract from interpretation of the site as a former Masonic development. The other options that have been proposed for the site are consistent with the opportunities the site provides. There is a very good possibility of spill over economic and social benefit for the locality through increased visitation of the site be it as a theatre, gymnasium or social meeting hall for various community functions.

9.4.7 Interpretation

It has been noted that the exterior of the building does not contain the typical Masonic symbols of “compass and square” or any stylized writing clearly identifying the building as a building specifically intended as a Masonic Hall. It is not clear from the history or obvious from visiting the site whether the building was embellished with symbolic figures and shapes that represented Freemasonry. It is assumed that either these symbols were removed or never incorporated into the initial design of the building.

Any photographs able to be procured from local histories of past Masons or of the Theatre group, which are appropriately captioned with names of those depicted, or images of the building internally or externally would be appropriate wall hangings within the renovated/readapted building. The best interpretation will include the retention of the exterior appearance of the Hall from Lakeview Street with its decorative masonry parapet.

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10.0 CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

The former Masonic Hall site requires a new use to ensure the ongoing retention of the building and maintenance of the site.

The Masonic Hall needs to remain identifiable and needs an injection of new activity to provide for continuing use of the building. The added component to the rear of the property could be demolished and rebuilt to better service the intended use and revitalisation of the site without loss of significant fabric.

For these reasons, the retention of the viability of the site through a compatible alternative use and the interpretability of the historical use and development of the site is a conservation imperative.

10.1 Management

Provision should be made for budgeting and possible funding for maintenance through income deriving activities.

It is important that this place be retained as an identifiable significant local place, clearly associated historically as a social meeting hall. Any work carried out on the property shall be recorded photographically and clearly identifying what has been removed, replaced, restored or reconstructed, as an ongoing record of development of the place.

10.2 Physical Interventions

By necessity, adaptation of the place to new uses will necessitate change to some elements of the place.

Some internal change to the former Masonic hall is not considered to be as critical to control. The internal plinth to ground level should be maintained as typical detailing associated with Masonic practice. Changes to the exterior of the building should be considered carefully due to the nature of significance of the place and its former intentions.

Measured drawings should be prepared reflecting the pre-change state of the fabric.

Photographic recording of the changes shall be maintained, cross referenced to a schedule describing the scope of works undertaken, the cost of the work and the people / tradespeople or companies responsible for the various sections of the works.

A complete record of correspondence, approvals and statutory authority communication, together with tender documents, quotation responses, and correspondence generated during the currency of the works as well as recording, tagging with markers that cant be readily detached or defaced, any elements of joinery or early fabric generally that has been removed in the process of the work. These elements shall be stored in a safe, dry and fire protected place on the site for reinstatement at some future time.

External works to the buildings shall be undertaken in accordance with the Burra Charter, replacing like for like materials and where details are to be reinstated, using known conditions or arrangements to guide such reinstatement.

Physical intervention including repair and conservation practice to significant fabric shall be undertaken using traditional materials and techniques of application where possible. This is particularly important in removing of all asbestos material associated with the roof and eaves and replacing with zincalume custom orb and fibre cement respectively. The re-tuck pointing to the east face of the building along with all other relevant exterior works outlined previously in this report.

External change shall be subject to the preparation of a Statement of Heritage Impact, concentrating on the streetscape impact along with the future use.

Repairs to the external brickwork as outlined with no future rendering of the exterior of the building should be permissible as this would detract from the original façade detailing.

Landscaping around the Hall should be considered and maintained to enhance visibility to the building from the street address. Tree and shrub removal from the east façade area of the building is considered appropriate in this light.
10.3 Consequences of the Policies
The policies relating to the adoption of new use of the facilities will provide for:

• Ongoing financial return that will enable the ongoing maintenance and protection of the significant elements of the site.
• The building at present is vacant and fenced off. Its heritage significance is deteriorating and its contributory appeal to the area is lacking in its present state of abandonment. With a new lease of life, the site could offer the locality of Speers Point a new attraction for the area whereby creating future employment for a range of people and at the same time promoting the heritage of the area.

The policies relating to the short term interventions will provide for:

• Stabilisation and conservation of the most important elements of heritage value on the site as the highest priority.
• Safe removal of all dangerous and contaminated materials such as, the present asbestos linings with appropriate replacement materials to enable a revitalisation of the site, as the highest priority.
• Provide amenity in support of the new use.

The policies relating to the longer term interventions will provide for:

• New use of the site will broaden the attraction and appeal of the site facilities, with the intention of drawing a wider user group to the place benefitting the area as a social attraction.

The policies relating to the interpretation of the place will provide for:

• Greater public accessibility to the history of Speers Point and particularly the awareness, and financial commitments of the Freemasons.
• Avenues for the broadening of recorded social history afforded over time through the brotherhood.
• Preservation of possible areas of future archaeological interest.

10.4 Policy Review
Policies contained in this document should be reviewed at frequent intervals, to ensure that adverse repercussions do not occur in the future.

Reviews should occur at intervals of no greater than five years.

10.5 Summary of Policy Statements
Specific conservation treatments are appropriate to different components within the place, arising from the individual contribution that each component adds to its significance.

Maintenance and in this case repairs are the basic conservation treatment necessary for the ongoing protective care of the fabric and setting of a place.

Conservation may also include one of more of the following in combination - preservation, restoration, reconstruction and adaptation as defined earlier.

10.5.1 Social Values
Policy 1 - Permit the contemporary use of the heritage building and the site for hospitality, social and community functions, educational purposes and other functions sensitive to the building’s nature and setting.

10.5.2 The Building Fabric – Preservation
Policy 2 - Understand the existing fabric. Do not undertake intervention with existing fabric unless there is a clear understanding of the ramifications of such works.
Policy 3 - Maintain the structural integrity of the buildings. Obtain specialist advice on structural and physical fabric deterioration or deformations. Monitor movements and observe for causes for such deterioration before interventions are undertaken.

Policy 4 - Comply with the statutory requirements of the BCA in the generality of access, fire protection & egress services & health amenity provisions.

Policy 5 - Prevent further deterioration of the significant fabric through conservation strategies that return existing significant fabric to its former position, consolidate deteriorating fabric, replace missing fabric only on the basis of a known former design detail and arrangement. Replacement shall be like for like.

10.5.3 The Setting

Policy 6 - Maintain a parallel built environment and setting. The setting is as important to the interpretation of the building and the place as the building itself.

10.5.4 Adaptive Reuse

Policy 7 - Ensure the future use of the building is non-interventionist externally, contained within the existing form and reflects the historical, social and aesthetic significance of the place while allowing for an economical return.

Policy 8 - Ensure any new openings in external walls are justified and do not mimic original detailing.

Policy 9 - Encourage broader emphasis on community uses.

Policy 10 - Any new building work must not destroy the outward appearance of the distinctive building. It is recommended that new works be recognisable and to be located to the rear of the main hall to preserve an unencumbered visual access to the site and building from Lakeview Street.

Policy 11 - New structures and finishes should reflect the character and appearance of the main hall. The appropriateness of design shall be determined through consultation with the Heritage Officer from Council and the heritage architect/consultant to be engaged for the preparation of an accompanying Statement of Heritage Impact, with each development proposal.

Policy 12 - Adopt provisions of the BCA in relation to fire resistance ratings and materials performance, egress, fire protection and all other matters and issues pertaining to the particular class of use proposed. Where ‘deemed to satisfy’ provision may jeopardise significant fabric, seek alternative fire engineered solutions.

Policy 13 - Provide sufficient security and perimeter lighting and surveillance to deter building damage by vandals.

Policy 14 - Provide a balance between public access and the need to service the facility.

10.5.5 Interpretation

Policy 15 - Interpretative signs should be introduced to the perimeter of the building site to signify its standing as a former Freemason building.

10.5.6 Access

Policy 16 - Vehicular access onto the site is limited. Access is to be enhanced through the provision of disabled access to the building and the provision of any other associated formal car parking spaces, balanced by retention of the buildings setting and visibility from the public domain.

Policy 17 - Pedestrian access is easily achieved from Lakeview Street to the site.

10.5.7 Archival Recording

Policy 18 - Ensure that there is a record of changes made within the former Masonic Hall building and its site.

Policy 19 - The archival record of changes shall be maintained by the facility management and the Lake Macquarie City Council for deposit in the main Library for free access to the
public. Matters of financial privacy and other confidential information as determined by council management shall be withheld from public access.

10.5.8 Maintenance
Policy 20 - Conservation work should be guided by a recurrent maintenance schedule.

10.5.9 Consultation with Indigenous People
Policy 21 - Future development on site should be undertaken after consultation with the Local Aboriginal Land Council and other stakeholders.

10.5.1 Adoption and Review
Policy 22 - Protection and development of the site should be guided by a current Conservation Management document. This may only be by a review of the condition of the fabric and photographic recording in the key areas established in this document.
11 CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT

11.1 What is required?
All Emergency and Short-Term intervention should occur in the order and to the time frames set out in the this document.

The property owner should:

- Arrange for the preparation of a Maintenance Schedule or checklist for the various elements of the site, some of which can be carried out by the owners.
- Develop whatever budgeting initiatives may be necessary to fund the long-term interventions and should identify a methodology for systematic review of this initiative.
- Identify the role and responsibilities of the person responsible for ensuring the implementation of the recurring maintenance tasks and should formalise a methodology for reviewing the relevance of the Maintenance Program.

11.2 How will it be achieved?
A maintenance schedule and time programme should be established, based on the fabric assessment and the identified defects present in the building identified in this document and also for the projected time for implementation of planned changes and adaptations to the building and the site.

These identified items should be broken up into short and long term elements and the intervals between attention need to be established as well as a method for recording and making notes on the condition of the element involved and what was actually done on what date and by whom. This record shall be kept in two concurrent locations and be regularly updated.

A heritage architect/consultant experienced in traditional building methods and working with and guiding contractors in the intervention into significant fabric should be engaged to prepare documentation for the works and to liaise with authorities and obtain tenders where appropriate for the particular works involved.

If an experienced heritage architect is not involved in the design and documentation phase, then a suitably qualified practitioner in heritage matters shall be engaged to undertake a review of the final design, make design review suggestions for incorporation and prepare the necessary support documents to accompany a Development Application.

11.3 Resources and Expertise Required
All identified and short-term interventions should be implemented by tradespeople experienced in traditional building fabric.

The owner should set aside a recurrent budget for the ongoing conservation and maintenance of the significant building and site.
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Stephen Booker  
*B.Sc.(Arch.), B.Arch. M.Herit. Cons., AIA, APTiDirector*  
and  
Neelam Praghananga  
B.Arch.  
and  
Sylvia Azzi  
B. Arch.  
for  
*carste STUDIO pty ltd*  
t/a stephen booker architect