

**SUBJECT: NOM 28/11/17 - RETENTION OF THE STORE FACADE IN
NEWCASTLE BUS INTERCHANGE**

REPORT BY: PLANNING AND REGULATORY

CONTACT: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND REGULATORY

DIRECTOR COMMENT

On 9 November 2017 Transport for NSW (TfNSW) announced that they had determined the Newcastle Bus Interchange Review of Environmental Factors (REF) following a four week public display period between June and August 2017.

As part of that REF included to demolish 'The Store' building. In support of the proposal to demolish the Store, a detailed Statement of Heritage Impact (SoHI) has been prepared in accordance with the principals contained in the Burra Charter. The purpose of the SoHI was to better understand the Store's cultural heritage values and assess its significance.

The concept of cultural significance is used in Australian heritage practice and legislation to encompass all of the cultural values and meanings that might be recognised in a place. Cultural significance is the sum of the qualities or values that a place has, including the five values: aesthetic, historic, scientific, social and spiritual. Each of these criteria may have tangible and intangible aspects and these values can frequently be interdependent, and may also be in conflict.

The Burra Charter affirms that the aim of conservation is to retain the cultural significance of the place. ICOMOS seeks the protection of the spirit of a place through a holistic approach that identifies *'constraints and opportunities in relation to the assessment of significant values and the setting of the heritage item, based on the definitions of terms in the Burra Charter'* and [most relevantly, Article 8].

One of the questions assessed in the SoHI is keeping the façade of The Store maintain the cultural heritage significance of the place overall. The SoHI concluded that the Store's significance largely lies in its intangible social and historic values, with its architectural and streetscape contribution being of lesser quality.

As part of the assessment, consideration was also given to the retention of the building's façade, but this is a practice that is now largely discouraged by heritage architects and conservation practitioners. The practice of facadism is viewed as a design compromise between demolition and preservation that does not serve the original building or the new building behind the façade well. The result of façadism is often a strange hybrid building that does not meld the new and the old in a coherent manner.

The outcomes of the SoHI indicate that the important cultural heritage values of the Store can be better interpreted through a range of different ways, thus preserving the spirit of the place for future generations.

TfNSW is the appropriate regulatory authority for the determination of the Newcastle Bus Interchange Review of Environmental Factors (REF) and there is no legal appeal mechanism available.

To provide Council with an overview of how the heritage interpretation of the Store's values has been undertaken and how it is proposed to be recorded within the future development of the site, it is recommended that:

1. Council request TfNSW to provide a workshop to Councillors on The Store's SoHI and proposed mitigation measures and;
2. Council commits to pursue appropriate recognition of The Store building through formal consultation with TfNSW as per State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007.

* - The *Australian ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, The Burra Charter 2013* (Burra Charter) and the associated series of Practice Notes provide a best practice standard for managing cultural heritage places in Australia.