

## STATEMENT OF HERITAGE IMPACT

Removal of

PLUMBERS WORKSHOP  
Peninsula Drive

BREAKFAST POINT  
NSW

### Amendment History

Issue	Date	Amendments
A	16 October 2012	Issued for review & comment
B	19 June 2013	Issued for Concept Plan Amendment Application

## Statement of Heritage Impact

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The history of the Mortlake Gasworks has been extensively researched and documented by Godden Mackay Logan and a brief history of the Plumbers Workshop is presented in their "Mortlake Gasworks Conservation Plans Miscellaneous Structures" 1989.

Commencing in 1913, an extensive building program was carried out at the Mortlake Gasworks, partly to meet an increased demand for gas and partly to replace plant at the older Darling Harbour gasworks, which was resumed.

The Plumbers Workshop was one of a number of workshops constructed during this period and was completed in May 1915. Originally, the workshop buildings comprised the 2 storey building which remains today and a single storey wing which extended approximately 90m to the north. The profile of the single storey building can be seen on the northern wall of the extant building. Access to the upper level of the two storey building was from a roadway, which sloped to the north, located immediately to the west of the building. The retaining wall on the western side of the building supported the roadway and may have been constructed before the workshops.

The single storey workshops housed a variety of trades, including fitters and machinists and carpenters, whilst the two storey portion housed the plumbers workshop and store. The workshops were intended to ensure that the gasworks were self contained and self supporting. All repairs and maintenance of the works were carried out by tradesmen employed directly by the works, and much new construction work was also carried out by works staff. This self sufficiency was maintained for most of the life of the works.

In 1971, the production of coal gas was superseded by a production method using naphtha, this in turn was replaced by natural gas from the South Australian gas fields in 1975.

The single storey portion of the workshop complex and the roadway were demolished in the 1990's during rehabilitation of the Breakfast Point site.



Photograph 1 c1936 (Milton Kent Photo)

The Plumbers Workshop can be seen in the centre of the photograph

### DESCRIPTION OF BUILDING

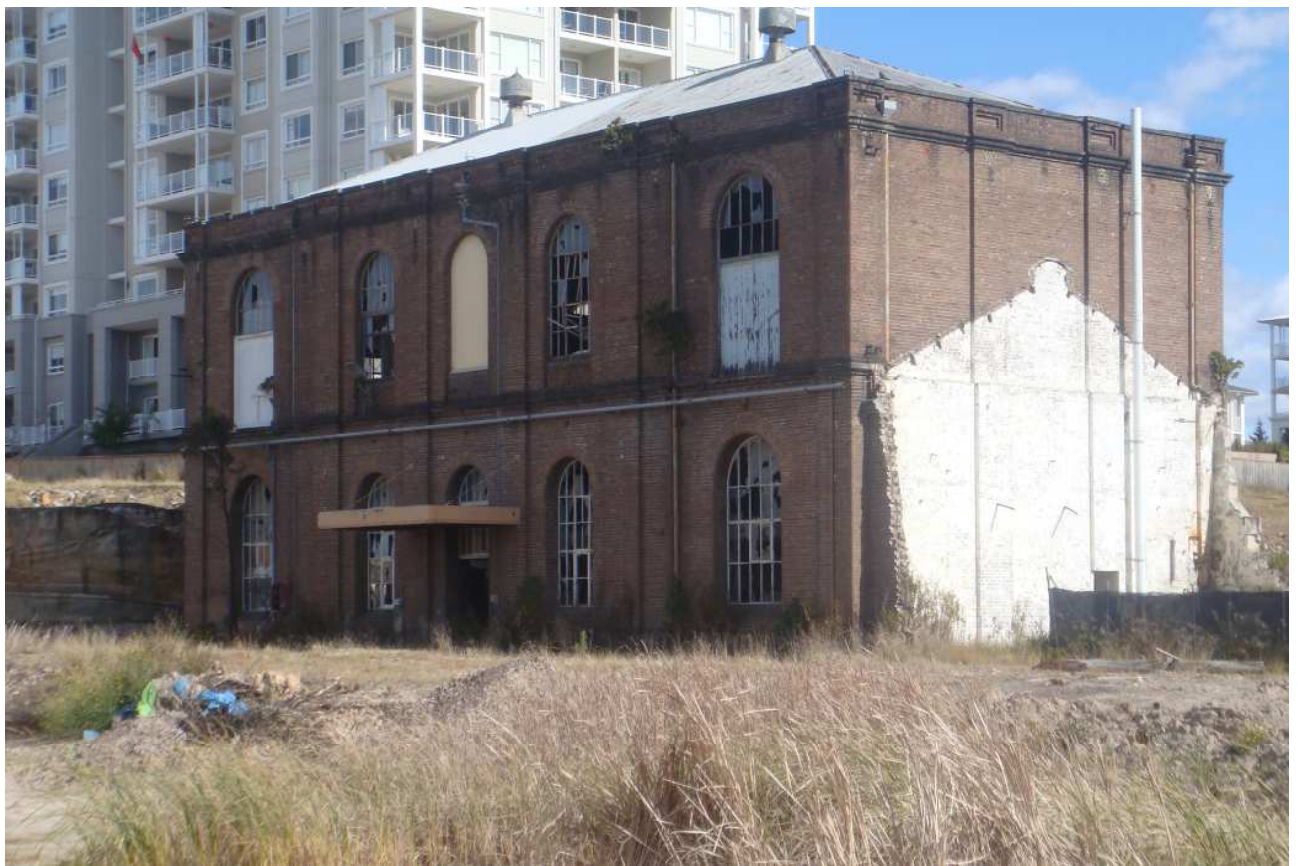
The remaining portion of the workshop complex, the plumbers workshop & store, is a 2 storey building of rectangular plan, approximately 30m x 13.8m. The building is of brick construction, with the walls divided into bays

by expressed engaged piers and with large arched windows, echoing the treatment of other buildings on the site such as the Powerhouse and the Blacksmiths Workshop. Pre-cast concrete units form a string course at the upper floor level and a decorative corbel below the parapet.

The upper floor is of reinforced concrete supported on reinforced concrete columns which also support a mezzanine floor within the lower storey.

The corrugated steel hipped roof is steeply pitched (33°) and is supported by timber purlins on lightweight steel trusses fabricated from angles and round bar. It is topped by two ventilators. The roof is drained by box gutters concealed behind the parapet which in turn discharge into rainwater heads on each façade..

The large, arched windows are timber framed, typically divided into 24 panes with fine glazing bars. One window opening on the eastern façade has been filled in, other openings have a pair of timber doors below a 12 pane window. On the western elevation, the central bay is also occupied by a pair of timber doors with a window above.



Photograph 2. Plumbers Workshop viewed from the northeast, with outline of single storey building visible on northern façade.

A steel awning has been installed at a later date over the central opening in the eastern façade at the lower level, partially obscuring the opening. Pipework which does not appear to be related to the building's function has been fixed to both the eastern & western facades.

Some remnants of the walls of the single storey building are still attached to the northern wall of the Plumbers Workshop and the outline of the single storey building is delineated by painted brickwork and pockets in the wall for purlins.

The structure of the building appears to be sound, although windows and doors are in various states of repair, with the majority of panes of glass broken, and glazing bars missing in some locations.





Photograph 3. Plumbers Workshop viewed from the west. The sandstone retaining wall which forms the western wall of the lower storey is visible.



Photograph 4. Steel roof trusses with timber purlins & hip rafters



Photograph 5. Lower level & mezzanine

## LISTINGS

The Plumbers Workshop is listed as item I545 in Schedule 5 of Canada Bay Draft Local Environmental Plan 2012. This listing is a new inclusion in Schedule 5. There are no other listings for this item.

## ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The NSW Heritage Office publication "Assessing Heritage Significance" sets out 7 criteria for assessing the heritage significance of an item or place. The criteria are:

**Criterion (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);

**Criterion (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);

**Criterion (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);

**Criterion (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;

**Criterion (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);

**Criterion (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);

**Criterion (g)** – an item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSW's

- cultural or natural places; or
- cultural or natural environments.

(or a class of the local area's

- cultural or natural places; or
- cultural or natural environments.)

Criterion (a). The Plumbers Workshop is important in the course, or pattern of Canada Bay's cultural history as it provides evidence of the past industrial use of the Breakfast Point site and of the self-sufficient nature of the gasworks operation

Criterion (b). The Plumbers Workshop does not meet this criterion

Criterion (c). The Plumbers Workshop does not meet this criterion

Criterion (d). The Plumbers Workshop does not meet this criterion

Criterion (e). The Plumbers Workshop has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Canada Bay's cultural history as it provides evidence of the self-sufficient nature of operations at the gasworks.

Criterion (f). The Plumbers Workshop possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Canada Bay's cultural history as it is one of the few buildings from the gasworks era remaining on the Breakfast Point site

Criterion (g). The Plumbers Workshop is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of Canada Bay's cultural places because it is representative of the past industrial usage of the site.

## STATEMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The Plumbers Workshop is a robust brick building with pleasing proportions and exterior detailing in brickwork and pre-cast concrete. It is one of the few buildings remaining on the Breakfast Point site from the gasworks era, and provides evidence of the self-sufficient operation of the gasworks. It's significance has been diminished by the earlier demolition of the northern single storey wing and by the removal of all equipment from the building, leaving little evidence as to its past use.

The Plumbers Workshop is considered to be of local cultural significance.

## THE PROPOSAL

It is proposed that the Plumbers Workshop be demolished and the site utilised for the construction of a new residential apartment building.

## HERITAGE IMPACT OF PROPOSAL

Options for Retention

Potential options for the retention and adaptive re-use of the building include:

- Community purposes, such as a community hall and amenities
- Commercial uses
- Residential apartments
- Mixed uses, including residential apartments + community facilities

Community facilities are already well provided for on the Breakfast Point site, with a community hall and the Breakfast Point Country Club providing a wide range of facilities.

There is limited demand for commercial space at Breakfast Point, the No 1 Office and Meter Readers Office are better located and more suitable for commercial uses than the Plumbers Workshop, which is located in the centre of a residential precinct. This restricts access for both pedestrians and vehicles. Provision of parking within the building is not practicable and space for on-grade parking is limited.

A concept proposal for the adaptive re-use of the building for mixed use was developed. The proposal comprised 8 loft style apartments on the upper floor, a swimming pool & associated facilities on the lower level and gymnasium areas on the mezzanine floor. When costed, this proposal was not economically viable.

## CONCLUSIONS

Demolition of the Plumbers Workshop will result in the loss of a building which contributes to an understanding the history of the Breakfast Point site.

However, given that the possible identified uses are either impracticable or economically unviable, there appears to be no other option.

Proposed mitigation measures include:

- Archival recording of the entire structure by means of measured drawings and photographic survey
- Examination of concrete elements such as columns and floor slabs during demolition to reveal details of the reinforcement used, thus addressing the research potential of the building
- An interpretive display could be included either within the entry lobby of any new building erected on the site or in a landscaped area adjacent to the site of the Plumbers Workshop.

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