

APRIL 2004

CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN & ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE IMPACT



KAPAU HOLDINGS PTY LTD

285-287 George Street, Sydney

GRAHAM BROOKS AND ASSOCIATES PTY LTD
ARCHITECTS AND HERITAGE CONSULTANTS

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1.0

Introduction

1.1 Context of the Report

This Conservation Management Plan and Heritage Impact Assessment has been prepared to accompany the submission of a development application for Beneficial House at 285-287 George Street, Sydney.

Beneficial House is listed as a heritage item on Schedule 1 of the *Central Sydney Heritage Local Environmental Plan (Heritage LEP) 2000*. The building, which was originally built as a department store, has been altered and modified several times since its construction in the 1920s. Currently retail spaces occupy the lower floors of the building, while the upper floors are used for office accommodation.

Currently the owners of the building propose to construct additional offices on the roof. Given the high heritage status of the building and the nature of the currently proposed works, Council require a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) to be submitted for this development application and a Heritage Impact Assessment to identify how the proposal satisfies the CMP.

1.2 Site Location

The property at 285-287 George Street comprises two allotments, which are Lot 22 in Deposited Plan 56723 and Lot 23 in Deposited Plan 59753. The oblong-shaped site is located opposite the junction of Hunter Street and George Street and has a main frontage to George Street. It also has a rear laneway access from Wynyard Lane. There is a slight fall in the natural ground from Wynyard Lane to George Street.

The building covers the whole site, with an approximate site area of 417,2 m². The building was originally constructed in 1923 and has a basement and seven storeys.

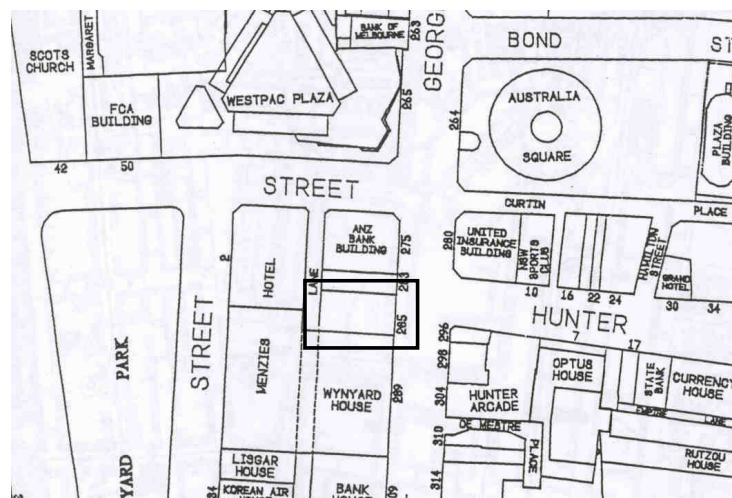


Figure 1-1 Location map

1.3 Methodology

This Conservation Management Plan has been prepared in accordance with guidelines in the Australian ICOMOS *Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance*, known as *The Burra Charter*, and the *NSW Heritage Manual*.

1.4 Documentary and photographic sources

The historical outline is based on primary and secondary documentary evidence provided by the Land and Property Information of NSW, the Archives of Sydney City Council, the Mitchell Library and the State Library of NSW.

Organisations such as the National Trust of Australia (NSW) and the Royal Australian Institute of Architects were also contacted and provided information.

Kate Rodé took photographs of the building in September 2003 and March 2004.

1.5 Authorship

Kate Rodé heritage consultant of Graham Brooks and Associates has prepared this report.

2.0

Historical Outline

2.1 Early History of the Site

MILITARY BARRACKS

In the early nineteenth century the land containing the subject site was part of the grounds of the Military Barracks, which occupied fifteen acres of valuable land in this part of the town. Until the late-1840s a ten feet high and two feet thick, square block stone wall ran along the western side of George Street, which sharply divided the growing commercial centre of early Sydney from its military guards. The fortress-like walls began just north of present Margaret Street and extended to Barrack Street, taking up the whole area between George and Clarence Street¹.

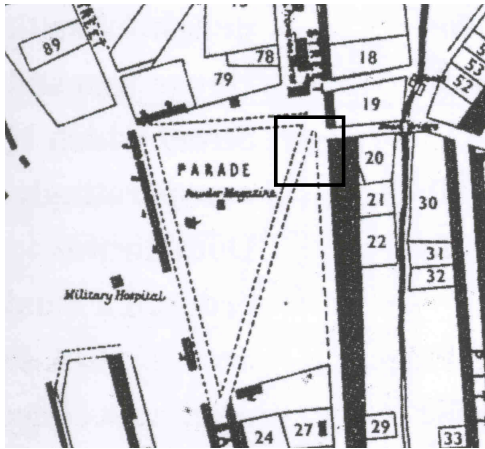


Figure 2-1 The location of the site shown on Meehan's Plan of the Town of Sydney, 1807 (Source: Ashton & Waterson, 2000)



Figure 2-2 Detail of the Plan of Sydney, 1836 by J. Basire, showing the approximate location of the subject site within the Military Barracks ground. (Source: Ashton & Waterson, 2000)

The two-storey barrack blocks stood back from George Street, and there were gates on the four sides of the walls. The main gate, with guardhouse, was in George Street, close to the present Wynyard Station ramp.

The barracks constrained the development of the area for general commercial purposes. Investors and town planners, however, had to wait until 1847, when the new Paddington barracks were completed and the troops marched away. The old barracks were demolished and between 1850 and 1853 the valuable barracks land was subdivided and sold at between forty pounds and eighty pounds a square foot. The present network of streets was laid out extending York Street to Margaret Street and beyond².

¹ Sharp, 1987

² Sharp, 1987

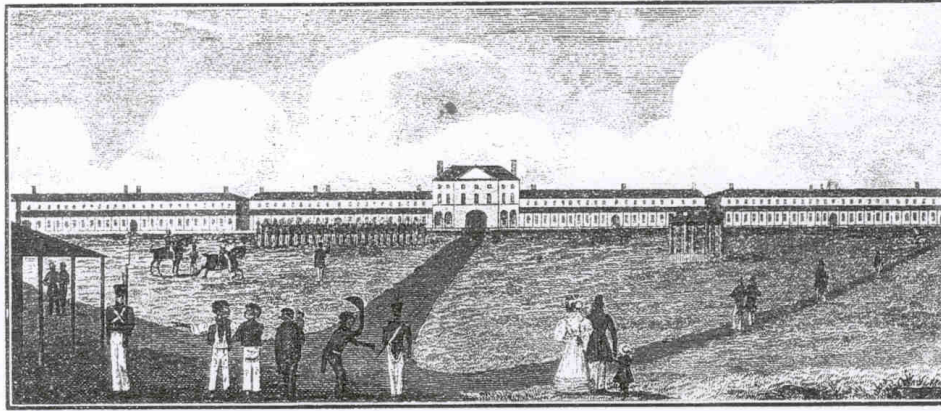


Figure 2-3 The military barracks and grounds in George Street in the 1830s (Source: Mitchell Library, Small Picture File)

Within a few years a great change has come over this part of the city and shops, insurance offices, warehouses and boarding houses were built. John Reeve purchased the two allotments, $8\frac{1}{4}$ perches each, which form the subject site. He paid £915 and 15 shilling for lot 22 on 27th June 1851 and £866 and 5 shilling for lot 23 on the same day³.

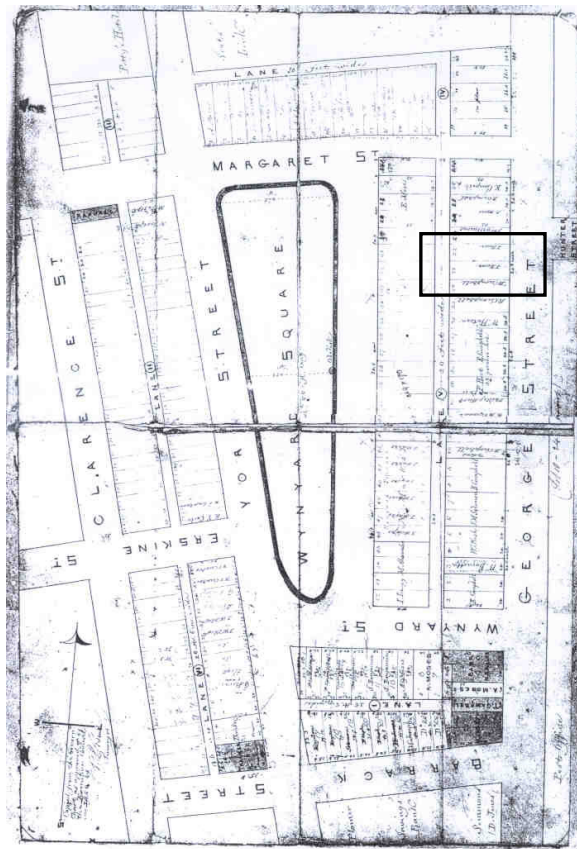


Figure 2-4 Plan showing the subdivision of the military grounds. Plan copied from the Government Chart as approved by the Executive Council in 1850, by P.L. Bemi, Surveyor

³ Grant to John Reeve, Serial No.227, p.9&10 (Land & Property Information)

(Source: Mitchell Library)

BUSINESS PREMISES, 1850S

In 1853 both allotments were conveyed to Philip Hart and two three-storey buildings were built on the site, extending back to Wynyard Lane. Contemporary rate books described the houses as brick and stone buildings with slate roof containing 6/7 rooms each and another three-storey component at the rear, containing three rooms. Until the 1880s the buildings were listed as 277 & 279 George Street.

The property at 277 was described as “office & store”, “shop”, “house & store” and “shops & offices” in various 19th century Rate Books. From the mid-1860 to 1895 James Williams owned the building, then it was transferred to William Barnard Walford⁴. From 1913 Walter Hull, medical practitioner became the owner of the property. *Sands Directories* listed John F. Holle tailor and his company for more than fifty years (between 1861 and 1911) as the occupier of the house. In the 1910s the building accommodated offices of importers and brokers and shops and workshops of hatters and shirtmakers.

The house at 279 was described as “shop & dwelling”, “store, house & shop” and “shop and offices” in the 19th century Rate Books of various years. The property was transferred from Hart’s ownership to Lebbeus Hordern in 1877. From 1890 to 1897 Thomas A. Dibbs was the registered owner of the property, which then also became part of the Walford Estate⁵. According to entries in early *Sands Directories* and Rate Books (1858-1863), the first tenant of the property was the boot warehouse of Delaney Brothers. In the following decades first Smith & Co tailors (mid-1860s to mid-1890s), then Cavanagh & Co tailors (1895 to early-1910s) occupied the building along with a number of other offices.

In mid-1920 both properties were transferred to Peapes and Company Limited.



Figure 2-5 View of Hunter Street, 1875, showing 285 George Street (then 277 George Street) in the background (Source: State Library of NSW)

⁴ Application No. 9753 (Land and Property Information)

⁵ Certificate of Title



Figure 2-6 The old premises which stood on the site, shown in Peapes' October 1922 Catalogue (Source: State Library of NSW)

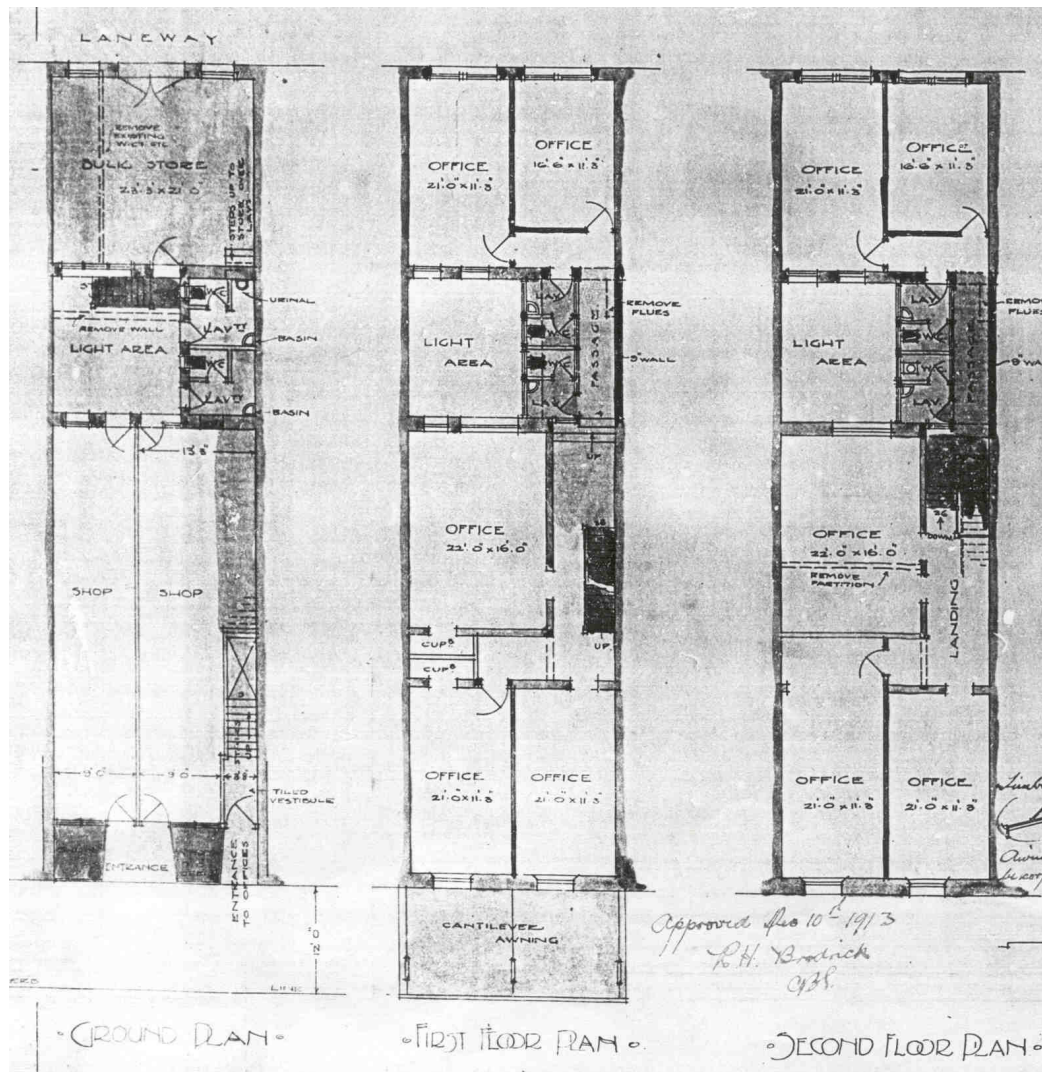


Figure 2-7 Plan of the building, which occupied the site at 285 George Street from the early 1850s to the early-1920s (Source: City of Sydney Archives, BA0901/13)

2.2 Peapes & Co. Ltd

In 1866 two young Englishmen, George Peapes and William Shaw, who had come to Australia to improve their position, purchased for £40 the fittings and the lease of a small shop at 338 George Street. Here they started a Men's Outfitters, one of the partners living in the dwelling attached to the shop.

Steadily and surely the business grew, until late in the 1880s it became Peapes & Co. In 1898, when Mr Peapes, the senior partner died, the business was formed into a limited company. From year to year the volume of business had increased and a move became essential. This was to an old building at 309 George Street, spreading into 311 George Street some years afterwards. To these premises enlargements were made from time to time, until, in 1923, the lease running out, the business was transferred to Peapes own new building at 285-287 George Street.

The picture of the new building first appeared on the cover of the 1922 Christmas Catalogue, which included the following description of the premises under construction:

"It will consist of seven floors and a basement, and will mark, for Sydney, an absolutely new departure in modern shop architecture and fittings. The whole will be utilised exclusively for display, selling and manufacture of Peapes' distinctive goods for men's wear and use. Appointment rooms for country clients and their friends, and lavatories for customers will be part of the extensive provision made for more convenient shopping. The new showrooms will allow a much more advantageous display than is possible at present. They will greatly increase Peapes' facilities in all directions...."

The site of the New Building is in George Street, a few yards north of the present location. It faces Hunter Street, and will be a landmark very easy to find. The position is unique, not only because it commands a full view up Hunter Street, but also because it is contiguous to the leading hotels, clubs, financial, commercial and shipping offices, and it is in the centre of the business area most frequented by men and boys".

The Company's new building officially opened on 17th December 1923 "before a most representative body of men"⁶. The image of the building remained Peapes' symbol and appeared on catalogues and newspaper advertisements until the 1950s-60s.

2.2.1 The New Building

The seven-storey load bearing brick building of Peapes Department Store was a scholarly adaptation of the 18th century English Georgian style to a medium-rise city commercial building, a rare application of the Georgian vocabulary of the Inter-War Revival Georgian style for a building of this size.

The Inter-War Georgian Revival architectural style was established in the early 20th century in Britain and America. The revived Georgian style continued to be popular throughout the 1920s and 1930s, often used for houses, blocks of flats, institutional

⁶ Journal of the Retail Trader's Association of NSW, January 1924. pp173

buildings and commercial structures of modest size.

In Australia the Inter-War Georgian Revival style began to make its presence felt during the second decade of the 20th century, largely owing to the effort of William Hardy Wilson. On his travels he admired American Colonial architecture in both its original and revived versions and had almost single-handedly rediscovered and recorded the early 19th century architecture in NSW and Tasmania⁷.

Critics, however, often regarded the revival of the Georgian style, with disdain and progressive architects on the grounds that buildings design in this style were mindlessly derivative, retrogressive and dull⁸.

Peapes Department Store was given a negative reception by contemporary architects, too. An article on the completed building appeared in the 12 November 1923 edition of *Building* and heavily criticised the design.

"The architecture of this façade faithfully portrays the unimaginative uniformity aimed at by devotees of the Georgian cult. This style is certainly one that lands itself to absence of architectural features and consequent cheapness of construction, but its popularity among architects of the younger generation is such, that we must begin to suspect it of being about the safest refuge for those who lack inspiration in design. If simplicity was the only quality required of a building, it certainly fulfils that requirement, otherwise it is so devoid of design as to hardly warrant the use of the word of architecture, the quality of which may be gauged by the unpleasant or pleasant sensations it produces. This building lacks the elements of a composition, such as climax or dominating factor, secondary climaxes, and sub-motives to attain the highest interest and contrast one with the other. There is an absence of vertical members, and likewise horizontal members, unless the puny projection, which forms the drip of the sills on the 3rd and top floors may be glorified as "members" having relation to design. The only relief attempted is the two rows of circular-headed fanlights, not happily disposed, for surely this treatment if introduced anywhere should have been at the top to form a climax and the line of balconettes to the French windows. Structurally the building may be correct, and the openings may show some regard to proportion, but a building of this description adds little towards beautifying a street. To reduce the small Georgian type of window (which, by the way is totally unsuited to commercial work), it was necessary to introduce a large light well in the centre of the building, utilising much valuable space.

Peapes & Co., however, was pleased with the new building and its Georgian front, explaining that "the idea of choosing this style was to preserve the early Australian architecture, generally spoken of as Macquarie", but also adding that "the interior fittings, of course, will reveal all that is modern⁹.

⁷ Apperley, 1989

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Journal of the Retail Trader's Association of NSW, January 1924. pp180

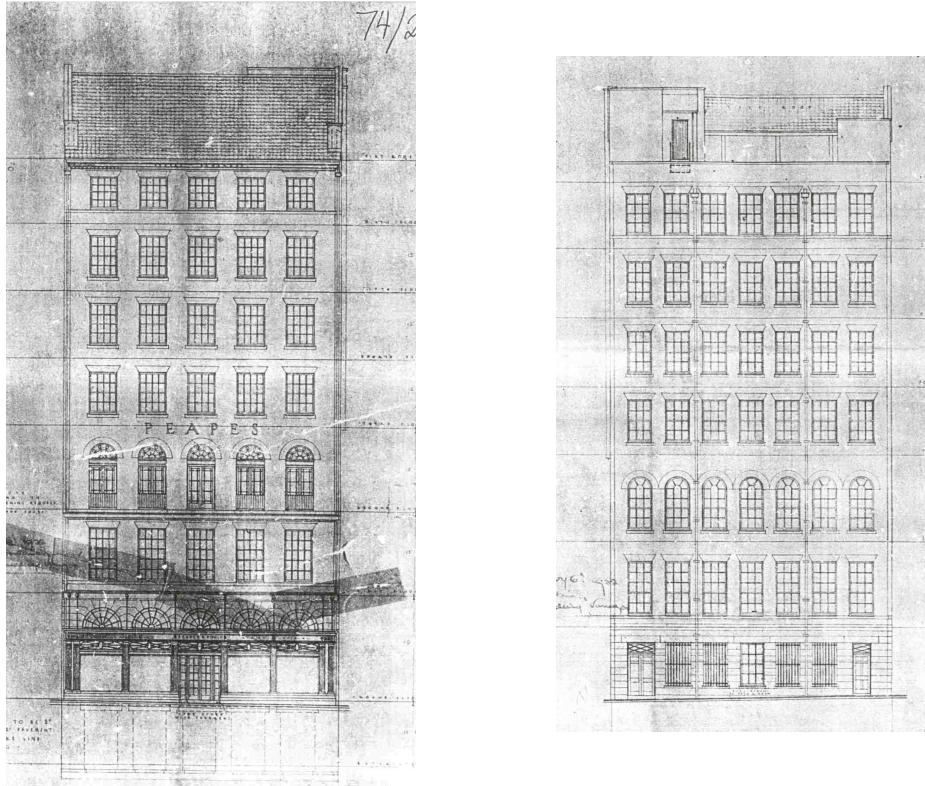


Figure 2-8 New business premises at 285-287 George Street Sydney for Messrs Peapes and Company Ltd, plans by Wilson, Neave and Berry Architects, 1922. Elevations (Source: City of Sydney Archives. BA 74/22)

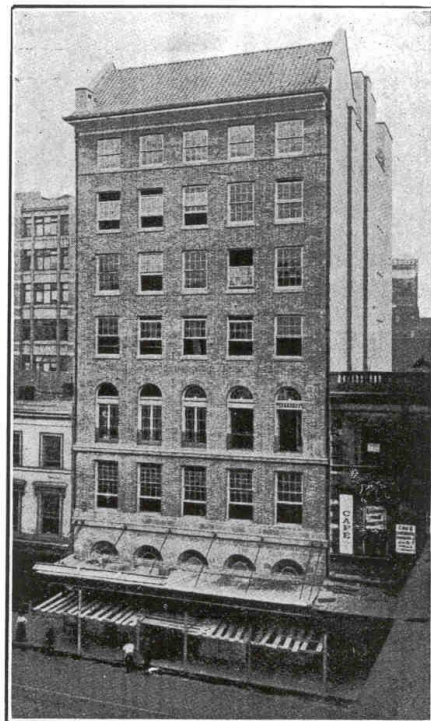


Figure 2-9 The completed building as it appeared in the "Building" in 1923 (Source: Building, November 12, 1923)

Internally the first and second floor retail spaces were organised around an oval void over the ground floor, while the upper floors contained a central light well. Contemporary description of the interior stated that "the central lighting, by means of galleries, gives a beautiful light throughout the building at all times of the day; and when daylight fails, the lighting then is by Verieux light, which is installed all through the selling sections, so that the nearest effect to daylight is obtained¹⁰.

The internal spaces were fitted out with Queensland maple stained to look like mahogany whilst the floors were polished jarrah with a neutral pale blue carpet. The engaged columns, incorporating the peach and the bat into the decoration, illustrated Wilson's great desire to integrate Eastern symbolism.

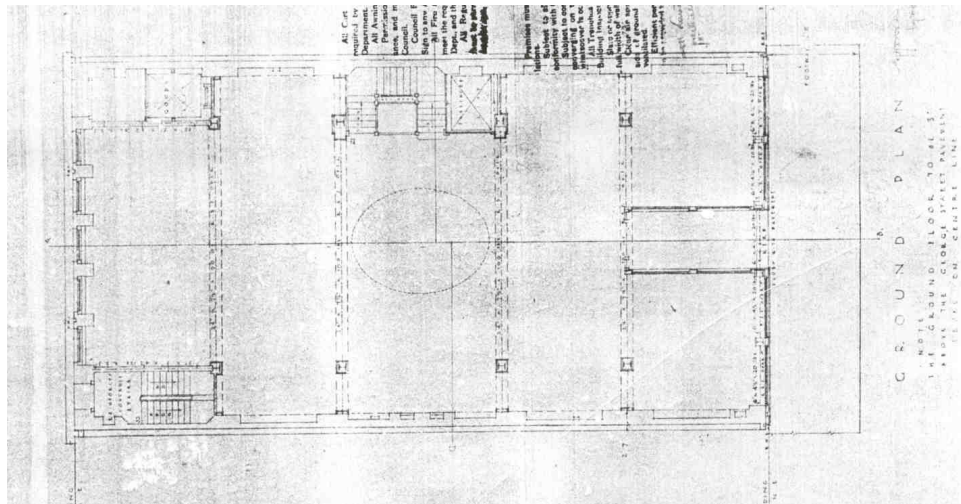


Figure 2-10 Ground floor plan by Wilson, Neave and Berry, 1922 (Source: City of Sydney Archives, BA 74/22)

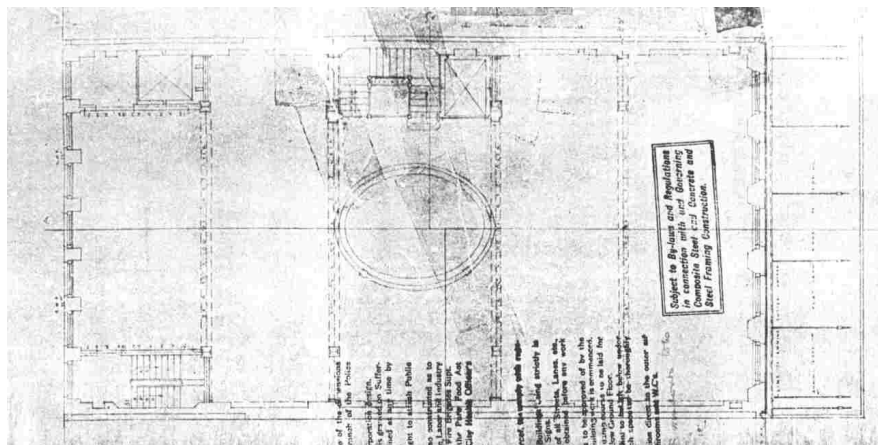


Figure 2-11 First floor plan by Wilson, Neave and Berry, 1922 (Source: City of Sydney Archives, BA 74/22)

¹⁰ Journal of the Retail Trader's Association of NSW, January 1924. pp180

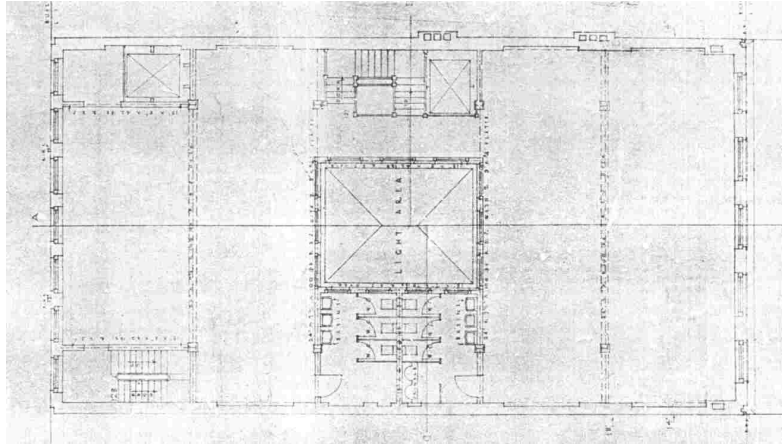


Figure 2-12 Plan of typical upper floor by Wilson, Neave and Berry, 1922 (Source: City of Sydney Archives, BA 74/22)

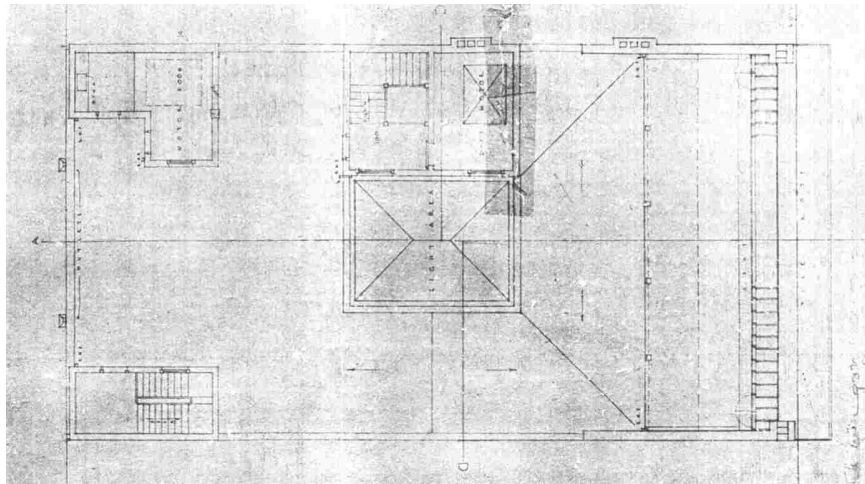


Figure 2-13 Plan of the roof floor by Wilson, Neave and Berry, 1922 (Source: City of Sydney Archives, BA 74/22)



Figure 2-14 Pepys Room, appearing in the 1926 Winter Catalogue. Pepys Room was advertised as a "Period" Room, for use of clients – for reading, writing, smoking or keeping appointments. Peapes extended a cordial invitation to utilise it as a city rendezvous for clients (Source: 1926 Winter Catalogue and SMH, 27 Marc 1929, p13)

2.2.2 Occupation and use

Peapes Menswear occupied the building between 1923 and 1970. Two sketches of the layout survived from this period providing a range of useful information about the condition and use of the building. One is the Fire Insurance Plan (c.1940); the other is a building survey with a hand-drawn sketch, done by Council's Architect and Building Surveyor's Department in 1939. Both sketches and attached descriptions confirm that the building had an ordinary construction. It had steel stanchions and beams encased with concrete for fire protection, wooden floors and a central light area with glazed wooden walls. There was an unenclosed electric passenger lift located along the northern boundary wall along with the open timber stairs. There was a fire enclosed concrete stair located in the southwestern corner of the building and an unenclosed electric goods lift close to the rear entrance. There was no sprinkler in the building, only fire hydrants and electric alarm system. The means of fire escape was assessed adequate.

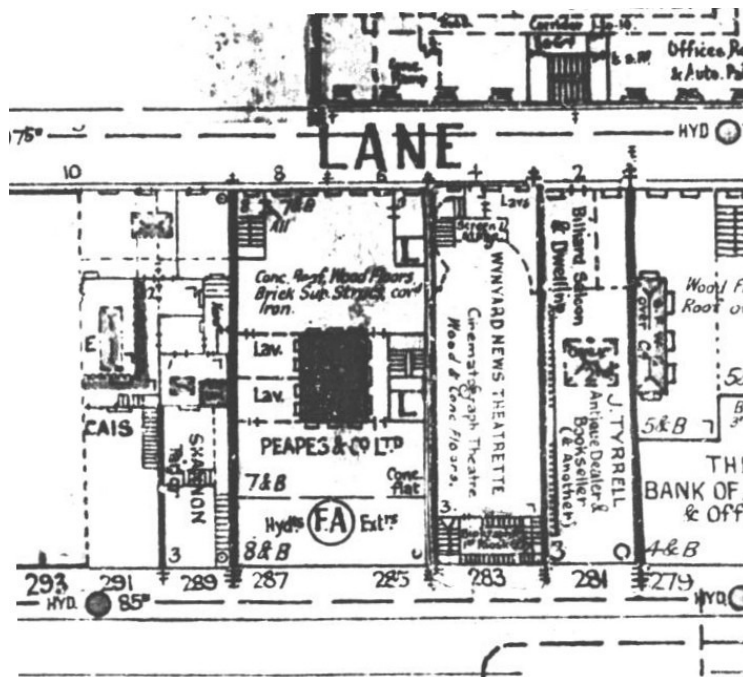


Figure 2-15 Fire & Underwriters Association of NSW Detail Survey Maps, c. 1940, showing the layout of the building (Source: Mitchell Library)

The whole building was occupied by Peapes & Co. Ltd, with an estimated 300 person being present at any time. The leather goods department used the basement and on the ground floor there was the general men's department. The ready-made suit sales occupied the first floor and the woollen goods department the second floor. The sixth floor accommodated workrooms and the staff lunch room.

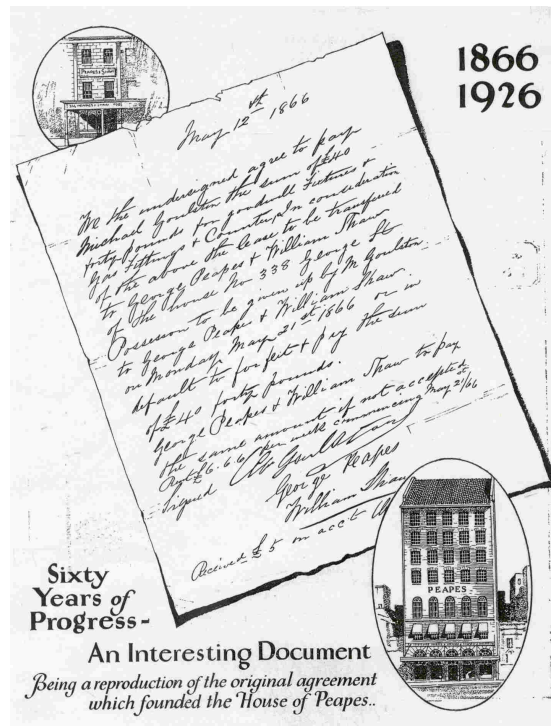


Figure 2-16 The image of the building was used as the symbol of Peapes' progress (Source: Journal of Retail Traders' Association)

A Range of Smart Sac Suits

(Ready-to-Wear)

TWO-BUTTON STYLES.

CB 30—Medium Weight English Tweed Blue-Grey Subdued Overcheck, all wool . . . 70/-
 CB 31—Medium Weight English Tweed, grey, with rosea tint subdued overcheck, all wool . . . 70/-
 CB 32—Dark Grey All Wool Australian Tweed . . . 75/-
 CB 33—Fawn All Wool Australian Tweed, light weight . . . 75/-
 CB 34—Fox's Cheviot (Rough) Serge, winter weight, pure indigo dye . . . 84/-
 CB 35—Fawn-Green Australian Tweed, Donegal finish . . . 84/-
 CB 36—Medium Grey English Tweed, open weave . . . 84/-
 CB 37—Medium Grey Tweed, fancy neat stripes . . . 90/-
 CB 38—Dark Grey Australian Tweed . . . 90/-
 CB 39—Fancy Dark and Medium Grey English Saxony Finish Tweed . . . 95/-
 CB 40—Medium Grey Worsted . . . 97/6
 CB 41—Fawn and Grey Donegal Tweeds . . . 105/-
 CB 42—Medium Grey Pinhead Cheek Worsted . . . 105/-
 CB 43—Fox's Light Weight Cheviot Serge . . . 105/-
 CB 44—Dark Grey Summer Weight Tweed . . . 110/-
 CB 45—Navy Blue Fast Dye Australian Serge . . . 115/-
 CB 46—Olive Green with Blue Overcheck Hopsack, 115/-
 CB 47—Medium and Dark Grey English Flannel, 115/-
 CB 48—N. Blue Vicuna Serge, 28/6/-, 28/15/-, 27/7/-
 CB 49—Med. Grey Eng. Worsted, 28/10/-, 27/7/-
 CB 50—Pinhead Cheek in Pure Worsted, finished with superior quality trimmings throughout, 27/15/-, 28/15/-
 CB 51—Light Grey Small Cheek Pure Worsted, hand finished throughout . . . 29/0/-

ONE-BUTTON STYLE.

CB 52—Peapes have a varied range of Blue Serges. Prices from 110/- to 210/10/-. All pure indigo dyes.
 CB 52A—A smart range of serviceable Greys, Blues and Lovats. Prices from 24/15/- to 28/8/-

THREE-BUTTON STYLE

CB 53—Dark Grey Australian Tweed . . . 105/-
 CB 54—Navy Blue Serge, 115/-
 CB 55—Others in Fancy and Plain Tweeds, up to 27/7/-

A New Introduction—SAC SUITS WITH EXTRA TROUSERS.

CB 56—Medium Grey English Tweed, hopsack finish . . . 95/-
 CB 57—Dark Lovat Australian Tweed . . . 105/-
 CB 58—Medium Grey Tweed . . . 117/6
 CB 59—Dark Grey Self Herringbone Tweed, 28/12/6.
 CB 60—Navy Blue Australian Cheviot, light weight . . . 28/15/-

CB 30 to 51

CB 52 to 52a

CB 53 to 55.

Figure 2-17 Ready-to-Wear collection from the 1923 yearly Peapes catalogue



Figure 2-18 Looking north in Wynyard Lane, 1926. The subject building is on the right side. Note original configuration of the ground floor façade (Source: The Archives of the City of Sydney)



Figure 2-19 Looking north in George Street towards Peapes Menswear, c. 1935. Note original configuration of the ground floor featuring elaborated columns and suspended awning. (Source: State Library of NSW)



Figure 2-20 View of part of the George Street façade of the building, c. 1935. (Source: State Library of NSW)

2.3 Conversion to Office Building

During its use as a department store only few alterations were recorded, which included the infill of the light well at first floor and second floor in 1954, and changes to the shopfront in 1966.

In 1970 the building was acquired by Equity Property Management Ltd. and Beaver Properties and in 1971 by the Permanent Building Society. In the same year an application was submitted to Council to carry out extensive alterations and refurbishment¹¹. This alteration included the infill of the central light area, removal of goods lift, and toilet facilities at the upper floors, rebuilding and enclosure of the central stair, introduction of a second lift and fire escape to Wynyard Lane. There was a separate tenant entrance and lobby created to the upper floors and new entry to the basement from George Street. The upgrading included the construction of new toilets and tearooms, the introduction of air-conditioning and sprinkler systems and addition of a central store building at roof level.

Main alterations to the spatial arrangement and fabric of the ground floor retail area included the introduction of mezzanine level. Both the ground floor and mezzanine level were converted to office spaces. A new rear entrance to the mezzanine level was created replacing the central window at the Wynyard Lane facade the other ground floor windows were bricked up. Internally walls and columns were fitted with timber panelling and ceilings altered to incorporate various fixtures.

In the 1970s and 1980s the principle works encompassed the reassignment of space through partitions¹². In 1980 further alterations were made to the ground floor and mezzanine level¹³.

In 1995 the ground floor and mezzanine level were re-converted to the retail use and new loading dock formed with access from Wynyard Lane.

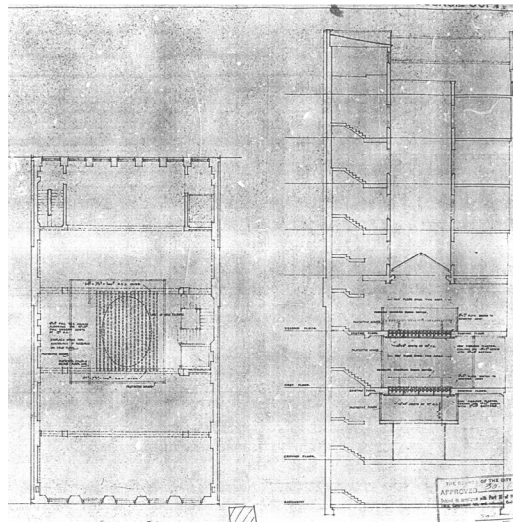


Figure 2-21 Filling in the hole in the ceilings under the skylight, 1954 (Source: Sydney City Archives, BA1014/54)

¹¹ Sydney City Archives, BA0785/72

¹² Sydney City Archives, BA0592/73; 1276/74; 0851/75; 1294/77

¹³ Sydney City Archives, BA1612/80



Sydney City Archives, BA785/71)



Figure 2-23 Alterations to the roof, May 1971. (Source: Sydney City Archives, BA785/71)

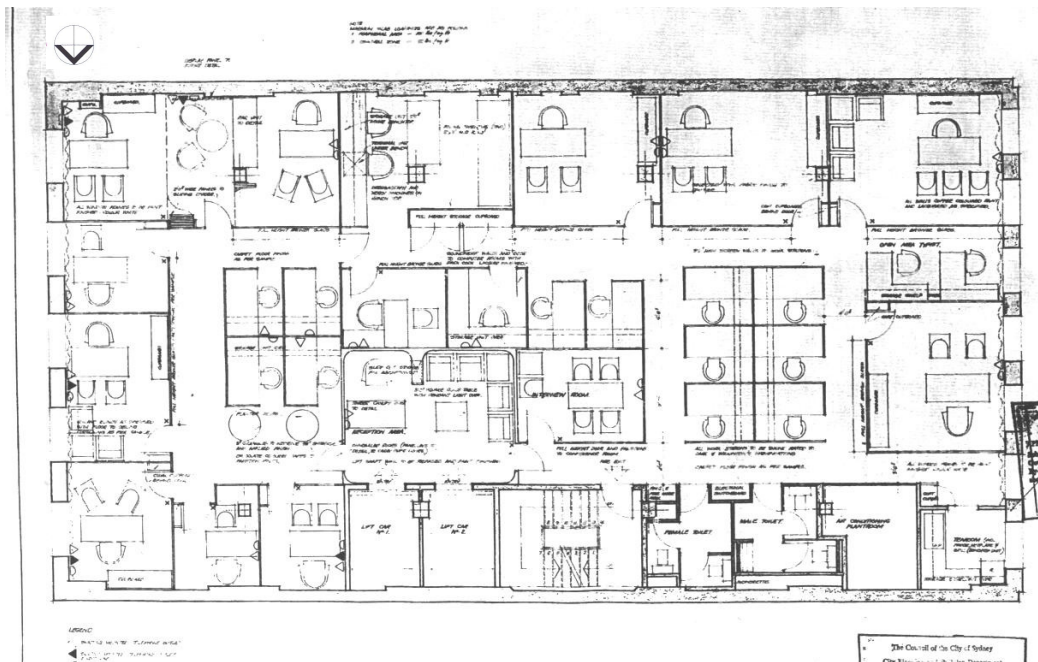


Figure 2-24 5th floor tenancy fitout, May 1973 (Source: Sydney City Archives, BA592/73)

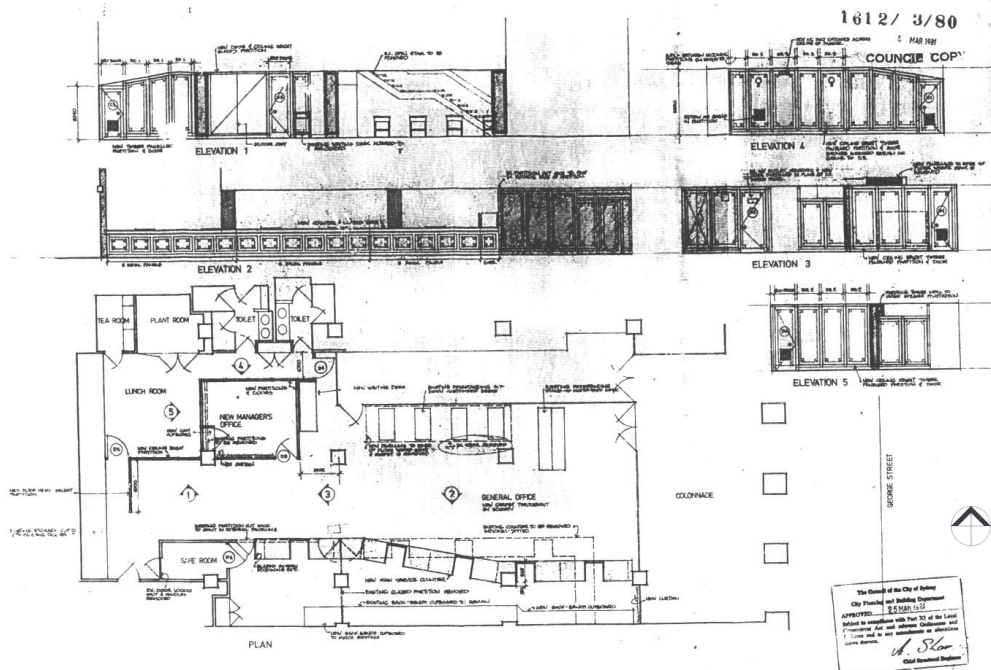


Figure 2-25 Office fitout at ground floor. Plan prepared for the NSW Building Society, August 1980 (Source: Sydney City Archives, BA1014/54)

2.4 Comparative analysis

2.4.1 William Hardy Wilson and the firm of Wilson, Neave & Berry

The *Sydney Mail* of 19 December 1923 reported the opening of Peapes Department Store at George Street saying "the work was entrusted to Mr Hardy Wilson, the well known artist of the firm Wilson, Neave and Berry, who has made a special study of the early colonial architecture"¹⁴.

William Hardy Wilson was born at Campbelltown, New South Wales, in 1881, into a wealthy, third generation Australian family. On leaving Newington College in 1898, he attended evening architectural courses at Sydney Technical College while articled to the firm of Kent and Budden.

In 1903, Wilson travelled to London to study architecture and art, where his many Australian friends included a number of established artists. With his lifelong friend and partner, Stacey Arthur Neave, Hardy Wilson made the Ground Tour of Europe and later America, where he was particularly impressed by the Colonial Revival architecture. He became an associate of the Institute of Empire Architects in 1905.

Returning to Sydney, Wilson found it architecturally backward and set out to create architecture, which would suit the Australian landscape and continue the colonial heritage. He had a great admiration for colonial architecture and wrote and sketched prolifically on the subject. His book, *Old Colonial Architecture in NSW and Tasmania*, was published in 1924.

Wilson set up in partnership with Neave in the Commonwealth Bank Chambers in Sydney, and designed his first real house for his friend the artist Lionel Lindsay. A new partner, John L Berry, joined the firm in 1920 and it seems he and Neave kept the practice running while Wilson devoted most of his energy to writing and art. Hardy Wilson was particularly fond of Chinese art, and explored the notion of integrating western ideas with those of the east¹⁵.

The partnership of Wilson, Neave and Berry produced a large number of residential buildings in the 1910s and 1920s, much of which has survived. In all the houses built in this period, the vocabulary of the Georgian architecture was freely used. The architectural compositions were of simple rectangular shapes, roofed with hips or gables in the vernacular manner, sometimes with verandahs. Most of the fenestration was six pane glazing in two sashes¹⁶.

In 1922 the firm was given its largest commission, to design the new department store for Peapes and Co. Ltd in George Street. No doubt that Wilson's earlier contract with Dunstan Vane at Macquarie Cottage in Pymble (1920) was an advantage as Dunstan Vane was managing director of Peapes Department Store.

For Hardy Wilson, however, Peapes Department Store was a struggle to achieve "an agreeable result under impossible condition"¹⁷. The location of the building

¹⁴ Cox, 1981

¹⁵ Jahn, 1997 p.222

¹⁶ Cox, 1981

¹⁷ cited in Edwards, 2001 p.94

defeated him "reared aloft between low structures on either side, which had nothing whatever to do with it, or with other places along the street"¹⁸. Wilson regarded the modern department store as a capitalist institution "knowing and caring nothing for artistry, except where profitable, or an advertisement...". Wilson was finally defeated by his inability to design anything beyond the classical style. He abandoned the project and left it to the hands of John Berry and commented later that his only contribution to Peapes was in the preliminary design. The building was completed while he was away overseas. He sent a postcard to John Berry from Grasse, France: "Congratulations on Peapes. It does your credit"¹⁹.

2.4.2 Surviving buildings designed by W. H. Wilson and the firm of Wilson, Neave & Berry

Howard Tanner compiled a list of architectural works by W.H. Wilson and the firm of Wilson, Neave & Berry in 1981. This inventory listed 46 buildings, constructed between 1910 and 1934, but noted that numerous garages, factory buildings, hotels and full range of speculative cottages had not been included in this list.

Although some of the cottages and country bank buildings were since demolished, a large number of residences, banks and a few commercial buildings survive and are listed on the State Heritage Inventory. The list includes:

- Cottage 'Merion', 7 Burns Road, Wahroonga, 1911 - Substantially intact
- Cottage, 17 Archbold Road, Roselle, 1912 - Altered or extended sympathetically
- Cottage 'Mulwaree', 59 Wentworth Street, Wentworth Falls, 1912
- 'Eryldene' House, 17 McIntosh Street, Gordon, 1913 – (on the State Register) most intact surviving example
- Bank of New South Wales, Ardlethan, 1914
- Bank of NSW, Goulburn and Spring Streets, Crookwell, 1914
- 'Purulia', 16 Fox Valley Road, Wahroonga, 1916 (on the State Register)
- Macquarie Cottage, 11 Avon Road, Pymble, 1918
- Cottage , 34 Hastings Road, Warrawee, 1919
- Office and Showroom, 177-185 William Street, Sydney, 1920s
- Cottage 'Stuart Lodge', 14 Roslyndale Avenue, Woollahra, 1920s
- 59 Pennant Hills Road, Oatlands/Nth Parramatta, 1922
- Council Chambers, 8181 Pacific Highway, Gordon, 1923
- Honda Road, Neutral Bay, 1924

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ Edwards, 2001 p.95

- Residence at 43 Bong Bong Street, Kiama, 1926
- 75 Kurraba Road, Neutral Bay (date unknown) – excellent Georgian Revival style residence



Figure 2-26 Burns Road, Wahroonga, 1911
(Source: State Heritage Inventory)



Figure 2-27 'Eryldene' House, 17 McIntosh Street, Gordon, 1913, Item on the State Heritage Register (Source: State Heritage Inventory)

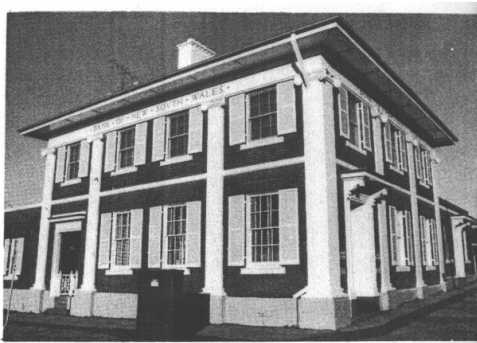


Figure 2-28 Bank of NSW, Goulburn and Spring Streets, Crookwell, 1914 (Source: Cox, 1981)



Figure 2-29 Figure 2-30 Macquarie Cottage, built for Dunstan Vane, the director of Peapes Department Store at 11 Avon Road, Pymble, in 1918. (Source: State Heritage Inventory)



Figure 2-31 Cottage, 34 Hastings Road, Warrawee, 1919 (Source: State Heritage Inventory)



Figure 2-32 Honda Road, Neutral Bay, 1924 (Source: Apperley et al, 1989)

Purulia and Eryldene are Wilson's two most important houses. Both of them date from the 1910-1920 period, when Wilson was actively involved in designing houses. After 1920, however, he appears discontented and moved constantly between art, writing and architecture, travelled in China and lived in England for some time, and he was hardly the backbone of the practice. How much involvement Wilson had in the practice is hard to know, but it is likely that although he was the senior partner of the firm, the other two members, Stacey Arthur Neave and John Berry, actively ran the practice.

2.4.3 Other buildings of similar style in Sydney

There are only a limited number of Georgian Revival commercial buildings of the Inter-war period in Sydney. Grenville House at 177-185 William Street, Lisgar House and British Airways House are the only other buildings.

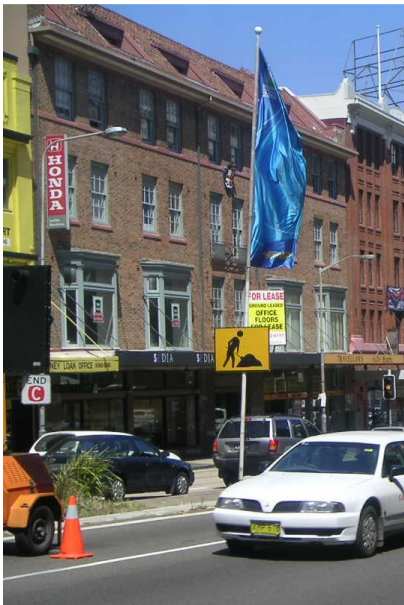


Figure 2-33 Grenville House, office and showroom, at 177-185 William Street, Sydney. The four-storey Inter-War Georgian Revival style commercial building was designed by the firm of Wilson, Neave & Berry in the 1920s.



Figure 2-34 *Attributed to Wilson Neave & Berry (although there is no proof of this attribution), the Usher Private Hotel (present British Airways House) was erected in c 1914. The polychrome brick and sandstone façade of the building represents the Commercial Palazzo with Georgian Revival detailing, which is an uncommon combination.*



Figure 2-35 *Lisgar House was designed by Gilbert Hughes & Maloney in 1927. The relatively tall scale of this Georgian Revival style building and its unusual cornice treatment make it a rare example of the period. It is an important contributor to the townscape character around Wynyard Park.*

2.4.4 Conclusion

Beneficial House is a good example of the Inter-War Georgian Revival style, which style is hallmarked by the name of William Hardy Wilson, who rediscovered, recorded and revived the early 19th century Georgian architecture of the colony. It is a rare application of the style for a commercial building of urban scale.

Beneficial House is significant component within the design work of William Hardy Wilson and the firm of Wilson Neave & Berry. Although Wilson's involvement in the project did not extend beyond the preliminary design, his influence can clearly be identified.

3.0

Physical Evidence

3.1 Urban Context/ Site

Beneficial House is located on the western side of George Street, opposite Hunter Street. The site has a rear front to Wynyard Lane and the building entirely covers the site.

The character of the area had considerably changed since the 1920s, when Beneficial House was originally built.



Figure 3-1 The urban context of Beneficial House dramatically changed in the last 30-40 years. The building, which at the time of its construction in 1923 was the only “high rise” structure on this section of George Street, now is dwarfed by its neighbours. Its well-proportioned brick façade, however, is a distinctive feature in the townscape.

3.2 Exterior



Figure 3-2 Beneficial House is a seven storey load bearing brick building in the Inter-War Georgian Revival style. The building is a blown up version of a three-storey Georgian shop front with sandstone base and face brick upper floors. The distinctive tiled roof is not visible from George Street, but is impressive when viewed from Hunter Street.



Figure 3-3 The rear façade retains its face brick upper section and multi-paned timber windows.



Figure 3-4 Detail of the upper section of the façade featuring excellent materials and detailing. Note multi-paned timber framed windows and semi-circular fanlights to second floor windows.

Figure 3-5 The ground floor façade was modified a number of times since the 1960s, when the original shop front was removed and replaced with sandstone arcade. Components of the original fabric including the awning and characteristic Georgian type glazing bars of the semi-circular fanlights have also been lost.



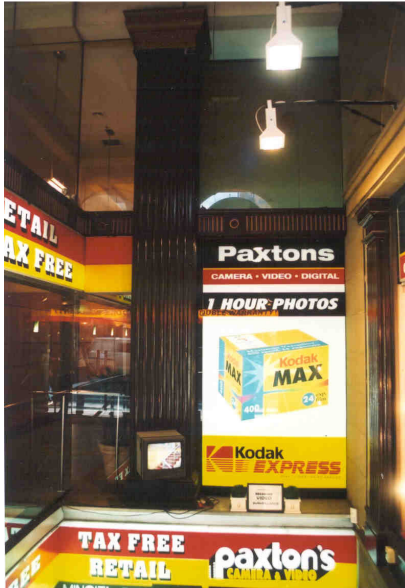


Figure 3-6 The separate entrances to the upper floors and to the basement were created in 1971, during a major refurbishment of the building for the Permanent Building Society.



Figure 3-7 The stone base of the rear façade has been altered, covered with metal plates for protection and painted over. A new rear entrance was formed in 1971, one loading dock created in 1995 and another in 2003.



Figure 3-8 Looking west towards Wynyard Lane on roof level. Note the small structure on the left that accommodated former fire stairs. With the introduction of a new fire stair in 1971 it was converted to a store. The store on the right dates from 1971 and was built on the top of the former light area.



Figure 3-9 Looking north along the wester side of the roof. This structure accommodated the goods lift, which was demolished in 1971



Figure 3-10 Looking east on the roof. Note 1971 store structure, which was built on the top of the former light area. The tiled roof in the background is part of the original design. The timber wall is later addition.

3.3 Interior

The building comprises nine floors including the basement and a mezzanine floor.

The basement is used as retail space with access from George Street. The ground floor retail space, which also includes the mezzanine, was refurbished in 2003. There is a rear entrance to the mezzanine from Wynyard Lane and an access to a recently added loading dock. The upper floors are used by various tenants (2nd and 3rd levels are presently vacant). The tenant's entrance at the northern side of the George Street façade leads to a lobby (formed in 1971) and lift, which accesses the upper floors.

Services to the building are located along the northern wall. A fire stair, located adjacent to the lifts opens onto the lift lobby at ground floor, with escape onto Wynyard Lane at mezzanine level. The original fire stairs on the southwestern corner of the building were removed in the 1970s, except between the basement and the mezzanine level, where still exists.

The spatial arrangement and internal fabric of the ground floor/ mezzanine floor retail area date from the 1971 and 1980 major remodelling and refurbishment of the building.

All upper levels are partitioned for office spaces with fitouts dating from various periods of the building's history. Except the original timber windows, which were retained on both facades, there is no original finish, fitting or fixture surviving in the interior of the building.



Figure 3-11 Entrance and stairs from George Street to the basement were formed in 1971. The basement is presently used as a retail space. All visible finishes and fixtures of the interior are contemporary.



Figure 3-12 The tenant's entrance and lift lobby was created in 1971



Figure 3-13 One of the two lifts, which replaced the original unenclosed lift in 1971



Figure 3-14 Looking east in the ground floor retail space, which was recently refurbished and re-fitted. This space has been altered several times since the 1960s, when the original shop front was removed. The retail area was converted to office space in the 1970s, which alteration included the removal the majority of original fabric and finishes. The only components of the present space that date from the initial construction are the timber-clad columns.



Figure 3-15 Looking west in the ground floor retail space. The spatial qualities of the original ground floor retail area were degraded, when the oval-shaped opening in the ceiling was filled in in the 1950s. The subsequent remodelling of the building, which included the construction of tenant entrance, enclosed lift and fire stairs and mezzanine level and the removal of much of the original finishes and fixtures, further degraded the qualities of the original ground floor retail space.



Figure 3-16 Looking east at mezzanine level, which was created in the 1970s. Note the coffered ceiling, which date from the 1971 remodelling of the interior.



Figure 3-17 Looking west towards Wynyard Lane at mezzanine level. The mezzanine is now used as meeting room and training area by the ground floor retail tenancy.



Figure 3-18 This rear entrance to the mezzanine level from Wynyard Lane was created in 1971, replacing the central window at the rear façade. Timber wall panelling and ceiling dates from the same alteration. The panelling of the north wall was probably removed in 1995 for the construction of the loading dock.



Figure 3-19 The fitout of first floor office space appear to date from the 1971 major refurbishment. Note full-height timber and glass partitions and false ceiling



Figure 3-20 Conference room, located at the George Street side of the first floor office space. Note original windows. Timber wall panelling and ceiling lining, however, dates from the 1970s



Figure 3-21 Timber and glass full-height partitions at second floor. This level is presently vacant



Figure 3-22 Office space facing George Street. Note original timber door with semi-circular fanlight



Figure 3-23 Joinery associated with windows and doors on both facades survived throughout the building



Figure 3-24 Looking west at the third floor office space. This level features lightweight partitions suspended ceiling and carpeted floors. Presently the office space is unoccupied.



Figure 3-25 The exposed timber floor at third level may be part of the original 1923 fabric of the building. Kitchen and toilet fitouts date from 1971 or more recent alterations throughout the building.



Figure 3-26 View of the fourth level office space, looking east, towards the George Street frontage. This level features painted light-weight partitions, suspended ceilings, carpeted floor and glazed timber internal doors



Figure 3-27 Looking towards the lift lobby in the fourth floor office space



Figure 3-28 The fifth floor has been recently refurbished and features modern finishes and fixtures



Figure 3-29

View of the sixth floor office space, which has been recently refurbished and features modern finishes and features. Looking towards George Street



Figure 3-30

Looking west along the main corridor at sixth floor

4.0

Assessment of Significance

4.1 Assessment criteria

The term heritage significance that is synonymous with cultural significance and cultural heritage values is defined in *The Burra Charter* (Article 1.2) published by Australia ICOMOS, as:

Aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations.

This value may be contained within the fabric of the item, its setting and its relationship to other items, the response that the item stimulates in those who value it now and in the historical records that allows us to understand it in its own context. The assessment of what has significance is not static. Significance may increase as more is learnt about the past and as items become rare, endangered or illustrate aspects that achieve a new recognition of importance.

A clear determination of significance permits informed decisions for future planning that should ensure that expressions of significance is retained, enhanced or at least minimally impacted upon. A clear understanding of the nature and degree of significance will determine the parameters for, and flexibility of, any future development.

The NSW Heritage Manual (as amended) developed by the NSW Heritage Office and the NSW Department of Urban Affairs and Planning provides the basis for assessment of significance of an item by evaluating its significance by reference to the following criteria:

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)

4.2 Assessment of Significance

Criterion (a)

Beneficial House is of historic significance as a physical reminder of an important development period in the 1920s. The location of the building reflects the prominence of George Street as a retail centre.

Criterion (b)

Beneficial House is noteworthy for its former lengthy association with the prominent retailer, Peapes Menswear, between 1923 and 1970. It is a significant and rare work of the firm of Wilson, Neave and Berry in a city context, which reflects the influence of William Hardy Wilson.

Criterion (c)

Beneficial House is a fine example of the Inter-War Georgian Revival architecture. Its facade is well proportioned and exhibits excellent materials and detailing. It created an appropriate image for an exclusive menswear department store.

Although the ground floor façade has been altered, externally the building retains its architectural qualities intact with multi-paned timber framed windows and tiled roof section. It is an important contributor to the streetscape of George Street.

Criterion (d)

Beneficial House has a long association with a prominent menswear store. Its position is demonstrative of the area as a retail centre in the city. The building has social significance locally.

Criterion (e)

The building does not exhibit any significance under this criterion.

Criterion (f)

Beneficial House is one of a limited number of Georgian Revival commercial buildings of the Inter-War period to survive.

Criterion (g)

Beneficial House represents the importance of George Street as the principal retailing thoroughfare in the city. It is representative of the former association with the prominent retailer, Peapes Menswear.

4.3 Statement of significance

Beneficial House is of historic significance as a physical reminder of an important development period in the 1920s. The building has a lengthy association with the prominent retailer, Peapes Menswear, who built the former department store in 1923 and occupied it until 1970. The location of the building is demonstrative of the area as a retail centre in the city.

Beneficial House is a significant and rare work of the firm of Wilson, Neave and Berry, which reflects the influence of William Hardy Wilson. The building is a fine example of the Inter-War Georgian Revival architecture. The building created an appropriate image for the department store and has been an important contributor of the streetscape of George Street.

5.0

Grading of significant elements

5.1 Introduction

The various elements of the building have been carefully assessed to determine their relative grading of significance, as an aid in establishing a framework for the conservation management of the building. This process examines a number of factors, including:

- relative age
- original architectural quality
- degree of intactness and general condition
- extant of subsequent changes
- ability to demonstrate a rare quality, craft or construction process.

Grading reflects the contribution the element makes to the overall significance of the site as a whole. With other words, it reflects the degree to which the significance of the site would be diminished if the component were removed or altered. Accordingly

ELEMENT OF HIGH SIGNIFICANCE

Makes a considerable contribution to the overall significance of the site.

ELEMENTS OF MEDIUM SIGNIFICANCE

Make some contribution to the significance of the place.

ELEMENTS OF LOW SIGNIFICANCE

Makes relatively little contribution to the overall significance of the place, when compared to other elements or aspects.

ELEMENTS, WHICH ARE INTRUSIVE

Is a disruptive influence to the overall significance or an inappropriate later addition, which obscures a clear understanding of the original nature of the place and its evolutionary development.

5.2 Grading of Significant Elements

The components of the building, which are of **high significance**, are:

- The overall form and scale and height of the building, including tiled roof section at the George Street frontage and parapet wall at the rear frontage.
- The architectural composition of the George Street façade, including the sandstone work of the upper part of the base with semi-circular openings, face brick work, multi-paned timber framed windows, the location, proportion and character of the openings and rhythm of window to wall.

- The architectural composition of the Wynyard Lane façade, including face brick work, multi-paned timber framed windows, the proportion of the openings and rhythm of opening to wall.
- The original building structure, comprising load bearing external walls and steel stanchions and beams encased with concrete.

These components are considered to have this rating due to their relative design quality, degree of intactness, good condition and visual contribution to the streetscape of George Street.

The components of the building, which are of **medium significance**, are:

- The 1970s sandstone base to George Street, which reflects the articulation and form of the original shop front and is generally sympathetic to the character of the building.

The components of the building, which are of **low significance**, are:

- Signage on the George Street façade.
- Spatial arrangement dating from the 1971 major upgrading and conversion of the former department store to office building, including tenant entrance and lobby, entrance stairs to basement from George Street, rear entrance, mezzanine level, new lifts, fire stair with rear fire escape and service areas.
- Partitions, wall and ceiling linings, finishes and fixtures, dating from 1971, 1985 and more recent refurbishments and fitouts.
- Infill floor structure where new floors have been provided (light area).
- Sprinkler and air conditioning system and support structures.

The components of the building, which are **intrusive** and tend to devalue the significance of the building, are:

- Missing glazing bars to fan lights at ground floor (George Street facade)

6.0

Constraints and Requirements

6.1 Introduction

This section outlines various major issues involved in the preparation of the conservation guidelines for the site. It takes into consideration matters arising from the statement of significance, procedural constraints imposed by cultural conservation methodology such as the Australian ICOMOS *Burra Charter*. It identifies all statutory and non-statutory listings that apply for the site and describes constraints and opportunities arising from these listings.

6.2 Issues Arising from the Statement of Significance

The assessment of significance provides a sense of the extent to which the building should be conserved and the extent to which it can support new uses.

The overall conservation policy framework is based on the following recognition of heritage significance:

- Beneficial House is a significant component of the built environment of Sydney as it is a physical reminder of an important development period of the area in the 1920s.
- It is a fine example of the Inter-War Georgian Revival architecture and a significant and rare work of the firm of Wilson, Neave and Berry.
- Beneficial House is an important contributor of the George Street streetscape.
- In the 1970s the building was converted from department store to office building, which included radical alterations to its interior at all levels and removal of much of its original internal fabric.
- The extent of alterations to the interior allows scope for future adaptive re-use, provided that no external alterations to George Street are required.

6.3 Physical Condition of the building

The building is in reasonable sound condition, having been refurbished in 1971. Some tenancies have been repetitively renovated a re-fitted and it is evident that very little of the original fabric survived throughout the building.

6.4 Heritage Management Framework

The Heritage Management Framework comprises statutory and non-statutory identification of various national and state heritage authorities, which provide authoritative statements regarding the heritage significance of a building and its worthiness for retention and conservation. The framework influences the formulation of conservation strategies and their implementation.

6.4.1 Sydney City Council

The local government are is Sydney City Council. The Council or the Central Sydney Planning Committee is the consent authority for all buildings except those with higher levels of protection under the *NSW Heritage Act*. The site also falls within the Central Sydney Zone, and as such is covered by the provisions of the *Central Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2000*.

Statutory controls on development of heritage items and heritage conservation areas are stated in this Council's *Central Sydney Heritage Local Environmental Plan (Heritage LEP) 2000* (gazetted 7 April 2000). The subject property is included on Schedule 1 – Buildings and sites – Item 122 (185-187 George Street, Beneficial House).

Listing on Schedule 1 of the Heritage LEP covers the entire building. A Development Application must be lodged for any proposed works where Council must take into account any potential impacts of a proposal on the heritage significance of a place in determining an application for those works. Council normally requires a conservation plan or heritage impact assessment to accompany any application for major works to a Schedule 1 listed building.

Consideration of development consent includes the effect of the proposed development on the heritage significance of the item and its setting, recommendations of any Heritage Inventory or other conservation type report prepared for the item, the provisions of any development control plan, and the significance of the interiors of a Schedule 1 heritage item. In this regard the policy recommendations of the Central Sydney Heritage Study (Item 2071) for the building are:

"Given the level of significance of Beneficial House a Conservation Plan should be prepared to guide any future development proposals or maintenance works. The external form and scale of the building should be preserved. Exterior: Future development should preserve the George Street façade including timber multi-paned windows, tiled roof section and sandstone arcade (if evidence confirms that it is original). Interior: Any internal alterations to the ground floor should be preceded by an investigation of surviving original spatial characteristics, materials and finishes. These elements should be incorporated and missing elements restored, in future fitout work. The extent of alterations to the upper floors allows scope for future adaptive re-use provided that no external alterations to George Street are required."

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT

Archaeological potential is defined in the *Archaeological Assessment Guidelines* (September 1996) prepared by the Heritage Office of the NSW Department of Urban Affairs and Planning as *"the degree of physical evidence present on and archaeological site, usually assessed on the basis of physical evaluation and historical research"*.

The 'Archaeological Zoning Plan for Central Sydney' (1992) is a Sydney City Council initiated report prepared by consultants Siobah Lavelle and Dana Mider. The report documents the survey and assessment of the archaeological potential of the City of Sydney.

The subject allotment is noted on this Archaeological Zoning Plan as an Area of Archaeological Potential – Partially Disturbed. Accordingly, before giving permission to development involving excavation, Council is required to consider the impact of the proposal on the potential archaeological resources.

6.4.2 National and Commonwealth Heritage Places

The *Register of the National Estate*, which was maintained by the Australian Heritage Commission, included Beneficial House. This was an indication of the heritage status of the building.

From 1st January 2004 a new heritage management regime became operative for National Heritage Places and Commonwealth Heritage Places within Australia and internationally. The former Australian Heritage Commission was replaced by a new Australian Heritage Council and the *Register of the National Estate* no longer has any formal role in the management of Commonwealth owned heritage places.

The *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, 1999*, (EPBC Act) was amended to include Aboriginal and Cultural Heritage values within the Act, in addition to the natural heritage values already protected. The EPBC Act now provides a comprehensive heritage management regime for two categories of historic places within Australia:

- **National Heritage Places**, which comprise a relatively small number of places that are nominated and accepted as having outstanding heritage values to the nation. These can be under any form of public or private ownership.
- **Commonwealth Heritage Places**, which comprise any Commonwealth owned land or land managed by a Commonwealth agency, that is considered to have significant heritage values for the nation. This category of places includes land that is under long term leasehold to the Commonwealth.

The *Australian Heritage Commission Act, 1975* was repealed at the time that the expanded EPBC Act was gazetted. Accordingly, referrals under Section 30 of that Act are no longer required. However, the amendments to the EPBC Act have introduced a number of new obligations for Commonwealth Agencies in relation to the heritage management of the two categories of heritage places.

The three acts which amended the EPBC Act are the *Environment and Heritage Legislation Amendment Act (No.1), 2003*, the *Australian Heritage Council Act, 2003*, and the *Australian Heritage Council (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Act, 2003*. These Acts are supported by Regulations, which detail many of the operational requirements of the documents that will be required under the new legislation.

The Australian Heritage Council now advises the Commonwealth Government on the identification and listing of places on the National Heritage List and the Commonwealth Heritage List. It does not have any formal comment or approval powers for development that may affect the heritage values of places on either of these lists.

It is the intent of the new legislation that Commonwealth agencies and other affected parties will manage their heritage places through a process that includes a comprehensive list of such places under their control, a heritage policy and the preparation of conservation management plans for the places. Future development or “actions” that have been evaluated through the CMP process and endorsed as exemptions will not need further approval under the Act. All other actions that are likely to have a significant impact on the heritage values of a place must receive approval through referral under Sections 26 or 28 of the Act. The Department of Environment and Heritage, through its Historic Heritage Management Section, will act as the consent authority for referrals, on behalf of the Minister. It is an offence for an agency of the Commonwealth to take, without the Minister’s approval, an action that has, or is likely to have, a significant impact on heritage values.

The decision whether to refer a proposal is a matter for the agency concerned, being a matter of judgment as to whether the action could have a significant impact on heritage values. If an agency is unsure whether its proposed action will result in a significant impact, it can still refer the question to the Minister, through the Department, for a determination.

6.4.3 NSW Heritage Council

The *Heritage Act 1977* (Amended) is an Act to conserve the environmental heritage of New South Wales. The Act established the Heritage Council of NSW, and recently the State Heritage Register. Section 4 of the Act defines State heritage significance as being:

...relation to a place, building, work, relic, moveable object or precinct, means significance to the State in relation to the historical, scientific, cultural, social, archaeological, natural or aesthetic values of the item.

Beneficial House is not included in this Register as an item of State significance.

6.4.4 National Trust of Australia (NSW)

The National Trust of Australia (NSW) maintain a Register that lists those buildings, site, items and areas which, in the Trust’s opinion, fall within the following definition:

Those places which are components of the natural or the cultural environment of Australia, that have aesthetic, historical, architectural, archaeological, scientific, or social significance, or other special value for future generations, as well as for the present community.

The façade of Beneficial House (formerly Peapes Store) is classified by the Trust and is included in its Register.

Listing in the Register carries no statutory implications. However the Trust’s listing is generally regarded as an authoritative statement about the heritage significance of a place and its worthiness for retention and conservation.

6.4.5 The Royal Australian Institute of Architects

The Architectural Conservation Committee of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects – New South Wales Chapter maintain a *List of Twentieth Century Buildings*, which includes places constructed in the period 1900-1950 that are considered to be:

The most significant examples of the work of leading architects,

Buildings, which are recognised as important landmarks in the development of architecture, and

Buildings, which, because of their quality and siting, make a significance contribution to the environment.

Beneficial House is included in this List.

The listing carries no formal or statutory obligations within any planning or development process. From time to time the RAIA's opinion is sought when major proposals are being formulated in relation to historic buildings.

6.4.6 Australia ICOMOS

This is a professional body of conservation practitioners, represented by the Australian National Committee of the Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS).

Australia ICOMOS has developed and published a Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance, generally known as *The Burra Charter*. This document establishes principles and methodologies for conservation work in Australia, based primarily on an understanding of the heritage values of a place and then appropriate responses to looking after the place in relation to various management issues and requirements. Its status is advisory, not statutory, but it has become widely recognised as establishing the basic methodology for conservation work in Australia.

6.5 Building Regulations

The Building Code of Australia is concerned with establishing uniform building regulations across Australia. The Code is implemented in NSW through the Local Government Act 1993. Generally, minimal standards are required to be reached in building works.

The main provisions of the Code concern structural requirements, fire resistance, access and egress (including provisions for people with disabilities), services and equipment, and health and amenities.

An assessment of compliance of the building with the Code had been carried out for the building and concluded that in its current form the existing building does not comply with contemporary standards for commercial property in the city.

7.0

Conservation Policies

7.1 Introduction

Conservation can be regarded as the management of change. It seeks to safeguard that which is important in the built environment within a process of change and development. As such, it is one of the functions of this document to establish criteria, policies and recommendations of the conservation, on-going use of the buildings as an appropriate and desirable future direction. In this way the owners and managers of the place/buildings will be able to formulate proposals within a known framework of acceptable directions, and planning authorities will be able to assess those proposals against the criteria.

The following section identifies **Policies** and **Guidelines** as the two basic mechanisms, with which to achieve the conservation and on-going use of the subject complex in the context of the adaptive re-use and necessary upgrade of the various building components. A brief **Background** provides the context for each of the policies. The **Policies** identify basic conservation guidelines, which are required to be met. They are supported by **Guidelines** and in places they should be clearly identified by the proponent and discussed in any Development Application submission.

7.2 Application of *The Burra Charter*

The Australian ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance (known as *The Burra Charter*) is widely accepted in Australia as the underlying methodology by which all works to sites/buildings, which have been identified as having national, state and regional significance are undertaken.

Because the subject terraces are of demonstrated cultural significance, procedures for managing changes and activities at their site should be in accordance with the recognised conservation methodology of the Australian ICOMOS *Burra Charter*.

7.2.1 Consistent Terminology

In order to achieve a consistency in approach and understanding of the meaning of conservation by all those involved a standardised terminology for conservation processes and related actions should be adopted. The terminology in *The Burra Charter* is a suitable basis for this.

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

Maintenance means the continuous protective care of the fabric and setting of a place, and is to be distinguished from repair. Repair involves restoration or reconstruction.

Preservation means maintaining the fabric of a place in its existing state and

retarding deterioration.

Restoration means returning the existing fabric of a place to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by reassembling existing components without the introduction of new material.

Reconstruction means returning the place as nearly as possible to a known earlier state or the introduction of materials (new or old) into the fabric. It does not necessarily mean going back to the earliest stage of construction or even to one date for the entire place.

Reconstruction means returning a place to a known earlier state and is distinguished from restoration by the introduction of new material into the fabric.

Adaptation means modifying a place to suit the existing use or a proposed use.

Use means the functions of a place, as well as the activities and practices that may occur at the place.

Compatible use means a use which respects the cultural significance of a place. Such a use involves no, or minimal, impact on cultural significance.

Associations mean the special connections that exist between people and a place.

Interpretation means all the ways of presenting the cultural significance of a place.

7.2.2 Treatment of Fabric of Different Grades of Significance

The building components of the terraces have been carefully assessed to identify the differing levels of contribution each makes to the significance of the overall site. The grading utilises a five-tier system of values: exceptional significance, considerable significance, some significance, little significance and intrusive. (Refer to Section 5.0 Grading of Significance)

The grading of significance of the various elements of the complex is valuable planning tool, and it assists in developing a consistent approach to the treatment of different elements. The various grades of significance generate different requirements for retention and conservation of the individual buildings and their various elements.

- Items identified as being of **exceptional and considerable significance** should be retained and conserved in situ. Any work, which affects the fabric or external appearance of these items, should be confined to Preservation, Restoration, Reconstruction, or Adaptation as defined by *The Burra Charter*. They should also be subject to continuing care and Maintenance.
- Where the fabric is of **some significance** some intervention is permissible. Adaptation, relocation or alteration to components of these items and spaces is acceptable provided that it protects the overall cultural significance, and is carefully considered and executed. Such work should take place within defined work programmes and should not be the product of general maintenance or sporadic alterations.
- Elements assessed as of **low significance** provide evidence of long-term use

and support the character and overall quality of the place. They have particular qualities that can expand overall interpretive themes, but are generally not regarded as essential to the major aspects of significance of a building or place, often fulfilling a functional role and/ or are in poor condition. Both retention and removal are acceptable options, depending on the element. Major interventions should be confined to areas where the fabric is of little significance.

- Elements identified as **intrusive** can reduce or obscure the overall significance of the place, despite their role as illustrators of the site's progressive development. The preferred option is for their removal, conversion to a more compatible form or replacement in a way, which help to retain the overall significance of the item. These items need not be addressed immediately.

The Burra Charter recommends a minimalist approach be taken in removing fabric graded as of **little significance** or **intrusive**, and it be limited to protecting and enhancing fabric of greater cultural significance, or allowing practical use of the building.

7.3 Change of Use

BACKGROUND

Changes of use can impact on the cultural significance of the building, and inevitably cause changes to the fabric. When the original use of Peapes Menswear store became redundant in the 1970s the building was radically altered and adapted to more commercial uses. During these alterations the original spatial characteristics, early materials and finishes of the interior have been lost, largely limiting the building's significance to its general external form and appearance.

The continuing commercial use of the building is acceptable, provided that there is no impact on the identified significance.

POLICY

The building may continue to accommodate commercial and retail style operations. Any future change should be compatible with the identified significance of the building, and not impact adversely on the significant fabric of the building.

GUIDELINES

- Future uses should take into account the identified cultural significance of the building.
- Potential new uses should be able to work within the nature and fabric of the existing building, without requiring extensive alterations.
- Uses with service requirements, which would have an adverse effect on the character and significance of the building, are unacceptable.

7.4 Retention of Significance of Exterior

BACKGROUND

The aesthetic significance of the building is largely based upon the architectural

character of its main and rear facades, including scale, style and materials, assesses as highly significant in this conservation management plan. The external fabric has over time been subject to alterations, such as the removal of the original street awning. The under awning fabric continued to evolve, reflecting the historical changes in the use of the building.

Sandstone and face brick, supplemented with a tiled roof section (at George Street) and a number of multi-pane timber windows (on both facades) are the dominant exterior materials of the building. Preservation of character of these materials is essential.

POLICY

The external envelope of the building should retain its architectural character, including materials, scale and style. Works to areas and elements of high significance should generally be restricted to preservation, restoration and maintenance with some reconstruction as required.

GUIDELINES

- The overall form, scale and character of the building should be maintained essentially in its current form.
- The architectural composition of George Street façade, including the sandstone work of the upper part of the base with semi-circular openings, face brick work, multi-paned timber framed windows and doors and the tiled roof section should be retained and preserved.
- If opportunity arises the restoration of the fan lights at ground floor should be considered.
- Given the extent of subsequent changes to the shop front the reconstruction of the suspended awning is not a requirement. The awning rod suspension brackets, which survive on the façade, should not be removed to provide evidence of the former awning.
- The 1970s sandstone base, which reflects the articulation and form of the original shop front, and is generally sympathetic to the character of the building, should be retained.
- The architectural composition of the Wynyard Lane façade, including face brick work, multi-paned timber framed windows and parapet wall should be retained.

ROOF

- The highly visible tiled roof section, which largely contributes to the distinctive character of the building, should be retained and conserved.
- Addition to the roof is acceptable, provided that it does not affect significant original fabric, does not diminish the integrity and general appearance of the building and is invisible from public place.

EXTERIOR MASONRY

- The exterior stone masonry should be retained intact and maintained in accordance with the cyclical maintenance regime.
- All exterior surfaces originally intended to be unpainted such as the sandstone and face brick, should remain unpainted.
- The covering of the stone base with metal sheeting at Wynyard Lane for protection is an appropriate solution.
- Damage and scarring caused by earlier fit outs or service installations should be repaired to match the original.

TIMBER WINDOWS AND DOORS

- Window repair and reconstruction should be carried out in a manner and to the details appropriate to the original construction. Original fabric should be retained wherever possible.
- Where the natural light through windows need to be controlled, this should be achieved by traditional means such as Venetian blinds. If complete light exclusion is required, this should be achieved without damaging the original fabric and having minimal effect on the external appearance.

7.5 Internal spaces

BACKGROUND

The interior spaces of the building have been extensively remodelled, so little of their original character remains. Therefore, with the exception of the original building structure, the internal spaces and fabric are assessed as having little significance.

The interiors can impact on the exteriors, for example by having false ceiling bulkheads partly across windows or by having strong and alien colour schemes, which are visible externally.

POLICY

Alterations to the internal layout and fabric is acceptable, provided there is no negative impact on elements identified as of high significance, in particular the original building structure and the external fabric and character.

GUIDELINES

- Extant building fabric, which survives from the time of construction should be retained and conserved, within future programs of re-use, alteration and addition.
- The original building structure, comprising load bearing external walls and steel stanchions and beams encased with concrete, should be retained and conserved.

- New partitioning or tenancy fitout at the front portion of ground floor and first floor should be designed where practicable, to allow the timber clad internal columns to be visible and enhance the character of the tenancy floor.
- Tenancy partitioning should not interrupt window openings.
- Throughout the building, interior decoration should be appropriate to the function of the space concerned, while not adversely affecting the external appearance of the building.
- Future false ceilings should be as close as possible to the underside of the structural floor, and not interrupt or abut the window openings.
- The lifts and fire stair should remain in their present location together with the amenities and services block, along the northern boundary wall.
- Intervention into original fabric for non-conservation purpose should generally be restricted to approved programs of re-use or upgrading of service areas and facilities.

7.6 Ordinance Compliance

BACKGROUND

The *Building Code of Australia* is the operative ordinance in New South Wales for conservation and re-use of heritage buildings. The key issues relating to compliance are fire resistance and egress provisions.

In its current form the building does not comply with contemporary standards for commercial property in the city. It is essential, however, that the cultural values of the building are not degraded by inappropriate responses to meeting ordinance requirements. Proposed upgrades of the building should take into consideration new approaches for the implementation of fire safety standards that do not harm the existing significant fabric.

POLICY

Approaches to compliance with building ordinances for the conservation and on-going use of the building should focus on responding to the spirit and intent of the ordinance if strict compliance would affect the significance. Uses, which require an unacceptable degree of intervention for upgrading to ordinance compliance, should be avoided.

GUIDELINES

- Conservation and upgrading programs should not place undue stress on the building fabric in order to meet excessive requirements of ordinance compliance.
- A fully resolved compliance strategy should be developed for the building encouraging the use of active suppression techniques, such as upgrading existing sprinkler and fire detection equipment rather than passive methods, which involve the modification or cladding of the original building structure.

- When dealing with disability access issues, refer to the document “Access to Heritage Buildings for People with Disabilities” prepared by E.J. Martin (Cox), August 1997.

7.7 Services

BACKGROUND

The installation of services is an intrinsic component of the contemporary functioning and viability of the building. The major upgrading and refurbishment of the building in 1971 included the upgrading of all services. The service block is presently located along the northern boundary wall of the building.

POLICY

The service block should remain in its present location, along the northern boundary wall. Where any alterations and additions require similar or expanded levels of services, re-use of existing service spaces should be considered.

GUIDELINES

- Where any alterations and additions require similar or expanded levels of services, re-use of existing service spaces is the preferred conservation option.
- Where possible any plant at roof level should be as compact and discrete as possible, and not be seen from the street.

7.8 Signage

BACKGROUND

Documentary evidence shows that original signage to the building existed in the form separate lettering fixed to the face brick wall below the third floor windows and in association with the awning.

Signage to the building presently exists either fixed directly to the George Street façade and or as window signage. All forms of signage have been identified as being of low significance. It is recognised, however, that signage is an intrinsic component of the commercial use and viability of the building.

POLICY

External signage to the building is acceptable; provided it is designed in such a way that it does not have a detrimental impact on the significance of the building.

GUIDELINES

- Any new signage should be sensitively designed within the existing architectural language and be easily removable.
- Fixing of signs should be limited to places that have previously held signs, to

reduce further damage to the fabric.

7.9 Interpretation

BACKGROUND

Interpretation of historic buildings essentially reveals the long term connections and cohesions, which they can add to our cultural identity. To interpret an historic building or site is to tell its story in a manner that will increase the public's understanding and appreciation of the significance of the place and its role in community, regional or national development.

The subject building (now known as Beneficial House) had a lengthy association with "Peapes Menswear" (1923-1970), a particularly well-known Sydney retail store. The building created an image for the store and reflected the importance of George Street as a principal retailing thoroughfare.

POLICY

The conservation and on-going use of the building should include some interpretation of its role in the development of George Street, as a principal retailing thoroughfare during the 1920s.

GUIDELINES

- As the extent fabric shows little evidence of the building's original function, the original use and name of the building should be interpreted on site by appropriate means.

Information about the building, including this conservation management plan should be deposited in a public archive.

7.10 Appropriate Conservation Skills and Experience

BACKGROUND

The continuity of competent advice is very important for the long-term implementation of a conservation management plan. The attitude, skills and experience required in the context of a conservation project are different to those applied to the design and construction of new buildings.

POLICY

Appropriate conservation skills and experience should be available within the project team assembled to deal with the conservation and upgrading works for the building.

GUIDELINES

- Appropriate professional skills and experience assembled to work on the detailed conservation of the building could include researchers, architects, structural engineers and building code compliance advisers.
- Building constructors, project managers and trades personnel who are experienced with working on historic buildings should be selected to work on the

project.

- In cases, where new works are proposed, professional consultants should liaise with conservation practitioners during the design, documentations and site works phases.

7.11 Review of the Conservation Management Plan

BACKGROUND

This Conservation Management Plan for Beneficial House proposes a framework for the management of heritage issues as part of the Development Application for additional office space at roof level. Circumstances however will change over the years as various recommendations are implemented and new user requirements emerge.

Conservation Policies need to respond progressively to changing situation, if they are to remain relevant.

POLICY

Conservation Policies should be reviewed every five years or to guide future programs of upgrading.

GUIDELINES

- Reviews of the Conservation Policies should be based on *The Burra Charter* and other guidelines provided by the NSW Heritage Office and the Sydney City Council.
- Reviews should also take into account any other relevant legislation, planning frameworks, appropriate literature and widely recognised conservation practices and procedures.
- Reviews should be undertaken by experienced conservation practitioners, in conjunction with relevant ownership and management representatives.

7.12 On-going Maintenance and Repair

BACKGROUND

In general, most of the building fabric is in robust and good condition and is well maintained. Deterioration of the external fabric, including stone and brick work and timber windows and doors, is considered typical due to the effect of weather.

To ensure the on-going conservation of significance building fabric, a regular maintenance schedule should be implemented, which provides for regular inspection and remedial action to be taken where necessary.

POLICY

To retard deterioration in significant areas and to ensure the on-going maintenance of significant building fabric, appropriate levels of maintenance should be continued on a cyclical basis. The regime should provide for a regular inspection of the building, and remedial action to be taken where necessary.

GUIDELINES

- The building fabric and services should be subject to continuing care and maintenance by the building owner, as set out by the On-going Maintenance Schedule in Section 9.2.
- In addition to regular maintenance activities, prompt preventive action and repair should be taken as necessary.
- Prevention of continuing deterioration should take priority over widespread repair or reconstruction.
- No maintenance work or repair should negatively impact on significant fabric.
- Particular attention should be paid to keeping in good order all the system that prevent water penetration into fabric and conduct water safely from the building and its footings.
- The On-going Maintenance Schedule should be reviewed and updated every five years to coincide with a review of the Conservation Plan, or subsequent to major programs of upgrading and re-use.

8.0

The Proposed Works

The current proposal for Beneficial House is described in the architectural drawings and associated documents prepared by Brewster Murray Pty Ltd Architects and Interior Designers. In essence the proposal involves the following.

- Demolition of the existing store located in the centre of the roof and the construction of additional office space. The new structure will have brick walls, metal roof, metal-framed timber flooring and aluminium framed windows and doors. There will be an elevated terrace on the western (Wynyard Lane) side of the roof.
- Construction of internal stairs between level six and the new roof level office space.
- Except the central store building (which was constructed in 1971 on the infill light well) all existing structures on the roof will be retained. The proposed structure will be located behind the George Street ridge and will set back well behind the Wynyard Lane street alignment.
- The proposed development will not be visible from the street or any public space.

9.0

Assessment of Heritage Impact

Present Conservation Management Plan identified that the heritage significance of Beneficial House is largely based on its 1920s origine and general external appearance. Alterations to the fabric, which were carried out in the early 1970s and were associated with the change of use and general upgrade of the building, radically altered the internal layout and removed much of the original fabric and finishes.

The statement of significance and schedule of significant elements presented in Section 4.0 and 5.0 of this report indicate that the original form, scale and general external appearance of the building should be retained and conserved. The extent of alterations to the interior, however, allows scope for future adaptive re-use, provided that there is no negative impact on elements identified as of high significance.

9.1 Assessment of Heritage Impact

The proposed works are considered to be consistent with the conservation policies identified in the this conservation management plan from the following reasons:

- The proposed alterations comply with requirements for the treatment of different grades of significance. The proposed works will not affect areas or fabric that had been identified as of high significance. The proposed new addition will not be visible from any public space; therefore will not affect the highly significant external appearance and architectural composition of the building.

The proposed works will require intervention into existing building fabric and the demolition of an existing store on the roof. This is considered acceptable, as the store dates from the 1971 upgrade and was constructed on the former light area. It is not visible from the street or from any public space and makes limited contribution to the overall significance of the property.

The introduction of a new stair between level 6 and the roof will require intervention into the existing floor structure. The affected section of the floor, however is not part of the original building structure, but is a 1970s infill section, therefore less significant.

- There will be no change in the use of the building, which will continue to accommodate commercial and retail operations.
- The current proposal has been carefully designed to respect the original/early fabric and general appearance of the building. The tiled roof section at the George Street frontage and the parapet wall at the Wynyard Lane frontage will be retained, maintaining the external appearance of the building. The new structure will be located behind the George Street roof-line and will also set back from the Wynyard Lane street alignment. Practically the addition will be invisible for the public eye.

- The addition is sympathetic to the heritage item in such a manner that it is not visible from the street or from any other public place.

The proposed development is considered to be acceptable in heritage terms. The significant components of the historic building will be retained and conserved. The proposed alterations will have no effect on the identified historical and aesthetic significance of Beneficial House.

9.2 Recommendations arising

The following recommendations arise from the foregoing analysis:

- Sydney City Council should have no hesitation in approving this Development Application and in endorsing the accompanying Conservation Management Plan as the basic framework against which any application for alterations should be assessed.
- A copy of this report should be lodged with the Sydney City Local History Library.
- The Central Sydney Heritage Inventory and the inventory maintained by the NSW Heritage Office should be updated as necessary using the information contained in this conservation Management plan.
- On-going maintenance works and inspection shall be performed at regular intervals as set out on the On-going Maintenance Schedule below. The schedule refers to cyclical maintenance works to fabric and services that should be implemented by the owner/manager as part of the process of on-going management of the building. A record of when this work is performed, and any faults found, or repairs made should be recorded and kept along side this maintenance schedule.

CYCLICAL MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE 285-287 GEORGE STREET, SYDNEY				
BUILDING ELEMENT	EVERY YEAR	EVERY 5 YEARS	EVERY 10 YEARS	EVERY 15 YEARS
OVERALL BUILDING	Monitor condition	Check security and general safety		
EXTERNAL				
FACE BRICK WALLS		Inspect and clean.	Inspect, clean and repoint where required.	
SANDSTONE BASE		Clean and repair as required.	Monitor condition, and clean and repair as required, on advice of expert assessment.	
TIMBER FRAMED WINDOWS AND DOORS	Inspect condition, paintwork and working order.	Repair and repaint as required.	Strip, seal and repaint.	
ROOFING		Monitor condition. Repair as required.		Replace as necessary
FLASHING		Monitor condition. Repair as required.		Relace as necessary.
DOWNPIPES/ GUTTERS/GRATES	Monitor condition, clean. Repair as required.			Replace as necessary.

CYCLICAL MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE 285-287 GEORGE STREET, SYDNEY				
BUILDING ELEMENT	EVERY YEAR	EVERY 5 YEARS	EVERY 10 YEARS	EVERY 15 YEARS
INTERNAL				
BRICK BOUNDARY AND PARTY WALLS	Routine clean.	Inspect condition, clean and repaint as required.		Repaint as required.
FLOOR FINISH	Monitor condition.	Repair as required.	Repair and refinish as required.	
CEILING TILES		Repair as required.		
OFFICE FITOUTS		Repair and repaint as required, except as altered by new tenancy fitout.		
JOINERY		Monitor wear.	Repaint surfaces intended for painting.	
FIRE STAIRS	Monitor condition.	Repair and repaint as required.		
SERVICES				
LIFT AND ASSOCIATED MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT	Inspect.	Repair and required.		Upgrade as required.
AIR- CONDITIONING	Inspect.	Repair as required.		Upgrade as required.
BUILDING ELEMENT	EVERY YEARS	EVERY 5 YEARS	EVERY 10 YEARS	EVERY 15 YEARS
HYDRAULICS	Inspect.	Repair and replace parts as required.		Upgrade as required.
ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT AND SERVICES	Inspect.	Repair and replace parts as required.		Upgrade as required.
FIRE SAFETY EQUIPMENT	Inspect.			Upgrade as required.

10.0

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