

23 September 2008

Ref: 2071094

Parkview Sydney Developments
Suite 1102, 14 Kings Cross Road
Potts Point NSW 2011

Attention: Paul Karantonis

CULTURAL HERITAGE STATEMENT 60 CHARLOTTE STREET, CLEMTON PARK

Reference is made to your request to respond to Item No. 10 - Heritage (if relevant), of the Director Generals Requirements (DGR's) dated 28 May 2008, for the proposed mixed use development at the abovementioned site.

The site is not listed on the New South Wales State Heritage Register. Further, the site is not on Schedule 1 of the Canterbury Local Environmental Plan No. 148 (the LEP).

The site was purchased in 1951 by the Sunbeam Corporation, an American company that had established itself in Australia many years before. A key element in the "recognition factor" of Sunbeam was its manufacture and distribution of the range of domestic kitchen appliances, especially the iconic Sunbeam "iron" and the Sunbeam "Mixmaster" in the immediate Post World War II years, starting in 1946. These appliances were first produced at the Company's site at Waterloo.

Due to the popularity of these products, the Company was required to expand production facilities. Hence, the purchase of the Clemton Park site.

In 1953, Rudder Littlemore and Rudder were commissioned to design the first building on the site. The building was constructed by T.O Whittle and completed ready for occupation and commencement of production of the domestic goods in 1954. In 1955 the then astonishing "pop-up toaster" was produced at this site.

In 1970, the Sunbeam Corporation purchased another iconic Australian item - the "Victa" Lawnmower. From 1984, the site produced these four (4) iconic items.

To meet production demands the buildings were extended and altered to suit the manufacturing and distribution processes and practices of the day.

The Company ceased operations on the site in 2002 when the site was sold.

During its operations, the site was a major source of employment for the Canterbury Local Government Area's residents as well as surrounding areas.

It is noted that the authors of the 1988 Canterbury Heritage Study recommended that the site be entered on Schedule 1 to the LEP. In October 2003, it was again recommended by Godden Mackay Logan in their Heritage Impact Statement for the site.

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The principal basis for the recommendation seems to be based on the following matters:-

- a) the architectural merits of the building;
- b) the fact that the Company was a major employment generator for the area; and
- c) that it was the place where the abovementioned iconic Australian domestic appliances were manufactured and distributed.

In relation to the architectural merits of the building, there are two points that are noted. Firstly, the "building" is said to have been extended and altered over the years in response to the changes in operations and needs. Secondly, the Godden Mackay Logan Report assessed the architectural merits of the building as being "representative of the International architectural style ... is dominant at the time... (However, it) is not an outstanding example of the style, rather it is a solid and competent expression of the styles main features."

Notwithstanding this view, it was considered to satisfy the Evaluative Criteria of Aesthetic Significance on the grounds that it is "a good representative example" of the style.

In relation to the third reason for listing, being the place of manufacture of the Sunbeam "Mixmaster" and the "Victa" lawnmower, in both instances, it is noted that for almost a decade those items were first manufactured on other sites.

The Mixmaster was first produced in 1946 at the Company's Waterloo site. It was not produced at the Clemton Park site until 1954. Each of the above facts contributes to the history of the operations and growth of the Company. Therefore, they contribute to the historical significance of the place.

It is understood that the Council has considered the above reasons but has thus far declined to list the site. It is understood that the reason for the Council's decision being that, while it acknowledges the manufacture of the items on the site and the contribution that the use of the site made to employment opportunities in the area, they are not sufficient to warrant listing as a heritage item. Further, that the architectural merits of the buildings do not support listing.

Sunbeam, the company, has been associated with the manufacture of iconic Australian household goods. Knowledge of the manufacture of those items on the site has some "historic" and "social" conservation values. However, two of the three household iconic items were first manufactured on other sites. In terms of heritage conservation assessment criteria, it is considered that the site has some significance for those values. However, it is considered that the sites on which the "iconic" items were first manufactured have greater "historic" and "social" conservation value. Therefore, it is considered that the decision of the Council not to list the site is well founded. This view is reinforced by the Council's view about the alterations to the buildings which go to questions of architectural merit. The Council's view on this point is supported.

It is considered appropriate to record the use of the site for the production of the "iconic" Australian household items – the Sunbeam iron, Mixmaster and pop-up toaster.

Accordingly, it is considered that the buildings can be demolished and that there be: (a) an archival recording of the site prepared prior to demolition; and (b) a commemorative plaque and interpretative display erected at an appropriate location where it will receive maximum exposure, informing employees and visitors alike about the history of the site.

Yours Sincerely

ROBERT POWER
Statutory Planning Director

