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29 September 2022

General Manager  
City of Ryde  
Locked Bag 2060  
North Ryde NSW 1670

Dear General Manager,

## **Short-form Heritage Impact Statement—17 Falconer Street, West Ryde**

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### **1 Introduction**

This short-form Heritage Impact Statement has been prepared on the instruction of ANSA Homes on behalf of the property owner of 17 Falconer Street, West Ryde (subject place)—a mid-1950s dwelling situated in the broad vicinity of an individual heritage item. It accompanies a development application (DA) for the demolition of the extant building and construction of a new residence at the place and provides the consent authority, the City of Ryde, with an expert assessment of the acceptability of the new work from a heritage impact perspective.

The author of this report is an experienced heritage consultant and accredited professional historian, and the assessment is made pursuant to the Expert Witness Code of Conduct in Schedule 7 of the *Uniform Civil Procedure Rules 2005* (NSW). Terminology and principles in this document are informed by sound heritage practice, namely as expressed by *The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance*, *The Burra Charter* (rev. 2013).

### **2 Heritage Management Framework**

The subject place—legally described as Lot 6, DP13078—is located on the west side of Falconer Street, near its intersection with Goodwin Street. Carara Reserve abuts the rear.

The place is not affected by a heritage overlay, either individually or as part of a heritage conservation area; however, it is situated in the vicinity of an individual item of heritage significance under Schedule 5 of the *Ryde Local Environmental Plan 2014* (RLEP). Its listings details follow:

Item name	Address	Property Description	Significance	Item no.
<i>The Downs</i> (house)	27 Goodwin Street, West Ryde	Lot 1, DP 223488	Local	53

Mapping details for *The Downs* are provided at Heritage Map – Sheet Her\_005, refer to the RLEP.

The council-endorsed Statement of Significance for *The Downs*, extracted from the NSW Heritage Inventory, is reproduced below:

The property is of historical significance as part of the 1888 Goodin's Vale Estate subdivision, evidencing late 19<sup>th</sup> century subdivision of the area, and as a house built for the Billington family of Ryde farmers and orchardists. The 1943 aerial photo of the site indicates the site's use for orcharding and vegetable growing continued well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The dwelling has [a] historical association with James Billington (likely junior), of the Billington family of Ryde farmers and orchardists, for whom the house was built circa 1888-1890, and who is recorded as residing in the street by 1891. The house has aesthetic significance as a fine representative Victorian Georgian style sandstone house with circa 1920s modifications to the verandah.

Updated: 22 August 2012

There are no other individual heritage items or conservation areas in the vicinity of the subject place.

The key objective for heritage management, as per the RLEP (at cl. 5.10), is to sustain a place's assessed heritage value. Accordingly, the above Statement of Significance and further discussion throughout this report concerning the heritage place provides an essential baseline for understanding the likely impact of the new work on the heritage asset—an approach in line with Article 27 ('Managing Change') of the *Burra Charter*.

### 3 Description

The subject building, a modest private residence constructed in the mid-1950s, is situated at a moderate setback from Falconer Street on a generally flat, rectangular allotment. It has a square footprint capped by a hipped roof clad in non-original glazed terracotta tiles. Eaves are wide with a sheeted soffit. The dwelling is likely of brick veneer construction, featuring an unusual variegated light tan and brown brick in stretcher bond. The façade is asymmetrical with a hipped wing and offset terrace. The latter is raised and has a tiled deck and decorative metal balustrade. The entrance is recessed. Windows in the frontage paired double-hung sashes with jalousies (purely decorative).

A concrete driveway runs the southwestern property boundary with a gabled brick/weatherboard garage at the end. There is no front fence. The garden is lightly landscaped with a 'crazy stone' retaining wall evident in the rear garden.

The immediate section of Falconer Street, which rises between Goodwin and Benson streets, is characterised by a mixed 20<sup>th</sup>-century housing stock, with scattered examples of Federation, interwar, postwar, and contemporary dwellings, mostly brick and single-storey. Few are of individual architectural note, although the eclectic design at no. 16 is indicative of the post-war International Style and of some interest.

The subject building is bordered in the south and at the rear (west) by the Carara Reserve, a medium sized public park.

*The Downs* is a substantial late Victorian period villa with a hipped roof clad in continuous corrugated metal sheeting (non-original). There is an attached skillion volume in the northwest, which could be original. The hipped crook is an extension. A striking sandstone chimney with moulded cap and terracotta pot survives on the eastern primary roof plane.

The residence is of masonry construction with dressed ashlar sandstone blocks. The verandah, which returns along the eastern elevation, is an interwar addition. It features a high rock-faced sandstone base course and balustrade with paired classicised colonettes supporting a flat roof (exposed rafter ends). Forward of the symmetrical façade (central door, flanked by French doors) is a pair of mature Canary Island Date Palms. Fencing at *The Downs* is non-original. Its eastern perimeter is heavily planted, obscuring views to the villa from Carara Reserve, which borders the heritage item in the north and east.



3D model of the subject place (red arrow), its immediate setting, and *The Downs* (yellow arrow), facing south across Carara Reserve. (Source: Apple Maps)

#### 4 Review of Heritage Impact

The proposal is outlined in a set of development application drawings prepared by ANSA Homes/Atria Designs, dated 15 September 2022. These plans should be referred to for a complete understanding of the submitted works.

In summary, it is proposed to demolish the existing dwelling and construct a two-storey private residence with an integrated garage. The new building would have a hipped roof clad in Colorbond sheeting with ground floor walls clad in Hebel panels (autoclaved aerated concrete) and weatherboard (unspecified) to the first floor. A colour scheme is not provided. Windows are generally vertical in proportions, although there are a number of horizontal openings on the first floor of the south elevation.

As the new work would occur in the broad vicinity of an individual heritage item (*The Downs*, 53), it is generally accepted that the RLEP at cl. 5.10(2) (a)(iii) allows the consent authority, the City of Ryde, to consider the proposed activities' potential heritage impact. The key objective for heritage management, as per the SLEP at cl. 5.10(1)(a) is to sustain a place's assessed cultural heritage value, as identified by its Statements of Significance.

The following adopts a performance/issue-based assessment model informed by sound heritage impact assessment approaches, the heritage objectives of the RLEP, pertinent heritage controls of the *Ryde Development Control Plan 2014* (RDCP), and 'recommended management' policies for *The Downs* (refer to the citation).

#### *Impact Assessment*

There would be no direct interface between the new work at the subject place and *The Downs* due to the physical separation provided by Carara Reserve. Accepting that, no scope exists for any physical impact of significant fabric at *The Downs* by the scheme.

The proposal would replace a single-storey mid-1950s dwelling with a two-storey house with a contemporary project home presentation. This would introduce a new taller building within the viewshed of *The Downs*. Nonetheless, in the view of this report, several existing and design factors negate any potential for the new work to have an adverse effect on the significance of *The Downs*.

Importantly, the place and *The Downs* are separated by approximately 22m of landscaped space in the Carara Reserve, including relatively dense clusters of mature indigenous/native trees, which characterise the southern section of the park. This verdant stretch would provide ample ground for a transition in scale and character between the new dwelling and *The Downs*. Existing plantings would also obscure, screen, and soften any view lines between the rear of the subject property/building and the heritage item. Also of note is the proposed siting of the new building, towards Falconer Street, effectively in the same footprint of the extant dwelling, which would provide for a large backyard—a further, albeit private, transitional space.

Having regard to the above, the proposed house would not threaten to dominate or subordinate *The Downs* nor detract from its immediate garden/park setting. Neither would any established public realm sightlines of note to *The Downs* be traduced by the scheme. The heritage asset would remain interpretable and appreciable as a substantial and notable late Victorian sandstone dwelling with an impressive classicised verandah when viewed from Goodwin Street and Carara Reserve.

To further support an acceptable heritage outcome, this report recommends that additional evergreen screen planting are considered for planting at the rear of the subject place and that a recessive colour scheme is adopted by the new building, at least for its first floor.

Please do not hesitate to contact me on 0491 341 906 if you have any questions.

Yours faithfully,

*Patrick Wilson*

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ICOMOS, Pro. Hist. PHA (NSW & ACT + VIC), SAHANZ, APT, IAIA, APT, Interps Aus, Nat. Trust (NSW)