

## **Attachment B2**

**Summary of Submissions –  
Sydney Masonic Centre**

Summary of submissions  
Table of contents

<b>SYDNEY MASONIC CENTRE, 279-283 CASTLEREAGH STREET, SYDNEY</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>WEIR PHILLIPS FOR LANDOWNER</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>PAUL DAVIDSON, SYDNEY MASONIC HOLDINGS LTD</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>DOCOMOMO AUSTRALIA INC</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>GLENN A HARPER</b>	<b>9</b>

No.	Submitter <sup>1</sup>	Submission summary	Submission response
B	Sydney Masonic Centre, 279-283 Castlereagh Street, Sydney		
B1	Weir Phillips for landowner	<b>Oppose.</b> For the reasons outlined below.	Objection noted and issues responded to below. This assessment prepared for the landowner was exhibited with the proposal.
B1	Weir Phillips for landowner	<p><u>Alterations</u> When completed in 1979, this building demonstrated core characteristics of brutalism, including assertive geometric forms, dominating scale and expressed structure of off-form concrete as the principal aesthetic device. This was original, powerful and well executed and confidently commanded its corner site. The criteria for listing are not satisfied because a key reason for listing as an example of Brutalist architecture is not met due to the extensive alterations to the building over time.</p> <p>Significant highly visible alterations and additions have fundamentally changed its external character. The street interface is human in scale with delicate refined materials that conceal rather than celebrate the structure and its sculptural qualities. These strip the building of its assertive overbearing scale, its uncompromising relationship to the street edge and reduce the relevance of the angular cantilever on the Civic Tower with ground level corner cantilever. The cladding of the Goulburn Street stair shafts and painting of part of the concrete facade disguise the original off-form concrete. The new tower, although executed superficially to the original design, is finished in painted concrete and lightweight cladding rather than the raw concrete originally conceived. Although much original fabric, including the interiors, is intact, these changes have applied a substantial additional layer to the most prominent public elements of the building. These changes irreparably alter the architectural character of the building so that it no longer exhibits the key characteristics of the brutalist style. The building in its present modified form does not satisfy the criteria for listing as a heritage item.</p>	<p><u>Alterations</u> City staff reviewed the landowner's submitted heritage assessment, the study assessment, other submissions and inspected the noted alterations. From more than 110 post-war buildings surveyed in central Sydney, the study identifies this building as worthy of local listing as an example of state heritage significance. The study concludes the building fulfils five Heritage Council criteria for local listing. The building is assessed as a powerful and outstanding example of brutalist architecture, off-form concrete construction and a local landmark, with monumental interiors that rank amongst the finest in Sydney from this period. It is also assessed as significant as an innovative work of Joseland &amp; Gilling and for its strong association with the United Grand Lodge. Some brutalist characteristics noted include the strong expressive shapes in reinforced concrete, bold curved elements, texture provided by building materials and large unbroken wall surfaces. The external building alterations are acknowledged in the inventory.</p> <p>The Sydney Masonic Centre podium retains its original construction, materials, overall form and fine interiors. The minor or reversible alterations and additions of a glazed enclosure, painting the off-form concrete and partial cladding of stair shafts do not permanently dominate, demolish or alter the robust building forms or materials. The new additions are distinguished from the old in line with Burra Charter principles, do not obscure the full height of the street frontage or internal features, and retain original features that can still be appreciated internally or are capable of restoration by removing additions. The form of the Civic Tower, built in 2005, realises the original design intent for this site and so does not detract from its significance. This review confirms the building has a reasonable level of integrity, with some alterations which do not compromise its assessed significance. The Docomomo Australia submission supports this conclusion. The building's significance, as assessed by the heritage study, can still be appreciated. The submission does not provide substantive new information to overturn the study assessment that this building satisfies the Heritage Council criteria for aesthetic/ technical and representative significance. The extent of listing of site components is reviewed below.</p>

<sup>1</sup> Submitters are named with permission from the submitter

No.	Submitter <sup>1</sup>	Submission summary	Submission response
B1	Weir Phillips for landowner	<p><u>Significance and exclusion guidelines</u>  Disputes study assessment of significance against 7 Heritage Council criteria, using the exclusion guidelines of the Heritage Office guideline.</p>	<p><u>Significance and exclusion guidelines</u>  The Heritage Office guide provides inclusion and exclusion guidelines for each of the seven Heritage Council criteria. The submission only references the exclusion guidelines. The Heritage Office guide states that the exclusion guidelines do not cancel out inclusion guidelines and should not be applied in isolation. The study assessment of this building and City review of this proposal consider both reasons for inclusion and exclusion, as required by this guideline.</p>
B1	Weir Phillips for landowner	<p><u>Historic, associations and rarity significance</u>  A long historic association with freemasonry is not, in itself, of particular historical significance. Such a claim could be made for numerous other sites without warranting their listing. This satisfies the Heritage Office exclusion guidelines from historic and associations significance as: an activity or process, people or events, that are of dubious historical importance, and because of alterations can no longer provide evidence of a particular association. The building has been significantly modified, in particular on the exterior, so that it no longer retains the core architectural characteristics which arise from its connection with Joseland &amp; Gilling. The building, as a place for freemasons to assemble is not rare. That few Masonic Halls or Temples were built in the latter half of the 20th century is a very narrow category for rarity.</p>	<p><u>Historic, associations and rarity significance</u>  This significant freemasonry association and historic significance is strengthened by the freemasonry use of the site since 1884 and the building's purpose-built design as the headquarters for the United Grand Lodge of NSW, as distinct from other freemason meeting places or local Masonic halls. The Sydney Masonic Centre is also assessed as a rare Masonic building in the City of Sydney for its period from the second half of the twentieth century. This is the subject period and scope for the study assessment for local listing. The building satisfies the inclusion guidelines for historic significance and associations for showing evidence of the occupation and group of the freemasons and the architectural work of Joseland &amp; Gilling. Neither are considered of dubious historical importance to satisfy the exclusion guidelines for historic significance and associations. The original building form, construction, interiors and its purpose-built design around the grand lodge room provide evidence of these two important associations, unaffected by the alterations. The Heritage Office guide states an item is not to be excluded on the grounds that others with similar characteristics have already been listed, such as other Masonic halls. The submission does not identify any other United Grand Lodges from the second half of the twentieth century in the City of Sydney, or in a larger geographic context, to dispute the study assessment that this example is rare at a local level. The submission does not provide substantive new information to overturn the study assessment that the building satisfies the Heritage Council criteria for historic, association and rarity significance.</p>

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B1	Weir Phillips for landowner	<p><u>Aesthetic/ technical and representative significance</u>            Although the building is a recognisable landmark, this in itself does not warrant listing. The standard of off-form concrete construction, although high, does not in itself warrant listing. The original concrete has been so obscured with a new glass façade, internal fit out and paint finishes that it has lost its fundamental integrity.</p> <p>The original architectural intent has been fundamentally altered by the external modifications undertaken, in particular the painting of the off-form concrete and the construction of a glass façade at the base of the building. It has lost the original aggressive sculptural presentation to the street corner. The glazed enclosure of the façade, attending internal fit-out and cladding of the stair shafts is theoretically reversible but would reduce lettable space and consequently is likely to remain in place more than temporarily. The painting of off-form concrete façade is extremely difficult to reverse. This satisfies the Heritage Office exclusion guidelines from aesthetic/ technical and representative significance for: lost the range of characteristics of a type, lost design or technical integrity, and its positive visual or sensory appeal or landmark and scenic qualities have been more than temporarily degraded.</p>	<p><u>Aesthetic/ technical and representative significance</u>            This building is featured as one of few Australian examples of brutalism in "A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture" (Apperly, Irving and Reynolds, 1989). The TKD study assessment of the building and Docomomo support this assessment. Both take into account subsequent alterations after the 1989 publication. From more than 110 post-war buildings surveyed in central Sydney, the TKD study identifies this building as worthy of local listing as an example of state heritage significance. The study concludes the building fulfils five Heritage Council criteria for its aesthetic/ technical, representative and other values. The building is assessed as state significant as a powerful and outstanding example of brutalist architecture, off-form concrete construction and a local landmark, with monumental interiors that rank amongst the finest in Sydney from this period. Some assessed brutalist characteristics include the strong expressive shapes in reinforced concrete, bold curved elements, and texture provided by building materials and large unbroken wall surfaces. This satisfies several Heritage Office inclusion guidelines for aesthetic and representative significance, such as for demonstrating creative achievement, aesthetic distinctiveness, and a fine example. The Heritage Office exclusion guidelines do not apply as the building designer is important, the building maintains reasonable design and technical integrity, and degrading additions are either minor or capable of reversal. The likelihood or difficulty of reversing alterations for commercial reasons is not part of the exclusion guidelines for assessing significance. Commercial circumstances and conservation technology change over time and are considered through the development application process. A heritage floor space award provides an incentive and option to recoup costs for restoration. For these reasons, it is considered the building's significance, as assessed by the study can still be appreciated. The submission does not provide substantive new information to overturn the study assessment that this building satisfies the Heritage Council criteria for aesthetic/ technical and representative significance. The extent of listing of site components is reviewed below.</p>
B1	Weir Phillips for landowner	<p><u>Social significance</u>            There is no evidence to suggest that the community of Freemasons applies any special significance to the building other than that associated with its amenity for Masonic activities. This satisfies the Heritage Office exclusion guideline that the building is only important to the community for amenity reasons.</p>	<p><u>Social significance</u>            The building has not been assessed in the study as meeting this criterion as one of the seven potential Heritage Council criteria for listing. The submissions in support of the heritage value and listing of this building from heritage bodies, professionals and community members may indicate it has potential social significance.</p>

No.	Submitter <sup>1</sup>	Submission summary	Submission response
B1	Weir Phillips for landowner	<p><u>Civic Tower and site components</u>  Variations to the original 1970s tower design were approved in 2001 for the addition of three levels and other minor changes. There was no change, however, to the general appearance of the tower or its originally conceived splayed base. This approval included the added glazing for the lobby and cafe by Peddle Thorpe and Walker. Both the glazed enclosure and the tower were completed by 2005 and represent the building in its current form. The Civic Tower, although generally consistent with the original design, altered the design with painted external finishes and cladding, rather than the off-form concrete pre-cast panels and expressed structure. The structure is 21st century engineering. The tower, while aesthetically well mannered, is unremarkable and, in itself, undeserving of listing.</p> <p>The quality of the Mona Hessing artwork is not disputed but does not rely on the building for retention or display.</p>	<p><u>Civic Tower and site components</u>  City staff considered the landowner's submitted heritage assessment, the study assessment, other submissions and the noted alterations. The study assesses the Civic Tower, built in 2005, as aesthetically significant for closely following Joseland &amp; Gilling's original intention and for its unusual method of construction, supported from the central lift core. For this reason, the tower design does not detract from the significance of the original building. While the general design of the tower dates from the 1970s within the post-war study period, its final design and construction completed 25 years later in the 2000s is not considered to have equivalent significance to the podium. It is accepted that the tower site component and its contemporary building fabric does not warrant conservation through inclusion in the heritage item name, where it extends above the original podium form. The assessed significance and integrity of the podium and its interiors are maintained, including the Hessing artwork, with minor or reversible alterations.</p> <p>Based on the City post-exhibition review of the listing, it is recommended the proposed item name is revised to specify the "podium including interiors and Mona Hessing artwork." This includes the lower 5-6 storeys of the building that form part of the original podium, with some internal spaces spanning several floors, as identified in this submission. It excludes the 24-storey Civic Tower above. The impact of external works to this tower on the Sydney Masonic Centre podium will still be assessed as in the vicinity of a heritage item. The inventory has been updated to reflect this post-exhibition review.</p>

No.	Submitter <sup>1</sup>	Submission summary	Submission response
B1	Weir Phillips for landowner	<p><u>Upgrades and reuse</u>  Listing buildings of this age and size imposes disproportionately on the owner more than for more modest sized buildings. These office buildings have an established lifecycle. As requirements for office space change, for energy efficiency and occupant facilities, economic pressure demands buildings are replaced. Many organisations require a high level of energy efficiency in buildings, which becomes more difficult to achieve with older buildings. As the building ages, its class of office space will be downgraded with lower rental incomes, unless arrested with major refurbishment. The refurbishment cost correlates with rental lift. Once listed, the building would have to be conserved, regardless of economic considerations and could be demolished only in the most exceptional circumstances. The building podium was designed specifically as a headquarters for Freemasons. Should their requirements change, there will be major issues in terms of reasonable adaptive reuse. This essentially sterilises an important central city site.</p>	<p><u>Upgrades and reuse</u>  The office spaces in the Civic Tower are excluded from the revised heritage item listing and the proposal is amended to enable complying development fit-outs of these excluded offices. As a result, the development process will be unchanged for most commercial fit-outs. The public spaces, meeting or function rooms of the Masonic Centre podium are more versatile. Through the distinctive brutalist architecture, the podium spaces provide a point of difference to attract functions, such as the 2009 Australia ICOMOS conference on (Un)loved Modern held in this building. Common tenancy fit-outs or minor repairs affecting listed building features can be achieved through the quick low-cost notification process for 'heritage works without consent', without the need for a development application.</p> <p>Listed buildings can still be upgraded to meet current standards and converted to new uses. This planning proposal makes no change to the zoning or development standards for the site. Listing as a heritage item recognises the heritage significance of the building and ensures this is considered through the development application process. A heritage listing does not direct the form of development, conservation or use. The non-prescriptive development assessment process for heritage items provides the opportunity to consider and address building and development issues for the individual building circumstances in a way that respects significant building features. The views and issues of owners and their consultants are considered through this process. By providing advance notice of heritage issues before an application is lodged, listing can reduce the cost and assessment time for an application. Listing this building gives its owners an option to recoup upgrade costs or generate revenue for works through a heritage floor space award. Owners are encouraged to arrange pre-application meetings with City planners to gain greater certainty about development plans.</p>

No.	Submitter <sup>1</sup>	Submission summary	Submission response
B1	Weir Phillips for landowner	<p><u>Conclusions</u> It is submitted that the Sydney Masonic Centre does not meet the threshold for listing under the criteria NSW Heritage Branch and thus should not be listed as a heritage item.</p>	<p><u>Conclusions</u> The submitted assessment for landowners has been considered, together with other public submissions. The study identifies this building as worthy of local listing as an example of state heritage significance. This submission disputes this assessment because of building alterations. These building alterations are acknowledged in the study assessment that recommends listing. The City review of the alterations and submissions confirms the building has a reasonable level of integrity, with some alterations which do not compromise its assessed significance. The Docomomo Australia submission supports this conclusion. The submission does not provide substantive new information to overturn the study assessment that the building satisfies at least one Heritage Council listing criteria. The submission only references the exclusion guidelines in the Heritage Office guide for assessing significance, without also considering the satisfied reasons for inclusion. The study assessment of this building and City review of this proposal are in accordance with this guideline, considering both reasons for inclusion and exclusion. The assessed local significance of the building under five criteria is supported for its historic, associations, aesthetic/ technical, rarity and representative value. The building therefore warrants listing as a local heritage item. The lesser significance of the 2005 Civic Tower above the podium is supported. As a result of the post-exhibition City review, it is recommended that the proposed item name is revised to specify the "Sydney Masonic Centre building podium including interiors and Mona Hessing artwork". This includes the lower 5-6 storeys of the building that form part of the original podium and excludes the 24-storey Civic Tower above. The inventory has been updated to reflect this post-exhibition review.</p>
B2	Paul Davidson, Sydney Masonic Holdings Ltd	<p><b>Oppose.</b> The objection is submitted for the owners, with the written authority of the Grand Secretary of Sydney Masonic Holdings, Stephen Green PDGM. The objection is for the reasons outlined below.</p>	<p>Objection noted and responded to below.</p>
B2	Paul Davidson, Sydney Masonic Holdings Ltd	<p><u>Landowner's heritage assessment</u> The Weir Phillips assessment clearly shows that the Masonic Centre does not meet the NSW Heritage assessment criteria and should not be considered for heritage listing. This includes updates to the executive summary, expanded body of the report and added guidelines for exclusion. Surely in all good conscience, these qualifiable arguments outweigh the subjective nature of the TDK report and argument to list.</p>	<p><u>Landowner's heritage assessment</u> The submitted updated assessment for landowners has been considered, together with other public submissions. The detailed response to the Weir Phillips assessment is provided above.</p>

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B2	Paul Davidson, Sydney Masonic Holdings Ltd	<p><u>Development</u></p> <p>The Weir Phillips assessment also discusses how any listing of the Centre will adversely affect any future redevelopment of the Civic Tower which in itself should be sufficient grounds to not list the Centre. When the centre is no longer required for Masonic purposes, if it cannot be redeveloped, the ageing building will sit idle as it is not fit for any re-adaptable purpose.</p>	<p><u>Development</u></p> <p>As addressed in the above response to the Weir Phillips submission, listed buildings can still be upgraded to meet current standards and converted to new uses. The office spaces in the Civic Tower are excluded from the revised heritage item listing and the proposal is amended to enable complying development fit-outs of these excluded offices. The public spaces, meeting or function rooms of the Masonic Centre podium are more versatile. Through the distinctive brutalist architecture, these spaces provide a point of difference to attract functions, such as the 2009 Australia ICOMOS conference on (Un)loved Modern held in this building. This planning proposal makes no change to the zoning or development standards for the site. Listing as a heritage item recognises the heritage significance of the building and ensures this is considered in future development through the development application or other approval process. A heritage listing does not direct the form of development, conservation or use.</p>
A2	Docomomo Australia Inc	<p><b>Support.</b> The Sydney Masonic Centre podium epitomises the Brutalist aesthetic with its strongly modelled forms and textured, board marked concrete walls defining bold, uplifting spaces. The 2009 Australia ICOMOS conference, (Un)loved Modern, was held in this building. The venue was selected for its variety of spaces and because its architecture demonstrated the conference theme on the relevance of Brutalism to the development of architecture. While the expressed external materials of the office tower are not as originally proposed, the form closely emulates and maintains the original design intent. While the glazed enclosure of part of the space under the overhang of the podium adapts public space to private, the frameless glass permits direct vision of original concrete forms of the overhanging podium and is reversible. The partial enclosure does not diminish the strength of the original design. The painting the vertical face of the podium superficially alters the brutalist aesthetic of off-form concrete, however the texture and expression of structure remain dominant. Docomomo Australia does not support the assertion by the owner’s consultants that subsequent changes have “fundamentally changed its external character.” Building changes are overwritten by the strength of the original design intent.</p>	Support noted.

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A15	Glenn A Harper	<p><b>Support.</b> Together with Town Hall House, this is an outstanding and rare brutalist period building. Each were impeccably built displaying a high degree of technical achievement. Both have a landmark quality. For the significance for the Masonic Centre, they believe recognition of the intact public foyers and the external massing (although built at a later date and with slightly different technologies) should also be carefully identified.</p>	<p>Support noted. The significant internal and external features of the podium, first built in 1978, are included in the recommended listing and the Civic Tower is removed, based on the City post-exhibition review. The 2005 Civic Tower form does not detract from the significance of the original building as it closely follows Joseland &amp; Gilling's original design intent. While the general design of the tower dates from the 1970s within the post-war study period, its final design and construction completed 25 years later in the 2000s is not considered to have equivalent significance to the podium. It is accepted that the tower site component and its contemporary building fabric does not warrant conservation, through inclusion in the heritage item name, where it extends above the original podium form. The impact of external works to the Civic Tower on the Sydney Masonic Centre podium will still be assessed as in the vicinity of a heritage item.</p>