

## Item 3.4

### Protecting Heritage

File No: S051491

#### Minute by the Lord Mayor

To Council:

The City's heritage conservation areas, which cover approximately 10 square kilometres (38 per cent) of our local area, house diverse living and working communities with strong and unique urban characteristics.

Places like Forest Lodge/Glebe, Paddington, Millers Point, Potts Point– Woolloomooloo, Darlinghurst, Surry Hills, and Redfern – Chippendale are among the most populous areas in Greater Sydney and consist predominantly of conservation areas which are some of the most historic neighbourhoods in Sydney.

Local resident groups such as The Glebe Society, Millers Point Residents Action Group and The Paddington Society have asked Council to consider increased heritage protections for their areas.

Resident groups want to strengthen the resources available to heritage property owners to help educate and support them to better maintain their properties.

Unfortunately, in NSW, neither the *Local Government Act 1993* nor the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* give councils the legal powers necessary to order that property owners maintain their buildings, even if they are listed as heritage items in the Local Environmental Plan. Councils are therefore unable to legally require owners to maintain their properties or prevent demolition by neglect.

A heritage education program has the potential to raise knowledge and awareness of owners about the significance of their property as well as leading to better informed and designed proposals submitted to Council.

This initiative can help build on the City's existing efforts to support heritage conservation areas. To date, the City has listed approximately 2,200 heritage items and 75 conservation areas to protect our historic buildings and landscapes and we are examining opportunities for increased protections through the City's current update of our planning controls.

In July 2019, the City published painting guidelines for properties in heritage conservation areas. Following that, in March 2020, we published a guideline that supports the installation of solar panels without the necessity for a development application, subject to criteria, while protecting the character of our heritage conservation areas.

In early 2020, the City started developing an education program including a public heritage workshop but due to Covid-19 restrictions, it was halted.

The City is committed to conserving its local heritage items and conservation areas as their historical origins and relationships to places contribute to the local character and strengthen each community's sense of place.

**Recommendation**

It is resolved that:

- (A) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to:
  - (i) review the City's website so that the City's heritage information resources are more easily found and understood. Details about and direction to relevant NSW Government policies should also be provided;
  - (ii) develop an education resource including online and in-person programs that raise knowledge and awareness of heritage property owners about the opportunities and limitations for maintenance and development of their properties; and
  - (iii) make a submission in response to the NSW Government's discussion paper on the proposed reforms to NSW Heritage legislation requesting that councils be given greater powers to prevent demolition of heritage properties by neglect; and
- (B) the Lord Mayor be requested to write to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces and the Minister for the Arts requesting that councils be given greater powers to prevent demolition of heritage properties by neglect through NSW planning and heritage legislative changes.

**COUNCILLOR CLOVER MOORE**

Lord Mayor