

South Australian HERITAGE COUNCIL

DEW-D0019405

13 October 2022

Hon Dr Susan Close MP
Minister for Climate, Environment and Water

Via email: OfficeoftheDeputyPremier@sa.gov.au

Dear Minister

RE: Requested report on decision to demolish the Thebarton Police Barracks

I understand that you are seeking the South Australian Heritage Council's advice on the proposed demolition of the Thebarton Police Barracks precinct under its legislated role in the *Heritage Places Act 1993* to advise you regarding heritage values under Section 5A(1)(iv).

The Council met on 13 October 2022 to discuss its advice to you.

The precinct was registered as a State Heritage Place on 18 November 1985 under the title of "Thebarton Mounted Police Barracks". It was confirmed under the *South Australian Heritage Act 1978*.

The following is the commentary on the South Australian Heritage Places Database:

Historically, the South Australian Police Force has been associated with the Thebarton Police Barracks since the barracks were constructed in 1917 to accommodate the South Australia Mounted Police, who moved from their premises located behind the South Australian Museum. The South Australian Mounted Police Cadre, established in 1838, is the oldest of its type in Australia, and with the possible exception of the Royal Irish Mounted Constabulary created by Robert Peel, is the oldest in the world. The changing use of the buildings on site illustrates the transition to motorised patrols, while retaining a patrol of Police Greys that supplement foot patrols and participate as honour guards at ceremonial functions.

There is a recent report prepared for the new Women's and Children's Hospital project which reviews the heritage values of the Thebarton Police Barracks and

confirms its importance and status as a State Heritage Place. It is not a publically available document but it may be sourced from the Department of Health.

The Council expresses serious concern about the demolition of the State Heritage listed precinct which includes ten significant heritage buildings and its original parade ground.

Demolition of State Heritage Places has been extremely rare. No Government, as far as we are aware, has demolished a confirmed State Heritage Place in its entirety before, let alone a whole precinct. Heritage protection law has been upheld for more than four decades in this State.

Council is extremely concerned about the precedent this Government's decision sets for the future.

The new hospital site will also impact on the heritage values of the nationally heritage listed Adelaide Park Lands and City Layout and may lead to referral under the *Environment, Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

Capturing the Heritage

In the event of special legislation being passed by Parliament to allow demolition of the Thebarton Police Barracks precinct, the Council strongly recommends the full site should be recorded in perpetuity. This will involve a range of techniques and processes. Further details of such preservation are included in Attachment 1.

Council also noted the importance of thorough archaeological investigations as required by the *Heritage Places Act 1993* and recommends the processes outlined in Attachment 1.

Archaeological investigations

Council also recommends the archaeological investigations apply to all areas within and adjacent to the Thebarton Police Barracks precinct where the ground will be disturbed or excavated to enable the construction of the new WCH.

Given the history of this part of the Adelaide Park Lands there are reasonable grounds to suspect that archaeological artefacts of heritage significance are likely to be found.

Council anticipates that the Government may be receiving separate advice concerning Aboriginal heritage.

The South Australian Heritage Council trusts that this advice may be helpful.

I would be very happy to meet with you to talk further about these matters.

Yours sincerely



Keith Conlon
Chair, South Australian Heritage Council

Attachment 1

Site recording of the Thebarton Police Barracks

In the event the demolition of the Thebarton Police Barracks occurs, the full site should be recorded in perpetuity.

Record all buildings using:

- 3D point cloud laser scan of the site quality to enable a 3D model of the site and each building in it and for future use in Virtual Reality (VR) and online renderings
- 360 degree image capture of buildings (exterior), external spaces and relationships with key buildings, selected interiors of buildings to enable future site interpretation through VR.
- Drone survey of the site to provide bird's eye view (still and moving images) and drone survey (still and moving images) showing movement through the space e.g. from horse's eye view to enable future interpretation of site - day in the life of a police horse.
- 360 degree images or other still photography of interior spaces in each building, (approx 55 structures). There should be at least 1 image for every room/space in each building to act as a general record.
- Note1: Quality and recording methods to be of quality and formats to enable a variety of possible futures uses including site interpretation.
- Note 2: It is understood that the nature of SAPOL work may preclude drone footage and interior images being taken until after SAPOL have vacated the site. Ideally, interior images of selected spaces for VR would include some rooms 'in use' where possible.

Archaeological discovery

It is recommended that the following archaeological investigations apply to all areas adjacent to the Thebarton Police Barracks where the ground will be disturbed or excavated to enable the construction of the new WCH. Under s27(1)(b) of the *Heritage Places Act 1993* (the Act) a permit is required if 'knowing or having reasonable cause to suspect that the excavation or disturbance will or is likely to result in an archaeological artefact of heritage significance being discovered, exposed, moved, damaged or destroyed.'

Given the history of this area, there is reasonable grounds to suspect that archaeological artefacts of heritage significance are likely to be found.

Ideally, archaeological investigation and recording of the Thebarton Police Barracks would occur in two phases:

- Phase 1 – pre-demolition
- Phase 2 - demolition and construction

Pre-demolition (Phase 1)

An archaeological assessment is undertaken to provide supplementary research about the importance of the site and to identify and prioritise the specific areas for archaeological excavation.

Preparation of an Archaeological Research Plan (or Management Plan), which details why the site is potentially important and provides the methodology for investigation, including pre-demolition and a watching brief to be implemented in Phase 2.

Archaeological excavation of the site should occur in adherence with the approved method in the Archaeological Research Plan. This will include recording archaeological remains and recovery of archaeological artefacts.

Demolition and Construction (Phase 2)

Phase 2 will involve the implementation of watching or monitoring brief, as outlined in the Archaeological Research Plan in Phase 1. This will provide the opportunity to assess, record and recover any significant archaeological material at the site that might be buried under the built structures and inaccessible to the pre-demolition archaeological excavation.

Scope of the archaeological investigation

- open area archaeological excavation and site recording,
- recovery, recording and conservation of archaeological artefacts,
- research of recorded sites and recovered archaeological materials, including analytical work as required (soil analysis, species identification of wood & plant material, pollen analysis, metallurgical analyses, radiocarbon dating, etc.),
- curation and interpretation of the site and associated finds, and
- publication of the results.

Site interpretation

The following projects (in priority order) are suggested to interpret the history and heritage significance of the Thebarton Police Barracks (including archaeological investigations), Aboriginal sites and lifeways along the river and early settler sites/encampments, in the event of demolition.

- Salvaging/ stockpiling building materials from the Thebarton Police Barracks suitable for re-use in heritage conservation projects, particularly bricks, stonework, door/window joinery and other timbers.
- Commission a Heritage Interpretation Plan from a professional specialising in the interpretation of heritage sites including the following deliverables (priority order) and to provide other options.
 - Augmented reality tours including soundscapes and videography
 - Virtual reality tours of various types e.g. Horse's Eye View (A day in the life of a police horse)
 - Film/oral history project
 - Monograph (glossy coffee table publication) and/or interactive multimedia e-book
 - Public art projects
 - Exhibition - physical space or as a part of the augmented reality tour or interactive multimedia e-book
 - Virtual reality room in the new WCH
 - Children's playground at Bonython Park or in new WCH
 - Soundscapes for use in the new WCH