

5. Civic Theatre – Expansion proposals

Attention: Emma Molloy

Contact: Carissa

Significance

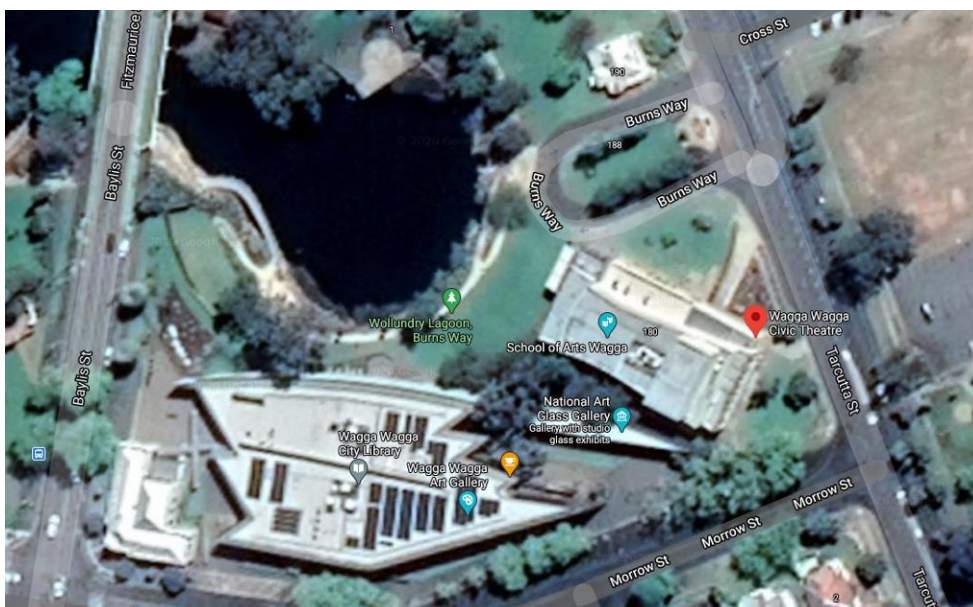
The site is within the Heritage Conservation Area and the Wagga Civic Precinct including the Civic Theatre is a listed heritage item.

The Wagga Wagga Civic Precinct includes buildings from the late 19th century, the mid 20th century and the late 20th century, each of which fits comfortably within a precinct of historic significance and exceptionally high aesthetic significance, located as it is on the banks of Wollundry Lagoon. Views in and out of the precinct are also noteworthy.

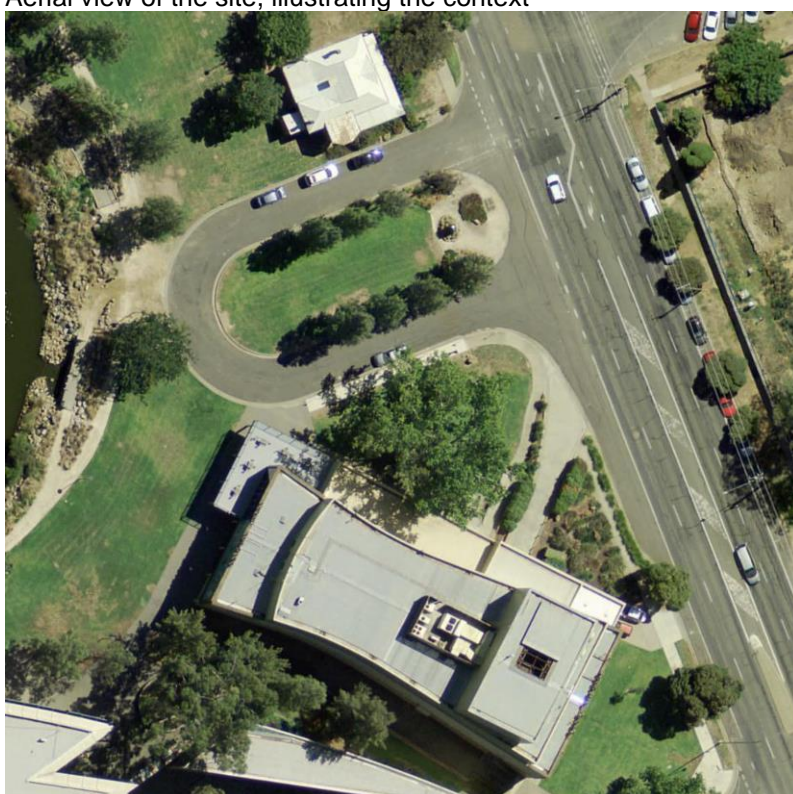
The Civic Precinct includes the Historic Council Chambers, the Civic Theatre and the recently completed Wagga Wagga City Council building which was designed by Melbourne architects Garner Davis. The complex overlooks the Wollundry Lagoon. The entrance portico expresses the prevailing Victorian Free Classical Revival style in the use of pro-style Doric columns supporting a triangular pediment below an elaborate entablature bearing the date 1881. The pediment displays the Victorian Royal Coat of Arms above the raised inscription 'COUNCIL CHAMBERS'. The entrance projects from the corner, the cement rendered base with its modelled surfaces linking with the street elevations through common detailing. This includes the use of semi-circular headed openings, string courses and balustrades with parapet walls at roof level. Pilasters continue the classical motif onto the set-back side sections of the entrance which feature arched openings. The panelled cedar entrance doors are flanked by semi-circular arched alcoves. The ceiling of the portico is plastered with lath and plaster. The roof is hipped and contiguous with the adjacent sections of the building. The originally plain cement rendered surface of the brickwork has been painted as has the Coat of Arms. The building has been modified over time to accommodate Council functions, and has recently been upgraded to serve as the Museum of the Riverina. Access to the building is now via a new rear entrance.

The Civic Theatre was opened and dedicated as a war memorial on 29 June 1963. The building was designed by Wagga Wagga architect S.J. O'Halloran and built at a cost of £165,000 by Siebels Brothers. It was designed to seat 497 patrons. A feature of the building is a mural of mosaic tiles in pastel shades with metallic figures in bronze, aluminium and copper in low relief, depicting the buildings function as a theatre. The mural was designed and constructed by Bim and Roma Hilde of Castlecrag, NSW. It was completed at the end of April 1963 and was considered to be quite controversial at the time. The artist Sali Herman described it as 'an eyesore and a crime against good taste'. The building has recently undergone upgrading and alteration as part of the Wagga Wagga City Council redevelopment. Coloured panels and windows which were once located to the left of the mural have been removed and replaced with glass doors [in dark glass], leading out onto a newly constructed balcony.

- The subject of the present enquiry and review is the former brick villa at 190 Tarcutta Street on the corner with Burns Way.



Aerial view of the site, illustrating the context



The proposal seeks to review the significance of the Tarcutta building with a view to expanding the theatre and including an element of the new work to replace the existing building in order to address the existing northern landscape setting as an integrated performance space.

Physical description and commentary

The subject appears to be an Inter war brick residence in the bungalow style of the period with dutch gabled galvanised iron roof with vents, expressed rafters, detached skillion verandah to three sides with half posts and decorative brackets on capped piers with waist high infill walls. The timber fenestration is generally the boxed casement style with fanlights and leadlight



View of the side – South Elevation and front-East Elevation of the subject building



Aerial view of the building indicates how the building may have evolved. This provides clues for the significance of the site/building/parts

Summary

The next steps

- Contact Geoff Burch at the WW&DHS on 0417 277 592 and have him or one of his colleagues research the history of the site
- Prepare measure drawings of the building, photograph the interiors to assess their integrity and then determine the relative significance of the elements.
- It is suspected that there are additions to the rear/west, south and north and that the corner and that the core beneath the main roof are the significant elements

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- Review the expansion plans related to the glazed north elevation of the expanded Theatre space and investigate options for including the significant elements of the existing within the design and landscape
- Consider how the remaining/adapted structure could be incorporated into the proposal. It is not expected that it retain the residential function. The retained structure could provide a food and beverage venue for the site as well as operate independently given the possibilities inherent in the location and the landscape setting
- Present the concepts to the HA when design development has reached an appropriate stage.

David Scobie
Heritage Advisor to Wagga Wagga City Council