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Planning Proposal for 17-31 Cowper St and 2A-D Wentworth Park Rd, Glebe (Reference X031277.008 – Cowper Street and Wentworth Park Road, Glebe)

The National Trust (NSW) objects to the removal of 17-31 Cowper St and 2A-D Wentworth Park Rd, Glebe from the St Phillips Conservation Area. The boundaries of this area have a strong historical basis, and it is because of effective heritage controls and resident and community action since the 1970s that Glebe continues to display so much of the unique character that it does today.

The Statement of Significance for this Conservation Area makes clear the reasons for its listing, as outlined in the excerpt below (bold text by National Trust):

“St Phillip's Conservation Area has historic significance for its subdivision of St. Phillip's Estate c. 1870, following redevelopment of 1842 leases. The area has a number of important layers...

The post 1974 public housing development and rehabilitation programs reflect the protection of Glebe due to resident action.

*St Phillips has aesthetic significance for its predominant Victorian character, supported by several other important historic layers and building types. **The area is rare for its extraordinary degree of architectural intactness**, and for the survival of early 1870s commercial and residential development so close to the city centre. The high level of integrity reflects the long history of church and government ownership.”¹*

The subject site is also included within ‘The Glebe Urban Conservation Area’ listed on the National Trust Register. The reasons for the 1974 listing of the Urban Conservation Area largely mirror those above, namely:

“Glebe is a history of early Australian urban architecture; as a townscape it is handsome, coherent and largely complete. The scale and character have been little disturbed by modern intrusion. About one-fifth of the houses have recently been acquired by the Australian Government and will be restored. Glebe seen as a whole is a significant part of Sydney's historic and architectural heritage and character must be conserved.”

¹ St Phillips Heritage Conservation Area, Statement of significance (last updated 01 Nov 12)
<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritageapp/ViewHeritageItemDetails.aspx?ID=2427857>



The boundaries of the National Trust and City of Sydney Conservation Areas, and the original Estate subdivision all include the subject property (see Figs 1-3 at Attachment 1):

1. The 1870s subdivision known as the St Phillip's Estate subdivision;
2. The St Phillips Heritage Conservation Area included on Schedule 5 of the Sydney LEP 2012 ; and
3. The National Trust's Heritage Register listing for The Glebe Urban Conservation Area

Given the high level of intactness of the conservation area and the mostly sympathetic neutral infill, it is appropriate to retain the subdivision boundary as it facilitates historical interpretation of the development of Glebe.

The Trust believes it is a bad precedent to simply modify the boundary of a Heritage Conservation Area (HCA) to allow development that would otherwise be considered unsympathetic and not contributing to the cultural values of the place.

Heritage Conservation Areas are vulnerable to edge effects. Those areas closest to the boundary suffer the greatest from development outside the HCA. Further encroachment into a HCA will result in the erosion of the HCA's integrity. The scale of an adjacent development that is outside of a conservation area cannot be used as a precedent for inappropriate work within a HCA – this is the whole purpose of such boundaries.

The Trust supports the provision of improved social housing in Glebe, and new development that is responsive to and conserves the heritage values of the conservation area.

Yours sincerely,

David Burdon
Director Conservation



Attachment 1

Figure 1: Plan of subdivision of the St. Philip, Glebe Estate, c. 1878 (Source: SLNSW)

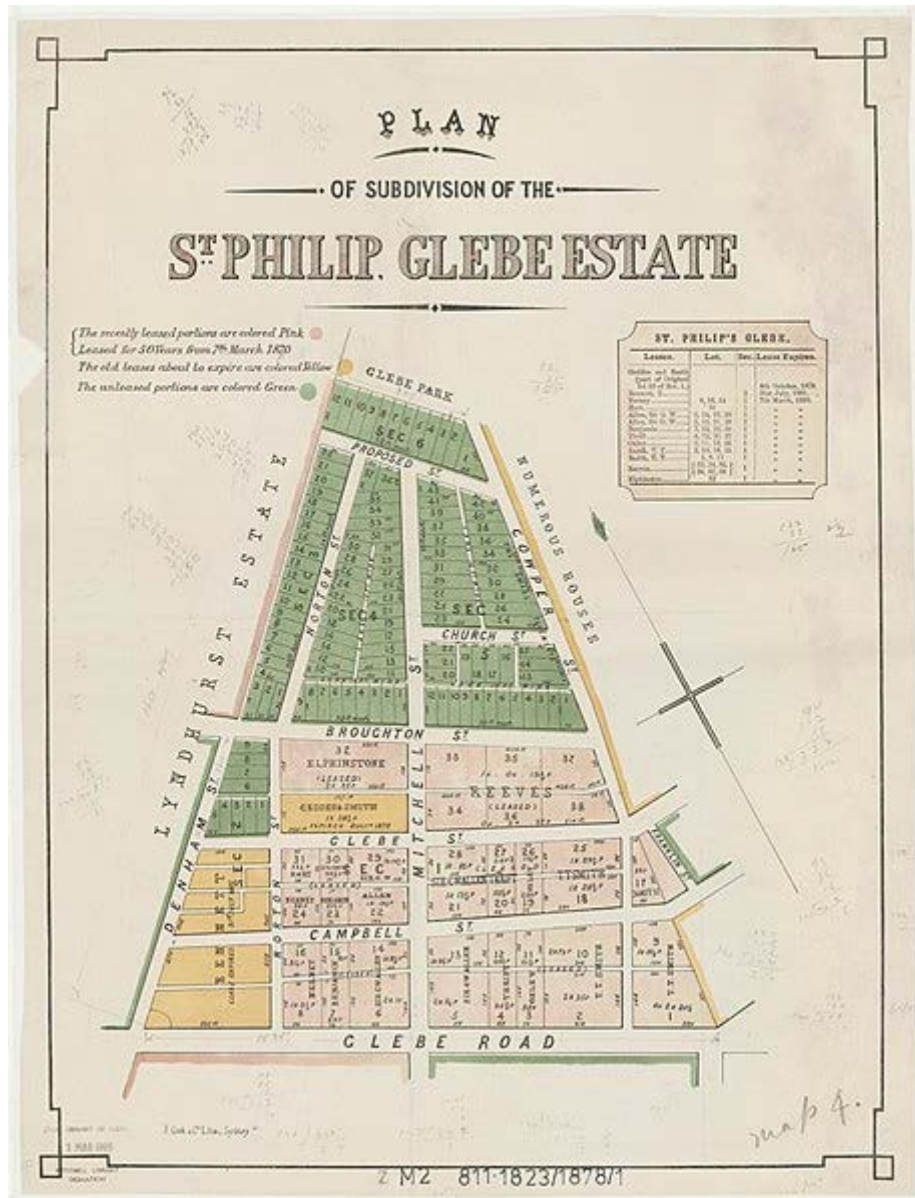




Figure 3: Boundary of the National Trust 'The Glebe Urban Conservation Area'

