

## LSJ Heritage Planning & Architecture

Lucas Stapleton Johnson & Partners Pty Ltd

The Trust Building, Suite 303, 155 King Street, Sydney, NSW, 2000 Email: mailbox@lsjarchitects.com Telephone: 02 9357 4811

ACN: 002 584 189 ABN: 60 763 960 154 Websites: www.lsjarchitects.com www.traditionalaustralianhouses.com.au

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Penrith Regional Gallery, 86 River Road, Emu Plains

### **Repair and Restoration works to Living Room Gallery**

### **HERITAGE IMPACT STATEMENT**

Prepared for: Penrith City Council

Issue: 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2021

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## **Introduction**

This Heritage Impact Statement (HIS) provides an analysis of a proposal to make alterations to the Living Room Gallery of the Penrith Regional Gallery. This report has been prepared in support of a Development Application to Penrith City Council.

The Penrith Regional Gallery is included as a heritage item in Schedule 5 of the *Penrith Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2010 as Lewers Bequest and Regional Art Gallery, houses and garden* (item no. 69). The place is not located within a heritage conservation area.

This report was prepared by Jessica Kroese of this office with review by Sean Johnson (see attached CVs). The site was inspected by Sean Johnson on the 27<sup>th</sup> of August, 2021. Tanner Kibble Denton Architects prepared the Conservation Management Plan (CMP), dated April 2021 for the place. The history and significance of the place contained within the CMP has been relied upon for the purposes of this HIS.

This report follows generally the methodology recommended by the NSW Heritage Office in *Statement of Heritage Impact* (Revised 2002) and is in accordance with the *Australian ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance (The Burra Charter)* and the *NSW Heritage Office Heritage Manual*.

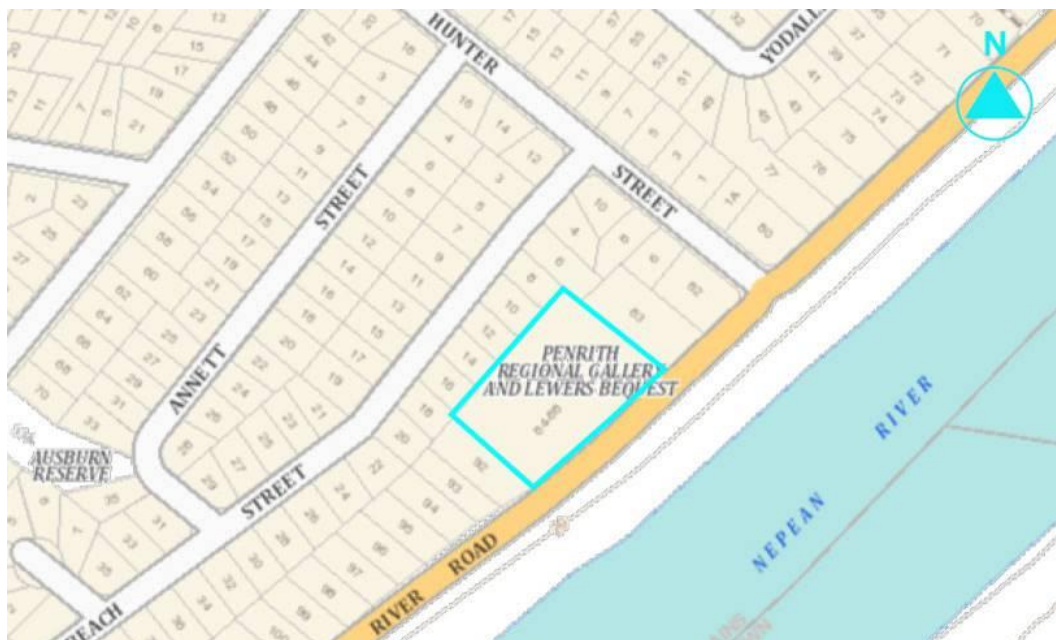
## **Description**

### **Penrith Regional Gallery**

The Penrith Regional Gallery, 86 River Road Emu Plains, is located on the western side of River Road, which runs parallel to the adjacent Nepean River, within the Local Government Area of Penrith City Council.

The Penrith Regional Gallery comprises a collection of buildings from varying periods between the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to present, set within an extensively landscaped garden. The area of the Penrith Regional Gallery that is the subject to the proposed works is the Living Room Gallery, located at the north-western side of the property and between the main gallery building to the north east, Lewers House Gallery to the south west, and carpark to the west.

The real property definition of the Penrith Regional Gallery is Lot 34, DP 1114973.



**Figure 1:** Map of the locality showing the location of the subject property (outlined in blue). Source: SIXMaps.



**Figure 2:** Aerial view of the subject property showing the legal allotment boundaries (outlined in blue). The real property definition is Lot 34, DP 1114973.

### Living Room Gallery

The Living Room Gallery (also called Lounge Room Gallery) comprises the former Kitchen wing of the nearby Lewers House, and was converted to a living room in 1950. It is a single storey, single room space, with painted white brick walls and hipped roof with gablets at each end. The building was significantly altered in the 1950s, with the addition of a flat roofed verandah, pergola and extensive glazing to the western elevation. A recent stone paved concrete ramp links the Living room Gallery to the Lewers Gallery verandah, enclosing much of the subfloor on the southern and western side.

Internally, the space retains elements of both its original layout and modified 1950s layout. The floorboards are divided into three sections – the north and south are Kauri Pine of differing dimensions, while the central third is knotty pine of poorer quality, possibly constructed over sandstone paving. The ceiling comprises painted pressed metal, with later flat panels installed over portions of the ceiling.

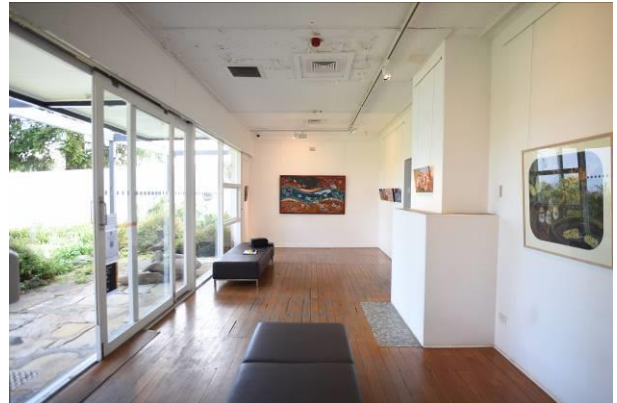
Some elements from the 1950s alterations of the space remain. A sideboard with cupboards and shelves is located against the southern wall and which is now painted white. To the west of the sideboard, a doorway has been infilled, however, the door leaf remains. A sliding door is located to the east of the sideboard, and which provides access to the adjoining kitchen. A chimney breast and shelf remains in the centre of the eastern wall, however the fireplace has been infilled. The hearth and shelf incorporates mosaics created by Margo Lewers and which remain insitu.

New services related to the use of the space as a gallery have recently been inserted, including air conditioning, track lighting, smoke alarms, and security cameras. The north and eastern walls are currently used to display artworks.

## Recent Images of the Place



**Figure 3:** Living Room Gallery, looking south.



**Figure 4:** Living Room Gallery, looking north.



**Figure 5:** External western façade of Living Room Gallery



**Figure 6:** Existing ventilation grilles to northern wall of gallery (indicated).



**Figure 7:** External southern façade of Living Room Gallery, showing the former tank stand and location of bricked-in door.



**Figure 8:** Typical view of floor substructure of Living Room Gallery.

## Historical Development

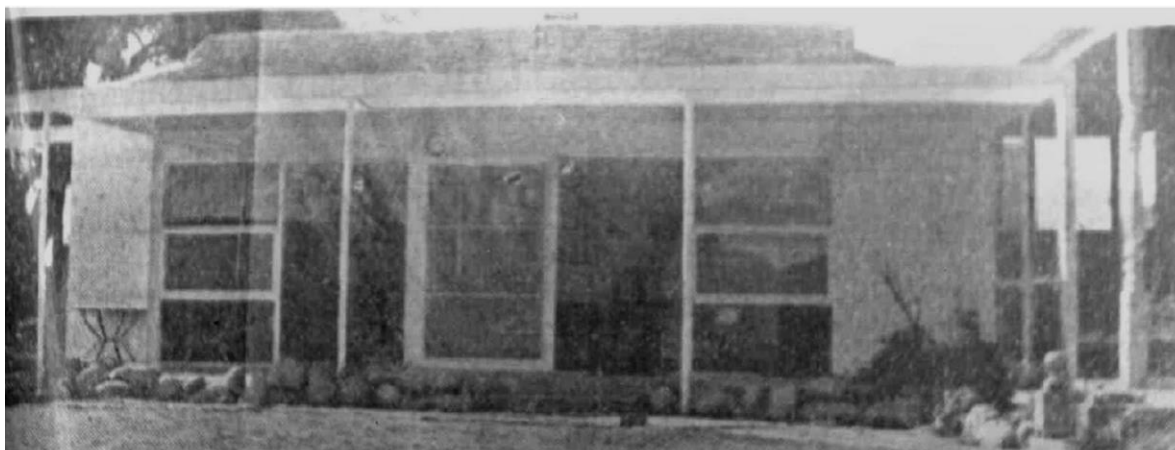
The following brief history of the Living Room Gallery has been reproduced in part from the CMP for the place, prepared by TKD Architects, dated April 2021. Refer to the CMP for the full history of the place, including the development of the other buildings that form part of the place.

The property on which the Penrith Regional Gallery is located adjoins the site of the former Government Farm, established in 1819. Much of the area surrounding the establishment, including the present site of the Gallery was utilised for the growing of rye, clover, fallow, potatoes, maize, barley and 'natural grass'. The land on the bank of the Nepean River was sold in two parts in 1832 .

The first five allotments (Lots 48 to 52) were put up for sale as suburban lots in April 1845 and purchased by John Dargin of Bathurst. The subject property is located on the former allotments 48 and 49, later adopted as parish portions 141 and 142.9. The properties changed ownership a number of times during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Between May 1905 and December 1907, the price of the property increased from 32 pounds to 950 pounds. It is likely that the original four room cottage was constructed during this period and formed part of a ten acre pig farm. In 1940 the property was purchased by Gerald and Margo Lewers. The place was used primarily as a holiday home until it became the permanent family home in 1950 when Gerald became a full time sculptor.

The original farmhouse consisted of two separate wings. Four large rooms surrounded by verandahs occupied the main section facing the river and the road. A 'lean to' bedroom with its own verandah was on the south east corner. The rear kitchen wing off the north-west corner of the main house contained a living/dining room, kitchen, utility room and two small bedrooms.

In 1955, Architect Sydney Ancher transformed this kitchen wing into a large living room with ceiling-to-floor windows overlooking the garden on the southern side and a large glass sliding door opening onto a stone paved terrace. This building is now known as the Living Room Gallery.



**Figure 9:** The living room of the former farmhouse in 1955, following its alteration by Sydney Ancher. Source: Connie Boesen, *Sydney Ancher: A Profile*, Volume 3.

Following the death of Gerald Lewers in 1962 and Margo Lewers in 1978 the property was donated to the community for use as a Gallery. Plans for a new Regional Gallery were developed by the Government Architect's Branch, and which involved the construction of a new gallery building to the northeast of the property, and conversion the original farmhouse, living room wing, Ancher House, and other ancillary buildings into a complex of galleries. The living room was to be used as a gallery for local artists and a seminar room, while bedrooms were to be occupied by a resident caretaker.

The property became known as The Lewers Bequest and Penrith Regional Art Gallery and was formally opened by the Premier of New South Wales, Neville Wran on 21 August 1981.



**Figure 10:** Living Room Gallery in 1956, looking north. Reproduced from CMP, figure 53.



**Figure 11:** Living Room Gallery in 1956, looking south. Note original finish of sideboard and shelves. Reproduced from CMP, figure 54.

## Heritage Status

The Penrith Regional Gallery is included as a heritage item in Schedule 5 of the *Penrith Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2010* as *Lewers Bequest and Regional Art Gallery, houses and garden* (item no. 69). The place is not located within a heritage conservation area.

## Significance Assessment

The CMP for the place includes the following Statement of Significance:

*Penrith Regional Gallery and The Lewers Bequest has significance at a State level as the former home and studios of Gerald and Margo Lewers, who were important twentieth century Australian Modernist artists. It is associated with the development of, and exchange of ideas about, Modernist art in the second half of the twentieth century. Despite changes to the garden and grounds, the place demonstrates the rare integration of architecture, artworks, movable items and garden setting, and is a manifestation of the creative philosophy and work of Margo and Gerald Lewers. It is a rare example of a regional gallery that was the home and workplace of two prominent Modernist artists and established with a significant collection of artworks by major artists.*

*The site of PRG&LB is historically significant at a local level for its associations with agriculture. Important evidence for this is provided by the former farm house and its kitchen wing that became home to the Lewers family and the tank stand in the front of the property.*

*Apart from Margo and Gerald Lewers, the site is associated with several other prominent individuals, including influential and highly regarded pioneering Modernist architect Sydney Ancher, who designed the alterations to the kitchen wing and the so-called Ancher House (in collaboration with Margo Lewers), respected architect Andrew Andersons and architect David Turner. It is also associated with Margo and Gerald Lewers' daughters, jeweler and artist Darani Lewers and artist and architect Tanya Crothers, who were responsible for the bequest of the place and its contents to the local Penrith community.*

*The place has aesthetic significance at State level. The buildings and garden areas provided a carefully designed setting for the display of artworks by Gerald and Margot Lewers and have the potential to regain this character. The Lounge Gallery and Ancher House have high aesthetic significance as buildings demonstrating the Modernist aesthetics of Sydney Ancher and Margo Lewers. The former farm house (now the Lewers Gallery) has aesthetic significance as an intact*

*example of a Federation era dwelling. The gardens associated with these buildings were rare examples of the Modernist aesthetic and have the potential to regain this quality.*

*Anecdotal evidence indicates that the place has social significance at a regional level as an important and valued community resource, and may provide a sense of local identity. Visitation indicates that the Gallery and garden are highly regarded as a cultural and social venue.*

The State heritage inventory for the local heritage listing for the place provides the following Statement of Significance:

*The place is of historic significance at a regional level as the former home and workshop of Gerald and Margot Lewers, important artists of the mid twentieth century period in Australia.*

*The place is of aesthetic significance at a State level as the buildings and garden areas provide a carefully designed setting for the display of artworks by Gerald and Margot Lewers. The works themselves, their immediate surroundings and wider site context display a high degree of creative accomplishment and are considered rare.*

*The place is of social significance at a regional level because its function as a regional Art Gallery provides an important and valued resource for the community.*

## **The Proposal**

### **Documents Describing the Proposal**

The proposed works are described in the following documents:

- Drawings by Lucas Stapleton Johnson and Partners:
  - 125850/01 – Site Plan, dated 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2021;
  - 125850/02 – Floor Plan and Sections, dated 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2021;
  - 125850/03 – Reflected Ceiling Plan, dated 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2021;
- Statement of Environmental Effects, by Lucas Stapleton Johnson and Partners, dated 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2021;
- Schedule of Works dated 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2021.

### **Background to the Proposal**

Concerns were raised by the Penrith Regional Gallery about strong musty odours within the Living Room Gallery, indicating possible health hazards, mould, and dampness. Cracking of the tongued and grooved pine flooring was also noted, possibly due to excessive sanding thinning, subsequently weakening the joints. An inspection of the sub-floor was carried out by Jessica Kroese of this office and John Wallis of Noel T Leach Builders on the 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021, and found evidence of possible fungal decay, lack of ventilation and generally sub-standard construction. The decision was taken by the Penrith City Council officers to take up and rebuild the floor as far as possible in accordance with current best practice.



**Figure 12:** Evidence of fungal growth to bearers of Living Room Gallery subfloor.



**Figure 13:** View of floor substructure of Living Room Gallery. Bearers are largely propped by bricks.

## Summary of Proposal

Refer to the Schedule of Works accompanying this submission for full details.

In brief, the proposal includes:

- **Replace Floor Boards:**
  - Take up existing floor, removing knotty pine boards in central area and salvaging Kauri pine boards elsewhere;
  - Rebuild floor using salvaged Kauri Pine in same location, using recycled Kauri pine where salvaged boards cannot be used. Replace portion of floor that is presently knotty pine with Cypress Pine.
- **Rebuild floor structure:**
  - Salvage and reuse all joists and bearers and rebuild floor structure in new configuration on new concrete pads and brick piers;
  - Install new damp proofing and termite proofing;
  - Install 4 no. hinged floor access panels (locations to be determined).
- **Ventilation:**
  - Install new removable sub-floor brick vent to southern external wall with mechanical exhaust ventilation attached. Install new ventilation fan in subfloor connected to SE vent;
  - Install new sub-floor brick vent to northern external wall TME, equally spaced between the two existing vents;
  - Install new brass slotted vent in floor to southern side of Living Room Gallery. Strip any lacquer from brass to allow to tarnish evenly.
- **Ceiling**
  - Strip paint from ceiling and removal and remove later flat panels. Heritage architect to investigate original paint colour and ceiling above flat panels;
  - Repair ceiling where required with matching pressed metal panels in zinc and repaint ceiling in white;
  - All existing ceiling services to be retained and reinstated.
- **Other**
  - Carefully strip paint from cupboards and shelves and restore polish to match original finish;
  - Install scratch-resistant polycarbonate sheet over hearth mosaic, set into timber frame to detail;

- Allow to install 2no. LED spot lights under floor to illuminate sandstone paving below. Switch lights to turn on when local floor hatch opened.

## Heritage Impact Assessment Methodology

An appropriate assessment methodology is to consider the details of the proposal and to compare them with the recommendations of a properly prepared Conservation Management Plan (CMP) in order to determine whether any aspect of the proposal is not in accordance with the recommended policies.

In this case, the Conservation Management Plan (CMP) prepared by Tanner Kibble Denton Architects, dated April 2021 will be used for this assessment (assessment 1).

In addition, as the place is included as a local heritage item on Schedule 5 of the *Penrith Local Environmental Plan 2010*, the heritage provisions of the *Penrith Development Control Plan 2014* apply and have been addressed below (assessment 2).

## Heritage Impact Assessment 1: Conservation Management Plan

In this assessment aspects of the proposal will be compared to the relevant Conservation Policies, as follows:

Policy	Comment
<p><b>Policy 4:</b> <i>Additional research and assessment of the component spaces and fabric should be undertaken to inform decision-making in relation to the detailed design of conservation works and alterations and additions to the site and its significant components.</i></p>	<p>The CMP provides the following further guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>undertake detailed investigation, recording and assessment of the documentary and physical evidence associated with built or landscape components, spaces, elements and fabric;</i></li> </ul> <p>Investigation works are proposed at various stages of the proposal, including investigation of the paint colour of the ceiling as well as of potential sandstone paving beneath the floor.</p> <p>The proposed works include allowance for the conservation and interpretation of any new information or elements that may arise as a result of the investigation works.</p> <p>The existing fabric and configuration of the floor will be archivally recorded during construction.</p>
<p><b>Policy 8:</b> <i>Heritage conservation should:</i></p> <p><i>Adopt a holistic approach and extend to all significant aspects of the place, including cultural landscape features, buildings and structures, collections, records, traditions, practices, memories, meanings and associations;</i></p> <p><i>Retain significant components, spaces, elements and fabric of the place consistent with their assessed level of significance and in accordance with specific actions identified within this CMP;</i></p> <p><i>Make use of all expertise and knowledge, and adopt an evidence-based approach to</i></p>	<p>The proposal involves the repair and replacement of the existing timber floorboards and substructure, repair of the pressed metal ceiling, and installation of new ventilation measures into the subfloor.</p> <p>These works are being proposed in order to address the lack of sufficient ventilation within the shallow subfloor space of the Living Room Gallery, which has in turn contributed to the deterioration of the floorboards and substructure. The pressed metal ceiling panels also show signs of rust and unsightly peeling of possibly lead-containing paint.</p> <p>The most significant components, spaces, elements and fabric of the place have been retained in keeping with their assessed level of significance.</p>



<p><i>materials conservation; and</i></p> <p><i>Ensure that the authenticity of original elements and fabric is maintained.</i></p>	<p>Refer to discussion below in regards to Policy 32.</p> <p>As much as possible of the existing fabric will be reused and reinstated in the same configuration.</p>
<p><b>Policy 32:</b> <i>The conservation and adaptive reuse of the building and structures is to be undertaken in a manner that is consistent with their assessed levels of heritage significance and in accordance with the guidelines included in this CMP.</i></p>	<p>The CMP for the place identifies the following elements of the Living Room Gallery as being of exceptional significance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The external form and fabric of the building, comprising original and 1950s sections.</i></li> <li>• <i>Tiled hearth and mantel associated with the fireplace in the former living room.</i></li> <li>• <i>Sideboard.</i></li> </ul> <p>The CMP also identifies the following elements as being of moderate significance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Internal modifications and the office addition at the western end of the building from 1981</i></li> </ul> <p>The CMP provides the following supporting guidelines:</p> <p><i>Retain and conserve all items of Exceptional and High heritage significance. The significant internal spaces of High heritage significance should also be retained and conserved.</i></p> <p><i>Items of Moderate heritage significance should be retained and conserved.</i></p> <p><b>Floor boards and substructure</b></p> <p>The significance of the floor of the Living Room Gallery is not separately identified. However, it is likely the portion of the floor laid in Kauri Pine predates work from the 1950s as it is similar to the flooring in the Lewers House Gallery.</p> <p>As much as possible of the existing floor boards and structural elements are proposed to be retained. In particular, the Kauri boards located at the northern and southern thirds of the floor will be salvaged and reused. The central third of the living room floor comprises knotty pine and is of poorer quality and condition, and as such will be replaced with Cypress pine.</p> <p>The substructure will be rebuilt on new concrete pads and brick piers to ensure ongoing structural stability. Ant caps will also be placed between the piers and bearers to and allow for inspection and minimise potential termite damage.</p> <p>Four new access panels will also be located in the floor to allow for inspection of the subfloor in the future, as well as to reveal the sandstone paving beneath the wooden floor.</p> <p>The proposed works will result in the loss of some original fabric, as some elements are damaged, or may become damaged during their removal. However, as much as possible of the existing floorboards and structure will be salvaged and</p>

reused. These works are being proposed as part of greater repair and restoration works to the Living Room Gallery to address deterioration of the floor in this room and ensure the ongoing future use of the space.

***Ceiling***

Similarly, the significance of the pressed metal ceiling of the Living Room Gallery is not separately identified. However, it likely dates from the earliest period of the development of the building as a Kitchen wing. The proposal involves stripping existing paint from the pressed metal and removing the later flat panels.

The ceiling above the panels will be investigated, and repaired where required with matching metal panels in zinc.

***Ventilation***

One new subfloor grille is proposed to be inserted into the northern wall, equidistant between two existing subfloor grilles. This will require intrusion into the external wall of the building. The grille will be detailed to match those existing and will be largely concealed by view by the adjacent office extension and northern garden wall. A new subfloor ventilation fan and grille is also proposed to south eastern corner Living Room Gallery. The fan will be only minimally visible from the exterior, given that it will be largely concealed by the existing tank stand.

One floor grille is also proposed at the south western corner of the living room floor, in front of the brick up door. The grille is to be of a simple, unobtrusive slotted design in brass. As the floor is already being taken up and re-laid, this new floor grille will not require the removal of existing fabric.

These grilles are being proposed in order to improve airflow through the space and prevent future deterioration of the subfloor structure due to dampness.

***Other***

Other works include the restoration of the sideboard and shelves based on photographic evidence, and installation of a polycarbonate screen over the existing Margo Lewers floor mural to prevent further damage. Both elements are identified as being of exceptional significance. The proposed works will result in a positive impact on the significant of these elements.

Collectively, the works will result in a negligible impact on the heritage significance of the Living Room Galley or Regional Gallery generally. The works are required in order to address deterioration of fabric within the Living Room Gallery.

	<p>The proposed repair and conservation works will allow for the continued maintenance and use of the place in the future.</p>
<p><b>Policy 39:</b> <i>Removal of hazardous materials should ensure that physical impacts on the heritage significance of the place are avoided, minimised or appropriately mitigated.</i></p>	<p>The proposal involves the removal of paint assumed to contain lead from the pressed metal ceiling. The paint will be removed carefully using a Peel Away paint removal system or similar, to avoid the use of aggressive chemicals or scraping that may damage original fabric. Paint investigation will be carried out prior to the paint stripping in order to record information about previous colour schemes.</p>
<p><b>Policy 48:</b> <i>Alterations and additions should be designed to minimise adverse impacts on the heritage significance of the site as a whole.</i></p>	<p>The works are being proposed to address ongoing issues regarding dampness within the subfloor and ceiling of the Living Room Gallery. All works to the internal spaces of the Living Room Gallery comprise repair, restoration or conservation works.</p> <p>All significant internal spaces will be retained as existing and no change is proposed to the overall form or configuration of the space.</p> <p>Existing significant fabric will be repaired, salvaged, and reused where possible. Where fabric is not able to be reused, new fabric will be inserted to match that existing. In the case of the floor, this will involve the use of recycled Kauri pine.</p> <p>The insertion of new access panels, ventilation grilles, and fans into the subfloor and floor will result in some loss of original fabric, however, will be minimised given that the floor is also proposed to be taken up and re-laid.</p> <p>Removal of the later flat ceiling panels and installation of new pressed metal panels to match that existing will result in a positive impact on the heritage significance of the space, as will the restoration of the sideboard and shelves to their original finish.</p> <p>Collectively, the works will result in a negligible impact on the heritage significance of the Living Room Galley or Regional Gallery generally</p>

## **Heritage Impact Assessment 2: Penrith Development Control Plan (DCP) 2014**

The proposed works have also been assessed against the guidelines set out by the *Penrith DCP 2014*. The Penrith Regional Gallery is included as a heritage item in Schedule 5 of the *Penrith Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2010* as *Lewers Bequest and Regional Art Gallery, houses and garden* (item no. 69). The place is not located within a heritage conservation area.

The proposed works involve internal works to the Living Room Gallery only. No works are proposed to the other buildings located at the place, or the surrounding gardens and landscaping. As such, only the relevant provisions of the *Penrith DCP 2014* have been addressed below:

Provision	Comment
<b>C7: Culture and Heritage</b>	
<b>7.1 European Heritage</b>	
<b>7.1.2 Heritage Items</b>	
<p>b) Development of a heritage item must:</p> <p>a) Be consistent with an appropriate Heritage Impact Statement or Conservation Management Plan;</p> <p>b) Be consistent with the information on the State Heritage Inventory for that heritage item;</p> <p>c) Protect the setting of the heritage item;</p> <p>d) Retain significant internal and external fabric and building elements;</p> <p>e) Retain significant internal and external spaces;</p> <p>f) Remove unsympathetic alterations and additions;</p> <p>g) Reinststate missing details and building elements; and</p> <p>h) Use materials, finishes and colours that are appropriate to the significant periods of development or architectural character of the item.</p>	<p>a) Refer to assessment 1 above.</p> <p>b) The State Heritage Inventory for the place provides no further information or provisions for consideration in development of the place.</p> <p>c) All proposed works are to the interior of the Living Room Gallery, excepting two ventilation grilles and one ventilation fan. The works will have no impact on the existing setting of the place.</p> <p>d) All significant external fabric and building elements are proposed to be retained. The works involve repair and restoration to the floorboards, floor structure, and ceiling of the Living Room Gallery, which form part of the early or significant fabric of the place. As much as possible, these elements will be salvaged and reused. Where this is not possible, new fabric will be introduced to match that existing.</p> <p>e)The works do not involve any change to the form or overall configuration of the Living Room Gallery space or other buildings of the Gallery.</p> <p>f) The later unsympathetic flat ceiling panels are proposed to be removed and replaced with pressed metal panels to match those existing.</p> <p>g) The proposal includes the restoration of significant the sideboard and shelves to their original finish, based on photographic evidence.</p> <p>h) All proposed new materials, finishes, and colours have been selected to match those existing and are appropriate to the relevant significant periods of the space.</p>
<p>c) Alterations to the room layout of heritage items are to ensure that the original room configuration remains discernible and can be interpreted.</p>	<p>No changes are proposed to the existing room layout of the Living Room Gallery or other buildings that form the Penrith Regional Gallery.</p>
<p>d) If there is any likelihood of an impact on any significant archaeological relics from a period prior to the current building, development must ensure that the impact is managed according to the assessed level of significance of those relics.</p>	<p>The CMP for the place notes that there is moderate to high level of historical archaeological potential within the property of a number of phases of development. The proposal involves minor excavation beneath the subfloor of an existing building. As such, it is possible that archaeological relics from the building’s periods of development may be located in this area.</p> <p>If when undertaking excavation work, historical archaeology is uncovered (an ‘unexpected find’), then the following procedure must be followed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stop work, protect the item and inform the project manager and/or an appropriate Council officer</li> <li>• Engage an archaeologist to undertake a preliminary assessment and recording of the ‘unexpected find’</li> </ul>

Provision	Comment
	and to prepare an archaeological management plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Implement archaeological management plan based on archaeologist advice (including if necessary, contacting NSW Heritage).</li></ul>
<b>7.1.4 Design Guidelines</b>	
<p>The proposed works are to the interior of the Living Room Gallery only and will not alter the overall form, siting, or appearance of the building. No other works are proposed to the other buildings at the place, or the surrounding landscape and garden areas. As such, the provisions of this clause do not apply.</p>	
<b>7.2. Aboriginal Culture and Heritage</b>	
1) If the development, including subdivision, but not strata subdivision, is on land identified as potentially archaeologically sensitive, an archaeological investigation is required with the development application. The Office of Environment and Heritage should be contacted for advice on survey needs and requirements.	<p>An Aboriginal Archaeological Assessment was prepared for the place by Extent Heritage, dated April 2021, and accompanies the CMP. The Assessment notes that <i>the entire study area as potential for deeply buried cultural material in the form of stone artefacts.</i></p> <p>The proposal involves limited shallow excavation of the ground in an area already much disturbed by construction and agricultural uses in the past. Excavation will not occur at a depth of more than 500mm. All other proposed works are contained within an existing building. As such, it is unlikely that the proposed works would uncover any potential archaeological relics.</p> <p>If Aboriginal items are discovered during construction or operation, works should cease immediately and the Office of Environment and Heritage contacted.</p>

## Conclusion

### Generally

The proposed alterations to the Living Room Gallery at the Penrith Regional Gallery involve a number of minor alterations and intrusions upon the existing fabric. They have been carefully designed to avoid alterations to the most significant parts of the place. The works are being undertaken as part of repair, restoration and conservation works to the space, in order to address recent deterioration of fabric and to ensure the ongoing use of the place.

### Recommendations

Consequently, in the view of this firm the proposal has a neutral impact on the significance of the item and **should be approved**, in relation to Heritage considerations by the consent authority.



Jessica Kroese  
Lucas Stapleton Johnson & Partners Pty Ltd  
LSJ Heritage Planning & Architecture

Encls.  
Inventory Sheet: Lewers Bequest and Regional Art Gallery, houses and garden  
CV SJ JK

## Item Details

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### Name

Lewers Bequest & Regional Art Gallery, houses and garden

### Other/Former Names

### Address

84-88 River Road EMU PLAINS NSW 2750

### Local Govt Area

Penrith

### Group Name

### Item Classification

#### Item Type

Built

#### Item Group

Residential buildings (private)

#### Item Category

House

### Statement Of Significance

The place is of historic significance at a regional level as the former home and workshop of Gerald and Margot Lewers, important artists of the mid twentieth century period in Australia.

The place is of aesthetic significance at a State level as the buildings and garden areas provide a carefully designed setting for the display of artworks by Gerald and Margot Lewers. The works themselves, their immediate surroundings and wider site context display a high degree of creative accomplishment and are considered rare.

The place is of social significance at a regional level because its function as a regional Art Gallery provides an important and valued resource for the community.

### Assessed Significance Type

State

### Endorsed Significance

Local

### Date Significance Updated

01/21/2005

## Listings

Listing Name	Listing Date	Instrument Name	Instrument No.	Plan No.	Gazette No.	Gazette Number
Heritage study	4/1/1987 12:00:00 AM					
Local Environmental Plan	12/20/1991 12:00:00 AM	Lewers Bequest and Penrith Regional Art Gallers;	EP-18			180
Heritage study	11/1/2007 12:00:00 AM		2260069			
Local Environmental Plan	9/22/2010 12:00:00 AM	Penrith Local Environmental Plan 2010	69			
Local Environmental Plan	12/20/1991 12:00:00 AM	Lewers Bequest and Penrith Regional Art Gallers;	EP-18			180
Local Environmental Plan	9/22/2010 12:00:00 AM	Penrith Local Environmental Plan 2010	69			
Heritage study	11/1/2007 12:00:00 AM		2260069			
Heritage study	4/1/1987 12:00:00 AM					

## Heritage Item ID

2260069

## Source

Local Government

## Location

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## Addresses

Records Retrieved: 2

Street No	Street Name	Suburb/Town/Postcode	Local Govt. Area	LALC	Parish	County	Electorate	Address Type
84-88	River Road	EMU PLAINS/NSW/2750	Penrith	Unknown			Unknown	Primary Address
84-88	River Road	EMU PLAINS/NSW/2750	Penrith	Unknown			Unknown	Primary Address

## Description

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**Designer**

**Builder/Maker**

**Construction Year Start & End**

**Circa**

**Period**

NO

Unknown

### Physical Description

**Updated**

The site is located on the western bank of the Nepean River. It forms part of the flood plains of alluvial soils at the base of the Blue Mountains. The climate at Emu Plains is considerably drier than the eastern portions of the Cumberland Plain, due to the rain shadow effect of the Blue Mountains. The original vegetation consisted of river-flat forests dominated by tall specimens of Forest Red Gums and Angophoras with River She-Oak along the banks of the Nepean River. The original house is an early Federation style brick cottage with verandahs on all sides with a separate kitchen building and bath house. The deep verandahs have robust turned posts. The elegantly profiled hipped roof is covered in asbestos cement pan tiles. The house fronts onto the Nepean River. A water tank on a timber tower is located to the north of the house. Ancher House, built in 1967 is sited along the northern boundary. Its design compliments the original house by the inclusion of verandahs, iron roof and plain rendered brick walls. The Penrith Regional Art Gallery was built as an extension to Ancher House in 1981 and located in the north-west corner of the site. Another gallery space has been added in recent years is distinguished by its simplicity of design and materials (Colorbond corrugated steel). The northern and western portions of the site have been adapted as the driveway and car park to the Gallery complex. An aris-rail perimeter fence defines the front and side boundaries.

The grounds include numerous plantings representative of the phased development of the site including a large bunya at the rear. The garden is organised into a series of spaces each with a different character. To the front of the original house is a cottage garden, with a main axial path; A stand of Italian Cypress is planted near the front gate. Small lawn areas, free-form in shape, are bounded by a range of shrubs and small trees such as Cotoneaster. A number of Gerald Lewer's sculptures and small bronze fountains are strategically placed within these spaces, often in association with small pools edged with large river pebbles. Lilies, bromeliads, Agapanthus, Iris and other monocotyledonous plants provide a strong texture to the ground plane. The paving consists mainly of weathered and new sandstone setts. The main garden beds to the front of the house and to the north have been mass planted with perennials, such as Iris and Nasturtium, to provide a rich palette of colour. To the rear of the house is a small courtyard garden dominated by succulents, while to the south of the house are a number of willows. In the area that is now the carpark are a number of mature trees including a Bunya Pine, a Red Cedar, and a Podocarp. The centre of the site is a sculpture lawn framed between the Ancher House and the original house. Small rectilinear courtyards to the rear and side of Ancher House were designed by Margot Lewers. Other sculptured elements that form part of the total landscape setting include copper downpipes by Gerald Lewers, and tile mosaics by Margot Lewers.

The organisation of the site into spaces and courtyards of various characters and the inclusion of sculptural elements of high creative accomplishment provide for rich sensory experiences. The theme of water movement is captured in the small copper fountains and downpipes by Gerald Lewers, and relates to the site context of a river bank overlooking the Nepean River.

The fabric of the site displays its evolution from a natural place, to farm and orchard, to artist's garden, to its present function as the Lewers Bequest and Penrith Regional Art Gallery. The more recent changes to the site have generally been sympathetic to the landscape character developed by Gerald and Margot Lewers. (RNE)

### Physical Condition

**Updated 01/11/2005**

This report was produced using the State Heritage Inventory managed by Heritage NSW. Check with your relevant local council or NSW government agency for the most up-to-date information.

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## Modifications And Dates

Opened as a gallery was in 1981 as a memorial to the sculptor Gerald Lewers, and his wife, Margo Lewers, a painter. ( Fox \* Associates 1987: EP-18)

## Further Comments

## History

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### Historical Notes or Provenance

### Updated

The original cottage was built around the turn of the century and formed part of a ten acre pig farm. The house was purchased by Margot and Gerald Lewers in 1940 and used mainly as a weekender until it became the permanent family home in 1950 when Gerald became a full time sculptor. During that time the land to the rear of the house was used as an orchard with the Blue Mountains providing an impressive backdrop. To the East the house had views over the Nepean River to the Penrith District. The house was renovated with the assistance of architect Sydney Ancher and the house/gallery building, now known as Ancher House was built in 1967 on the northern part of the house. The spaces between the buildings were designed by Margot to compliment the larger cottage garden surrounding the original home. Gerald Lewers (1905-1962) was a trained artist who commenced sculpting full-time in 1950. He exhibited his work regularly and undertook a widerange of commissions until his death in 1962. From about 1957 Gerald worked mainly in copper, constructing fountains and designing a number of gardens. Margot Lewers (1908-1978) studied art and had, prior to her marriage in 1933 to Gerald Lewers, established a Design Workshop in Sydney. During the late 1930s Margot operated an interior decorating shop, Wotanda Gallery in Sydney. In 1950 she moved to Emu Plains and commenced full-time painting. During the 1950s Margot exhibited regularly, winning a number of art prizes.

In the early 1960s Margot began working with mosaic, and continued to exhibit until her death in 1978. Gerald Lewers was an important figure in the development of sculpture in Australia. Margot Lewers made a considerable contribution to Australian Art, particularly during the 1950s and 1960s as a painter. Margot wished the family home be preserved as an Art Gallery. Following her death in 1978 her two daughters gave the property and a collection of paintings and sculpture to the Penrith City Council. The New South Wales Government and Penrith City Council Built the New Regional Gallery which links the sites original buildings

## Historic Themes

Records Retrieved: 8

National Theme	State Theme	Local Theme
Developing cultural institutions and ways of life	Townships	Municipal Government
Developing cultural institutions and ways of life	Townships	Municipal Government
Developing cultural institutions and ways of life	Pastoralism	Tourism and recreation
Developing cultural institutions and ways of life	Pastoralism	Tourism and recreation
Developing cultural institutions and ways of life	Defence	Unknown
Developing cultural institutions and ways of life	Defence	Unknown
Building settlements, towns and cities	Welfare	Rural villages
Building settlements, towns and cities	Welfare	Rural villages

## Assessment

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### Criteria a)

#### Historical Significance

Include

Exclude

The place is of historic significance at a regional level as the former home and workshop of Gerald and Margot Lewers, important artists of the mid twentieth century period in Australia.

### Criteria b)

#### Historical Association Significance

Include

Exclude

The buildings are associated with Gerald and Margot Lewers, artist of note in the history of the State.

### Criteria c)

#### Aesthetic/Technical Significance

Include

Exclude

The place is of aesthetic significance at a State level as the buildings and garden areas provide a carefully designed setting for the display of artworks by Gerald and Margot Lewers. The works themselves, their immediate surroundings and wider site context display a high degree of creative accomplishment and are considered rare.

### Criteria d)

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**Social/Cultural Significance****Include****Exclude**

The place is of social significance at a regional level because its function as a regional Art Gallery provides an important and valued resource for the community.

**Criteria e)****Research Potential****Include****Exclude****Criteria f)****Rarity****Include****Exclude**

The cottage is rare at a local level given its integrity, age and riverside setting. The gallery is rare at a State level for the quality of the grounds and buildings housing the collection and use as a regional art gallery.

**Criteria g)****Representative****Include****Exclude**

The complex is one of a number of structures in Emu Plains erected over the nineteenth century and early part of the twentieth century which collectively demonstrate the pattern of a village settlement at this important location at the foothills of the Blue Mountains. Collectively these structures imbue the area with high historic and aesthetic values.

**Integrity/Intactness****Updated** 01/21/2005

High

**References**

## References

Records Retrieved: 2

Title	Author	Year	Link	Type
Penrith Local Environmental Plan 1991 (Environmental Heritage Conservation).		1991		Written
Penrith Local Environmental Plan 1991 (Environmental Heritage Conservation).		1991		Written

## Heritage Studies

Records Retrieved: 10

Title	Year	Item Number	Author	Inspected By	Guidelines Used
Penrith Heritage Study Review	2005	2260069	Paul Davies Pty. Ltd.	Paul Davies Pty Ltd	Yes
Penrith Heritage Study Review	2005	2260069	Paul Davies Pty. Ltd.	Paul Davies Pty Ltd	Yes
Register of the National Estate	1992	2260069	Commonwealth Government		Yes
Register of the National Estate	1992	2260069	Commonwealth Government		Yes
Register of the National Estate	1992	2260069	Commonwealth Government		Yes
Register of the National Estate	1992	2260069	Commonwealth Government		Yes
Register of the National Estate	0	2260069	Contribution to Australian Heritage Commission		Yes
Register of the National Estate	0	2260069	Contribution to Australian Heritage Commission		Yes
Register of the National Estate	0	2260069	Contribution to Australian Heritage Commission		Yes
Register of the National Estate	0	2260069	Contribution to Australian Heritage Commission		Yes

## Procedures / Workflows / Notes

Records Retrieved: 0

Application ID / Procedure ID	Section of Act	Description	Title	Officer	Date Received	Status	Outcome
No Results Found							

## Management

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### Management

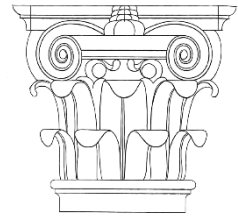
Records Retrieved: 0

Management Category	Management Name	Date Updated
No Results Found		

### Management Summary

Ian Stapleton, B.Sc.(Arch.), B.Arch., Grad.Dip.Env.Law, F.R.A.I.A.  
Registered Architect No. 4032 Nominated Architect  
Sean Johnson, B.A., Dip.Arch., M.Sc.(Arch.Cons.), R.A.I.A.  
Registered Architect No. 4728  
*Associate:*  
Kate Denny, B.A., M.Herit. Cons.

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LSJ Heritage Planning & Architecture

## CURRICULUM VITAE

### SEAN JOHNSON, BA(Hons), DipArch, MSc(Arch)(Cons) RAIA

Sean Johnson is a conservation architect with many years' experience of working on historic buildings in Australia and England. He trained in England, migrated to Australia in 1978 and developed an interest in architectural conservation when working on the rehabilitation of terrace housing in Sydney in the early 1980s.

While living in England 1988-1994, Sean worked with Firmstone & Company on the conversion of Somerset House into an art gallery for the Courtauld Institute of Art. He later carried out under his own name the conversion of an 18th century Cotswold house for The Theatre Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire.

On returning to Australia he completed a Master's degree in Architectural Conservation at the University of Sydney completing a thesis on museum climate control in historic buildings. Sean then spent four years working with the Heritage Group of the Department of Public Works, before joining Clive Lucas Stapleton & Partners in 1997. He has since worked on the restoration of Swifts, Darling Point, which won the 2012 Lachlan Macquarie Award; the adaptive reuse of the Woolloomooloo Finger Wharf; and the conversion of the Mint, Macquarie Street into headquarters for the Historic Houses Trust of NSW which won the Lachlan Macquarie Award and Greenway Awards in 2005. As well as carrying out architectural work Sean has co-authored conservation plans for important places ranging from the Australian Museum to the Sydney Harbour Bridge and given specialist heritage advice to public and private clients including other architects.

### Experience

**1997 to present:** Conservation architect, partner with Lucas Stapleton Johnson & Partners

- Roseneath, Parramatta (c1837), adaptive reuse and restoration for Our Lady of Mercy College, 2019
- Thompson Square Windsor, Conservation Management Plan, 2018
- Macquarie Arms Hotel, Windsor, Conservation Management Plan, 2017
- Exterior restoration and colour scheme for National Trust Centre, Observatory Hill, Sydney, 2017
- Hyde Park Barracks, Conservation Management Plan, 2016
- Reconstruction of NSW Parliamentary Library, the Jubilee Room, in 2016 (National Trust Heritage Awards, Highly Commended 2018)

Lucas Stapleton Johnson & Partners Pty Ltd The Trust Building, Suite 303, 155 King Street, Sydney, NSW, 2000  
ACN: 002 584 189 ABN: 60 763 960 154 Email: mailbox@lsjarchitects.com Telephone: 02 9357 4811  
Websites: www.lsjarchitects.com www.traditionalaustrianhouses.com

- Centennial Memorial, Parramatta, Conservation (National Trust Built Heritage Award 2015)
- Reconstruction of Francis Greenway's gate lodge domes, Hyde Park Barracks, Sydney in 2012 (RAIA Architecture Award 2013);
- NSW Parliament House, Sydney, Conservation Management Plan, new guard house entrance and redesign of forecourt and Speaker's Garden, restoration of 1829 Legislative Council room, ongoing advice on historic building, 2007- present;
- Alterations and additions to Keeper's Cottages at Macquarie Lighthouse, Vacluse, 2009.
- External restoration of Wyldefel Gardens, an iconic Modernist building in Potts Point, Sydney, 2008.
- New accessible ramp and steps to the front door of the Great Hall, University of Sydney, 2008 (Commendation from NSW National Trust Heritage Award).
- Conversion of the Mint Coining Factory, Macquarie Street, Sydney Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales (winner with FJMT Architects of RAIA John Sulman, Lachlan Macquarie and Greenway Awards, 2005).
- Restoration of Swifts, large Victorian mansion in Darling Point, Sydney, 2000 (Lachlan Macquarie Award, 2012 and RAIA Heritage Architecture Award, 2012)
- Adaptive reuse of the Wharf at Woolloomooloo, 1997-1999.

Co-author of Conservation Management Plans for: NSW Parliament House, Australian Museum, St. John's College, University of Sydney, Windsor Road and Old Windsor Road, Central Depot of Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney, amongst others.

**1993-1997** Conservation architect with Heritage Group of the New South Wales Department of Public Works & Services.

Project architect for the exterior conservation of Railway Institute Building. This project won the Horbury Hunt Award for Excellence in Brickwork and a commendation at the 1996 RAIA Architecture Awards.

Produced a Conservation Management Plan for the Sydney Harbour Bridge and a Building Maintenance Plan for the Lands Department Building, Sydney. Prepared a conservation plan and oversaw refurbishment works at the former Petersham Public School, (now Petersham TAFE West) which won the Marrickville Medal Award Commendation in 1998.

**1991-1993** In private practice in Oxford, England

**1988-1991** Architect with Firmstone & Company, Oxford, England  
Conversion of Strand Block of Somerset House, London into Galleries for the Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London.

**1986-1987** Architect with Otto Cserhalmi & Partners, Sydney,

**1986** Enrolled as a chartered architect in New South Wales

**1983-1986** Housing Commission Inner City Project Team, Waterloo, Sydney.  
Design of infill housing and rehabilitation of terrace houses.



## Committees

National Trust Built Heritage Conservation Committee

## Published work, Conference Papers & Studies

- *A Tale of Two Front Doors*, NSW National Trust Magazine, April–June 2019
- *Hadley Park, Castlereagh – A survivor in search of a future*, NSW National Trust Magazine, April-June 2017.
- *The Jack Arch: its origin and use in NSW*, Architecture Bulletin, Autumn 2015
- *The Puzzle of Gannon House*, Australiana, August 2013
- Australian Encyclopedia of Architecture, Article on Sydney Harbour Bridge, 2011
- Paper given at ICOMOS ‘Corrugations’ conference, November 2005 ‘*Scarcely Entitled to that Name: Parramatta to the Hawkesbury along the Windsor Road*’ (joint author)
- Paper presented at National Trust’s *Creative Conservation* Conference May 2005 entitled *Creative Conservation at the Mint*
- Wyatt Conservation Series Lecture at National Trust of Australia (NSW), October 2002, *The Geographical Fallacy in Heritage Assessment*.
- Paper on cleaning brickwork, National Trust Conference *Keeping Up Appearances*, 2002
- “Museum Climate Control in Historic Buildings – Alternatives to Air-Conditioning”, MSc thesis, University of Sydney, 1995.
- Published Conservation Plans:
- Sydney Harbour Bridge Conservation Management Plan, 1998.
- Long Bay Correctional Centres Conservation Management Plan, 1997.
- Broken Hill Gaol Conservation Plan, 1996.

## August 2019

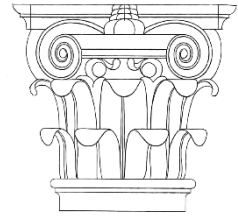
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LSJ Heritage Planning & Architecture

## CURRICULUM VITAE

### JESSICA KROESE BArch. Des (Hons), MHerit. Cons (Hons)

Education: University of Sydney, Masters of Heritage Conservation (Hons.), 2021  
University of New South Wales, Architectural Studies (Hons.), 2018  
University of Queensland, Bachelor of Architecture and Design, 2016

Employed by the firm as a Graduate Heritage Planner since 2019.

Recent work includes:

#### *Conservation Management Plans and Updates*

- Roxy Theatre, Leeton
- The Entrance Surf Club
- Regatta Park, Emu Plains
- Parliament House, NSW (update)

#### *Heritage Development Work (applications to consent authorities)*

- ACA Building, Sydney
- Supreme Court of NSW, Hospital Road Sydney
- Casula Powerhouse, Casula
- Clarence House, Sydney
- Drummoyne Reservoir, Drummoyne
- Oberton, Mater Hospital, Crows Nest
- Roseneath, Our Lady of Mercy College, Parramatta
- Parliament House, NSW
- Tebbutt's Barn, Tebbutts Observatory, Windsor
- Figtree House, Hunters Hill
- Wyoming, Birchgrove
- Carisbrook, Lane Cove

#### *Heritage Reviews and Studies*

- Collingwood House, Liverpool
- Liverpool Courthouse, Liverpool

February 2021

Lucas Stapleton Johnson & Partners Pty Ltd The Trust Building, Suite 303, 155 King Street, Sydney, NSW, 2000

ACN: 002 584 189 ABN: 60 763 960 154 Email: mailbox@lsjarchitects.com Telephone: 02 9357 4811

Websites: www.lsjarchitects.com www.traditionalaustrianhouses.com