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Number 60–Planning and Heritage

Friday, 10 February 2023

The New South Wales Government Gazette is the permanent public record of official NSW Government notices. It also contains local council, non-government and other notices.

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**HERITAGE ACT 1977
INTERIM HERITAGE ORDER NO.**

Under Section 25 of the *Heritage Act 1977* Waverley Council does by this order:

- I. Make an interim heritage order to cover the item of the environmental heritage specified or described in Schedule 'A'; and
- II. Declare that the Interim Heritage Order shall apply to the curtilage or site of such item, being the land described in Annexure 'B'.

This Interim Heritage Order will lapse 12 months from the date that it is made unless the local council has passed a resolution before that date either:

1. in the case of an item which, in the council's opinion, is of local significance, to place the item on the heritage schedule of a local environmental plan with appropriate provisions for protecting and managing the item; and
2. in the case of an item which in the council's opinion, is of State heritage significance, nominate the item for inclusion on the State Heritage Register.

Delegated Person
General Manager

Emily Scott
Waverley Council

Sydney
8 February 2023

Delegated decision for General Manager's signature

Schedule 'A'	
Name & address of property or issue:	Talmudical College aka Yeshiva College or Harry Triguboff Centre 34-36 Flood Street, Bondi Lot 1 DP 1094020 Parish of Alexandria, County of Cumberland
Item Description:	Synagogue and Jewish learning centre
Type of application or issue:	IHO in relation to application for spot rezoning (Planning Proposal PP-1/2022) requiring a WLEP amendment from SP2 Educational Establishment to R3 Medium Density. This is likely to lead to demolition of the Harry Seidler-designed synagogue onsite.
Applicant: Owner:	Waverley Council Karimbla Properties
Proposal:	Rezoning for residential use is unlikely to retain the existing building in adaptive or current form
Approximate cost of works:	Not applicable
Statutory Listings	Nil
Non Statutory Listings	RAIA, Register of Significant Buildings in NSW
Other items affected by proposal	Unknown
Previous Heritage Council determinations:	Not applicable
Notifications	Not at this date. In the process of notification
Information for consideration:	<p>Annexure A:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Drawings prepared by Harry Seidler (architect) 2. Miller, Milson Ferris (structural engineers) 3. Harry Seidler, Synagogue floor plans, from <i>Art and Architecture</i> (US Modernist magazine) June 1964, p 11 <p>Annexure B:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Site Plan showing curtilage of item</p> <p>Annexure C:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Draft SHR Listing</p> <p>Annexure D: Submissions received:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. DOCOMOMO President, Dr Scott Robertson 2. G. Danks 3. Royal Australian Institute of Architects 4. R. Rosenberg

File no.		HRL no.		Application no.	IDA/DA/S60 no.
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Date received		Date decision required	
Date further info requested		Date further info received	

Statement of significance

It is concluded that the former Sydney Talmudical College building at 34-36 Flood Street is of State and Local historic, aesthetic, and social significance. The Modernist-style building exemplifies the works of architect Harry Seidler, widely acknowledged as Australia's foremost practitioner in Modernist architecture from the mid-20th to early 21st centuries.

Seidler brought to Australia his experience as a student and later architect working with world leaders in Modernism including Walter Gropius, Marcel Breuer, Joseph Albers and Oscar Niemeyer. Seidler's design is enhanced by the collaborative input of structural engineer Peter Miller, of the firm Miller, Milston and Ferris, whose refinement of building structure would provide a key aspect of Seidler's designs through much of his career.

The building represents the expansion of the Orthodox Jewish community in Sydney's East following World War II. The community's commissioning of Harry Seidler and acceptance of his Modernist design marks a significant change from the use of historicist reference in Jewish liturgical buildings, this being a transition likely based upon engagement of noted contemporary architects for comparable buildings [synagogues] in North America.

The building's sophisticated barrel-vaulted roof, comprising a series of parallel 75mm thick concrete semi-cylinders spanning the 50' (15m) width of the building (plus eaves overhangs on the north and south façades to provide protection to the glazed semi-circular windows closing off the vaults), was structurally engineered by Miller, Milston & Ferris (established in 1957 in offices in Caltex House). Structural engineer Alan Milston (1922-2012) was an active member of Sydney's Jewish community. Harry Seidler (also working from an office in Caltex House) wrote that the use of these barrel vaults allowed for the construction of the building in two stages; stage 1 comprising 5 vaults and stage 2 the remaining 4 vaults. The synagogue and Talmudical College building is the only religious building designed by Harry Seidler.

Dr Paolo Stracchi, of the University of Sydney, following a literature survey of Constructional Review (1955-1975), considers that the synagogue is the earliest surviving building employing the use of linked, parallel thin-shell concrete barrel vaults in NSW or possibly even in Australia. Such a significant use of structural technology is of paramount importance in understanding the development of architecture and building technology in Australia and its use by Seidler is evidence of Seidler's personal connection to Modernism in the USA and Brazil, rather than an adoption of a process as seen in journals or magazines. The clarity and clear-span form of the original building serve to facilitate ongoing and potential adaptation of use by the established community.

Subsequent additions and change of interiors to the building have served to maintain its historic function and role in the Orthodox community. Recent unsympathetic additions to the street frontage detract from the buildings aesthetic and streetscape qualities but are at distance from the core building and able to be removed.

The demolition and-or substantial alteration of early buildings by Harry Seidler have added to the rarity of the Flood Street building. The building's ongoing retention will maintain the ability to inspect and interpret the aesthetic, structural and historic significance of the building and its relationship to the evolving careers of Internationally significant architect Harry Seidler and Structural Engineer Peter Miller.

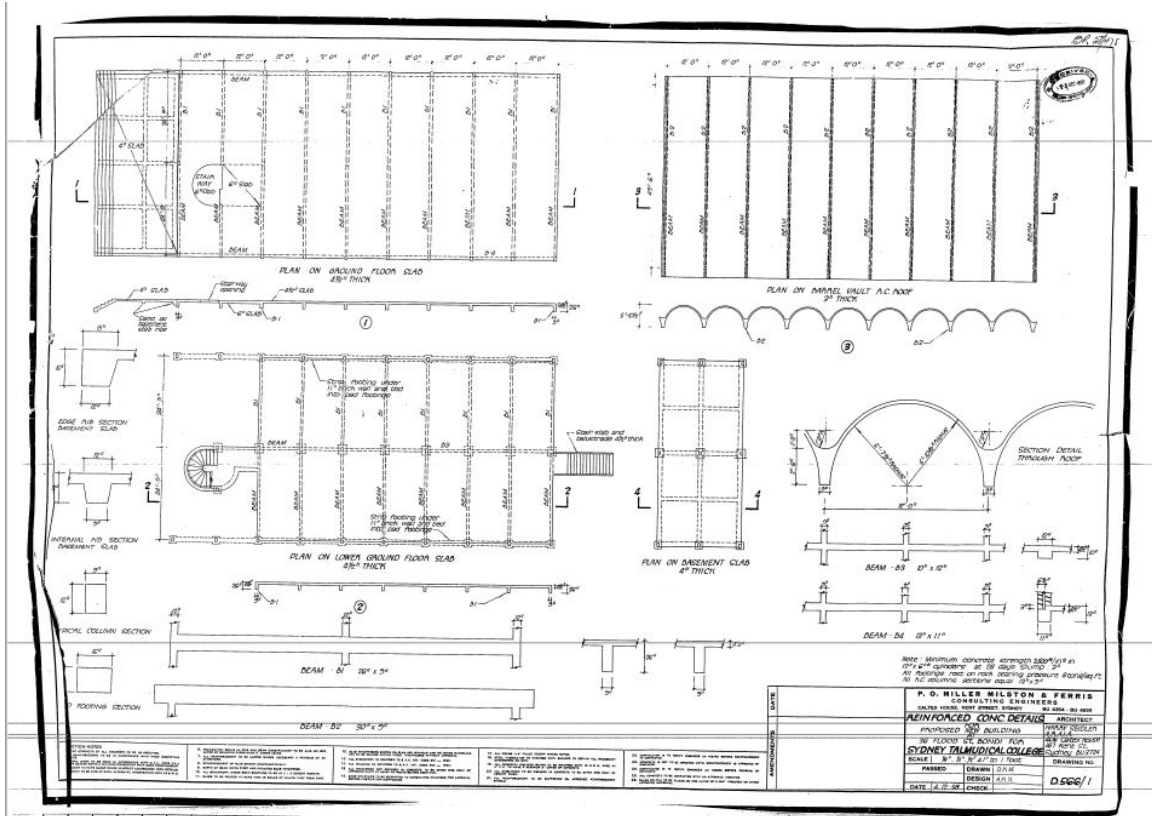
Reference: Not on the SHR

Date: February 2023

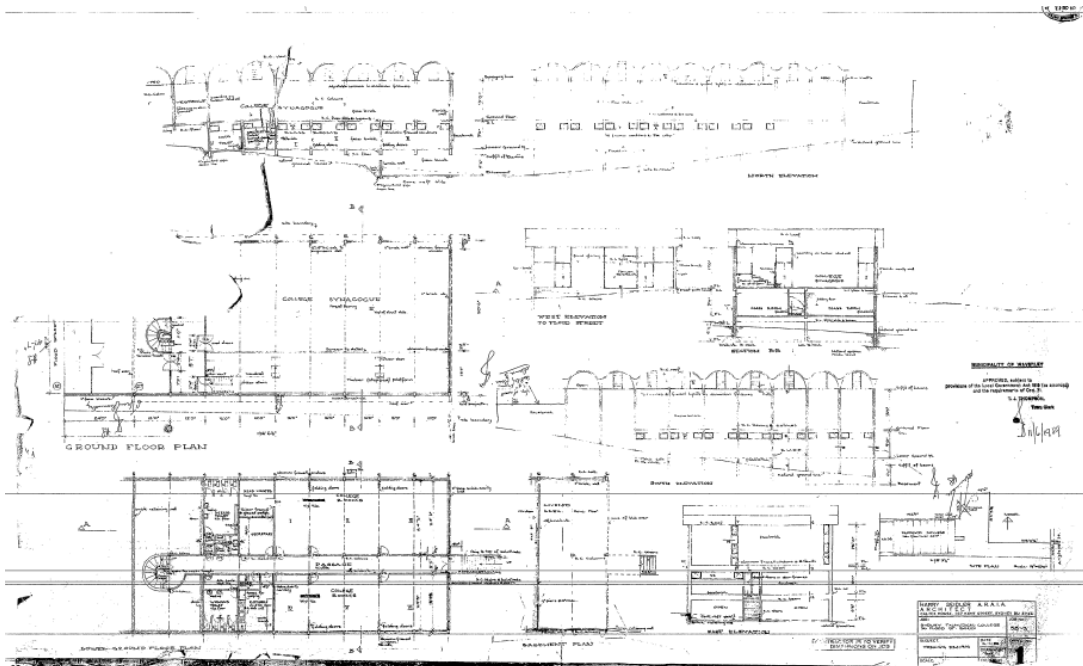
Annexure 'A'

H. Seidler and structural engineers' drawings, submitted to Council, 1958

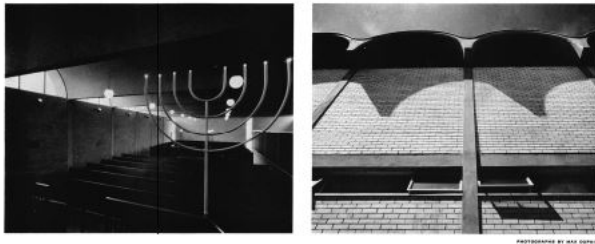
P.O Miller Milston Ferris, structural engineers



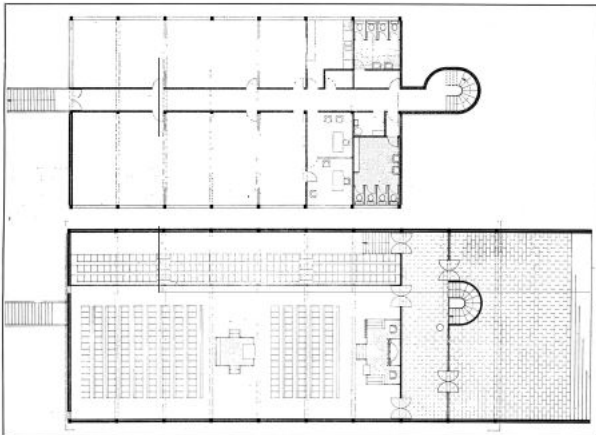
Harry Seidler:



Harry Seidler, Synagogue floor plans, in *Art and Architecture* (US Modernist magazine) June 1964



P. O. MILLER, MILTON AND FERIS, ENGINEERS



Annexure 'B' – Site Plan showing curtilage of item



Source: Karimbla Properties

Annexure 'C' – Draft SHR Listing
Annexure 'D' – Submissions received

Letters of objection to rezoning and support for heritage listing from:

1. DOCOMOMO President, Dr Scott Robertson
2. G. Danks
3. Royal Australian Institute of Architects
4. R. Rosenberg

23 January 2023

General Manager
Waverley Municipal Council
PO Box 9
BONDI JUNCTION NSW 1355

Dear Sir

**34 Flood Street, Bondi Junction
Former Sydney Talmudical College and Synagogue, designed by Harry Seidler
Request for Interim Heritage Order and assessment of significance**

Docomomo Australia is aware that a Proponent-led Planning Proposal has been submitted to the NSW Government regarding the rezoning of 34 Flood Street, Bondi Junction from SP2 Infrastructure – Educational Establishment to R3 Medium Density Residential. The former Sydney Talmudical College at 34 Flood Street (Lot 1 DP 1094020) is currently used as a synagogue as an adjunct to the adjacent Yeshiva College at 36 Flood Street (Lot A DP 340445) which is currently zoned R3. Whilst the proposed rezoning of 34 Flood Street would still permit a Place of Public Worship and an Educational Establishment, the Planning Proposal is accompanied by a future development scenarios document “36A Flood Street Bondi,” prepared by Meriton that indicates proposals for the redevelopment of the combined site of 34 & 36 Flood Street (ie Lot 1 DP 10940420 combined with Lot A DP 340445) for medium density housing. This document indicates that neither a Place of Public Worship nor an Educational Establishment are proposed after the rezoning is approved.

None of the Planning Proposal documents, or the assessment by the Department of Planning & Environment (November 2022), or the submission by Waverley Council regarding the Planning Proposal have assessed any possible heritage significance of the subject properties of 34 or 36 Flood Street. However, the Waverley Council submission of 8 September 2022 does touch tangentially on social significance in that, in Council’s opinion, the SP2 Infrastructure zone was instituted over the site of 34 Flood Street to encompass a site of “crucial social infrastructure”.

The two-storey building on the sloping site at 34 Flood Street was designed and constructed as the Sydney Talmudical College (a college of religious instruction) on the lower level and the College Synagogue located on the upper floor, level with Flood Street. The building was designed by one of Australia’s most significant architects, Harry Seidler (1923-2006), in 1958. The building was approved by Waverley Council in June 1959 and construction was completed, in two stages, by 1961. The building’s sophisticated barrel-vaulted roof, comprising a series of parallel 75mm thick concrete semi-cylinders spanning the 50’ (15m) width of the building (plus eaves overhangs on the north and south façades to provide protection to the glazed semi-circular windows closing off the vaults), was structurally engineered by Miller, Milston & Ferris (established in 1957 in offices in Caltex House). Structural engineer Alan Milston (1922-2012) was an active member of Sydney’s Jewish community. Harry Seidler (also working from an office in Caltex House) wrote that the use of these barrel vaults allowed for the construction of the building in two stages; stage 1 comprising 5 vaults and stage 2 the remaining 4 vaults. The synagogue and Talmudical College building is the only religious building designed by Harry Seidler.

Dr Paolo Stracchi, of the University of Sydney, following a literature survey of *Constructional Review* (1955-1975), considers that the synagogue is the earliest surviving building employing the use of linked, parallel thin-shell concrete barrel vaults in NSW or possibly even in Australia. Such a significant use of structural technology is of paramount importance in understanding the development of architecture and building technology in Australia and its use by Seidler is evidence of Seidler’s personal connection to Modernism in the USA and Brazil, rather than an adoption of a process as seen in journals or magazines.

Given the significance of the building as a rare religious building by Harry Seidler, the pioneering nature of the concrete barrel roof structure, and the possibility of it being the earliest surviving example of such an innovative construction system in Australia, an independent assessment of its significance as a building of aesthetic and technical significance should be undertaken. In addition, because of the importance of the building to the local

Jewish community the social significance of the building should be assessed as a part of that independent assessment of significance.

In order to facilitate an independent assessment of the building's significance Docomomo Australia urges Waverley Council to make an Independent Heritage Order (IHO) under Section 25(2) the NSW Heritage Act 1977, as, in the opinion of Docomomo Australia, the building "may, on further inquiry or investigation, be found to be of local heritage significance" and that, the building could be harmed, as defined by Section 25(2) of the Act, because the document accompanying the Planning Proposal indicates that the future use of the site, once rezoned, would involve the demolition of the building to enable the construction of medium density housing.

Whilst Docomomo Australia understands that the building has undergone alterations since its completion, the basic building, the important barrel vaults of the roof, the north façade, and the front façade (with its arched sheltering portico, and the white curved stair drum) remain intact and that the alterations to the building could be reversed to reinstate the original presentation of the building as an important work of architecture, to be a social representation of post-war Australia, and to demonstrate the development of Jewish educational establishments in post-war Sydney.

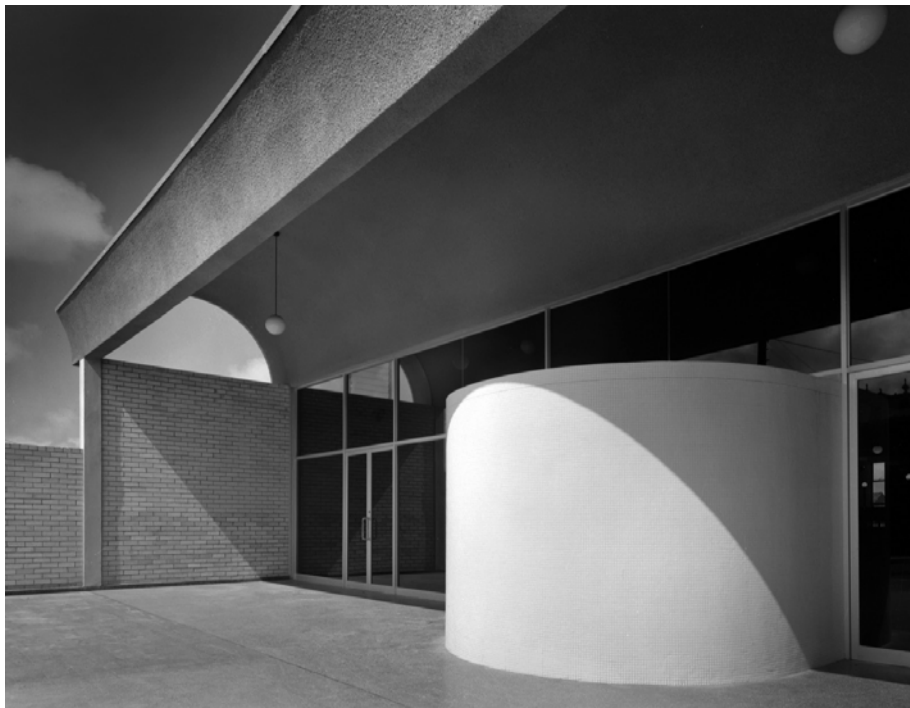
We have appended a number of photographs of the building taken during its construction and soon after its completion that indicate the quality of the design and the innovative structural system employed for the roof. It is worth noting the subtle use of colour in the interior of the building that contemporary black and white photographs could not depict.

We have been given approval by the copyright-holder of the photographs to include them in this submission but not for any further reproduction or use in other documents.

Yours faithfully



Dr Scott Robertson,
BSc (Arch), BArch (Hons), M Built Env (Blg Cons), PhD
President
Docomomo Australia Incorporated



Photographer Max Dupain (commissioned by Harry Seidler)
Copyright Penelope Seidler
Year 1962

Architect Harry Seidler
Digitised by Eric Sierins

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Photographer Harry Seidler

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Year 1962

Architect Harry Seidler

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Photographer Harry Seidler
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Year 1961

Architect Harry Seidler
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PPI-2022

Chief Executive Officer
Waverley Council
PO Box 9
BONDI JUNCTION 1355

Dear Ms,

Re: Synagogue and College, 34-36 Flood St Bondi.

I have been advised that it is proposed to rezone the above site from "Special Uses /Community" to "Residential", thereby permitting the demolition of the existing building and the replacement with residential apartments. I was involved in the construction of this building during my period of association with the office of Harry Seidler, the architect for the project.

I would hope you might reconsider this matter and agree to the placement of a Local Heritage Conservation Order to the building and the site. The reason for this being that the building was designed by one of Australia's leading architects, Harry Seidler, and has considerable aesthetic, social and historical attributes which should be protected, including its relationship to the local community.

In addition it has rare technical attributes, by reason of the barrel vaulted structure, the barrel vaults being 75mm thick. The structural engineer was P.O. Miller.

Seidler arrived in Australia in 1948, having studied under Walter Gropius at Harvard University; worked with Marcel Breuer in New York and importantly spent time in the office of leading Brazilian Architect Oscar Niemeyer in Rio de Janeiro. Whilst with Niemeyer, Seidler was exposed to many different forms of thin shell concrete roof constructions, from pavilions, clubs, churches etc, one of the most important being The St Francis of Assisi Church in the district of Pampulha in the southern city of Belo Horizonte, which was "World Heritage Listed" in 2016

Niemeyer was considering the use of shell concrete structures, the ultimate perfection of which, was the design of the Government Buildings at the new Brazilian capital, Brasilia, founded in 1960.

Apart from the Academy of Science Building in Canberra (Architect- Roy Grounds) the Synagogue Building remains I believe the only building of its type in NSW/ ACT and possibly Australia.

Finally I would request you carefully consider the matter of rezoning, for the reasons that the vaulted roofs are capable of large spans with minimum thickness of concrete, the building is a link with Seidler's early career and as summarised above, it represents, if somewhat indirectly, a significant association with three (3) of the most important modernist architects of the twentieth century.

I do hope you may consider this matter as, including the items set out above, the building is also listed on the Royal Australian Institute of Architects Register of "Significant Buildings of the Twentieth Century".

To lose this building is to lose something that may never be replaced, and it is hoped Council may establish a Heritage Conservation Order over the entire site.

Yours sincerely,



B.Arch. (Hons) ARAIA, ARIBA. Dip. H & N P

17 January, 2023



Australian
Institute of
Architects

NSW

ABN 72 000 023 012

The Royal Australian Institute of Architects
trading as Australian Institute of Architects

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Melbourne, Victoria 3000

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national@architecture.com.au
architecture.com.au

19th January 2023

The General Manager
Ms. Emily Scott
Waverley Council
PO Box 21
Hunters Hill, NSW 2110

Via email: info@waverley.nsw.gov.au

Dear Ms Scott,

Re: Talmudical College, 34-36 Flood Street, Bondi

It has been brought to our attention that a rezoning application for the above site, previously rejected by Waverley Council on strategic planning grounds is now being assessed by the NSW Government.

The site contains the only religious building to be designed by the eminent Australian architect Harry Seidler. It dates from 1961 and is listed on the Institutes register of significant buildings (item 4702711). It is recorded as being an outstanding building of post war international style due to its unique multiple barrel vault shell concrete roof.

Whilst there is substantial information available in relation to the building it appears that no heritage assessment has ever been carried out and the buildings are not listed on the council's heritage register.

We therefore ask that council issue an interim heritage order for this site until a thorough and independent heritage assessment has been undertaken.

Sincerely

Laura Cockburn
NSW Chapter President
Australian Institute of Architects

We respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work and pay respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Thank you to those who support the middle and lower class of the Jewish community who will be most affected by the demolition of communal zoned land to make way for residential units.

The loss of the synagogue at 36 Flood Street would be a great loss to the community.

It was built by Holocaust survivors. I used to attend that synagogue as a boy and I still remember the faces of those who lost everything and came to these shores to rebuild their lives. My dad who is a child Holocaust survivor would speak to these men in Hungarian. They will never be forgotten. One of them cried one Sabbath to my dad. I will never forget that. Never. Let a million Meritons be built there I will remember. Many of them died childless. Some of the women had gone through Mengeles experiments. I will remember them. That site is a shrine to their memories. Mr Triguboff placed management in that facility. Why should the community suffer for management.

Mr Triguboff is not stuck with communal land. He can sell it at community infrastructure prices. Let the community buy it.

Thank you to those who protect and preserve communal infrastructure at a time that the masses are facing increased cost of living.

R. Rosenberg