

# REPORT

To: Phil Melling, Director  
Development and Community  
Services, City of Greater Geraldton

From: Tanya Henkel

Date: 13 April 2022

Subject: Proposed demolition of  
Greenough Shire Office Fmr on Lot  
47 (No. 1) Edward Road, Utakarra

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In assessing the proposal to demolish the Greenough Shire Office Fmr on Lot 47 (No. 1) Edward Road, Utakarra, please be advised of the following:

- 1.0 **The Place:** Situated on the corner of Edward Road and the Geraldton-Mt Magnet Road, the Greenough Shire Office Fmr is set on an angle addressing the corner and backing on to a sports oval. The large single storey building is of brick construction with a hipped tile roof which features several gables. Originally built in 1971, the building underwent extensions and renovations in 1991. On 11 April 2021 the building was damaged by the impact of Tropical Cyclone Seroja.
- 2.0 **Heritage Listings:**
  - 2.1 **Municipal Inventory:** The place is included in the City of Greater Geraldton Municipal Inventory of Heritage Places (Greenough Volume) as Place No. 182. The place has been allocated a management category of 4 which states:  
“Some Significance: Contributes to the heritage and/or historical development of the locality.  
Management Recommendation: Conservation of the place is desirable. Any proposed change to the place should be in sympathy with the heritage values of the place.”
  - 2.2 **Town Planning Scheme:** The place is NOT located within a Heritage Area or Special Control Area as defined under a Local Planning Scheme.
- 3.0 **The Proposal:** It is proposed to demolish the building and leave the site vacant for sale purposes.
- 4.0 **Site Visit:** Due to time constraints the Heritage Adviser has been unable to conduct a site inspection prior to the preparation of this report. However she has been furnished with information including the Building Structural Report and photographs of the building taken on 13 July 2022 by CGG staff which have been used as the basis for this report. If required, the Heritage Advisor can inspect the property during her next visit to Geraldton at the end of April.
- 5.0 **Issues:**
  - 5.1 **Damage caused by Tropical Cyclone Seroja:** The cyclone caused considerable damage when the rear steel carport detached and landed on the main roof damaging roof tiles and resulting in water ingress. Additional roof damage was caused by wind uplift while the asbestos eaves around the building were also damaged. Internally ceilings and flooring incurred damage.

- 5.2 Building Structural Report:** Prepared by Flow Consulting Engineers on 8 March 2022, the report describes the damage caused by the cyclone, centred on the rear carport, however does not address the other damage caused by wind uplift to other sections of the tiled roof or water damage to the eaves. The report states, "Structural Integrity: Despite the damage to the tiled roof, the Greenough Shire Office building is structurally sound and could be rebuilt." However the estimated cost to repair the building is very significant, inclusive of a new roof, new ceilings, painting and floor coverings - \$655k compared to the cost of demolition - \$50k.
- 5.3 Heritage Values of the Place:** The Statement of Significance contained in the Municipal Inventory Place Record states: "The Shire of Greenough Offices have some social significance as the centre for local government in the Greenough district since 1971." The place has been assigned a low management category to reflect the lower heritage values. The place is not located within a Heritage Area or Special Control Area as defined under a Local Planning Scheme and as such there are no additional heritage considerations to take into account. Furthermore the place has no streetscape setting contribution to factor in. In summary the place has been included in the Municipal Inventory owing to its social values as the administrative centre for the local government as opposed to any aesthetic values relating to its architectural merit.
- 5.4 Heritage Conservation and Development Local Planning Policy Requirements:** To meet the requirements of the LPP the City of Greater Geraldton will need to complete an Archive Record prior to the approval for demolition (Section 4.4). Meanwhile it is noted that the LPP requires a structural engineer's report, "*If structural failure is cited as justification for the demolition of a place in the local government's inventory*" (Section 4.3). In this instance I understand that the structural integrity of the building is not the reason for the proposed demolition, rather it is other reasons to do with high costs of repairs and refurbishment together with the challenges of selling the property. Additionally there are no Redevelopment Plans in the case of demolition (Section 4.5), however it is noted that the removal of the subject building will not result in a gap in an historic streetscape or the loss of a building of architectural merit within a character precinct so the relevance of this optional requirement is low.
- 5.5 Demolition versus Repair:** While the repair and sustainable reuse of the building is preferable at some point the practicalities of the situation need to be factored into the decision-making process. It is understood that the property has been for sale for some time. While there was some interest from prospective purchasers, no sale eventuated, possibly owing to the large scale of the building and its awkward interior floor plan. I believe the building had stood vacant for a while prior to the impact of the cyclone. The building has insurance coverage, however there are some complicating factors involved in reaching an agreed settlement. Obviously continued negotiations between the City and the insurance company to reach an acceptable settlement are encouraged. One option for the City of Greater Geraldton to consider is offering to sell the property as is at a markedly reduced rate to reflect the damage and cost of repairs as has been done at other cyclone damaged places such as Oakabella Homestead and the Railway Tavern in the Shire of Northampton. However this does not guarantee repair and refurbishment of

the building which is located on a high profile site at the eastern entrance to the City.

**5.6 Cyclone Funding Option:** It should be noted that the City of Greater Geraldton may be eligible to apply for Cyclone Seroja Recovery Funding to assist with repairs to the building given that it is entered in the Municipal Inventory. The Cultural and Heritage Asset Clean-Up and Repair Grant Program offers reimbursement grants of up to \$20,000 for works not fully funded under insurance. For further information contact Sandy Curtis at E: [heritagesupport@dplh.wa.gov.au](mailto:heritagesupport@dplh.wa.gov.au) or P: 6551 9993 and quote the place number P13946.

**5.7 Interpretive Outcome:** Given the social significance of the site, being the centre of local government for the Shire of Greenough for over 40 years, it is recommended that options for a suitable interpretive outcome be considered should demolition proceed.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**Based on the above considerations the demolition of the building is supported subject to the following:**

- i. **The preparation of an Archive Record as per Section 4.4 of the Heritage Conservation and Development Local Planning Policy.**
- ii. **No agreement on an acceptable insurance settlement being forthcoming.**
- iii. **A suitable interpretive outcome for the site being agreed to.**

I hope these comments are of assistance and thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposal. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any additional information.

Tanya Henkel  
Heritage Advisory Service