

10.10.Relocation of Heritage Bus Shelters: Monte and McLaren

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ATTACHMENTS	1. Heritage Assessment of Monte & McLaren bus shelters [10.10.1 - 11 pages]
CSP LINK	Outcome 6 – A vibrant LGA where culture and creativity is enjoyed by all C2. Preserve and celebrate North Sydney’s heritage

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to advise Council on the proposed relocation of the heritage bus shelters, Monte and McLaren, currently located on Miller Street, North Sydney.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- In April 2022, Sydney Metro advised Council that they would be relocating bus stops located at 192 Miller Street and 229 Miller Street, to the northern entry of Victoria Cross Station, at 200 Miller Street and 255 Miller Street respectively.
- Transport for NSW (TfNSW) installed modern steel and glass bus shelters at these new bus stop locations, with signage advising that all bus services would cease operating from the former bus stops located at the heritage ‘traditional style’ Monte (192 Miller Street) and McLaren (229 Miller Street) bus shelters, from 30 March 2025.
- Council engaged Heritage Architects, Lucas, Stapleton, Johnson, and Partners (LSJP), to provide a heritage assessment, with recommendations for the treatment of these now-redundant shelters.
- Upon inspection, LSJP observed the deteriorated condition of the Monte and McLaren shelters. Subsequently a Structural Engineer was engaged to assess them, and bracing was installed in line with their recommendations.
- The recommendations from LSJP were to either remove the newly installed TfNSW shelters and rebuild the existing traditional-style shelters in their place, or relocate the Monte and McLaren shelters to active bus stops at heritage locations where similar shelters have been removed.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT Council endorse the proposed relocation of the Monte and McLaren bus shelters on Miller Street to Lady Hay and Crowie on Pacific Highway, in accordance with recommendations of the Heritage Assessment report prepared by Heritage Architects Lucas, Stapleton, Johnson, and Partners.

2. THAT Council endorse exploring advertising opportunities in the vicinity of the current and proposed bus shelter locations, to replace any revenue stream lost through the relocation.

3. THAT Council note that proceeding with the proposed relocation work is subject to the determination of a future Development Application.

Background

In late 2022, Council removed five heritage listed bus shelters in error, namely Marist, Falcon, Crowie, Woodstock, and Lady Hay. Council replaced these with new shelters, except at the Lady Hay location, due to receiving and complying with a stop work notice following demolition. Subsequently, Council obtained heritage advice to identify methods to reinstate heritage bus shelters at these locations.

Report

In April 2022, Sydney Metro informed Council that new bus stops would be created at 200 Miller Street and 255 Miller Street, coinciding with the opening of the Victoria Cross metro station's northern access point, to replace existing stops at 192 Miller Street and 229 Miller Street respectively.

The heritage 'traditional style' bus shelters located at these former bus stops, known as Monte (192 Miller Street) and McLaren (229 Miller Street), are typical to the North Sydney streetscape, and are noted on the North Sydney Heritage Map, indicating that they are Heritage items under Schedule 5 of the NSLEP 2013.

Council requested that Sydney Metro consider relocating the Monte and McLaren heritage style shelters to the new bus stop locations, however, these representations were unsuccessful. TfNSW proceeded to install modern steel and glass shelters at the new bus stops outside Victoria Cross Station and posted service change signage at the Monte and McLaren shelters, advising that all services to the former bus stops would cease from 30 March 2025.

Council engaged Heritage Architects, LSJP, to provide a heritage assessment with recommendations for the treatment of the heritage 'traditional style' shelters (Attachment 1).

During their initial assessment, LSJP raised concerns about the condition and structural integrity of the Monte and McLaren shelters. Council engaged a Structural Engineer to assess further and installed temporary bracing in accordance with their advice.

In their heritage assessment LSJP note that, despite their poor condition, the Monte and McLaren shelters retain all aspects of their cultural significance and recommend that these shelters are either relocated to:

1. the new bus stop locations at 200 Miller Street and 255 Miller Street to replace the modern steel and glass shelters installed by TfNSW; or
2. the following locations to replace the heritage style shelters that were previously removed in error by Council:
 - a. Bus stop BS033 - on Pacific Highway adjacent to 71 Crows Nest Road, North Sydney, where the former heritage-style shelter, named Lady Hay, was located prior to its demolition in 2022. To date, the Lady Hay shelter has not been replaced.

- b. Bus stop BS035 - on the north-western corner of Pacific Highway and Myrtle Street, North Sydney, where the former heritage-style shelter, named Crowie, demolished and replaced with a modern style shelter in 2022.

The first option would not result in any changes to the heritage listing, except for updating the listed addresses for the Monte and McLaren shelters at their new locations; however, it would mean removing and disposing of two brand new, fit for purpose shelters.

The second option would reinstate heritage 'traditional style' shelters at Lady Hay and Crowie, which have remained on the heritage list despite no longer existing. However, the Monte and McLaren shelters would be removed from the heritage list. These shelters are a good match for replacement. McLaren is a Type A shelter, the same as Crowie, and Monte is a Type B shelter, as was Lady Hay. They also have the advantage of being on the original tram route and close to each other. This option would require the removal and disposal of the modern style shelter at the Crowie location and removal of one advertising panel with its associated revenue.

The Monte and McLaren shelters would be dismantled in accordance with the methodology outlined LSJP's heritage assessment. Existing materials would be reused wherever possible, with new lettering required for the renaming of the shelters.

Subject to Council resolving to endorse the recommendations of this report, a Development Application will be prepared for dismantling and reconstructing these shelters at the recommended locations.

Consultation requirements

There is no community consultation required in relation to the recommendations noted within this report. The Development Application would be available for public comment.

Financial/Resource Implications

The relocation of these shelters is noted in Council's 2025/26 Operational Plan, with an allocation of \$200k for the relocation of these shelters in the 2025/26 Capital Works budget.

Presently both bus shelters have static scrolling faces which under the advertising contract provide an estimated minimum \$10,000 per year. Should Council endorse the recommendation, the advertising revenue received by Council would reduce slightly, but would ultimately increase if the faces were replaced with digital panels as part of the relocation.

Legislation

North Sydney Council Local Environment Plan 2013.

NORTH SYDNEY COUNCIL BUS SHELTERS

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT MONTE & McLAREN BUS SHELTERS



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Cover image: Bus Stop Shelter BS005 McLaren, Miller Street, North Sydney, April 2024

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1. Introduction

Background to the study

Lucas Stapleton Johnson and Partners were engaged in April 2025 by North Sydney Council to prepare this report. It aims to provide a heritage assessment and recommended treatment for two heritage-listed bus shelters in Miller Street, North Sydney: BS005 McLaren and BS006 Monte. The bus stops in question have been made redundant by new stops installed approximately 100m to the north of their current locations associated with the Victoria Cross Metro station where Transport for NSW has installed modern steel and glass shelters.

A visual inspection was carried out and initial advice was provided on 17th April 2025. This report formalises that advice.

This report incorporates information contained in our previous report *North Sydney Council Bus Shelters Heritage Review* dated March 2024.

Author Identification

Sean Johnson of Lucas, Stapleton, Johnson & Partners prepared this report with review by Kate Denny. Unless otherwise stated, photographs are by the authors. The images and photographs (except those of the author) used in this report have been reproduced for this report only. Copyright continues to reside with the copyright owners and permission must be sought for their use in any other document or publication.



Figure 1 BS006 Monte, April 2025

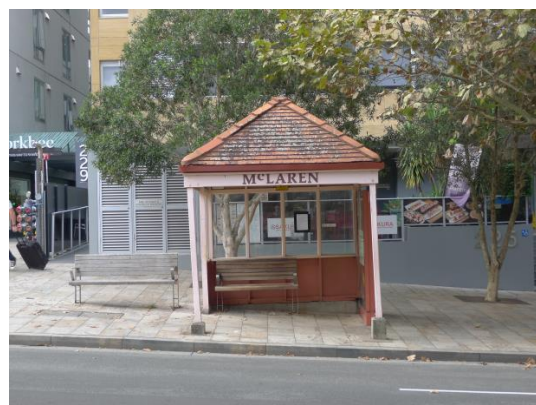


Figure 2 BS005 McLaren April 2025

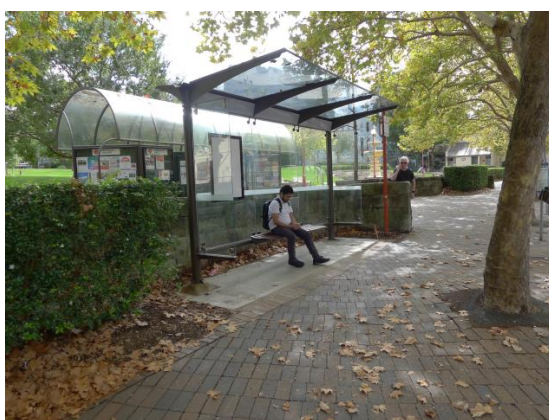


Figure 3 New bus stop shelter, opposite Victoria Cross Metro station, April 2025



Figure 4 New bus stop shelter near Victoria Cross Metro station, April 2025 Photo: Jessica Choy NSC

2. History & Description

History

The distinctive 'traditional style' North Sydney Council bus shelters were an initiative of Ted Mack (1933-2018) Mayor of North Sydney in the period 1980-1987. The design was developed by John Kinstler, Town Planner and Council Architect for North Sydney from 1981-1992, their installation was supervised by architect Hugh Slatyer and they were built by Stephen Edwards Construction in 1984.

The shelter design was inspired by the last remaining tram stop shelter in North Sydney located in Miller Street near North Sydney Oval. A network of tramlines was developed in North Sydney from 1886 until the last one was removed in 1958 and trams were replaced by buses. Some of the shelters are located on and are considered to interpret those original tram routes.



Figure 5 Original 1920s tram shelter (BS004 The Oval) from Miller Street

Ted Mack was quoted as saying that the bus shelters 'turned out to be the most popular thing I have done' and 'People liked them because it gave them a feeling of belonging; it gave them a sense of local identity.'¹

The North Sydney Heritage Study Review, of 1993, recommended including the traditional style bus shelters on the LEP list of items of environmental heritage. The Scobie Heritage Review of 2015 recommended 44 shelters for local heritage-listing and identified 7 which did not meet the criteria for listing. There are still 44 shelters on the State Heritage Inventory listing, although not all survive. McLaren and Monte are noted North Sydney Heritage Map HER_002A indicating that they are heritage items under Schedule 5 of the NSLEP 2013 (Item no.I 0407).

Physical Description and Condition

The shelter design drawn by Hugh Slatyer bears little resemblance to the tram shelter (BS004 The Oval) that is said to be its inspiration. It has a roof of plain tiles instead of Marseilles tiles and a series of fixed pane windows with plywood cladding below instead of weatherboard walls. The whole structure is also of lighter construction than the prototype. A major difference is in the eaves treatment. The 1920s tram shelter has rafters overhanging the eaves whereas the modern versions have a deep beam on all four sides and no overhang. This deep fascia gives the modern shelters a 'clipped' distinctively Post-Modern style appearance, making them a product of their time.

McLaren bus stop BS005

McLaren is close to the original bus shelter design drawn by Hugh Slatyer, noted as 'Type A' in our 2024 report. It is a square structure with a pyramidal tiled roof, a hardwood roof structure resting on stop chamfered edge beams, two stop chamfered posts at the front and rear walls of hardwood framing

¹ David Scobie Architects, North Sydney Council Bus Shelter Heritage Review, January 2015.

clad with grooved plywood and four toughened glass windows forming the rear wall plus one on the north wall. The southern window has been replaced by a large illuminated advertising sign.

Some roof tiles are missing but the roof structure appears sound. The rainwater gutter discharges onto the eaves beams and has caused them to decay at the south-east corner. The glazed walling is in poor condition as is usual for these shelters due to the lack of an adequate sill to throw off the water. The front posts appear to be out of plumb and leaning to the north.



Figure 6 McLaren north wall



Figure 7 McLaren rear



Figure 8 McLaren interior



Figure 9 McLaren roof

Monte bus stop BS006

Monte is very similar to McLaren but the rear wall has been replaced with diagonal bracing (noted as 'Type B' in our previous report). The roof gutters have vegetation growing in them and rainwater discharges onto the north-east corner making the beams at that point subject to possible decay. The southern glazed wall is in poor condition and the north wall is replaced by a large illuminated advertisement panel. Posts have rotten bases and are leaning to the north.



Figure 10 Monte north wall



Figure 11 Monte south wall



Figure 12 Monte interior



Figure 13 Monte roof structure

3. Discussion of Cultural Significance

The Statement of Significance given in our previous report is as follows:

Criterion (a) An item is important in the course, or pattern, of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).

The 1980s traditional-style bus shelters in the North Sydney LGA are physical evidence of the term of office of the popular mayor Ted Mack and his initiative to give the municipality a sense of individual character. Mack was quoted as saying that the bus shelters were 'the most popular thing I have done'.

The shelters help to interpret the history of public transport in North Sydney by following early tram routes and later bus routes.

Criterion (b) An item has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).

The design of the shelters has strong associations with prominent Mayor of North Sydney Council (1980-87), Ted Mack and North Sydney Council Architect and Planner, John Kinstler (1981-92).

Criterion (c) An item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in NSW (or in local area).

The bus shelters were architecturally designed to interpret the earlier tramways shelters and to produce a distinctive piece of public infrastructure reflecting the architectural and townscape character of North Sydney but in a contemporary Post-Modern manner.

For the past 40 years, the shelters have been distinctive landmarks, making a valuable contribution to North Sydney streetscapes, especially those which include a large number of heritage-listed buildings or are in Conservation Areas.

Criterion (d) An item has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in NSW (or local area) for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.

The shelters are held in high regard by people of North Sydney LGA as demonstrated by their inclusion in North Sydney Council LEP Heritage Schedule, having been identified in previous heritage studies and through the processes of public consultation².

² David Scobie Architects, North Sydney Council Bus Shelter Heritage Review, 2015, p.17.

Criterion (g) An item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSW's cultural or natural places or environments (or a class of the local area's cultural or natural places or environments).

Each of the shelters is a representative example of a distinctive design from the 1980s created, owned and maintained by North Sydney Council.

This statement is particularly appropriate for the two shelters McLaren and Monte, because they are prominently located on the Miller Street former tram route and are close to the North Sydney Council offices. Their names were chosen to relate to nearby features i.e. Monte Sant' Angelo Mercy College and McLaren Street.

Their streetscape contribution is strongest for the Monte shelter as it stands in front of the Federation Style brick and tile house at 196 Miller Street and within sight of the Federation Style North Sydney Council Chambers building with its terra cotta tiled roof.

The McLaren shelter has a backdrop of high-rise buildings of approximately 18-storeys, so it makes less contribution to its immediate context and is more a reminder of the character of the municipality's residential areas.

4. Conclusions & Recommendations

Despite their poor condition the McLaren and Monte shelters retain all aspects of their cultural significance, as identified above. However, buses no longer stop at either of the shelters and the official bus stops have been relocated approximately 100m further to the north in Miller Street. To address this situation we provide below two options for their appropriate treatment.

Option 1

The shelters could be rebuilt at the new bus stops in place of the recently erected modern shelters. This will allow the retention of their names and heritage status. The architectural context of both locations is suitable for the traditional shelter design. Enough room exists at both locations provided the shelters are positioned towards the back of the footpath.

Refer to the Schedule of Works and drawings describing the proposed rebuilding method in our previous report date March 2024.



Figure 14 Context eastern side of Miller St



Figure 15 Context western side of Miller St

Option 2

Option 2 is to rebuild both shelters elsewhere and to rename them to replace traditional 1980s shelters that have been removed or replaced.

Two locations that have the advantage of being on the original tram route and close to each other, are:

- A shelter named Lady Hay is missing from bus stop BS033 adjacent to 71 Crows Nest Road, North Sydney.
- A shelter named Crowie has been replaced with a modern type at bus stop BS035 at the north-western corner of Pacific Highway and Myrtle Street, North Sydney.

The maximum amount of existing fabric should still be reused (new lettering would be needed). Detailing should follow the recommendations (including drawings and specifications) of our previous report.

Effect on Heritage Listing

In the case of the Option 1, no change to the existing heritage list would be required except for adjusting the street address of McLaren and Monte shelters and adjusting their location on the NSLEP Heritage Map.

Under Option 2, McLaren and Monte shelters would be removed from the heritage list. Lady Hay and Crowie remain on the heritage list, although the shelters no longer exist, therefore the relocated shelters could take their place and would be a good match for them as McLaren is a Type A shelter and so was Crowie, whereas Monte is a Type B shelter and so was Lady Hay.

Once repair and rebuilding have been carried out, the opportunity should be taken to update the list of shelters in the State Heritage Inventory and on the LEP heritage map to reflect the remaining bus shelters.

Urgent Action for Safety Reasons

As noted above, the front posts of both shelters have a pronounced lean towards the north. Given the weight of the tiled roofs and the posts' possible instability, we have recommended to the council that they be cordoned off from access and carefully dismantled as soon as possible. The addendum below gives guidance on salvaging the material.



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Addendum A – Materials Salvage Methodology

The following material should be salvaged intact for reuse from the two bus shelters:

- Roof tiles including hip and apex tiles.
- Roof battens, rafters, purlins, ties and cross bracing.
- Eaves beams.
- Bed mould under gutter.
- Bolts, coach screws & brackets.
- Light fitting & associated wiring & controls.
- Brass lettering (Monte & McLaren)
- Community notice board (Monte only)
- Signs
- Seat

Methodology

Roofing consists of plain tiles (aka terra cotta shingles) nailed to battens. These should be carefully stripped and the roof structures kept intact. Hardwood beams, lettering, lights, etc can be salvaged for reuse. Salvaged materials should be clearly labelled and kept on pallets separately for each shelter to assist in reassembly.

Preferred method:

1. Remove cement mortar from ridge tiles, if possible, and set aside for reuse. If cement will not come off cleanly, provide new ridge tiles to match existing.
2. After removing ridge tiles, remove plain roof tiles ('shingles') from the top by carefully levering out or cutting nails, clean off any mortar, stack on pallets and set aside for reuse. It is possible that only alternate courses are nailed.
3. Remove and dispose of guttering and downpipes.
4. Disconnect light fitting and salvage with any associated wiring and controls.
5. Carefully salvage seat, metal signs, community notice board (Monte only)
6. Detach the whole roof structure from the supporting posts and wall frames. Carefully lift it intact onto a truck and transport it to storage.
7. Salvage cross bracing from rear wall (Monte only).
8. Remove and dispose of remaining wall structures and make good paving to match existing.

Alternative method (if roof structure cannot be kept intact):

1. Remove cement mortar from ridge tiles, if possible, and set aside for reuse. If cement will not come off cleanly, provide new ridge tiles to match existing.
2. After removing ridge tiles, remove plain roof tiles ('shingles') from the top by carefully levering out or cutting nails, clean off any mortar, stack on pallets and set aside for reuse. It is possible that only alternate courses are nailed.
3. Remove and dispose of guttering and downpipes.
4. Disconnect light fitting and salvage with any associated wiring and controls.
5. Carefully salvage seat, metal signs, community notice board (Monte only)
6. Carefully dismantle roof structure after numbering all members and providing a drawing to identify number and location of each. Stack, de-nail and set aside for reuse.
7. Salvage cross bracing from rear wall (Monte only).
8. Remove and dispose of remaining wall structures, concrete plinths and make good paving to match existing.