



Millers Point & Dawes Point Village Precinct

General design guidelines for adaptive reuse of heritage
properties

Department of Climate Change,
Energy, the Environment and Water



Acknowledgement of Country

Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we work and live.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

This resource may contain images or names of deceased persons in photographs or historical content.

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Glossary of terms used in this document

Adaptation	Changing a place to suit the existing use or a proposed use (Burra Charter 2013)
Agreeable	Acceptable by consent authorities
Burra Charter 2013	<i>Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 2013</i>
Conservation	All the processes of looking after a place to retain its cultural significance (Burra Charter 2013)
Fabric	All the physical material of the place including elements, fixtures, contents and objects (Burra Charter 2013)
Form	The overall shape and volume and the arrangement of the parts of a building
Integrity	In the context of heritage conservation, integrity generally refers to the wholeness and intactness of the heritage property's physical and intangible attributes, which preserve its cultural significance. These attributes might include location, design, materials, workmanship, and the setting of the property (ICOMOS 2012).
Millers Point	The whole of the area bounded by the Sydney Harbour Bridge, Bradfield Highway and the Western Distributor on the east, Walsh Bay on the north, and Darling Harbour on the west
Reasonable	Adequate or sufficient to meet a specific minimum requirement, standard, or purpose without being excessive or insufficient
Sympathetic	In the context of heritage buildings, 'sympathetic' means making changes that respect and blend with the original design, historical significance, and cultural context. It involves preserving integrity and character while accommodating modern needs or improvements.
Owner	The owner of the property or long-term leaseholder



1. Introduction

Millers Point & Dawes Point Village Precinct is one of Australia's most exceptional and intact historic urban places. This unique precinct is listed on the State Heritage Register (SHR no. 01682) under the NSW *Heritage Act 1977*. It is listed for its ability to demonstrate, through its old buildings, history, documents, and archaeological finds, how colonial and post-colonial Sydney and New South Wales developed.

Located just north-west of Sydney's central business district, the precinct is surrounded by Sydney Harbour Bridge, Walsh Bay and Barangaroo. It contains a rare collection of archaeological sites, landscaped areas, and buildings dating from the late Colonial, Victorian, Federation and early interwar periods (Figure 1).

Buying a property in Millers Point & Dawes Point Village Precinct means owning a unique part of our nation's story in one of Australia's most historic conservation precincts, rich in its history, architecture and landscape. With this ownership comes the responsibility of managing the property in accordance with heritage and planning controls, while creating an opportunity to appropriately adapt an item of state significance.

These heritage design guidelines have been developed for the adaptation of the properties for current and future generations. The guidelines intend to provide clarity in guiding changes to the properties to achieve current owners' aspirations, and to incorporate modern amenity while retaining the heritage values of individual properties and Millers Point as a whole.

The guidelines aim to enable careful consideration of such changes to reduce their combined effect on the heritage values of the precinct, providing greater certainty to the owners. They seek to add to the existing technical conservation advice and best-practice management publications available through Heritage NSW.

The guidelines have been informed through community consultation undertaken by the Heritage Council of NSW in partnership with Heritage NSW and the City of Sydney. The consultation process involved a range of online and face-to-face opportunities for community members to participate and provide input via interactive mapping tools and multiple workshops. This feedback helped shape the guidelines to ensure they reflect what the community wants for the future of Millers Point and Dawes Point.

1.1 Statement of significance

The following statement of significance has been extracted from the state heritage inventory form for Millers Point & Dawes Point Village Precinct (SHR no. 01682):

Millers Point & Dawes Point Village Precinct is of state significance for its ability to demonstrate, in its physical forms, historical layering, documentary and archaeological records and social composition, the development of colonial and post-colonial settlement in Sydney and New South Wales.

The natural rocky terrain, despite much alteration, remains the dominant physical element in this significant urban cultural landscape in which land and water, nature and culture are intimately connected historically, socially, visually and functionally.

The close connections between the local Cadigal people and the place remain evident in the extensive archaeological resources, the historical records and the geographical place names of the area, as well as the continuing esteem of Sydney's Aboriginal communities for the place.

Much (but not all) of the colonial-era development was removed in the mass resumptions and demolitions following the bubonic plague outbreak of 1900, but remains substantially represented in the diverse archaeology of the place, its associated historical records, the local place name patterns, some of the remaining merchants villas and terraces, and the walking-scale, low-rise, village-like character of the place with its central 'green' in Argyle Place, and its vistas and glimpses of the harbour along its streets and over rooftops, the sounds of boats, ships and wharf work, and the smells of the sea and harbour waters.

The post-colonial phase is well represented by the early 20th century public housing built for waterside workers and their families, the technologically innovative warehousing, the landmark Harbour Bridge approaches on the heights, the parklands marking the edges of the precinct, and the connections to working on the wharves and docklands still evident in the street patterns, the mixing of houses, shops and pubs, and social and family histories of the local residents.

Millers Point & Dawes Point Village Precinct has evolved in response to both the physical characteristics of its peninsular location, and to the broader historical patterns and processes that have shaped the development of New South Wales since the 1780s, including the British invasion of the continent; cross-cultural relations; convictism; the defence of Sydney; the spread of maritime industries such as fishing and boat building; transporting and storing goods for export and import; immigration and emigration; astronomical and scientific achievements; small scale manufacturing; wind and gas generated energy production; the growth of controlled and market economies; contested waterfront work practises; the growth of trade unionism; the development of the state's oldest local government authority the City of Sydney; the development of public health, town planning and heritage conservation as roles for colonial and state government; the provision of religious and spiritual guidance; as inspiration for creative and artistic endeavour; and the evolution and regeneration of locally-distinctive and self-sustaining communities.

The whole place remains a living cultural landscape greatly valued by both its local residents and the people of New South Wales.



Figure 1 Millers Point & Daves Point Village Precinct, map showing State Heritage Register listed area with varied examples of building typologies

1.2 Who these guidelines are for

These guidelines are for:

- owners and managers of properties within Millers Point & Dawes Point Village Precinct
- applicants involved in a development proposal or updating a conservation management document
- Heritage Council of NSW and its delegates involved in assessing and determining applications for proposed developments.

1.3 Purpose of these guidelines

Millers Point & Dawes Point Village Precinct: general design guidelines for adaptive reuse of heritage properties is a non-statutory document that establishes design guidelines for common work types in the Millers Point & Dawes Point Village Precinct.

The main purpose of the document is to help applicants plan and prepare complete applications for works consistent with the design guidelines, which can then be approved by Heritage Council of NSW and its delegates.

The document focuses on the most common work types, including but not limited to, openings to internal walls, access improvements, installation of air conditioning, installations to the rear yard, enclosure of balconies and verandahs, and management of archaeology. If the work type you are proposing is not included in these guidelines, we encourage you to contact Heritage NSW early in the process. To receive feedback before finalising your application, see the NSW Government Environment and Heritage website: [Pre-lodgement service for heritage applications](#).

The guidelines also draw on *The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 2013* (Australia ICOMOS 2013), published NSW heritage guidelines, *Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012* (NSW Government 2024), *Sydney Development Control Plan 2012* (City of Sydney 2012), and the existing conservation management documents for the Millers Point properties. The guidelines should be used in conjunction with these documents and do not replace or amend them.

Following the guidance in this document does not release property owners from the obligation of obtaining approvals for work from the Heritage Council of NSW and its delegates.

1.4 How to use these guidelines

These guidelines are intended for use by building owners or managers proposing to undertake adaptation works on properties within the heritage-listed Millers Point & Dawes Point Village Precinct. They provide guidance to building owners or managers during the design and construction phases of the adaptation works, in addition to the policies of the property's conservation management plan.

Before starting work:

- Access and follow the conservation management plan for the property. This plan has been prepared to facilitate shared understanding of the place and inform decisions about its future. Conservation management plans for all properties in Millers Point and Dawes Point can be obtained from Heritage NSW. Ensure the proposed works, in general, are consistent with the relevant conservation management document, except where variation is allowed by these guidelines.
- Find the section of these guidelines that matches the type of work you plan to do. Make sure your proposal conforms to the guidelines for the work. If your proposal does not conform to the guidelines, you will either need to revise your proposal or provide sufficient justification for consideration by the Heritage Council or its delegate.
- Ensure the statutory approvals process is followed. This includes gaining 'section 60' approval under the Heritage Act from the Heritage Council or its delegate. Certain activities and work are exempt from approval under the Heritage Act for items listed on the State Heritage Register.
- In addition, development consent is required from the City of Sydney under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*. Development applications need input from the Heritage Council or its delegate before a determination can be made by the City of Sydney. These are called integrated development applications. For certain minor and maintenance works, the process includes gaining 'exempt approval' from the City of Sydney.
- Submit your application, including a fully completed application form, accompanied by supporting information to demonstrate how your work complies with the guidelines. For information on types of applications and submission requirements see the NSW Government Environment and Heritage website: [Apply for heritage approvals and permits](#).

Note

The diagrams presented in this document are indicative only and are provided for illustrative purposes. New works are denoted in blue.

Actual designs may vary, and alternative design options may exist. Any proposed design alterations or options are subject to review and approval by the relevant authority.

1.5 Delegations between Heritage Council of NSW and City of Sydney

The Heritage Council has delegated a range of regulatory functions to the City of Sydney Council. The delegation allows the City of Sydney to grant approvals for changes to State Heritage Register listed items where the works or activities would not have a major adverse impact or materially affect an item's heritage significance.

For more information see the NSW Government Environment and Heritage website: [Heritage delegations](#).



2. Vision

2.1 Heritage conservation vision statement

'To protect and celebrate the unique heritage of the Millers Point & Dawes Point Village Precinct as part of Sydney and Australian history in perpetuity. The precinct will be home to a thriving and united community that has a strong sense of belonging and will act as a custodian of its heritage, character and distinct sense of place.

‘A healthy balance between old and new will be achieved through utilising a set of heritage guidelines to make future heritage management decisions.’



Past

- Historic
- Valuable heritage
- Indigenous history
- Celebrated and valued as part of Sydney and Australian history to be enjoyed in perpetuity



Future

- Consistent decision-making
- Protecting social and built history
- Protecting the peace, serenity and slowness of pace in the precinct
- Respecting history while being sympathetic to functionality
- Balancing between protecting heritage and allowing for modern living and amenities
- Heritage management decisions guided by principles



Present

- Home
- Unique character
- Sense of belonging
- Amenity and vibrancy
- Beauty, character, views
- Thriving, happy and united community that celebrates social, cultural and demographic diversity
- Multi-generational
- Community unity and spaces



3. General heritage design guidelines

3.1 Opening up internal spaces

In adapting to the challenges of contemporary living, the owners of properties in Millers Point have expressed a desire for new internal openings or the widening of existing ones to connect spaces. However, the conservation management plans (as endorsed by the Heritage Council or its delegate) for the properties do not support such modifications to early stone or brick masonry. This is to prevent irreversible loss of significant building fabric and to maintain the spatial qualities of significant spaces. A few conservation management plans make exceptions for basements and spaces deemed of lesser significance.

A balance has generally been achieved, aiming to prevent the irreversible loss of significant fabric, to maintain the integrity of the layout and architecture, and address the reasonable need to enhance spaces by improving natural light, ventilation, and connectivity. The spatial qualities of significant spaces (such as historic layouts and room sizes) provide physical evidence of past uses and contribute to a greater understanding of the significance of the heritage item. The modifications, including new internal openings, should ensure the original room layout is discernible and understandable.

3.1.1 Objectives

- To ensure new internal openings are sympathetic and do not compromise significant building fabric
- To allow for the original internal layouts to be understood
- To ensure provision of appropriate connections between spaces while maintaining the architectural integrity of a space
- Where known and appropriate, to reinstate original openings

3.1.2 Recommended design guidelines for opening up spaces

New internal openings or widening of existing openings can be considered if this is consistent with the relevant conservation management document, **OR** where all of the following guidelines are met:

1. There is little or no impact on significant form, fabric, function and location.
2. The work proposed will reinstate an earlier opening while retaining layout and spatial integrity, or the size of the opening is limited to the minimum extent needed for a reasonable functional relationship between the 2 spaces and to allow movement from one space to the other (1.2 m wide x 2.1 m high openings are generally considered reasonable in such situations).
3. The work proposed is limited to only one opening between 2 spaces.

See Figure 2.

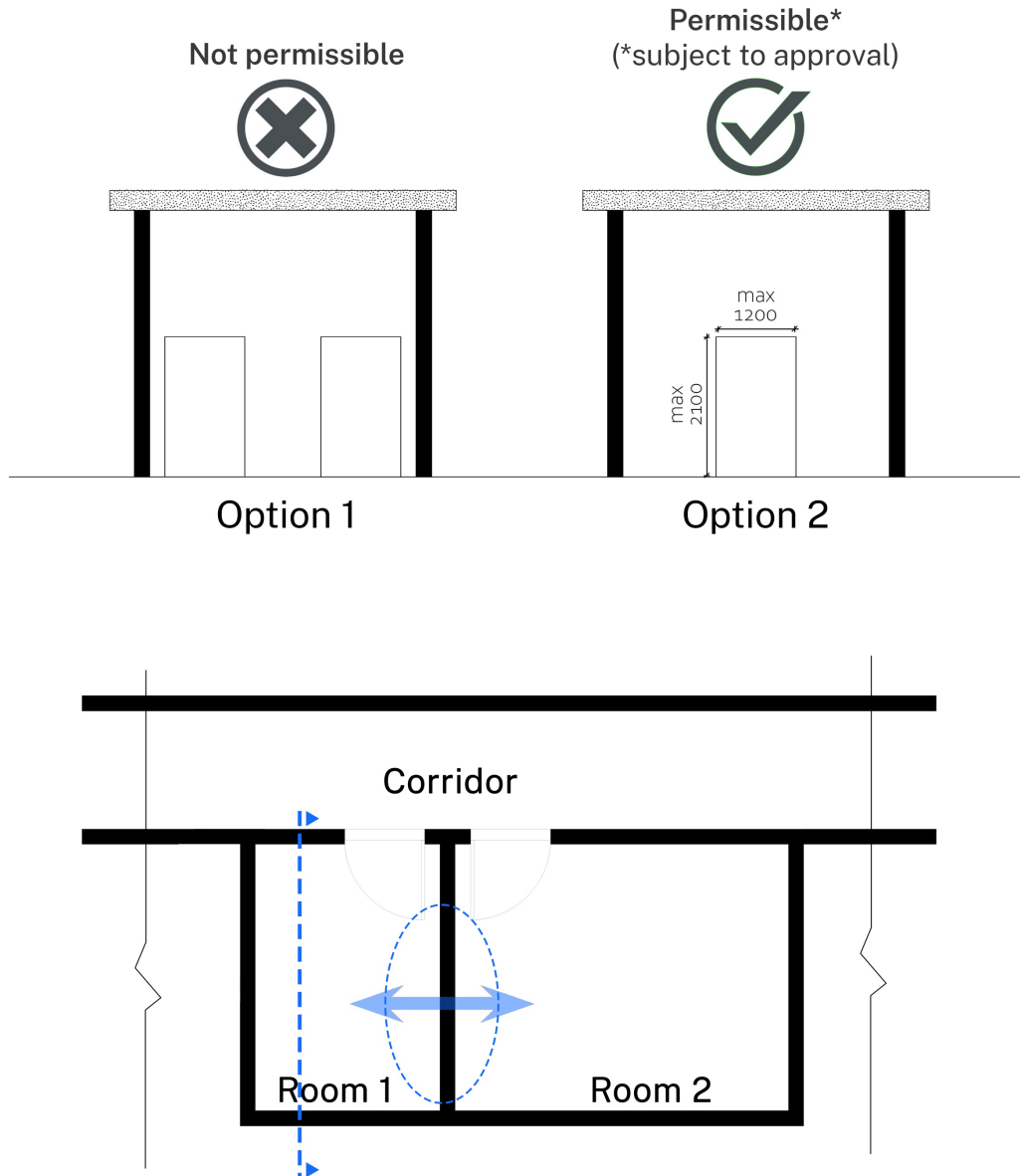


Figure 2 Opening up internal spaces

3.2 Access improvements

The standards for reasonable access have evolved significantly over the years, and most of the heritage properties in Millers Point fall short of current standards. Applicants often seek access improvements such as lifts, dumb waiters, or stair replacement or alterations. The Heritage Council and its delegates have considered proposals for lifts and dumb waiters, and in instances where the physical and visual impacts were minimal these additions have been approved.

Archaeological remains must be considered when planning these improvements. A historical archaeological assessment should be completed by a suitably qualified and experienced archaeologist early in the process. See section 3.15 on archaeological management.

In general, it is important to carefully consider the implications of access improvements on identified significant fabric and elements because changes can impact the building's intactness and significance.

3.2.1 Objectives

- To ensure that access improvements are sympathetic to and respect the heritage significance of the place
- To preserve significant fabric while undertaking access improvements
- To ensure there is minimal disturbance to surviving state-significant archaeological remains of the Millers Point & Dawes Point Village Precinct

3.2.2 Recommended design guidelines for access improvements

To improve amenity of access to different levels, **lifts** can be considered where they are in accordance with the policies of the relevant conservation management document, **OR** where all of the following guidelines are met:

1. The lift is wholly internal to the subject building with no impact on external presentation of the building and does not protrude above the existing roof line.
2. The proposed lift is in an area of low archaeological potential where there is minimal impact on archaeological remains.
3. It is designed to be discreet, reversible, have minimal fixings, and considers form, fabric, function and location.
4. The installation process will have minimal impact on the building's significant fabric, form, function and location.
5. The proposed insertion does not necessitate additional changes to the significant fabric (such as additional openings).
6. It is limited to a reasonable size.

See Figure 3.

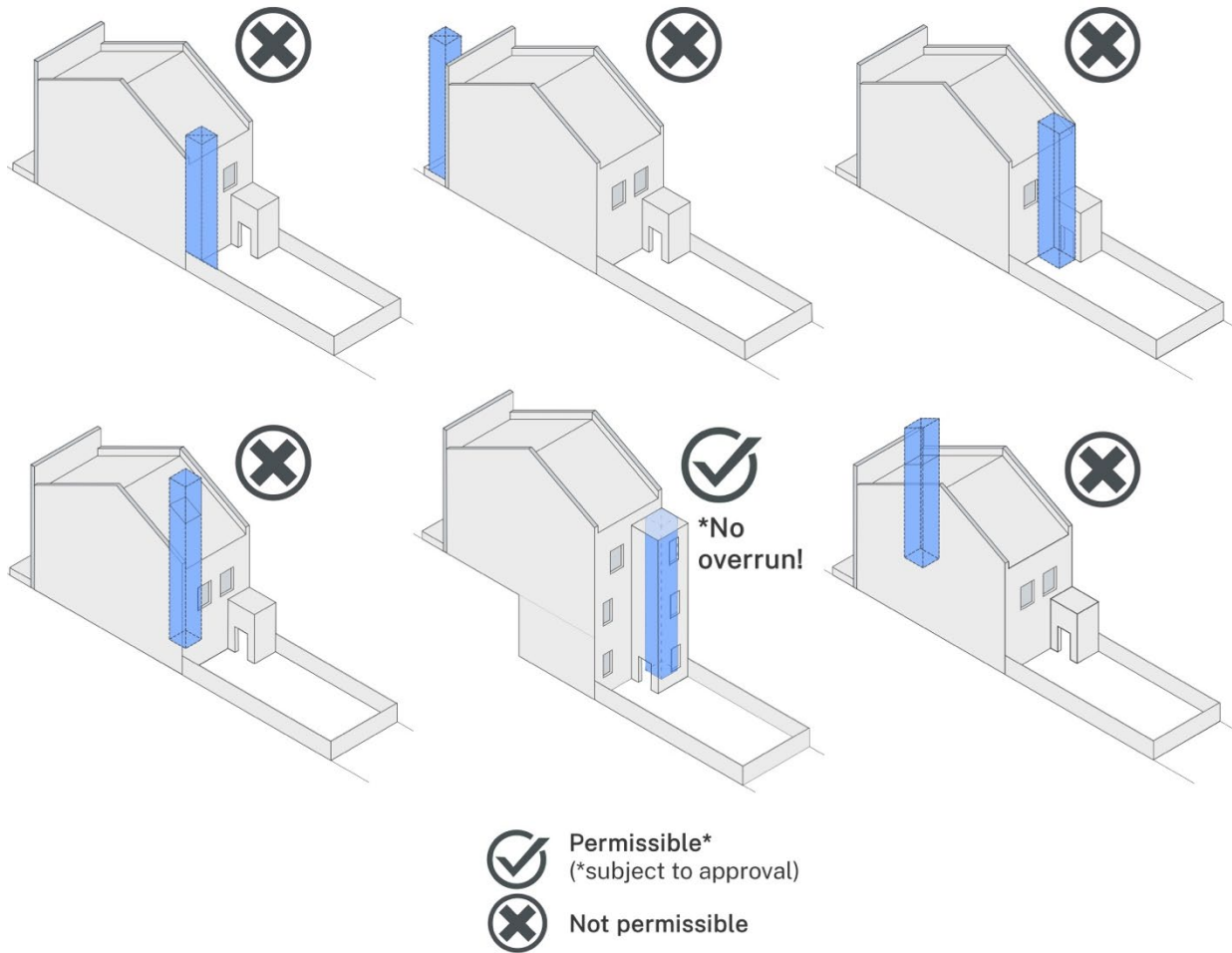
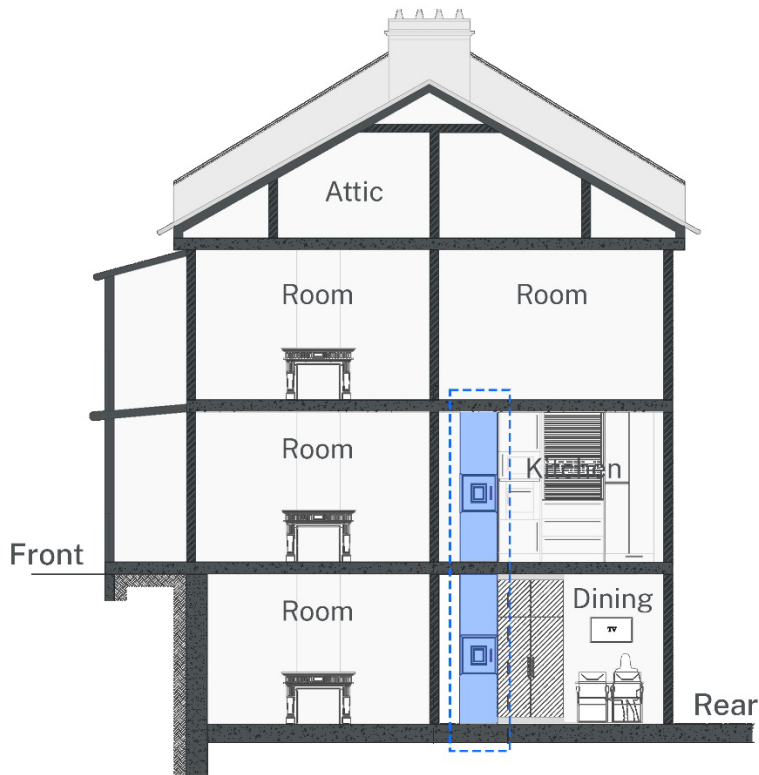


Figure 3 Access improvements – installing lifts

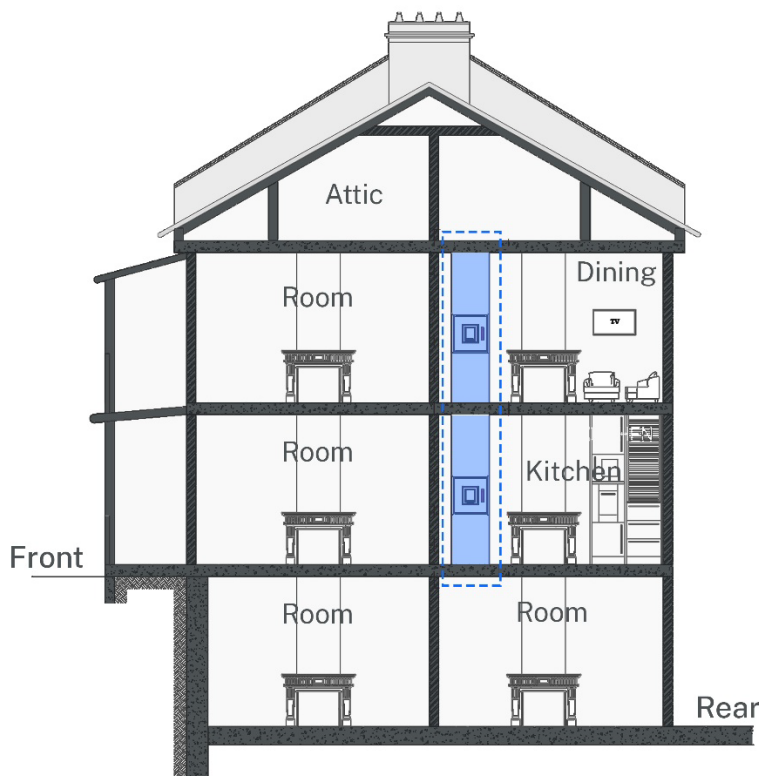
Installing a **dumb waiter** can be considered if it is in accordance with the policies of relevant conservation management document, **OR** where all of the following guidelines are met:

7. The proposed dumb waiter is in an area of low archaeological potential where there is minimal impact on archaeological remains.
8. Dining areas cannot be located at the same floor level as the kitchen due to practical and functional reasons.
9. The number of levels proposed to be connected are the minimum needed for reasonable functionality.
10. It is limited to a maximum size 600 mm x 550 mm and is reversible.
11. It is designed to be discreet and considers form, fabric, function and location.

See Figure 4.



Sectional elevation - option 1



Sectional elevation - option 2

Figure 4 Options for installing a dumb waiter connecting dining and kitchen spaces located at different levels

Alterations or replacement of an existing **staircase** can be considered where the changes are in accordance with the policies of the relevant conservation management document, **OR** where all of the following guidelines are met:

12. The existing staircase is identified as having little significance (for example, it has been substantially altered or replaced).
13. The proposed work is generally within the footprint of the existing staircase.
14. The proposed work is in an area of low archaeological potential where there is minimal impact on archaeological remains.
15. The proposed work does not require removal of significant fabric and is constructed using materials and an aesthetic that are in keeping with the character of the place.

3.3 Converting attics to habitable space

Attic spaces in most properties were not designed to be habitable, with only a few examples where they were used as servants' quarters or children's bedrooms. Converting these attic spaces into habitable areas requires Building Code of Australia upgrades to ensure adequate height, light, ventilation and accessibility.

Converting an attic into habitable space can impact structural integrity and original internal and external appearance. The modifications can also reduce the building's historical significance by altering its original features and characteristics.

3.3.1 Objectives

- To retain the significant building fabric, roof forms and structural integrity of the building's historical characteristics
- To ensure the original single-room layout and characteristic of an attic is retained and interpreted
- To ensure the upgrade works comply with Building Code of Australia requirements while ensuring minimal visual and physical impacts to the building

3.3.2 Recommended design guidelines for converting attics to habitable space

Converting an attic to habitable space can be considered where the proposal is consistent with the policies of the relevant conservation management document, **OR** where all of the following guidelines are met:

1. The attic space is accessible by an existing stair.
2. The habitable space is designed:
 - a. to ensure associated Building Code of Australia upgrade works minimise physical and visual impact on significant building elements or structure and do not involve removal of any original structural elements of the roof, such as struts or tie beams; and
 - b. to avoid impact on the principal building facades and roof form.
3. New dormer windows or roof additions are not proposed.

See figures 5 and 6.

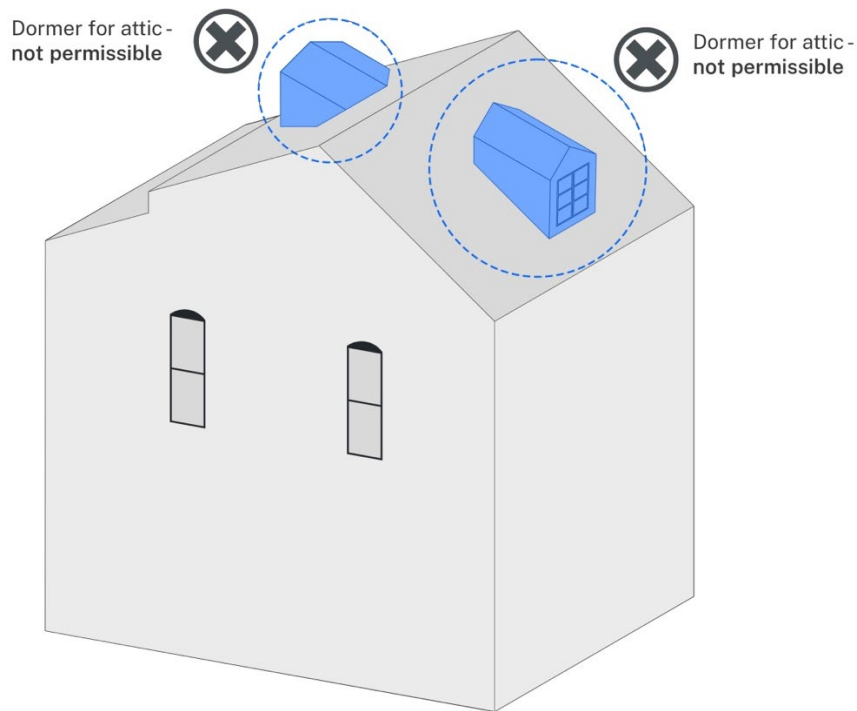


Figure 5 New dormer windows or roof additions

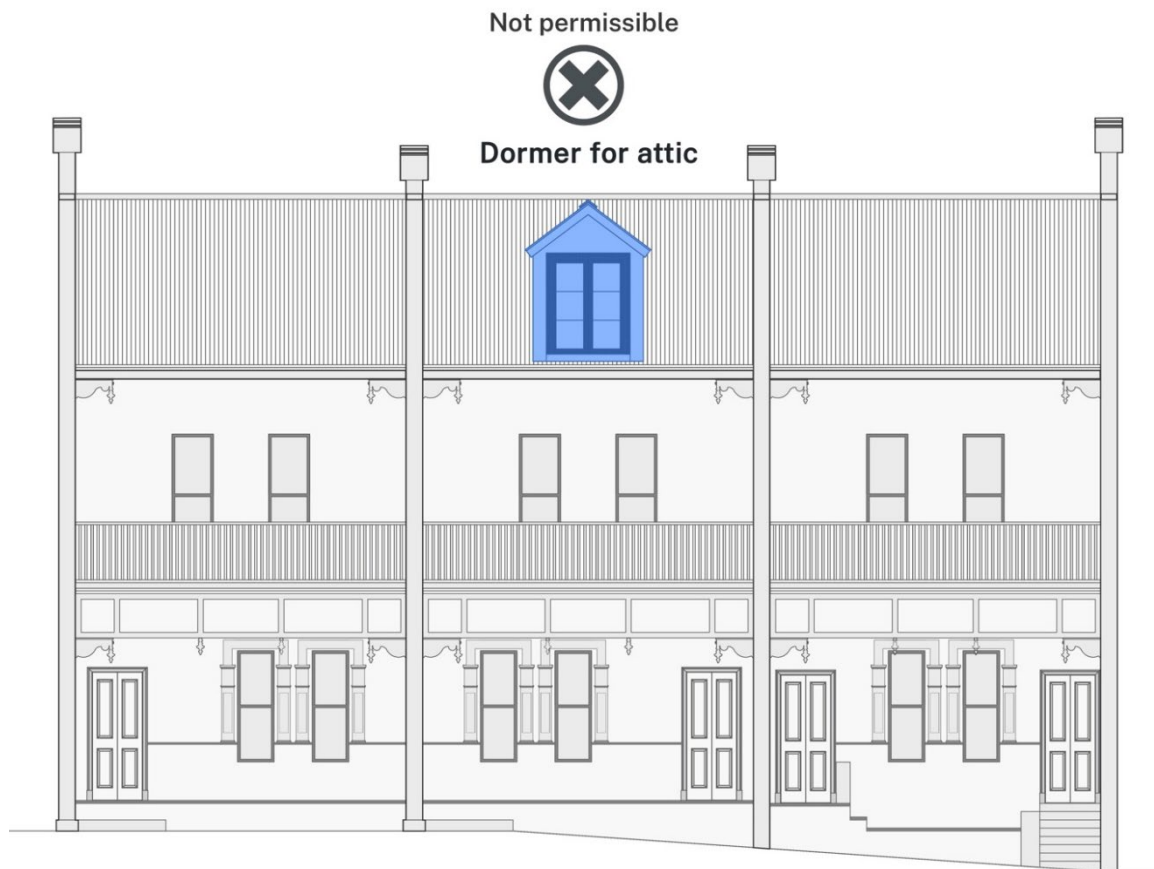


Figure 6 Group of terraces – front elevation

3.4 Ceiling and roof penetrations

There is a significant demand for skylights and roof hatches to provide light and ventilation, particularly when roof spaces are converted to storage or habitable areas, or to provide access to the roof for services. The physical impact of these installations includes cutting rafters, purlins, and significant roofing and ceiling structure. Visually, the impact is generally noticeable in mid- to long-distance views due to the low visibility from a close distance caused by the steep viewing angle. Additionally, the installation of skylights will significantly impact the overall presentation of the heritage item, particularly when applied across a group of properties. The cumulative effect of such modifications will alter the visual and aesthetic consistency of these properties. Consequently, this could substantially diminish the heritage significance of the entire group.

The installation of skylights may also trigger cumulative impact on significant building fabric. For instance, converting a roof space into a habitable room often requires removal of roof structures, damage to significant ceilings below due to additional structural elements needed for constructing a trafficable floor, and the introduction of a staircase to access this new level.

Roof hatches, which may be required for servicing plants and equipment on the roof can have their impact mitigated by fitting them between existing rafters and purlins and blending their external appearance with the roof finish.

Ceiling hatches are often sought to convert attics into storage areas. These typically involve drop-down ladders, which require cutting through ceiling timber, thereby impacting the physical structure and significant ceiling.

3.4.1 Objectives

- To conserve significant building fabric
- To maintain the significant visual character and architectural expression of the terrace groups in the precinct
- To ensure the cumulative impacts from ceiling and roof penetrations are kept to a minimum by using appropriate mitigation measures
- To limit penetrations into significant ceiling fabric to maintain the historical integrity of the property

3.4.2 Recommended design guidelines for ceiling and roof penetrations

Roof penetrations for skylights and roof hatches can be considered where they are consistent with the policies of the relevant conservation management document, **OR** where all of the following guidelines are met:

1. They are essential for service access purposes or to provide light to an existing habitable space that does not have any other window.
2. They are designed and placed to minimise physical and visual impact by:

- a. matching approved existing skylights or roof hatches in adjoining properties within the terrace group
 - b. being located in an unobtrusive part of the roof that does not impact the principal roof form visible from the public domain or neighbouring properties
 - c. having a low profile flushed with the roof surface with simple, unobtrusive detailing and colouring that merges with the roofing material. Roof hatches should be clad externally to match the existing roof finish.
3. Only one skylight or roof hatch is proposed.
 4. They are limited in size to avoid impact on significant roof elements or structure by fitting between existing rafters and purlins.
 5. The skylight shaft would not adversely impact the spatial quality of significant interior spaces.

See Figure 7.



Figure 7 Group of terraces – roof penetrations on rear elevations

3.5 Introducing new internal bathrooms

Refurbishing existing bathrooms and introducing new internal bathrooms are among the most common proposed works within Millers Point & Dawes Point Village Precinct. These properties were originally constructed when toilets, bathrooms and laundries were external to the main building. However, contemporary living standards demand attached bathrooms and internal laundries. It is now considered desirable to have at

least one internal bathroom on each floor, ideally attached to the bedroom it serves. Most of the Millers Point terraces have only 2 or a maximum of 3 rooms per floor, which have often been identified as significant spaces in the conservation management plans (as endorsed by the Heritage Council or its delegate).

A literal reading of the conservation management plan policies does not allow these rooms to be used for bathrooms, making it challenging to achieve a reasonable level of contemporary living amenity. The physical impacts of adding bathrooms include running services, installing partitions, installing fixtures and fittings, waterproofing and tiling, and subdividing spaces, which affect the spatial character. Additionally, new bathrooms can also impact archaeological remains (subfloor deposits where present), particularly if lath and plaster ceiling conservation has not previously occurred. This can have a cumulative impact on the precinct's surviving archaeological remains, especially in older Millers Point houses (such as those from the 1860s and earlier). See section 3.15 on archaeological management.

The Heritage Council and its delegates have adopted a flexible approach to this essential work, often negotiating reasonable outcomes by allowing bathrooms in significant spaces through design layout and detailing to mitigate potential impacts and ensure reversibility. Solutions have included raised floors and stud walls to carry all services and wet area treatments, as well as using the whole room for the bathroom to retain spatial qualities and features of the significant room, such as fireplaces within the bathroom.

Low-scaled, sympathetically designed additions have been approved for ensuite pods in significant spaces when no other option was feasible. However, these insertions are less desirable solutions. They were designed to resemble pieces of furniture to minimise intrusion on the room's spatial character. The height of the pods was reduced to match the height of the adjacent existing door architrave. Careful detailing was required to avoid impact on significant fabric due to tiling, fixings, fittings or services. The use of glazed partition walls that do not reach the ceiling helped to preserve the room's spatial qualities by allowing the room's historic layout and character to be appreciated.

3.5.1 Objectives

- To retain significant spatial characteristics and room layouts
- To minimise cumulative impacts on significant rooms through the introduction of bathrooms and associated services
- To encourage bathrooms be inserted (in the form of a pod or piece of furniture) in a sympathetic manner that does not adversely impact significant fabric
- To ensure penetrations and service risers are minimal and designed to be reversible
- To ensure there is minimal disturbance to surviving state-significant archaeological remains of the Millers Point & Dawes Point Village Precinct

3.5.2 Recommended design guidelines for new internal bathrooms

Recognising residents' needs for essential amenity, installing new bathrooms in significant rooms can be considered where they are consistent with the policies of the

relevant conservation management document, **OR** where all of the following guidelines are met:

1. The proposed bathroom is not located in principal front rooms.
2. The proposed bathroom uses the whole room and does not subdivide significant spaces or is sympathetically designed to minimise impact on the spatial character of the room. This would allow a bathroom to be inserted in a room in the form of a pod or a piece of furniture that would allow the room to be visible as one space. These insertions should not exceed 30% of the room area.
3. It can be demonstrated that the new bathroom is necessary for the functioning of the item as a single dwelling, and there is no other bathroom on that floor.
4. The bathroom is designed and detailed to be reversible, minimising impact on significant fabric. This may include raised floors or false walls to allow for services and wet area treatment. Penetrations and service risers should be minimised and located to reduce impact to significant fabric. The bathroom should be designed to avoid impact on doors, skirtings and ceilings.
5. The proposed bathroom is in an area of low archaeological potential where there is minimal impact to archaeological remains.

See figures 8, 9 and 10.

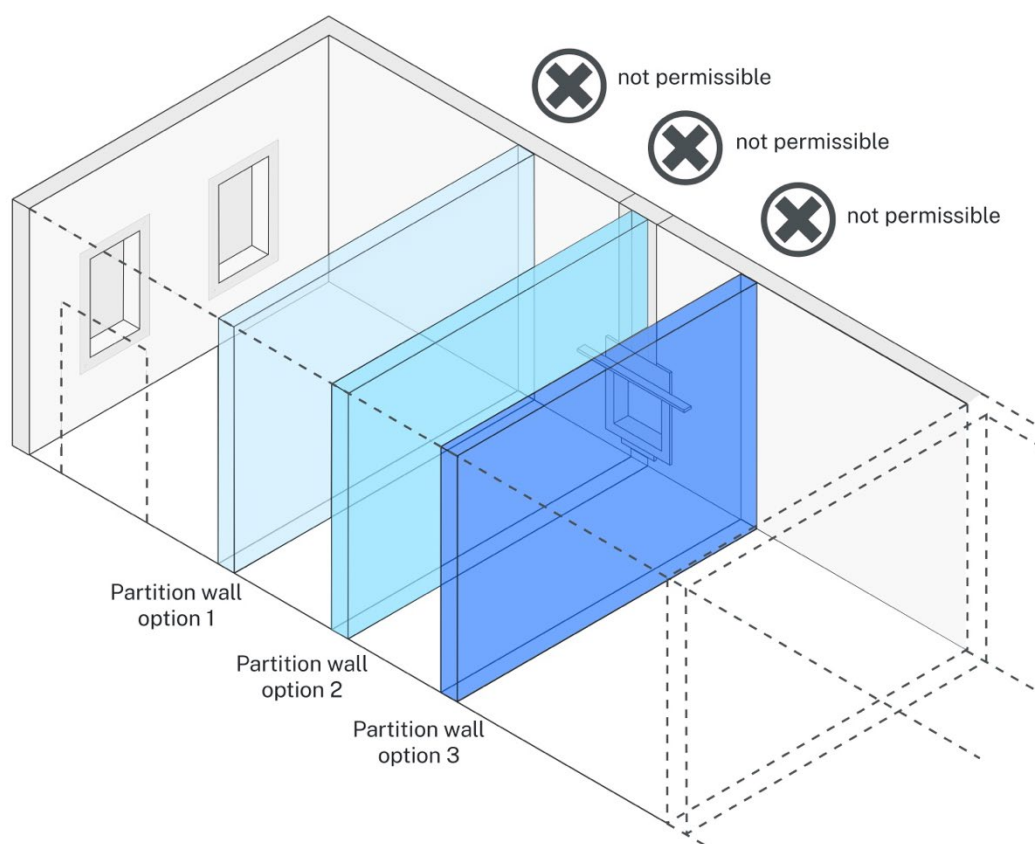


Figure 8 Existing significant room

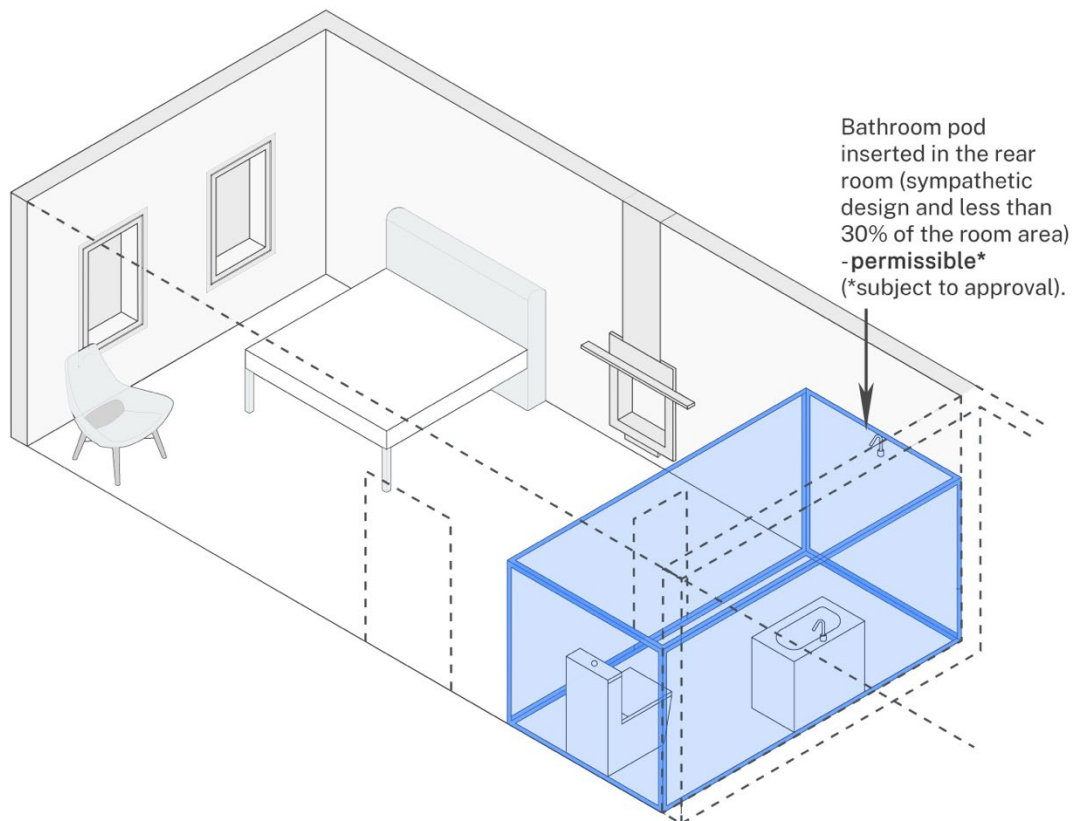


Figure 9 Existing rear room with a bathroom pod

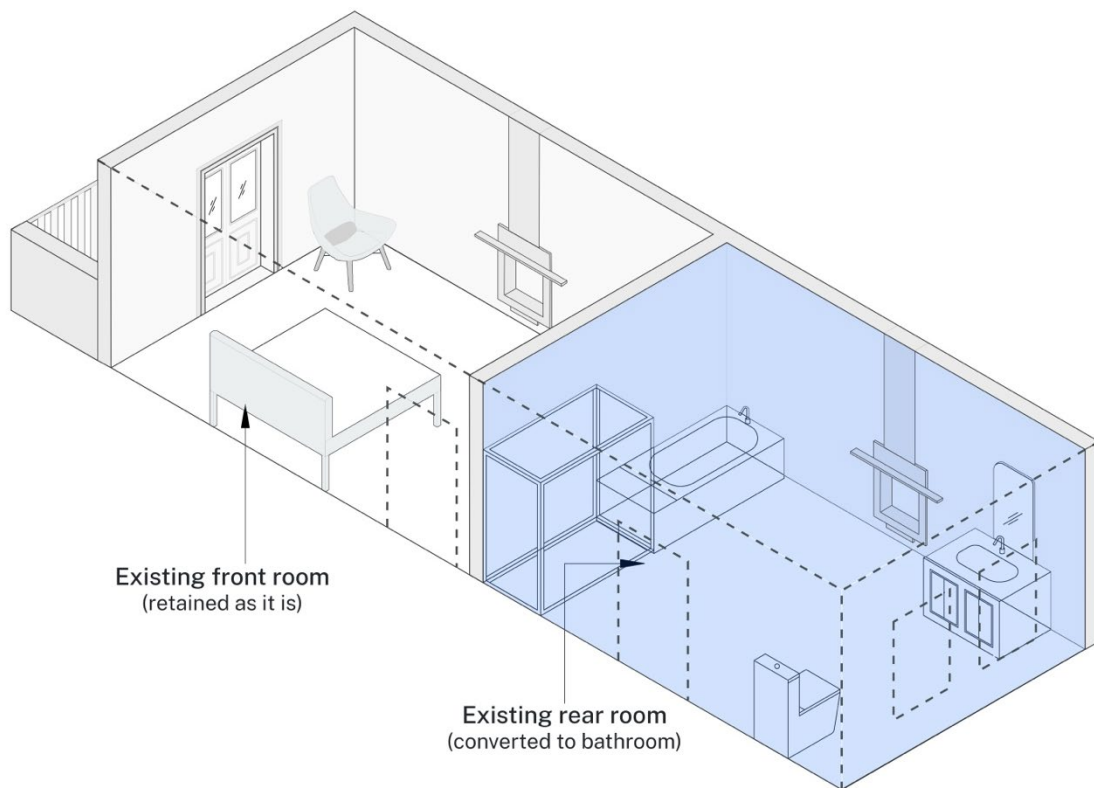


Figure 10 Converting a rear room into a bathroom

3.6 Providing air conditioning

Air conditioning can be an essential component of contemporary living, particularly in buildings not designed with energy sustainability design guidelines, such as the terraces in Millers Point. The Heritage Council and its delegates have adopted a flexible approach, favouring mitigation over refusal for such installations.

While split-system air conditioners are typically installed, there are instances where ducted (ceiling-mounted or floor-mounted) or multi-split units have been used, dictated by the potential impacts on significant fabric. In cases, where significant ceilings do not exist, ducted systems have been considered appropriate. However, to avoid impacting significant ceilings, split bulkhead-type or floor-mounted systems have been negotiated and incorporated within joinery units along walls.

Occasionally, openings in floorboards are proposed to install grilles for ducted air conditioning. Ducted systems require fan coil units to be located either within ceiling space (requiring cutting of joists) or in bulkheads, resulting in the loss of floorboards and ceiling fabric, and often requiring wall openings for the ducts to pass through. Such cases are often supported by the argument that the affected fabric is already compromised or damaged, or that the physical impact is modest.

Consideration must also be given to archaeology via an archaeological assessment, as laying services within floor cavities can impact significant archaeological remains (subfloor deposits where present), particularly if lath and plaster ceiling conservation has not previously occurred. This can impact subfloor deposits (ground floor levels) and the installation of new conduits in rear yards. Any approval of piecemeal removal of significant archaeological remains cumulatively impacts the state-significant archaeological value expressed in the Millers Point & Dawes Point Village Precinct listing. See section 3.15 on archaeological management.

3.6.1 Objectives

- To preserve and retain the building's significant fabric and spaces
- To encourage the use of air conditioning systems and units that minimise penetrations through significant fabric
- To ensure installing air conditioning systems does not physically or visually compromise the external presentation of the building
- To ensure there is minimal disturbance to surviving state-significant archaeological remains of the Millers Point & Dawes Point Village Precinct

3.6.2 Recommended design guidelines for installing air conditioning

Installation of air-conditioning can be considered where the proposal is consistent with the relevant conservation management document, or where **OR** where all of the following guidelines are met:

1. The installation process will minimise impact on the building's significant spaces and fabric. A split system is preferred as it requires smaller penetrations through

significant fabric and comprises indoor units which can be floor standing or concealed within joinery.

2. External units do not obscure any part of the external walls other than at ground level.
3. External units are not visible from the public domain (for example, behind an existing parapet) or adjoining properties and there is an existing access roof hatch for maintenance purposes or a roof hatch that would be approved under the relevant principle.
4. External units are located at a reasonable distance from original significant fabric to avoid condensation and heat impacts.
5. Conduits and pipe work routes are located in an agreeable location.
6. The installation is designed to be reversible, including fixings (which are to be minimised).
7. Proposals are clearly informed by an archaeological assessment, providing details on the presence or absence of archaeological remains and where new conduits are required. These should be laid in existing trenches to avoid impact to archaeological resources or installed with appropriate safeguards (for example, archaeological monitoring and recording).

See Figure 11.

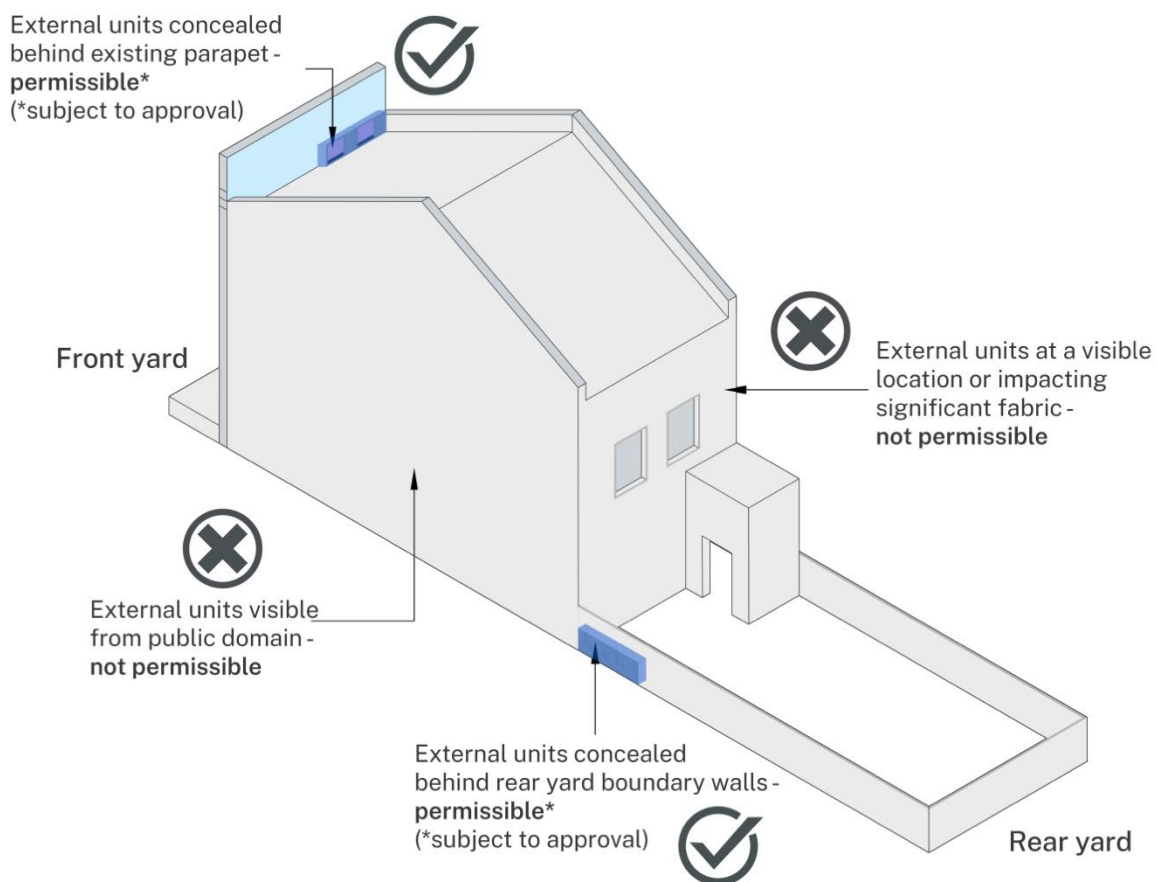


Figure 11 Installing air conditioning

3.7 Roof-level ancillary elements

While not common, some property owners seek to install solar panels and hot water systems on their roof to improve the amenity of their dwellings. Generally, conservation management plans (as endorsed by the Heritage Council or its delegate) do not permit installing such elements on the roof of the primary building or in locations where they would impact significant views. The primary concerns are visual impacts, though minor physical impacts can occur during installation and fixing on significant fabric.

If the visual impacts can be mitigated, it may be possible to allow such elements. For example, installations completely hidden behind an existing parapet that are not visible from the public domain may be considered acceptable.

3.7.1 Objectives

- To ensure the cumulative impacts from roof additions, primarily visual, are kept to a minimum
- To ensure new roof additions do not adversely impact significant fabric
- To employ mitigation measures that reduce the visibility of roof-level ancillary elements from the public domain of the Millers Point & Dawes Point Village Precinct

3.7.2 Recommended design guidelines for roof-level ancillary elements

Roof-level ancillary elements, including solar panels and antennae can be considered where they are consistent with the relevant conservation management document, or where **OR** where all of the following guidelines are met:

1. They are located so they will not be visible from the public domain.
2. They are sympathetically designed to minimise visual impacts in terms of scale, form, material and colour scheme, and they are compatible with existing character.
3. They are located in areas of lesser significance where there is minimal impact on architectural character, significant views, and significant fabric.
4. They are unlikely to have an unacceptable cumulative adverse impact on the consistent appearance of the terrace group.
5. They will not require structural strengthening works that impact significant fabric including roof elements.
6. Reticulation of connecting cables is neat and unobtrusive and requires no chasing into significant masonry.

3.8 Extending living space through decks in rear yards

In some cases, the difference in height between the floor and the rear yard creates a disconnect, leading to the yard being underused. Often, the ground floor is a full level above the rear yard, which is accessible at grade from basement level. However, in many instances, the level difference is approximately 1 m, which alienates the rear yard from the ground floor due to the step down.

To address this, the owners sometimes construct decks to extend their living space, altering the historic physical relationship between the rear yard and the building. While constructing decks in the rear yard to extend the living space of the building may be desirable, it can alter the historic integrity, disrupt the original spatial relationships between the building and its surroundings, and detract from the aesthetic significance of the property. These alterations can significantly impact the understanding and experience of the rear yards as they were intended.

However, depending on the specific circumstances, it may be possible to mitigate the impacts through careful design. Limiting the deck height to a maximum of 500 mm above ground level can help retain the spatial character of the rear yard and avoid the need for a balustrade.

Decks or platforms detached from the building are deemed more detrimental to the spatial character of the rear yard and its relationship with the building. Proximity to any outbuildings can exacerbate this impact.

Archaeological remains must be considered when planning these improvements. A historical archaeological assessment should be completed by a suitably qualified and experienced archaeologist early in the process. See section 3.15 on archaeological management.

3.8.1 Objectives

- To ensure rear additions are designed to be sympathetic and reversible
- To ensure rear additions continue to maintain the understanding and experience of the rear yards as they were intended and designed historically
- To allow for interpretation and legibility of original rear yards and their layouts
- To ensure there is minimal disturbance to surviving state-significant archaeological remains of the Millers Point & Dawes Point Village Precinct

3.8.2 Recommended design guidelines for decks in rear yards

Decks to the rear can be considered where they are consistent with the relevant conservation management document, **OR** where all of the following guidelines are met:

1. They abut the rear of the main building and are not an independent element in the rear yard.
2. They are reversible and constructed in lightweight material.
3. They are sympathetically designed to minimise visual and physical impacts to form, fabric, function, location and site permeability.
4. They allow the rear yard to remain a single space visually, do not impact (visually and physically) any significant outbuildings, and are as low as possible above the existing ground level. For this purpose, it is preferable to keep the height of such decks below 500 mm.
5. They are designed to allow for the interpretation and legibility of the rear yard.

6. The proposed deck is in an area of low archaeological potential where there is minimal impact to archaeological remains.
7. Construction works will not impact state-significant archaeological remains and significant landscape elements.

See Figure 12.

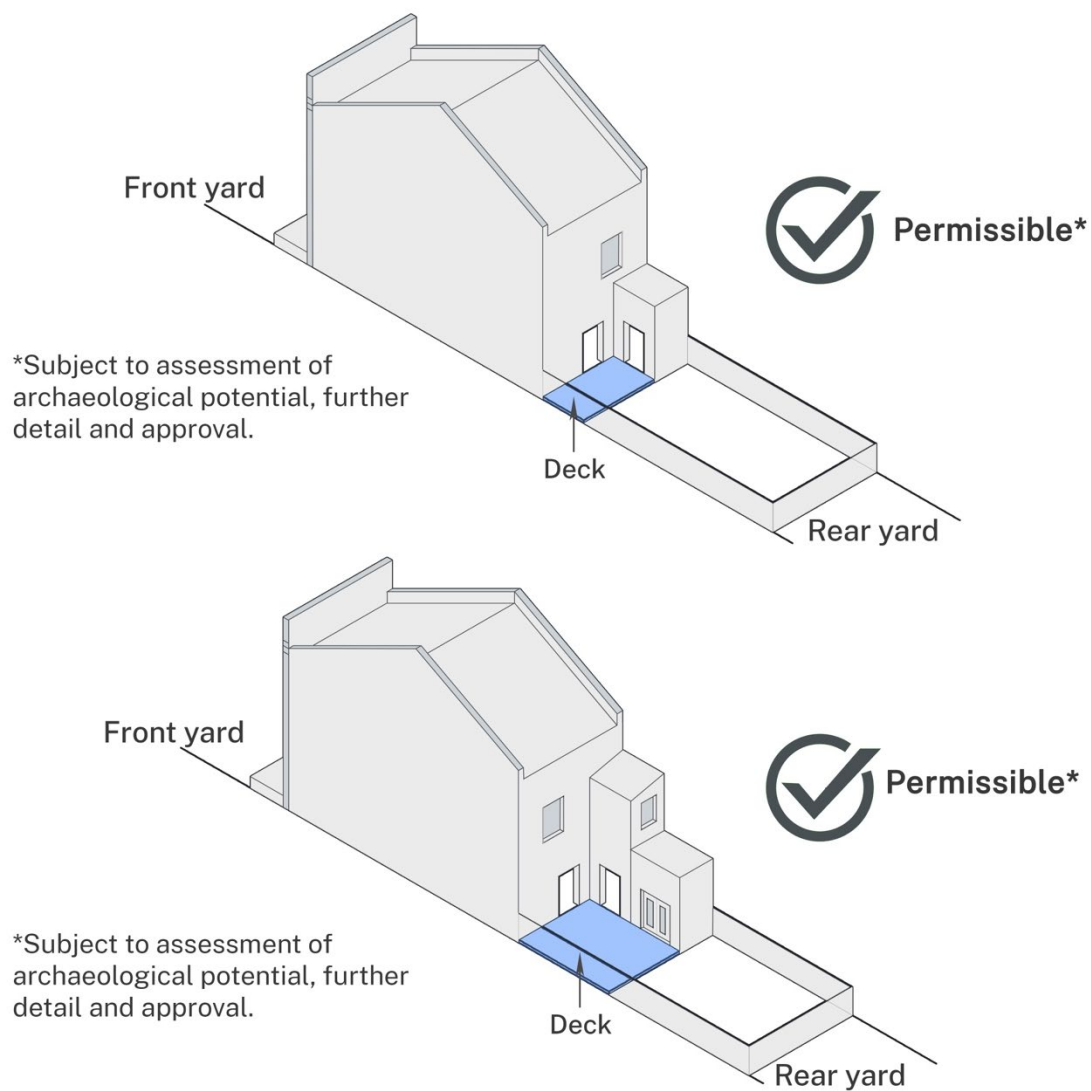


Figure 12 Installing a deck in a rear yard

3.9 Raised platforms for car parking in rear yards

In some cases, properties are situated at an elevated position, making convenient access from on-street car parking facilities challenging. Owners of such properties have expressed the need to accommodate car parking on raised decks or platforms to the rear yards to overcome this issue. These additions could impact the spatial character of the rear yard, its relationship with the building or any significant outbuilding, and may not result in a favourable heritage outcome. These additions could also affect significant fabric such as stone flagging.

Generally, it would be desirable that any adaptations or additions regarding raised platforms for car parking in rear yards are sensitively designed and implemented to harmonise with the historical fabric, preserve the spatial relationships between the rear yard and the heritage item, and contribute positively to the overall heritage value of the property.

Depending on the specific circumstances, it may be possible to mitigate these impacts through careful consideration of the location, size and design of the ramp or platform.

Archaeological remains must be considered when planning these improvements. A historical archaeological assessment should be completed by a suitably qualified and experienced archaeologist early in the process. See section 3.15 on archaeological management.

3.9.1 Objectives

- To ensure raised platforms for car parking are designed to be sympathetic, with minimal visual or physical impacts to the significant building, outbuildings, walls, fences and surrounding street elements
- To allow for interpretation and legibility of original rear yards and their layouts
- To ensure there is minimal disturbance to state-significant archaeological remains, natural landforms, landscape features and vegetation

3.9.2 Recommended design guidelines for raised platforms for car parking in rear yards

Raised platforms for car parking can be considered where they are consistent with the relevant conservation management document, **OR** where all of the following guidelines are met:

1. They are located in the rear yard in an area of low significance.
2. They are sympathetically designed to minimise visual impacts in terms of form, fabric, function and location, and in line with the existing character of the rear yard.
3. They do not impact (visually and physically) any significant outbuildings, walls or fences.
4. They do not require the construction of a new kerb crossing that removes significant public domain fabric such as stone kerbs, gutters or footpaths.
5. They are designed to allow for the interpretation and legibility of the rear yard.
6. They are reversible and constructed in lightweight structurally sound material.
7. The size of the proposed platform is the minimum required for a single car park and does not exceed 30% of the rear yard area.
8. They avoid impact on significant natural landforms, landscape features including stone flagging, significant archaeological remains, and vegetation.

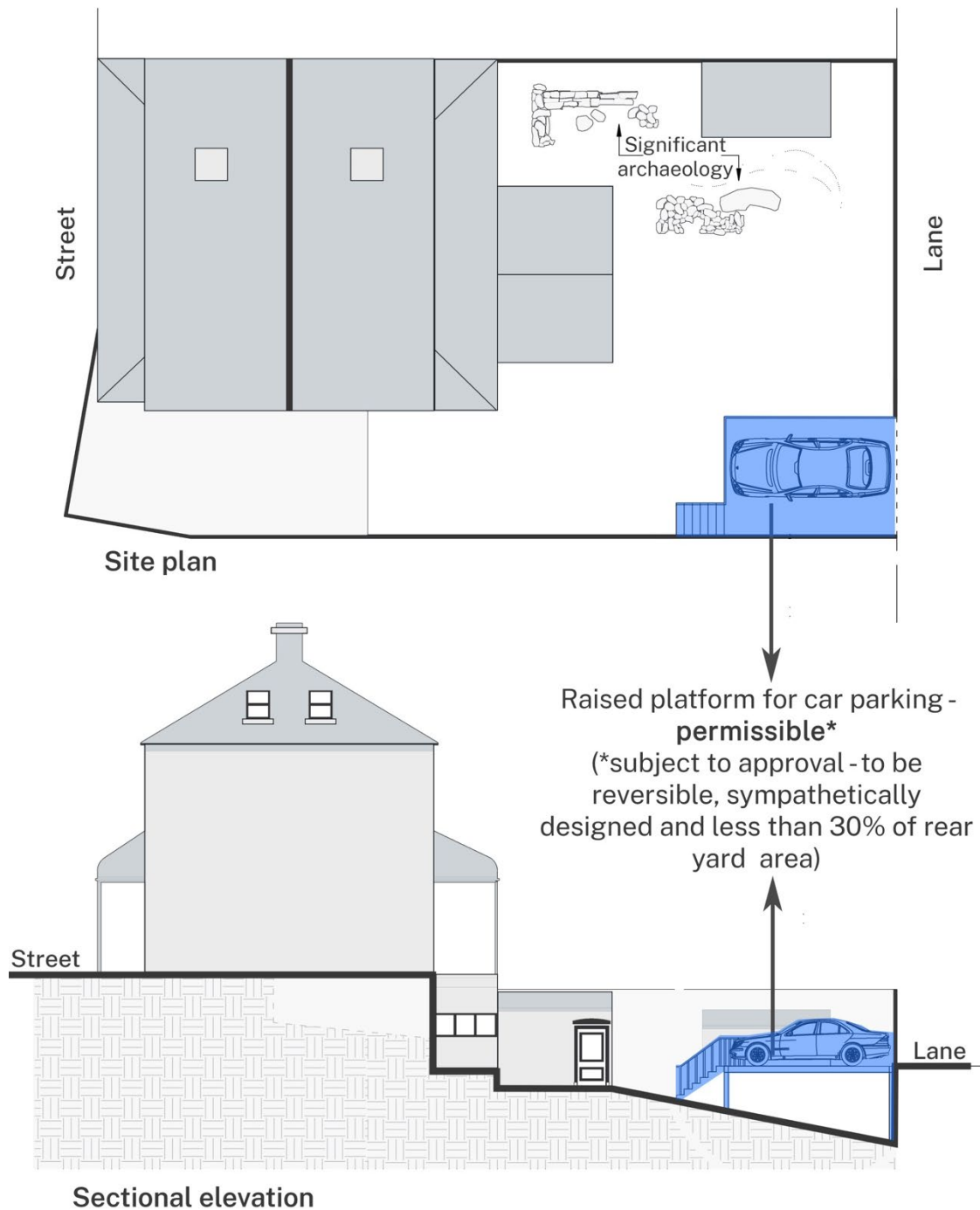


Figure 13 Raised platform for car parking in a rear yard

3.10 Swimming or plunge pools in rear yards

Property owners in Millers Point & Dawes Point Village Precinct sometimes desire swimming or plunge pools in their rear yards, and, in some instances, they prefer these pools are covered for privacy. Both the installation of pools and their covers can potentially impact the significant heritage values of the property. Privacy covers disrupt the legibility of the 'open space' quality associated with a rear yard, potentially impacting the historical character of Millers Point from the public domain.

Pools usually require fencing along all sides, which has some visual impact, especially if they are above ground.

Archaeological remains must be considered when planning these improvements. A historical archaeological assessment should be completed by a suitably qualified and experienced archaeologist early in the process. See section 3.15 on archaeological management.

3.10.1 Objectives

- To minimise cumulative visual and physical impacts to the historical character of Millers Point & Dawes Point Village Precinct
- To ensure the addition of swimming or plunge pools maintains the understanding and experience of rear yards as they were intended and designed historically
- To ensure there is minimal disturbance to surviving state-significant archaeological remains, natural landforms, landscape features and vegetation

3.10.2 Recommended design guidelines for swimming or plunge pools in rear yards

Swimming or plunge pools can be considered where they are consistent with the relevant conservation management document, **OR** where all of the following guidelines are met:

1. They are located in the rear yard in an area of low significance.
2. They are sympathetically designed to minimise visual impacts in terms of form, fabric, function and location, and in line with the existing character of the rear yard. For this purpose, it is preferable to keep them at ground level.
3. The proposed pool area is no greater than 25% of the rear yard area.
4. The pool area is located to minimise the visual impact of any required safety screening or fencing, for example by locating it along the rear fence or in a corner, and by keeping the pool as close to the ground as possible. Privacy screens, pavilions, pergolas or retractable awnings over pool areas to create additional privacy should be avoided as they impact legibility of the rear yard and also impact the historical character of Millers Point as a whole if visible from the public domain.
5. They avoid impact on significant natural landforms, landscape features, significant archaeological remains, and vegetation.
6. Conflicts in design resolution – for example, between the pool location, shape or visual impact with confirmed archaeology – should be managed by the higher heritage value. For example, if the archaeological remains are state-significant, their protection should take higher priority than managing other considerations such as visual impact.

See figures 14 and 15.

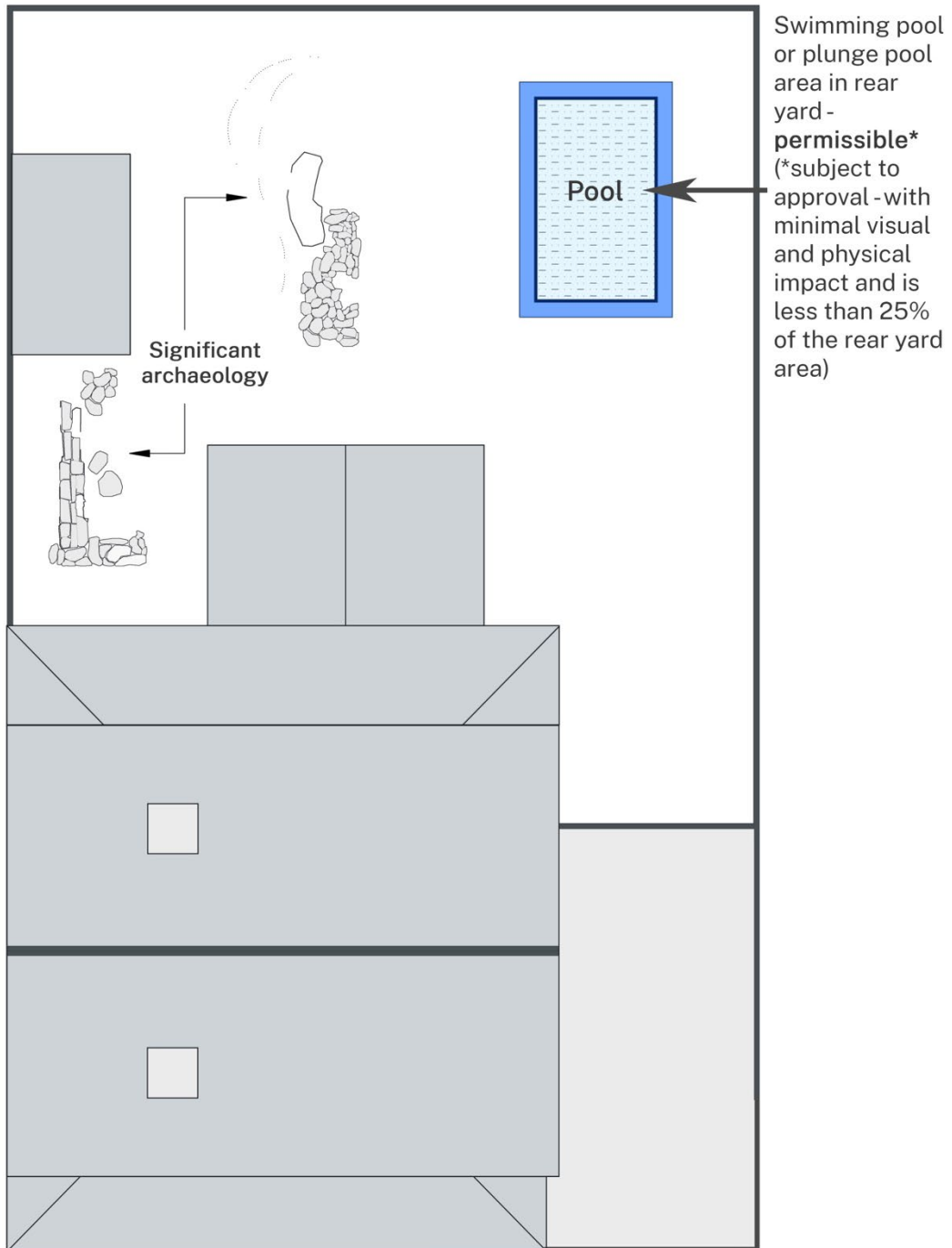


Figure 14 Site plan for swimming or plunge pools in a rear yard

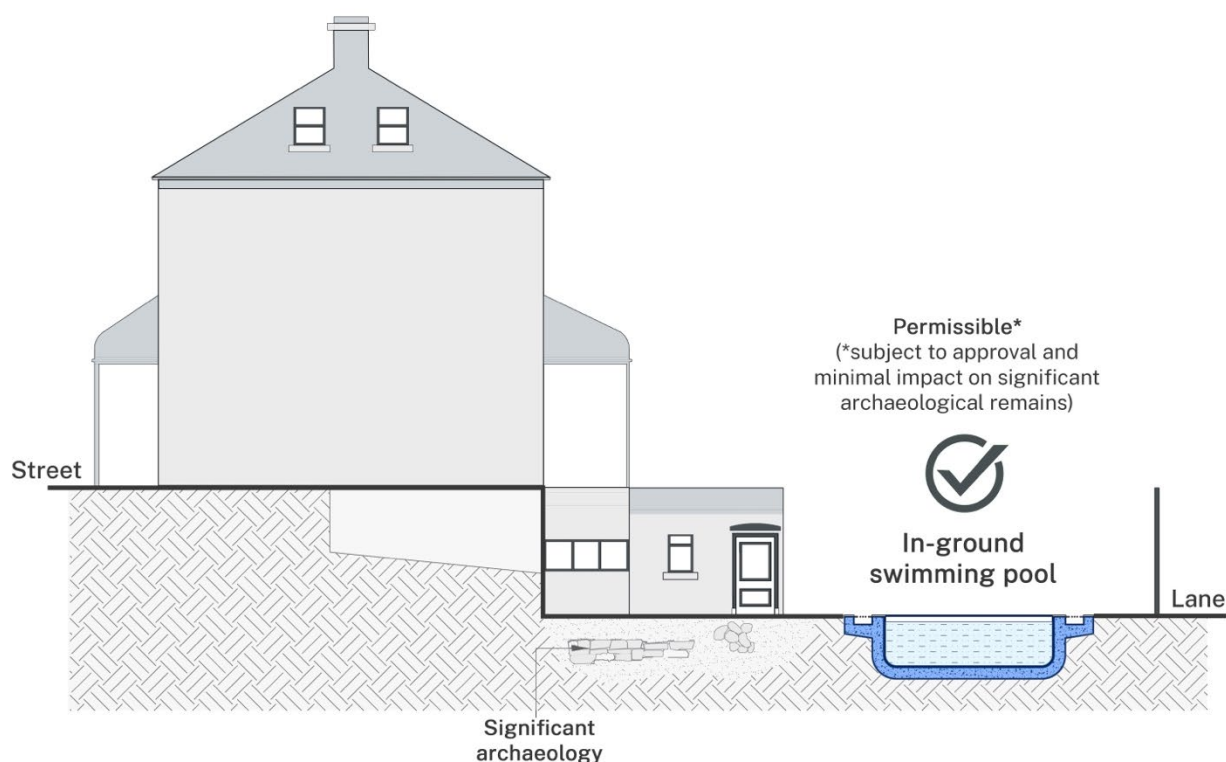


Figure 15 Sectional elevation for an in-ground swimming pool in a rear yard

3.11 Multiple installations and additions in rear yards

Typical terrace rear yards were historically used as utility spaces and often feature significant outbuildings and landscape elements. These rear yards may also contain archaeological resources, including historical services, artefact deposits and soil profiles, evidence of historical fence lines, land subdivision patterns, wells, privies and their contents, and remains of previous structures.

Current owners frequently use these yards for recreational purposes or as an extension of their living spaces. However, the installation of multiple fixtures and elements such as swimming pools, awnings and decks to facilitate these uses could potentially have a cumulative impact on the significant character and appreciation of the rear yard, as well as on any potential archaeological resources.

Archaeological remains must be considered when planning any works. A historical archaeological assessment should be completed by a suitably qualified and experienced archaeologist early in the process. See section 3.15 on archaeological management.

3.11.1 Objectives

- To minimise cumulative visual and physical impacts to the historical character of the significant building, the associated terrace group, and the overall Millers Point & Dawes Point Village Precinct
- To allow for interpretation and legibility of original terrace forms, rear yards and their layouts

- To ensure there is minimal disturbance to surviving state-significant archaeological remains of the Millers Point & Dawes Point Village Precinct

3.11.2 Recommended design guidelines for adding multiple installations and additions in rear yards

Multiple installations and additions in a rear yard can be considered where they are consistent with the relevant conservation management document, **OR** where:

1. They are unlikely to have an unacceptable cumulative adverse impact on the consistent character of the terrace group.
2. They are designed to allow for the interpretation and legibility of the rear yard in terms of their form, fabric, function and location.
3. Installation works are unlikely to have an unacceptable cumulative impact on significant archaeological remains and significant landscape elements.

3.12 Installing rear awnings

Rear extensions that extend beyond the existing building footprint are generally not considered acceptable if they are inconsistent with the policies of the CMPs (as endorsed by the Heritage Council or its delegate). However, there are instances where a rear awning extending beyond the original building footprint has been approved due to specific circumstances. Such approvals are typically part of a negotiated outcome based on various factors such as the large size of the rear yard, alignment with existing extensions on neighbouring properties, and the minimal impact on the open-to-built-space ratio of the allotment.

3.12.1 Objectives

- To ensure new rear awnings do not compromise the integrity and consistent appearance of the terrace group within the precinct
- To ensure new rear awnings are designed to maintain the open-to-built-space ratio of the allotment
- To ensure new rear awnings do not obscure the legibility of original rear yards

3.12.2 Recommended design guidelines for rear awnings

New rear awnings can be considered where they are consistent with the relevant conservation management document, **OR** they are either:

1. replacing existing awnings or structures, and do not protrude beyond the line of existing awnings when fully extended (if retractable awnings are proposed)
2. in line with approved awnings on neighbouring properties of a group listing and maintain a consistent appearance with the group.

It is also required that any new rear awning proposal:

3. does not require structural alterations to the existing building
4. does not incorporate vertical drop blinds or supports

5. does not obscure the legibility of the rear yard
6. is sympathetically designed to minimise visual impacts in terms of form, function, fabric, location and be compatible with existing character.

See Figure 16.

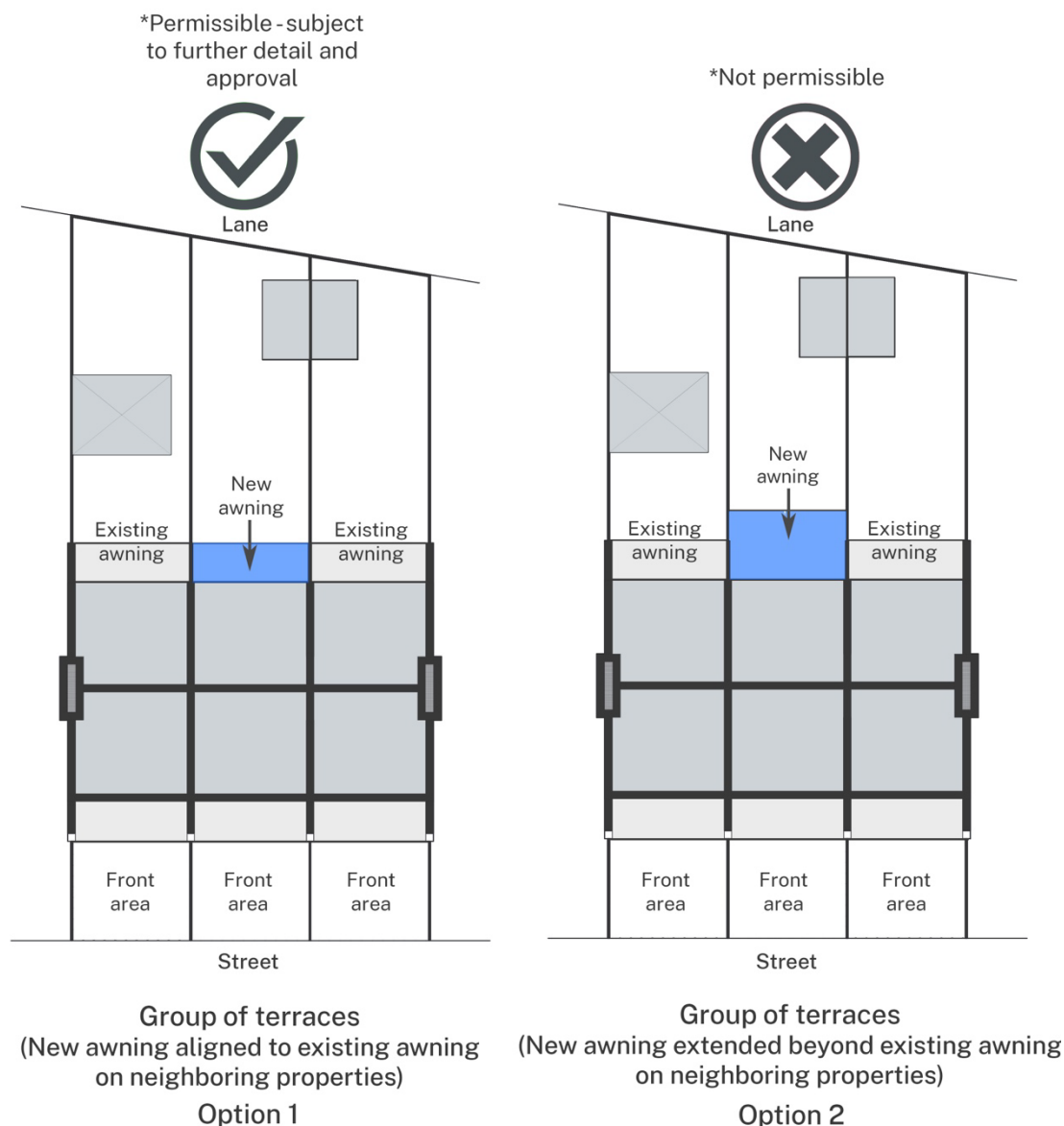


Figure 16 Installing new rear awnings

3.13 Ancillary elements on front facades

The terrace style houses in Millers Point & Dawes Point Village Precinct are not only highly significant but also integral to the urban fabric and streetscape, embodying the area's authenticity and historical charm. The streetscape character is defined by the architectural coherence of these terrace houses, which contribute to the area's unique identity and heritage value.

Various ancillary elements are often required for city living, including security grilles, meter boxes, temporary ramps, intercoms, security cameras, booster valves, fire alarms, replacement meter boxes and cabling, and so on. While these elements are necessary to comply with current National Construction Code and Building Code of Australia standards, or to provide additional security, their installation and design should be carefully considered to preserve the streetscape characteristics and architectural integrity of the terrace houses. Improperly integrated ancillary elements can disrupt the visual symmetry of the streetscape. These elements must be installed sensitively and in a manner that respects the heritage values and streetscape character of their properties and the surrounding precinct.

Some conservation management plans (as endorsed by the Heritage Council or its delegate) include provision for such ancillary features on the front facade, while others discourage this placement and recommend alternative solutions, such as installing these features on rear facades or less significant areas of the dwelling. The Heritage Council and its delegates have approved such proposals where they are consistent with the endorsed conservation management plans.

Smaller elements like intercoms, security cameras, meter boxes and fire alarms can generally be accommodated with minor adjustments to mitigate any visual or physical impacts. Initially, security screens were problematic because they incorporated fine wire mesh. However, over time, owners have accepted security doors made of simple metal grills without mesh. These doors have significantly less impact and have been approved as an essential security feature, as the removal of the mesh reduces the visual impact to an acceptable level.

Where site or documentary evidence indicates that original fanlights above front doors were operable for ventilation, restoring this ventilation is preferable to installing security doors. Operable fanlights provide security while offering superior privacy and weather protection.

3.13.1 Objectives

- To ensure additions to the front facade of significant buildings, such as ancillary elements, are compliant with National Construction Code or Building Code of Australia standards, and are sympathetic and compatible with the existing architectural characteristics of the building
- To ensure the design and installation of security features are carefully considered to preserve the streetscape characteristics and architectural integrity of the terrace houses

3.13.2 Recommended design guidelines for adding ancillary elements on front facades

Ancillary elements on front facades including security doors, meter boxes, temporary ramps and service equipment can be considered where they are consistent with the relevant conservation management document, **OR** where all of the following guidelines are met:

1. Positioning in a less obtrusive location is not feasible
2. They are sympathetically designed to minimise visual impacts in terms of scale and form, material and colour scheme, and are compatible with the existing architectural character of the building
3. They are unlikely to have an unacceptable cumulative adverse impact on the consistent appearance of the terrace group.
4. Security screens to front doors can be considered if:
 - a. existing fanlights cannot be made operable for ventilation
 - b. they are simply detailed and designed to emulate the pattern and character of the timber panels of the door they are securing
 - c. they are located on the front doors on the ground floor.

3.14 Enclosed front and rear balconies and verandahs

Although it is no longer a very common proposal, some owners of terraces, particularly those near the Sydney Harbour Bridge, seek to enclose open balconies and verandahs to reduce noise and pollution from the bridge. Conservation management plans (as endorsed by the Heritage Council or its delegate) generally discourage new enclosures to front and rear balconies. However, repair and general maintenance to existing enclosures are considered acceptable.

The terraces were originally designed as single residences but were adapted for multiple tenancies in a haphazard manner over time, leading to some uncharacteristic additions and alterations to balconies and verandahs. Over the years, the Heritage Council and its delegates have successfully negotiated with owners to reinstate enclosed balconies and verandahs to their original open configuration in many instances. Alternative noise and pollution abatement measures have been successfully implemented in some terraces, including installing sound seals on existing doors and windows, improved glass panes, secondary glazing, and internal acoustic curtains.

Enclosing open verandahs and balconies generally has an adverse impact on the aesthetic of the historic streetscape and precinct. The open form of the verandahs and balconies illustrates the original building aesthetic and use, while existing enclosures signify later phases of development. Enclosing open balconies and verandahs can result in negative aesthetic impacts on individual terrace houses and significant cumulative impacts on the historic streetscape and aesthetic value of the terrace groups.

3.14.1 Objectives

- To ensure the enclosure options do not result in adverse impact to the aesthetic qualities of the historic streetscape and precinct
- To encourage the reinstatement of open balconies and verandahs to allow for reinterpretation of original architectural character and use

3.14.2 Recommended design guidelines for enclosed front and rear balconies and verandahs

1. Enclosing currently open verandahs and balconies is not appropriate.
2. Alternative options to consider for reducing noise or dust may include secondary internal window glazing, use of window systems that provide soundproofing without replacing existing windows, , acoustic seals and curtains.
3. Removing existing enclosures when possible is encouraged.

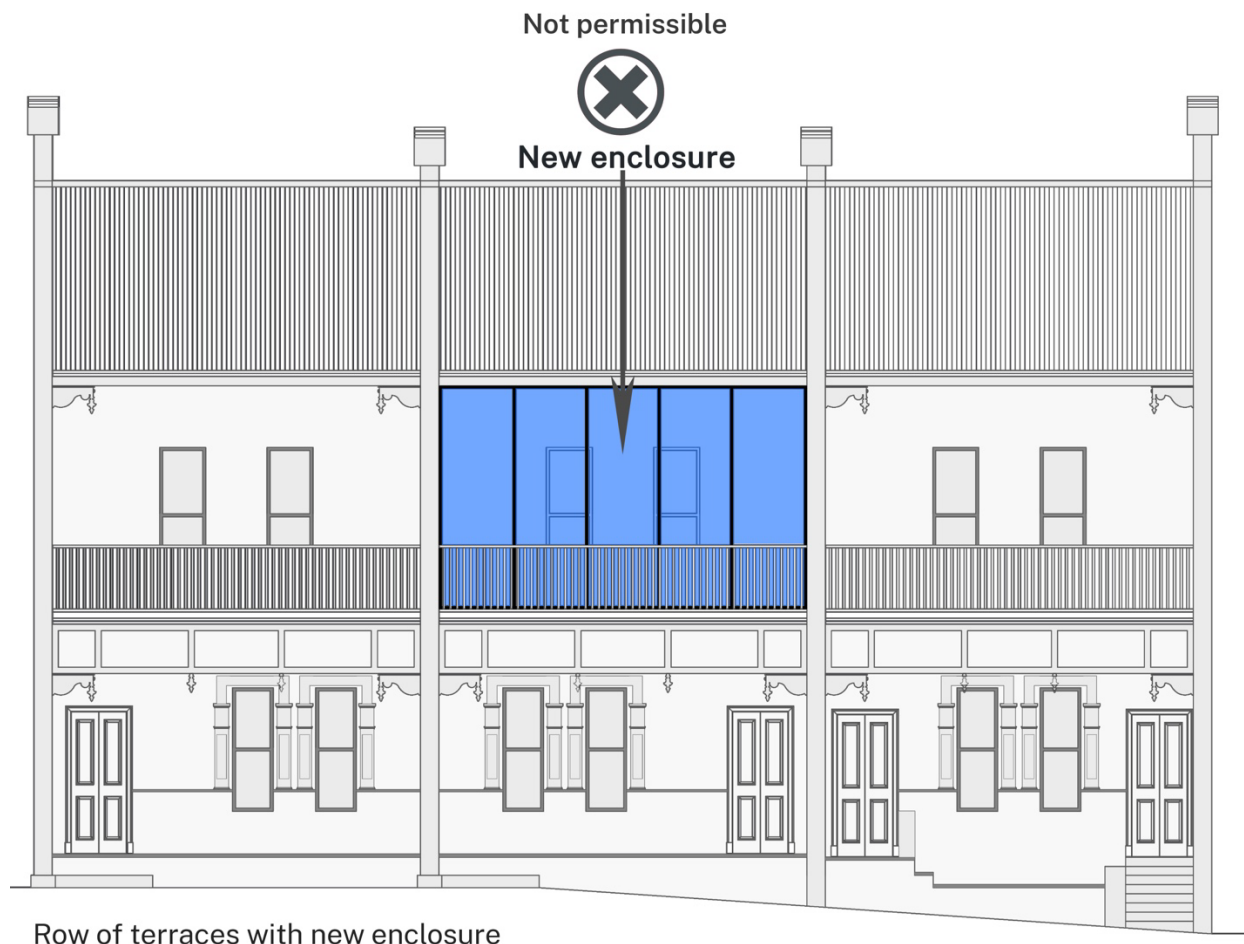


Figure 17 Enclosure of front and rear balconies and verandahs

3.15 Managing significant archaeological remains

Archaeology is an identified value within the State Heritage Register listing for Millers Point. Some properties in the precinct have potential to contain significant archaeological resources in their backyards. Rear yards may contain the remains of previous structures, historic services, artefact deposits, wells, privies, and their contents. This archaeological resource is potentially of state significance because it relates to the early colonial settlement and development of Sydney. Any excavation has a potential to harm significant archaeological remains below ground, including

archaeological deposits that have accumulated beneath the ground floors of extant houses.

Above-ground archaeological remains may be located within the structure of extant buildings, for example, within wall cavities and chimneys, and beneath upper-level floorboards. Archaeological remains encountered in these locations during disturbance activities should be managed in accordance with an unexpected finds protocol.

Most of the conservation management plans for properties in the precinct exclude specific assessment of historical archaeological potential and significance. They instead include high-level advice from *The Rocks and Millers Point archaeological management plan* (Higginbotham 1991) that made broad recommendations where further site-specific assessment is warranted. It has not been updated since 1991.

Conservation management plans can be used as a resource in an archaeological assessment. However, any proposed excavation for development works needs an archaeological assessment. Initially, this may be in the form of a preliminary desktop analysis conducted by a suitably qualified heritage consultant. This would involve researching the history of development of the site, including any activities that may have resulted in major disturbance to the ground surface, to determine the archaeological potential. If it is assessed that there is potential for archaeological remains to be present that cannot be avoided by excavation for the proposed development, a full historical archaeological assessment will need to be undertaken.

Additionally, a historical archaeological assessment should be prepared by a suitably qualified and experienced archaeologist in accordance with the guidelines *Archaeological assessment* (Heritage Office 1996) and *Assessing significance for historical archaeological sites and 'relics'* (Heritage Council of NSW 2009). These assessments should identify what relics, if any, are likely to be present (known as archaeological potential), assess their significance, and consider the impacts from the proposal on this potential archaeological resource.

Where harm is likely to occur, it is recommended the significance of the relics be considered in determining an appropriate mitigation strategy. If mitigation measures are recommended in the assessment, a 'section 60' approval (under the Heritage Act) is required. As part of the application, an appropriate research design and excavation method, with a nominated excavation director who meets the requirements set out in *Criteria for assessing excavation directors* (Heritage Council of NSW 2019), should also be prepared to guide any proposed excavations or salvage program.

Applications for rear additions or replacement of rear yard structures, new services, and disturbances within older buildings present the most risk. For example, disturbances to wall, floor, roof space and ceiling cavities in older structures may disturb and remove rare and significant archaeological fabric. While not present in all Millers Point dwellings, there have been several properties where this was a significant impact. As a non-renewable resource, archaeological remains are often overlooked, and designs to avoid impacts may not be addressed well by some consultants managing these projects, as they focus on other aspects such as impacts to visible fabric.

3.15.1 Objectives

- To ensure there is minimal disturbance to surviving state-significant archaeological remains of the Millers Point & Dawes Point Village Precinct
- To ensure archaeological remains are appropriately considered, addressed, and managed while undertaking physical or ground penetrative works
- To inform applicants on the appropriate application pathway for the assessment of archaeological impacts
- To establish a consistent and objective approach to managing archaeological remains across the Millers Point & Dawes Point Village Precinct

3.15.2 Recommended design guidelines for managing significant archaeological remains in Millers Point

1. Applications, where excavation is proposed, will not be accepted as ‘complete’ by the Heritage Council or its delegate without an archaeological assessment where a conservation management plan (as endorsed by the Heritage Council or its delegate) has required one. This also applies to integrated development applications where a Heritage Council-endorsed conservation management plan policy requires an archaeological assessment. If an application is lodged without an assessment in these circumstances, the application should be withdrawn, or it will be refused due to insufficient information.
2. Where existing archaeological assessments are available and current, they should be used to guide preparation of an archaeological impact assessment for a proposed change. Archaeological assessments and impact assessment documents should be prepared by suitably qualified and experienced historical archaeologists, and the results included in the statements of heritage impact for the relevant application (section 60 integrated development approval). This will enable the Heritage Council or its delegate to clearly understand the impacts on all the listed State Heritage Register values when determining an application for change.
3. Applications may be approved where archaeological works are minor and would not detrimentally impact State Heritage Register values. For example, where state-significant archaeological remains are not affected and works are minor (for example, testing), an experienced archaeologist is nominated to be excavation director. Some excavations may be allowed under standard exemptions where the requirements of that exemption can be met. For example, re-excavation of existing service trenches for new services where ‘relics’ would not be disturbed.

See Figure 18.

Management of potential below-ground archaeological remains

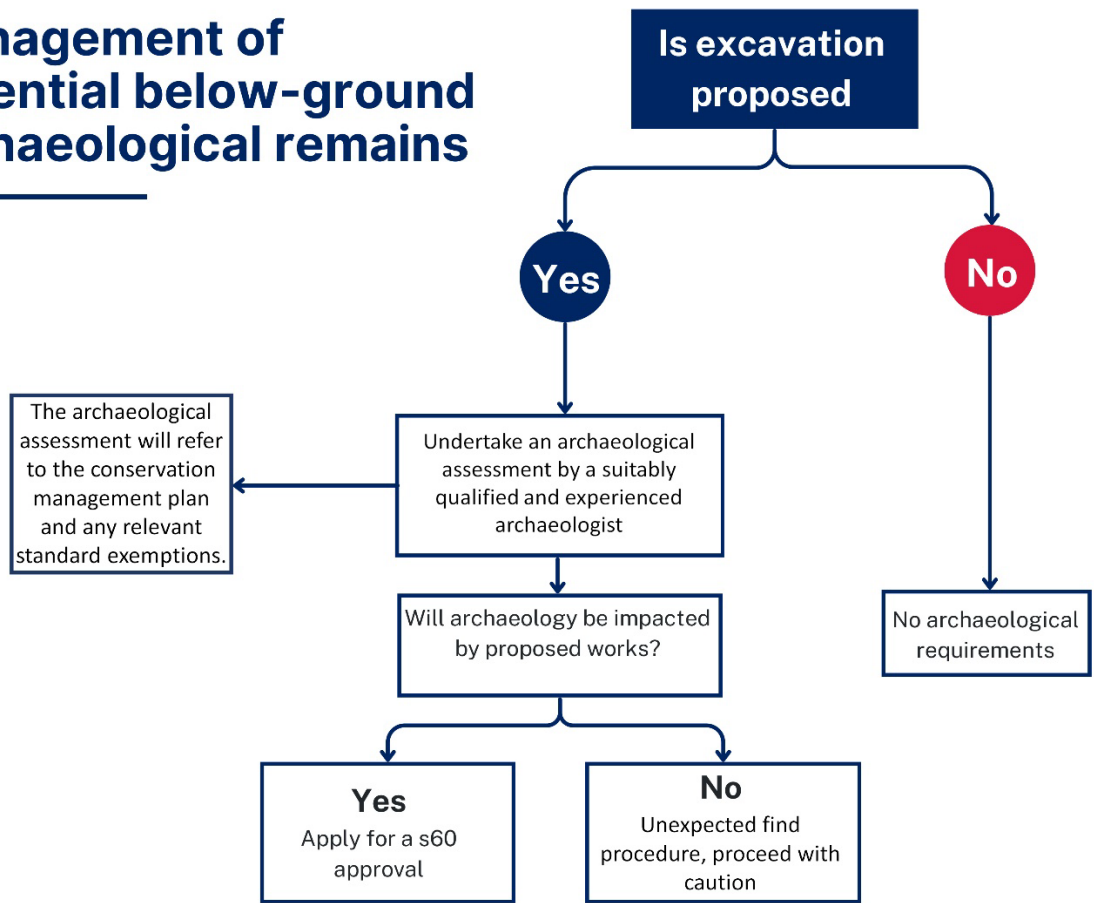


Figure 18 Process for managing potential archaeological remains



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