Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of the Mosman Heritage Fund, proposes a strategy to encourage properties within the Military Road Conservation Area to apply for funding and outlines the case for subsequently increasing the funding allocation for the Mosman Heritage Fund.

Officer’s Recommendation

The Manager Urban Planning recommends that:

1. Council notes the strategy to encourage properties within the Military Road Heritage Conservation Area to apply articulated in this report for funding and improve the area’s streetscape.
2. Council increases the maximum grant amount for the heritage fund from $1000 to $1500 for properties within a Heritage Conservation Area from $3,000 to $5,000 for heritage items.

Background

At the 5 February 2019 Council Meeting a Mayoral Minute was tabled that proposed a strategy to improve the quality of the Military Road Heritage Conservation Area (HCA). The Minute proposed utilising Mosman’s Heritage Assistance Fund (the Fund) to target properties within the Military Road HCA and encourage applications. In addition, the Minute proposed increasing the budget of the Fund from $30,000 to $60,000 to allow for anticipated additional demand.

It was unanimously resolved that the Mayoral Minute be adopted and a report be presented to Council that details how the fund operates and recommendations to assist applications from the Military Road precinct.

Current Position

The Fund was established in 1998 to encourage the maintenance and upkeep of Mosman’s heritage properties, with an aim to maintain a high level of historic character throughout the area. Dollar for dollar grants are provided for works to heritage properties that seek to undertake restorative maintenance works or re-instate original features. Works must be visible from the public domain and the maximum grant amount available under the Fund is $3000 for works to a heritage item or $1000 for properties within an HCA. The maximum grant amounts have not been increased since 2000.

On average, Council receives between 12-20 applications a year, common projects include fence replacements, painting, brick tuck-pointing and roof restorations.

Residents can find the in-detail process to apply for the Heritage Fund and supplementary information on Council’s website. This includes all forms, examples of works previously funded, information on the requirement to obtain two quotations for each application and that the Fund provides grants on a dollar for dollar basis for works visible from the public domain.
Application Assessment

The Urban Planning team assesses Heritage Fund applications as follows:

1. Once an application is received, the Urban Planning Team checks it for completeness and to ensure compliance with Council's guidelines for funding.

2. Appropriate applications are referred to Council’s Heritage Advisor who undertakes an assessment to ensure works are appropriately restoring or maintaining the property and are complementary to the heritage character of the building.

3. The Heritage Advisor's comments are referred to the Manager Urban Planning for review and endorsement. The Manager Urban Planning reviews the Fund’s expenditure for the financial year and approves satisfactory applications under delegation of the Director Environment and Planning.

4. The applicant is notified in writing that their application was successful and that they can proceed with the works.

5. Upon completion of the works, the applicant is requested to provide a claim for payment form with photographs and invoices attached.

6. Council undertakes an inspection of the property and refers the matter the Heritage Advisor who ensures the works are as originally described and payment can be processed.

Military Road

There are 145 properties within the Military Road Heritage Conservation area, 20 of which are individually listed heritage items. A map showing the Military Road Conservation Area and each property’s individual significance ranking is attached to this report.

The Mosman Heritage Review, prepared by Godden Mackay Heritage Consultants in 1996 describes the conservation area as follows:

“In aesthetic terms the commercial and retail area of Military Road is a marvellous microcosm of the range of architecture to be found in Mosman, distinctively combining retail and residential uses in a unified, lively and diverse linear and curvilinear streetscape. Its scale is pleasantly moderate and the variety of forms materials, textures and colours is full of interest. The successful integration of some facades of later and very recent vintage, as can be seen here, indicates that good design is an ageless quality. The ‘village’ atmosphere prevails despite some unhappy incursions. Several impressive buildings elevate the generally good aesthetic quality of the Conservation Area to a high level of value. The social significance of the area lies first in the fact that here can be seen a great many of Mosman’s municipal, commercial and principal educational institutions, as well as a stretch of residential development. It is associated with prominent developers who erected speculative ensembles of shops, dwellings and commercial occupancies, and with the sequences of tenants in retail, trade and commerce activities many of them well-known identities past and present in Mosman.”

Despite the quality of the area, heritage properties require frequent maintenance and upkeep. Some properties within the area feature worn exteriors, dilapidated materials and unsympathetic additions. There is potential to further improve the visual and historic amenity of the area by encouraging the undertaking of works sympathetic to the area's heritage quality.
Operation of the Fund

The Fund’s budget of $30,000 has remained the same since the Financial Year (FY) 2011/12. The maximum grant amounts of $3000 for works to a heritage item and $1000 for works to properties within an HCA have not been adjusted since FY 2000/01.

Historically, majority of claims under the Fund were for works to residential properties. Applications for works to Mosman’s commercial heritage properties have been under represented. Only one heritage fund application for a property within the Military Road HCA has been received during the past two years.

Promotion of the Fund

The Urban Planning team manages promotion of the Fund. It is typically promoted through the Urban Planning Team’s social media outlets including Facebook, Twitter, Blog and Newsletter. There are links to the Fund on Council’s website and occasionally an advertisement for the Fund is included in Council’s weekly Mosman Daily advert.

In previous years, letterbox drops have been successful in targeting HCAs to increase awareness and encourage applications.

Financial Implications

An increase in the budget for the Fund does not necessarily mean the total budget allowance would be exhausted. Applications for the Fund still rely on landowners or tenants to be willing to invest time and money organising works.

Relationship with MOSPLAN

Strategic Direction 2 - A Culturally Rich and Vibrant Community:

• Strategy 1: Celebrate Mosman's unique identity and heritage

Strategic Direction 6 - Well Designed, Liveable and Accessible Places:

• Strategy 1: Value and strengthen the special aesthetic qualities of Mosman

Comment

Three recommended components are presented below that, together or individually, would assist Council in improving the quality of the Military Road HCA and generally improve the operation of the Fund.

Targeted Promotion Strategy

The targeted strategy would initially consist of an information pack mail out to all properties within the Military Road HCA. The pack would include an overview of the Fund, examples of works that are potentially fundable and details of Council’s Heritage Advisory Service that could provide recommendations on proposed works and options for consent.

Budget Increase

Increasing the Fund's budget from $30,000 to $60,000 for FY 2019/20 would ensure sufficient funding for anticipated demand from the targeted promotion strategy. A review of the increased budget allocation would be required before the following financial year to ensure the efficacy of the
increased budget. The review would include analysis of the projects undertaken in the Military Road HCA and other feedback.

Grant Increase

The maximum allowable grant has not been adjusted since 2000. In this period the cost of maintenance and construction works has risen. An increase in the maximum allowable grants for HCAs would encourage Heritage Fund applications from Military Road HCA and more generally from Mosman’s other HCAs. Increasing the maximum amount claimable for the Heritage Fund from $1000 to $1500 for properties within an HCA is considered a fair adjustment that balances the impact on the Fund’s budget with the benefit to residents. In addition, the maximum funding for heritage items is recommended to increase from 3,000 to $5,000.

Recommended Action

It is recommended that Council commence a targeted promotion strategy to encourage Heritage Fund Applications in the Military Road Heritage Conservation Area to ultimately improve the aesthetic and heritage quality of the conservation area.

In order to encourage applications from the Military Road Heritage Conservation Area and more generally from heritage properties, it is recommended that Council increase the maximum grant amount for Heritage Conservation Areas from $1000 to $1500 and for Heritage Item to $5,000.

Recommendation endorsed by Director Environment and Planning.

Attachments

1. Military Road Heritage Conservation Area Ranking Map [EP/17.1]
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The historic significance of Military Road is that it formed part of the earliest residential and military development of Mosman. It is associated with the area as a major defence post in Sydney Harbour. The road influenced the growth of the suburb because it was, and still is, the major traffic route to and from the area. It became the centre of retail and commercial activity in the suburb.

In aesthetic terms the commercial and retail area of Military Road is a marvellous microcosm of the range of architecture to be found in Mosman, distinctively combining retail and residential uses in a unified, lively and diverse linear and curvilinear streetscape. Its scale is pleasantly moderate and the variety of forms, materials, textures and colours is full of interest. The successful integration of some facades of later and very recent vintage, as can be seen here, indicates that good design is an ageless quality. The ‘village’ atmosphere prevails despite some unhappy incursions. Several impressive buildings elevate the generally good aesthetic quality of the Conservation Area to a high level of value. The social significance of the area lies first in the fact that here can be seen a great many of Mosman’s municipal, commercial and principal educational institutions, as well as a stretch of residential development. It is associated with prominent developers who erected speculative ensembles of shops, dwellings and commercial occupancies, and with the sequences of tenants in retail, trade and commerce activities many of them well-known identities past and present in Mosman. (Source: Mosman Heritage Review, 1996, prepared by Golden Mackay Heritage Consultants)

The sandstone walls, kerbs, fences and features are key elements of the character of the Mosman Council area. They collectively contribute to the heritage and urban values of their settings. While not all features are of equal heritage value, it is the range and collective value that is most important in retaining the character of the area.

Heritage fences are a very important streetscape element of the conservation area. Fences vary in style and material and include stone fences, stone and iron fences, timber fences or timber and metal fences. In a number of locations fences are a continuous feature across a number of properties reflecting a common design and construction, in other areas the use of a material such as stone links a range of properties. (Source: Mosman Heritage Review, January 2007, prepared by Paul Davies Pty Ltd)