

Scanned copy of original submission

Coorparoo Christian Assembly
c/- PO Box 99
Coorparoo Qld 4151

20 February 2006

Responsible members of the Coorparoo Christian Assembly have been and are **very** greatly concerned following receipt of advice, towards the end of 2005, from the Brisbane City Council, that our Church Building has been Heritage Listed.

Whilst our protest was in vain, we were advised that the Council may consider contributing to the building's Maintenance and Repair costs.

The Church Building is a large Weatherboard one, constructed in or about 1930. We have managed to maintain it in good condition throughout but complete re-painting of the external areas is now necessary; at an estimated cost approaching \$15,000.

The congregation currently consists of about 15 members, most of whom are octogenarians, either full or part pensioners. We cannot foresee any increase whatever in numbers in fellowship, either in the near or distant futures. Therefore, unless the Council assists us financially, we will experience extreme difficulty in maintaining the building in a satisfactory condition.

Yours faithfully

John Young
Elder - on behalf of the members of the Coorparoo Christian Assembly

Coorparoo Brethren Assembly
PO Box 99
COORPAR00 QLD 4151

15 February 2006

Mr Laurie Jones
Senior Heritage Architect
CITY PLANNING
Urban Management Division
Brisbane City Council
Level 16 69 Ann Street
BRISBANE QLD
GPO Box 1434
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Dear Mr Jones

Re Entry of 217 Cavendish Road, Coorparoo, on the City Plan Heritage Register Lots 20.21
RP13059

write to you as advised by Ms Heather Richards following my telephone conversation with her yesterday, 14 February, and in response to correspondence between myself. Secretary of the Christian assembly at Coorparoo, and various City' Planning officers of your Council concerning the Heritage Listing of our Church Property as above.

A perusal of your copies of this correspondence will indicate that we were first advised of the proposed listing by the then Manager City Planning, Mr. Michael Papageorgiou, on 13 August 2004. Mr Papageorgiou included a copy of the Council's Heritage Register Planning Scheme Policy and he, we presume, ticked dot *points* (.) 1, 4, 5 and 7, to indicate that these were important *Criteria* selected to determine cultural heritage significance.

I telephoned your Office later that month and conferred *with* Mr B. Rough and subsequently wrote to Mr. Rough, on 30 August 2004, objecting to the proposed listing as invalid in our case and outlining the reasons for our objections.

I can locate no record of any acknowledgment of this letter in our files or any correspondence from your office until 14 June 2005, when Ms Heather Richards forwarded a short note which reads.

“Dear Mr Wheat,

Here is our heritage information brochure as promised.

Regards

Heather Richards”

Ms Richards also enclosed a letter dated 10 June 2005 written by Mr. Papageorgiou to advise: “*Council has resolved to enter the property on the City Plan Heritage Register at its meeting of 31 May 2005*”, rejecting our submission on the grounds that: “*The issues raised by the submitter are not covered by the criteria under which the site is assessed for heritage listing.*”

I replied to this letter on 24 June, in which I reiterated details of our objections, insisting that none of the four items indicated by Mr. Papageorgiou are applicable in our case; an indiscriminate assessment had been made by a Council officer/s.

Your letter to me of 7 October 2005 further demonstrates the Council’s intransigence in insisting, as it does that: “*As an **early twentieth century** place of worship in Coorparoo it is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of the City’s or local area’s history,* and: “*It has a strong and special association with the life and work of the Brethren Assembly of Coorparoo and adjacent suburbs.*”

It appears to have escaped your notice that the building concerned could never have been considered as “***an early twentieth century place of worship***”. The building was not constructed until well into that century – **in the very late 1930’s!** Those responsible for its construction did so to meet the then current needs of the Church. They could never have foreseen the decline in membership which ensued in later years.

Secondly, whilst it may have had association with the life and work of our Church people during earlier years, this has continued to **decrease significantly** during the latter decades of the century, as we have continued to inform your office. Only several current members have had an association with the Church for more than 10 years and live in the local area, whilst none of our children have found it convenient to maintain close association therewith for any appreciable period.

Church attendances, as you may well know, have generally continued to decline, dramatically, in Western countries for many years now, for various reasons. Significant numerical growth appears to occur, primarily, only in those churches conducting less conservative services.

As I indicated, most of the 15 current members of our congregation are octogenarians whose health is continuing to decline. Almost all are pensioners with extremely limited financial resources.

Imposition of the Heritage Listing will involve increasing hardship for each of us. We will become less and less able to maintain the building in a satisfactory state as the number of our members decline through attrition. As we will also be unable to attract the interest of any otherwise potential purchaser, the condition of the building will inevitably deteriorate, as has happened and continues to occur in many cases throughout the City Council’s areas.

What cultural value would or could any derelict property then have??

Your office is undoubtedly aware that the Federal Treasurer, Mr. Peter Costello, has expressed grave concern concerning the serious deficiencies in the matter of “*Conservation of Historic Heritage Places.*” You would have also received a copy of the “*Productivity Commission’s Draft Report*”, issued by that Commission recently.

I direct your close attention to the attached copy of this Report, in particular to those sections I have highlighted and to the notes I have made therein.

The Commission, as you may know, has instituted a “*Public Enquiry*” as follows: “*The Commission has commenced a public enquiry into the policy framework and incentives for the conservation of Australia’s historic heritage places*”

“If you wish to make a submission please complete the online registration of interest form or the printed registration of interest form and return it by fax or mail. You can also email the inquiry team your contact details.”

“We are interested in your experiences using this web site and would appreciate an email with your comments and suggestions (such as what you like or dislike about the site) so that we can continue to improve it.”

I shall, of course, lodge an early submission to the Commission supplying appropriate details of our experiences with your Council’s City Planning, Urban Management Division.

On behalf of the Coorparoo Christian Assembly

N. G. Wheat
Secretary