**HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE GOLDSBROUGH**

**ABSTRACT:**

The Goldsbrough was originally built in 1886; was destroyed by fire in 1935 and rebuilt by the original builders, the Stuart brothers, in 1936. It was entered into the Register of the National Estate by the Australian Heritage Commission in 1980, and reviewed in 2003.

In the 1970s the Ultimo-Pyrmont-Haymarket District Study made it quite clear the Goldsbrough must be saved and cherished. There is no doubt the Goldsbrough is a significant heritage site for the city of Sydney.

***Question 1*:** Has the Goldsbrough ever been recognised as a significant Heritage Building?

Answer: Yes.

The Goldsbrough, as Woolstore 1, can be found in the Australian Heritage Commission’s

Register of the National Estate as follows:

Class: Historic

Legal Status: Registered (21/10/1980)

Place ID: 2250

Place File No: 1/12/036/0412

“STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

“The Pyrmont St. Woolstores, comprise the Elder Smith Goldsbrough Mort No. 1 Woolstore, built in 1936 and the Pitt Son Badgery Woolstore built in 1906 and extended in 1921. ……. The quality of the architectural embellishment of the buildings suggests the wealth associated with the industry in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Criterion A. 4). The form and layout of the woolstores demonstrates the nature of goods handling technology in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century which required the extensive use of gravity driven transport, the efficient layout of loading docks and good use of natural and artificial light (Criterion D. 2). The Woolstores feature a sophisticated use of brickwork for decorative effect and are among the finest examples of the Federation Warehouse style remaining in Sydney. The Elder Smith Goldsbrough Mort No 1 Woolstore, unlike the Pitt Son and Badgery Woostore which had its interior replaced, exhibits post and beam construction techniques for its internal structures and uses hardwood timber to its ultimate extent and scale with a high level of sophistication (Criterion F. 1). The Elder Smith Goldsbrough Mort N. 1 Woolstore is an uncommon surviving Sydney example of a woolstore with a large scale and sophisticated timber construction. The Elder Smith Goldsbrough Mort No 1 Woolstore, is a rare expression of inter-war Commercial Palazzo architecture in the Federation Warehouse style (Criterion B. 2). The Elder Smith Goldsbrough Mort No 1 Woolstore, is important for its association with the wool broking activities of Thomas Sutcliffe Mort who, with the wealth created as a successful wool broker, went on to become one of the significant Australian industrialists of the nineteenth century. (Criterion H.1)”

CONDITION AND INTEGRITY:

In 1996 it was noted that the interior of the Pitt Son and Badgery Woolstore has been replaced with a concrete post and slab structure which diminishes its integrity. The building exterior is in good condition. The Elder Smith Goldsbrough Mort No1.Woolstore was renovated in 1995 and reported in excellent condition in 1996, though modified for its current residential apartment use. Most modifications are sympathetic to the significance of the building.

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***Question 2****:* Is the Elder Smith Goldsbrough Mort No.1 Woolstore the present Goldsbrough Building?

Answer: Yes.

If the Statement of Significance leaves any doubt because The Goldsbrough was then called the Elder Smith Goldsbrough Mort Woolstore No. 1, this quote from the “Conybeare Morrison \*03.123\* August 2005 Conservation Management plan for 320 Harris St, Pyrmont (Goldsbrough Mort Carpark) is supplied:

“2.14 Goldsbrough Mort Woolstores, Alterations and Additions

Following the fire, Goldsbrough Mort & Co Ltd commissioned Stuart Bros to build a new woolstore on Pyrmont Road (No 1 Store) and undertake alterations and additions to the woolstores on Harris Street (Nos 2 and 3 stores). A description of the works to be undertaken are given in a letter from WJ Stuart (Managing Director) of Stuart Bros to the Joint Managers of the Goldsbrough Mort & Co Lts. Dated 24 February 1936.”

***Question* 3:** Did any other government body think the Goldsbrough was of Heritage Significance?

Answer: Yes

Source: Ultimo-Pyrmont-Haymarket District Study

This study in the 1970s was focused on the Darling Harbour redevelopment plan:

**“k. Dominance of Classified Woolstores:**

The two woolstore complexes are the A.M.L.&F. (referred to as Merino Central one) and the Goldsbrough Mort and the Pitt Son and Badgery Building (Merino Central Two).

It is an undisputable fact that these monolithic buildings are vital and integral part of the overall proposal with which is must emerge …..

“**I. Function of the two Classified Woolstore Complexes in the Draft Management Plan**

In determining the function of the two woolstore complexes the following salient points should be noted:-

1. These buildings have been classified by the Heritage Council and the National Trust. In assessing the historic merits and exclusive location of these remarkable buildings the National trust stated that they formed ‘an essential visual component of the wall of woolstores which dominate the view of Ultimo and Pyrmont from the City.’
2. The woolstores constitute a commanding feature on the skyline. Viewed from the City, across the expanse of Darling Harbour and the Goods Yard, their imposing disciplined facades personify Australia’s historic and unique pastoral past upon which this nation’s economy was structured. Their obliteration cannot be entertained.”

***Question 4****:* What was the Australian Heritage Commission?

Source: Wikipedia:

Answer: The Australian Heritage Commission was created in 1975 by the Whitlam Government.

“The AHC had wide terms of reference, covering natural, Indigenous and historical heritage.”

“In the 1980s and 90s the AHC developed a number of policy documents which became standard heritage practice.”

“A critical component of the commission was the creation of the Register of the National Estate, which was intended as an inventory of ‘those places, being components of the natural environment of Australia or the cultural environment of Australia, that have aesthetic, historic, scientific or social significance or other special value for the future generations as well as for the present community.’ The AHC was an important catalyst to other state and local heritage protection and took on the early role of establishing guidelines, standards and criteria for assessment and managing places of heritage significance.”

***Question 5****:* What happened to Australian Heritage Commission?

Source: Wikipedia

Answer: “The AHC was ultimately abolished under the Howard Liberal-National coalition government and the Australian Heritage Council formed in its place on 19 February 2004.”

***Question 6:*** What were the consequence of this change in government bodies?

Source: Parliamentary Business/paper on Senate Environment and Communication/chapter 3

Commenting on the change to Australian Heritage Council:

“There ae two striking differences between these provisions. The first is the extent to which the bills remove the capacity of the Council to act on its own accord, instead requiring the direction of the Minister. Thus, the Council will no longer receive nominations for listing, and the Council must not undertake an assessment of a place’s National/Commonwealth Heritage values unless the Minister asks it to do so. Equally, if someone nominates a place for heritage listing to the Minister, yet the Minister for whatever reason decides not to forward the nomination to the Council, the Council is not permitted to undertake any assessment of that place’s Heritage values. (2). The second is the narrowing of the broader functions of the proposed Council to contrast to that of the existing Commission.”

**CONCLUSION:**

The point is not whether the Goldsbrough is currently listed as Heritage Significant. The point is that it is Heritage Significant for the city of Sydney and if the wool industry deserves mention in Australia’s past, then for all of Australia.

Ed Truscott

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