

ITEM 3 NAN TIEN TEMPLE - NSW STATE HERITAGE REGISTER NOMINATION

The NSW Heritage Council is currently considering a State Heritage Nomination for the Nan Tien Temple in Berkeley. The nomination has been prepared and lodged by Nan Tien Temple staff to seek recognition of this significant cultural institution. The proposed listing includes an expanded curtilage boundary which includes leased land surrounding the Temple, which is owned by Council.

This report discussed the draft nomination, including consultation undertaken within Council, with Temple staff, Heritage NSW staff and the Wollongong Heritage Reference Group. It is recommended Council support the proposed nomination on the Temple land and object to the inclusion of Council's Wollongong Memorial Gardens and Cemetery lands.

RECOMMENDATION

The General Manager be delegated authority to prepare a submission to the NSW Heritage Council advising that –

- 1 Council supports the recognition of the Nan Tien Temple site on the State Heritage Register with a reduced curtilage boundary that captures the Temple owned property only (Lot 126 DP 817646).
- 2 Council objects to the inclusion of Council's property (Lot 127 DP 817646 - Wollongong Memorial Gardens) within the proposed curtilage boundary and requests the exclusion of this land from the listing curtilage for the reasons outlined within this report.
- 3 Should the NSW Heritage Council progress a State Heritage Curtilage that affects Council's land despite the above objection, Council requests that Heritage NSW engage further with Council staff to ensure that site-specific exemptions are put in place to allow for the on-going operational requirements of the Wollongong Memorial Gardens along with any other operational requirements attached to these lands.
- 4 Council recommends that the NSW Heritage Council work with Temple representatives to ensure that any State Heritage Listing provides appropriate exemptions to enable the ongoing maintenance, management, adaptation and use of the (modern) Temple buildings and site to ensure the ongoing cultural functions will not be unnecessarily frustrated by complex, costly and time-consuming approval procedures.

REPORT AUTHORISATIONS

Report of: David Green, Manager City Strategy (Acting)

Authorised by: Corey Stoneham, Director Planning + Environment - Future City + Neighbourhoods (Acting)

ATTACHMENTS

- 1 Draft Heritage Listing Details – Assessment of Significance
- 2 Draft State Heritage Listing Proposed Curtilage Map
- 3 Nan Tien Temple Lease Area Map with Council's Land Holdings

BACKGROUND

The NSW Heritage Council is currently considering a State Heritage Nomination for the Nan Tien Temple in Berkeley. It is understood that the nomination was prepared and submitted by Temple staff and is supported by the Temple as a means of acknowledging the cultural significance of the Temple as a significant cultural institution within the community.

Details of the proposed listing, including details of the history of the Temple, and an assessment of its significance are provided within the Draft Listing form provided as Attachment 1 to this report.

The Statement of Significance for the site provided within the draft listing reads as follows -

Nan Tien Temple may be of State heritage significance as an outstanding example of Buddhist architecture and landscaping. Its temple and Pagoda buildings, and its surrounding landscape, designed for reflection and meditation, are evidence of the growth of Buddhism in late 20th century Australia.

Nan Tien Temple likely has historic values as evidence of the presence and growth of a non-Christian religion in NSW following the cessation of restrictive federal immigration law in the 1970s. At the time of its building, it was the largest Buddhist temple in the southern hemisphere. The beginning of its construction in Wollongong in 1992 signalled a key moment in the way that regional NSW cities embraced the cultures of new migrants and the growth of Buddhism.

Nan Tien Temple has potential aesthetic values as a striking expression of Mahayana Buddhism in Australia. Its Main and Front Shrines, built in the Chinese Imperial Palace architectural style, and the Pagoda modelled on T'ang Dynasty design tradition are focal points in the landscape. Their internal colour scheme, orientation and placement within the landscape, design of extensive gardens, plantings, sculptural and the Lotus Pond demonstrate the application of the principles of 'feng shui' and are informed by elements of the Australian landscape. The view lines from the Pagoda, a significant regional landmark, extend beyond the curtilage to take in Mount Kembla and create a visual corridor lined with deciduous trees and lanterns.

Nan Tien Temple has potential social and associative values as a place of worship for Buddhist migrants and refugees arriving in Australia since the 1970s. Nan Tien Temple has enabled these Australians to retain a connection with the cultural philosophies and traditions of their former homeland and to make them known to other Australians. It is likely of social significance as a place of reflection and for those seeking to study and learn about the Buddhist faith and the Dharma (Buddha's teachings). Nan Tien Temple also has potential social values as a cultural, educational and tourist destination in NSW, open to the public, community organisations and visitors regardless of religion.

The Temple was approved through Development Application No.1991/238 with construction commencing in 1992, and the main buildings being constructed between 1993 and 1997. This recent construction would represent the most modern heritage listing within the Wollongong Local Government Area, and possibly represent the most modern State Heritage Listing within NSW. The modern nature of the Temple and its comparatively young age (less than 30 years) raised some questions in discussions with the Wollongong Heritage Reference Group about whether this was a sufficient age to warrant heritage recognition, with discussion revolving around what constituted heritage significance as opposed to a culturally significant place.

It is of note that some of the other most modern heritage items listed within the Wollongong Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2009 - Heritage Schedule include other religious institutions. In particular, the Sri Venkateswara Temple at Helensburgh, built from 1978 and consecrated in 1985, with major modifications in 1994 and more recently, has been listed in the LEP for some time. Further, the former Thirroul Uniting Church in Redman Avenue, built in 1967 and the Sacred Heart Church in Stewart Street Wollongong built in 1966 provide modern examples of Christian Church buildings listed on the heritage schedule.

The draft curtilage proposed for the listing is provided as Attachment 2 to this report. The draft curtilage map provided by Heritage NSW includes an aerial photograph that pre-dates the construction of the access bridge over the M1 Motorway (constructed in 2017). This bridge, and central access link is shown in the Council map provided at Attachment 3 and does not appear to have been considered in the finalisation of the proposed curtilage.

Importantly, the proposed draft listing curtilage includes Council land that is subject to current lease arrangements with the Temple. The affected land includes two separate areas of Lot 127 DP 817646, including -

- a A large area of land zoned C3 Environmental Management and RE1 Public Recreation, which forms part of the Memorial Gardens and Cemetery lot, and makes up the area of the Berkeley Hills located behind the Temple.
- b An access handle linking the Temple land to Berkeley Road, which provides for the existing access driveway and entry gate from Industrial Road. This land is zoned SP1 Special Purposes - Cemetery and forms part of the Wollongong Memorial Gardens site.

These affected areas of Council land are shown within the map provided at Attachment 3 to this report.

Public submissions in relation to the draft nomination were invited by Heritage NSW up until the 5 September 2023, however an extension of this deadline was negotiated to allow time for Council to consider this report and finalise its formal submission.

PROPOSAL

The NSW Heritage Council's Notice of Intention to list the Nan Tien Temple proposes to include a significant area of land within the proposed curtilage. This curtilage includes large areas of Council land that are currently subject to formal lease arrangements for use associated with the Temple.

Following internal consultation, and with input of the Wollongong Heritage Reference Group, this report recommends that the proposed State Heritage Listing of the Nan Tien Temple be supported. However, it is proposed that this support be limited to the inclusion of only the Temple owned lands (Lot 126 DP 817646). It is proposed that the Council land (parts of Lot 127 DP 817646) should be excluded from the proposed curtilage. These lands to be excluded are shown within Attachment 3 to this report.

This recommendation is proposed on the basis that -

- a The Temple represents a modern cultural institution with its primary use and function being located wholly within the lands owned by the Temple.
- b A substantially expanded curtilage as proposed, for a modern building less than 30 years old appears unnecessary.
- c The Council land included within the proposed curtilage includes an access driveway linking from Berkeley Road, which forms part of the SP1 lands that are tied to the Wollongong Memorial Gardens and the former Crematorium operation. The future operations, function and expansion options and opportunities of this important Council and public facility should not be prejudiced by the proposed nomination.
- d The Council land behind the temple is zoned C3 Environmental Management, and RE1 Public Recreation, which forms part of the Memorial Gardens and Cemetery lot, and would provide minimal potential for development impacts on the Temple's hillside setting but their inclusion within the listing could be prejudicial to future operational considerations.
- e The application of an expanded curtilage to Council lands may imply a permanency to the existing use and tenancy arrangements and prejudice future lease arrangements and use considerations relating to these lands.
- f The Wollongong Heritage Reference Group recommended the exclusion of the Council properties from the proposed State Heritage curtilage.

CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Council staff have held discussions with representatives from the Temple and Heritage NSW during May 2023 regarding the State Heritage nomination. During this meeting, Temple staff expressed their strong desire to see the Temple recognised on the State Heritage Register.

This report has been informed by input from a range of Council staff from various Council Divisions. Council's Property Division have provided direct input to the report and its recommendations given the potential implications of the inclusion of Council owned lands within the proposed State Heritage Curtilage. This input has been incorporated into the recommendations of this report.

The proposed State Heritage Listing was reported to the Wollongong Heritage Reference Group at its meeting held 24 August 2023. The Reference Group discussed the proposal at length, with discussion centring on the following key issues -

- a Consideration of whether the Temple's age (dating from 1992) was sufficient to warrant recognition as a heritage item and discussion of comparable listings within the Wollongong Heritage Schedule.
- b Discussion on cultural significance verses heritage significance.
- c Recommendation that Council should ensure that the proposed curtilage would not impact on the future operation and potential future opportunities for the expansion of the Wollongong Memorial Gardens and Crematorium.
- d Noted the need to ensure that the listing did not unnecessarily complicate the maintenance, evolution and use of the Temple given that its significance is tied to its ongoing cultural expression.

The Reference Group were generally supportive of the proposed nomination but held a unanimous view that the draft State Heritage Listing curtilage should be reduced to exclude the Council owned properties surrounding the Temple site.

PLANNING AND POLICY IMPACT

This report contributes to the delivery of Our Wollongong 2032, Goal 1: We value and protect our environment. It specifically delivers on core business activities, including 'promote and protect heritage', as detailed in the Land Use Planning service.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The implications of the proposed curtilage on the long-term future sustainable use of the Council land holdings included within the draft curtilage boundary are a relevant consideration for this report. The ongoing sustainability and operational requirements of the Wollongong Memorial Gardens and Crematorium Site and the potential implications of the State Heritage Curtilage on future operational requirements and opportunities have been considered in the recommendations of this report.

The potential impact of the proposed curtilage on the sustainable management of Council's land holdings have been addressed in the recommendations of this report through the recommended exclusion of Council's properties from the proposed curtilage boundary.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The proposed State Heritage Curtilage boundary includes Council owned lands. Whilst these lands are currently subject to lease arrangements with the Nan Tien Temple, the inclusion of these lands within the proposed State Heritage Curtilage could have a prejudicial impact on future use, and lease considerations for these lands. The application of the State Heritage Curtilage to the existing access driveway and Council lands surrounding the existing Memorial Gardens could act as an impediment to potential future operational requirements and options.

These risks are proposed to be managed through the recommendation of this report, which proposes that the Council owned properties be excluded from the State Heritage Curtilage.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The application of a State Heritage Listing curtilage over the Council owned properties presently leased to the Nan Tien Temple has some potential to impact on the value of these lands, and could feasibly impact on future options and opportunities.

This financial risk has been considered in arriving at the proposed recommendation, which suggests the exclusion of Council's Lands from the proposed State Heritage Curtilage boundary.

CONCLUSION

Recognition of the Nan Tien Temple as a significant cultural institution through a listing on the State Heritage Register is considered a positive step in acknowledging the continuing influence of multiculturalism, diversity and cultural difference in our communities, and is supported.

The inclusion of the Council owned lands surrounding the Temple within the proposed Heritage Curtilage is considered unnecessary and is not supported for the reasons outlined within this report. It is important that the proposed curtilage does not unnecessarily limit or prejudice the future use and management of these lands beyond the current zoning and environmental constraints.

To facilitate the ongoing evolution and adaptation of the Temple site, any proposed State Heritage listing should provide flexibility, through carefully considered site specific exemptions or otherwise, to ensure the facility is not burdened with unnecessary procedural and approval requirements. Council encourages Heritage NSW to work with Temple staff to ensure that appropriate mechanisms are put in place to allow for functional arrangements to maintain and develop these modern buildings.

Nan Tien Temple (Under Consideration)

The Heritage Council of NSW considers nominations for listing on the State Heritage Register based on an assessment of its heritage significance and taking into account any submissions received from the public. The Heritage Council of NSW then makes a recommendation to the Minister who has the final decision on whether or not to direct the listing of the item on the State Heritage Register.

Item details

Name of item: Nan Tien Temple (Under Consideration)
Other name/s: Southern Paradise Temple; Fo Guang Shan Nan Tien Temple; Nan Tien Bridge
Type of item: Complex / Group
Group/Collection: Religion
Category: Buddhist Temple
Hectares (approx): 22
Property description

Lot/Volume Code	Lot/Volume Number	Section Number	Plan/Folio Code	Plan/Folio Number
LOT	126		DP	817646
LOT	127		DP	817646

Boundary:

The northern and western edge of the proposed curtilage follow the Lot boundary of 126. The southern boundary follows the fence-line in Lot 127 and the eastern boundary is located in Lot 127 and incorporates the 'Mountain Gate' entrance drive.

Owner/s

Organisation Name	Owner Category	Date Ownership Updated
Nan Tien Temple	Religious Organisation	
Wollongong City Council	Local Government	

Statement of significance:

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Nan Tien Temple likely has historic values as evidence of the presence and growth of a non-Christian religion in NSW following the cessation of restrictive federal immigration law in the 1970s. At the time of its building, it was the largest Buddhist temple in the southern hemisphere. The beginning of its construction in Wollongong in 1992 signalled a key moment in the way that regional NSW cities embraced the cultures of new migrants and the growth of Buddhism. Nan Tien Temple has potential aesthetic values as a striking expression of Mahayana Buddhism in Australia. Its Main and Front Shrines, built in the Chinese Imperial Palace architectural style, and the Pagoda modelled on T'ang Dynasty design tradition are focal points in the landscape. Their internal colour scheme, orientation and placement within the landscape, design of extensive gardens, plantings, sculptural and the Lotus Pond demonstrate the application of the principles of 'feng shui' and are informed by elements of the Australian landscape. The view lines from the Pagoda, a significant regional landmark, extend beyond the curtilage to take in Mount Kembla and create a visual corridor lined with deciduous trees and lanterns.

Nan Tien Temple has potential social and associative values as a place of worship for Buddhist migrants and refugees arriving in Australia since the 1970s. Nan Tien Temple has enabled these Australians to retain a connection with the cultural philosophies and traditions of their former homeland and to make them known to other Australians. It is likely of social significance as a place of reflection and for those seeking to study and learn about the Buddhist faith and the Dharma (Buddha's teachings), Nan Tien Temple also has potential social values as a cultural, educational and tourist destination in NSW, open to the public, community organisations and visitors regardless of religion.

Date significance updated: 28 Jul 23

Note: The State Heritage Inventory provides information about heritage items listed by local and State government agencies. The State Heritage Inventory is continually being updated by local and State agencies as new information becomes available. Read the Department of Premier and Cabinet copyright (<https://www.dpc.nsw.gov.au/copyright>) and disclaimer (<https://www.dpc.nsw.gov.au/privacy>).

Description

Designer/Maker: Woods Bagot
Construction years: 1992-1995

Physical description:

Nan Tien Temple is built upon 55 acres of land and modelled on T'ang Dynasty and Chinese Imperial Palace architectural styles, the latter of which is influenced by secular building design. It consists of three main structures, the Main and Front Shrine, a seven tier, eight-storey Pagoda and the Pilgrim Lodge. These structures are surrounded by extensive landscaped gardens. When viewed aerially, this area is designed to represent a seated Buddha in meditation, with the Main Shrine as his head, surrounding buildings as his arms and the Courtyard as his lap. Nan Tien Temple is entered through the Mountain Gate, referencing traditional mountain settings of monasteries and reflects the mountains surrounding the Wollongong area, visible from the temple site. Passing through the Mountain Gate marks a distinct change in the environment from the industrial area of Unanderra and surrounding Port Kembla sites to the serene, landscaped approach to Nan Tien Temple. Entrance to the shrines is via the ascending stairs into the Front Shrine. Two wings connect the Main Shrine, elevated and set back from the Front Shrine to create a courtyard. This main group is constructed of reinforced concrete framing and slab with steel roof framing and timber trusses. Terracotta figures enliven the building and the colours were painted in saffron, terracotta and fuchsia by a team of Taiwanese artists. In the perimeter of the walkways are a public dining hall, an art gallery, private dining spaces, a museum, gift shop and offices. The complex also houses a tiered conference room and an auditorium which can seat 300 people. The Pagoda is accessed by a walkway through landscaped gardens. The walkway continues in a loop, loosely following the perimeter of the site and passes a seated Buddha in meditation and the Nan Tien Gratitude Bell made from bronze on an elevated part of the site, descending into a wooded area adorned with outdoor sculptures, past the Pilgrim Lodge (which provides accommodation) and lastly the Lotus Pond which completes the loop back at the stair of the Front Shrine.

All of the exteriors of the buildings, including the main temple complex, are coloured with the auspicious Chinese Imperial Palace colourings of yellow and red, and are adorned with glazed terracotta roof tiles, artefacts and decorative elements. The landscaped gardens and extensive grounds are decorated with numerous statues, artworks and artefacts relevant to Buddhism, including the large Gong and Drum (Drum and bell). The Lotus Pond reminds visitors of the importance of being pure of mind and overcoming obstacles in life and is a flourishing home to wildlife. The northern boundary of the site is marked by a high solid fence wall built in the Chinese Imperial Palace Style and in bright shades of terracotta and warm-toned reds.

Nan Tien Temple is connected to the Nan Tien Institute Complex by a privately owned pedestrian bridge, which spans 200m over the M1 Princes Highway, metaphorically linking the spiritual and educational traditions of Buddhism. The Inauguration Ceremony for the Bridge was attended by NSW Premier, Gladys Berejiklian who spoke of the significance of the bridge as it, 'symbolises the exchange of cultures between east and west' (Opening of Bridge, 2018, quoted in Nan Tien Temple SHR Nomination Application)

The Main Shrine and the Front Shrine

The Main Shrine or "Great Hero Hall", is dedicated to the Five Directions of Confidence, Longevity, Wisdom, Inner Beauty and Peace, presented as five three metre statues of Buddhas. The 417 square meter Shrine space also comprises of 10,000 smaller Buddha statues covering its walls, reminding visitors that the Buddha's nature is all around and within us, and that everyone can achieve Buddhahood. Statues of the Heavenly Attendants are also situated on the walls, as well as hand painted on the roof. The paintings on the ceiling of the Main Shrine and temple Museum, were painted free hand and feature gold leaf. The colours stray from the usual red and yellow themes to include pastel pinks, greens and blues. This was specifically chosen by Fo Guang Shan as a tribute to Australian bush landscape colours and to show gratitude for allowing them to build their temple here.

The Main and Front Shrines are decorated externally with the auspicious Imperial Palace colourings of yellow and red, and are adorned with glazed terracotta roof tiles, artefacts and decorative elements which indicate the spiritual importance of each structure. These signifiers include the level of detail and materials used in decorative painting, with golden dragon motifs adorning the Main and Front Shrine structures and the number of red figurines adorning the hipped edges of the rooflines. The Main Shrine has the most lofty and grandiose roofline of all the buildings. Rooflines are an indication of status – the greater the height and slope of the roof, the higher the rank of the building as is the case with the Main Shrine. A large Gong and Drum hang from the roof, flanking the entrance to the Main Shrine. On either side of the Main Shrine's imposing doorway is a Conference Room for 180 guests and on the other is an auditorium which can seat 330 guests.

The siting of the Main and Front Shrine complex demonstrates the application of the belief system of 'feng shui' in its siting between Mount Kembla and Mount Keira, its axial planning, its orientation within the landscape and its extended visual curtilage of the site to its surrounding ranges. Their placement creates a visual midline of symmetry between them and a triangular relationship between the three elevated sites within the landscape.

The Front shrine, or "Great Compassion Shrine", is dedicated to Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, known as Guan Yin in Chinese. A large statue of this legendary Bodhisattva takes pride of place, where she is depicted as having 1,000 arms and eyes. In this Shrine the walls are covered in gold-coloured moulds of this Bodhisattva, which remind people to show compassion for one another. Avalokitesvara is loosely translated as "the compassionate age who sees," referring to this Bodhisattva's ability to see all the suffering in the world and thus come to people's aid. She is said to have one thousand eyes and hands with which to save all sentient beings. Guan Tin takes a variety of forms; the Front Shrine's primary stature portrays her with a third eye in the middle of her brows, and multiple hands (Nan Tien Website).

The Pagoda

The seven-tiered, eight-storey Pagoda is a columbarium and Shrine, built to provide a resting place for up to 7,000 people. Although the rest of the Temple is designed in accordance with Imperial Palace architecture, the Pagoda is modelled on T'ang Dynasty design. The seven-tiered style (eight-storey) of the Pagoda reflects a similar convention of the T'ang Dynasty architecture (A.D. 618-906). The view lines from the Pagoda extend beyond the curtilage to take in Mount Kembla and create a visual corridor lined with deciduous trees and lanterns. The Pagoda is a significant regional

landmark in the regional landscape and is from most viewpoints the first visible structure of the site.

The pagoda has its origin from the India stupa, an ancient type of building used to store sutras and sacred relics of the Buddha. A pagoda often distinguishes Chinese temples as predominantly Buddhist, as opposed to classical, Taoist or Confucius. Its tapering design reaching to the sky is synonymous with the idea of practicing Buddhism step-by-step which eventually led to supreme enlightenment. Inside, a statue of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva is strategically positioned to face out of the building, down a tree lined walkway, to a large outdoor statue of Amitabha Buddha who presides over the Pureland. The significance of this design being that Ksitigarbha worked to help people who passed away to be reborn in a higher place, one of which, Chinese Buddhists believe is the Pureland. The Shrine also consists of walls of brass name plates, which commemorate the deceased and a wishing bell for visitors who make a wish and sound the bell.

The Pilgrim Lodge

The Pilgrim Lodge is a 100-room accommodation facility and provides a unique use to Nan Tien compared with other Buddhist temples in NSW as Buddhist temples typically have dormitory style lodgings. It is built in a less ornate expression of the Chinese Imperial Palace architectural style, and has a smaller number of figurines adorning its roofline, indicating its is of less significance than the Main and Front Shrines.

The Gardens and Plantings

The gardens are set upon 55 acres of landscaped rolling hillsides and are decorated with various statues and artefacts relevant to Buddhism. At the time of purchase, the site consisted of largely cleared paddocks when acquired for the Nan Tien Temple. At present, there is some regenerating native vegetation on the hilltop behind the temple and in a gully on the slopes, consisting of stands of Black Wattle (*Acacia mearnsii*), small shrubs and lantana. There are informal garden areas immediately surrounding the buildings while the grounds have been planted with both indigenous and non-indigenous species. Indigenous species include stands of Eucalyptus, including Ironbarks; Port Jackson figs (*Ficus rubiginosa*); Hills figs (*Ficus microcarpa hillii*); a Bunya Pine (*Araucaria bidwillii*) and a row of Norfolk Island pines (*Araucaria heterophylla*) on the hilltop behind the temple; a row of Lilly pilli (*Syzygium smithii*) towards the south-western boundary; and alternating Illawarra flame trees (*Brachychiton acerifolius*) and Jacarandas (*Jacaranda mimosifolia*) surrounding the Lotus pond. Non-indigenous species include Pin oaks (*Quercus palustris*); Ginkgo (*Ginkgo biloba*); Bodhi (*Ficus religiosa*); Himalayan cedar (*Cedrus deodara*) and an avenue of Canadian maple 'Autumn Red' (*Acer rubrum*) leading to entrance of the Pagoda.

The open space of the back elevation, behind the Main Shrine is punctuated by open spaces, decks and sculptural features, with visual points to encourage contemplation. The Main and Front Shrines demonstrate the application of the belief system of 'feng shui' in its siting between Mount Kembla and Mount Keira, its axial planning, its orientation within the landscape and its extended visual curtilage of the site to its surrounding ranges. The view lines behind the Main Shrine extend beyond the curtilage to take in Mount Kembla on the left and Mount Keira on the right. Their placement creates a visual midline of symmetry between them and a triangular relationship between the three elevated sites within the landscape.

A large manmade pond showcasing the seasonal lotus is a flourishing home to wildlife. The pond is intended to remind visitors of the importance of being pure of mind and overcoming obstacles in life. Lotus is one of the most complex and prominent Buddhist symbols of purity and enlightenment: its growth from the swampy depths into an exquisite and fragrant flower, symbolising people's growth and blossoming into enlightenment. Lotus imagery is a recurring theme throughout Nan Tien Temple and many of the Buddha and Bodhisattva figures are on lotus thrones.

Physical condition and/or Archaeological potential:

The physical condition of Nan Tien Temple is excellent being in continual use and regularly maintained for its originally intended and ongoing use. The structure is built of modern materials and Nan Tien Temple have gone to great lengths to use the original suppliers of materials where updates the 1990s fabric have been required. For example, they have sourced the same Japanese country to supply terracotta tiles to re-tile and repair the temple shrine roof.

Date condition updated: 13 Jun 23

Modifications and dates:

- 1992 - Rehabilitation work to landfill site commences
- 1993 - Construction of Main Shrine commences
- 1994 - Construction of Pagoda commences
- 1995 - October – Official opening
- 1997 - Construction on the Pilgrim Lodge and Lotus Pond begin.
- 2004 - Tea House added underneath Front Shrine
- 2017 - Construction begins on the Nan Tien Bridge which links the Nan Tien Institute and Nan Tien Temple and spans across the M1 Princes Highway.
- 2021 - Lift from base of steps to allow access to Main Shrine from courtyard
- 2023 - Re tiling of slate steps in front of Front and Main Shrines. Replacement tiles sourced from India as per original tiles
- 2023 - Earthworks to northern boundary near the Mountain Gate Entrance and Nan Tien Temple fence wall.

Current use:

Nan Tien Temple is a place of worship, learning and meditation for the Mahayanan Buddhist faith. It is also a cultural landmark, tourist destination, function and education centre.

History

Historical notes:

Traditional owners

For more than 30,000 years prior to European occupation, the Illawarra area was home to the local Wodi Wodi Aboriginal people of the Dharawal nation (NPWS, 2005; also spelt Tharawal; AIATISIS Map, 1996). Dharawal people had a well-developed and complex society, and physical and cultural evidence of this remains today in the forms of burials, middens (accumulations of materials created in the course of daily life) and other sites. Aboriginal culture and history have also been preserved through traditional knowledge and dreaming stories which have been passed down through the generations. The earliest evidence of Aboriginal occupation of the Illawarra region comes from an archaeological site located within Bass Point, NSW (Donaldson, et al, 2015, 1). This shell midden site has been dated to 17,000 years BP. At the time, this site would have been located further inland due to sea level changes and it is approximately 15km south-east of the subject area. Lake Illawarra, to the east of the subject site, formed approximately 5,000 to 6,000 years ago when sea levels stabilised (Donaldson, et al, 2015, 1.). Lake Illawarra was an important fishing site where crustacea, fish, roots, tortoise and water birds would have gathered (NPWS, 2005, 10).

The sites of Mount Keira and Mount Kembla are significant focal points in the landscape from Nan Tien Temple and are associated with Dreaming stories such as 'The Story of the Five Islands'. Mount Keira is believed to have been a site used for ceremonies and it has ongoing significance to the Dharawal Aboriginal people. The Dreamtime stories associated with Mount Keira account for the formation of the broader Illawarra landscape. Mount Kembla is a significant site for Aboriginal people and is also linked to the Dreaming stories associated with Mount Keira. It contains archaeological sites that show evidence of Aboriginal settlement before their forced removal from the site in 1942 when fortifications were built during the Second World War at Mount Kembla (Mt Keira Summit Park, 2016, 13).

History of Berkeley area and suburb

European settlement commenced in 1815 when Dr Charles Throsby moved cattle into the area in 1815 (NPWS, 2005, 14) although it is possible the search for timber had brought Europeans to the area some years before (Wollongong Heritage and Stories, 2023). In 1816 Robert Jenkins was granted 1000 acres at the north-eastern end of Lake Illawarra in what is now known as Berkeley (NPWS, 2005, 14; Barwick, 1978, 2). Jenkins named the area Berkeley after his home in the estate at Berkeley, Gloucestershire, England, before arriving in Sydney in 1808 (Barwick, 1978, 2). Like the Berkeley property, these land grants were located adjacent to creeks or rivers, reducing the Dharawal people's access to fresh water and other resources (NPWS, 2005, 15). Furthermore, these permanent settlements introduced diseases and campaigns of frontier violence, devastating many of the Dharawal tribes in the Illawarra region (Migrant Heritage Project, 2021, 2). The environmental impacts of European settlement also disrupted food sources and introduced non-native species to the ecosystem. Grazing and cattle, as well the dairy and timber industries dominated land uses in the first three decades of European settlement.

The timber industry began to falter during the 1840s and 1850s due to the depleted cedar forests in the Illawarra region. This occurred in conjunction with the establishment of the coal industry in the area from 1849. The Berkeley coke ovens opened in 1889 (Barwick, 1978, 15). More broadly, the arrival and expansion of industries such as coal mining, coke and later the steelworks at Port Kembla in 1928 shaped Berkeley and the area surrounding it as a place of industrial production and predominantly working-class settlements. Although the Dharawal people continued to camp and hunt in the area, the expansion of European settlement and industry pushed the Dharawal to the fringes of their country, particularly along the coast (NPWS, 2005, 25). This pressure and repeated removal of Aboriginal people from their lands continued as development expanded, particularly in the 1920s with the development of sites such as the Port Kembla Steel works and Hill 60 (NPWS, 2005, 30, 50-53; Migration Heritage Project, 2021, 7).

Following the Second World War, increased immigration from Europe and the Illawarra region resulted in numerous hostels being established as temporary accommodation in the area. The closest of these to the Nan Tien Temple site was also on land that was part of the original Berkeley Estate. On 16 July 1953, the Commonwealth Government bought a total of 21 acres of land (Lots 8 and 9 of the former Berkeley Estate) to erect the Berkeley Migrant Hostel (Migration Heritage Project, 2021, 14). The Migrant hostel housed 2,800 people and was built in the form of rows of galvanised iron huts (Barwick, 1978, 16). During this period, the NSW Housing Commission also selected Berkeley for a public model housing project, building 2,075 homes from the mid-1950s (Barwick, 1978, 16).

The growth of Buddhism in Australia

The first documented evidence of social knowledge of Buddha in Australia dates from 1826, when Commodore James Brisbane (1774-1826) who was returning from the First Burmese War brought a statue of Buddha to Sydney aboard the HMS Warspit (Florek, 2015). Brisbane then gave this statue of Buddha to Captain John Piper (1773-1851) who was in charge of Customs in early colonial Australia (Florek, 2015; the statue is now housed in the Australian Museum). However, Buddhism as a practiced system of beliefs was introduced to Australia until the mid-19th century with the arrival of Chinese immigrants who worked in the Victorian goldfields and as coolie labourers (Croucher, 1989 2-4; Spuler, 2002, 140). Census data captured the arrival of Buddhists during this time in Victoria (Adam and Hughes, 1996, 41). It is important to note that Chinese migrants' belief systems ranged across the four religious tenets: classical religion, Confucianism, Taoism (or Daoism) and Buddhism. Smith states that most Chinese people migrating to Australia in the 19th century practised classical religion but also incorporated elements of Taoist and Buddhist beliefs (Smith, 2006, 38). According to Croucher, the earliest temples, 'Joss' Houses, were established on the goldfields and were small, temporary structures (Croucher, 1989, 2-4; see also Smith, 2006, x) during this period. The first documented Buddhist organisation was formed in Melbourne in 1925 (the Little Circle of Dharma by convert Buddhists who had gained experience of Buddhism in Burma, Spuler, 2000, 35) and the first teacher to visit Australia was Sister Dhammadinna in 1952 (Spuler, 2002, 140).

Following Federation in Australia in 1901, the introduction of discriminatory nationwide immigration policies restricted Asian immigration well into the 1960s. This somewhat quelled growing interest in Buddhism during the late 19th century as well as practising Buddhists, however by mid-20th century it was clear that interest in Buddhism was rising again. From the 1940s, Buddhism and environmentalism were intertwined in the teachings and publications of lawyer, conservationist and academic Marie Byles. Peggy James argues that Byles' interpretation of eco-Buddhism philosophies helped her Western readers to appreciate the use of the Buddha's teachings to minimize harm in day-to-day practices and was influential in early expressions of Australian conservationism and environmentalism (Peggy, 2015, 235-239). Byles created a Buddhist hut for the purposes of meditation at her property Ahimsa in the 1950s (SHR #01494). The Buddhist Federation of Australia was formed in 1958 and the Buddhist Society of New South Wales was established in 1971 for the arrival of a Sri Lankan monk, Venerable R. Somaloka. Somaloka established the first Buddhist Monastery in Australia in Katoomba in 1973 (Spuler, 2000, 35; Spuler, 2002, 140).

Coinciding with the growth of interest in Buddhism was the gradual dismantling of the federal discriminatory migration policies commencing in the late 1940s, with major legislation being the introduction of the Migration Act 1958 and The Racial Discrimination Act 1975. The number of Buddhists in Australia began to increase from the 1960s and the official end of the Immigration Restriction Act 1901 help grow this trend. Following the end of Vietnam War 1974-75, many refugees arrived in Australia from Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam as part of a refugee policy program and by the late 1980s, relations between the Australian and Chinese governments were strengthening, which meant more Asian born migrants were relocating to Australia to live, work and study. They brought their cultural and religious beliefs but there were not many places for Buddhists to worship or study the Dharma.

Throughout the late 1970s and 1980s, the variety of Buddhist traditions and sects in Australia diversified and numerous organisations were established during these decades. The Vietnamese Buddhist Federation of Australia was founded in 1981, with the help of the Most Venerable Thich Phuoc Hue, a Vietnamese monk who arrived in Australia in 1980. His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet first visited Australia in 1982 and since then has made a number of visits, with these visits increasingly drawing more interest and large crowds. In 1985, the Buddhist Council of New South Wales was formed. According to Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) census data, the population of Chinese migrants increased from 41,741 to 224,685 in the period 1991-2016 in Sydney alone.

By the 1990s, there were a growing number of Buddhist temples in Australia, and a number of these were constructed during the early 1990s, including Chung Tian Temple in Priestdale, Qld and the Sunnataram Forest Monastery, Bundanoon, NSW. There are three different schools within Buddhism: Theravada (Sri Lanka, Thailand, Cambodia and Burma), Mahayana (China, Korea, Japan and Vietnam) and Vajrayana (Tibet, Nepal and Bhutan). Mahayanan Buddhism (to which Nan Tien belongs) has consistently been the largest Buddhist school of faith in Australia representing 34% of the Buddhist faith (Spuler, 2002, 142; Barker, 2007, 69). Nan Tien Temple is a Mahayanan Buddhism complex of the Fo Ghang Shan monastic order. In 1996, 1.1% of the population (199, 812 people) identified themselves in the Australian census as Buddhists (Spuler, 2002, 139, 144). By 2001, census data showed that this figure was 1.9% (357, 813) and by 2006, it had risen to 2.1% (418,749 people). This data shows that Buddhism is one of Australia's fastest growing religions (Barker, 2007, 65) and also that this increase occurs in both Australian born and migrant populations (Barker, 2007, 68).

Planning a Buddhist temple in Wollongong

In the late 1980s, relations between the Australian and Chinese governments were strengthening and more Asian born migrants were relocating in Australia to live, work and study. They brought their cultural and religious beliefs but there were not many places at this time for Buddhists to worship or study the Dharma. At this time, the Grand Master Hsing Yun of the Fo Guang Shan (FGS) Buddhist order was considering the construction of an Australian temple site as part of a broader objective to bring the Dharma to other countries. FGS is an order in the Mahayana school of Buddhism founded in 1967 in Taiwan by Grand Master Hsing Yun and means Buddha's light mountain (Nan Tien Website; Pacey, 2012, 123.). Gordon Waitt states that the first suggestion of Wollongong as a potential location for a temple site came from Christine Yuen, a Vietnamese-Australian from the Illawarra area who approached Grand Master Hsing Yun when in Taiwan about the possibility of building a temple in Wollongong citing its landscape, beauty and proximity to Sydney (Waitt, 2003, 229). Information provided by Nan Tien Temple states that a Vietnamese-born assistant to the Lord Mayor of Wollongong, Frank Arkell, had remarked on the lack of places for her mother and other Asian migrants to worship and learn the Buddhist Dharma. Arkell had previously shown support for religious minorities and advocated for the creation of places of worship. His vision for Wollongong focused on multiculturalism, cultural diversity and strengthening the local economy by engaging tourism-enhancing strategies (Waitt, 2003, 230-1).

In 1989, the Lord Mayor of Wollongong initiated discussions with the Fo Guang Shan Buddhist Order to build a Buddhist monastery in Australia. The Fo Guang Shan Founder, Venerable Master Hsing Yun visited the proposed Flagstaff Hill site in Wollongong in 1989 and observed that the site was an auspicious location (Waitt, 2003, 229; Waitt sites an article in Illawarra Mercury, 17 June 1989, p.3). The subject site, at Flagstaff Hill, is north-facing and its primary central axis runs north-south from the summit of Flagstaff Hill through the temple's centre, bisecting the two prominent elevations of Mount Kembla and Mount Keira. Waitt states that other local governments in Sydney and Brisbane had made offers of free land for the purpose of building the temple, but Hsing Yun regarded Wollongong's elevated position most suitable for its fengshui and spatial structure (Waitt, 2003, 229-230). In 1990, the Mayor of Wollongong, Frank Arkell sought the approval and assistance of all council members in supporting the Buddhist temple. Ven. Hsing Yun visited Wollongong again in September 1990 to further explore the possibility and site.

In December 1990, Wollongong City Council donated 26 acres of land for one hundred years, with a nominal annual rental fee of \$1 (Pacey, 2012, 129-130; Eastwood, 2012, 122; Shi, 2021, 168). BHP Steel (now BlueScope Steel), a nearby facility donated 29 acres of land to the Nan Tien Temple project, seeing it as a tourist drawcard (Pacey, 2012, 129-130). At the time, Wollongong was not an obvious location for a Buddhist Temple of such a large scale. Wollongong was a city of 210,000 people and home to only 800 Buddhists. It was a major industrial centre with 'a legacy of heavy industry, smokestacks and pollution, rather than as a place of pilgrimage' (Waitt, 2003, 225). However, it was significant that Nan

Tien Temple was to be located in Berkeley, a largely Anglo-Celt suburb in Wollongong, and is evidence of changing attitudes towards non-Christian faiths, migration and tourism more broadly in Australia (Waitt, 2003, 223). At this time, the Fo Guang Shan Order had also begun construction of a large temple and seven-storey pagoda near Brisbane, opening in 1993.

Characteristics and types of Chinese and Buddhist temple architecture

Traditionally, Chinese temples are relatively small structures built in a secular style of 'palace' architecture (Lindsay, 2001, 15; Lindsay 2006, 39; Nan Tien website). Chinese temples were not typically built for large number of people for simultaneous worship as is the case in Western religious tradition (Lindsay, 2001, 15; Lindsay 2006, 39). The traditional role of village temples is to offer a peaceful, harmonised sanctuary and a spiritual atmosphere, which is reflected in the architectural principles of symmetry and balance, as well as central place in which the village society could seek refuge and assistance (for example, see Yiu Ming Temple Precinct, 1996). Temple design is informed by feng shui and careful consideration is given to size, axial planning, symmetry, orientation, location, the tilting or upturned roof systems, the application of bright colours (such as red, green, gold, white) and ornaments.

The main religious philosophies of China are Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism and what is known as classical religion (Lindsay 2006, 37). Temples can exclusively reflect one of these belief systems, but most often they incorporate elements of more than one; for example, both Buddhism and Taoist deities can be worshipped in the same temple. Characteristics of architectural and decorative styles that are particularly associated with Buddhist architecture are the principles of balance with nature, design being informed by and harmonising with its surrounding local environment, a prominent raised podium on which Buddha is located at the rear of shrines, seated Buddha statues, ascending stairs or paths of progression to symbolise the path to enlightenment, residences for monastics and the presence of pagodas, or stupas. Stupas were structures where the Buddha's relics and Sutras were traditionally kept in India. As Buddhism spread to China, the tradition of the Stupa followed but the architecture evolved into the Pagoda style structure more commonly found in Chinese gardens and temples (Nan Tien Website). The tapering of the pagoda is synonymous with the idea of practising Buddhism step-by-step to eventually reach enlightenment (Nan Tien website).

Construction of the Nan Tien Temple

The subject site was a former landfill site and was donated To the Fo Guang Shan order by Wollongong City Council for the purposes of the temple. Considerable groundworks were required to rehabilitate the site in 1992-1993, with a ground-breaking ceremony marking the commencement of the works on 28 November 1992. At the time of its building, the property was bounded by residential property to the south-west border, the publicly owned Wollongong Crematorium to the north-east boundary, the M1 Princes Motorway along its north-west border and, to the south, another vacant council block (Waitt, 2003, 224). The architect of Nan Tien Temple was Jones Brewster Regan, an Australian architect (Nan Tien Temple website). The site is designed to be representative of heavenly space and follows the principles of Chinese Buddhist temples (Waitt, 2003, 230). Despite Berkeley's past connections to the migrant experiences of arriving and hostel accommodation, commentators have observed that the temple's location at Wollongong seemingly contrasted with its historical associations of Western industrialised work areas and Anglo-Celtic working-class communities (see Waite, 2019, Pacey, 2012). Pacey argues that Nan Tien Temple demonstrates that disparate values, traditions, and notions can co-exist and be harmonious. In this case, Australian and Western values and themes can co-exist and complement those of Chinese Buddhism (Pacey, 2012, 124-5).

The construction of the Main Shrine and temple complex began in 1993 and the Pagoda began in 1994. Construction on these elements were completed in 1995 at a cost of \$50 million, most of which was donated by Fo Guang Shan members in Taiwan (Spuler, 2002, 140) with the official opening in October of that year (the construction on the Pilgrim Lodge and Lotus ponds began in 1997). The Grand Master Hsing Yun, founder of the Fo Guang Shan Buddhist sect, presided over the opening ceremony of Nan Tien Temple (Waitt, 2003, 224.). The then 'Ethnic Affairs Minister' Mr Nick Bolkus presenting \$100 to cover the 'rent costs' on behalf of the Australian Federal Government at \$1 per year for one hundred years. This \$100 was on display at the temple Museum. Nan Tien Temple was awarded the 'Master Builder's Association Excellence in Construction Merit Award for Public Buildings' upon its opening in 1995. The entire construction period was five years and two months (Nan Tien website).

The Nan Tien Institute was launched in 2011 originally within the grounds of the Nan Tien Temple complex and later moved to a new location directly opposite across the M1 Princes Motorway. The new centre for the institute was designed by architect Woods Bagot and was shortlisted for the NSW Architecture Awards in 2015 in the Educational Architecture section. It is Australia's first government accredited tertiary education provider based on Buddhist values. In August 2017, the construction on the Nan Tien bridge began. The Nan Tien Bridge is a privately owned 200m long pedestrian bridge which spans the M1 Princes Motorway and links the Nan Tien Temple site with the Nan Tien Institute. It was opened in July 2018 by the then Premier Gladys Berejiklian. In 2021, the Nan Tien Institute - Education and Cultural Centre won the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) NSW Regional Achievement Award - South NSW.

Role and Legacy of Nan Tien in New South Wales

At the time of its completion in 1995, Nan Tien Temple was the largest Buddhist temple in the southern hemisphere; it is now the largest in NSW (Spuler, 2002, 140). 'Nan Tien' in Chinese means 'Paradise of the South' (Nan Tien website). Since its completion, Nan Tien Temple has become an important place and spiritual centre for the Chinese Mayahana Buddhist community, followers of Fo Guang Shan Humanistic Buddhism and for the migrant Chinese community to worship and learn the Dharma. It has also become a significant cultural, educational and tourist landmark for both Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike, known for its vast scale, striking facade and distinctive architecture. In 1999, the temple was a finalist in the 'Significant Regional Attraction' category of the New South Wales Tourism Awards (Spuler, 2002, 140). In 2015, Nan Tien Temple was named as a finalist for Cultural Tourism for the NSW Tourism Awards and has won further awards for tourism, landscaping, lighting, architecture and gardening in regional and state categories (see

Nan Tien website for further details). It hosted 100,000 visitors annually by 2012 (Eastwood, 2012, 122) and 200,000 annually by 2019 (Shi, 2019, 165), demonstrating its continual growth as a tourist and spiritual destination.

The building of Nan Tien represents an important historical moment in the growth and broadening place of Buddhism in Australian society (Spuler, 2002, 140). Nan Tien Temple post-dates the emergence of the Anglo-dominated Buddhist community in Sydney (for example, see Ahimsa SHR #01494) and reflects the changing needs and religious make-up of the Australian population following increased migration from Asian countries in the latter half of the 20th century. Nan Tien Temple hosts important events on the Chinese Lunar Calendar including Chinese New Year and Dharma Services, welcoming visitors from around Australia and overseas. Nan Tien Temple also strives to be part of the NSW interfaith and community groups. The Temple regularly hosts interfaith and community group organisations, where use of facilities and meetings rooms are provided free of charge. As research by Pacey shows, Nan Tien Temple has sought to achieve a broader level of engagement and relevance for the Australian community and be a central point for the cross-fertilisation of ideas between Buddhist and non-Buddhist, Chinese and Taiwanese, and traditional Western and Eastern philosophies (Pacey 2012, 124). It hosts school excursions, venue hire for events, cultural events (particularly those on the Chinese calendar) and is an important tourist attraction in the region and for the regional economy.

Nan Tien holds an annual calendar of events, festivals and observance that are significant to the Buddhist calendar. Annual major events include the Nan Tien Cultural Festival, Buddha's Birthday festival, Chinese New Year, Harmony Day, Wellness Day, as well as numerous shorter services or days of observance such as the Lantern Festival, special Dharma services and offerings.

Historic themes

Australian theme (abbrev)	New South Wales theme	Local theme
4. Settlement-Building settlements, towns and cities	Towns, suburbs and villages-Activities associated with creating, planning and managing urban functions, landscapes and lifestyles in towns, suburbs and villages	Creating landmark structures and places in regional settings-
8. Culture-Developing cultural institutions and ways of life	Religion-Activities associated with particular systems of faith and worship	Religious worship-
8. Culture-Developing cultural institutions and ways of life	Religion-Activities associated with particular systems of faith and worship	Monastery-
8. Culture-Developing cultural institutions and ways of life	Religion-Activities associated with particular systems of faith and worship	Practising Buddhism-
8. Culture-Developing cultural institutions and ways of life	Social institutions-Activities and organisational arrangements for the provision of social activities	Places of informal community gatherings-

Assessment of significance

SHR Criteria a)
[Historical significance]

Nan Tien Temple is likely of State heritage significance for its historical value as evidence of a significant moment in the recognition and acknowledgment of the changing spiritual needs of the increasingly multicultural population of Australia. At the time of its opening in 1995, it was the largest Buddhist temple in the southern hemisphere. Nan Tien Temple is the largest Buddhist temple in NSW and since its inception, has provided a place of worship and spiritual home for Buddhist migrants and Australian-born Buddhists, as well as a place of education and learning for school students, tourists and the broader community. It is evidence of the cultural and religious shifts in the population of NSW towards a more multicultural society following the end of restrictive immigration policies that underpinned migration practices in Australia between 1901 and the 1970s. It also likely has historical values as evidence of the changing religious beliefs of those migrant communities who came to Australia from the 1970s as opposed to the religious beliefs of previous migrants which were predominantly of Christian origins.

The location for Nan Tien Temple was negotiated between the then Mayor of Wollongong and Grand Master Hsing Yun, Founder of the Taiwanese Fo Guang Shan Buddhist Order from 1989. Its location within the proximity of the largely industrial, working-class suburb of Berkeley surrounding Port Kembla reflect the emerging ties between multiculturalism, tourism and visions for future regional economies during the 1980s and 1990s and changing social attitudes which increasingly embraced non-Christian religions in the latter half of the 20th century in Australia.

SHR Criteria b)

[Associative significance]

Nan Tien Temple is likely of State heritage significance for its association with the growth of Buddhism in Australia and for its associative values for Chinese, Taiwanese, Vietnamese, South Korean and Japanese migrant populations of the Mahayana Buddhist belief. As the largest Buddhist temple in NSW, the Nan Tien Temple likely has associative values as a focal spiritual site and landmark for the Mahayana Buddhist community, and in particular, the Chinese migrant community. Nan Tien Temple is a place for people to practice and understand the Dharma (Buddha's teachings) and its associative values are underpinned by its role in providing an important place where large numbers of Buddhists can gather, meet and worship and continue to practice their beliefs.

Nan Tien Temple also likely has associative values as a central place where large-scale events on the Chinese Lunar Calendar are held, including Chinese New Year and Dharma Services. Nan Tien Temple practices the traditional Gong and Drum ceremony daily; this is part of traditional Buddhist culture and is usually only observed during special events. Nan Tien Temple also has potential associative values for the geographical region of Wollongong as a destination site for tourists (both spiritual and recreational) and as a significant visual landmark for the Wollongong community.

SHR Criteria c)

[Aesthetic significance]

Nan Tien is likely of state significance as an outstanding example of a Buddhist temple complex modelled on the Chinese Imperial Palace style and Pagoda modelled on T'ang Dynasty architectural tradition. Its significant siting, vast scale, grandiose temple buildings, decorative elements and landscaping are outstanding examples of Buddhist architecture not replicated elsewhere in NSW.

Nan Tien likely has aesthetic values as the largest Buddhist temple in NSW. It is comprised of two connected shrines (the Main and Front Shrines), a seven-tiered, eight storey pagoda and sprawling landscaped gardens designed to encourage reflection, worship and balance. The Main Shrine has aesthetic values in its expression and interpretation of Buddhist decorative elements in relation to its placement in the Australian landscape. The ceiling of the Main Shrine incorporates a non-traditional temple palette of including pastel pinks, greens and blues, specifically chosen by Fo Guang Shan as a tribute to the Australian bush landscape and to show gratitude in allowing the temple to be built there.

Nan Tien Temple likely has aesthetic values for its seven-tiered, eight storey Pagoda modelled on T'ang Dynasty design. The Nan Tien Pagoda is a unique example of the cultural fusion of Indian stupas (where Buddha's relics and Sutras were kept) and the Chinese style of pagoda structures. The Nan Tien Pagoda demonstrates traditional Buddhist architecture principles of harmonising with and beautifying the specific environment of a place. The view lines from the Pagoda extend beyond the curtilage to take in Mount Kembla and create a visual corridor lined with deciduous trees and lanterns. It is the tallest Chinese Pagoda in NSW and is a significant regional landmark in the regional landscape.

Nan Tien Temple likely has aesthetic values for its landscaping, plantings, lotus pond and sculptures located throughout the site. Its placement demonstrates the application of the belief system of 'feng shui' in its siting between Mount Kembla and Mount Keira, its axial planning, its orientation within the landscape and its extended visual curtilage of the site to its surrounding ranges.

SHR Criteria d)

[Social significance]

Nan Tien Temple is likely of social significance as a central gathering place of contemplation for both migrant and native-born Buddhist Australians in NSW. The temple provides Mahayana Buddhist migrants and refugees a place to retain connection with the culture, philosophy and traditions of their former homeland and to make them known to other Australians. This connection is particularly important to Mahayana Buddhist migrants and refugees from Vietnam, China, Korea, Taiwan and Japan who have migrated to Australia since the 1970s. Nan Tien is a sanctuary for Buddhists across NSW to practice and learn their faith from resident monastics. According to Australian census data, between the years 1996-2001, Buddhism was the fastest growing religion in Australia. Nan Tien Temple has been a central place of ongoing social importance for this growing Buddhist community, both migrant and non-migrant. The ongoing use and expanding social value of Nan Tien Temple further reflects the presence and evolution of Buddhism in Australia, from migrant beginnings to social growth to mainstream community engagement.

Nan Tien has potential social values in its role as a place of education, culture and tourism. Since its opening, Nan Tien Temple has played an important role in bridging the educational and spiritual cultures of east and west. Nan Tien Temple hosts school excursions, cultural festivals and events, conferences, tours and is offered free to community organisations for use of their grounds and buildings to encourage openness and engagement. It is also a major tourist attraction and a regional community cultural centre and has won regional and state awards for tourism reflecting its importance in the overall profile of NSW destinations and the social and cultural esteem Nan Tien Temple is viewed with. As a spiritual, educational and tourist destination for Buddhists and non-Buddhists in Australia, Nan Tien has played a significant social role in shifting societal attitudes and promoting acceptance of migrant culture and spiritual beliefs in NSW.

SHR Criteria e)

[Research potential]

This item is unlikely to meet the threshold of significance at a state level against the criterion.

SHR Criteria f)

[Rarity]

This item is unlikely to meet the threshold of significance at a state level against the criterion.

SHR Criteria g)


[Representativeness]

This item is unlikely to meet the threshold of significance at a state level against the criterion.

Integrity/Intactness:

Nan Tien Temple is in excellent condition and continues to be used for its original intended purpose as a Buddhist temple. As a popular site utilised daily by the Buddhist community, schools, community organisations and tourists, it is regularly maintained and its original form is intact.

Assessment criteria:

Items are assessed against the  State Heritage Register (SHR) Criteria (</resources/heritagebranch/heritage/listings/criteria.pdf>) to determine the level of significance. Refer to the Listings below for the level of statutory protection.

Listings

Heritage Listing	Listing Title	Listing Number	Gazette Date	Gazette Number	Gazette Page
Heritage Act - Under consideration for SHR/IHO listing			17 Aug 18		

Heritage Act - Under consideration for SHR/IHO listing			20 Jan 23		
Heritage Act - Internal Nomination for SHR listing			17 Aug 18		
Potential Heritage Item			05 Jan 15		

Study details

Title	Year	Number	Author	Inspected by	Guidelines used
Chinese Australian Cultural Heritage in NSW	2004		Chinese Australian Historical Society Inc		No
Arriving and Settling in NSW since 1945	2012		Terry Kass		Yes

References, internet links & images

Type	Author	Year	Title	Internet Links
Written	Anna Halafoff, Ruth Fitzpatrick, Kim Lam	2012	Buddhism in Australia: An Emerging Field of Study	
Written	Croucher, Paul	1989	Buddhism in Australia	
Written	Enid Adam and Philip J. Hughes	1996	The Buddhists in Australia	
Written	Fo Guang Shan		Nan Tien Temple / About Us (website page)	View detail (http://www.nantien.org.au)
Written	Foundation and Friends of the Botanic Gardens	2014	'South Coast Getaway, 18-19/11/2014' itinerary	
Written	Gordon Waitt	2003	A Place for Buddha in Wollongong, New South Wales? Territorial rules in the place-making of sacred spaces	
Written	Kate Gahan and edited by Sue Wesson	2005	A History of Aboriginal People of the Illawarra 1770 to 1970	
Written	Kathleen H. Barwick	1978	History of Berkeley, New South Wales	
Written	Ken Eastwood	2012	Nan Tien Temple	
Written	Lindsay Smith	2006	Hidden Dragons: The archaeology of mid-to-late nineteenth century Chinese communities in southeastern New South Wales	
Written	Michelle Barker (Spuler)	2007	Investments in Religious Capital: An explorative case study of Australian Buddhists	
Written	Michelle Spuler	2002	The Development of Buddhism in Australia and New Zealand	
Written	Michelle Spuler	2000	Characteristics of Buddhism in Australia	
Written	Mike Donaldson, Les Bursill and Mary Jacobs	2015	A history of Aboriginal illawarra Vol I: Before Colonisation	

Written	Peggy James	2015	The Eco-Buddhism of Marie Byles	
Written	Scott Pacey	2012	Flows of Faith: Religious Reach and Community in Asia and the Pacific	
Written	Shi Juewei	2019	Buddhist merit in the West: A case study from Australia's Nan Tien Temple	
Written	Thanh Nguyen	1995	Recommendations and Guidelines for Designing Vietnamese Buddhist Temples in Australia	

Note: internet links may be to web pages, documents or images.



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Listing curtilage recommended

Heritage Council of New South Wales







State Heritage Register- Proposed Curtilage:Nan TienTemple
Berkeley NSW
Plan:3207


0 50 100 m

Map scale: 1:3500 @ A4
Datum/projection: GCS GDA 94
Date: 13 June 2023







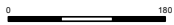
-  Proposed SHR Curtilage
-  Land Parcel
-  SUBURB
-  LGA




wollongong
 city of innovation

Legend

-  Nan Tien Temple Leased Area
-  Wollongong Memorial Gardens
-  Proposed SHR Curtilage



 Meters

Date of Aerial Photography: 2023
Drawn: H. Jones
Date: 01 September 2023
Gis ref: Leased_Areas_01-09-23.mxd