

MEETING: Confidential Meeting of Council
DATE: 20th February 2024

DEPARTMENT: ADMINISTRATION
OFFICER: Chief Executive Officer

REPORT ITEM	13.2
REPORT TITLE	Brewery Cellars Strategic Development
File Reference	7.36.1.1
PILLAR Objective	COMMUNITY ASSETS & INFRASTRUCTURE Implement Council's Infrastructure & Asset Management Plan and keep the community informed.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) be authorised to negotiate (including all terms and conditions) the purchase of the property at 5 Bridge Terrace BURRA (CT5611/727) subject to the following:

- 1) the purchase price does not exceed \$ _____ (excluding all duties, purchase costs and charges); and**
- 2) that the CEO in his opinion reasonably believes;**
 - a) the residence, land and other buildings are not substantially defective; and**
 - b) the acquisition represents positive ancillary heritage value to the Council as an integral part of the former Unicorn Brewery (currently owned by the Council).**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On the 15th August 2023 Council passed the following motion:

128/23..... That Council give permission to the Chief Executive Officer to discuss with the owners of 5 Bridge Terrace Burra (CT5611/727) a proposal for Council to request a first right of refusal to purchase the property when the owners decide to place the property on the market. The Brewery Cellars are located under the above-mentioned property and this would allow for strategic planning for this property.

The property has been listed for sale by Raine & Horne Real Estate Agency for a price range of \$560,000 - \$580,000. Should Council wish to purchase the property as a strategic acquisition given its historical value as a part of the former Unicorn Brewery then Council will need to make an offer in keeping with section 49(a1) of the *Local Government Act* by **obtaining value in the expenditure of public money.**

Obtaining Value in the Expenditure of Public Money is not restricted to price alone.

An assessment of value for money must include, where possible, consideration of:

- the contribution to Council's long-term plan and strategic direction;
- any relevant direct and indirect benefits to Council, both tangible and intangible;
- efficiency and effectiveness of the proposed procurement activity;
- whole of life costs;
- Council's internal administration costs;
- technical compliance issues;
- risk exposure; and
- the value of any associated environmental benefits.

The property offers Council:

- a) the opportunity to secure an important integral historical part of the former Unicorn Brewery which will add significance and strategic value to Council through the proposed World Heritage inscription of the Australian Cornish Mining Site Burra;
- b) enable immediate abatement of water ingress to the former Unicorn Brewery cellars which have been directly affected by water from the property over many years. This will provide further surety for the future conservation and preservation of the vast Unicorn Brewery cellar network by providing access for drainage remediation and management.
- c) the opportunity to expand the Paxton Square Cottages accommodation and/or;
- d) enable a readaptation use in line with the former Unicorn Brewery's historical values.

1. *The former Unicorn Brewery site contains the remains of the Unicorn Brewery which was in operation from 1873 until 1902. The Unicorn Brewery was part of an early brewing industry, an important industry in Burra and the surrounding region, and in the economic development of South Australia in that period.*

The remains are of significance because they reflect features of that early brewing industry. The cellars are the most intact and unaltered remains of the unicorn Brewery. Other relics contained on the site and their relationship with the cellar network contribute to an overall interpretation and appreciation of an immense industrial site for that period.

The relics are significant for their historical associations. The Unicorn Brewery had been in operation for only 4 years when the Burra Mine closed and much of the town's dwindling population was leaving in search of work elsewhere. This did not significantly affect the brewery's trade, implying that there was a significant market other than the local mining population. The Unicorn Brewery's trade was supported by the expanding agricultural population of the Mid-north region.

The Unicorn Brewery was tied to the colony's expanding rail network. The railway was used extensively by the brewery and is a reflection of Burra becoming a railhead town, and also of South Australia's economic dependence on the railway as a transport system. The fate of the brewery also illustrates Adelaide's increasing dominance as the trade, production and commerce centre for the whole of South Australia.

Socially, the Unicorn Brewery was the focus of a major brewing industry in Burra and the whole of the Mid-North region of the state. It supplied many of the hotels in this region and as far afield as Broken Hill.

Aesthetically, the relics of the Unicorn Brewery that are on this site above ground reflect little of the brewery's former character or importance. It is only by closer examination of the remaining stone walls in relation to the significantly altered single story buildings and the largely intact cellar network that the importance and size of the site can be realised.

The above ground brewing plant was noted as an imposing feature of burra's urban landscape and although little now remains the brewing tower and chimney were among Burra's tallest buildings.

The cellars still retain their historical integrity. The surviving features are closely linked with their original function, a reflection of the simple method for the creation of a suitable environment for the storage of ale.

The cellars have a simple aesthetic appeal, retaining an atmosphere which captivates interest and generates curiosity. However little information can be provided to satisfy technical curiosity.

The underground clears are the most significant remains of the brewery and the one most closely linked with its function. They are practically complete and have not been adapted for any other purpose, apart from some dilapidation of white plaster and masonry the basic structure is intact and some remnants of racks, bottles and other apparatus are apparent.

While little architectural or technological significance in themselves, the cellars remain and some of the above ground structures are significant because they can be used to demonstrate the 19th century gravity system by which beer was brewed in this plant.

Although only a small part of the total complex, the method of construction of the cellars is of significance and reflects different methods and periods of construction, they are also a rare example of such an extensive structure of this type in South Australia.

At the local level the site is a vivid reminder of one part of the economic development of Burra after the closure of the Burra Mine.¹

- 2.. *The northern now building contains two (2) attached residences. The residence immediately to the north (Burke) of the council owned land is now a four (4) roomed cottage directly above a room of the cellars below. Walls are 50mm thick timber framed walls with masonry infills and plaster.*

The most northerly residence (Tiver) has an awkward floor plan arrangement brought about by the existence of a thick section of walling occurring within the residence. From the entrance a central passage leads to four (4) rooms, two (2) to each side of the passage. However, a fifth (5) room is linked to the two (2) rooms to the south of the passage. It is possible that the thick inner wall was the base of the tower structure.

The tower is the most dominant of all features photographed. Located within the main complex of single-story buildings to the north of the site, the tower is photographed or depicted with a hipped, pyramidal roof. Its photographic appearance suggests a corrugated, galvanized, sheet roof with a central louvred vent structure also with a hipped pyramidal roof.

¹ The Unicorn Brewery Cellars and Structures; A Conservation Study - Statement of Cultural Significance prepared for State Heritage Branch, Department for Environment and Planning by Flightpath Architects in September 1988.

The verticality of the tower is emphasised on the west elevation by two (2) openings in masonry of window proportions with louvres or slats to the outside. The openings occur above the roof line of the single-story structure. On the western elevation there is considerable stonework above the highest window to the eave, suggesting that the tower was at least four (4) storeys in height.

The tower was clearly constructed of stone with brick quoins. The walls of the tower project centrally from the main roof of the single storey structure. Its central north south axis aligns with the ridge of the single storey structure ²

CONTEXT

While the Unicorn Brewery is not a State Heritage Place the brewery has significant historical value due to the role it played in the early brewing industry in South Australia. Its location close to Paxton Cottages plays a relevant role in the historical development of Burra and early life there. It adds value to the visitor experience and storytelling after the mining ceased in Burra in 1877.



Unicorn Brewery, Bridge Terrace, Burra (c.1890)

Source: *State Library of South Australia, Mortlock Pictorial Collection, B 10378*

² The Unicorn Brewery Cellars and Structures; A Conservation Study - Structures (circa 1890) prepared for State Heritage Branch, Department for Environment and Planning by Flightpath Architects in September 1988.