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HERITAGE IMPACT STATEMENT

Athol Lodge, 7 Diggings Terrace, Thredbo

FINAL 4 November 2013

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to assess the impact of the proposed minor works to *Athol Lodge*, 7 Diggings Terrace, Thredbo.

Athol Lodge:

- **is** within the Australian Alps National Parks and Reserves which is included on the National Heritage List
- **is not** listed as a heritage item on the State Heritage Register established by the *NSW Heritage Act 1977*;
- **is** listed as a heritage item in Schedule 3 of *State Environmental Planning Policy (Kosciuszko National Park—Alpine Resorts) 2007*;
- **is not** listed as a heritage item in Schedule 7 of the *Snowy River Local Environmental Plan 1997*; and,
- **is** within the vicinity of heritage places listed in Schedule 3 of *State Environmental Planning Policy (Kosciuszko National Park—Alpine Resorts) 2007*.

State Environmental Planning Policy (Kosciuszko National Park—Alpine Resorts) 2007 includes *Athol Lodge* as a heritage item located in Thredbo Alpine Resort. The property description is given as "Lot 29, DP 727592 (known as Lot 46)". The current property description is Lot 756, DP 1119757.

This report has been prepared at the request of Strategic Design, Jindabyne, NSW.

1.2 The Site

Athol Lodge (Lot 56, DP 1119757), is located at 7 Diggings Terrace, Thredbo, NSW. Thredbo is a small village situated within Kosciuszko National Park that primarily functions as a ski resort.



Figure 1: Locality map

Source: Google Maps, accessed 2 November 2013

1.3 Methodology

This report has been prepared with reference to the NSW Heritage Branch guidelines for the preparation of statements of heritage impact, being:

- *Statements of Heritage Impact*, NSW Heritage Office and Department of Urban Affairs & Planning, 1996, revised 2002.

This report has regard to the principles established by *The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance*, Australia ICOMOS, 1999.

This report has been prepared with reference to *State Environmental Planning Policy (Kosciuszko National Park—Alpine Resorts) 2007*.

This assessment of heritage impact has also been prepared with reference to the documentation provided by Strategic Design:

- Plans – attached as Appendix A
- Statement of Environmental Effects dated October 2013

A site visit was not made. Photographs have been provided by Strategic Design.

The following documents have been referenced in the preparation of this report:

- Kosciuszko National Park Plan of Management 2006 by the Department of Environment and Conservation (NSW)
- Extract of *Thredbo Alpine Village Kosciuszko National Park, N.S.W: Draft Conservation Plan* by Clive Lucas Stapleton and Partners, June 1997
- Heritage Assessment Inventory for Thredbo Alpine Village by Clive Lucas Stapleton and Partners

1.4 Author

This report has been prepared by Kate Higgins, B.Sc (Architecture), B. Architecture, Master Heritage Conservation.

2.0 ABORIGINAL OCCUPATION

Scientific evidence indicates that Aboriginal people have a long history of using and occupying Kosciuszko National Park, demonstrating their successful adaptation to extreme environmental conditions. Evidence includes stone artefact scatters, campsites and ceremonial grounds.

The park is highly significant for descendants of Aboriginal people with traditional and historical links to the mountains. This is illustrated by their ongoing sense of belonging and identity, spiritual attachments, surviving traditional knowledge, and family stories and memories.

The annual migration of large Bogong moths to the mountains provided opportunities for large scale annual gatherings of different Aboriginal groups for feasting and ceremonies.

3.0 KOSCIUSZKO NATIONAL PARK

The first Europeans ventured into the region in the 1820s, thus commencing the disruption and displacement of Aboriginal societies and the introduction of new industries such as grazing and mining. Grazing was a significant pastoral activity in the nineteenth and twentieth

centuries. Continuously practiced for over 150 years, it made a considerable contribution to Australia’s pastoral industry.¹

The early 1900s saw an increase in scientific interest and tourism in the high country. By the 1930s, the mountains were attracting a growing number of bushwalkers, many of whom recognised the considerable recreational and natural values of the area. In 1972 the Government ceased to allow grazing within the park and extensive rehabilitation of eroded areas began. Kosciuszko National Park is reserved under the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974. Section 30E of the Act states that the purpose of reserving land as a national park is to identify, protect and conserve areas containing outstanding or representative ecosystems, and natural or cultural features, landscapes or phenomena that provide opportunities for public appreciation, inspiration, sustainable visitor use and enjoyment.²

The existing skifields and ski resorts reflect important social and recreational movements within Kosciuszko National Park.

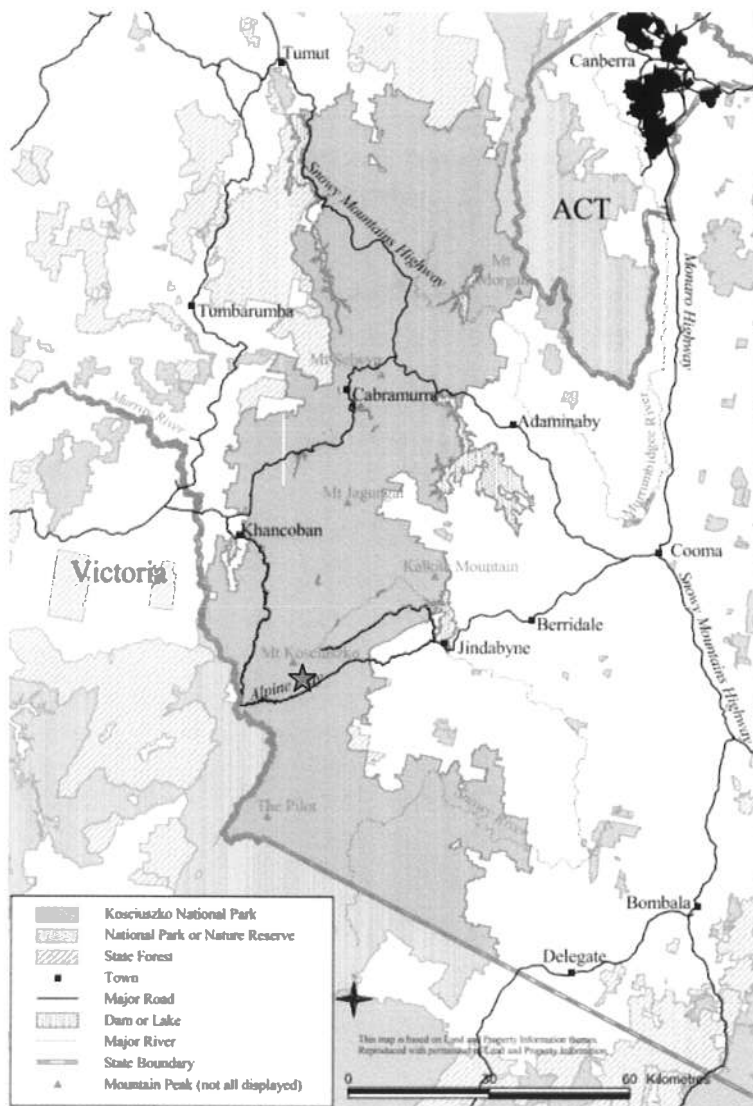


Figure 2: Map showing Kosciuszko National Park. The approximate location of Thredbo is shown with a red star.

Source: Department of Environment and Conservation (NSW), *Kosciuszko National Park Plan of Management 2006*. Annotation by author.

¹ Summary Statement of Significance, Australian Alps National Parks and Reserves, <http://www.environment.gov.au>

² Department of Environment and Conservation (NSW), *Kosciuszko National Park Plan of Management 2006*, pp 4 - 5

4.0 THREDBO VILLAGE

The potential of the area as a ski resort was observed by Tony Sponar, a hydrographer at the Snowy Mountains Authority, who together with others, formed the Kosciusko Chairlift and Thredbo Hotel Syndicate. The Syndicate was granted a lease in 1957 and began work on a chairlift and basic accommodation.³

The planning of Thredbo Village was piecemeal, centred around the paramount issues of road access (the Alpine Way and Banjo Drive), ski facilities (Crackenback ski lift), and accommodation. The village layout responded to the prevailing topography, minimisation of infrastructure costs, and access to views.⁴

Since 1987 the lease has been held by Amalgamated Holdings Limited who have invested over \$130 million in village infrastructure and facilities.⁵

The key elements which together form Thredbo's village character are:

- steep topography and surviving and introduced vegetation;
- relatively small lot size;
- clustering together of well designed and finished lodges;
- the availability of views and vistas within the village to the mountain ski slopes; and,
- the placement of 'landmark' buildings which provide a unique identity and sense of place.⁶



Figure 3: Aerial view of Thredbo Village. The location of Athol Lodge is indicated with a red arrow.

Source: SIX maps accessed 3 November 2013

³ <http://www.thredbo.com.au>, accessed 2 November 2013

⁴ Clive Lucas Stapleton and Partners, *Thredbo Alpine Village Kosciusko National Park, N.S.W: Draft Conservation Plan*, June 1997, p 26

⁵ <http://www.thredbo.com.au>, accessed 2 November 2013

⁶ Clive Lucas Stapleton and Partners, *Thredbo Alpine Village Kosciusko National Park, N.S.W: Draft Conservation Plan*, June 1997, p 26



Figure 4: View towards Thredbo village.
Source: bluepowder.com.au

5.0 ATHOL LODGE

Athol Lodge is a two – three storey lodge constructed in 1959 in the “Alpine” architectural style. The original unauthorised specifications for *Athol Lodge* were prepared in 1958 for Mrs. N.L. Palmer. Peter Storey of Civil and Civic appears to have been the architect. The lodge is clad with painted vertical timber boards and has a gable metal deck roof. The heritage inventory sheet prepared in 1997 states that the lodge was largely intact, although it is noted that the external timber steps and deck had probably been replaced and extended.⁷

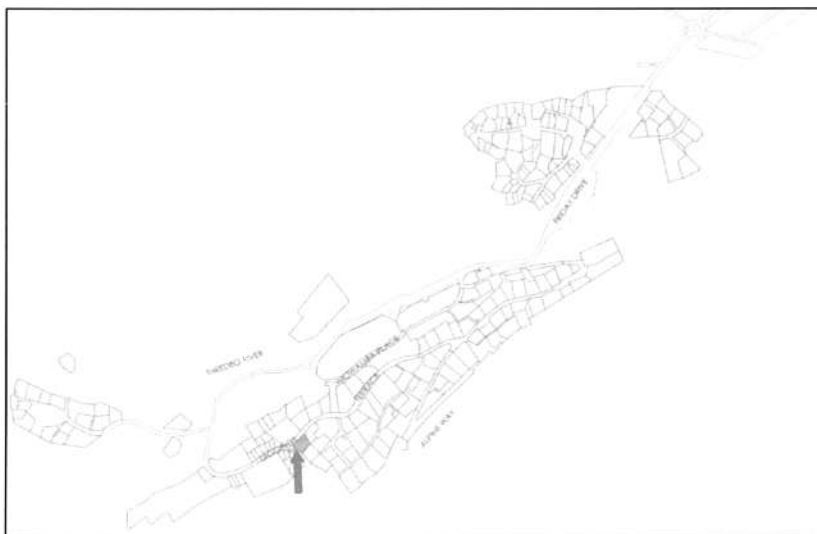


Figure 5: Location plan.
Athol Lodge is indicated with a red arrow.
Source: Strategic Design

⁷ Clive Lucas Stapleton and Partners, Heritage Assessment Inventory for Thredbo Alpine Village, 25 June 1997



Figure 6: Aerial view of Athol Lodge showing the roof.
Source: SIX maps accessed 3 November 2013



Figure 7: Front facade of Athol Lodge.
Source: Strategic Design



Figure 8: Streetscape and front facade of Athol Lodge (on the left side of the photograph).
Source: Strategic Design

6.0 HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

6.1 Athol Lodge

The statement of significance for Athol Lodge is:

Athol is an extant example of one of the earliest commercial lodges established at Thredbo. It also possesses the following values:

- Historic – it is an item which is representative of the earliest phase of development of Thredbo.*
- Aesthetic – it is an item which has a strong 'Alpine' influence in its architectural style
It contributes to the townscape qualities of the Creek group of buildings*
- Social - it is an item which is likely to be held in high regard by the first generation of ski enthusiasts that used the village
It is an item which is likely to be held in high regard by the first generation of residents of the village⁸*

6.2 Thredbo Village

The following statement of significance for Thredbo village is extracted from *Thredbo Alpine Village Kosciusko National Park, N.S.W: Draft Conservation Plan* by Clive Lucas Stapleton and Partners, dated June 1997 (pages 38 and 39).

⁸ Clive Lucas Stapleton and Partners, Heritage Assessment Inventory for Thredbo Alpine Village, 25 June 1997

5.3 Statements of Cultural Significance for the Place

Thredbo is significant for the following reasons:

5.3.1 Historic

Thredbo is representative of a number of ski resorts in the Snowy Mountains which were opened up in the 1950s to development due to works associated with a major national development project (the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electricity Scheme). It contains fabric in the form of roads and relocated former SMHEA huts which is representative of this significant phase in the history of post-WWII Australia (Criteria: HIS - REP - NAT).

Thredbo is one of a handful of ski resorts developed in NSW and Victoria in the mid to late 1950s. It contains fabric in the form of lodges and infrastructure which is representative of the early phase of this development (Criteria: HIS - REP - STA).

Thredbo possesses rare associations with members of a migrant community which settled in NSW after WWII. The association is in the form of a community residing at Thredbo, building and operating lodges and other services within the resort (Criteria: HIS - RAR - STA).

Thredbo is an example of a 20th century privately developed resort within the boundary of a NSW National Park and its fabric illustrates various phases of Government and head lease administrations (Criteria: HIS - REP - STA).

5.3.2 Aesthetic

Thredbo possesses some fabric which is representative of early technology used in the initial stage of development of the New South Wales ski resorts. This is contained in the chair lifts of Ramshead and Merritt's Spur (Criteria: AES - REP - STA).

Thredbo possesses a number of building which are good examples of ski lodge architecture of the 1950s-70s period (Criteria: AES - REP - STA).

Because of its topography and town planning Thredbo has a special 'village character' unlike that of other NSW ski resorts and contains a number of building groups, views and vistas of notable aesthetic quality (Criteria: AES - RAR - STA).

5.3.3 Social

Because of its 'village character' it is probable that Thredbo is held in high regard by the skiing community of NSW as a place uniquely associated with their sport (Criteria: SOC - RAR - STA).

Association with acknowledged 'pioneer' era of opening up the Snowy Mountains, Thredbo is held in high regard by the first generation of enthusiasts that used the resort, the residential community which ran the facilities and to some extent by their descendants (Criteria: SOC - RAR - LOC/STA).

5.3.4 Scientific

Thredbo does not appear to exhibit any attributes which meet this criteria.

7.0 PROPOSED WORK

There are two units within the building; 'Athol 5' (a five bedroom accommodation unit for public holiday rentals) and 'Athol 2' (2 bedroom accommodation unit for private use). Proposed works include the demolition of two irreparable decks on Athol 5, and a verandah roof structure off Athol 2. All windows throughout the building will be upgraded to double glazed units also, and a new fire place box in the living area of Athol 5. The lodge is proposed to have all external cladding re-painted with a new colour scheme, and landscaping to be improved around the entrances and car parking, to improve access amenity.⁹

Refer to Appendix A for a detailed description of the works shown on the plans prepared by Strategic Design.

8.0 PLANNING PROVISIONS

State Environmental Planning Policy (Kosciuszko National Park—Alpine Resorts) 2007 is the relevant planning instrument.

State Environmental Planning Policy (Kosciuszko National Park—Alpine Resorts) 2007 includes *Athol Lodge* as a heritage item located within Thredbo Alpine Resort.

Clause 26 Heritage Conservation of *State Environmental Planning Policy (Kosciuszko National Park—Alpine Resorts) 2007* states that the heritage objectives of the SEPP are to:

- conserve the environmental heritage of the land; and,
- conserve the heritage significance of heritage items, including associated fabric, settings and views.

The Clause requires the consent authority, before granting consent, to consider the effect of the proposed development on the heritage significance of the heritage item concerned.

The provisions of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* have not been considered as part of this assessment. (Note: *Athol Lodge* is within the boundaries of a place listed on the National Heritage List.)

9.0 ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE IMPACT

9.1 Preamble

The effect of the proposed work is assessed with regard to the relevant provisions *State Environmental Planning Policy (Kosciuszko National Park—Alpine Resorts) 2007*.

The effect of the proposed work is also assessed with regard to the conservation policies of the *Thredbo Alpine Village Kosciusko National Park, N.S.W: Draft Conservation Plan*.

The potential impact on Aboriginal places or archaeological resources is not assessed.

9.2 State Environmental Planning Policy (Kosciuszko National Park—Alpine Resorts) 2007

The proposed work will not adversely affect the heritage values of *Athol Lodge*, nor its setting or any views because:

- the work is minor, largely involving remedial and maintenance works (see a further discussion below);

⁹ Strategic Design, *Statement of Environmental Effects*, October 2013, p 5

- the work is necessary in order to bring the building up to a safe standard (see a further discussion below);
- the maximum amount of original fabric as is practicable will be retained;
- the verandah roof to be demolished appears not to be original (part of "Athol 2");
- the addition of a deck across "Athol 2" is compatible with the architectural character of the existing building;
- the decks to be demolished appear not to be original but have been altered and rebuilt in the past (see comment on the heritage inventory sheet) and so have negligible heritage value;
- no change is proposed to the existing topography;
- the proposed changes reflect and retain the architectural character of the existing building;
- the historic use of the building as a winter skiing lodge is retained;
- the proposed hardwood and steel balustrades have a simple functional design that will not be visually intrusive and will allow the balustrades to remain secondary visual elements, with the architectural form of the building remaining the dominant visual element;
- the materials are compatible with the existing materials;
- the timber of the proposed balustrade respects the natural materials used in the existing building (timber clad walls above a stone base) ;
- the proposed work helps to retain the historic use by undertaking necessary safety works and improving amenity and the environmental performance of the building;
- the proposed colour scheme is not obtrusive, having neutral colours compatible with the colours of the existing stonework walls;
- the changes to the landscape setting are minor and compatible with the existing setting;
- the new work will be clearly identifiable as new and not original;
- the proposed work will not adversely impact on the streetscape or setting of any nearby historic properties as it is compatible with the character of the existing building and, being minor in nature, will have limited visual effect ; and,
- no views or vistas will be blocked.

The structural inspection report dated 23 April 2013 and prepared by G.O. Engineering Consultants states that the balcony of the main building is no longer structurally sound and that the existing decking is inadequate. The report recommends remedial action.



Figure 9: Existing deck.

Source: G.O. Engineering Consultants



Figure 10: Existing deck.

Source: G.O. Engineering Consultants

9.3 Conservation Management Plan Policies

The relevant conservation policies of the *Thredbo Alpine Village Kosciusko National Park, N.S.W: Draft Conservation Plan* are addressed in the table below.

	POLICY	RESPONSE
7.2	Treatment of the Fabric	
7.2.1	Retain heritage fabric	The following are to be retained: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • original fabric – as the decks have been replaced previously • landform • significant vegetation – some new sympathetic planting which will enhance the landscape setting is proposed • lot size and arrangement • road and path pattern
7.2.2	Retaining heritage associations	The lodge, and early extant lodge built in the European Alpine style, is being retained. Its primary form and materials remain unchanged.
7.2.3	Other considerations	It is necessary to replace the existing decks as they are unsafe. The changes provide for the historic and on-going use of the building as a ski lodge.
7.2.4	Maintenance	The re-painting of the existing cladding is necessary maintenance work. The proposed colour scheme is neutral and in keeping with the natural colours of the stone base to the building. The neutral colours will ensure that the building is not visually obtrusive.
7.2.5	Views and vistas	No views or vistas will be blocked.
7.4	Use of the place	
	Retaining heritage uses	The proposed works allows the historic ski lodge use to be retained.
7.5	Intervention in conserved fabric	
	Disturbance	There will be minimal disturbance of the ground.
7.6	Adaptation of conserved fabric	
	Intervention	The proposed changes are to elements of the building which are no longer original or are minor changes which allow the original Alpine architectural form to remain clearly apparent. Some changes are required for safety reasons.

7.7	Additions and new buildings and other features of the place	
	Additions and other features	<p>The proposed additional deck along the front of "Athol 2" is a minor element compatible with the architectural character of the existing building. The deck helps to retain the historic use of the lodge by improving its amenity.</p> <p>The simple form and detailing of the decks and balustrades will help ensure that these elements are visually subservient to the main building form of the lodge.</p> <p>The materials of the decks and balustrades are sympathetic to the existing materials.</p> <p>The existing car parking area is to be realigned to be parallel to the lodge and slightly enlarged to add one additional space. This will have a negligible impact on the setting of <i>Athol Lodge</i>.</p>

10.0 CONCLUSION

The proposed minor and maintenance works to *Athol Lodge* provide for the continuation of the historic use of the building as a ski lodge. This report has considered the heritage significance of *Athol Lodge* and of Thredbo village.

The proposed works will not adversely affect the heritage values nor village character of Thredbo as the work is compatible with the existing character of the area.

The proposed work will have a negligible impact on the heritage significance of *Athol Lodge* as the works are minor, and retain the key aspects of the architectural style of the existing building, as well as its setting.

It is considered that the proposed work satisfies the heritage provisions of *State Environmental Planning Policy (Kosciuszko National Park—Alpine Resorts) 2007*.

The proposed work is considered acceptable with regard to its impact on heritage values and it is recommended to be approved.

APPENDIX A