

Crago Mill Precinct

Yass Valley Council

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Heritage Design Statement



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Heritage Design Statement to Support the Development Application for Crago Mill Precinct.

The overall precinct design

The existing heritage listed Crago Mill is located both well back from the Comur Street alignment and at an angle to the street. From early in the design process for the project, it was felt that the existing heritage building should be connected to Comur Street as the main street of Yass, and not hidden.

In developing the design for the precinct the proposed new buildings have been carefully placed to both connect to the main street and also create a setting for the heritage Crago Mill. This has been achieved by creating a triangular public space which resolves the geometries of the site, allowing the development to address Comur street, while integrating the new buildings and exiting heritage around a single urban space. The three edges of the public space are defined by:

- The Civic Administration Centre to the southern edge
- A commercial building to the northwestern edge; and
- Comur Street to the northeastern edge.

This strategy allows the historic Crago Mill to sit at the apex of the triangular space and be framed by buildings on either side. This arrangement gives the Crago Mill pride of place within the precinct, both as the focus of the new plaza and as an important building in the streetscape.

A new terrace is proposed to the south eastern side of the Mill building. This terrace will connect to the existing railway platform and allow the cafe to spill out around two sides of the existing building. This will importantly allow the cafe to activate the public plaza.

The public space is of a size that a series of open flexible “public rooms” can be used to run community activities. These activities will activate the new precinct and add generally to the town centre. This urban space has been designed to gently slope to Comur Street with a mix of paved and grassed areas designed to stimulate community activities and enhance views through from the main street to the Mill. Careful location of trees in the public space will ensure views of the Mill as one moves along the main street of Yass.

Cutting across the site from the corner of Comur and Polding Streets through to the Aldi carpark, it is planned to construct a new terrace which will transition the existing sloping levels of the main plaza to the rear of the site and create a platform for the new Library and Civic Administration Centre. This terrace is set to be along one edge of the historic railway spur line. This reinforces the existing heritage Crago Mill structure, creating a strong visual line back to Comur Street.

The terrace has been designed to be at the same level as the existing railway platform. The overall intention is that users of both the Mill cafe and the library feel connected, as they appear to be having a “conversation”. We believe this also reinforces the public nature of the Crago Mill.

The Crago Mill and library building are two separate structures, linked by a number of design aspects, including:

- Careful consideration of the building forms to connect the buildings visually;
- The placement of the library allowing it to address the Crago Mill;
- The ability for library functions to spill out onto the terrace between the library and heritage Mill building; co-joins activities; and
- The design of the northern facade of the library as a transparent glass facade allows users of the library to feel they are connected to the public space and its heritage focus.

These aspects work together to unite the two buildings.

It is also noted that this precinct has the potential to be connected further with Yass’s heritage as the start of a heritage walkway following the rail line to the river, at the northern end of the town centre.



Crago Mill Refurbishment

The Crago Mill building was at the core of Yass's early development in the late nineteenth century. It is an expression of Yass as a vibrant rural commercial and community hub. A refurbished Crago Mill has potential to house a range of community programs and activities. It is proposed to include a Cafe to serve all components of the precinct within level 1 of the existing building. It is planned to use the remainder of the level as flexible community and exhibition space. A flexible loose fit approach to the renovation and reuse of the Mill will allow opportunities to evolve to match the creativity and innovation of the Yass community.

Key elements of the Crago Mill include:

- New stair and lift tower to allow access to upper level of the Mill to maximise use of the heritage building.
- Level 1, along with heritage railway platform to house cafe to serve the whole precinct. A new terrace for additional seating proposed to be located on eastern side of building to allow a mix of undercover and "in the sun" seating.
- Upper levels of the Mill would provide area for flexible exhibition and community functions. These areas will be visually connected to the ground floor cafe through open voids that run through the building exposing the heritage building fabric.
- Ground level and heritage platform serves as dining and food preparation areas for 'a cafe tenancy'.
- Use of the basement for flexible community and exhibition space. It is also intended to include heritage interpretation on this level as there are a number of artefacts of the Mills previous industrial heritage located in the basement.
- Railway and track to be maintained at historical level. Steps from platforms allow connection to the rail level and main public urban space.

The renovation and reuse of this building carefully considers the existing building fabric to ensure the heritage value is maintained while adapting the building to new uses. We have identified the following principles which guided the design of this component of the project.

- The existing building is to be maintained intact and renovated to preserve the existing heritage building fabric.
- The railway platform and awning over the platform are important parts of the heritage and are to be preserved.
- The Mill building should include functions that allow the multi floor open spaces to be preserved.

Design of the new buildings to enhance the heritage setting

Careful consideration of the proposed new building designs was undertaken to ensure they complimented the heritage of the site and its surroundings. The design of each building incorporates elements of the site and the town centre including:

- The scale of the buildings which relate to those of the neighbouring buildings and scale of the Crago Mill.
- Each of the new buildings include a feature curved walls with proposed rippled surface. This celebrates the first nation connection to country and meeting of waters as well as drawing the eye towards the focus of the public space, Crago Mill.
- The ensemble of gabled roofs topping the new buildings echos that of the Crago Mill, and the historic forms of the site.
- The proposed building will have painted brickwork facades with galvanised steel roofs. These materials have been selected to connect to the existing urban character and materiality of Yass's' main street.

