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Exhibition

Port Phillip Heritage Review

Volume I – Exhibition Version Amendment
C161port

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Prepared for the City of Port Phillip by Andrew Ward, Architectural Historian

1. Introduction

1.1 Port Phillip Heritage Review¹

The initial Review of the cultural heritage of the City of Port Phillip was commissioned in October, 1996. The consultant team was lead by Andrew Ward, architectural historian and supported by Francine Gilfedder, horticulturalist and garden historian. Data base management and map generation was undertaken by Ian Perry of Big Picture Software Pty. Ltd. and research assistance was provided by Jenny Dalrymple of Andrew Ward's office. The project was directed by Jim Holdsworth, manager, Urban Design and Strategic Planning at the City of Port Phillip and he was assisted during the early stages of the Study by Peter Boyle, architect, as project officer.

The project was undertaken simultaneously with the City of Port Phillip Urban Character Study and a joint project steering committee was established to give support to the consultant teams. The membership of the committee was as follows:

- Councillor Dick Gross (chair),
- Councillor Pat Browne,
- Councillor Liz Johnstone
- Jim Holdsworth, manager Urban Design and Strategic Planning,
- David Spokes, general manager, Community Planning,
- Steve Dunn, manager Business and Industry,
- Geoff Austin, Department of Infrastructure,
- Dale Wardlaw, Department of Infrastructure,
- Kim Dovey, University of Melbourne,
- Lyn Harrison, community representative,
- Adair Bunnnett, community representative,
- Andrew Heslop, community representative, and
- David Brand, community representative.

The support of the members of this committee throughout the course of the Study is acknowledged with thanks, their knowledge of the Municipality, their expertise and commitment to the task being highly valued.

¹ The Port Phillip Heritage Review (Version 2) was gazetted as a part of Amendment C5 to the Port Phillip Planning Scheme in December 2000.

The City of Port Phillip, having been formed by the amalgamation of the Cities of Port Melbourne, South Melbourne and St. Kilda, had inherited several urban conservation studies. They had been prepared at different times, commencing in 1975 and using different criteria for the evaluation of the significance of places. Furthermore, the municipal boundaries represented discontinuities in the identified urban conservation areas, placing the integrity of the new City's conservation strategy at risk. The studies were as follows:

- Yuncken Freeman Ashton Wilson: South Melbourne Conservation Study (1975),
- Jacobs Lewis Vines: Port Melbourne Conservation Study (1979),
- Allom Lovell Sanderson Pty. Ltd.: South Melbourne Conservation Study (1987),
- Nigel Lewis and Associates: St. Kilda Conservation Study Area 1 (1982),
- David Bick: St. Kilda Conservation Study Area 2 (1985),
- Robert Peck von Hartel Trethowan with Henshall Hansen Associates: City of St. Kilda Twentieth Century Architectural Study (1992), and
- Allom Lovell and Associates: Port Melbourne Conservation Study Review (1995).

1.2 Updating the Port Phillip Heritage Review

Since the gazettal of the original Port Phillip Heritage Review in 2000, additional assessments of places and areas of heritage significance have been completed. The following heritage studies were commissioned:

- Graeme Butler and Associates: *Swallow Street (2004)*
- Heritage Alliance: *East St Kilda Heritage Study (2004)*
- Heritage Alliance: *Elwood Heritage Review (2005)*
- Heritage Alliance: *Nightingale Street Heritage Study (2008)*
- Heritage Alliance & Built Heritage: *Review of Heritage Overlay 3 (2009 / 2010)*
- Lovell Chen: *Review of Heritage Overlay 1 (2011)*.
- Lovell Chen: *Review of Heritage Overlay 1 Port Melbourne – Stage 2 Review (2012)*
- Peter Andrew Barrett: *Tiuna Grove, Elwood (2019)*
- RBA Architects and Conservation Consultants: *Fishermans Bend Heritage Review: Montague Commercial Precinct (2019)*
- David Helms Heritage Planning: *Port Phillip Heritage Review Update (2019)*
- Context Pty Ltd: *Heritage Assessment, 588-590 City Rd, South Melbourne (2017)*.
- Context Pty Ltd: *Heritage Assessment 2-6 Blanche Street and 110-118 Barkly Street, St Kilda (December 2017)*.
- Peter Andrew Barrett: *58 - 60 Queens Road, Melbourne Heritage Assessment (November 2017)*.

The resultant findings have been included in the Port Phillip Heritage Review through the Planning Scheme Amendment process.²

The assessment framework used in each of the above heritage assessments is based upon the framework developed by Andrew Ward as outlined in the following chapters.

² The Port Phillip Heritage Review is an incorporated document in the Port Phillip Planning Scheme. Planning Scheme Amendments C24, C29, C32, C46, C52, C54, C70, C72, C74, C89 and C103 enabled new information on heritage places and heritage areas within the municipality to be included in the Port Phillip Heritage Review.

2. Brief

The project brief was designed to address the inconsistencies inherent in the previous studies when viewed together. The objectives were stated in the brief as follows:

- *“to provide a consistent approach to building grading and the recording of building significance across the municipality, for all architectural/historical periods including the twentieth century;*
- *to identify and fill gaps in building records, e.g., to ensure that significant 20th century buildings across the municipality are identified;*
- *to ensure that building gradings are updated, e.g., some buildings have been demolished;*
- *to identify historically significant streetscapes, other public spaces, parks or elements within them worthy of protection;*
- *to provide the strategic basis for any future statutory heritage controls in the Planning Scheme using the new Heritage Place Control.”*

The project tasks were to:

- Review the building gradings and assessments from the earlier studies.
- Assess 20th century buildings across the whole of the municipality to complement the work previously undertaken in the former City of St. Kilda.
- Investigate and complete building identification forms and citations for the commercial and industrial areas of Port Melbourne that were not included in the 1995 review.
- Review the Port Melbourne recommendations for area controls based on the new Model Heritage Place control.
- Prepare plans identifying the location of all graded buildings and existing and proposed urban conservation area boundaries.
- List those buildings recommended for inclusion in the Register of the National Estate and the Victorian Historic Buildings Register.
- Identify and assess the public spaces and parks within the City of Port Phillip and their contents including significant trees, monuments and sculptures.

3. Study Method

3.1 Thematic Environmental History

A working paper was prepared (no.1) summarising the findings of the environmental histories prepared by earlier consultants so as to establish an historical context for the forthcoming field work. It was, however, agreed at an early stage, that the Review should be founded in a new thematic history of the whole of the Municipality using the trial framework of themes contained in the report entitled “Principal Australian Historic Themes: A Guide for heritage agencies” (draft), being a document prepared under the Australian Heritage Commission’s National Heritage Co-ordination Strategy. This work was carried out and constitutes section 4 of the Report. The work previously undertaken by the consultants in the reports noted above was used as a source of information in the thematic history which also drew on available published histories of the former Cities of Port Melbourne, South Melbourne and St. Kilda. This work was undertaken by Andrew Ward.

3.2 Field Survey

The Thematic Environmental History provided a basis for the identification and evaluation of the significance of places in the field. The criteria for the assessment of cultural heritage significance adopted by the Australian Heritage Commission in April, 1990 were used in conjunction with the history and the field inspections to provide preliminary assessments of significance for all properties in the Municipality. A working paper (no.4) was prepared to explain how these criteria would be applied and used in the generation of computerised maps. These maps recorded information according to a system of ranking which can be explained in the following terms:

Levels of importance were simplified along traditional lines, assigning the letter A to places considered to be of national importance, B to those of regional importance and C to those of local importance. These levels of importance had implications for the introduction or confirmation of existing statutory control provisions in the Planning Scheme. Where a place was considered to have lesser importance than level C, it was ranked D, meaning that it was likely to be substantially intact but merely representative of an era. Places of lesser cultural value were ranked E, usually implying that the place had been defaced, but not irretrievably, or that it was aesthetically undistinguished. Finally, a place was ranked F if it was considered to have been important in the past but as a result of intervention now so compromised that it was likely to be of interest only. Places having for planning purposes no cultural value were ranked N.

It is important to note when interpreting the maps produced in this way that they represent a “picture” of the Municipality that is in many instances based upon imperfect data. A quick visual inspection of the exterior of a building, after all, cannot be said to constitute a thorough appraisal. By the same token, however, if a data sheet has been prepared for a place, then the recommendations arising from the review of this data sheet have been incorporated in the maps and may therefore be counted as a firm basis for future planning decisions. The maps are therefore of greatest value for their capacity to graphically present an overview of the Municipality, not only in terms of its evolution but also in terms of the cultural value of neighbourhoods. They have been used to assist the consultant to identify potential heritage overlay areas.

The maps themselves used a digital base supplied to Council by the State Government. One of the layers of this base consists of a series of polygons representing the boundaries of properties. The mapping software allows data fields to be attached to each property with the result that the map becomes a front end to a data base table. Data generated during this Review, however, was included on the map by adding a separate data base table, linked to the map table by a unique identifying number. In this way, one can work on the data in the heritage table independently of the map. In its final form, the Review consists of data sheets for individual places linked to the map by the appropriate identifying numbers. The mapping software was Mapinfo, having the capability of linking with Microsoft Access97 for the storage of linked data.

3.3 Heritage Overlay Areas

These areas were identified using the maps in conjunction with the work of the previous consultants. Further inspection was then undertaken in the field to verify this Consultant's findings. There are important changes between the work of the earlier consultants and this Review that can be accounted for in the following ways:

- in some instances, places have been altered since the earlier surveys. In extreme circumstances, contributory buildings have been demolished. This was, not surprisingly, most evident in the areas that had not been protected by planning scheme control.
- given the new planning scheme provisions and more particularly the urban character provisions, it was determined that heritage controls should only apply to those areas where the fabric of the place was considered to be so important that it should not be demolished. In other words, the areas of lesser cultural value could not unreasonably be managed by the urban character provisions of the Scheme. It is for this reason that the proposed heritage overlay areas have been drawn with precision and form highly irregular patterns. Their focus, after all, is on the conservation of fabric as well as character. It is argued in this Review that discrete areas, bounded more or less neatly by streets and natural boundaries are best managed by the urban character controls with heritage overlay controls applying only to those areas within the urban character areas where demolition control is required. It is partly as a consequence, therefore, of the new planning provisions, that the approach to the identification of the heritage overlay areas has changed.
- finally, and as a consequence of the computerised mapping process, changes were made on the basis of data that had been prepared consistently over the whole of the Municipality, irrespective of past municipal boundaries. Consistency carries with it the fact that comparative evaluations were made for places in this Review over a much larger area than had previously been subject to consideration. In other words, some areas, which when assessed in terms of the former municipal boundaries, were arguably the most important of their respective types, were of much lesser importance when assessed comparatively over the wider municipality of Port Phillip.

Once identified, the areas were documented in terms of their present circumstances and the elements which give them distinction. Their history was then summarised and their position in the thematic framework identified prior to preparing statements of significance with consequent recommendations.

3.4 Data Sheets

Data sheets have been prepared for several additional places previously undocumented. They include the heritage overlay areas themselves, individually significant places situated outside of the areas and a number of additional places. A standard format has been used that is similar to the heritage overlay area data sheets. Big Picture Software Pty. Ltd. was engaged during the course of the Study period to prepare a data base incorporating the data sheets for the individual places undertaken as a part of this Study as well as the work of all previous consultants. The findings of the past consultants have been reviewed as a part of this Study using the same criteria, thereby introducing consistency to the assessments. This data base forms an additional four volumes of this report.

3.5 Schedule to the Heritage Overlay Table

This schedule was prepared using the assessments arising from the field survey and checking them wherever possible against the assessments of the earlier consultants. It includes the identified heritage overlay areas and all places of individual significance outside of those areas. Within the areas, only those places considered to be of regional or state importance have been listed. It follows that there are many places of individual significance at the local level within the identified heritage overlay areas that have not been separately listed.

Generally speaking, paint colour scheme controls have been proposed only in the retail streets of the heritage overlay areas. These controls are not proposed in the residential areas except where a place is individually listed. Interior controls for individually listed places have only been proposed where elements of the interior of a place are known to contribute to its significance in an important way. This may be on account of their architectural or aesthetic value or simply because a building of a certain type is expected to have rooms of a certain type, the absence of defacement of which would impact on its significance. By way of example, a post office would be expected to have a public space; a railway station, waiting rooms, and so on. Planning decisions impacting on the significance of the building should respect the integrity of these spaces, irrespective of their aesthetic values.