



The Carlton Residents Association Inc.

Newsflash

To: CRA Members
From: Sue Chambers, President
Re: The Latest News
Date: July 11, 2004

Dear all

In the past month, a number of important decisions and plans have been made.

The most important has been the decision to place the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens on the world heritage list: see the citation below and check http://whc.unesco.org/pg.cfm?cid=82&id_news=66

Australia - **Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens**. The Royal Exhibition Building and its surrounding Carlton Gardens were designed for the great international exhibitions of 1880 and 1888 in Melbourne. The building and grounds were designed by Joseph Reed. The building is constructed of brick and timber, steel and slate. It combines elements from the Byzantine, Romanesque, Lombardic and Italian Renaissance styles. The property is typical of the international exhibition movement which saw over 50 exhibitions staged between 1851 and 1915 in venues including Paris, New York, Vienna, Calcutta, Kingston (Jamaica) and Santiago (Chile). All shared a common theme and aims: to chart material and moral progress through displays of industry from all nations.

It is expected that this status will lead all levels of government to plan and resource the preservation, maintenance and restoration of both the REB and the Carlton Gardens. There is now a draft Master plan for the Carlton Gardens which will go to public consultation soon, for submissions to Council by February 2005. Watch the MCC website for further information. There is great scope for improvements to the Carlton Gardens!

Our Committee also decided with much reluctance to negotiate an agreement with Becton on the Eastern Precinct site rather than Appeal the Minister's decision at VCAT. We were able to get some reduction of scale on the Swanston Street building, and commitment on streetscape improvement, further work on the design of the Cardigan Street building and car parking concessions. We still remain of the view that the building complex is patently visually bulky for the site, and that the development will dominate the heritage building and not provide a positive benefit to pedestrians at the busy Faraday/Swanston Street intersection. Our legal advice was not to proceed. From another view, the gains we achieved from the original plans were substantial: but what will be built is unlikely to impress future generations, who will not know about the original plans.

A further instance of chipping away at Carlton's heritage is the "renovation" at 264 and 266 Elgin Street. These two charming cottages are part of a level 1 streetscape and graded C in the MCC heritage list. CRA objected to the plans to extend the cottages at the back on heritage grounds, due to part of the roof being removed on one of the cottages, and thus jeopardizing the structure of the original building. We called for a heritage consultant's report to inform the



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decision. The MCC heritage advisor objected on the grounds that the plans did not retain the front two rooms, and to the removal of part of the roof structure of the original building. The developer's heritage advisor argued that the removal of the roof was allowed by planning controls because it would not affect the view of the building from the street. The MCC officer's report sided with the developer's heritage advisor, and a planning permit was issued. Don Chambers and I were appalled to see the extent of the demolition in mid June this year. Just the front wall of 266 remained as can be seen below! MCC checked the extent of the demolition, and found it was greater than the permit allowed. A fine of \$500 was imposed.

266 Elgin Street: facing the street

266 Elgin Street demolition