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Mr Tim Smith
Executive Director
Heritage Victoria
PO Box 500
Melbourne VIC 8002 heritage.permits@delwp.vic.gov.au

Dear Mr Smith

**Subject: Submission in relation to Permit Application P26807
Royal Exhibition Building: Promotion and Protection Works**

The following submission, from the Planning Committee of the Carlton Residents' Association [CRA], addresses one matter, the proposed new Pavilion on the lower promenade deck.

Yours faithfully

Ewan Ogilvy [for the Planning Committee of the CRA]

Royal Exhibition Building VHR1501 - Permit Application P26807 Comments upon the Proposed Dome Promenade Pavilion

The reinstatement of the promenade experience is strongly supported. However, the location, size and potential uses of the proposed pavilion on the lower deck are likely to have a major impact on the cultural significance of the Royal Exhibition Building.

Comments

The proposed pavilion is described in the following manner (Lovell Chen [May 2017] p 83)

As has been described, the proposed pavilion on the lower promenade deck is to provide a covered space to accommodate visitors in inclement weather (hot and cold), to house interpretation and to provide a space which can generate income for Museum Victoria in support of the long term conservation of the building. The proposal references the original deck treatment, which included a 'camera obscura' structure for the duration of the first exhibition. This was a gable roofed building which was visible from ground level, as illustrated in Appendix B.

From the information presented in the drawings and the schedule of works, it is clear that this structure is no "simple" pavilion. While the steel framed glass pavilion may be conceived as a "light" structure, it takes up about 40% of the area of the lower promenade deck, and unlike many "light" pavilions, will be constructed to facilitate the provision of both mechanical and electrical services. No doubt, these services will be required so that the space can "generate income for Museum Victoria".

It is suggested [in the extract above] that the pavilion "references the original deck treatment, which included a 'camera obscura' structure for the duration of the first exhibition". However, it must be emphasised that this temporary [and smaller] structure served a very different purpose as indicated in the following extract from Lovell Chen [Nov 2016] p 4.

The camera obscura was described in reports and letters to various newspapers over the duration of the exhibition.

'... some additional architecture in the shape of a thing that looks like an iron sentry-box ... This box has been fixed up over the south entrance to the building ... turns out that the thing is a camera obscura, for which a sum of 3d. is to be charged for a peep at this great metrolupus (sic) of the Southern seas.⁵

While the Photo Montage exhibits provided by the Applicant suggest that the proposed pavilion will be largely obscured when viewed from different vantage points in the Carlton Gardens, it will constitute a major new element when viewed from the upper promenade deck [see attachment]. Also, if the pavilion is used at night for income generating functions, the light spill will draw attention to this major new element.

While the housing of interpretation materials in the Pavilion could be useful, given that stage 2 of the Basement works will include a ticketing desk, shop and gallery, exhibition and storage spaces, this location would provide an alternative, and equally convenient location, for the housing of interpretation materials.

Finally, it is not clear why accommodation needs to be provided at the lower promenade deck for visitors in inclement weather [both hot and cold]. It wasn't required in the nineteenth century, and cannot be regarded as an essential component of the Protection and Promotion Project.

Conclusion

Since the major purpose of the promotion works is to reinstate the Promenade Experience, it is not at all clear how the construction of a Pavilion and associated "Utility Room" on the lower deck will facilitate that experience. When these facilities are used for income generating functions, it is highly likely that access to the upper deck [and the promenade experience] will be restricted. Also, given that the new Pavilion will take up about 40% of the lower deck, this structure cannot avoid detracting from the appreciation of the original pavilions [stair "shafts"] and other roof elements of the REB when viewed from the upper deck. This would not be consistent with The Burra Charter [2013] guidance.

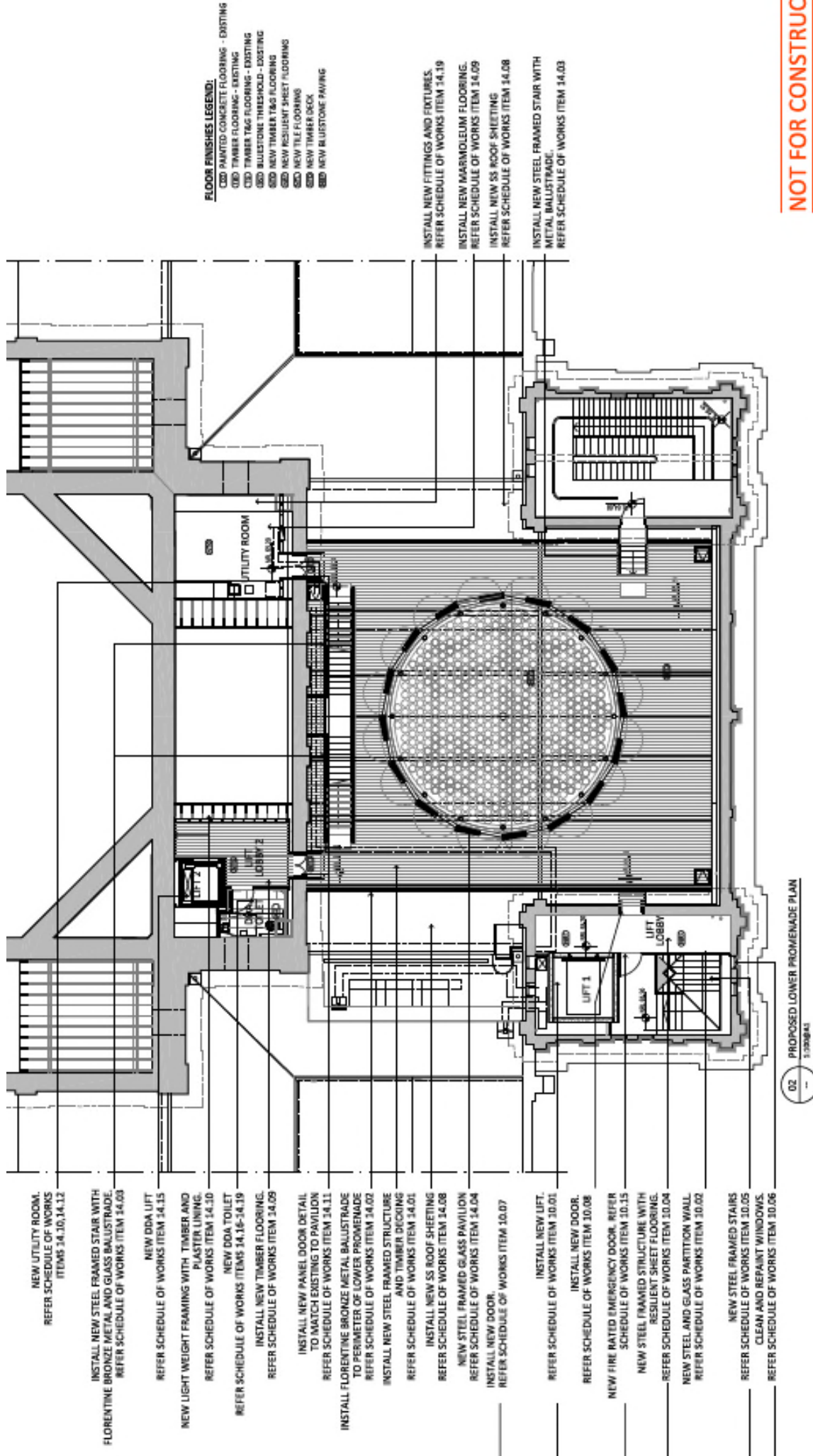
This Charter includes the following guidance: 22.1 New work such as additions or other changes to the place may be acceptable where it respects and does not distort or obscure the cultural significance of the place, or detract from its interpretation and appreciation.

Key References:

- Lovell Chen [Nov 2016] Additional Investigation, Royal Exhibition Building: Protection and Promotion Project
- Lovell Chen [May 2017] Protection and Promotion Project, Department of Environment Assessment
- The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 2013 [The Burra Charter, 2013].

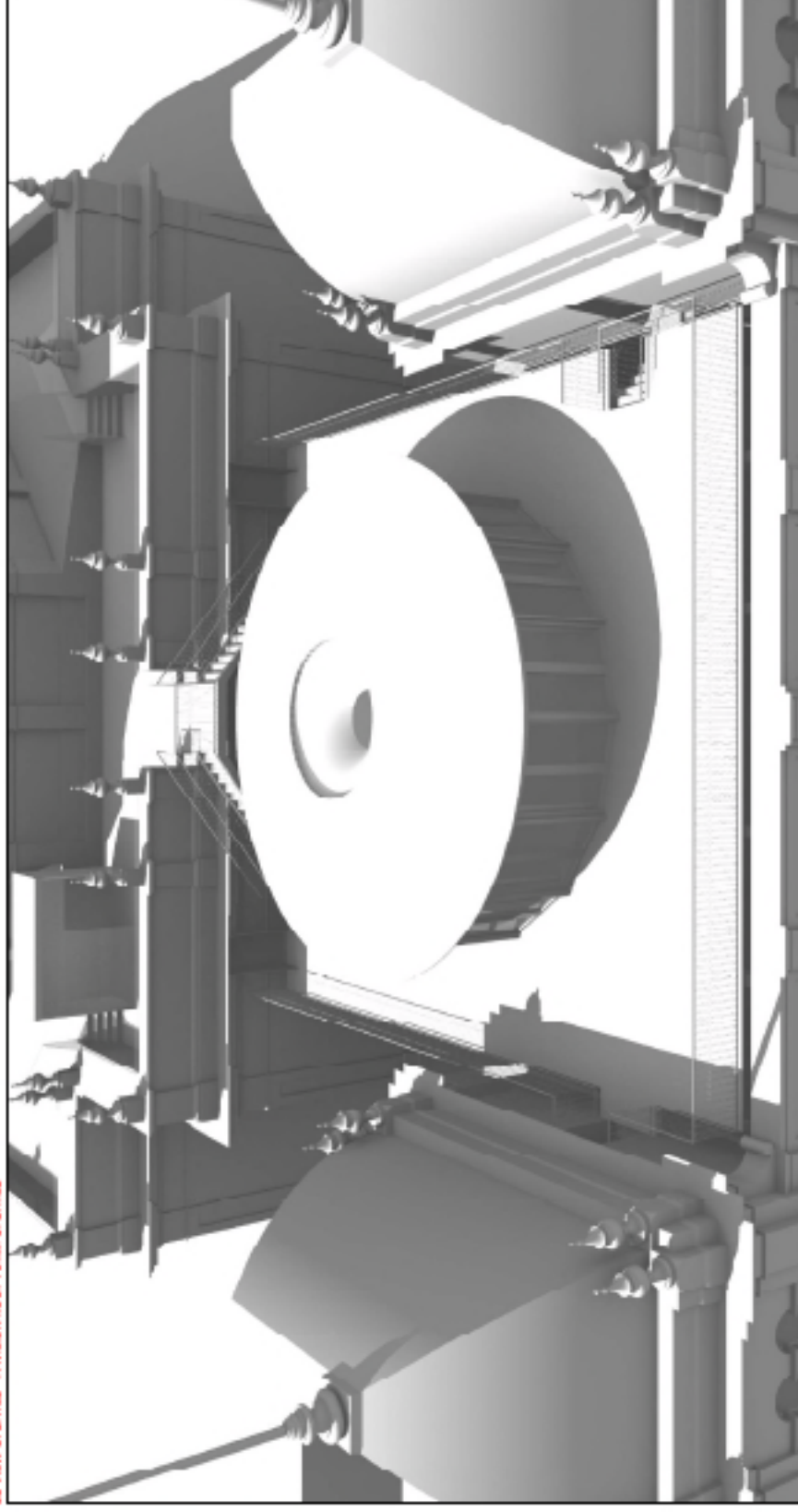
Attachment: REB – Proposed Dome Promenade Pavilion [Plan & 3D Image]

Royal Exhibition Building – Proposed Dome Promenade Pavilion



NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

14.04	Pavilion	New steel glass and florentine bronze coated metal pavilion structure with faceted glazed operable and fixed panels to façade and glazed oculi to centre of conical roof. Sealed sheet flooring (timber, metal) within Pavilion to facilitate provision of services (mechanical, electrical).
14.05		Not used
14.06	Pavilion	Florentine bronze metal sheet roof.
14.07		Glazed oculi (skylight)



Extract from Lovell Chen [May 2017] Protection and Promotion Project, Department of Environment Assessment p83

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