

# Carlton Residents Association

Heritage Policy Review and Local Heritage Significance      Submission – 3 February 2016

## The Carlton Precinct [HO1] Statement of Significance

In comparison with other Precincts identified [and described] as part of the City North Heritage Review 2013, the HO1 Precinct is a very large and diverse Precinct that has two parts:

- The large area east of Swanston Street, and
- A smaller section encompassing the University Square and heritage places on Barry Street, Leicester Street and Grattan Street [east of Leicester Street].

Although the Draft Statement of Significance for HO1 makes reference to the University Square (Sub)-Precinct, given the significance of the square and the surrounding heritage places, it is the view of the CRA that the University Square area should be identified as a separate precinct. This would be consistent with the other smaller precincts identified in the City North area:

- Former Ramsay Surgical Precinct [HO1120] 182-210 Berkeley Street
- Little Pelham Street Precinct [HO1121] 183-195 Bouverie Street, and
- Lincoln Square South Precinct [HO1122] 11-31 Lincoln Square South & 631-645 Swanston Street

These three smaller City North Precincts are described fully, with separate Statements of Significance, along with the other heritage places in the City North area, in a separate Incorporated Document [Revised June 2015].



The HO1 Heritage Precinct west of Swanston Street requires a separate Statement of Significance; it includes the University Square and significant heritage places on Barry Street, Leicester Street and Grattan Street [east of Leicester Street].

The other major Precinct in the Carlton area is the World Heritage Environs Area Precinct [HO992]. The Statement of Significance for this Precinct is included in the World Heritage Environs Area Strategy Plan [21 October 2009]. This is a Reference Document to the Melbourne Planning Scheme.

A further complication arises because places that are included on the Victorian Heritage Register also have Statements of Significance. For example

- The Sacred Heart Church and Corpus Christi College on Rathdowne Street [HO107], which includes three significant places, has a Statement of Significance, and
- The Law School Building & Old Quadrangle, the Old Arts Building, the Old Physics Conference Room and Gallery; and the Underground Car Park at the University of Melbourne [HO342] all have Statements of Significance.

Although these two Heritage Overlays have not been identified as Precincts in the Planning Scheme, there is no logical reason why they should not be described in this way. This highlights one of the many inconsistencies in this Heritage Review. Why for example is the Lincoln Square South Precinct, with five separately identified heritage places, identified as a Precinct, while the site of the former Children’s Hospital [HO81], which includes a similar number of significant places, not designated as a Precinct? The CRA has identified many other inconsistencies in the designation of Heritage Precincts. In our view, these inconsistencies must be resolved.

From the above analysis, it is clear that the Carlton area is “covered by” Statements of Significance in at least three different ways. There are Statements included in

- The City North Heritage Review – an Incorporated Document
- The World Heritage Environs Area Strategy Plan – A Reference Document, and in
- The Victorian Heritage Register [for those places and precincts included on this Register]

In the view of the CRA there is an urgent need to consolidate this information in the one Incorporated Document. It should not be necessary for practitioners, researchers and citizens to search for basic heritage information in so many places.

Finally, it is the strongly held view of the CRA that where clusters of significant heritage places are located within the larger HO1 Precinct, these clusters should be separately identified as Precincts. In the very early days of heritage planning, South Drummond Street was a separately identified Conservation Precinct. Other candidates for separate Precincts would include Charles Street, a narrow street with bluestone pavers, and a high proportion of intact modest cottages [see image below], and the Drummond-Elgin Street intersection.



The Drummond-Elgin Street intersection includes a cluster of significant public buildings and other significant places – including the current Post Office, the former Police Station and the former Court House Buildings [see image below].



The Association submits that smaller precincts, where more detailed Statements of Significance are possible, would provide a vastly more useful planning tool when assessing the impact of new development proposals for these precincts.

#### **Replacement of current local heritage policies [22.04 and 22.05] with revised heritage policies.**

It is not clear which policy applies to the City North area of Carlton, which now has a Capital City Zoning [CCZ]. According to the application statement, the CCZ Heritage Policy “applies to places included in the Heritage Overlay within the CCZ, **excluding land within Schedule 5 to the CCZ (City North).**” [Emphasis added]. But, according to the Lovell Chen September 2015 Report, the CCZ Heritage Policy is “intended to apply to places within and outside the CBD Grid.

It must be noted that the State Government approved ALTERNATIVE arrangements for the City North area in October 2015. For this area of the CCZ, the other Heritage Policy [22.05], with two exemptions for the Schedule 5 area, will apply. The uncertainty that this potential change will create is extraordinarily unhelpful. If the CoM endorses the Lovell Chen recommendation, we will now be confronted with endless arguments at VCAT over how much weight should be accorded to which policy.

Also, given that the Design and Development Overlay [DDO 61] for the City North area makes it clear that a mid-rise scale of buildings (6 to 15 storeys), **that is distinct from the tall built form in the Hoddle Grid, is to be established**, it is not at all clear why a policy relevant to the Hoddle Grid is appropriate for City North.

#### **New buildings and additions to existing buildings within a heritage overlay: the issue of height.**

Both the revised policies [22.04 and 22.05] include guidance which suggests that

- new buildings should be respectful of the heritage place and be compatible and in keeping with the precinct characteristics, including façade and building heights etc, and that



- additions to significant or contributory buildings should be respectful of the building's character and appearance, scale etc

Although this guidance sounds promising, on closer examination, the word respectful in the definitions section of the policy has been emptied of any meaning. The new definition deletes any reference to historic building **size** and replaces the word “**adopted**” with “**referenced**”.

- The “old wording” ... ‘Respectful’ means a design approach in which historic building size, form proportions, colours and materials are adopted, but modern interpretations are used ...
- The “new wording” ... Respectful means a modern design approach to new buildings, additions and alterations to buildings, in which historic building form, proportions, details, colours and materials are **referenced** but not directly copied.

The CRA submits that this new definition provides little helpful guidance to Responsible Authorities, applicants and other interested parties. A key consideration in most VCAT hearings, that involve heritage matters, concerns the scale of new buildings, and building additions in heritage overlays. More particularly, are the new works sufficiently recessive or will they dominate the heritage place? The word ‘referenced’ is so vague, it cannot possibly assist in the assessment task. When the Design and Development Overlays provide more precise guidance on the contentious scale matter, it really does call into question the efficacy of the revised heritage policies.

#### **Heritage guidance for sites the subject of significant development applications but not within a Heritage Overlay.**

Where these sites are NOT included within a Heritage Overlay, but ARE adjoining places that are within a Heritage Overlay, the Local Heritage Policies [both old and revised] will have no impact.

With the contraction of the suburban wide heritage precincts that has already taken place, this problem will only get worse. From a heritage perspective, a much better outcome would be achieved, if non-contributory places that are adjacent to heritage overlays could be categorised as non-contributory **within** an expanded overlay. [The individual heritage place below is in Pelham St]



## New Clauses in Heritage Policies – Services and Ancillaries

The revised Heritage Policies include many additional clauses that address deficiencies in the old Policies. One of the new clauses addresses the matter of services and ancillaries, with a particular focus upon those that will address greenhouse gas emissions or water consumption. The CRA supports the inclusion of this new clause.

### Replacement of current incorporated document *Heritage Places Inventory October 2014* with a new *Heritage Inventory 2015*.

It is argued that the major need for the new inventory is to replace the current A to D grading system with the new grading system, “as required by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and by Planning Panels Victoria.” This new approach to defining heritage significance, was described in the City of Melbourne Report: *A Review of the Local Heritage Planning Policies in the Melbourne Planning Scheme* [July 2014]. At page 12 of this report it is noted that the State Government Practice Note for “Applying the Heritage Overlay – Practice Note 01” recommends that significance be categorised as either “State Significance” or “Local Significance”. For the City of Melbourne the principles of translation were summarised in the table at p 12.

City Of Melbourne Grades	Practice Note 01 levels of significance
A	State Significance
B	Individually Significant
C Possibly some D	Individually Significant
D Possibly some C	Contributory
Ungraded	Non-contributory

This raises a key question for the current Amendment, **why did the consultants not follow this scheme?** Of the 1200 C graded and 193 D graded properties in the Carlton precinct outside the CCZ, only 329 have been categorised as significant. That is, approximately 1000 Carlton properties that had previously been categorised as C Grade have now been downgraded to the “Contributory” status under the revised scheme.

It must be emphasised that the use of the word “contributory” in the above table has a different meaning from the one used in the current Policy 22.05. In this Policy, ALL the graded buildings [that is from A to D] were regarded as significant. These significant buildings were then categorised [in the current Policy] as either “Outstanding” or “Contributory”

- *Outstanding building* means a grade A or B building anywhere in the municipality
- *Contributory Building* means a ‘C’ grade building anywhere in the municipality, or a ‘D’ grade building in a Level 1 or Level 2 streetscape.

It is clear from the later discussion of the Grading of Buildings in the same Policy, that ‘C’ buildings are locally significant ... they “Demonstrate the historical or social development of the local area and/or make an important aesthetic or scientific contribution.” To categorise most of these buildings as “Contributory” under the revised scheme cannot be justified.

According to the revised Heritage Policies, all heritage places in an individual heritage overlay are significant. However, many of the heritage overlays include a place [or places] that are currently graded C or D. In the Carlton Postcode approximately 49 of the 86 Heritage Overlays include places with a C grading or lower. For those in an “individual” overlay to be automatically designated as significant raises another serious anomaly in the translation exercise. The D Graded place below at 144-146 Queensberry Street [HO807] would be designated as a significant place under the Lovell-Chen scheme. [Image extracted from the i-Heritage data base.]



### **Gaps in new Heritage Inventory**

Unlike the 2014 Inventory which is to be replaced, there are significant gaps in the new Inventory for the Carlton area.

- It omits properties that are on the Victorian Heritage Register
- It omits ALL graded properties in the City North Area
- It omits all the graded properties on the University of Melbourne campus [these were included in the Carlton section of the 2014 Inventory]
- It excludes places with an individual Heritage Overlay from the Schedule
- It lists graded buildings in some of the smaller precincts the subject of a Heritage Overlay, but not others, and
- Unlike the 2014 Inventory, those graded buildings that are included in the Inventory are no longer separated into the odd and even numbered properties. Given that streetscape quality remains an important element in any heritage assessment, it is most unhelpful for the odd and even property numbers to have been consolidated.

Finally, as the Heritage Inventory is meant to include all the places described in the i-Heritage database, it is inconceivable that the proposed replacement of the 2014 Inventory should be SO incomplete. With so many gaps, the proposed new Inventory will be most unhelpful.