

Annual Report Carlton Residents Association for the year 2022

Presented at the Annual General Meeting, held 20 February 2023

PRESIDENT:

The annual report is an opportunity to reflect on the achievements, challenges and general business of the CRA. To many, it may seem like a collective of conservative heritage preservationists, but this could not be further from the truth. In the time that I have contributed to the CRA I have learned a great deal about the history of Carlton, the trials and tribulations of navigating planning schemes. I have made wonderful friends and as an association we have supported some incredible initiatives, institutions and individuals within Carlton.

We have commenced 'Carlton Conversations' held at The Clyde, which is an opportunity to hear from Carltonian stalwarts and mingle with the community. The first was a roaring success with Barry Jones, who reminisced on his days at Melbourne University and beyond. The upcoming conversation will be with Nobel Laureate Professor Peter Doherty who has made invaluable contributions to research of infectious disease and immunity - something of a hot topic the last few years to say the very least!

We have participated in local community events such as the KSLCC Christmas Party and contributed to conversations with PCCC, Carlton Inc, meetings with the Lord Mayor Sally Capp and the other resident associations within the City of Melbourne. We have also commenced selling gift pack cards that celebrate the architecture of Carlton - something we all love and what drew so many of us to the area originally. We have promoted, advocated and demonstrated our passion towards Carlton in every way we can.

It has been an incredible honour to hold the position of President for the past three years. It certainly was challenging with lockdown after lockdown, however I learned to appreciate that even faced with such adversity (and the general challenges that come with community politics), coming together and celebrating what we love is important. I love Carlton, it is my home, it has been my place of work, and it is where I have chosen to raise my family. I will always advocate in the best interests of this wonderful suburb and our colourful community.

I would like to thank the committee for their tireless efforts. I have struggled in the last twelve months to find balance and it is only because of the committee members that the CRA has continued to prosper. I would like to thank the members and broader community for their support and I encourage everyone to remain enthusiastic and contribute to the CRA.

Thank you. Antoinette Sagaria (retiring President)

PLANNING

Key Policy Challenges

It has been another challenging year on both the Planning Policy and Town Planning Permit fronts. As most citizens will know, we were challenged with a most contentious development proposal for the former Cancer Council site, 1-23 Rathdowne Street, [opposite the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens, REB&CG] late last year.

Proposed development at right



1-23 Rathdowne St, Carlton

The Application for this site has exposed the weakness of our current suite of planning controls.

Design and Development controls of the Melbourne Planning Scheme

These are the key provisions that are available to control the height and envelope of a building. For most of Carlton, even for the critical Rathdowne Street part of the World Heritage Environs Area, these provisions generally only include maximum [but discretionary!] building heights for new developments.

While the City of Melbourne has recommended, in their submission concerning the *World Heritage Strategy Plan Review*, that these discretionary provisions should be strengthened, it appears that these weak provisions will remain for that critical Rathdowne Street frontage [from the latest version of the new plan]. Further, the Association has now been advised that this important Strategy Plan is unlikely to be approved before the Tribunal hearing scheduled for mid-year, in relation to the new development proposal for the Cancer Council Site.

Statement of Significance

Another important planning tool for ANY Heritage Overlay is the Statement of Significance for a Heritage Precinct and/or Heritage Place. Currently, the Statement of Significance for the Heritage Overlay surrounding the REB&CG is contained in the existing *World Heritage Environs Area Strategy Plan* [a Reference document in the Planning Scheme]. In our view this is quite anomalous; surely a Statement of Significance for a precinct surrounding a **World Heritage Site** deserves to have the status of an Incorporated Document. Even although Amendment VC148 to the Melbourne Planning Scheme requires a Statement of Significance to be incorporated in a Planning Scheme for a Heritage Overlay, this is unlikely to be achieved before the scheduled Tribunal hearing.

The weakness of the current height provisions

It should be noted that the one Planning Scheme Amendment that held out the possibility of stronger height guidance [the Sunlight to Public Parks Amendment] has also been languishing. According to City of Melbourne records, the Adopted Version of this Amendment was forwarded to the Minister for Planning for Approval way back in September 2021. As the CRA made a detailed presentation to the Planning Panel back in March 2021, citizens should know that the wheels of planning reform can move incredibly slowly.

City wide Heritage Review and Carlton Heritage Review

The other major planning initiative that has been a CRA pre-occupation for many years, is the city wide heritage review, and, over 2022, the Carlton Heritage Review. The Association presented its final submission to the Panel Hearing, established to review submissions, in early October 2022. The Panel released its Report late 2022; it is now over to the City of Melbourne to adopt its preferred version of this Amendment. At the time of writing this report, this had not been done. Sadly, for the Association many of the key recommendations of the CRA were not accepted by either the Council or the Panel.

For most of Carlton, the Association will not have information concerning the key attributes of Heritage Places; that is, the ‘what, how and why’ a place is regarded significant. For most significant Heritage Places in Carlton, the Association will have to rely upon the Precinct Wide Statement of Significance for the Carlton Area to distil key information; a most imprecise way of answering those key questions.

In our submission to the Planning Panel, we presented strong arguments to segment the large diverse precinct of Carlton so as to better define the values of the areas in separate Statements of Significance [a position also advanced by the Panel that heard submissions in relation to the city wide Heritage Review – Am C258].

More particularly, in the recent Panel Hearing, we noted that the concentration of significant heritage places on, or near, the Drummond/Elgin Street Intersection should have justified a separate Heritage Overlay, ‘It would be difficult to locate a greater concentration of significant commercial and [former] public heritage places in Carlton. Given that most of these places have NOT been provided with Statements of Significance, this provides a further justification for a new precinct overlay’. [Images of significant heritage places at this Intersection are illustrated below.]



171 Elgin Street Shaw Davey Slum Hotel,
South West Corner of Elgin & Drummond
Streets [August 2022 E. Ogilvy]



170 Elgin St Carlton, North West Corner
of Drummond Street [December 2021,
E. Ogilvy]

Ewan Ogilvy 7 February 2023

Planning Applications

- 1-23 Rathdowne Street- Application for a multi-storey building in the World Heritage Environs Area. CRA and locals objected. The City of Melbourne (CoM) issued a notice of refusal and the Applicant has appealed to VCAT. CRA will attend the hearing and make verbal and written objections.
- 186-190 Lygon Street – An application for an excessively high building. CRA objected and awaits a CoM decision.

There have been several applications where we have assisted the local objectors or lodged an objection to Council.

CRA objections are available on the [CRA website](#).

Royal Exhibition Building, Carlton Gardens (REB&CG) and The World Heritage Environs Area (WHEA)

The CRA has made detailed submissions to proposed amendments to the old *WHEA Strategy Plan*. The amended *Strategy Plan* will, we trust, expand the limited Area of Greater Sensitivity, where there are stronger planning controls, to include the whole of the WHEA.

The adoption of the *Strategy Plan* will require several amendments to the Melbourne Planning Scheme. We are hopeful that these changes will strengthen the heritage and Design and Development Overlay controls [DDO's] in this important area, particularly in that area south of Grattan Street where these controls currently include those [discretionary] 'maximum' building heights.

Grattan Street Traffic

CRA has made a submission to CoM for Grattan Street to be reopened to through traffic when the rail underground works make this possible. In addition CRA has stated that Queensberry Street, which was upgraded to take more traffic when Grattan was closed, be returned to former traffic volumes when Grattan Street is reopened.

Peter Sanders

Report from the Friends of Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens – (FREBCG)

Justification -

The Carlton Gardens together with the Royal Exhibition Building is a recognised World Heritage site:

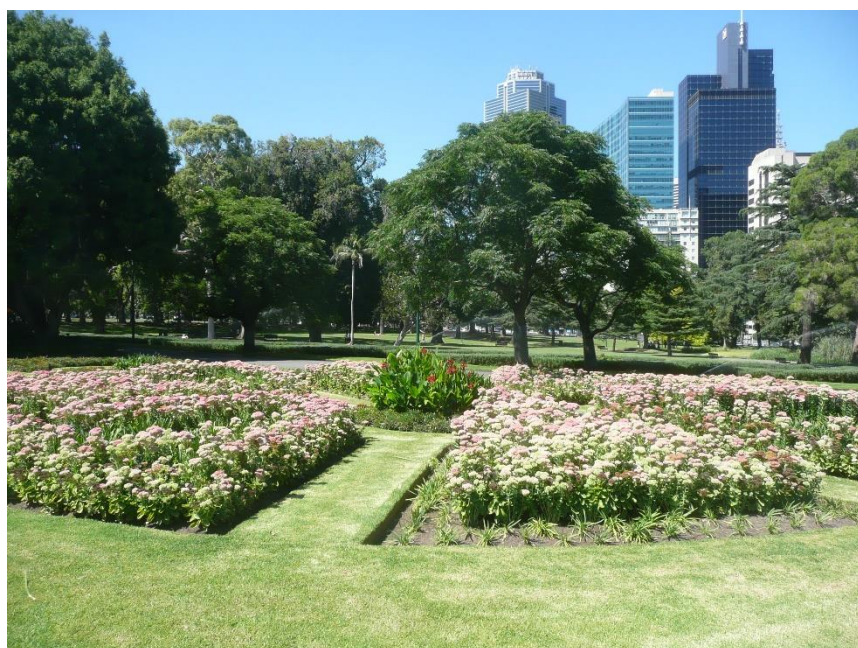
"There is nothing like it anywhere else in the world today", wrote the eminent UK historian, Professor David Cannadine."

All this was recognised in the nomination of the Carlton Gardens and the Royal Exhibition Buildings as a World Heritage site.

The 2022 plan by the Friends of the Carlton Gardens was to continue to lobby the different bodies who manage the Gardens on the importance of the Heritage of Carlton Gardens and especially the importance of preserving the trees.

This plan is ongoing and because of several concerns is now becoming more crucial as each year passes.

In our plan to preserve this national treasure we have recognised:



- In the last 12 years especially, the population of the area surrounding the gardens has increased exponentially. People use the Gardens not only for walking, running, get fit classes, escaping the heat of the city and weddings but also for leisure gatherings - picnics abound every day - not just weekends. It's wonderful to see.
- The Gardens are a thriving habitat for wildlife - this has been especially noticeable during the Pandemic.
- The trees are suffering badly - despite care by the gardeners and adequate water. Why is this happening?

The City of Melbourne and other main organisations seem not to be as concerned as we are, and part of this is the fact that there is no one umbrella body looking after the Carlton Gardens and the Royal Exhibition Buildings.

It is easy to 'pass the buck'.

We were extremely concerned to find that the City of Melbourne has given the Garden Show a three year lease, seemingly without consulting any other governing bodies such as Heritage Victoria or the Heritage Council.

We will continue to voice our main concerns regarding:

- The damage from heavy equipment, huge vehicles and concrete blocks damaging the trees and lawns further each year.
- Fences put up weeks before and after - cutting out the public from using the Gardens.
- The disregard for the Wildlife of the Gardens - thus wrecking the delicate ecosystem.

This National Treasure deserves to be carefully managed, protected and preserved under one umbrella only.

World Heritage Does Matter

Trish O'Loughlin

TRAFFIC TRANSPORT AND PARKING

CRA Transport Policy

A draft Transport Policy has been prepared and comments made by the CRA Committee. The Policy will replace the existing 'CRA Traffic, Transport and Parking Policy2015'.

CRA members are invited to make submissions which we ask to be submitted by the end of March 2023.

The draft document is available on the [CRA website](#).

Peter Sanders

COMMUNICATION

Newsflash and Website:

The Newsflash:

Three editions were published in 2022, March, June – September and December.

The publication aims to inform members and the wider community about the work of CRA to foster a liveable Carlton.

Frank Chamberlain has assisted with editorial advice over a number of years, helping to create a quality publication. During 2022 however, he has had to retire from this role. We are most thankful for his contribution over this time. Mary Healy has volunteered to assist with future editions.

CRA members, politicians, inner city resident groups and other interested parties receive an emailed copy of each edition. In 2022 members were asked to opt in, to receive a printed copy. CRA is happy to distribute hard copies to everyone who requests this, so if you are not receiving a hard copy and would like one, please email: carltonresidents@gmail.com with that request.

You might like to volunteer to help distribute the printed copies – a pleasant walk, usually 4 times each year. Remember past editions back to 2002 are available on the CRA website.

The Website:

The CRA website provides information for you to stay informed about the work of CRA and broader aspects of life in Carlton.

The home page posts the latest news and the Newsflash is available on the site soon after publication. From January 2004, the index available for each edition can be of assistance when searching for information on a particular topic.

The Planning page lists planning applications made to the City of Melbourne and objections by CRA are detailed. Also included, is information on CRA's participation in VCAT appeals.

Information on the World Heritage Environs Area (WHEA) and the Carlton Heritage review is featured on the Heritage page. The Carlton Heritage Review could mean a different grading for your place of residence and/or buildings in your area.

You will also find information about meetings, Committee members and a copy of each annual report via the Meetings page.

Members are invited to comment or make suggestions regarding any of the above.

Please do so using the carltonresidents@gmail.com email address.

Lyn Cracknell