



RICHMOND POLICE : STATION FEASIBILITY STUDY

THE CITY OF YARRA

August 2013

Prepared for
The City of Yarra

LOVELL CHEN

ARCHITECTS & HERITAGE CONSULTANTS

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1.0 Background

The following report has been prepared for the City of Yarra to explore the potential for the development of the former Richmond Police Station site at 333 Bridge Road, Richmond as a community arts facility.

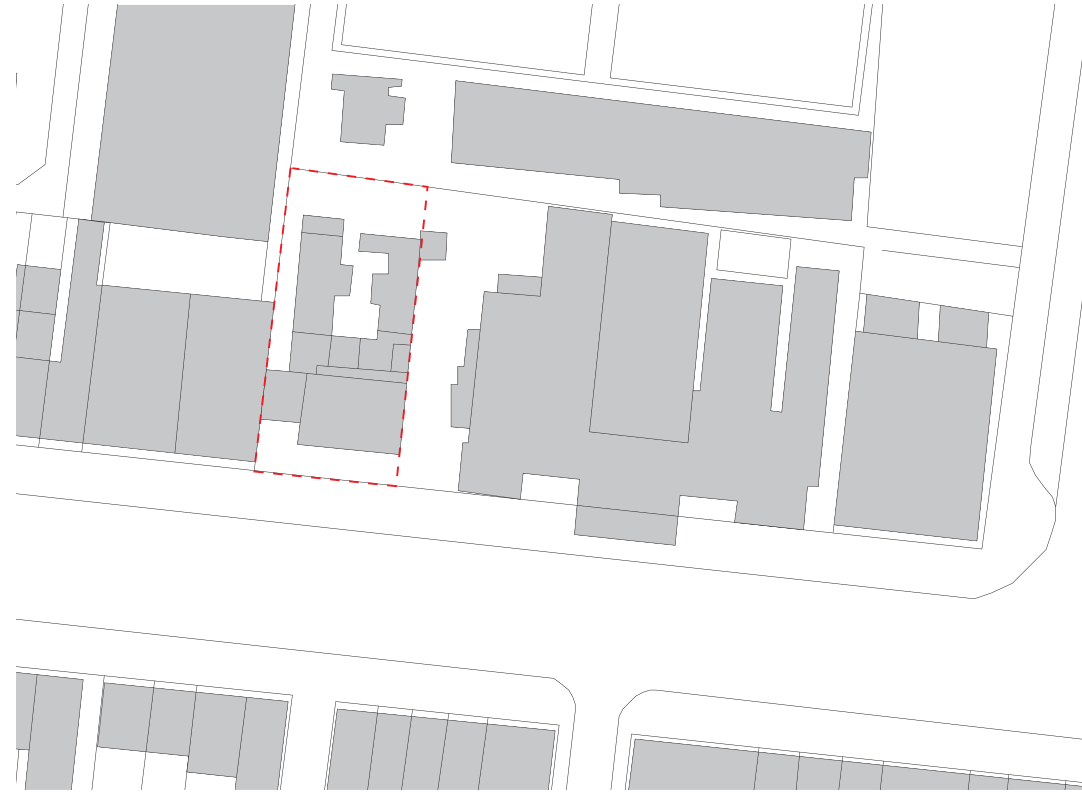
2.0 Existing condition

The former Richmond Police Station comprises a complex of buildings on the west side of the Richmond Town Hall including the main two-storey 1878 police station fronting Bridge Road, an early bluestone lock-up (c.1860s and relocated to this site in 1872) and later attached or free-standing single-storey extensions to the Police Station dating from 1947-59 to create additional office accommodation and amenities. The courtyard space between these buildings was roofed over as part of further alterations and additions in the 1980s. The site is part of the Crown Land allotment that includes the Richmond Town Hall. It is abutted by a ROW and the Richmond Town Hall to the east, the Richmond Bowling Club to the north, a commercial property to the west and Bridge Road to the south. The police station is set back from the Bridge Road site boundary creating an extended forecourt area along the principal façade, albeit as it is south facing this forecourt is fully shadowed for much of the day.

The building is currently occupied by City of Yarra staff in offices on the first floor of the police station, with much of the space at ground level allocated to storage due to the poor amenity of the spaces. A temporary demountable office building has been located to the rear of the site on the asphalt carpark adjacent to the Bowling Club. The public toilets on the north-east corner are publically accessible from the ROW.

The buildings are generally in fair condition with some evidence of rising damp to the east wall of the police station. The police station is polychromatic brick with rendered detailing to the arched window openings, a bluestone plinth and hipped slate roof. The interiors are simple high volume spaces arranged around a central hall and stair, with square set ceilings, moulded timber architraves and sills to the doors and windows and four-panel timber doors. The fireplaces have been closed over and the mantelpieces much modified. The lock-up is a bluestone structure with a hipped slate roof comprising a central entry lobby and three cells. It retains the original narrow solid timber cell doors. Access around the buildings is complicated with no compliant external access into the police station complex and a series of changing levels throughout. The existing staircase is non-compliant.

The buildings originally served the Richmond Court House which was part of the Richmond Town Hall building to the east. This relationship has been largely lost with the various redevelopment phases to the town hall and the increased use of the shared ROW between the buildings as a delivery and back-of-house service area serving the town hall and bowling club.



SITE PLAN

SCALE NTS



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PROJECT
RICHMOND POLICE STATION
FEASIBILITY STUDY
TITLE URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK
CLIENT THE CITY OF YARRA
DATE 21 AUGUST 2013

3.0 The framework

Any redevelopment of the police station site is desirably undertaken within the context of the existing *Urban Design Framework – Richmond Town Hall Precinct July 2007*. This framework envisages “a civic precinct in the heart of Richmond which offers a range of services in one location, including community, cultural and recreational activities ... centred on the Town Hall.” The design aims to create a “vibrant community hub focused on a central square that acts as a focal point for the precinct and broader region and as a community meeting place.”

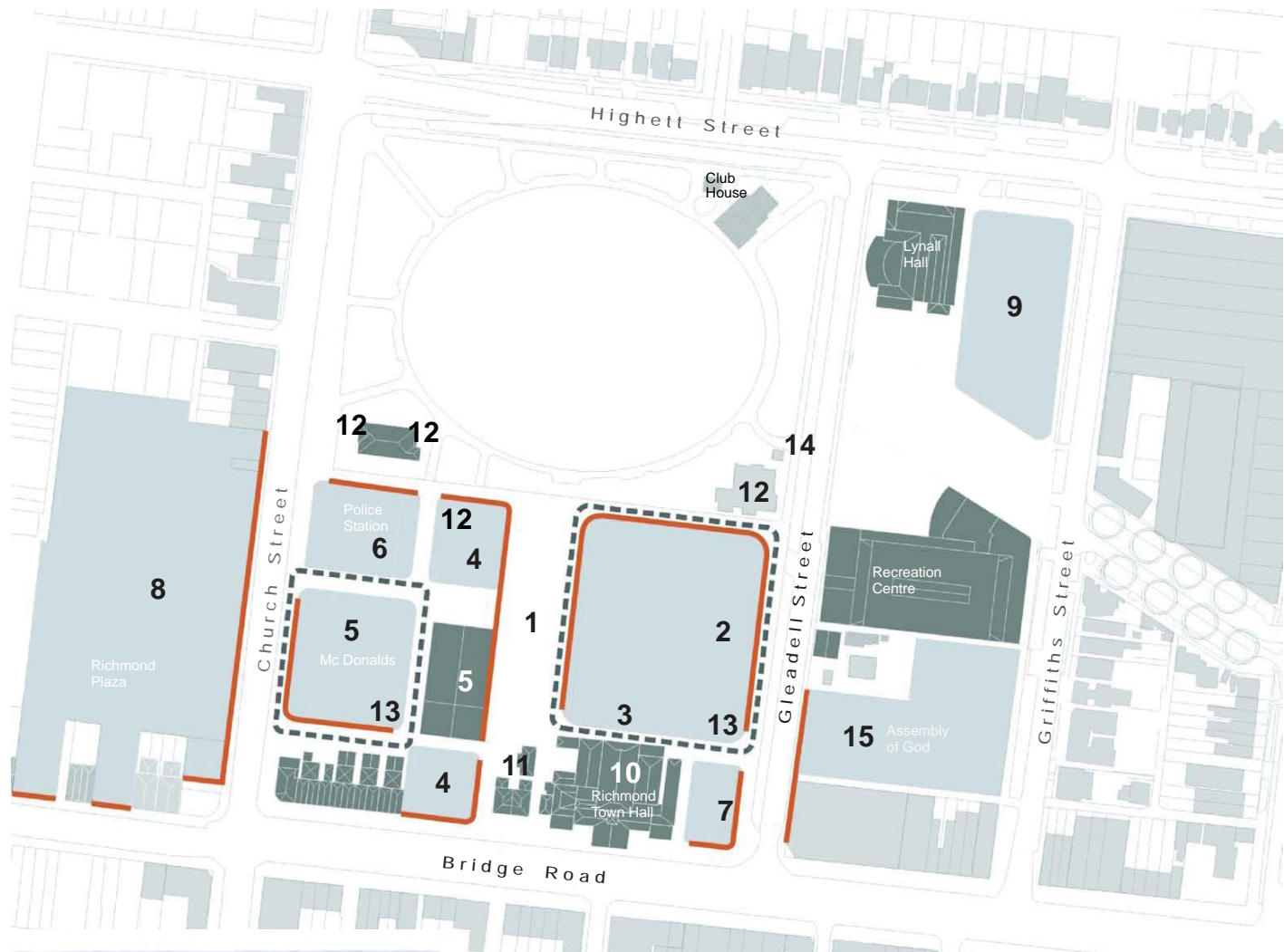
The central town hall square is the major urban design gesture and involves the creation of a broad pedestrian boulevard link from Bridge Road to the recreation reserve further north with the police station acting as a gateway nodal point on Bridge Road. This project offers the first opportunity to implement this vision.



Bridge Road showing restored gaol

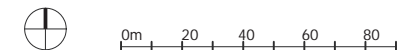


Possible Town Hall Square looking south



Excerpts from Urban Design Framework - Richmond Town Hall Precinct - July 2007

- Possible redevelopment sites
- Heritage buildings or possible retention of existing building fabric.
- Provide active use frontages at ground floor level including frequent entry points.



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4.0 Our approach

This project is envisaged as a small step along the path to implementation of the urban design framework vision. While the initial focus is on enabling the site to operate as a community arts facility, the broader vision for the precinct is maintained in the interventions and gestures the proposed design makes. It is also mindful of this needing to be affordable first steps, with an eye to staging the works, making the redevelopment occur in logical, sequential phases.

Our approach is also presaged by the following:

- Short term actions that lead to long term change
- Turning a dead public space into an alive public space
- Transformation that makes small scale interventions characterised by their community focus and realistic goals.

The police station complex has for a long period been a closed inaccessible building to the public, initially through its official function and now due to its lack of amenity and accessibility. The first stage of this project is to sweep away the encroachments and open the site, inviting activity and use in and around the heritage buildings. The result is considerable demolition coupled with small surgical interventions to the original building largely focussed on access and amenity.

External spaces are envisaged as community spaces that can be occupied for gallery/community arts activities, as much as they can be occupied by town hall staff on their lunch break or members of the community looking for a spot in the sun. The notion of pop-up activities and spaces is to be nurtured and encouraged in this process. The accidental and the temporary, low cost strategies that occupy and enliven the spaces, these are the ambition in this first phase.



Community Led Development

Transformation



small scale
INTERVENTIONS
are characterized
by their
community-focus
and realistic goals



Local Food



Community Garden

low-cost strategies that have a positive impact on the urban habitat



Street Facade

Cooperatives



Guerrilla Urbanism



Tactical Urbanism



Bike Politics



Share Culture

SHORT TERM ACTION LONG TERM CHANGE



Evolutionary Infrastructure

New Cultural Landmarks



CHANGE how a place works and is perceived

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Paley Park
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Store Front Gallery NYC

Community Galleries

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TITLE INSPIRATION
CLIENT THE CITY OF YARRA
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5.0 The design

It is proposed to demolish all the later alterations and additions on the site retaining only the original 2-storey police station and lock-up. In the process this establishes the first step in realising the ultimate goal of the central square concept.

The street frontage will be activated by the insertion of a new ramp and stair to the front door of the police station enabling equality of access and most importantly reactivating the main facade of the building which has been moribund for too long.

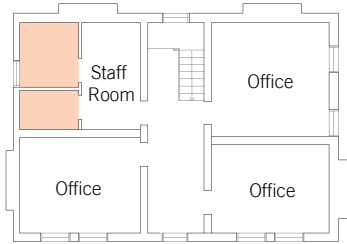
The existing non compliant staircase will be removed and a new lift installed as a freestanding structure to the rear of the building, on axis with the main hallway. The original floor plan will be reinstated at both levels and new amenities will be located in the existing single-storey service area at the rear of the building. A new lineal structure will be constructed to the rear of the police station on the north-west corner, entered by a new stair that pops out along the west façade, lightly meshing the new and the old together. This gallery is effectively creating two spaces, the semi enclosed courtyard and undercroft space at ground level between the police station and lock-up which interacts with the open laneways created between the police station and the existing commercial building to the west and the town hall to the east. This is a space for installations, gatherings, resting, propping, engaging, and pop-ups. It is both gallery and public realm.

The enclosed black box gallery above creates a link to the future stage of development to the rear of the site, envisaged as a 2-3 storey structure that mirrors the footprint of the police station, creating a natural bookend to the lock-up. In this first stage the rear of the site presents the opportunity for a small garden or ‘parklet’ that could be created by the community, a guerrilla planting project bathed in northern light.

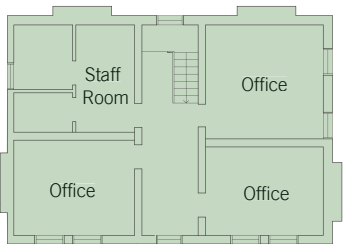
The lock-up is to be left as a gallery space, with the ambition that it house installations and events that humanise the spaces, removing the stigma and aura of detention, fear and shame that has been associated with this space.

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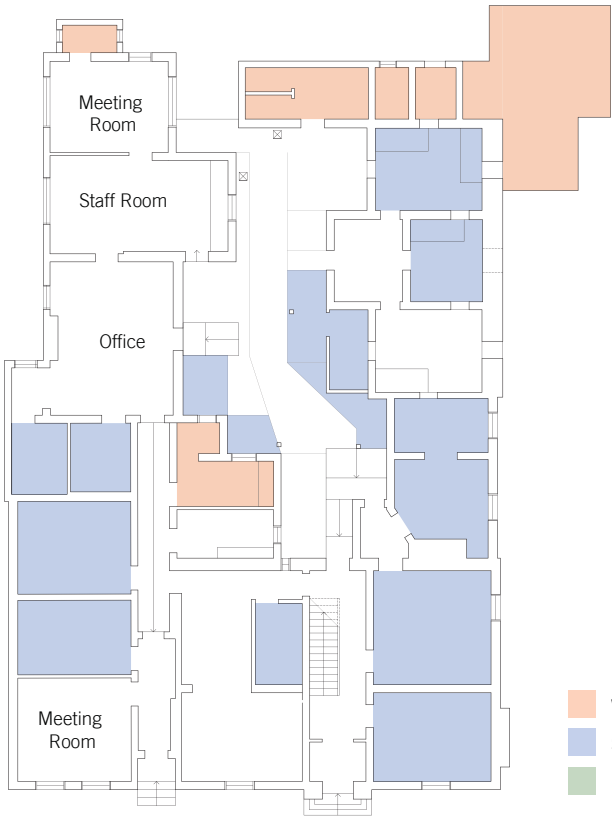
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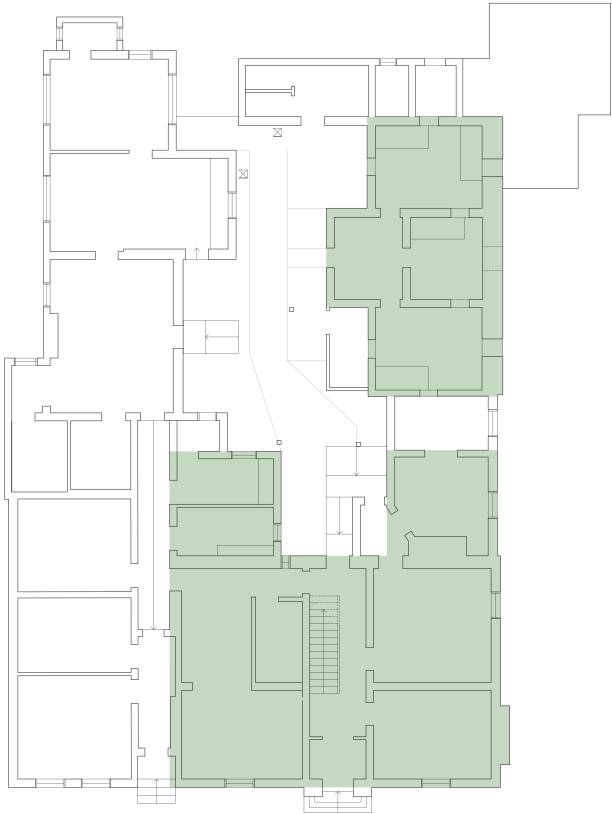
FIRST FLOOR PLAN
AREA ANALYSIS



FIRST FLOOR PLAN
AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE



GROUND FLOOR PLAN
AREA ANALYSIS



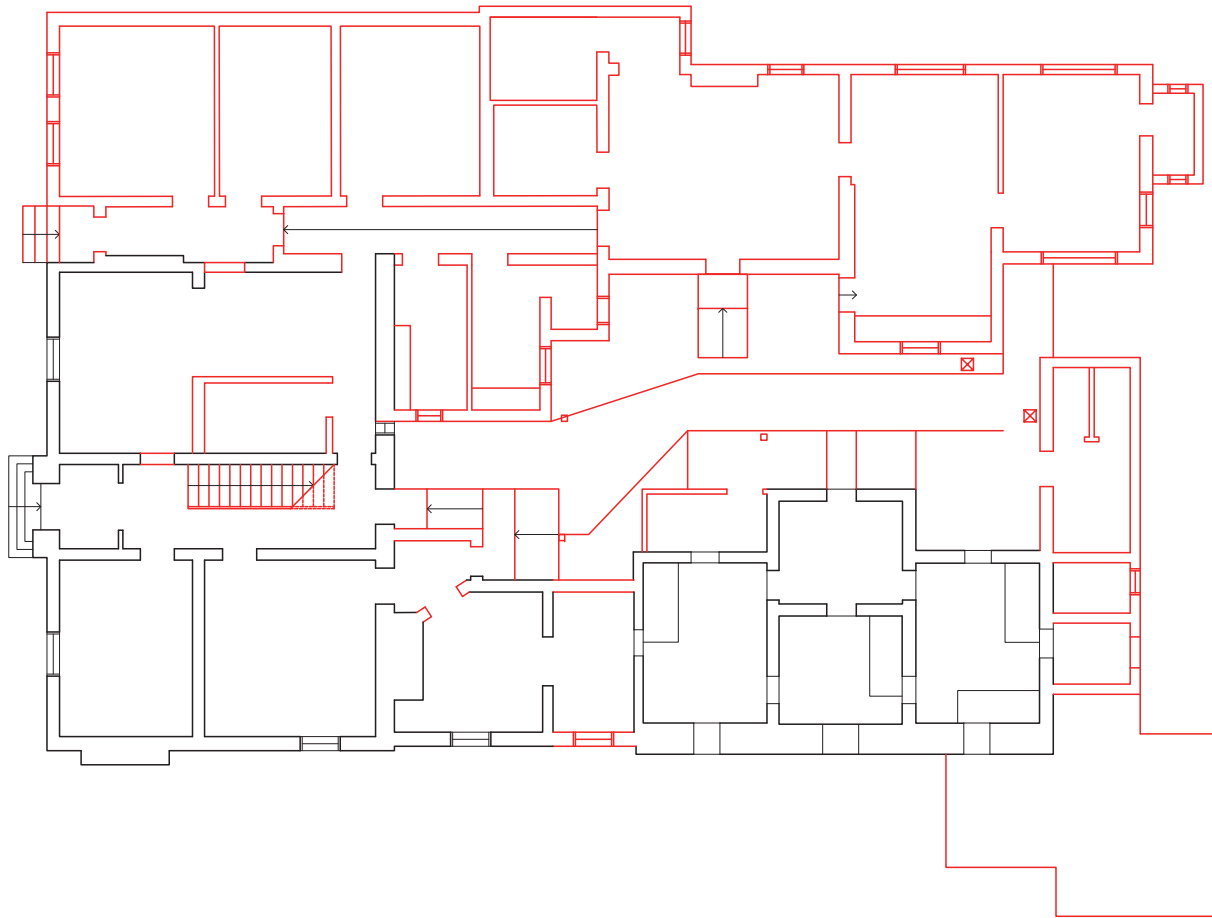
GROUND FLOOR PLAN
AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE

- KEY
- Wet Areas
 - Storage
 - Areas of Significance

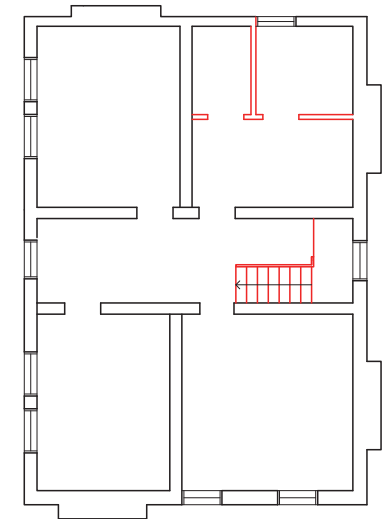
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TITLE FLOOR PLANS AREA ANALYSIS
CLIENT THE CITY OF YARRA
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GROUND FLOOR DEMOLITION PLAN



FIRST FLOOR DEMOLITION PLAN

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TITLE DEMOLITION PLAN

CLIENT THE CITY OF YARRA

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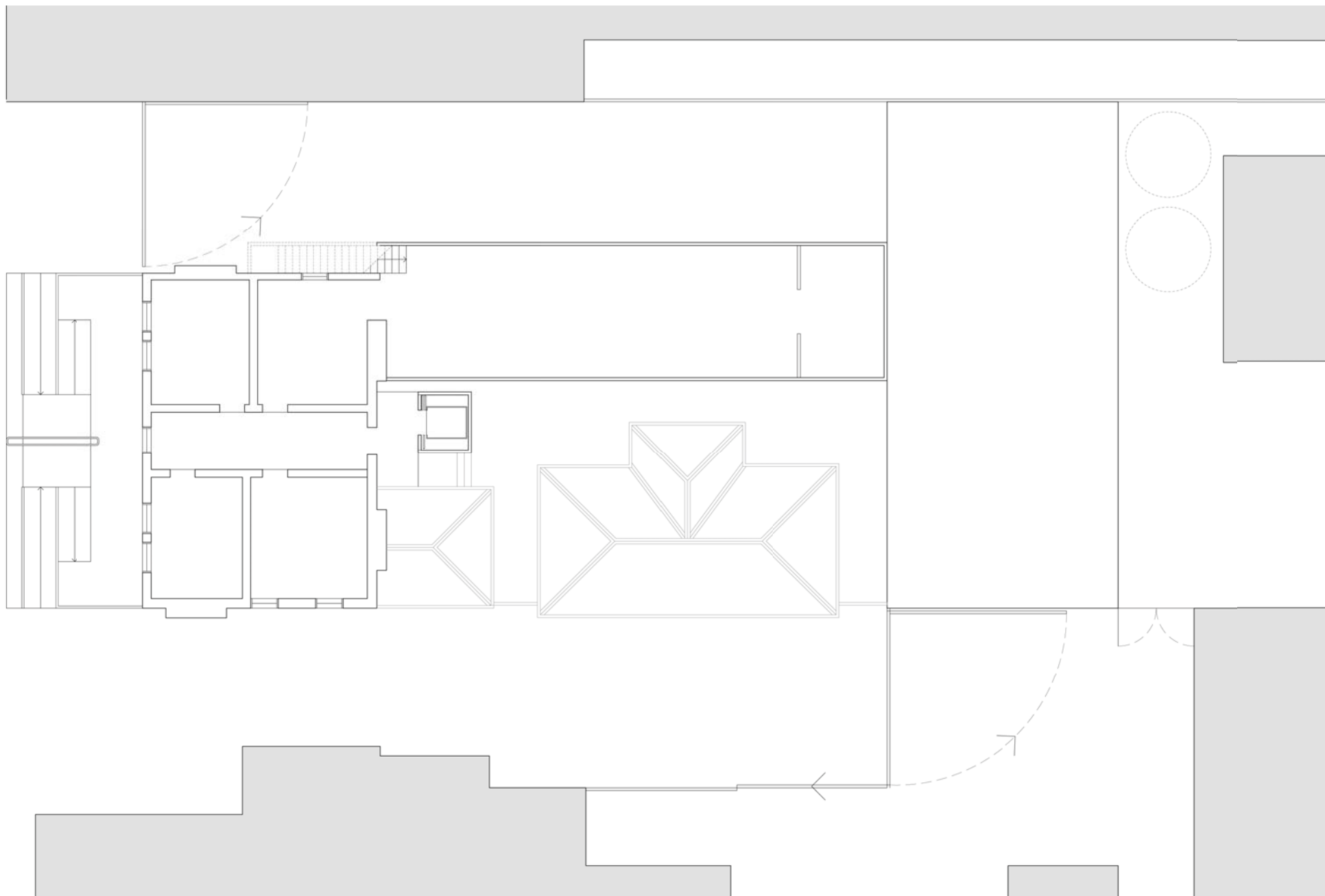
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TITLE PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR
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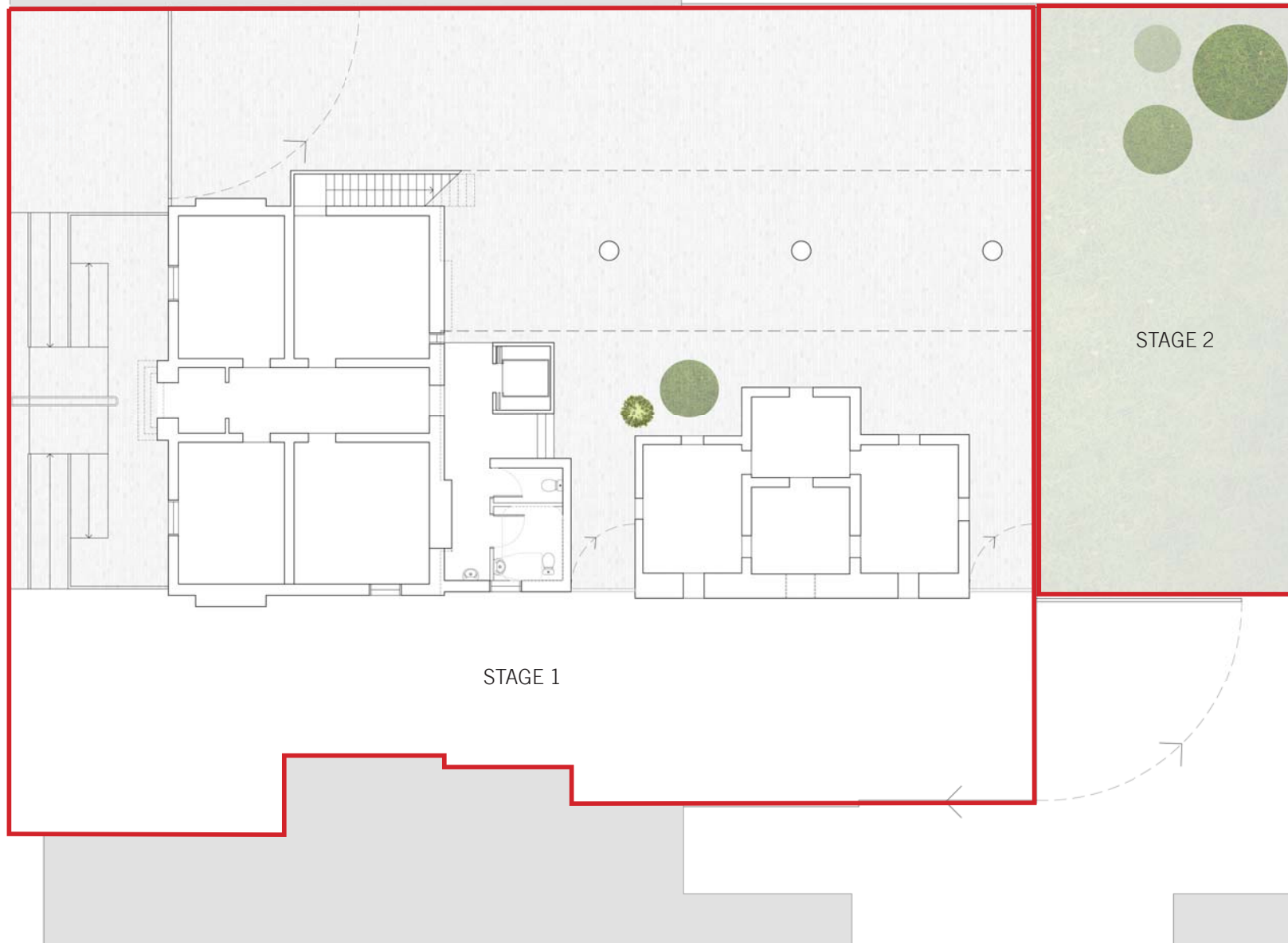
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PROJECT
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TITLE PROPOSED ELEVATION
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6.0 Heritage

The former Richmond Police Station is included in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay in the Yarra Planning Scheme as the site-specific Heritage Overlay H0230. Its significance is recognised both through the site-specific overlay, and through its listing as an individually significant heritage place in Council's schedule of heritage places.

The significant elements on the site identified in the 2007 *Heritage Review of former Richmond Police Station & lockup* by Graeme Butler are the 1878 police station, 1873 lock-up and remnant sections of the court house toilet block as built in 1905 (this is subsumed within the existing public toilet block on the north-east corner of the lock-up).

This design will retain and restore the police station with the exception of the north-west service wing and the removal of the original stair. The service wing is a secondary element to the rear of the building and has been significantly modified by later alterations and additions. On balance it is considered that the removal of these elements together with the proposed modifications associated with the new lift and entry ramp and stair to the front entrance will not detrimentally impact on the retention of heritage significance of the building. The ramp design will retain the original bluestone entry stairs *in situ* and enable the bluestone plinth to the base of the wall to be read as a continuous element.

The retention of the lock-up will involve the removal of the later court house toilet block from the north end of the lock-up. This is considered to be an acceptable heritage outcome as it will enable the lock-up structure to be revealed in the round and fully restored to its 1873 form.

The site is not included in the Victorian Heritage Register or the Victorian Heritage Inventory pursuant to the Heritage Act 1995, though as a note, a site such as this one could well have archaeological values that would be protected under the Heritage Act regardless of the listing status.

Memorandum

To: Anne-Marie Treweeke
From: Melinda Catlow
Date: 20 August 2013
Subject: Richmond Town Hall Police Station

Anne-Marie

The following advice is provided to inform the Feasibility Study for the reuse of the former Richmond Town Hall Police Station for the purposes of an art gallery.

Subject land

The subject land is known as 333 Bridge Road, Richmond and is located approximately 80 metres to the east of Church Street. The site appears to form part of the Richmond Town Hall site.

At this time we have not been able to view the land status information but have spoken to Karen Hayes, Property Officer at the City of Yarra. Based on the discussions with Karen Hayes we understand that the land is subject of a Crown Grant and that the Crown Grant restricts the use of the land to the purposes of a courthouse and lockup.

If this is the case, then firstly it is unlikely that Council will be able to issue a planning permit for the use and secondly the use may not be able to legally commence. Legal advice to confirm this position should be obtained if this proposal is pursued.

Based on our conversation with Karen Hayes we understand that if Council was to pursue an art gallery on the site, there is the potential that the Crown Grant may need to be relinquished and a Crown Reserve, with the City of Yarra as the public land manager, sought.

While this is outside of our area of expertise, we note that the ownership issue will have an impact on the consideration of the planning issues. **On this basis, we have provided a summary of the controls and where a planning permit may be triggered in the event:**

- the land ownership and Crown Grant issues have been addressed,
- Council is the public land manager, and
- there is no restriction in the ownership regime on the use of the land that would prevent an art gallery.

Planning Controls

Under the provisions of the Yarra Planning Scheme the land is within the Public Use Zone 7 – Other public purposes (PUZ7).

Pursuant to the provisions of the PUZ7, a planning permit is not required for use or development if the proposal falls within the land use category of "other public use" and is carried out by or on behalf of the public land manager. In the event that one of these tests is not met a planning permit will be required for use and development.

The land is also affected by the Heritage Overlay H0230 – 333 Bridge Road, Richmond, Richmond Police Station and H0310 – Bridge Road Precinct, Richmond.

Pursuant to the provisions of the Heritage Overlay, a planning permit is required to demolish or remove a building and to construct a building or construct or carry out works. The provisions of the H0230 and H0310 further require a planning permit to be obtained to externally paint a building.

Advertising signs are at Category 4 pursuant to Clause 52.05. further detail in relation to the type and size of signs which are prohibited or allowed, with or without a planning permit, is provided within the Particular Provisions section below.

State Planning Policy Framework

The network and planning of the City's Activity Centres is set out at Clause 11.01. Specifically, "... *the concentration of major retail, residential, commercial, administrative, entertainment and cultural developments into activity centres which provide a variety of land uses and are highly accessible to the community*" is sought by Clause 11.01-2.

Planning for public open space that is commensurate with the needs of the community is encouraged at Clause 11.03.

Specifically in relation to Metropolitan Melbourne, Clause 11.04-2 provides further guidance in relation to Activity Centre hierarchy. Major Activity Centres, such as the Bridge Road MAC, are sought to comprise a mix of activities, including business, retail services and entertainment.

Clause 15 relates to 'Built Environment and Heritage' and provides further policy direction in relation to urban design (Clause 15.01), sustainable development (Clause 15.02) and heritage (Clause 15.03).

Clause 17 relates to 'Economic development' and at Clause 17.03 seeks to maintain and improve tourism within metropolitan Melbourne. Strategies include (among others), developing city precincts and promenades, nurturing artistic and cultural life and improving public facilities, amenities and access.

Clause 19.02-3 relates to 'Cultural facilities' and seeks to "*develop a strong cultural environment and increase access to arts, recreation and other cultural facilities*", particularly within Major Activity Centres, such as Bridge Road.



Local Planning Policy Framework

Municipal Strategic Statement

The following sections of Council's Municipal Strategic Statement at Clause 21 of the Yarra Planning Scheme are relevant to the consideration of the proposal:

- Clause 21.03 - Vision

This clause sets out the land use, built form, transport and environmental sustainability vision for the municipality in 2020. The accompanying Strategic Framework Plan at Figure 1 identifies the site as being within a Major Activity Centre and within close proximity to open space. The Residential Development Opportunities Map at Figure 2 identifies land to the north of the site as a strategic redevelopment site.

- Clause 21.04 – Land Use

The Urban Form Framework Map at Figure 3 to this clause identifies the site as being located adjacent to the Richmond Town Hall which is recognised as a "landmark" site and on Bridge Road, which is identified as a "main road strip". Clause 21.04-4 relates to "Community facilities, hospitals and medical services" and seeks to ensure that a range of community services that cater for a range of needs are provided. Clause 21.04-5 relates to "Parks, gardens and public open space" and identifies the importance of providing public open space as part of new development.

- Clause 21.05-1 – Built Form, Heritage

This clause seeks to ensure that identified places of heritage significance are protected and enhanced. The relevant objective is:

Objective 14 To protect and enhance Yarra's heritage places.

- Clause 21.05-2 – Built form, Urban design

This clause sets out the objectives for urban design within the municipality. The objectives are:

Objective 16 To reinforce the existing urban framework of Yarra.

Objective 17 To retain Yarra's identity as a low-rise urban form with pockets of higher development.

Objective 18 To retain, enhance and extend Yarra's fine grain street pattern.

Objective 19 To create an inner city environment with landscaped beauty.

Objective 20 To ensure that new development contributes positively to Yarra's urban fabric.

Objective 21 To enhance the built form character of Yarra's activity centres.

Objective 22 To encourage the provision of universal access in new development.

- Clause 21.05-4 – Built Form, Public environment.

This clause seeks to ensure that new development contributes positively to the public environment. The objectives of the clause seek to ensure that community interaction and activity is provided and to ensure that advertising signage contributes positively to the municipality.

- Clause 21.06 – Transport

This clause identifies the need to reduce car dependency within the municipality by promoting and improving walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure. Strategy 30.1 specifically relates to improving pedestrian and cycling links in association with new development where possible.

- Clause 21.07 – Environmental Sustainability

The promotion of ecological sustainable development is specifically identified at Objective 34.

- Clause 21.08-9 – Neighbourhoods – North Richmond (area north of Bridge Road)

This clause specifically relates to areas north of Bridge Road, and while the neighbourhood Map at Figure 21 identifies the Richmond Town Hall and Bridge Road Major Activity Centre, the content of this clause remains relatively silent on these areas. In contrast, the Central Richmond (area between Bridge Road and Swan Street) at Clause 21.08 provides further commentary in relation to the Bridge Road Major Activity Centre.

The Built Form Character Map at Figure 22 identifies the land to the north of the subject site as "Non Residential Areas" where the interface of development with the street should be improved.

The creation of a civic and cultural node around the Richmond Town Hall is specifically identified. The maintenance of the role of the Richmond Town Hall as a landmark is also identified.

Local Planning Policies

- Clause 22.02 – Development Guidelines for Sites Subject to the Heritage Overlay

This policy applies to all land within the Heritage Overlay and provides further guidance in relation to the protection and enhancement of identified places of cultural or natural significance within the municipality. Policies relate to demolition, original location, reconstruction and restoration, painting and surface treatments, culturally significant trees, subdivision, new development, alterations or additions and archaeological sites.

- Clause 22.03 – Landmarks and Tall Structures

This policy applies to all development and seeks to maintain the prominence of the municipality's valued landmarks and landmark signs such as the Clocktower of the Richmond Town Hall.

- Clause 22.07 – Development Abutting Laneways

This clause applies to applications for development that is accessed from a laneway or has laneway abuttal. We have not been able to view a copy of title or similar but based on the information available do not consider the site to abut any laneways.

Particular and General Provisions

- Clause 52.05 – Advertising Signs

Pursuant to the provisions of the PUZ7, advertising signs are in the most restrictive Category 4 at Clause 52.05-10 (Category 4 – Sensitive areas). Within this category, most signs are prohibited, save for, among others, a direction sign not exceeding 0.3sqm, which is as-of-right, or a floodlit sign (any size) or business identification sign (not exceeding 3sqm) for which a planning permit may be granted.

- Clause 52.06 – Car Parking

Based on our opinion that the proposed land use can be best categorised as a “Place of assembly”, the provisions of Clause 52.06-5 requires 0.3 car parking spaces to be provided for each patron permitted.

A planning permit is required to reduce (including reduce to zero) the number of car parking spaces required under Clause 52.06-5.

- Clause 52.29 – Land Adjacent to a Road Zone, Category 1, or a Public Acquisition Overlay for a Category 1 Road

Pursuant to the provisions of Clause 52.29, a planning permit is required to create or alter access to a road in a road Zone, Category 1, such as Bridge Road. Any application under this provision must be referred to the Roads Corporation (VicRoads).

- Clause 52.34 – Bicycle Facilities

Pursuant to the provisions of Clause 52.34, one employees bicycle space is required to be provided for each 1500sqm of net floor area used as a ‘Place of assembly’. For visitors, two bicycle spaces plus one to each 1500sqm of net floor area is required.

Summary

The following summary is provided on the basis that:

- the ownership and reserve purposes are rectified such that Council is the public land manager and the reserve provisions identify municipal purposes or similar;
- the proposed use and development as an art gallery are undertaken for, or on behalf of, the public land manager; and
- the proposed use as an art gallery is consistent with the other public purposes identified in the crown reserve or similar land status arrangements.

If the above circumstances apply and a planning permit is not required for use, there is still likely to be a planning permit trigger for the development of the land under the provisions of the Heritage Overlays. There is also likely to be a planning permit required in relation to the car parking associated with the change of use of the land. Similarly, if insufficient bicycle facilities are provided or if a new crossover is proposed to Bridge Road, a planning permit may be triggered.

In determining an Application for Planning Permit the Responsible Authority (in this case, the City of Yarra), the content of the local and state planning policies would need to be considered. We consider that the primary issue to be taken into account is the heritage aspect.

Clause 22.02 -5.1 Demolition sets the policy context for sites where removal of part of a Heritage Place or Contributory Element is proposed. In this respect the policy states:

Encourage the removal of inappropriate alterations, additions and works that detract from the cultural significance of the place.

Generally discourage the demolition of part of an individually significant or contributory building or removal of contributory elements unless:

- *That part of the heritage place has been changed beyond recognition of its original or subsequent contributory character(s).*
- *For a contributory building:*
 - *That part is not visible from the street frontage (other than a laneway), abutting park or public open space, and the main building form include roof form is maintained; or*
 - *The removal of the part would not adversely affect the contribution of the building to the heritage place.*
- *For individually significant buildings or works, it can be demonstrated that the removal of part of the building or works does not negatively affect the significance of the place.*

It is noted that as a part of the design exercise for the concept plan development the “historically significant buildings” are largely intended to be retained, maintained and reused. Later additions to the existing building are intended to be demolished and new building elements proposed behind (to the north of) the main building with limited visibility likely from Bridge Road.



In the assessment of new development, alterations or additions, Clause 22.02-5.7.1 provides the policy context. The policy statements of relevance include the following:

- *Respect the pattern, rhythm, orientation to the street, spatial characteristics, fenestration, roof form, materials and heritage character of the surrounding historic streetscape.*
- *Be articulated and massed to correspond with the prevailing building form of the heritage place or contributory elements to the heritage place.*
- *Be visually recessive and not dominate the heritage place.*
- *Be distinguishable from the original historic fabric.*
- *Not remove, cover, damage or change original historic fabric.*
- *Not obscure views of principle façades.*
- *Consider the architectural integrity and context of the heritage place or contributory element.*

More specifically in relation to Industrial, Commercial and Retail Heritage Place or Contributory Elements the policy states:

Encourage new upper level additions and works to:

- *Respect the scale and form of the existing heritage place or contributory elements to the heritage place by being set back from the lower built form elements. Each higher element should be set further back from lower heritage built forms.*
- *Incorporate treatments which make them less apparent.*

The plans prepared for the Feasibility Study are considered to be largely consistent with the heritage policy in that the main historic building elements are proposed to be retained and additions are to the rear of contemporary style and distinguished from the original historic fabric. In addition, the height of the proposed buildings is consistent with the existing built form and will have limited visibility from the street.

Other local planning policy content at Clause 2203 Landmarks and Tall Structures seeks to protect views to the silhouette and provide of Yarra's valued landmarks to ensure they are main as the principal built form reference. This includes the clocktower of the Richmond Town Hall. The building heights proposed ensure that that this policy objective should be achieved.

It is noted that the provisions in relation to signage are very restrictive and that minimal signage could be placed on site without a planning scheme amendment to add the subject land to the Schedule to Clause 36.01 Public Use Zone, if the proposed signage is to exceed the current provisions.

In overall terms, the conceptual plans appear to be of a form that is responsive to Council policy.

The plans incorporated in this report have been briefly discussed with Mary Osman, Manager Statutory Planning. Whilst there has been the issue of the public land management and ownership raised, there was a level of support expressed in relation to the concept.

Conclusion

In order for this proposal to proceed we are of the opinion that the issue of land management and ownership needs to be addressed. Following this, and based on the concept plans provided, we consider that a planning permit will be required, but there is a reasonable argument to be made in support of the proposal, subject to the details being developed and resolved.