

HERITAGE IMPACT STATEMENT

for

S7 Stockade Avenue, Coburg
Former Pentridge Prison Laundry

This Heritage Impact Statement for part of a permit application for:

Maintenance works, internal layout alterations and external works to the original Pentridge Prison Laundry Building

Victorian Heritage Number: H1551
Heritage Overlay No: HO47
Pre-application Meeting No: P39984

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DATE: 30th October 2024

P39984 – HM PRISON PENTRIDGE, CHAMP STREET AND MURRAY ROAD AND URQUHART STREET AND PENTRIDGE BOULEVARD AND WARDENS WALK AND SENTRY LAND AND INDUSTRY LANE AND STOCKADE AVENUE AND VIA ROMA, COBURG, MORELAND CITY (H155)

LOCATION

The site is Lot S7 Stockade Avenue on the traditional land of the Kulin Nation, and is situated between Wardens Walk to the west, and Via Roma to the south and east. It is known as the former Pentridge Prison Laundry and identified on the Victorian Heritage Registration under number H1551 as Building B13.

The site falls under Heritage Overlay HO47 and is identified as Lot S7 on Plan of Subdivision 543333S, with Volume Number 11079 and Folio Number 331.

CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUES

The Victorian Heritage Database Report describes that the former HM Pentridge Prison was established in December 1850. The structures remaining from the prison consist of A Division, B Division, B Division Annexe (former kitchen), D Division including the exercise yards, the former hospital (Former E Division), F Division, G Division (Jika Reformatory for Girls), H Division, the main gate, Administration Building, the former Chief Warders and Overseer of Works Residences, the Industries Buildings, *the laundry*, the south gate to the Women's Prison, and remaining bluestone walls, gates and lookout towers.

The former HM Prison Pentridge is of historical, architectural, archaeological, scientific (technological) and aesthetic significance to the State of Victoria as the largest prison complex constructed in Victoria in the nineteenth century.

The Victorian Heritage Database Report discusses that the former prison is of historical, architectural, archaeological, scientific (technological) and aesthetic significance to the State of Victoria as the largest prison complex constructed in Victoria in the nineteenth century. Its architectural significance is due to its monumental size and the austere Classical style of the nineteenth century prison buildings. The complex of buildings and walls are important for their expression of the requirements of containment and order.

Heritage Victoria advice provides a brief background and history of the specific building, supposing that the Laundry was adapted from an earlier woollen mill on the site in the late 1860's. The east wall consists of two layers of bluestone with course rubble infill, which is different to the west wall, being a single skin of bluestone, suggesting that the east wall may have formed part of the original site boundary. Plans dated 1892 show the addition of a lantern roof form to the building at this time, as well as a dormer to the southern hip.

The northern wall of the building was originally solid bluestone with no apertures. This wall collapsed and was rebuilt in brick during the 80's or 90's and was demolished around 15 years ago.

The Laundry therefore contributes to the significance of the overall Pentridge site, and whilst being of a more modest and less imposing scale than other neighbouring buildings, its age and story contribute to the cultural heritage value of the precinct.

CURRENT EXISTING CONDITIONS

The property was acquired by its current owner in 2022, and at the time had fallen into a significant state of disrepair through inaction by previous owners. The current owner's intent is to make the building secure and watertight as soon as possible.

The building is currently vacant, uninhabitable, and in a derelict state due to extended exposure to the weather, general age and a lack of previous maintenance. The site is secured with a temporary mesh fence. There is no street facing north wall. The roof sheeting is decaying, and many corrugated sheets are missing. There are no gutters and downpipes. The timber roof structure is deteriorated in parts. A section of the bluestone wall is missing, and other parts require maintenance.

Detailed descriptions of the existing conditions of various components are outlined in the '*Former Pentridge Prison – Laundry: Extract From Heritage Infrastructure Audit Update 2023,*' prepared by Lovell Chen and dated November 2023.

Initial stormwater renewal has been performed in anticipation of reroofing and new guttering and downpipes being installed in conjunction with the provision of power supply to the site

THE PROPOSED ACTIVITY

It has been identified that an opportunity exists to make the building watertight and secure relatively quickly and economically with minimal interventions to the existing structure and heritage fabric, which would facilitate reuse through new activations, while representing a reasonable economic benefit to the owner.

This proposed adaptive reuse is a significant reduction to that which has been previously discussed with various authorities as the owner is motivated to commence work to make the building safe and watertight and has simplified the overall scope significantly to facilitate an easier path through the application process, while still enabling reasonable commercial use with negligible adverse impact on the heritage fabric.

The works broadly consist of:

- Removal of some internal walls as required
- Removal of part concrete floor, plinths etc to provide a level surface to work over
- Removal of existing roof sheeting
- Removal of existing window and door frames
- Replacement of roofing including installation of skylights
- Installation of new gutters and downpipes
- Installation of new facade
- Installation of new doors and windows to existing openings (except where shown)
- New lightweight internal partitions and services
- New levelled flooring
- External and Internal painting
- External concrete and hard surfaces
- Side arbour structure
- Soft landscaping

There is no proposed extension to the footprint of the building defined on the VHR. No works beyond the perimeter of the existing bluestone walls are proposed, with the exception of landscaping and paved elements.

No signage is included as part of this application, as final uses and tenants have not been determined. The primary objective is to obtain a permit to facilitate making the

building watertight to prevent additional decay and deterioration. Future applications may include fitout and signage by future tenants where required.

The simplicity and comparative low cost of the proposal will allow for works to commence expeditiously upon the issuance of a Heritage Victoria and Merri-bek City Council permit. A projected timeline of 12 months is viewed as being a reasonable duration for the works to be constructed.

STRUCTURAL WORKS

The Lovell Chen report identifies that there are minor signs of rotting and organic growth to some of trusses that have been exposed by the dilapidated roof sheets. A structural engineer has been engaged to inspect the existing trusses as part of these works and advise on structural interventions such as splicing in sections of new timber to match the original size and species (where available) or a similar approved species and size otherwise.

It is noted that the pre-application advice provided by Heritage Victoria included a requirement that the permit application include structural engineering advice supporting any methodology to retain and protect heritage fabric during strengthening works and include details of any temporary support structures and methodology for reinstatement/reconstruction of heritage fabric. This will be forthcoming but was not able to be made available in the timeframe required by Heritage Victoria where an application must be submitted.

EXTERNAL WORKS

Advice has been provided by Heritage Victoria of the introduction of a roof lantern to the laundry in the 1890's and its subsequent removal around the 1960's. Whilst we acknowledge and agree with Heritage Victoria that the re-instatement of the roof lantern would align with good heritage practice as well as meet the requirement to provide additional internal natural daylight, the cost of this work does not align to the lettable income that can be derived from the completed space.

As part of the works, a glazed wall element is proposed to the northern elevation where the existing wall has been demolished. The original wall was solid bluestone which was demolished in the 1980's or '90's and rebuilt in brick, before again being demolished around an estimated 15 years ago. Whilst it is acknowledged that the original wall was solid bluestone, the reconstruction of this wall in bluestone is not feasible. Not only is the cost extremely prohibitive, but a solid wall also diminishes the connection and activation to the street, severely impacting the type of tenant that could be attracted to lease a tenancy of this type, making the development uneconomic.

INTERNAL WORKS

The internal bluestone division is situated too far towards the rear southern wall of the existing structure to create a separate tenancy that has a connection to the rear courtyard space. It is the intent that the removal of this wall will allow the flexibility to create a larger space that can have a connection to the south courtyard. The intent is that this outdoor space will be able to be provided to the public realm as a thoroughfare and outdoor leisure space intertwined with the flexible use space to the rear of the laundry building. The identity of the original wall will remain through the retention of bluestone nibs either side of the wall location where it abuts the main east and west walls.

There is no proposal for lined ceilings, leaving the existing timber roof structure exposed between the new lightweight partitions. The existing timber framed cross partitions at the northern end of the building may be able to be incorporated in the new layout.

Description of Heritage Infrastructure as outlined by Lovell Chen Report:

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| ○ The full thickness and height of all bluestone walls | retain |
| ○ Original roof trusses, framing and roof from | retain & repair |
| ○ All roof cladding | replace |
| ○ Rainwater goods | replace |
| ○ All iron rods | retain/replace |
| ○ Brick chimney | removed |
| ○ All stone floors and associated drains | retain & build over |
| ○ All timber doors and associated hardware | replace |
| ○ All iron grilles and associated hardware | remove/replace |
| ○ All timber framed windows and associated hardware | replace |
| ○ Any obscured glazing | remove |
| ○ Boarded wall linings and early drying cabinets | remove/replace |
| ○ Brick north wall | new |

ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE HERIATGE ACT

The adopted proposal has been identified as offering an appropriate balance between providing reasonable economic of the building whilst having minimal detrimental impacts on the cultural heritage significance of the place under section 101 (2) of the Heritage Act 2017. The proposed interventions are minimal and gentle in the extent to which the cultural heritage significance of the place are affected by the proposal.

Furthermore, under Section 101 (3) the proposal will have minimal effect on the cultural heritage significance of any adjacent neighbouring property as the works are contained within the existing envelope of the laundry building and offer a negligible external impact on the adjacent heritage buildings.

CULTURAL HERITAGE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The regulations do not require a Cultural Heritage Management Plan for the proposed activities, being 'Demolition (r.16)' and 'Alterations Of Buildings (r.14)' as they are classified as exempt.

SPECIFIC EXEMPTIONS UNDER THE VHDR

All interior alterations that do not adversely affect the exterior fabric (including the roof or structure) of the following buildings: B1 (Main Gate and Administration Building), B2 (Former Chief Warders and Overseer of Works Residences), B3 (Former Hospital - Former E Division), B5 (B Division Annexe), B6 (Industry Buildings), B10 (G Division), B12 (F division - either side of central building), **B13 (Laundry)**, B14 (South Gate to Former Women's Prison).

SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND CONCLUSION

The current proposal has been greatly simplified from earlier considerations involving multiple additional stories containing residential apartments. The impacts on the Heritage place and cumulative effects of the proposed activity are therefore significantly reduced to the extent that this proposal enables a rapid rectification of the deteriorating fabric in conjunction with an economically beneficial activation of the site.

The owner is motivated to obtain a permit in order to commence rectification and maintenance works on the building to make it safe and watertight, whilst at the same time maintaining a level of flexibility in the future use and tenant's that can be attracted subject to market conditions and demands.

The residual impact on the heritage place following these works will be minor and the benefit will be the preservation of the building for generations to come.

Without the proposed interventions, the risk is that the building will continue to decay to the extent that it becomes uneconomic to rectify it and the heritage significance will be lost.

REFERENCES

Former Pentridge Prison – Laundry; extract from Heritage Infrastructure Audit Update 2023

Former Pentridge Prison Heritage Infrastructure Audit Report, prepared by Lovell Chen, dated 17 February 2017

Former Pentridge Prison Heritage Infrastructure Audit Update, prepared by Lovell Chen, dated January 2020

Former Pentridge Prison Conservation Management Plan, prepared by Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd, dated April 2016