

H0526 ROBUR TEA BUILDING
28 CLARENDON STREET SOUTHBANK, MELBOURNE CITY
Permit Application P39527

Why is the Robur Tea Building of cultural heritage significance?

The Robur Tea Building was included in the Victorian Heritage Register in 1982. It was constructed between 1887 - 1888 as a warehouse for Fergus and Mitchell, manufacturing stationers and its name relates to its later use as a tea warehouse.

The Robur Tea Building is of historical, architectural and scientific significance to the State of Victoria and is one of the finest and most prominent examples of a nineteenth century warehouse in Melbourne. It was, and continues to be, a landmark and is one of the few surviving industrial and warehouse buildings that once dominated the south bank of the Yarra River.

The brick building is supported by an innovative system of 450 ironbark piles and concrete rafts, and demonstrates one of the earliest uses of steel beams to support the floors.

What was the permit application for?

In 2 May 2024 Heritage Victoria received a permit application for works to construct seven integrated towers and buildings ranging in height from 30 levels to 3 levels surrounding the Robur Tea Building on the north, south and west elevations, and part demolition, adaptation and conservation of the Robur Tea Building.

The permit application was advertised from 8-21 May 2024.

Why has the permit been issued?

The development proposed is a revised scheme from that refused by Heritage Victoria on 30 May 2023 (P33108). The applicant returned to Heritage Victoria with changes to the proposal responding to feedback.

On 26 June 2024, a permit was issued by Heritage Victoria for the construction of seven integrated towers and buildings ranging in height from 30 levels to 3 levels surrounding the Robur Tea Building on the north, south and west elevations, and part demolition, adaptation and conservation of the Robur Tea Building for the following reasons:

- The suite of conservation works proposed are a positive heritage outcome and will remove unsympathetic additions, reconstruct or reveal significant heritage details, and return the principal façades to their original design and historic presentation.
- The development contributes to the reasonable and economic use of the Robur Tea Building. Refusal of the permit application would substantially impact the reasonable and economic use of the place.
- The design, materiality and detailing of the proposed development is of high architectural quality. The proposed setbacks would allow for the Robur Tea Building to sit proud in the streetscape and retain some landmark qualities.

Can the applicant appeal the decision?

The applicant or the owner may make a request to the Heritage Council to review the Executive Director's determination to impose a condition on the permit. A request for a review must be made to the Heritage Council of Victoria within 60 days of the refusal of the application. The Heritage Council is an independent statutory authority established under the *Heritage Act 2017*.