

Heritage Impact Statement (Revised)
for
New Scoreboard and supporting structure.
Central Park, 10-18 Main Street, Stawell
VHR No. 2284

Further Information

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Prepared for Northern Grampians Shire

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

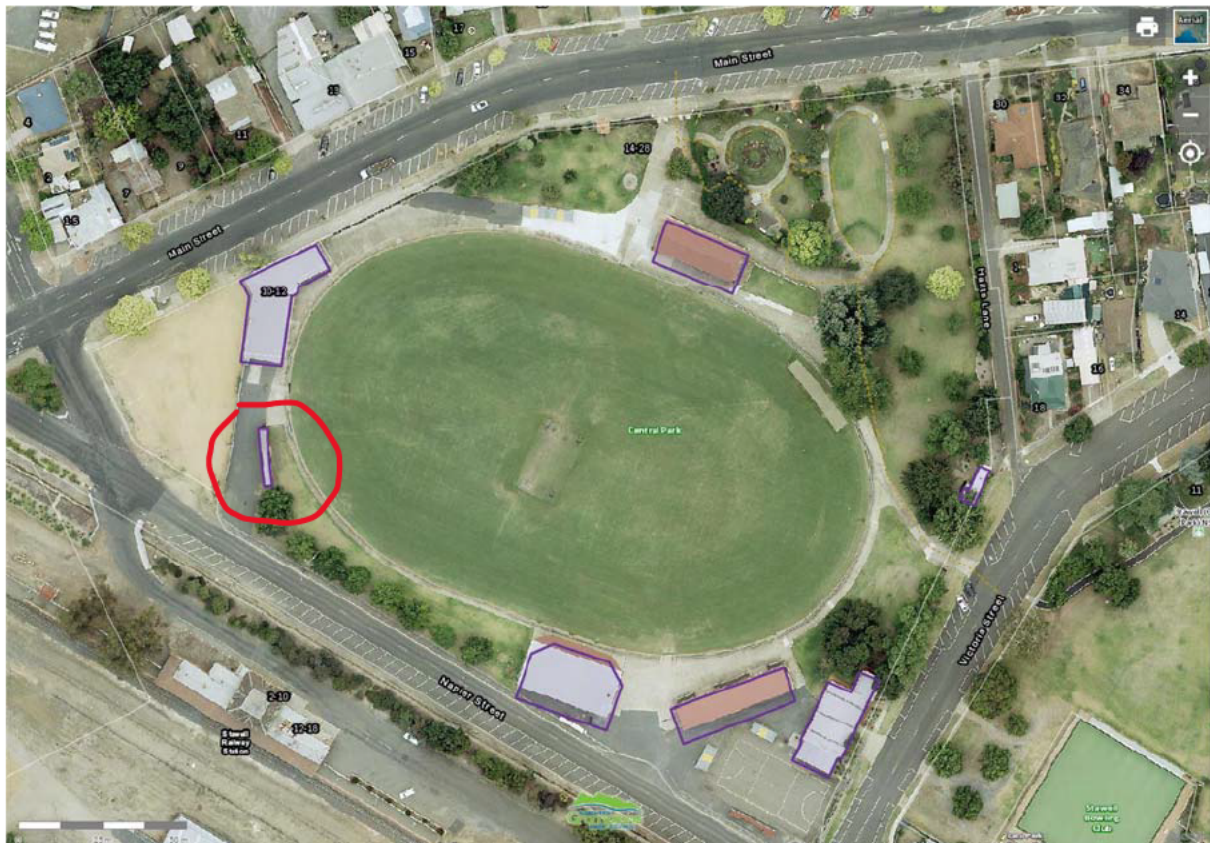
Introduction of a new electronic scoreboard and supporting structure.

Pre-application meeting number: P38064 Summary of pre-application feedback from Heritage Victoria

An application was made for a preapplication meeting (P39468). Written advice from Ms [REDACTED] was received. The pre application advice was made to ascertain if the works required a permit or could be done under an exemption from a permit. The advice received was that a permit would be required for the construction of a new scoreboard and supporting structure as these are deemed as new works in a heritage place.

Address and location description:

- Central Park is located at 10-18 Main Street Stawell and has frontages to Victoria Street, Napier Street and Hattis Lane. The entire site is included within the Registered Place The existing Scoreboards are not included as significant components. The existing scoreboards are on the west side of the land as shown in the aerial photograph below.



Location of Existing Scoreboards circled in red.

Significance of the place

Central Park at Stawell is located near the centre of Stawell and comprises a sports oval, a timber grandstand and other buildings and a number of memorials, set amidst ornamental gardens and lawns. The site was used from the 1860s by the local gold miners as a cricket ground and later as a football ground but is best known as the site of the Stawell Gift, Australia's oldest, richest and most prestigious short-distance footrace. The Stawell Athletics

Club was formed in 1877 and held its first meeting on Easter Saturday 1878 at the botanical reserve.

By 1884 the Gift had become an international event, with runners from around Australia competing against those from Europe and America. In 1898 the Easter meeting was held for the first time at Central Park, where a new timber grandstand was built, designed by the Melbourne architects Kempson & Conolly. The Memorial Gates, made by the local foundry of Kay & Company, were added in 1903, in memory of the fifty-seven Stawell men who volunteered to serve in the Boer War. The Stawell Gift meeting has been held at Central Park every Easter since 1899, apart from the war years of 1942-5. It has grown to a three-day event, culminating in the Stawell Gift race, a handicap race now (since 1973) of 120 metres, with a first prize in 2011 of \$40,000.

Central Park is a reserve of about 7 hectares with views south towards the Grampians. It comprises a grassed sports ground, elaborate cast iron memorial entrance gates supported by masonry pillars, two brick ticket offices, an old timber grandstand and two other newer brick stands, several memorials to past runners and large open areas, including ornamental gardens and lawns. The central feature is the sports oval, around which is a diverse range of mature and semi-mature trees, including both native and exotic species. Between the grandstand and Main Street is a small ornamental rose garden, enclosed by a thick hedge and with a memorial sundial and stone seat.

How is it significant?

Central Park at Stawell is of historical, architectural and social significance to the state of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

Central Park is historically significant for its long association with the Stawell Gift, Australia's oldest, richest and most prestigious short-distance footrace, which has been held at Stawell every Easter since 1878 (apart from the war years of 1942-45), and at Central Park since 1898. The Gift reflects the importance of athletics events as a recreational activity in the nineteenth century, and the continuing popularity of foot racing as a professional sporting event since then. Central Park is associated with the gold mining origins of the town of Stawell, having been used by the miners as a cricket ground as early as the 1860s, and the origin of the Gift lies in the running races held by the Stawell Miners' Association from 1873. Central Park is of social significance as the site of the running of the Stawell Gift, one of Australia's greatest sporting events.

The significance of the place is embodied in the continuing use as the home of the Stawell Gift foot race and in the oval, trees, early grandstand, memorial gates and Main Street ticket boxes.

Why are the Works Required?

The existing scoreboard is obsolete and many parts are not operational. The supporting structure has been assessed for risk and condition. It was deemed to be in poor condition. The proposed new scoreboard is multipurpose and can give the required information in real time for a number of sports including the Stawell Gift.

Existing condition of the place.

Central Park has two existing adjacent scoreboards on the south west end of the oval. The north section of the two existing scoreboards appears to have been the earliest section constructed. It is believed to have been constructed in the 1920s but no documentary evidence has been located. The construction date of the south section is also not known

The existing structures are not included in the Heritage Victoria registered plan of significant buildings and are not referred to in the statement of significance.

Current use of the place.

The place is used as a public sports ground hosting cricket, football and netball matches and the annual Stawell Gift Foot Race. The southern scoreboard is generally used as the north section has some parts that are not operational. The scoreboard is not electronic and cannot relay information in real time or be used for multiple uses.

Constraints and opportunities resulting from the significance of the place.

Central Park is constrained by the limited areas for development due to the significant buildings and trees within the place.

Proposal

The revised proposal is to retain the existing non-significant scoreboards and supporting structures. After community consultation and review of a number of options the new scoreboard is proposed to be located in a new position separate from and to the north of the existing scoreboards. The proposed site is currently a paved area and away from other significant structures on the site.

Conclusion

It is my opinion that the proposed works will have little physical or visual impact on the significance of Central Park. The new scoreboard and supporting structure do not physically or visually impact on the significant features of Central Park.

The provision of a scoreboard to modern standards and requirements will support the ongoing use of Central Park as a major regional sporting ground and for the nationally and internationally significant Stawell Gift running race.

Wendy Jacobs
9 August 2024



Existing scoreboards, Central Park, Stawell.



A

B

C

D



Option explored for siting . Preferred option after community consultation is D



Proposed site of new scoreboard



Proposed location of new scoreboard and artists impression.