



# Heritage Impact Statement

Australian Museum of Performing Arts (AMPA)  
Victorian Arts Centre VHR H1500  
100 St Kilda Road, Southbank

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Place Details

This Heritage Impact Statement (HIS) is for the Victorian Arts Centre VHR H1500 (the heritage place).

### 1.1.1 Address & location description:

The heritage place is located 100 St Kilda Road, Southbank.

This proposal affects part of the heritage place, known as Hamer Hall. Specifically, this proposal relates to two spaces (the project area) located beneath the upper terrace to the west end of Level 06 of Hamer Hall facing Southbank Boulevard and the Birrarung (Figure 1). The eastmost space (currently vacant) was originally the site of the Treble Clef restaurant. The westmost space (currently occupied by The Channel) was originally the site of the now closed Performing Arts Museum (PAM).

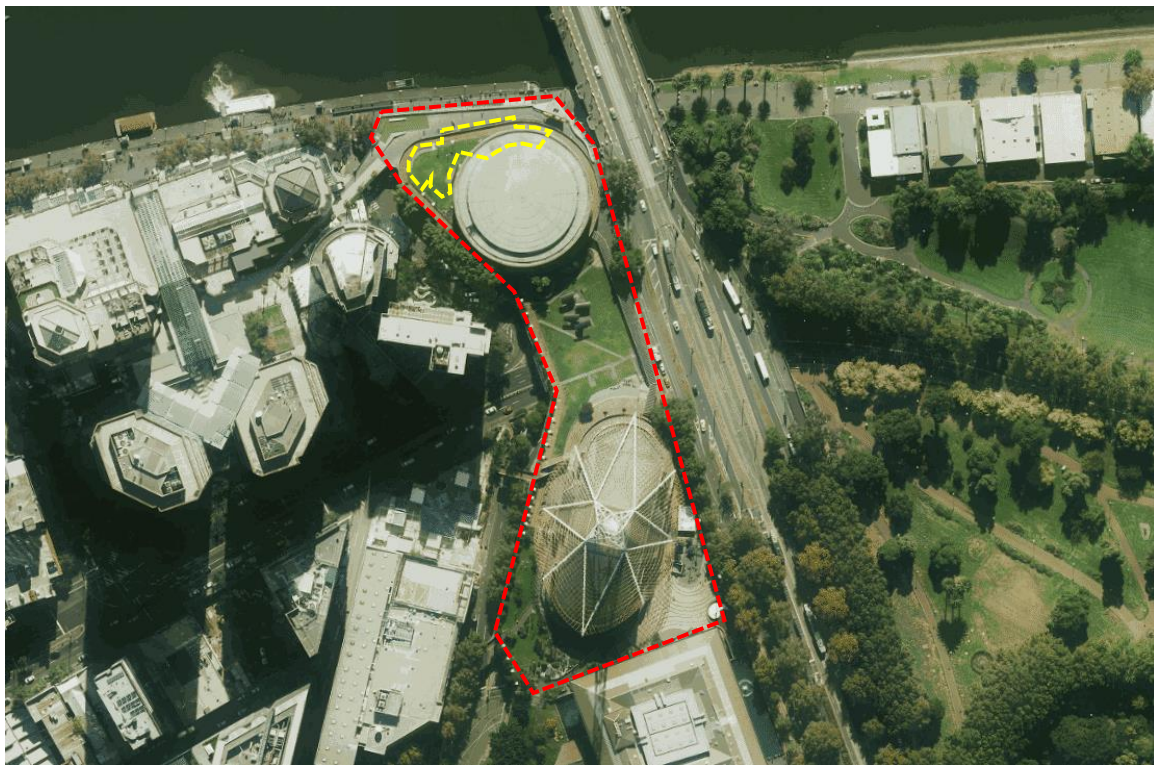


Figure 1: Aerial view of the Victorian Arts Centre VHR H1500 (outlined in red), comprising Hamer Hall (north) and the Theatres Building (south). Project area shown indicatively in yellow. Source: VicPlan, 2024.

## 1.2 Project Details

This HIS forms part of an application for demolition, alterations and additions to the project area.

The proposal seeks to adaptively re-use the project area, to create a new museum and exhibition space to accommodate the newly established Australian Museum of Performing Arts (AMPA) within Hamer Hall. As such, this proposal seeks to transform the project area into a flexible open gallery and exhibition space. As part of this proposal, part of the existing frame structure (approved under P19340) will be enclosed and adapted to form a new gallery pavilion.

Initially conceived of as a physical proof-of-concept for AMPA, this proposal has developed to encompass a larger area and provide an increased offering delivered over two stages:

- **Stage 1**

Stage 1 will provide a dedicated exhibition space of approximately 550sqm for exhibitions curated by Arts Centre Melbourne (ACM) and small touring exhibitions. Stage 1 is scheduled to open in Spring/Summer 2025.

- **Stage 2**

Stage 2 will expand the gallery into the adjacent space (currently occupied by The Channel) creating a total floor area of approximately 900 sqm. This will enable AMPA to increase its offering to encompass larger exhibitions, including exclusive international content. Stage 2 is intended to commence within 2-3 years of opening.

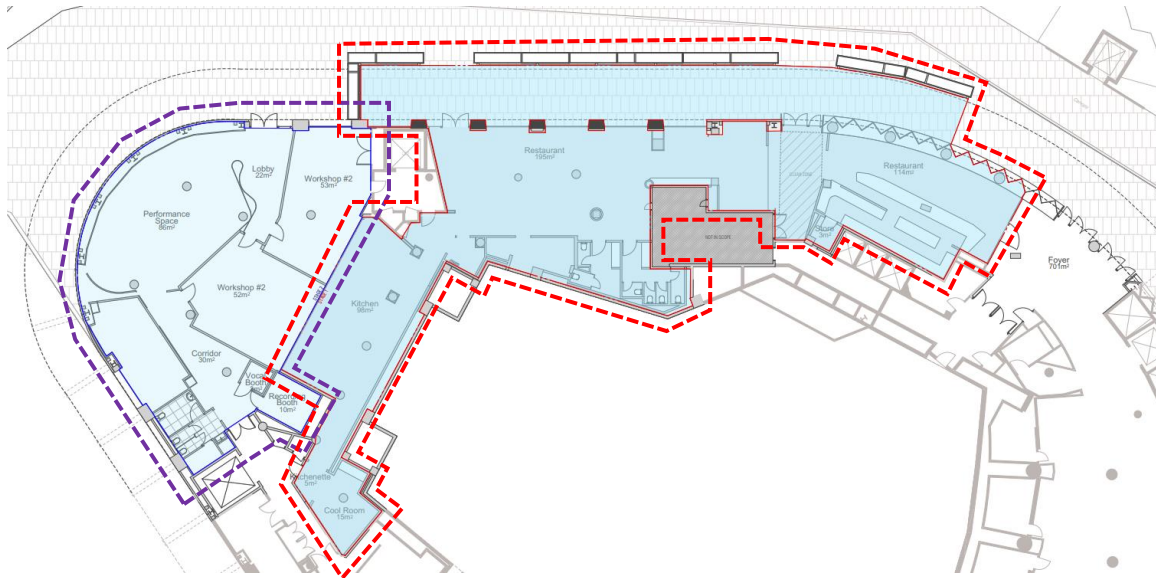


Figure 2 Existing floor plan indicating Stage 1 scope in red and Stage 2 scope in purple. Source: Fender Katsalidis Architects. 2024.

ACM exists through The Victorian Arts Centre Act 1979 (VIC) (the Act). Under the Act, ACM has a mandate to maintain, conserve, develop, promote and oversee the exhibition of the State collection of the performing arts, known as the Australian Performing Arts Collection (APAC). Comprising of more than 850,000 objects, APAC is a unique and internationally recognised repository of Australia's performing arts history with significant cultural value. Grounds' original scheme for Hamer Hall included a dedicated museum for the exhibition of performing arts material (PAM) however this has since closed and currently opportunities for the exhibition of APAC are limited. As such, this project has been developed out of a need to substantially improve ACM's ability to deliver on this mandate, by reestablishing a dedicated museum (AMPA) for the exhibition of performing arts material, including APAC.

AMPA seeks to reintroduce a performing arts museum within and adjacent to the original PAM location, enabling ACM to share the riches of APAC with all Victorians, national and international visitors alike. Combined with ACM's exhibiting, performance, programming, and marketing pedigree, this proposal provides an opportunity to work collaboratively with government and the creative sector to tell the story of Australia's performing arts cultural heritage, its rich legacy, and its vibrant future whilst reinvigorating ACM's long held commitment under the Act to the preservation and celebration of performing arts in Australia.

In addition, this project will provide a new daytime cultural attraction within the heritage place, encouraging public visitation during major construction works and closures related to the Reimagining Arts Centre Melbourne (RACM) and Melbourne Arts Precinct Transformation (MAPT) projects and supporting the broader MAP's role as the State's premier cultural destination. This proposal is supported by a seed Grant provided by Creative Victoria for the development of AMPA and construction of a proof-of-concept space.

### 1.2.1 Pre-application meeting

A pre-application meeting (P39754) was held with on site with Heritage Victoria (HV) on 21 May 2024. Following the meeting a letter of pre-application advice was provided by Heritage Victoria on 18 June 2024. The key points are reproduced below:

- *The proposal to reactivate Hamer Hall North space and north terrace as an exhibition space for the Performing Arts Collection and small food and beverage offering is aptly suitable as the performing arts museum originally was located close to this area in the Roy Grounds scheme. a Hamer Hall north terrace elevation is of high cultural significance and has primary views from the Princes Bridge and the North bank of the Yarra and from the Yarra. In the past there has been great interest from the public and stakeholders when change has been implemented to this space externally and we are cognisant of possible impacts to its cultural significance.*
- *The external pavillion space expansion proposal into the space underneath the concourse balcony within the existing post structure and the new facade treatment has a significant impact to the primary facade and views and would not be supported as a permanent structure or infill. However, the temporary and reversible nature of the proposal for the purposes of the museum functionality could be supported. A temporary term in the order of no more than 3 years may be considered. If a permit application is lodged we would need to see a discussion within the Heritage Impact Statement of what other less intrusive options were considered and why these were discounted. For example, is there additional tenancy space within the footprint of the building? What is causing the necessity of a pavillion space to expand into the terrace and whether there were options?*
- *The proposal of a temporary café cube may be considered subject to further detailed design. The proposal of using the eastern section of the north terrace as outdoor seating area to support food and beverage service is likely to be supported.*
- *The significance of the north spaces within Hamer Hall building is a combination of contributory and noncontributory spaces according to the Victorian Arts Centre Conservation Management Plan volume 2 1995. These spaces have had many changes over the years, mostly food and beverage programmed spaces. The proposal for the gallery entrance, gallery exhibition and back of house spaces in this area are likely to be supported, subject to further detailed design.*
- *We recommend that you engage a Heritage consultant to assist with the heritage impact statement and advise on the proposal as a whole.*

Following the pre-application meeting, the proposal expanded to encompass the original Performing Arts Museum (PAM) space, currently occupied by The Channel, and is to be delivered over two stages. The proposed project area is considered an appropriate space for AMPA given the original use of part of the area as a performing arts museum, the prominent riverfront location and proximity to APAC (stored within the same building). As such, ACM was not in a position to consider other potential locations of sufficient size and proximity to APAC. Further correspondence with Heritage Victoria indicated a potential enforcement matter related to the later frame structure located within the project area. Following this, further research was undertaken and identified the frame structure was approved under P19340 in July 2013. Later, a permit exemption P38950 to install temporary banners to the frame between November 2023 and April 2024 was approved in October 2023.

### 1.2.2 Request for Further Information

Heritage Victoria issued a Request for Further Information (RFI) on 05 September 2024. The following outlines the items requested in the RFI and how these were addressed in the updated drawings by Fender Katsalidis, dated 02.10.2024:

1. *Provide the time frame that the proposed works will occupy the undercroft to the north terrace.*

In the initial permit application, a permanent timeframe was requested for the proposed extension into the undercroft space. However, following the advice outlined in the RFI, ACM now seeks a



minimum 10-year timeframe. Any reduction to this timeframe would render the proposal unfeasible, given the significant investment required and its ability to contribute to revenue generation.

Further justification on this timeframe can be provided if required by Heritage Victoria.

2. *Provide the updated survey of the significance of individual spaces at Hamer Hall by Bryce Raworth and Phillip Goad, 2010 referred to on page 5 of the Heritage Impact Statement.*

A copy of the *Southbank Cultural Precinct Redevelopment Stage 1 [Hamer Hall] Heritage Impact Statement*, April 2010, prepared by Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd with Professor Phillip Goad is included in the submission documents. Please refer to the “summary update to the CMP listing of spaces and fabric in relation to levels of significance” included at pp. 9-10.

3. *Advise whether based on the advice set out above, you wish to revise your application to remove the cafe built within the undercroft.*

Based on the advice set out in the RFI, the proposal has been amended to remove the café addition. The proposed addition will now stop short of the Gallery 1 double doors to the northern façade and the east end wall of the pavilion will be visible externally. The external face of the east end wall will be painted charcoal. Additionally, the extent of the existing steel frame will be reduced by demolishing three bays to the east end. This will enable the original section of the building to again be visible, allowing for an improved understanding of the original undercroft to this area.

Refer to updated Architectural Drawings for further details.

Further to the submission of the RFI information, Heritage Victoria requested an update of the HIS on 28 October 2024. The following HIS is a reflection of this request.

### 1.2.3 Traditional Owners Information

The heritage place is located on the traditional land of the Wurundjeri People. Under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006, the Registered Aboriginal Party for this land is the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation.

The heritage place is located within an area of cultural heritage sensitivity.

### 1.2.4 Client

This HIS has been prepared for Arts Centre Melbourne.

## 1.3 Reference Documents

This HIS refers to the following supporting documents:

- *Victorian Arts Centre Conservation Management Plan (CMP)*, prepared by Allom Lovell and Associates in 1995.
- *Southbank Cultural Precinct Redevelopment Stage 1 – Hamer Hall Heritage Impact Statement (SCPR HIS)*, prepared by Bryce Raworth with Professor Philip Goad in April 2010.
- *The Victorian Arts Centre Act 1979 (VIC)*
- *AMPA Reasonable and Economic Use Statement*, prepared by ACM in July 2024.
- *Architectural Drawings*, prepared by Fender Katsalidis Architects in October 2024.
- *Appendix A: Victorian Heritage Database Report: Victorian Arts Centre*

In addition, this HIS should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- *Updated Architectural Drawings*, prepared by Fender Katsalidis Architects, dated 02.10.2024, as follows:

<b>Drawing No.</b>	<b>Drawing Name</b>
TP000	Cover Page
TP001	Existing Site Plan





TP002	Level 6 (St Kilda Rd) Existing Conditions Plan
TP003	Existing Elevations
TP004	Existing Elevations
TP005	Demolition Staging
TP006	Level 6 Demolition Plan
TP007	Level 6 Staging Plan
TP050	Design Process Diagrams
TP051	Design Process Diagrams
TP052	Design Process Diagrams
TP100	Proposed Level 6 Floor Plan
TP101	Proposed Level 6 Reflective Ceiling Plan
TP200	Proposed Elevations
TP201	Proposed Elevations
TP202	Proposed Elevations
TP250	Proposed Section A
TP251	Proposed Section B
TP300	Visualisation
TP301	Visualisation
TP302	Visualisation
TP500	Exterior Finishes Schedule

#### 1.4 Limitations

This report does not address any Aboriginal, archaeological, horticultural matters.

The proposed activity, alteration of buildings, is an exempt activity under the Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018 (VIC) Part 2 Division 2(8). A Cultural Heritage Management Plan is not required to be prepared for the activity outlined in this application.

The Victorian Arts Centre VHR H1500 is not listed on the Victorian Heritage Inventory and as such, there are no identified archaeological values or potential.

A site visit to the project area was undertaken by Trethowan Architecture on 17 June 2024. Apart from the project area, other parts of the heritage place were not inspected during the site visit.

The CMP was prepared for the whole of the heritage place (Theatres Building and Hamer Hall) in 1995. Several alterations to Hamer Hall have occurred since, including the 2012 Southbank Cultural Precinct Redevelopment works which substantially altered the north elevation and internal configuration. An updated survey of the significance of individual spaces at Hamer Hall was undertaken by Bryce Raworth with Professor Phillip Goad in 2010 prior to the completion of the Southbank Cultural Precinct Redevelopment works. In 2013, an updated CMP was prepared for the Theatres Building by Lovell Chen however did not include Hamer Hall. As such, this HIS refers to the CMP and 2010 survey to assess the significance of the project area.

## 2 History, Significance & Description

### 2.1 Historical Summary

The heritage place is located on the Traditional Lands of the Wurundjeri People of the East Kulin nation.

From the 1860s, the low lying swampy area characterising the southern bank of the Birrarung (Yarra River) was used for travelling circuses till a permanent circus was developed at the site in 1901. The circus site was then acquired by Wirth's Circus, where it remained for 50 years. By the 1940s the site was earmarked as the potential location for a cultural centre and by 1956 a committee had been established to oversee the development project, which was to encompass an art gallery and cultural centre. Roy Ground of Grounds, Romberg and Boyd was appointed the architect and development of a masterplan for the expansive site along St Kilda Road begun. The masterplan, designed by Grounds in 1960, proposed three distinct geometric forms comprising of the art gallery, art school and copper spire, sited upon an expansive podium with functional areas sunken below.<sup>1</sup>

The Victorian Arts Centre and Gallery complex commenced construction to Grounds' design in 1962 with the first stage, the National Gallery of Victoria, reaching completion in 1968. The second stage comprising of the theatres and concert hall, originally in a single submerged building with spire atop, reached difficulties relating to brief, budget and site conditions. This led to the separation of the theatres building and concert hall and shifting of the concert hall site further north to the former Snowdon Gardens site.<sup>2</sup>

Construction of the Melbourne Concert Hall (later Hamer Hall) and the adjacent Theatres Building began in 1973. The Melbourne Concert Hall was opened in November 1982, with the Theatres Building completed two years later. The Victorian Arts Centre officially opened in October 1984 and is now known as Arts Centre Melbourne (ACM). The Melbourne Concert Hall was renamed Hamer Hall in 2004, in honour of former state Premier Sir Rupert Hamer.<sup>3</sup> The original internal arrangement at the St Kilda Road level comprised of main entrance foyer to the east and amenities to the north east corner. The Treble Clef restaurant was located facing the River to the north and Performing Arts Museum (PAM) occupied the space to the west end of the floorplate.<sup>4</sup>



Figure 3 Victorian Arts Centre precinct c.1983. Note original north elevation of the lower podium, intended to be a mirrored interpretation of the adjacent Princes Bridge VHR H1447. Source: Victorian Heritage Database.



Figure 4 Treble Clef restaurant from Riverview Terrace, c.1982. Source: Australian Performing Arts Collection.

<sup>1</sup> Allom Lovell and Associates, *Victorian Arts Centre Conservation Management Plan*, 1995.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> PROV 7882/P0001.



Figure 5 Riverview Terrace c.1982. Note, outdoor seating area with glazed balustrade and planter boxes. Source: Australian Performing Arts Collection.



Figure 6 Interior of the Treble Clef restaurant, c.1982. Note, original interior scheme with patterned carpet, music themed wallpaper and glossy columns. Image by Julie Millowick. Source: Australian Performing Arts Collection.

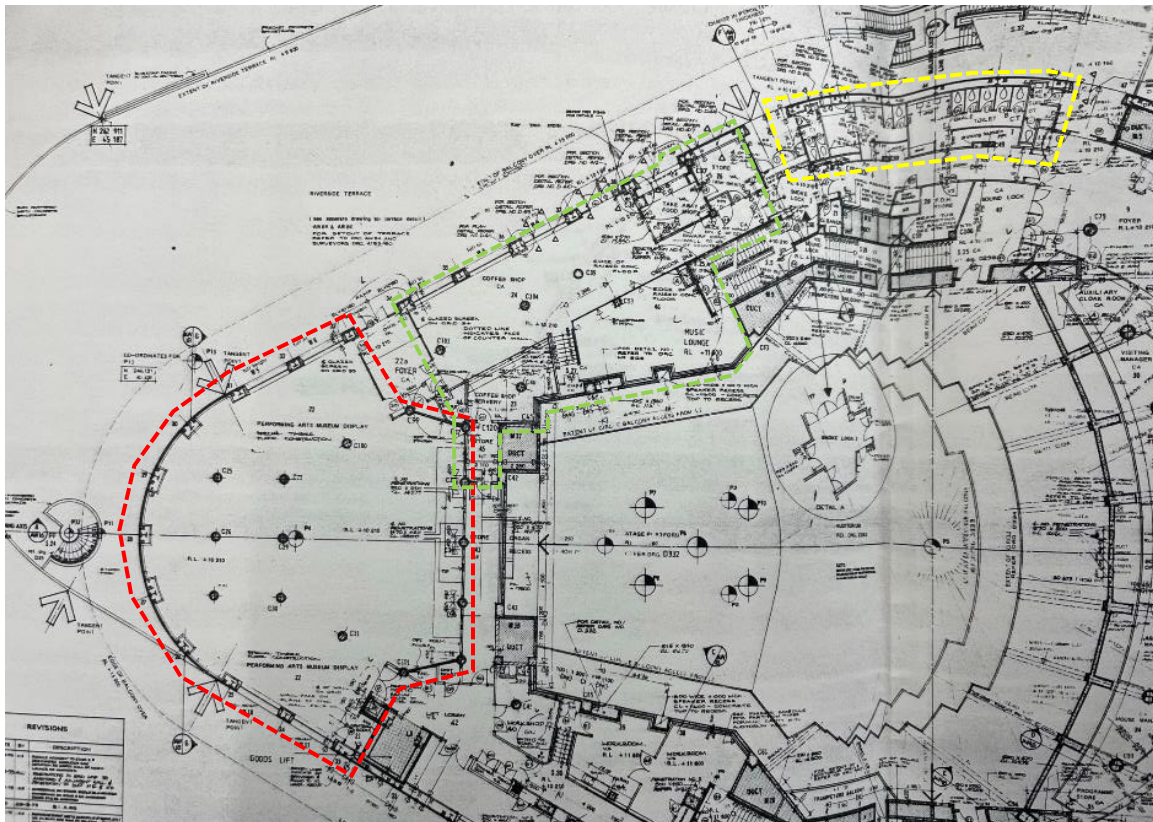


Figure 7 Early floor plan of Hamer Hall St Kilda Road Level (Level 06) showing original internal layout. PAM indicated in red, Treble Clef restaurant and kiosk indicated in green, and toilets indicated in yellow. Source: PROV 7882/P0001.

Since its completion in 1982, Hamer Hall has undergone several alterations. In 1992, the original Riverside Terrace was altered, with new landscaping and an extension to the west end to form a bridge to the Southbank development. Further internal alterations followed, including the refurbishment of several lounges and the original Treble Clef restaurant (project area). By 1997, PAM was closed, the space was later refurbished to become The Channel. Promotional banners have also been temporarily installed at various times to promote events related to the use of the place as a performing arts venue (Figure 8).

In 2000-01, the Treble Clef restaurant was again refurbished and reopened as EQ Café and Bar with external addition constructed to the north elevation of Hamer Hall, designed by NMBW Architects. The works extended the internal dining space into a new northern addition which sat below the cantilevered terrace and extended out to a distinctive double height addition positioned in front of the above balcony. The project won the 2001 AIA Melbourne Prize for outstanding contribution to the public realm.

Later in 2012, Hamer Hall underwent significant redevelopment to address programmatic and performance challenges. The building had been designed by Grounds' as a raised cylindrical drum with several sunken levels below forming a podium to the north elevation, externally articulated as a mirrored interpretation of the adjacent Princes Bridge. The 2012 redevelopment works, designed by ARM Architects, sought to renegotiate the buildings connection with the public realm by remodelling the lower podium level, original Riverside Terrace and street level to improve the buildings engagement with St Kilda Road and the adjacent Birrarung. ARM's redevelopment works modified the lower podium, removing the original external detailing and introducing a new geometric language of curved concrete forms permeated by glazing in a manner sympathetic of the monumentality of the original architecture. A large concrete staircase was constructed alongside Princes Bridge, connecting the upper terrace to Southbank Promenade. Works were undertaken internally to update amenities and improve the connection of internal spaces to the public realm by introducing a zig-zag glazed façade to the north east corner. In 2013, an external steel frame structure was installed to the area below the cantilevered upper terrace to create a sheltered outdoor dining area for the Trocadero Restaurant. This structure was originally intended to be visually obscured by plantings of Kumquat trees, ornamental grape vines and Jasmine. More recently, the original Treble Clef restaurant tenancy was occupied by Fatto Bar and Cantina however this has since closed.



Figure 8 Hamer Hall in 2009 prior to redevelopment works. Note EQ Café and Bar and temporary promotional banners to the drum form. Source: Google Maps, 2009.

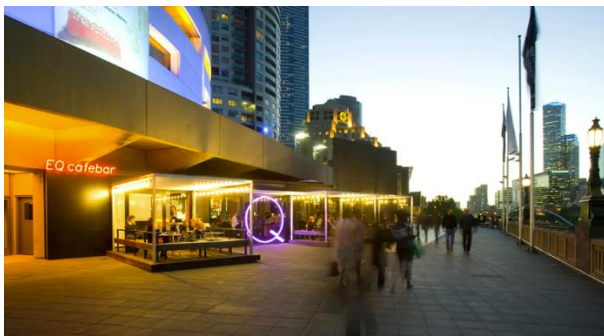


Figure 9 EQ Café and Bar by NMBW Architects, c.2001. Source: NMBW Architects.



Figure 10 EQ Café and Bar by NMBW Architects, c.2001. Source: NMBW Architects.



Figure 11 Hamer Hall following redevelopment works connecting the St Kilda Road level to Southbank Promenade below. Project area indicated in red. Image by John Gollings. Source: ArchitectureAU.



Figure 12 Hamer Hall following redevelopment works connecting the St Kilda Road level to Southbank Promenade below. Image by John Gollings. Source: ArchitectureAU.

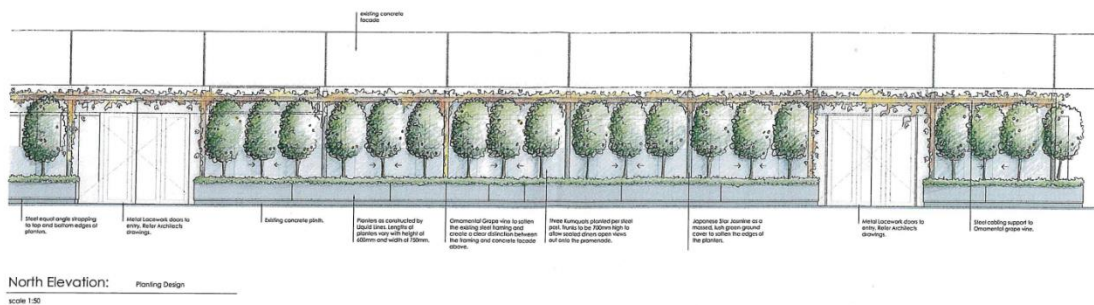


Figure 13 Excerpt from drawings endorsed under P19340 in July 2013. Proposed North Elevation of the frame structure indicating planting design of Kumquat trees, ornamental grape vines and jasmine. Source Robert Boyle Landscape Design Pty. Ltd. 2013



Figure 14 Image of exterior of Trocadero Restaurant with external steel frame structure, note current planter boxes not installed at this time, c.2013. Source: Dining Nirvana.



Figure 15 Interior of Trocadero Restaurant, note steel structure visible through windows, c.2013. Photo by Ken Irwin. Source: Good Food- The Age.

## 2.2 The Cultural Heritage Significance

The heritage place is identified as significant at the local and state levels. It is listed on the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR H1500) and the Melbourne Planning Scheme (HO760). Heritage Victoria is the Responsible Authority.

### 2.2.1 Victorian Heritage Register (VHR)

The VHR listing includes all land, all buildings (including the exteriors and interiors), trees, hard landscape elements, gardens, all fixtures attached to the building at the time of registration including light fittings, built-in furniture, decorative elements and wall, ceiling and floor finishes. The registration also includes objects integral to the place including paintings, sculptures, furniture and archival objects.

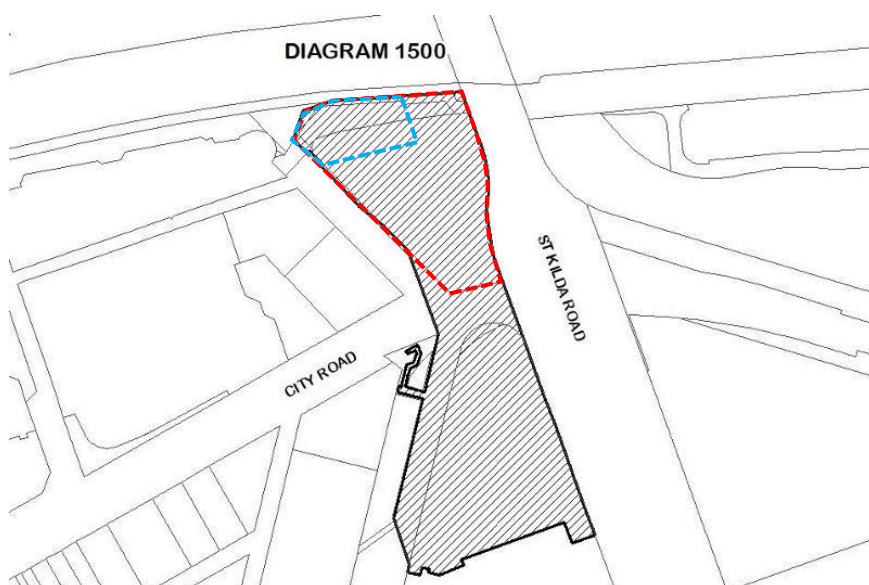


Figure 16 VHR Registration Map for Victorian Arts Centre VHR H1500, with Hamer Hall indicated in red and project area indicatively shown in blue. Source: VHD.

### Statement of Significance

The Statement of Significance is reproduced below, with relevant sections underlined.

#### ***What is significant?***

*The Victorian Arts Centre including the land, all buildings (including the exteriors and interiors), trees, hard landscape elements, gardens, all fixtures attached to the building at the time of registration including light fittings, built-in furniture, decorative elements and wall, ceiling and floor finishes. The registration also includes objects integral to the place including paintings, sculptures, furniture and archival objects.*

#### ***How is it significant?***

*The Victorian Arts Centre is of aesthetic, architectural, historical, scientific and social significance to the State of Victoria. It satisfies the following criterion for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register:*

- *Criterion A – Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history.*
- *Criterion B – Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history.*
- *Criterion D – Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects.*
- *Criterion E – Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.*
- *Criterion F – Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.*
- *Criterion G – Strong or special association with a particular present-day community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.*
- *Criterion H – Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history.*

#### ***Why is it significant?***

*The Victorian Arts Centre is significant at the State level for the following reasons:*

*The Victorian Arts Centre is of historical significance as a major cultural institution which was envisaged as Victoria's pre-eminent performing arts venue. It was an expression of the international arts centre movement of the post-war period and remains one of the largest public works projects in Victoria's history. The Victorian Arts Centre attracted an*

unusual level of public interest and support, indicating the extent to which Victorians supported the concept of a cultural centre envisaged for the entire community. The complex, with its distinctive spire, provided Melbourne with an important visual identity. [Criterion A]

The Victorian Arts Centre is also of historical significance for its Foundation Art Collection which was established in the early 1970s, particularly the works by some of Australia's most renowned twentieth century artists which were selected or commissioned specifically for the place. It reflects the holistic approach to creative arts encouraged by the mid twentieth century international arts centre movement and the desire to include visual art collections alongside performing art spaces. [Criterion A]

The Victorian Arts Centre is a rare example of an accomplished 1980s interior design scheme and a rare example of the work of Academy Award winning set and costume designer John Truscott. The interiors are an outstanding example of Truscott's theatrical stage and set design applied to permanent interiors and were his largest and most important interior design commission. Due to the temporary nature of set design, the Victorian Arts Centre interiors are a rare surviving example of Truscott's work. [Criterion B]

The Victorian Arts Centre is of architectural and aesthetic significance for its overall design by pre-eminent Victorian architect Roy Grounds as a notable example of his work. The Victorian Arts Centre is also of architectural and aesthetic significance for the distinctive decorative interiors designed by John Truscott and applied to Grounds' architectural design. [Criterion D and E]

The Victorian Arts Centre is scientifically significant for the level of technical accomplishment in addressing the difficulties of the site, including the innovative engineering solutions in relation to the substructure of the buildings. [Criterion F]

The Victorian Arts Centre is socially significant as the pre-eminent performing arts centre in Victoria and is valued by many Victorians who have a shared experience of the place since its opening in 1984. There is a particularly strong attachment for those who regularly frequent the place. For some community members, the attachment began with the public donations to support the development of the place and continues to the present day. In some cases, the attachment is multi-generational. [Criterion G]

The Victorian Arts Centre is significant as a major work of noted Australian modernist architect Roy Grounds, who, together with his former partners Robin Boyd and Frederick Romberg, was one of the most influential architects of his generation, pioneering modernist design and changing Victoria's built environment. Together with the gallery, the Arts Centre occupied much of his time from the 1960s to his death in 1981. Grounds' importance as an architect was recognised when he was awarded the RAI Gold Medal in 1968 and was knighted the same year. [Criterion H]

The Victorian Arts Centre is also significant for its association with Sir Rupert Hamer, Premier of Victoria from 1972 – 1981. He played a central role in the development of the precinct and the development of Victoria's arts sector. He was knighted in 1982 and the Melbourne Concert Hall was renamed Hamer Hall following his death in 2004. [Criterion H]

## 2.2.2 Melbourne Planning Scheme

The heritage place is protected by the Melbourne Planning Scheme under Heritage Overlay HO760: *Hamer Hall, 100 St. Kilda Road and Arts Centre, 2 St. Kilda Road, Southbank*. Prohibited uses are permitted under Clause 43.01: Schedule to the Heritage Overlay.

## 2.2.3 Non-statutory listings

The heritage place is subject to non-statutory heritage controls as it is listed on the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) Heritage Register as Property No. B7076.

Non-statutory listings have no formal or legal weight in the planning scheme but are customarily considered when making planning decisions and are representative of heritage values in the community.



## 2.3 Policies

The heritage place is subject to both general<sup>5</sup> and place-specific permit exemptions as a result of the VHR listing. Where there is conflict between general and place specific exemptions, specific exemptions prevail. The CMP also outlines a series of conservation policies for the place.

### 2.3.1 General Permit Exemptions Policy

General permit exemptions relevant to this proposal and project area include:

- 4.0 Internal fitouts  
*Internal fitouts are exempt subject to general category conditions and specific exemption conditions.*
- 6.0 Services  
*Works or activities to services are exempt subject to general category conditions and specific exemption conditions. Works or activities must be limited to existing services.*

### 2.3.2 Place Specific Permit Exemptions Policy

A place specific permit exemption policy is included as part of the VHR listing. The policy includes several general conditions. Place specific permit exemptions relevant to this proposal and project area include:

- Building exteriors  
*Minor patching, repair and maintenance which replaces like with like without large-scale removal of or damage to the existing fabric or the large-scale introduction of new materials. Repairs must maximise protection and retention of fabric and include the conservation of existing details or elements. Any new materials used for repair must not exacerbate the decay of existing fabric due to chemical incompatibility, obscure existing fabric or limit access to existing fabric for future maintenance.*  
*Maintenance, repair and replacement of existing services such as plumbing, electrical cabling, surveillance systems, pipes or fire services which does not involve changes in location or scale.*  
*Removal of extraneous exposed items such as pipe work, ducting, wiring, antennae and aerials, and making good*  
*All lighting or works to the existing lighting scheme of the Arts Centre spire and Hamer Hall.*
- Interiors (public areas including stairs, passageways, bathrooms, restaurants, cafes and kitchens)  
*Maintenance, repair and replacement of non-original lighting fixtures, tracks and the like.*  
*The removal and replacement of temporary banners or signage in existing locations.*
- Venue operations  
*The display, installation and removal of temporary promotional elements such as banners, billboards, flagpoles in existing locations.*

### 2.3.3 Conservation Management Plan (CMP)

The CMP outlines General Conservation Policies for the heritage place. Relevant policies are reproduced below:

- 4.3.3 Use

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<sup>5</sup> General Permit Exemptions, published by DELWP, 2022.



*The Victorian Arts Centre should continue to be used primarily as a public performing arts venue, exhibition and cultural centre and the State's principal venue for the performing arts. While other compatible uses are possible, these should remain subsidiary to the primary use.*

- 4.3.6 Adaption of the Buildings

*Adaption of significant spaces for compatible uses should only be undertaken in locations and in a manner that will not substantially detract from the cultural significance of the spaces of the Victorian Arts Centre*

*Where future works are to occur to significant spaces, the approach should first be to conserve significance elements of fabric. New work should ensure that the heritage significance of the buildings and site is not diminished.*

- 4.3.7 New Construction

*New construction on the site should ensure that the heritage significance of the main buildings, terraces, and landscape areas is not diminished.*

- 4.3.10 Signage

*Retain the original fixed signage design both externally and internally. Avoid intrusive additional signage.*

- 4.4.2 The Buildings – Exteriors

*Conserve all of the original external fabric that contributes to the overall geometric conception of each building. While all exteriors are generally considered to be of primary significance, certain elements of these exteriors are less significant than others.*

*Of the Concert Hall, make no alterations to the form of the original drum. Alterations may be made for functional reasons to the building exterior below the level of the upper terrace but these should be minimised and where possible conform strictly to existing window openings and respect the general geometric purity of the original scheme. Also to be considered are the horizontal lines of the existing building as regards the composition of any major additions. Materials used in these alterations should not be the same as the Theatres building or the National Gallery and be sympathetic in colour and texture to the original building.*

*Make no alterations to the upper level terrace balustrade of the Concert Hall. While canopies etc. may be attached to the building these should be attached beneath and back from the line of the underside of the terrace.*

*Additions may be made to the upper level terrace but the form of these additions must minimise the formal impact upon the significance of the drum form of the Concert Hall, ie visually retain maximum exposure of the drum form when viewed from across the river. Tangential additions to the drum are not acceptable. Any addition with large area of glazing should take into account the general massive character of the Concert Hall drum and make the new work clear through use of materials. No addition should be allowed to extend out to the same line of the upper level terrace balustrade, ie the sense of the terrace should be respected and retained. Pedestrian access around the building should be retained at all times.*

- 4.4.2 The Building – Interiors (Foyers)

*Generally retain the original interior scheme, including finishes, lighting and furniture, in foyers of primary significance. There could be scope for alterations if required, provided that the original design theme is maintained, and that the impact of alterations does not reduce the amount of surviving original fabric unacceptably.*



## 2.4 Analysis of the Significance

The heritage place is of aesthetic, architectural, historical, scientific and social significance to the State of Victoria. This significance is embodied in the built form and fabric of Hamer Hall, the place's ongoing use as Victoria's pre-eminent cultural and performing arts venue, and the significant collection of objects integral, comprising the Foundation Art Collection.

The prominent cylindrical form of Hamer Hall, geometrically distinct from the oval State Theatre and vertical Spire and sited upon the broader podium extending down St Kilda Road to the rectangular form of the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV), illustrates Grounds' interest in the civic potential of monumental geometric forms, a quality carried through from the 1960 masterplan. Externally, the pre-cast panels and wide inset balconies and openings to the upper levels of Hamer Hall illustrate the use of solid and void and are significant. This monumental architectural language is continued through the pre-cast concrete panelling and the projecting balcony wrapping the building above Level 06. The solid balustrade walls of the balcony and tapered beams below are significant architectural features.

### Levels of significance

The CMP prescribed levels of significance to the individual spaces of Hamer Hall, as follows:

- Areas of *primary significance* were defined as those that contributed in a fundamental way to an understanding of the cultural heritage significance of the place and the public operation of the Victorian Arts Centre. These spaces were predominately intact in form and fabric or particularly demonstrative of the original architectural concept.
- Areas of *contributory significance* were defined as those spaces that contributed in a secondary way to an understanding of the cultural heritage significance of the place and the public operation of the Victorian Arts Centre. These spaces included spaces which were intended to accommodate change as dictated by their function, utilitarian or repetitive spaces or spaces which were never intended to be of primary importance in the internal hierarchy of spaces.
- Areas of *no significance* were defined as those that were either originally minor in nature or spaces that had been significantly altered such that they had lost any significance.

The CMP indicated that the whole of the exterior of Hamer Hall above the podium level (to the north elevation) is of *primary significance* to the heritage place. The interior of the then Treble Clef restaurant (since closed and significantly altered) was of *contributory significance* and the interior of the Performing Arts Museum (PAM) was of *no significance*. In 1992, substantial alterations were made to the Riverside Terrace including the extension of the terrace to the west and reconstruction of the servery area, kitchen and bar to Treble Clef restaurant. Later, the restaurant was refurbished by NMBW Architects in 2000-01 and reopened as the EQ Café and Bar.

In 2010 a further survey of the heritage place was undertaken as part of the *Southbank Cultural Precinct Redevelopment Stage 1 – Hamer Hall Heritage Impact Statement* (SCPR HIS), to ascertain any changes to the significance of individual spaces that may have arisen due to later alterations. The survey found that the space formerly occupied by the Treble Clef restaurant had been substantially altered and was no longer considered to be *contributory significance* to the heritage place and was now of *no significance* to the heritage place.

The SCPR HIS also provided a summary of the significant features of the exterior of the building and interiors. Externally, significant features relevant to the project area include:

- Cylindrical form of the main building
- Balcony and balustrade supported on deep tapered beams
- Precast concrete panels with deep openings
- Beams, walls and columns of bush-hammered concrete

Internally, significant features relevant to the project area include aspects of the Grounds' interiors such as beams, walls, soffits, balustrades and columns of bush-hammered concrete.

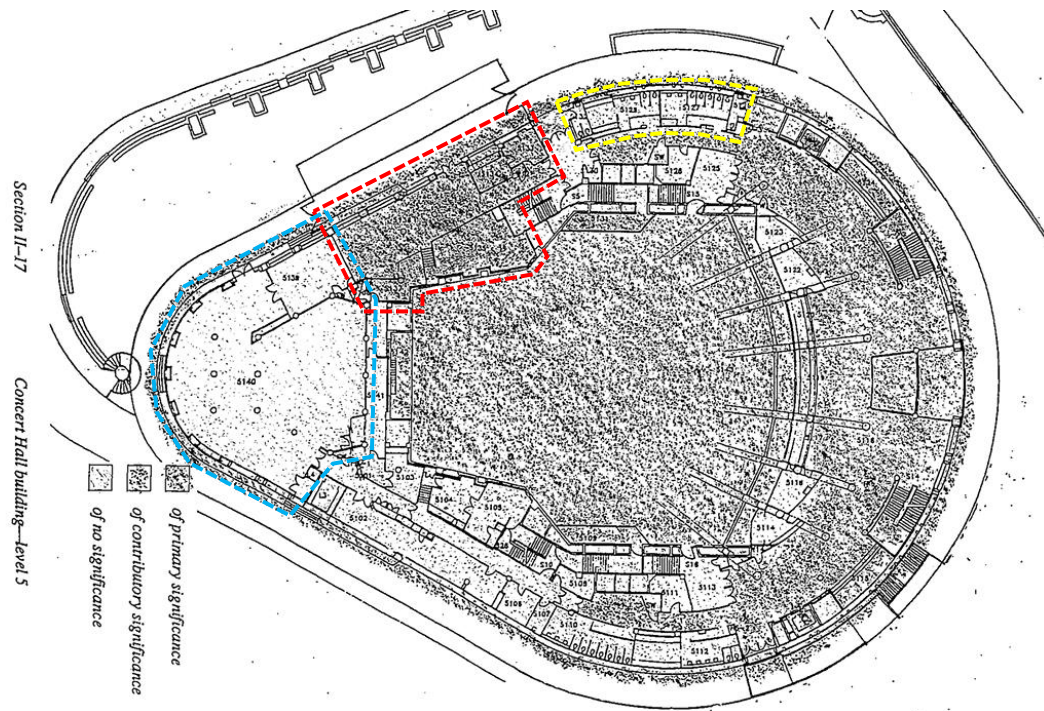


Figure 17 Significance Plan from the 1995 *Victorian Arts Centre CMP* indicating former internal arrangement. Performing Arts Museum (PAM) shown in blue (*no significance*), Treble Clef restaurant shown in red (assessed to be of *contributory significance* in 1995), and toilets shown in yellow. Source: Allom Lovell and Associates, 1995.

## Alterations

In 2012, redevelopment works to Hamer Hall comprised of substantial alterations to the north-facing lower podium levels as well as internal updates and rearrangements. Bold sculptural concrete forms now characterise the remodelled lower terrace, introducing a new geometrical language to the heritage place and opening the building up to the Birrarung. To the St Kilda Road level, the former Riverside Terrace was partially demolished and redesigned to allow for improved access to the lower riverside level, with grand concrete staircase constructed and zig zag glazing introduced to the east end of the north facade. Glazing between the pre-cast clad façade columns was also altered and double doors with mirrored framing installed.

Despite alterations, the significant formal quality of Hamer Hall and its relationship to the broader podium extending along St Kilda Road, the NGV and Theatres Building, remains intact. As do the significant features of the exterior outlined above. The glazing and openings to the north elevation of the project area are later non-original fabric. A later frame structure (approved in 2013 under P19340) with planter boxes and associated fixtures (outdoor heaters, lighting) extends across the exterior of the project area and was installed to provide sheltered outdoor dining with glazed infill panels. Promotional banners were later installed to the frame. This later structure is of no significance to the heritage place.

## Summary

In summary, the interior of the project area, has been significantly altered from the original scheme for PAM and the Treble Clef restaurant, with no original features remaining. The internal arrangement of spaces has been substantially altered and zig zag glazed façade added to the west end of the project area as part of the 2012 works by ARM. The glazing to the west end of the project area has also been altered and is non-original fabric although partially retains the original pattern of openings between rectangular columns. As such the internal space is of no significance to the heritage place. The exterior of the building is of *primary significance* with significant elements relevant to the project area including the cylindrical form of the main building, balcony with solid balustrade and deep tapered beams below, and pre-cast concrete panels with deep openings. The later frame structure, planter boxes and associated fixtures to the exterior of the project area are of no significance to the heritage place.

## 2.5 Description

### 2.5.1 Project Area

The original internal arrangement has been significantly altered, with commercial kitchen added to the west and stairs, toilets and lifts reconfigured throughout.

Externally, the project area is located at Level 06 of Hamer Hall and sits below the upper terrace (Figure 18). The projecting balcony of the upper terrace is supported by tapered beams which extend over the project area forming a deep under croft with solid pre-cast balustrade above (Figure 19). A later, frame structure with planter boxes and panels of glazing and banners, extends across the Stage 1 project area partially enclosing the under-croft space (Figure 20). The steel structure is fixed to the underside of the balustrade and projects slightly from the line of the terrace above. The steel frame consists of ten equal bays aligning with the breakup of the pre-cast panels to the above balustrade. The west end of the steel structure is partially enclosed with a half-height glazed wall and planter box. The third and ninth bays are open and align with double doors in the building's facade. The flooring to the external area is paved in rectangular bluestone pavers.

Behind the steel structure, the north façade of the project area comprises of two different architectural treatments. To the west end the façade comprises of regular bays of rectangular columns aligning with the above tapered beams and pre-cast balustrade panels (of which the steel structure aligns). The columns are clad in pre-cast panels with recessed panels of later fixed glazing in between (Figure 22). There are also later glazed double doors with mirrored framing and infill panels of mirrored panelling (Figure 24). Projecting dark bronze wall lights are fixed to the façade above each bay. Several bays feature ventilation grilles at high level between the beams. Further east, the language of the façade changes signalling the 2012 alterations by ARM, with zig zag glazed façade in projecting mirrored frame. Beside are glazed double doors with mirrored framing providing access to the project area.



Figure 18 View of Hamer Hall from north bank of the Birrarung. Project area indicated in red. Source: Trethowan Architecture, 2024.



Figure 19 View of project area (indicated in red) from adjacent Princes Bridge VHR H1447. Source: Trethowan Architecture, 2024.



Figure 20 Exterior of the project area, note projecting balcony of Hamer Hall with later steel frame structure below. Source: Trethowan Architecture, 2024.



Figure 21 East end of the project area, not tapered beams to underside of upper terrace and later zig zag glazing to left of image. Source: Trethowan Architecture, 2024.



Figure 22 West end of the project area, note later steel structure with glazing and planter boxes partially enclosing the exterior walkway. Source: Trethowan Architecture, 2024.



Figure 23 Later infill wall with mirrored panelling from the 2012 redevelopment works by ARM. Source: Trethowan Architecture, 2024.



Figure 24 Later double doors with mirrored framing from the 2012 redevelopment works by ARM. Note also, ventilation grilles in dark bronze finish above door. Source: Trethowan Architecture, 2024.

Internally, the Stage 1 project area is divided into three distinct spaces with toilets and amenities contained to the south wall abutting the adjacent theatre. The east space, bounded by the glazed zig zag façade, forms the former bar area with elongated tiled bar, terrazzo flooring and suspended ceiling dating to the former hospitality tenancy, Fatto Bar & Cantina (Figure 25). The zig zag glazed façade sits upon a mirrored frame inset with mirrored circular columns. West of this space a double door entrance way and fire corridor divides the bar area from the central former dining space. The fit out of the former dining space is partially demolished with suspended ceiling removed exposing the above services (Figure 26). The walls are tiled and the rectangular columns within the space have been infilled to take on a circular tiled form. The floor is clad with timber boards in a chevron pattern. To the south west corner of the dining space a hallway leads to a back of house goods lift lobby (out of scope) and the former kitchen space and cool room. The kitchen has been partially demolished with all equipment removed and ceiling removed to expose the above services. The tiled floor to this area has been raised with the lower original floor level visible to areas where equipment has been removed. The walls are tiled with some areas clad in stainless steel. Several circular columns are positioned to form a corridor leading to the cool room area, the ceiling over this corridor is lower owing to above services.

The east wall of the project area contains glazed double doors and adjacent rectangular fixed window leading to the main entrance foyer for Hamer Hall (Figure 28).



Figure 25 Interior of project area to east end. Note later terrazzo floor, bar and suspended ceiling from Fatto Bar & Cantina fit out. Source: Trethowan Architecture, 2024.

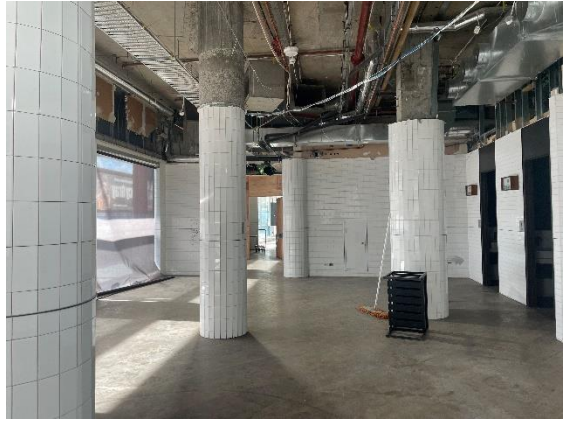


Figure 26 Interior of project area. Note later tiled finish, timber flooring and suspended ceiling (removed) from Fatto Bar & Cantina fit out. Source: Trethowan Architecture, 2024.



Figure 27 Interior of the former kitchen space, note raised tiled floor. Source: Trethowan Architecture, 2024.



Figure 28 View into project area from Hamer Hall entrance foyer. Note, rectangular column with bush-hammered finish. Source: Trethowan Architecture, 2024.

## 2.5.2 Current Use

The heritage place maintains its original use as Victoria's pre-eminent cultural and performing arts venue. The Stage 1 portion of the project area was originally occupied by the Treble Clef restaurant and following its closure retained its hospitality use until the closure of the most recent tenant, Fatto Bar & Cantina. It is now vacant with no specified use. The Stage 2 portion of the project area was originally occupied by PAM (since closed) however is currently occupied by ACM's Creative Learning team for their educational space, The Channel.

## 2.6 Constraints and Opportunities

Some constraints of this proposal include:

- All external elevations of Hamer Hall are of *primary significance* to the heritage place. The north elevation in particular is a prominent public interface, located at the entrance to the CBD. Alterations should be careful to respect Grounds' original design.

Some opportunities of this proposal include:

- The project area for Stage 1 is currently vacant and underutilised. An opportunity exists to repurpose the area to an appropriate new use. Additionally, the undercroft area below the cantilevered upper terrace is presently underutilised. The frame structure that partially encloses the area was intended to provide shelter for outdoor dining, but this use has become redundant following the closure of adjacent hospitality premises.

- Based on current averages, more than 50,000 people walk across Princes Bridge and past Hamer Hall each day, equating to roughly 19 million people a year. Thus, the project area is a highly visible space with massive potential audience and as such, presents a significant opportunity to create a new cultural destination within the heritage place.
- The APAC comprises of over 850,000 objects and artworks embodying Australia's performing arts heritage and illustrating the rich history of performing arts in Australia. Historically, PAM publicly exhibited the collection with a dedicated museum in Hamer Hall. However, PAM closed and presently there is no museum space within the heritage place dedicated to the exhibition of performing arts material, including APAC. Rather materials from the collection are primarily exhibited through small, short term displays in foyers, ad-hoc loans and online engagement. As such, there lies an important opportunity to reestablish a dedicated museum for the public exhibition of APAC and other performing arts materials within the heritage place.



## 3 Proposal

### 3.1 The Proposed Works

The proposed works comprise of demolition, alterations and additions works to adapt the project area into a gallery and exhibition space to accommodate AMPA. The proposal is to be delivered over two stages:

- Stage 1 relates to the former Fatto Bar and Cantina space and comprises of internal alterations to adapt the former hospitality tenancy into exhibition spaces, and the enclosure of the existing frame structure to create a new demountable pavilion. The floor area of exhibition space at Stage 1 is approximately 550sqm.
- Stage 2 relates to the space currently occupied by ACM's educational space, The Channel, and will comprise of internal demolition and alterations to transform the space into an open plan gallery and exhibition space. The floor area of exhibition space at Stage 2 is approximately 310sqm.

The following sections outline the proposed works relating to Stage 1 and Stage 2.

#### 3.1.1 Demolition

The extent of demolition is largely contained to demolition of the later internal fit out including finishes, fixtures and partition walls. The existing partition wall dividing the project area from the entrance foyer will also be removed and replaced with a new partition wall and sliding door in the same location. Externally, the later planter boxes, glazing and banners to the steel frame structure will be demolished, as well as two columns to the west end wall of the frame. Three bays to the east end of the frame will also be demolished.

Five bays of glazing to the west end of the north facade, including glazed double doors and upper ventilation grilles (all later non-original fabric), will be removed as shown in Figure 29. The later external wall lights will be retained.

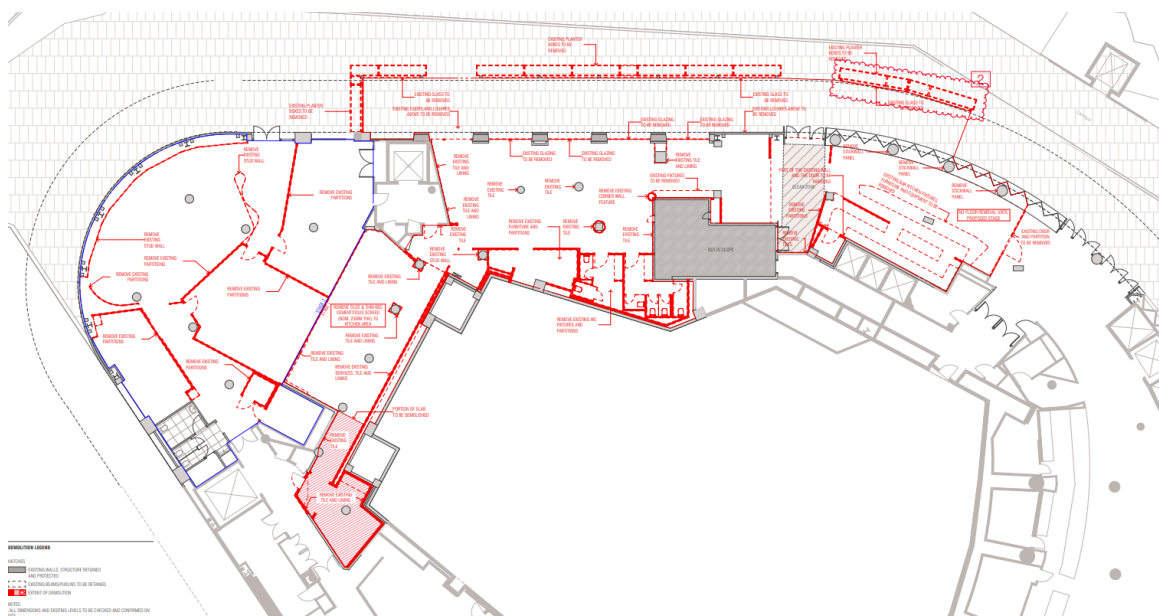


Figure 29 Diagram indicating proposed extent of demolition. Source: Fender Katsalidis Architects, 2024.

#### 3.1.2 New Work

##### Addition



The retained extent of the frame structure will be repurposed and enclosed to form a new demountable pavilion addition situated below the cantilevered upper terrace and occupied by an extension of the gallery space.

The retained extent of the frame will be enclosed with internal wall lining constructed to the inside face of the existing frame and AMPA promotional display fixed to the external face of the frame. The display will stop at the line of the existing top beam in the framing to create a shadow gap between the addition and above balustrade. The display will exist as the primary wayfinding element to visually locate AMPA and will be strictly used to provide information on exhibitions related to AMPA. The west end wall will comprise of opaque double doors painted charcoal and providing back of house access to the gallery area. The east end wall will also be painted charcoal. The steel structure will feature charcoal steel framing and charcoal folded steel flashings.

Internally, removable timber flooring will be constructed above the existing external paving to match the internal floor level and finish. The tapered beams of the undercroft will remain exposed to the ceiling. Wide steel channels will be suspended along the underside of the beams to deal with water ingress issues, with up lighting fixed to the channels to highlight the beams. Movable display units will sit between each façade column. The existing façade ventilation grilles will be either removed or modified to divert services into the addition.

The expansion into the undercroft area is required to increase the overall floor (Stage 1 and Stage 2), allowing AMPA to achieve the minimum floor area required to host international touring exhibitions (generally between 800-1200 sqm). The opaque façade with AMPA promotional display is required to restrict natural light and ensure the control of internal light levels within the gallery.

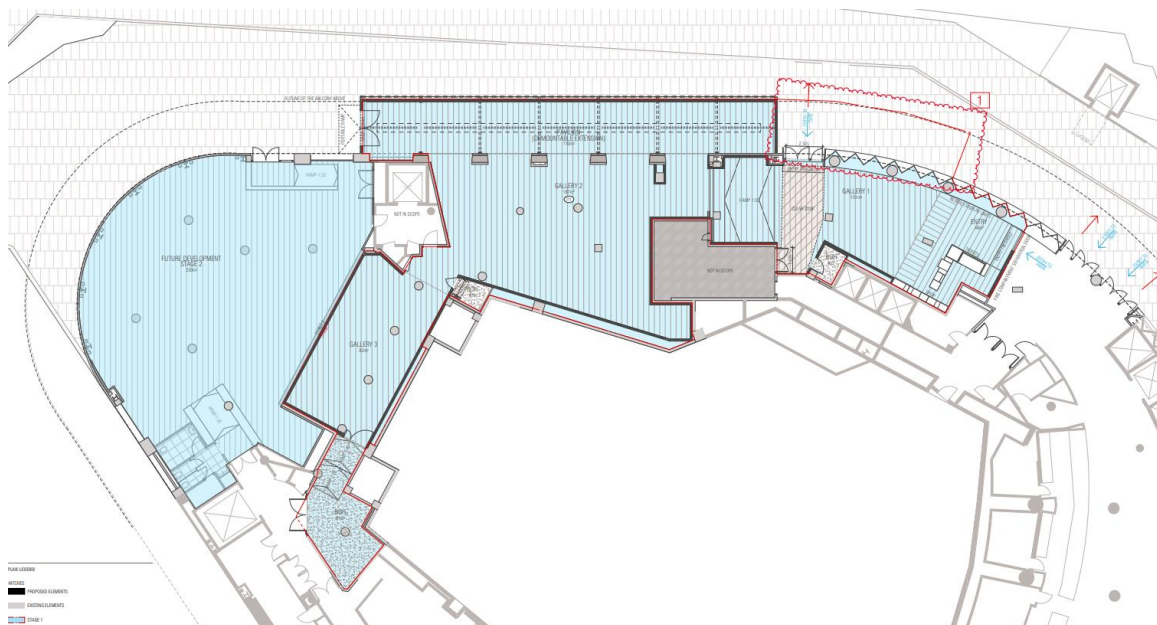


Figure 30 Proposed Floor Plan, with Stage 1 and Stage 2 indicated. Source: Fender Katsalidis, 2024.



Figure 31 External render indicating proposed pavilion addition. Source: Fender Katsalidis, 2024.

### Internal fit out

The interior of the project area will be adapted into a temporary gallery space for temporary exhibitions, divided into four main areas: three open-plan galleries and the north pavilion addition. To the east, the former bar area will be transformed into an open plan Gallery 1 and entry/retail space with sliding entry door installed to the east wall to provide access from the main entrance foyer of Hamer Hall. The area will be open and flexible with retail shelving to the south wall and L-shaped ticketing desk. The former central dining area will become Gallery 2, divided from Gallery 1 by a discrete folding wall. This area will form the largest gallery and lead out to the proposed pavilion addition. The internal finishes will comprise of timber flooring and white walls.

To the south west, the former kitchen will become Gallery 3, separated from back of house areas further south. Stage 2 proposes to remove the west wall of Gallery 3 to expand the gallery floorplate into the adjacent space currently occupied by The Channel. The internal fit out for Stage 2 will continue the approach of Stage 1 with timber flooring and white walls throughout and lighting grid suspended from the ceiling.



Figure 32: Conceptual render of entry/retail space looking towards Gallery 1. Source: Fender Katsalidis Architects, 2024.



Figure 33 Conceptual render of the proposed addition. Source: Fender Katsalidis Architects, 2024.

## 4 Assessment

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### 4.1 Impacts, Options Considered and Mitigation

Visual and physical impacts to the heritage place related to the proposal are identified. These impacts are outlined as follows, with details, options considered, and mitigation strategies also discussed as relevant.

#### 4.1.1 Demolition

Demolition of the interior fit out will have no impact on the significance of the heritage place. The interior spaces of the project area are of no significance to the heritage place and have undergone substantial alteration through various phases of development. No significant or contributory original finishes or fixtures remain extant internally. Likewise, the partition wall to the main entrance foyer is later fabric and any impacts related to its removal and replacement with a sliding door are negligible and will have no adverse impact.

The demolition of the planter boxes, glazing and columns to the external frame structure is related to later fabric and of no significance to the heritage place. The demolition of three bays to the east end of the existing frame structure will enable an original section of the building to again be visible, allowing for an improved understanding of the original undercroft to this area. The demolition of later gas heaters and associated extraneous exposed items (wiring etc.) will have no impact on the significance of the heritage place and are exempt under the Specific Permit Exemption Policy.


The removal of five bays of glazing, including double doors, and ventilation grilles to the façade will impact the heritage place by removing later non-original fabric which contributes to the visual language of the façade with its composition of recessed glazing between pre-cast clad columns. However, the impacts are negligible given the area has been altered previously and the items are later fabric, thus their removal will have no impact on the integrity of the significant original fabric.

#### 4.1.2 New Work

##### **Addition**

The proposed gallery addition will increase the total floor area of exhibition space, which combined with Stage 2 will enable AMPA to meet the minimum area required to host international touring exhibitions. Whilst the addition will result in some visual and physical impacts, it will increase AMPA's offering, greatly improving its potential to attract visitors and ultimately supporting the long-term conservation and ongoing use of the heritage place. The proposed location for AMPA was chosen for its prominent riverfront location, potential for expansion into the original PAM site and opportunity to adapt the underutilised former Fatto Bar & Cantina tenancy. With over 50,000 pedestrians walking across Princes Bridge and past Hamer Hall each day, the location will offer AMPA an enormous opportunity to attract visitors. This is further amplified by the proposal to employ the façade of the addition for AMPA promotional display, allowing AMPA to engage directly with the public realm by promoting exhibitions along the riverfront. The impacts of the addition and proposed mitigation strategies are discussed in further detail below.

The later external frame presently impacts the heritage place by physically obstructing pedestrian access through the undercroft and visually obstructing the undercroft from the north elevation of Hamer Hall. The proposal to adapt part of the underutilised frame to create the pavilion addition will result in further visual and physical impacts to the heritage place. The addition will visually and physically impact the north elevation by further infilling the undercroft. However, while the addition formalises the enclosure of the undercroft, the existing frame with its opaque banners presently encloses the space and prevents it being read as an undercroft as originally intended. The proposed works will adapt this space, implementing a specific AMPA promotional display across the enclosure to promote AMPA exhibitions where currently banners on the existing frame advertise events happening within the heritage place. This is consistent with past and existing uses of temporary banners and displays across Hamer Hall to promote events related to the broader place's ongoing use as a performing arts venue. Furthermore, the display, installation and removal of temporary promotional banners and billboards at existing locations is exempt under the place specific permit exemption policy. Overall, the visual and physical impacts related to the enclosure



of the existing structure are minor and are mitigated by the design approach and articulation, discussed as follows.

The overall design strategy has sought to avoid irreversible change to significant fabric and mitigate against impacts to the significance of the heritage place. This approach is guided by the CMP policy 4.3.6 which advises *where future works are to occur to significant spaces, the approach should first be to conserve significant elements of fabric* and Article 15.2 of the Burra Charter which states *changes which reduce cultural significance should be reversible, and be reversed when circumstances permit*. As such, the addition is designed to be demountable, allowing for complete reversibility without physical impact to significant original fabric should future requirements change. Furthermore, by limiting the footprint of the addition to the existing frame and ensuring it remains contained below the balustrade, the proposal continues the approach of the approved frame to sit within the undercroft and minimises further impacts to the north elevation. This approach and the use of a restrained material palette, allows the addition to read as a secondary element. Further limiting the visual impacts and ensuring the addition does not detract from the significant language of the continuous balustrade above.

The visual permeability of the pavilion façade is constrained by the use of the internal space for exhibitions, thus requiring restricted natural light levels. The visual impacts of the opaque façade with a singular AMPA promotional display are mitigated by the design of the display with a shadow gap above to ensure there is visual separation between the addition and original balustrade. The simplicity of the single large scale display reduces the visual clutter of the current arrangement with its multiple ad-hoc banners and provides an opportunity for AMPA to visually locate itself and engage with the adjacent public realm. The display will enable AMPA to capitalise on the prominent riverfront location of Hamer Hall, drawing upon the existing use of the area for promotional banners to continue to promote events related to the heritage place however in an updated and rationalised manner. Internally, the tapered beams will be left exposed and rectangular façade columns left extant with movable furniture in between. This will mitigate against the impacts of enclosure by providing a visual distinction between the addition and adjacent internal space, ensuring the line of the original façade remains intelligible internally. Further, any impacts related to the suspension of steel channels from the underside of the beams are negligible and mitigated by the use of up lighting to visually highlight the significant beams.

### **Internal fit out**

Internally, the spaces that comprise the project area are of no significance to the heritage place. No extant significant or contributory fabric related to interior materials, finishes or fixtures has been identified within the project area and the original structural elements (including columns) are to be retained. The interior of the project area has undergone several phases of development, rearrangement and change and as such has a strong ability to absorb further internal change. Given this, the proposed internal works to create an open plan exhibition and retail space will have no visual or physical impacts to the significance of the heritage place.

### **4.1.3 Use**

Given part of the project area was originally used as a performing arts museum, the proposal to adapt the project area into AMPA will enhance the significance of the heritage place by reinstating part of the project area's original use. This new use aligns with policy 4.3.3 of the CMP which indicates the heritage place *should continue to be used primarily as a public performing arts venue, exhibition and cultural centre and the State's principal venue for the performing arts*. Furthermore, the use will enable ACM to fulfill its obligation under the Act *to oversee the exhibition of performing arts material from the State collection*.

Overall, the new use will positively impact the heritage place by allowing ACM to maintain, conserve and enhance the cultural heritage significance of the place by providing a dedicated space for the public exhibition of performing arts materials including APAC, alongside the performance spaces of the heritage place.

## **4.2 Why the Proposal Should Be Supported**

The proposal should be supported as the works enable the reestablishment of a performing arts museum, AMPA, within the heritage place. This will create a new daytime cultural attraction, revitalising the riverfront spaces of Hamer Hall and enabling ACM to greatly expand upon its ability to promote and oversee the public exhibition of the State collection (APAC) and other performing arts materials. AMPA will create new opportunities within the heritage place for public engagement with the rich history of the performing arts and enhance the ability of ACM to deliver on its commitments under the Act. In particular, AMPA will greatly improve ACM's ability *to ensure the maintenance, conservation, development and promotion of the State collection of performing arts material and oversee the exhibition of performing arts material from the State collection*. Improving ACM's overall contribution *to the enrichment of the cultural, educational, social and economic life of the people of Victoria*. This is of pertinence when considering the ongoing construction works (related to the RACM and MAPT projects) and associated temporary closure of public areas within the heritage place that contribute to its significant cultural function and ability to engage with the public.

The proposal will reinstate a dedicated museum and gallery space for the exhibition of performing arts material within and adjacent to the location of the original PAM. This will expand on Grounds' scheme by extending the footprint of the original museum into the adjacent tenancy and new addition. AMPA will capitalise on several existing opportunities, including the creation of a dedicated museum for the exhibition of the State's performing arts collection and the adaption of the vacant Stage 1 project area to a new use that supports the heritage place's primary function (as per CMP policy 4.3.3).

It is acknowledged that the proposal to increase the footprint of AMPA by further enclosing the existing frame structure, will visually and physically impact the heritage place. However, the addition will enable AMPA to achieve a combined floor area across Stage 1 and 2 of approximately 900 sqm. Therefore, meeting the minimum floor area required for international touring exhibitions (generally 800-1200sqm) and greatly expanding AMPA's offering to include exclusive international content. This will amplify AMPA's ability to appeal to an increased audience, improving its commercial viability and ultimately contributing to the broader heritage place's long-term conservation and significance as the State's preeminent performing arts centre. The use of a singular AMPA promotional display will significantly refine past and existing uses of promotional banners to Hamer Hall and this area and enable AMPA to engage with enormous number of passing pedestrians. Ultimately, the display will allow AMPA to further capitalise on the prominent riverfront location, increasing its potential audience and thus contributing to the long-term conservation and ongoing use of the heritage place.

The heritage place, including the north elevation of Hamer Hall at Level 06, has undergone substantial change as the place has evolved to facilitate its significant function as the State's principal venue and cultural centre for performing arts. In this regard, change is a necessary factor in the continual evolution of the role of performing arts centres. The project area, originally occupied by the Treble Clef restaurant and PAM, has been altered through various uses and phases of development which have also altered and added to the north elevation at Level 06. As such, the project area has an ability to absorb further change where it is required to enable the place's ongoing function as the State's cultural centre of performing arts, and provided it is undertaken with respect to the place's significance. In this case, the proposed addition will impact the heritage place by further infilling the undercroft. However, these impacts are minimised by the containment of the addition within the existing frame and mitigated by the reversible design approach and careful design articulation which ensures the addition reads as a secondary element. Furthermore, the visual and physical impacts of the addition are substantially outweighed by the positive impacts of the proposed use and its ability to both enhance the significance of the heritage place and enable ACM to fulfill its commitments under the Act.

In summary, the proposal to extend AMPA into the undercroft by enclosing part of the existing frame with an opaque facade, will greatly improve AMPA's ability to appeal to an increased audience and ultimately contribute to the long-term conservation and on-going use of the broader heritage place. Where impacts are identified these are mitigated by the reversible design and careful articulation of the addition. Overall, the proposal to reinstate a performing arts museum within Hamer Hall will enhance the significance of the heritage place and enable ACM to exceed in



fulfilling its commitments under the Act. As such, the proposal will have no adverse impact on the significance of the heritage place and should be supported.

#### 4.2.1 Matters which the Executive Director is to consider under s101(2)

To assist with the consideration of the relevant matters of s101(2) of the Heritage Act 2017, the response to each matter follows the bold italics as written below:

##### **S102(2)(a) the extent to which the application, if approved, would affect the cultural heritage significance of the registered place or registered object:**

The APAC comprises of over 850,000 items related to the rich history of performing arts in Australia. As custodian, ACM has a legal obligation to maintain, conserve, develop, promote and oversee the exhibition of the State's collection of performing arts material (APAC).

Historically, The Performing Arts Museum (PAM) was opened in Hamer Hall in 1982, and in 1984 the Westpac Gallery (later George Adams Gallery) was launched in the Theatres Building, both intended to showcase and share the stories of the State's collection of performing arts material. However, by 1997 PAM had closed and the exhibition activities of ACM were concentrated to the various exhibition spaces in the Theatres Building. In 2017, following discussions with the State Government and music stakeholders, the Australian Music Vault (AMV) was launched in the remaining gallery of the Theatres Building. Since then, public access to APAC has been limited to various small and short term displays in the foyers, online engagement and ad-hoc loans to other national and international institutions, and the recent introduction of limited behind-the-scenes tours of the Collection Store. As such, the bulk of this State-owned asset currently remains hidden behind the doors of the APAC storeroom and archives.

This proposal capitalises on the opportunity to establish a dedicated museum and gallery space for the public exhibition of APAC and other performing arts collections within the heritage place. AMPA will reinstate a performing arts museum within the riverfront spaces of Hamer Hall, building upon the original intent of Roy Grounds' scheme to create a new daytime cultural destination for Victorians, national and international visitors to engage with APAC and the rich stories of the performing arts.

In summary, the heritage place exists as a living legacy of the twentieth century international arts centre movement which sought to approach the creative arts through a holistic lens, displaying arts collections beside performing arts spaces. The proposal to establish the AMPA within the heritage place builds upon this legacy and will ultimately enhance the cultural heritage significance of the heritage place by enabling ACM to:

- Reinstate a dedicated museum and gallery space for the exhibition of the State's performing arts collection within Level 06 of Hamer Hall, as was included in Roy Ground's original scheme for the heritage place, which located the former PAM to the west end of Level 06.
- Maintain, conserve and enhance the social and historical significance of the heritage place for the State of Victoria and future generations.
- Ensure the maintenance, conservation, development and promotion of the State collection of performing arts material as per Section 5(1)(e) of the *Victorian Arts Centre Act 1979*.
- Oversee the exhibition of performing arts material from the State collection as per Section 5(1)(fa) of the *Victorian Arts Centre Act 1979*.
- Enrich the cultural, educational, social and economic life of the people of Victoria as per Section 5(2) of the *Victorian Arts Centre Act 1979*.

##### **S102(2)(b) the extent to which the application, if refused, would affect the reasonable or economic use of the registered place or registered object;**

The new Australian Museum of Performing Arts (AMPA) will reintroduce and reinvigorate Arts Centre Melbourne's long-held commitment to the preservation and celebration of the performing arts in Australia.

Launching in 2025, the Australian Museum of Performing Arts will be unique in Melbourne's cultural landscape, celebrating the breadth of the city's, the state's and the country's ongoing contribution to the performing arts.

AMPA aims to share the riches of the Australian Performing Arts Collection and more with Victorians and our national and international visitors. Creating an innovative, immersive visitor experience within an iconic performing arts venue, AMPA will enable Arts Centre Melbourne (ACM) to take a dynamic new approach to a cultural institution, one that will combine gallery spaces with retail and events.

Situated in the iconic Hamer Hall, AMPA will be where ACM celebrates and explores Australia's place in the performing arts, through exciting new and innovative temporary exhibitions that make the most of creative practice today, from theme-based and trans-historical exhibitions to exclusive international content. AMPA will be where the myriad stories of the performing arts are presented, in the heart of the Melbourne Arts Precinct and at the home of the performing arts in Australia, Arts Centre Melbourne.

Based on current averages, more than 50,000 people walk across Princes Bridge and past Hamer Hall each day. Over a year, this equates to 19 million people. This represents a massive potential audience for a new cultural destination that will be highly visible as you approach the urban garden of the precinct.

AMPA will add a new daytime cultural attraction, drawing people across the river, encouraging visitation, contributing to the visitor economy, and providing the people of Victoria and tourists with new opportunities to explore the rich stories of Australia's performing arts history. With mass public appeal, the popular culture offer will also provide additional opportunity for ACM to encourage visitation to its venues during construction closures and impacts in the Theatres Building, and beyond.

### **Reasonable Use – Summary of Impacts**

ACM is the preeminent performing arts venue in Australia. With five stages across three venues, ACM fulfills its commitment to the Victorian Arts Centre Act 1979 (the Act) to “enrich the cultural, educational, social and economic life of the people of Victoria”. The Act commits ACM to carry out this enrichment through various functions, including through the “development and promotion of the State collection of performing arts material” and the “exhibition of performing arts material from the State collection”. To realise this commitment, ACM must evolve through the introduction of a gallery space dedicated to the exhibition of Australia's rich performing arts cultural heritage, and by extension meet the increasing expectations of the role and function of a performing arts centre.

When ACM was established, the role of the performing arts centre and its importance in the community was different. Early iterations of performing arts centres that served their communities were to showcase excellence, “bringing the best of the performing arts to the fore” (Stephen Wolff, 2013). This expectation has continued to evolve across the past 40 years – moving from showcasing excellence, to driving the concentration of artistic people and activity, to providing community access to the arts, to “enabling innovation in content and activity” (Stephen Wolff, 2013). This evolution in the role of performing arts centres has shifted world-wide.

Across the past 10 years in particular, ACM has experienced this change in sentiment, and aims to exceed expectations in fulfilling our commitment to the Act. Achieving this involves growing the extended experience that audiences have come to expect, through investment in its infrastructure. In addition, by evolving its commercial offering ACM can attract and retain visitors, who generate important funds for re-investment into opportunities for cultural expression, participation, and sector development.

### **ACM'S Past and Current Cultural Heritage Offerings**

The preservation and celebration of the cultural heritage of the performing arts has been integral to ACM's offering and experience since its inception, with a performing arts museum and storage facilities for its Australian Performing Arts Collection (APAC) featured in architect Roy Grounds' earliest drawings.

The Performing Arts Museum (PAM) opened in the new Melbourne Concert Hall (now Hamer Hall) in 1982, a gallery venue dedicated to performing arts exhibitions; and in 1984 with the opening of



the Theatres Building, the Westpac Gallery (later the George Adams Gallery), was also launched to host exhibitions. By 1997 PAM had closed, and ACM concentrated its exhibition activities in its gallery in the Theatres Building. For 35 years, ACM's various gallery spaces shared the stories from its collections through exhibitions that explored all genres of the performing arts: from circus, dance and music, to opera, theatre and popular entertainment. In 2017, following negotiations with the State Government and key music industry stakeholders, the remaining gallery in the Theatres Building was turned over to become the Australian Music Vault (AMV), an exhibition space that specifically celebrates the live music scene.

#### Status of existing facilities

Since the establishment of the AMV, public access to APAC's now more than 850,000 objects and related curated interpretation of Australia's performing arts cultural heritage has been limited to a presence in AMV (and so restricted to live music content), small and sporadic cased displays in some foyers, loans of objects from the collection to other cultural institutions, and online engagement.

ACM visitors continue to hold an interest in seeing the history of the full breadth of the performing arts. A study undertaken by EY Sweeny in 2019 found that 78 percent of ticket holders surveyed at ACM were supportive of the proposal to re-establish a permanent gallery for the Collection (APAC). (2018-19 Mid Year Review)

With work now well underway on ACM's Reimagining project through the Melbourne Arts Precinct Transformation (MAPT), ACM recognises that it is a critical time to address its responsibility to provide access to cultural heritage through exhibition and display, as outlined in the Act. ACM is committed to driving this initiative now, when ACM's audiences and visitors can benefit from an expanded cultural offer during this significant period of disruption and reduced stage-based programming due to the Reimagining works.

New facilities are required, to reinstate a museum dedicated to the celebration and interpretation of Australia's performing arts history, one that embraces a contemporary, innovative approach to curation and exhibition design with a dynamic temporary exhibition program. On the northern face of Level 6 of Hamer Hall, a now-vacant commercial space has been identified as the site of the new AMPA.

With an existing footprint of approximately 450 sqm, the expansion of the space into the undercroft will provide an additional footprint of approximately 100 sqm enabling the creation of a gallery space large enough to hold exhibitions featuring innovative and dynamic content especially curated by ACM's expert staff. The site sits immediately alongside the site of the original Performing Arts Museum, and as such has great potential to expand further in subsequent years. This second stage will result in an overall footprint of approximately 900sqm, giving AMPA the opportunity to host international touring exhibitions; content that often requires galleries with a capacity of between 800–1200 sqm in size.

#### Investment in AMPA; and the Melbourne Arts Precinct and Public Realm

The State Government is making significant investment in the Melbourne Arts Precinct, of which ACM is a centrepiece; the Precinct's Public Realm will connect Hamer Hall and the Theatres Building to the neighbouring cultural institutions, Southbank community, and CBD. The ultimate realisation of the Precinct will provide a significant uplift in access, and new amenity for leisure and recreation to visitors.

While the establishment of AMPA is a project that sits outside of the MAPT, ACM not only has an opportunity to optimise current visitor engagement, but also respond to the heightened demand expected when the Precinct is finished. AMPA is ideally situated to support the Melbourne Arts Precinct to drive the Precinct's role as a premier cultural destination of Victoria. AMPA can contribute to this destination by providing contemporary and exciting new experiences that respond to opportunistic pedestrian traffic, as well as drive visitation by becoming a destination itself.

In June 2023 Creative Victoria granted ACM \$500,000 in seed funding to establish a physical proof-of-concept for a permanent museum, AMPA; this funding is to "add a daytime cultural and tourism drawcard ... and share the riches of the Australian Performing Arts Collection with Victorians and visitors." (Letter of Agreement, Creative Victoria) A fundraising campaign has since been launched



with notable success, and work is progressing in converting the Hamer Hall site, with a view to launching in late 2025.

It is reasonable for ACM to renovate this part of Hamer Hall to reintroduce and reinvigorate its cultural offer, providing an attractive and accessible daytime arts experience, and in doing so, enrich the cultural, educational, social and economic life of Victorians. We want to provide value that inspires and supports participation.

If the AMPA works do not proceed, ACM will continue in a state that does not allow it to properly service its functions as set out in the Act, by providing access to its collections; and will not secure the benefits of optimised visitor offers through daytime activation.

### **Economic Use – Summary of Impacts**

As a Public Non-Financial Corporation (PNFC), ACM is required to apply a high degree of commercial acumen to its operations, in direct contrast to many other cultural institutions. As a result, ACM relies on visitation to remain a sustainable offering for the Victorian community. ACM's business model leverages government investment through commercial (self-generated revenue streams), to support its overall offering and investment in creative content that provides the balanced and accessible content and artistic participation opportunities for all Victorians.

As a PNFC, ACM navigates a sophisticated balance between the cultural, social, and educational activity and its commercial operations to deliver on the Act. Self-generated revenues have been critical to cover operating costs and to invest in creative content and artistic opportunities to provide a balanced and accessible program, benefitting Victoria's performing arts sector and Victorians, and attracting visitors nationally and internationally.

Prior to 2020, ACM generated \$4 in revenue for every \$1 of government base funding invested and, pre-COVID, ongoing government funding comprised around 20 per cent of ACM's revenue. The remaining 80% was self-generated via:

- visitor revenues (ticketing, F&B, car park)
- presenter revenues (resident companies and external hirers)
- fundraising (philanthropy, sponsorships, memberships).

Venue utilisation was at peak levels in the Theatres Building and further growth capacity was limited, with the most scope at Hamer Hall: State Theatre (97 per cent); Playhouse (95 per cent); Fairfax Studio (97 per cent); and Hamer Hall (71 per cent).

Further revenue growth at that stage was reliant on increased visitor and audience attraction, selling more unsold seats – which with an average audience size, already strong at 76 per cent of capacity in indoor venues, this is not an easy achievement.

As a new initiative, the financial modelling for AMPA is currently underway, and is planned to be at the very least self-sustaining, with aspirations to contribute to an uplift of ACM's overall general revenue. Incorporating funding and revenue streams including ticket sales, grants, sponsorships, partnerships, and philanthropic support, ACM is modelling a tiered approach to exhibition cost and income scenarios for AMPA.

Ensuring dynamic and changing exhibitions with diverse content from one exhibition to the next will provoke both audience growth and repeat visitation. A changing program that includes both exhibitions dedicated to the breadth of Australian performing arts experience, and exclusive content from international institutions, will position ACM to capture this broad audience engagement from year to year.

As a seven day per week daytime offer, AMPA will tap into an aspect of Melbourne's key cultural tourism market that ACM does not have a foothold in – a dedicated, contemporary gallery environment for the high-profile temporary exhibition experience. AMPA has great potential to address, and take advantage of, this significant gap in its offer to both Victorians and visitors. In a public sector cost environment combined with low base funding, ACM needs to be able to continue to self-generate funding through key sources or will increasingly need to rely on additional Government support.



If AMPA was not to proceed as outlined, stage one would have significant limitations in its capacity to generate enough revenue to be self-sustaining, as its financial feasibility is reliant on the physical size of the offer. Inclusion of the undercroft in the first stage will ensure that exhibitions will be large enough in both scope and scale to be offered as a successful paid experiences for the public.

The further expansion in stage two will be critical for AMPA's forward operations; without this increase in size, AMPA will be unable to host high-appeal international exhibitions. With the expansion, the exhibition program will then be able to incorporate exclusive international content which will dynamise the public offer, including an uplift in revenue generation.

**S102(2)(d) if the applicant is a public authority, the extent to which the application, if refused, would unreasonably detrimentally affect the ability of the public authority to perform a statutory duty specified in the application.**

The ability of ACM to perform some of its statutory functions under the Victorian Arts Centre Trust would be restricted if the proposal subject to this permit application did not receive approval.

The Victorian Arts Centre Trust (the Trust) is the legal name for ACM and is established as a statutory authority within the arts portfolio of Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR) under The Victorian Arts Centre Act 1979 (VIC) (the Act). ACM is designated as a Public Non-Financial Corporation (PNFC), reflecting its ability to operate on a commercial basis subject to certain government requirements, and its funding reflects this status. The Trust is responsible for the operation of ACM and its various performing arts spaces, including Hamer Hall. The Act defines the legal functions of the Trust, including to:

- *ensure the maintenance, conservation, development and promotion of the State collection of performing arts material*
- *oversee the exhibition of performing arts material from the State collection*
- *contribute to the enrichment of the cultural, educational, social and economic life of the people of Victoria*

The proposal outlined in this permit application seeks to enhance the Trust's ability to perform the above statutory functions through the creation of a dedicated museum for the exhibition of the APAC and other performing arts materials. Failure to approve the proposal would limit the Trust's ability to deliver on the above statutory functions and ultimately limit public accessibility of APAC, reducing the Trust's capacity to *contribute to the cultural, educational, social and economic enrichment of the people of Victoria*.

## 5 Summary of Impacts and Conclusion

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In summary, the proposal comprises of works to adaptively reuse the riverfront spaces of Hamer Hall and redundant frame structure (approved under P19340) to reestablish a performing arts museum, AMPA, at the location of the former PAM. The proposed works will revitalise the riverfront, creating a new daytime cultural attraction that will enable ACM to fulfill its commitments under the Act. Specifically, opportunities for the exhibition of the State collection of performing arts material are currently limited. AMPA will address this shortcoming and substantially improve ACM's ability to deliver on its mandate under the Act *to ensure the maintenance, conservation, development and promotion of the State collection of performing arts material and to oversee the exhibition of performing arts material from the State collection.*

Since the establishment of Roy Grounds' vision for Hamer Hall in 1982 until today, previous uses of the place through to the current frame structure have consistently visually impacted the heritage place, including by obstructing the original undercroft from the north elevation of Hamer Hall. It is acknowledged that the proposed enclosure of part of the frame structure to create a pavilion addition will be a new approach that visually and physically impacts the heritage place. However, these impacts are necessitated by reasonable and economic considerations which will contribute to the ongoing use and conservation of the broader heritage place. Where identified these impacts are mitigated by the complete reversibility of the proposal and the design articulation. Further, the proposed use will positively impact the significance of the heritage place by reinstating a performing arts museum within Hamer Hall and enabling ACM to retain, conserve and enhance the significance of the heritage place through its ongoing use as the State's principal venue and cultural centre for performing arts.

Overall, the proposal will have no adverse impact on the significance of the heritage place and is supportable from a heritage perspective. The proposal continues with the approach of ongoing works at the heritage place to enable the place to evolve successfully to the changing nature of its role as the State's preeminent performing arts centre. AMPA will provide ACM with the facilities to exceed in fulfilling its commitment to the Act, increasing its offering to the people of Victoria and ultimately contributing to the long-term conservation and protection of the place's cultural heritage significance.





## Appendix A Victorian Heritage Database Report

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