

8 June 2023

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**PROPOSED INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL REDEVELOPMENT, 487-503 COLLINS STREET. MELBOURNE (HERITAGE PERMIT APPLICATION P35014 RIALTO BUILDING – 497-503 COLLINS STREET)**

We act on behalf of Salter Brothers Asset Management Pty Ltd atf Salter Brothers (Rialto) Trust, the landowner and permit applicant in this matter.

Further to ongoing pre-application engagement with Heritage Victoria, and our recent meeting, we are delighted to hereby submit this heritage permit application, pursuant to section 93 of the *Heritage Act 2017*.

This application (P35014) is made as one of two applications at Heritage Victoria's request, and is made in the context of the proposed integrated redevelopment of the site, which has a relationship to both heritage places which are part of the proposal, namely the Rialto building [VHR0041] and the Winfield building [VHR0040], with the proposed use and development spanning both buildings and both registered and unregistered land. A separate, concurrent application (P35013) is submitted in respect of the Winfield building.

A corresponding planning permit application for the proposed integrated redevelopment of the site is also presently being finalised for submission to the Minister for Planning, following ongoing consultation with the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP), Melbourne City Council (MCC), Heritage Victoria (HV) & the Office of the Victorian Government Architect (OVGA).

**Application materials**

To assist Heritage Victoria's assessment, the following materials have been prepared and form part of the application:

- Architectural drawings (existing and proposed) and design report, prepared by *Cox Architecture*.
- Conservation Management Plan (Rialto and Winfield buildings), prepared by *Raworth Conservation & Heritage*.
- Heritage Impact Statement & conservation works schedule (Rialto building), prepared by *Raworth Conservation & Heritage*.
- Reasonable & Economic Use report, prepared by *Urban Ethos* – please see note below.
- Heritage Interpretation Report, prepared by *Sue Hodges Productions*.
- Structural engineering, BCA and seismic compliance advice prepared by *4D Workshop*.

**NOTE:** As requested by Heritage Victoria, two versions of the Reasonable & Economic Use are included with this application. The Reasonable & Economic Use report is marked Commercial in Confidence due to the sensitive nature of the information it contains. Accordingly, an unredacted version is provided for the sole purpose of Heritage Victoria assessment and it is requested that this version of the report not be advertised. A redacted public version of the same document that may be advertised is also provided.



The requisite recent copy of title is also enclosed.

### **Heritage fabric primacy and significance**

The applicant views the site including the Winfield and Rialto heritage buildings as important cultural assets not just for Collins Street but for Melbourne as a city, and is committed to their long term retention and conservation, and to their utilisation in such a way that celebrates and allows for the wider appreciation of the history of this part of Collins Street – both post and pre European settlement.

The careful treatment and retention of all heritage fabric on site has guided and informed the resolution of an important new mixed use precinct which seeks to revitalise this part of Collins Street, and provide for the long term preservation of Melbourne's treasured heritage.

### **Heritage Victoria pre-application advice**

The applicant has appreciated Heritage Victoria's acknowledgement of a range of positive heritage benefits of the proposal, and the encouragement to proceed to lodge an application to allow for consideration of the merits of the proposal through a permit application process.

As you are aware the applicant has carefully considered and sought to address Heritage Victoria's earlier preapplication feedback as far as possible. This has resulted in significant refinements to the application and accordingly, in conjunction with the reasonable economic use assessment, we look forward to continuing to work with Heritage Victoria towards a positive outcome for this important and unique project.

It is noted based on the reasonable economic use assessment that the significant investment in long term innovative reuse of the heritage buildings, conservation and maintenance and the delivery of the identified heritage benefits will not be able to be secured if the project does not proceed.

Alternative options investigated have been assessed as non viable (except for option 5 which involves a larger development footprint, but is not advanced in response to Heritage Victoria feedback) and hence it is considered the proposed development reflects the minimum level of development to deliver an acceptable economic outcome, and hence to secure funding for the conservation and maintenance of the Rialto and Winfield buildings. The reasonable and economic use of the Rialto and Winfield buildings, in total over 13,000sq.m of heritage floorspace, would be significantly affected by a refusal, which would over time have a deleterious impact on the heritage places.

Heritage Victoria's pre-application feedback has been carefully considered and addressed, with significant changes implemented including increased setbacks, revised façade detailing and a significant reduction in the scale and mass of the development.

#### *Impact of scale and mass*

- Contextually, the site sits in amidst a sequence of large commercial towers, and the side and rear tower setbacks proposed are greater than those of the Rialto and Olderfleet buildings to the abutting east and west of the site.
- As noted above, the increased front tower setback on average is recessed 11.7m back from Collins Street, with the minimum front setback commencing 60m above Collins Street increased from 8m to 11.1m in response to Heritage Victoria feedback.
- To the west, there is an average 10.3m setback, with minimum setbacks increased from 5m to 8.5m from the western site boundary.
- The increased setbacks and shaping of the building result in a 16% reduction in the scale of the new built form.
- Importantly, and distinct from the adjacent sites, no demolition of existing heritage fabric is proposed.
- Further to this feedback from Heritage Victoria, a further revised structural solution has been investigated and proven from an engineering perspective, which removes the raked columns from their previous position within Winfield Square.

### *Raked building profile*

- The raked profile of the building has been reduced and it is not considered the form of the tower increases a sense of gravity or massiveness.
- The building form relatively is much smaller than either of the Rialto office towers or the Olderfleet tower.
- The minimum tower setbacks occur 60m above Collins Street and 35m above the heritage parapets – at this height and being behind the first bay of the Rialto building these setbacks will not impact the primary pedestrian experience.

### *Contemporary form dominance*

- As well as increasing the setbacks and reducing the scale of the building, the façade language has been altered to ensure it is sympathetic and does not compete with the expression of the Rialto building.
- Solid façade elements that introduce a textured building profile and one that relates to the heritage building colour scheme have been revised to feather out from the central building break at level 16, with a reduced density at the lower levels to ensure the heritage parapets are not blurred or confused and maintain their primacy, with a calm glazed backdrop beyond.
- Additionally, the demolition of the 1980's building which mimics the Rialto ensures the primary appreciation and prominence of the heritage buildings on site.
- The removal of the heavy canopies to Collins Street and through the entry portal also reveals the internal return elevation of the first bay of the Rialto building, further reinstating to the pedestrian experience the primacy of the heritage fabric.

### *Western side projection*

- Importantly in relation to the western projection to the side of the site, the proposal sits on a mid block site, as distinct from a corner site, and so is not prominent to the Collins Street streetscape.
- Substantially setback from Collins Street, the western side boundary of the site is largely concealed by the adjacent Rialto office towers and is not a prominent pedestrian view, either from the adjacent Rialto plaza level (views to site concealed by the existing architectural atrium structure) or from Collins Street (west), to which the Rialto and Winfield facades (each circa 25m high) present as the predominant element to the street.
- The extent of the western side projection has also been reduced by 3.5m in response to Heritage Victoria feedback, and so occurs at a minimum of over 11m back from Collins Street and 8.5m from the side boundary, at a height of 60m above the level of pedestrians on Collins Street.

### *Enhanced heritage values*

- It is considered the revealing of the western subway, Winfield Square, the rear of the Winfield building and the greater opportunities to view and appreciate the eastern elevation and the roofscape of the Rialto building, and the innovative reuse of the vertical urinals are all considerable opportunities that celebrate and enhance the heritage values of the place.
- Similarly the removal of canopies and the reduction of other interventions such as the existing lobby treatments and extent of bridges are further significant improvements, with the new building form not impacting pedestrian views of the heritage building from any vantage point, relative to the existing condition.
- The framing element of the new building to Flinders Lane has been adjusted in line with Heritage Victoria feedback, again with the goal of prioritising the heritage values of the place and in this instance affording greater visibility of the Rialto building from the public realm.
- A schedule of conservation works has been prepared with implementation envisaged as part of the redevelopment to further enhance the existing heritage values.

*Façade articulation and geometry*

- Building on Heritage Victoria's advice, cues have been taken from the unique historic layout of the site to inform the resolution of the building façade, with the 'break' afforded by Winfield Square emphasised vertically to appropriately relate to the heritage architecture.
- The geometry of the building has also been softened through the use of greater setbacks.

*Reasonable economic use*

- The reasonable economic use considerations warrant holistic consideration. Whilst part of the site is not registered, the overall integrated use of the site as proposed is an important part of supporting the long term preservation of the Winfield and Rialto buildings (alternative refurbishment, renovation and redevelopment options have been considered but are not viable). The various and integrated land use activities (club, hotel and office in particular, and their associated buildings and works) span both the new and heritage built form and hence it is considered the application warrants holistic and broader consideration [as afforded by sub sections 101 (2) & (3) of the Act].
- We look forward to working with you through the application process in relation to any queries or requests that may arise in relation to the Reasonable & Economic Use report that has been prepared.

**Conclusion**

We trust the changes made to the proposal are considered favourable, and we look forward to working with Heritage Victoria on this important project for the city. Please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned at your convenience.

Yours faithfully,



**PLANNING & PROPERTY PARTNERS PTY LTD**