

Lovell Chen Ref: 20230146

Mr Steven Avery
Executive Director
Heritage Victoria
2 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne Vic 3001

Attention [REDACTED]

30 August 2024

Re: P39855 Professional Chambers, 110-118 Collins Street, Melbourne

I write with regard to a Request for Further Information (RFI) issued by Heritage Victoria on 25 July 2024 in relation to application number P39855, which relates to the Professional Chambers building which is located on the lands of the Wurundjeri people.

The RFI raised two concerns with the proposed scope of works (refer below). A meeting was held on site on 13 August 2024 to discuss the heritage concerns and also the particular challenges that are present in relation to the entry porch space and its detailing. As a result of this discussion, some further options have been investigated in relation to the signage and security gate. The enclosed architectural package prepared by Woods Bagot present the options and the current proposed solution to alleviate the heritage concerns surrounding the scope of works. It is noted that the final options included in the enclosed package are still subject to detailed design. Accordingly, if the options are deemed to be acceptable, it is respectfully requested that a condition is placed on a permit requiring further detailed documentation to be lodged prior to the commencement of those specific works (signage and security door).

In order to respond to the RFI, please find below the concern raised in the RFI, together with a response and outline of the options considered in response to the heritage issues raised.

The first concern raised was in relation to the glazed panel and signage which was to be set within the top of the arched opening:

The glazed panel proposed to be located within the archway of the building which would obscure views to the decorative stained glass and alter the shape and appearance of the archway. You may wish to provide further justification to demonstrate why this addition is necessary. Alternative locations for the Hour Glass sign could be considered.



The proposed location of the tenancy signage to the central arch, above the entry to the building, is considered an important piece of identification signage for the tenant of the building. The intent of the glazed panel was to maintain visibility of the stained glass entry doors within the porch while also allowing the tenancy signage to present as an contemporary addition to the front of the building. The issue with regard to the opacity of the glazing is understood, and as a result it was discussed on site whether a clear glazed pane of glass could be acceptable to maintain visibility.

Following further consideration, it is now proposed to install a simple metal rail to span the rear section of the arch, with the signage (consisting of illuminated lettering) fixed to the rail. This approach will introduce a new framing element within the arch, however it will be a discrete and contemporary addition, that will not detract from the overall shape and appearance of the archway, nor obstruct views to the stained glass doors and entry behind. The cabling to enable the illumination of the lettering will be fitted within the metal rail and will be discretely installed within the arched entrance.

It is further noted that a suspended sign was considered, however the location for the suspension of the sign would be from the front of the building, in front of the arched entry. This was not considered desirable as it would add to the extent of signage projecting from the building and disrupt the presentation of the central arched entry. A suspended sign within the entry porch would not be clearly visible, or would be obscured by the security doors, and is therefore not considered appropriate for tenancy identification.

The second concern raised was in relation to the security door which was to enclose the arched entry:

The proposed roller shutter is considered to be insufficiently perforated and does not appear to be designed in response to the heritage significance of the place. It has not been demonstrated in the application that alternative more transparent options would not suit the purpose. To this end, further information should be provided to confirm whether options with much greater transparency such as a simple but sympathetically designed cast iron gate would be viable.

The proposed enclosure of the entry porch is required to ensure the entry to the building is secure outside of business hours. Woods Bagot has given further consideration as to whether a gated solution may be achievable, however as discussed on site and as depicted in the enclosed architectural studies, this is not a workable solution. The geometry and detailing of the entry porch would mean that the gates would not be able to open internally within the space, and the arrangement of the handrails and steps to the entrance, together with the size of the gate doors, would prevent an option where the gates would open outward. Further, a gated entry with inward swinging doors would not allow for safe egress from the building and is not achievable from a fire safety perspective.

Further consideration in relation to different types of roller doors has also been undertaken, however investigation into these options has indicated that either the side tracks/guides for the door, or the roll drum, would not be able to be installed within the constrained space of the entry porch.

As the preference is not to obstruct the overall presentation of the entry porch and the arched form, a further solution has been explored which consists of foldable metal gates that in a closed position allows a greater level of visibility through to the entry porch, and in an open position are folded in a concertina configuration to either side of the entry and largely concealed within the entry porch. An indication of the presentation is provided, subject to detailed design development. The open form of the metal gate, and the decorative detail, is complementary to the building, while also allowing views into the entry



porch. It is a high quality outcome which achieves the desired security to the entry porch, and will not impact on the architectural significance of the place.

In addition, it is understood that the City of Melbourne has provided a response to heritage Victoria in relation to the application. It is noted and understood that a planning permit is required for signage and this application will be lodged in the near future.

I trust that sufficient information has been lodged in order to respond to the RFI, however if further information or clarification is required please contact the undersigned on [REDACTED] or by email at [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

Lovell Chen

Katherine White

Director