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# SOUTHBANK CULTURAL PRECINCT REDEVELOPMENT

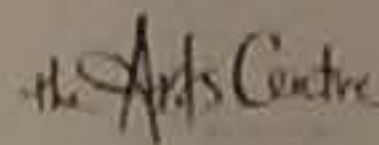
STAGE 1 - HAMER HALL

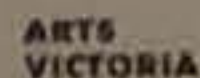
HERITAGE VICTORIA APPLICATION FOR PERMIT  
19 APRIL 2010

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

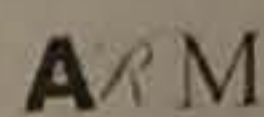
**HAMER  
HALL**

SCPR.S1

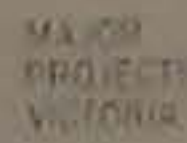
The Arts Centre

ARTS  
VICTORIA

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WELLINGTON

A & M



MAJOR  
PROJECTS  
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HALL**

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*the Arts Centre*

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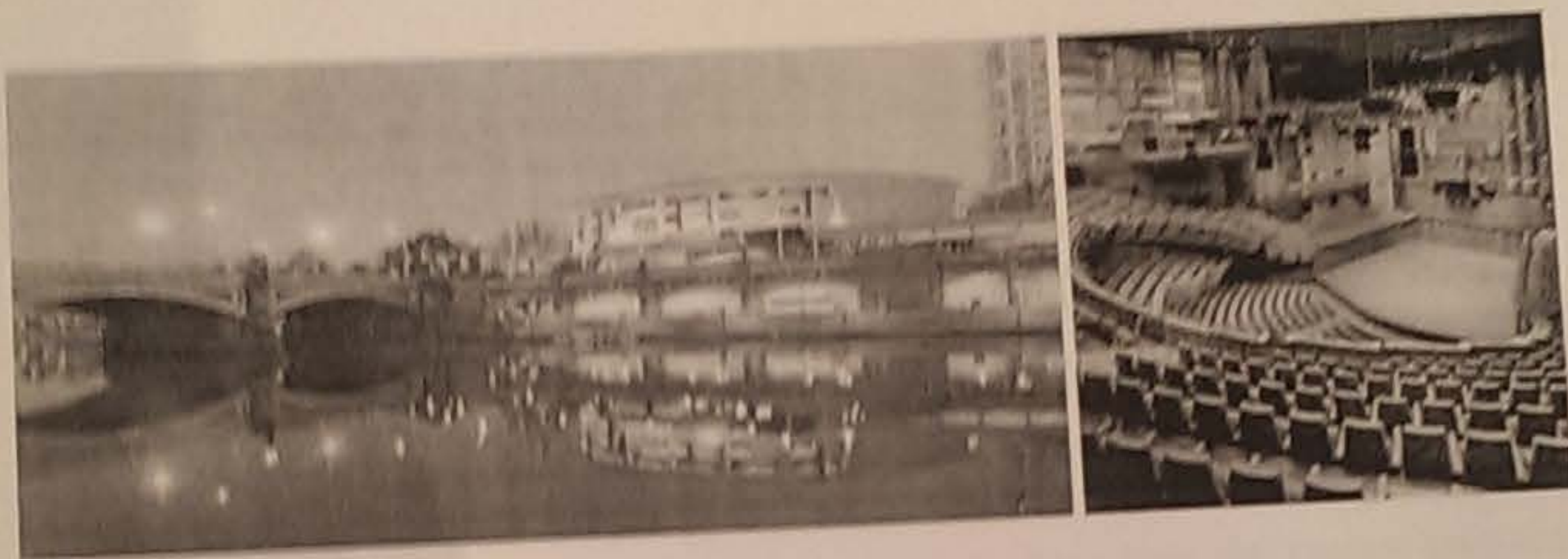


ARM



MAJOR  
PROJECTS  
VICTORIA

Proposed Southbank Cultural  
Precinct Redevelopment Stage 1  
*[Hamer Hall]*



Heritage Impact Statement

April 2010

Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd  
with  
Professor Philip Goad

Proposed Southbank Cultural  
Precinct Redevelopment Stage 1  
Hamer Hall

Heritage Impact Statement

April 2010

## 1.0 Introduction

This report has been commissioned by Ashton Raggatt McDougall Architects on behalf of the Victorian Arts Centre and Major Projects. It comments on the significance of Hamer Hall at the Victorian Arts Centre, and provides an assessment of the potential heritage impacts resulting from the current proposal for the building to be upgraded as part of the Southbank Cultural Precinct redevelopment. Specifically, this Heritage Impact Statement reviews the proposal for partial demolition and alterations to Hamer Hall including an addition on the river promenade side of the building.

The purpose of this report is to assess the potential impact that the proposed works have upon the character and significance of Hamer Hall and the Victorian Arts Centre complex as a whole. No detailed research into the history of the subject site or any associated historical significance was undertaken as part of this report, as this has already been undertaken by others.

## 2.0 Methodology

This heritage impact statement has been prepared with regard to the *Burra Charter* and its guidelines, as amended in 1999, and in general accordance with Heritage Victoria's guidelines for heritage impact statements. It seeks to respond to four key questions:

- 1) *What physical and/or visual impacts will result from the proposed works?*
- 2) *If there are detrimental impacts, provide reasons why the proposal should be permitted*
- 3) *Has the design been influenced by, or had to address any Local Planning Scheme provisions?*
- 4) *What measures are proposed to mitigate the detrimental impacts?*

### 3.0 Sources of Information

The analysis below draws upon several site visits and external and internal inspections of Hamer Hall, along with a thorough review of the *Victorian Arts Centre Conservation Management Plan* (Allom Lovell and Associates Pty Ltd in association with Dr Phillip Goad, November 1995).

In preparing this report, the authors have also been mindful of the City of Melbourne's heritage overlay provisions and local heritage policy, as set out under **Clause 43.01** and **Clause 22.04** of the *Melbourne Planning Scheme*.

### 4.0 Listings and Controls

#### *Victorian Heritage Register*

The Victorian Arts Centre, including Hamer Hall, is on the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR Registration H1500). The extent of registration includes all of the land and buildings on the site. The registration includes a permit policy, which provides some indication of which internal spaces are important (the permit policy is included as Appendix A to this report). All the interiors are part of the registration, but permit exemptions are provided for works in some (generally less important) areas. These exemptions appear to be in generally accordance with the CMP findings regarding which areas are more important and which are not. The permit exemptions are given on the basis that the works which may be undertaken will not affect the significance of the place.

The site abuts Princes Bridge, which is also included on the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR Registration H1447). The proposal includes some works the southern end of Princes Bridge but these fall outside of the bridge's extent of registration.

#### *City of Melbourne*

Hamer Hall has an individual heritage overlay control, listed as 'Melbourne Concert Hall' (HO920), under the City of Melbourne Planning Scheme (refer figure 2 below). The extent of the heritage overlay should in theory be all of the land and the interiors, but in fact the schedule to the heritage overlay identifies the interior as not being subject to the overlay. In addition, the mapping excludes the City Road alignment, which passes under the subject site, whereas the site above the City Road should, in theory, be included. In any event, a permit is not required under the heritage overlay for places on the Victorian Heritage Register, although applications are referred to the local government authority for comments and consultation.



Figure 1 Heritage overlay map showing the subject site and its environs.

The key considerations within the terms of the heritage overlay are whether the proposed works will affect the character and appearance, and thus the significance, of the heritage place, i.e. the Victorian Arts Centre.

*National Trust of Australia (Victoria)*

Hamer Hall has not been classified by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria).

*Register of the National Estate*

Hamer Hall is not on the Register of the National Estate.

## 5.0 History

*The following history is drawn from the Victorian Arts Centre Conservation Management Plan*

The site of the Victorian Art Centre was originally low lying swampy ground, used from the 1860s as a site for travelling circuses. In 1901, a permanent circus was constructed on part of the site. Three years later, the remainder of the site was developed as 'Princes' Court', featuring a Japanese Tea House, open air theatre, miniature train and a water chute. The entire site was taken over in 1907 by Wirth's Circus, which remainder there for 50 years.

Various buildings were added to Wirth's complex over the years, including a dance hall in the 1920, but were destroyed by fire in 1953. The site was identified as the preferred location for a new cultural centre in 1944 although it is was not until 1956 that the State government established a building committee to oversee development of the project.

In December 1959, Roy Grounds of the firm Grounds Romberg and Boyd was by selected as the architect of the proposed art gallery and cultural centre on the former Wirth's site. Grounds' master plan for the arts complex was presented and approved in December 1960.



Figure 2 (left) Architect Roy Ground and Gallery Director Eric Westbrook viewing a model of the Art Centre, 1961. Source: Picture Victoria

Figure 3 (right) Undated photograph of the Snowdon Gardens fountain, which was demolished to make way for the Concert Hall. Source: <http://www.thecollectormm.com.au>

Ground's master plan was based on three formally distinct buildings - an art gallery, art school and tall copper clad spire - sitting on a broad podium level with St Kilda Road, with functional spaces such as auditoria and car parking located beneath.

The project was planned in two stages - first the gallery and then the performing arts centre and spire. Construction of the National Gallery of Victoria commenced in 1962 and the building was formally opened on 20 August 1968.

Ground's initial concept for the second stage of the complex was compromised by changes to the brief, budgetary constraints and difficult site conditions. The original master plan had placed the Theatres and Concert Hall underground in one building, topped by a copper sheathed spire, however it soon became evident the cost would be prohibitive. It also became apparent that the ground under the planned theatres building was unstable and required extensive piling. A decision was made to construct the Theatres building halfway out of the ground and build the Concert Hall closer to the Yarra River on public parkland known as the Snowdon Gardens.

The contract for excavation and construction of the Concert Hall substructure was let in 1976 and building works were well advanced by 1979. The Concert Hall was opened on 6 November 1982. In 2004, The Concert Hall was renamed Hamer Hall in honour of former Premier of Victoria Sir Rupert Hamer.

Ground's design for Hamer Hall is based on a cylindrical drum, which strongly recalls Castel Sant'Angelo, Rome in terms of its formal geometry and siting on a riverbank alongside a bridge (refer figure 3 below). Originally intended to be built wholly underground, Hamer Hall was constructed with four levels above St Kilda Road and four levels partly or wholly underground. The exterior is clad in pre-cast concrete panels and articulated by projections and voids created by cantilevered and recessed balconies. The interiors largely the work of theatre designer John Truscott who was appointed as a consultant to the project in 1980.

Truscott's design picks up on Ground's original concept of an underground building by representing geological strata and the forms and colouring of precious Australian minerals and gemstones. Foyers and public spaces use a rich palette of red, ochre and polished brass.



Figure 4 (left) Castel Sant'Angelo, Rome



Figure 5 (right) A 1980s postcard showing the recently completed concert hall (Hamer Hall) in the foreground. Source: <http://www.thecollectormm.com.au>

A number of alterations have been made to the Hamer Hall since it was completed in 1982. In 1988, the performing Arts Museum archives were relocated in 1988 from the basement at level 1 to a larger space housed in the original garage below the Arts Centre lawn. Most other changes to Hamer Hall have taken place on Riverside Terrace where substantial alterations were made in 1992, in conjunction with the Southbank development. These works included extending the terrace to the west and new landscaping. Around the same time, the Treble Clef restaurant servery area and kitchen were rebuilt and the bar was constructed.

In 1998, the Amcor and Commonwealth Bank lounges were refurbished to a design by Ashton Raggatt McDougall. More recently, the Treble Clef restaurant was refurbished by NMBW architects and renamed EQ Café/bar. The works included a black metal clad extension on Riverside Terrace with decked pergolas. Aside from these changes, Hamer Hall remains largely unchanged from its c1982 state.

## 6.0 Significance

As noted above, Hamer Hall is included on the Victorian Heritage Register, and is recognised as being of state significance. The statement of significance for the former factory complex, as endorsed by Heritage Victoria, provides a detailed appreciation of the significance of the place, and this is reproduced in full below:

### *What is significant?*

*After the National Gallery of Victoria opened in 1968 as the first stage of the Victorian Arts Centre, attention turned to the completion of the remainder of the complex. This included a concert hall, theatres and spire, which had all been conceived by Roy Grounds in his original*



*master plan in 1960, as one building, under a spire, and linked to the gallery via a covered porch. He died before seeing the final completion of this project which he began in 1959.*

*The site selected for this complex, just south of the Yarra, was first proposed in 1943, proclaimed in 1957, and construction of the gallery component finally commenced in 1962. A competition was not held for the design of the Arts Centre and in 1959 Grounds, Romberg and Boyd were appointed architects. In awarding this commission, emphasis was placed on Grounds thirty years of experience and he subsequently became responsible for the job. He then devoted much of his time, from the 1960s to the 1980s, to this building complex. The rectangular gallery building was constructed to the south of the selected site in St Kilda Road, a triangular art school constructed to the west in 1970, and the area to the north, known as the North End, was allocated to the theatre and concert facilities, located under a circular spire.*

*Nine years after producing the master plan, and with the gallery complete, Grounds turned his attention to the design of the theatre and concert facilities. Initial plans had been for a new gallery building and a multi-purpose auditorium, however plans for the auditoria components grew, and the State government was persuaded to annex land all the way to the Yarra. The design for the State Theatre was altered to accommodate 2000 patrons and concerns over the implications of structural works associated with underground proposals, particularly after the collapse of the West Gate Bridge in 1970, forced Grounds to look at alternatives. The Theatres Building was modified and extended above St Kilda Road level as an undistinguished bush-hammered concrete building, and the spire, lifted to house the flytower, became an enormous latticed space frame. The Concert Hall, also originally intended to be underground, became a massive, sandstone coloured precast panelled, cylinder. As a result, Ground's initial concept for the complex was greatly compromised.*

*Responsibility for the project lay with the Building Committee, established in 1956, and comprising a number of representative members from the community, local councils, regional Victoria, the Victorian Government and the National Gallery of Victoria. These included Kenneth Myer, who was chairman from 1965 to 1989, Professor Joseph Burke and later Professor Margaret Manion from the Fine Arts Department at Melbourne University, Councillor Michael Winneke and Sir Ian Potter. For twenty five years this committee were a consistent force in the completion of the complex. It became the Victorian Arts Centre Trust in 1980, with actor and film director, George Fairfax, as its first General Manager, a position he held until 1989. Originally appointed as a technical officer, and Chief Executive Officer in 1972, Fairfax played an influential role in the development of the Arts Centre.*

*Work began on the theatre site in 1973, with excavation work not completed until 1977-8, two years later than expected. Work on the more stable concert hall site began in 1976. As work began on the substructures, fully developed sketch plans of the buildings and their interiors were completed.*

*Academy Award-winning expatriate set designer, John Truscott, was employed to decorate the interiors and his theatrical connections added another dimension to the project. His work on the interiors was constrained only by a requirement to leave elements already constructed, such as Ground's faceted cave Concert Hall interior, to which he applied jewelled finishes, and his steel mesh draped ceiling in the State Theatre, to which he added perforated brass balls. The lushness of Truscott's interiors, contrasted with the sombre character of Ground's exterior.*

*The Concert Hall opened in November 1982, while substantial work remained to be done on the Theatres site. The rest of the Arts Centre was opened progressively in 1984, with the Theatres building officially opened in October that year. This signified the completion of one of the largest public works projects in Victorian history, which had been undertaken over a period of almost twenty five years.*

*How is it significant?*

*The Victorian Arts Centre is of architectural, aesthetic, historical and social significance to the State of Victoria.*

*Why is it significant?*

*The Victorian Arts Centre is of architectural significance as a major work by noted Australian 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. Together with the gallery, the Arts Centre occupied much of his time from the 1960s to 1980s. Grounds significance as an architect was confirmed when he was awarded the RAI A Gold Medal in 1968 and was knighted the same year.*

*The Arts Centre is of architectural and aesthetic significance for the high standards of design and detail evident in the distinctive interiors of the performance and ancillary spaces, designed by John Truscott. The Victorian Arts Centre is of historical significance as one of the largest public works projects in Victoria's history. This ambitious project, undertaken over a period of almost twenty five years, encompassed complex planning, design, documentation and construction phases. It has associations with prominent individuals in Victoria's cultural history including George Fairfax and John Truscott.*

*The Arts Centre is of historical significance as a major cultural institution and as the primary focus for the arts in Victoria. Once constructed, the complex, with its distinctive spire, provided Melbourne with an important visual image.*

*The Arts Centre is of social significance for the unusual level of public interest and support it afforded. A large number of Victorians were involved with the planning and financing of the complex and a number of major and minor corporate and individual sponsors were involved.*

## 7.0 Conservation Management Plan

A conservation management plan (CMP) was prepared for the Victorian Arts Centre by Allom Lovell and Associates and [then Dr] Philip Goad in 1995. The CMP was comprehensive in its scope and carefully described the fabric of the place and the related levels of significance for the component parts and for the whole. This being said, the site has undergone some changes in the ensuing 15 years, and it would be appropriate for the CMP to be reviewed and updated at some time in the near future.

In early 2010 a further survey of the place was undertaken in order to check on changes that may have altered the significance of spaces within the building. It was apparent that a number of rooms had been altered under permits issued by Heritage Victoria, but the affected spaces were largely of lesser significance and the changes not of great moment in relation to the significance of the place.

The CMP includes a range of general and specific conservation policies that make reference to levels of significance and that also are framed with reference to specific spaces within the building. These are included as Appendix B to this report. The following provides a summary of the key aspects of the CMP heritage policies.

### Exteriors

As a general principle and where practicable, the retention of as much as possible of the Roy Grounds exteriors should be adopted.

Significant aspects of the Grounds exteriors include the following:

- cylindrical form of main building
- balcony and balustrade (Level 6) supported on deep tapered beams
- precast concrete panels, deep openings
- bronze anodized aluminium-framed glazed doors with circular polished brass push plates
- porch ceiling at entry level with pendant stalactites
- roof terrace at Level 6
- beams, walls and columns of bush-hammered concrete walls
- double flight stair of bush-hammered concrete (north elevation)
- copper roof

Consideration should be given to relocating the Clement Meadmore sculpture 'Dervish' back to its original location at the west end of the Riverside Terrace.

### Interiors

As a general principle and where practicable, the retention of as much as possible of the Roy Grounds interiors should be adopted.

- Significant aspects of the Grounds interiors include the following:
- beams, walls and columns of bush-hammered concrete, including circular polished brass floor and ceiling trims to columns
- stair balustrades and soffits of bush-hammered concrete
- Hamer Hall auditorium

As a general principle and where practicable, the retention of as much as possible of the John Truscott interiors should be adopted.

These spaces were considered as being of primary significance in 1995, and given the lapse of fifteen years, their significance has not diminished. Indeed, three spaces previously considered of contributory or no significance in 1995 should be elevated to items of primary significance. These include the following dressing rooms:

- Margaret Sutherland Room (Level 2)
- Hephzibah Menuhin Room (Level 2)
- Bernard Heinze suite (Level 2)

Significant aspects of the Truscott interiors include the following

- padded leather wall surfaces and gold-anodised aluminium strips (doors and walls)
- vertical mirror panels with chamfered edges associated with movement spaces such as stairs and elevators
- original Truscott designed lamps, seats and tables
- red Persian travertine marble floors
- internally lit poster display boxes (east wall, Levels 2 & 3)
- west wall, Level 2 extending up to the ceiling of Level 3 of foyer: bush hammered concrete wall, covered by 'Paradise Garden' painting series (1968-70) by Sir Sidney Nolan
- the suspended sculpture, 'Arcturus' (1982, by Michael Santry) (hung between Levels 4 & 6)
- feature ceilings, including:
  - the golden cubes (Level 3)
  - pendant stalactites (entry foyer, St Kilda Road, Level 5)
  - select areas of polished brass

The following provides a summary update to the CMP listing of spaces and fabric in relation to levels of significance.

#### Spaces still considered of Primary Significance (2010)

<i>Space No.s</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Functional Group</i>
<b>Level 2</b>		
2105	Margaret Sutherland Room	dressing rooms
2107	Hephzibah Menuhin Room	dressing rooms
2109	Bernard Heinze suite	dressing rooms
2116; 2117, 2119	Stalls foyer	foyers
2145, 2146	Auditorium and stage	auditoria
<b>Level 3</b>		
3103, 3136	Auditorium	foyers
3117, 3118, 3119	Cadbury Schweppes suite	function rooms
3120, 3122	Foyer	foyers
<b>Level 4</b>		
4117, 4121	Foyer	foyers
4155, 4156	Auditorium, stage and organ	auditoria
<b>Level 5</b>		
5118, 5121	Foyer	foyers
5142, 5143	Auditorium, stage and organ	auditoria

<i>Level 6</i>		
6105, 6113	Foyer	foyers
6120	Auditorium, stage and organ	auditoria
<i>Level 7</i>		
7104	Upper part of foyer	foyers
7108	Auditorium, stage and organ	auditoria
<i>Level 8</i>		
8110	Upper part of auditorium	auditoria

**Spaces no longer considered of Primary Significance (2010)**

<i>Level 2</i>		
L1 and L2	Lifts	foyers
<i>Level 3</i>		
L1 and L2	Lifts	foyers
<i>Level 4</i>		
L1 and L2	Lifts	foyers
<i>Level 5</i>		
L1 and L2	Lifts	foyers
<i>Level 6</i>		
L1 and L2	Lifts	foyers

**Spaces still considered of Contributory Significance (2010)**

None

**Spaces no longer considered of Contributory Significance (2010)  
(now of No Significance)**

<i>Level 3</i>		
3123	Baxter Room	function rooms (much altered)
<i>Level 4</i>		
4144	Green Room	green room
<i>Level 5</i>		
5133-5137	Treble Clef restaurant	restaurants

**8.0 The Proposed Works**

The proposal seeks to partially demolish and alter Hamer Hall and to construct an addition on the river promenade to its north side. As set out in the architects' statement that accompanies the application documentation, the brief for the works is substantially built around a need to upgrade the acoustics to the auditorium and to make the foyers more accessible and public friendly. The works to the foyers seek to resolve issues in relation to poor circulation, lack of public toilets, Building Code of Australia requirements, and the like.

In addition, the works seek to upgrade and improve the interface of Hamer Hall with Southbank more generally, through the removal of the existing deck and

construction of a new deck that is integrated with the broader promenade to the river edge, as well as new stairs to St Kilda Road and the edge of Princes Bridge.

In relation to these works and the CMP conservation policies that are described above, a conservation strategy has been developed in consultation with the architects and client group as a 'best fit' marriage of project brief and conservation policies. This strategy recognises that the CMP specifically anticipates the need for future change to the building:

*As a general policy, elements of primary and contributory significance should be conserved. However, it is recognised that circumstances within which the Victorian Arts Centre operates have changed significantly since it opened. Use of the Victorian Arts Centre has substantially increased and patterns of use have changed. The nature of public demand for facilities and services has changed dramatically since the complex was designed and the construction of Southbank has had an impact which was never envisaged by the original Victorian Arts Centre Trust, or the architects. For these reasons, a number of the original concepts and spaces are variously inadequate, dysfunctional or poorly sited in today's context and, necessarily, change will occur.<sup>1</sup>*

The conservation strategy for the redevelopment can be summarised as follows.

#### *Exterior*

The external drum of Hamer Hall is to retain its integrity to the upper levels, and have signage removed from those levels, so as to regain its original visual prominence. Signage is to be relocated to a lower canopy zone, the canopy itself being rebuilt to incorporate glazed roofing in place of the present walkway. The existing deck structure toward the river edge, which is largely outside the extent of registration of the site, is to be demolished and replaced by a new structure. A new stair and point of connection to St Kilda Road and Princes Bridge is to be provided, but this is largely outside the extent of registration of Princes Bridge. Major changes to the exterior drum of Hamer Hall are limited to the lower areas that are substantially concealed from general views by the existing/altered canopy and/or the proposed new deck, ie areas that are already in part altered.

#### *Interior*

The Grounds-designed auditorium is to be upgraded to improve its acoustic performance for the long term, an upgrade that inevitably involves substantial change, but where original fabric can be retained or adapted in a compatible manner, this is to be done. Further to this, the prismatic concrete forms of the upper walls of the auditorium are to be retained but clad in cloth to improve their acoustic performance, and the ceiling is

<sup>1</sup> *Victorian Arts Centre Conservation Management Plan* Volume 1, p. 93.

largely to be retained. The original bush hammered walls are to be retained but concealed behind acoustic walls.

The Truscott-designed foyers require very substantial reworking to achieve the objectives of the brief, but a balance has been struck where the two key levels for entry to the building, ie levels 4 & 5, are to be heavily modified, but the other levels, ie levels 2, 3 & 6, are to retain much of their original character and fabric, albeit with some modification to improve circulation and services such as bars and toilets. Key elements of the original foyer interiors that are to be retained (to level 2, 3 & 6 in particular) include the leather wall panels, gold leaf feature ceilings and exposed bush hammered walls, beams and columns.

The proposed works to each level of the building can be summarised in more detail as follows:

#### Level 2

##### Foyer

- Retain existing leather wall panels and existing mirror panels
- Retain existing ceilings with partial infill and new light fittings
- Retain existing stone floor to areas outside sound locks
- Retain existing stairs. Alter existing balustrades and handrails to comply with current BCA requirement
- Retain existing furniture
- Install new light fittings
- Relocate existing artwork ('Paradise Green' by Sidney Nolan)
- Remove existing bar, structures and associate floor finishes
- Construct new bar facility along the west side of the foyer
- Demolish existing escalators
- Install new escalators
- Refurbish existing toilets on the east side of the foyer
- Construct new toilet facility on the north side of the auditorium
- Replace existing carpet to match existing

##### Auditorium

- Retain existing bush hammered in-situ concrete walls – either exposed or behind new high mass acoustic walls
- Retain existing pre cast acoustic diffusion panels either exposed with thin acoustic treatment with scenery painted finish to match existing or behind new high mass concrete walls.
- Retain existing precast ceiling panels
- Replace existing seats
- Replace existing carpet
- Replace existing parquet floor as required
- Remove existing lightweight plaster and timber veneer acoustic panels and replace with high mass acoustic wall cladding bonded to existing in-situ concrete
- Remove and reinstate existing plaster balcony soffits as required for mechanical modernisation
- Replace stage flooring and stage fascia
- Replace stage doors
- Reconfigure wall at corner of stage wings to improve acoustics
- Replace fascia to choir lift

##### Back of House

- Demolish some internal walls and part demolish existing floor slab to allow for new hoist and goods lift
- Minor alterations to Buckland Room including operable acoustic wall
- Minor alterations to toilets and construction of additional storage

<b>Level 3</b>	
Foyer	<p>Retain existing leather wall panels retained, existing mirror panels</p> <p>Retain existing feature ceiling over void. Modify existing ceiling to suit new bulkhead over bar</p> <p>Retain existing gold leaf ceiling over mezzanine walkway. Replace match existing where required for mechanical works</p> <p>Retain existing bush hammered concrete columns, walls and beams. Modify concrete balustrade in new escalator/circulation zone</p> <p>Retain existing stairs. Alter existing balustrades and handrails to comply with current BCA requirement</p> <p>Retain existing furniture</p> <p>Demolish existing escalators and landing over existing bar</p> <p>Construct new escalator/circulation system and associated concrete slab infill for escalator landing</p> <p>Refurbish existing lift cars</p> <p>Retain existing Cadbury Schweppes lounge</p> <p>Install new carpet to match existing</p> <p>New toilet facilities</p> <p>Construct new kitchen in footprint of existing Baxter Room with new VIP lounge area adjacent. Existing leather wall panels removed</p>
Auditorium	<p>Retain existing bush hammered in-situ concrete walls – either exposed or behind new high mass acoustic walls</p> <p>Retain existing pre cast acoustic diffusion panels either exposed with thin acoustic treatment with scenery painted finish to match existing or behind new high mass concrete walls.</p> <p>Retain existing precast ceiling panels</p> <p>Replace existing parquet floor as required</p> <p>Replace existing seats</p> <p>Replace existing carpet</p> <p>Remove and reinstate existing plaster balcony soffit as required for mechanical upgrade</p> <p>Install new front to existing balcony to comply with BCA and OH&amp;S requirements</p> <p>New acoustic wall and architectural finish to stage surround and choir seats</p> <p>Demolish lower rows of balcony</p>
Back of house	<p>Generally unaltered aside from demolition of some internal walls and part demolition of the existing floor slab to allow for new hoist and goods lift</p>
Riveredge	<p>Demolish existing deck structure including all piers/columns/ramps/external stairs</p> <p>Construct new river edge entry and lobby sequence linking river side to level 4/5</p> <p>Construct new food and beverage tenancies along river frontage including loading facilities</p> <p>Construct new lobby spaces and toilets</p> <p>Construct new stair from river edge to St Kilda Road with lift access</p>
<b>Level 4</b>	
Foyer	<p>Retain existing bush hammered concrete columns, walls and beams</p> <p>Demolish existing escalators, stairs and associated voids</p> <p>Part demolition of existing floor slab for new escalator pit</p> <p>Construct new internal circulation system, including new walls, infill of existing void, new escalators and new stairs linking level 4 with level 5</p> <p>Remove existing carpet and stone floor finishes</p> <p>Construct river side lobby spaces</p>



- Demolish internal walls along west side of foyer (including leather lining) and create new bar and technical rooms  
Demolish existing toilets on north side of auditorium. Replace with new performance space.  
Upgrade existing toilet facilities on south side of auditorium  
Refurbish existing lift cars  
Replace existing brass balustrades and handrails to comply with BCA requirements
- Relocate Donald Laycock art collection  
Remove and store existing artwork 'Arcturus'
- Auditorium**
- Retain existing bush hammered in-situ concrete walls – either exposed or behind new high mass acoustic walls  
Retain existing pre cast acoustic diffusion panels either exposed with thin acoustic treatment with scenery painted finish to match existing or behind new high mass concrete walls.  
Retain existing precast ceiling panels  
Replace existing parquet floor as required  
Remove existing lightweight plaster and timber veneer acoustic panels and replace with high mass acoustic wall cladding bonded to existing in-situ concrete  
Remove and reinstate existing plaster balcony soffits as required for mechanical modernisation  
Demolish lower four rows of balcony and provide new balcony to front of row 5.  
Provide new front to existing balconies to comply with BCA and OH&S requirements  
New acoustic wall to stage surround and transition wall  
Retain trumpeter's balconies behind new architectural cladding  
Replace existing seats  
Replace existing carpets  
Remove and store organ
- Back of house**
- Demolish part of existing concrete floor slab to allow for new hoist and goods lift  
Enlarge and upgrade back of house loading facilities  
Refurbish greenroom
- Riveredge**
- Demolish existing piers, ramps and associated structures  
Construct new entry lobby linking river side to level 5.  
Construct new food and beverage tenancies  
Construct new lobby space and toilets
- Level 5 Foyer**
- Retain existing bush hammered concrete columns and beams  
Demolish foyer entry including main entry doors (retain feature ceiling and lighting over entry)  
Demolish existing stairs and part of existing floor slab to create new voids. Construct new internal circulation system, including new walls, infill of existing void, new escalators and new stairs linking level 5 with level 4  
Part demolish external walls along St Kilda Road frontage  
Enlarge foyer and provide access to new deck on north side by demolishing existing toilet block  
Install new internal and external wall linings including continuous exterior glazing  
Demolish existing office spaces on west side of foyer and enlarge front of house facilities including bar and cloak room  
Install ceilings and flooring  
Demolish existing toilets and construct new toilets

	Construct new stair linking level 5 with level 6 Refurbish existing lift cars
Auditorium	Retain existing bush hammered in-situ concrete walls – either exposed or behind new high mass acoustic walls Retain existing pre cast acoustic diffusion panels either exposed with thin acoustic treatment with scenery painted finish to match existing or behind new high mass concrete walls Retain existing precast ceiling panels Replace existing seats Replace existing carpets Replace existing parquette floor as required Remove existing lightweight plaster and timber veneer acoustic panels and replace with high mass acoustic wall cladding bonded to existing in-situ concrete Remove and reinstate existing plaster balcony soffits as required for mechanical modernisation Install front to existing balcony to comply with BCA and OH&S requirements
Riveredge	Demolish existing deck including pedestrian link to west side of Princes Bridge Reinstate historic detailing to bridge New deck works as per level 3
Back of house	Demolish part of existing concrete floor slab to allow for new hoist and goods lift
<b>Level 6</b> Foyer	Retain existing bush hammered concrete columns, walls and beams Retain existing ceilings Retain existing entry void Retain existing leather wall panels Retain part of existing stair Alter balustrades and handrails to comply with current BCA requirements Replace existing carpet Demolish some internal walls to allow for new toilet facilities in existing 'sound house' areas Construct new bar facilities Remove part of the existing perimeter walkway and replace with new glazed canopy
Auditorium	Retain existing bush hammered in-situ concrete walls – either exposed or behind new high mass acoustic walls Retain existing pre cast acoustic diffusion panels either exposed with thin acoustic treatment with scenery painted to match existing or behind new high mass concrete walls Retain existing precast ceiling panels Replace existing seats Replace existing carpet Replace existing parquet floor as required Remove existing lightweight plaster and timber veneer acoustic panels and replace with high mass acoustic wall cladding bonded to existing in-situ concrete Remove and reinstate existing plaster balcony soffits as required for mechanical modernisation Create new opening in existing in-situ wall to provide access to technical zone Install new rigging structure over stage Install new overstage acoustic reflector Construct new overstage technical zone
Back of house	Generally unaltered except for new stairs to level 5 and new ramp to choir seats

## 9.0 Analysis

### *1) What physical and/or visual impacts will result from the proposed works?*

The proposal will clearly bring about a visible change to the exterior by removing existing fabric and introducing several new modern elements, but this is a change that will result in only limited impact upon the identified significance of the site. In particular, the proposal protects the upper drum of Hamer Hall, and thus protects Grounds' vision of the building as a geometric entity and as the visual equivalent of Castel Sant'Angelo, Rome.

The greatest extent of change will take place on the river promenade area, where the existing decking/promenade is to be demolished and replaced with a new structure – much of this zone of change is outside of Heritage Victoria's extent of registration, but in any case the structure to be demolished is substantially not original or significant.

The proposed illuminated signage to the face of the canopy overlooking the river will be an innovation, but one that is seen to be impact neutral relative to the existing signage arrangements.

In relation to the interior, the key impacts arise in relation to the substantial changes to the auditorium and to the foyers, with many instances of original fabric being removed and new fabric introduced.

Upgrading of back of house and technical facilities will have little impact outside these areas, which are in any event are not normally accessible to the public and are generally considered to be of lesser significance.

The works require the removal [to storage] of the sculptural light 'Arcturus', as the void within which it is located is to be lost. The Sidney Nolan prints to the foyer wall at Level 2 are to be retained in part, with some prints to be relocated or stored. This is of lesser impact, insofar as these prints were introduced subsequent to completion of the place as a wall covering, and are not in any case a complete set of the print group or part of an original concept for the prints by the artist.

### *2) If there are detrimental impacts, provide reasons why the proposal should be permitted*

As noted above, the CMP specifically anticipates the need for future change to the building, as *'it is essential that the complex continues to function as a dynamic and potent machine, as it does now, rather than as a static building sheltering cultural activities'*.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Victorian Arts Centre Conservation Management Plan* Volume 1, p. 93.

The role of Hamer Hall within the Victorian Arts Centre is as the key auditorium for the performance of music. It is imperative to the significance of the place that its acoustic performance reflect this status, as this is critical to ensuring its long term utility and, as a concomitant, its social and historical significance. In the present instance, the acoustic performance of the Hall is adversely impacted by many of the elements that contribute to its valued architectural character. The works seek to strike an appropriate balance in terms of the conflicting objectives of maintaining the place's social and historical significance and maintaining its original architectural character. The key benefit of the proposed works is their provision for a long term, sustainable and ongoing use of the building as a concert hall.

Similarly, while the Truscott foyers are of architectural interest and, as part of the original fabric, contribute to Hamer Hall's present integrity as a place, it is not possible to address the inadequate functionality of these spaces without some degree of change. The proposed works provide a functional and aesthetically positive response while maintaining sufficient of the original character of these spaces to allow Truscott's design intent to be enjoyed and understood.

It is not uncommon for public institutions and associated buildings to require substantial change in order to accommodate their valued use. In recent years Melbourne has seen substantial changes to both the NGV St Kilda Road and to the Myer Music Bowl that have sought to retain key aspects of their iconic presence within the city while nonetheless allowing radical improvements.

At a more extreme level, the MCG has seen the replacement over the past two or three decades of all the older built form on the site, including the significant (registered) Members' Stand.

As a related issue, the socially significant fabric of Waverly Park (or AFL Park) at Waverley, also a registered historic place, has been substantially demolished, in that case because the social significance was judged of primary importance rather than the architectural significance of the place – only a portion of the stands has been retained to signify the original architectural character of the place and to represent the associated social significance.

The redevelopment of Hamer Hall as presently proposed confronts a similar conflict between the valued ongoing use of the place, and the associated aspects of historical and social significance, and a desire to retain its original fabric in a manner that allows key aspects of architectural and aesthetic significance to be understood and interpreted.

*3) Has the design been influenced by, or had to address any Local Planning Scheme provisions?*

The proposal has been prepared with proper regard for the relevant City of Melbourne planning scheme provisions, including the heritage overlay at **clause**

43.01 and the local policy for heritage places within the Capital City Zone, clause 22.04.

This being said, the considerations relevant under these clauses are essentially the same as those relevant under the Heritage Act. In brief these can be summarised as '*what is the impact of the proposal upon the character, appearance and significance of the place*', and these matters are addressed throughout this report.

4) *What measures are proposed to mitigate the detrimental impacts?*

The key measures that have been taken to mitigate detrimental impacts are, in effect, those encapsulated in the strategy for conservation and development of the site set out above, ie at the beginning of Section 8.0 [p 11] of this statement.

## 10.0 Conclusion

In summary, the proposal for works to Hamer Hall have been developed from a detailed appreciation of the significance of the place and its component parts.

While the works clearly result in a substantial degree of change to the heritage place, the overall result is a considered and sympathetic outcome, where the impact associated with changes to fabric is offset by positive acoustic, design and urban design outcomes that are complementary to the larger heritage significance of the place.