

MEMORANDUM

TO	Clara Friedhoff, Housing Choices Australia	FROM	Clare Lewis/Suzanne Zahra
RE	8 - 18 Mason Street – Heritage Advice	DATE	2 May 2023

Introduction

This memorandum summarises the heritage issues associated with the proposed development of 8 - 18 Mason Street, Warragul (the subject site). The subject site is located on the lands of the Gunaikurnai People.

Our opinion is based on a review of the briefing material provided by Housing Choices Australia including:

- Baw Baw Council
 - Council Meeting Agenda dated 24 April 2015
 - Correspondence to J Whitehead regarding Extension of Planning Permit, dated 28 July 2015
- Architectural Drawings and associated reports
 - Drawing Set numbered TP.01 – TP.04, TP.2.1 – TP.2.8, TP.3.1 – TP.3.2, TP.4.1-TP.4.4, TP5.1 – TP.5.10, TP. 6.1, TP. 7.1 (inclusive), prepared by Freadman White, dated 31 March 2023.
 - OVGA Design Report prepared by Freadman White, dated February 2023
 - Pre-App Design Report prepared by Freadman White, dated December 2022

In addition to the briefing material, we have reviewed:

- Nearmap (various capture dates), accessed 7 November 2022 and 5 April 2023
- Baw Baw Planning Scheme, Clause 43.01, Clause 15.03-1L and the Design and Development Overlay
- *The Baw Baw Shire Heritage Study, Stage 2, Volume 2, Heritage place and precinct citations* prepared by Context Pty Ltd in 2011.

The comments and advice provided are based on this preliminary work, and not a detailed investigation into the history of the subject site. A site visit was not undertaken to inform this report.

Description, streetscape context and brief history

The subject site is a broadly rectangular allotment of 1661sqm with a principal frontage to Mason Street and bounded to the north by an unnamed lane. It is located at the south-east corner of the intersection of Williams and Mason streets (Figure 1). The land slopes slightly to the east.

In 2011, the subject site was included in the *Baw Baw Shire Heritage Study, Stage 2, Volume 2: Heritage place and precinct citations*, prepared by Context Pty Ltd, 2011. Identified as 'Maisonettes', the heritage

citation report (2006) described the three pairs of maisonettes (1930s) as historically significant to the City of Warragul, noting their importance as one of the earliest examples of higher density forms of accommodation which emerged to meet housing demands.¹ The buildings on this site were demolished in 2015.

The site is located to the north-east of the Warragul Railway Station (HO119) and is adjacent to a range of commercial premises in the Queen Street Precinct (HO78). To the south, the site abuts the carpark of the Commercial Hotel (at 115 Queen Street, a two-storey brick building) which is to the eastern edge of the Queen Street Precinct. On the east side of the site is the Former Bonlac Foods Factory (HO125).



Figure 1 Aerial view of subject site (purple outline) and adjacent carpark (red arrow); north to top of image
Source: Nearmap, November 2022

Heritage and planning controls

Heritage controls

The subject site is included in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (HO) of the Baw Baw Planning Scheme and is identified as HO89 Semi-detached houses 8 - 18 Mason Street, Warragul. In 2015,

¹ Context Pty Ltd, Heritage Citation Report - 'Maisonettes' in *Baw Baw Shire Heritage Study, Stage 2, Volume 2: Heritage place and precinct citations* (2011), p. 900-902.

Council approved a planning permit application (PLA0139/15) for the demolition of the buildings and development of the land. The buildings were demolished in 2015 and in 2022 an extension of time for completion of the works approved under the planning permit was granted. Notwithstanding the demolition of the significant buildings on the site, the HO controls remain in place and any development of the site would be subject to the provisions of the Baw Baw Planning Scheme.

Under the provisions of the HO, the site is subject to Clause 43.01 'Heritage Overlay' and Clause 15.03-1L 'Heritage Conservation in Baw Baw'.

Queen Street Precinct (HO78)

The subject site is adjacent to the Queen Street Precinct (HO78). The precinct is of local historic, architectural and aesthetic significance to the Baw Baw Shire. Historically, it is significant as evidence of the development boom in Warragul from the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth century and because it is the largest and most intact late nineteenth century commercial precinct in the Baw Baw Shire. Its architectural and aesthetic values lie in the consistent quality of its built form and the high degree of integrity to the main periods of development.²

Other planning controls

The site is subject to a Design and Development Overlay (DDO1), a Development Contributions Plan Overlay (DCP01) and a Parking Overlay (PO1), the latter two controls not being relevant to the considerations of this advice.

Design and Development Overlay (DDO1)

Table 1 in Schedule 1 to the DDO includes design requirements for the public/private interface of new developments. The DDO requires buildings to be scaled appropriately to create an effective transition to adjoining residential uses or heritage buildings.

Proposal

The proposal is for the construction of two parallel four-storey rectangular footprint buildings, orientated north-south along the east and west boundaries. The buildings will be constructed on a single level basement occupying the whole of the site. The area between the buildings is proposed as a courtyard and communal open space. Documentation has been prepared by Freadman White (Drawing Set TP.01 – TP.04, TP.2.1 – TP.2.8, TP.3.1 – TP.3.2, TP.4.1-TP.4.4, TP5.1 – TP.5.10, TP. 6.1, TP. 7.1 (inclusive), dated 31 March 2023).

The proposal consists of:

- Basement car parking, with vehicle access from the north side via the lane
- Ground floor retail, services, bicycle parking and residential accommodation
- 1 -3 levels of residential accommodation.

Development issues

With the demolition of the significant buildings and elements on the site, the historical significance of the heritage place is no longer evident. That said, the HO control remains in place and the site remains

² Context Pty Ltd, 'Heritage Citation Report – Warragul, Queen & Smith Streets' in *Baw Baw Shire Heritage Study, Stage 2, Volume 2: Heritage place and precinct citations, (2011)*, p. 68.

subject to the relevant provisions as noted above. The Decision Guidelines at Clause 43.01-8 relate to the values of the registered place and the management of these, and design issues related to development of the site.

The key issues are:

- Implications of the Strategies related to Development under Clause 15.03-1L-01
- Whether the proposed development satisfies the heritage design requirements of DDO1.

Heritage advice

The proposal has been considered against the relevant heritage provisions in the Baw Baw Planning Scheme, including the local heritage policy at Clause 15.03-1L-01 'Heritage Conservation in Baw Baw'. Clause 43.02 'Design Development Overlay' provides design requirements for new developments adjoining heritage buildings. The relevant sections are summarised below.

Development (Clause 15.03-1L)

Demolition of the buildings in HO89 proceeded consistently with the permit, which anticipated the removal of associated historical values. Redevelopment of the site would have no further adverse impact on heritage values.

Decision Guidelines (Clause 43.01-8)

As noted above, with the removal of heritage values associated with the site, the Decision Guidelines are considered to not apply.

Design and Development Overlay

The requirements under Table 1 of DDO1 are considered to be relevant to the proposal.

Discussion

The new development will be constructed on a site which is subject to DDO1 and the design requirement is that buildings are scaled to create an effective transition to adjoining heritage places/buildings.

The site is located adjacent to the Queen Street heritage precinct. Key elements that contribute to the significance of the precinct include consistency of siting and scale (predominantly two-storey) of the commercial buildings and the landmark qualities of the buildings on the corner of Queen and Smith streets. The Commercial Hotel, a two-storey building located on the edge of the precinct, is noted as an important streetscape element.

DDO1 seeks to retain the legibility of the heritage precinct through the management of the scale of new development where proximate. In this instance, the subject site is separated from the HO precinct by a wide car park, which provides a substantial buffer, and is well-separated from the contributory elements at the eastern end of the precinct. While the proposed development at four storeys will be taller than the contributory buildings in the precinct, the potential for visual intrusion is lessened by the location of the subject site away from the precinct. The significance of the precinct and its cohesive character and presentation will not be adversely affected by the proposed development. The new development is sufficiently removed from the Commercial Hotel and the precinct, such that any impact on the precinct's architectural and aesthetic values, which relate predominantly to the commercial strip and its interface

with the railway station to the south, are minimised. The transition in scale as recommended under DDO1 is not considered to be warranted in this instance.