

13 May 2016

Ms Rosanne Massey
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Re: URGENT—Permit No. 1313/2015, 92 Beach Road, Port Melbourne

Dear Ms Miles,

I am writing to you in regard to the proposed demolition of the London Hotel, with reference to correspondence from the City of Port Phillip to Ms Ann Gibson, President of the Port Melbourne Historical & Preservation Society (PMHPS), dated 12 April 2016, as well as a number of enquiries made with the National Trust by members of the Port Phillip community.

As you are aware, information provided by the PMHPS indicates that the London Hotel has been operating continuously as a hospitality venue since its establishment in 1861. Its prominent location near the railway and Station Pier means that generations of visitors to Melbourne, and those travelling abroad, would have marked their arrival or departure from Melbourne at this important gathering place. Modifications to the building over time, including extensive remodelling in the fashionable Moderne style in the 1930s, demonstrate layers of historical significance reflecting the continued use of the building as a hotel over more than 150 years.

The National Trust believes this property is worthy of heritage protection and it is of concern to us that a full assessment of the significance of this place has not been undertaken by a qualified heritage professional.

Under *Planning Practice Note 1—Applying the Heritage Overlay (PPN01)*, historical, social and cultural significance are criteria against which heritage values should be assessed:

Criterion A: Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).

Criterion G: Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).

It is clear from information contained in the report *Amendment C5 and C14 to the Port Phillip Planning Scheme Report of the Panel, Part B: December 1999*, as well as advice provided to Council by Mr Helm, that the historical and social significance of the London Hotel has never been comprehensively assessed. Assessments undertaken to date appear to relate to architectural and aesthetic significance only.

With reference to PPN01, the Trust does not accept Mr Helm's view that "other forms of recognising these values (signage, interpretation), may be more appropriate than the HO" for places of historical and social significance. Social and cultural significance can be embodied in the fabric of a place, and in the case of the London Hotel, we believe the hotel fabric is an important tangible link to the place's significance. Moreover, an appropriate form of recognition cannot be arrived at until there has been a comprehensive assessment of heritage values. In this case, it is clear that this has not been undertaken.

We strongly urge the City of Port Phillip to refuse permission to demolish this building until a comprehensive heritage assessment of its social and cultural significance can be undertaken, and to apply for interim heritage protection to facilitate this. We believe that such an assessment is warranted given the strong interest in this issue by PHMPS and other members of the Port Phillip community. Please don't hesitate to contact me on 9656 9818 if you require any further information about this submission.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'F. Watson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Felicity Watson
Senior Community Advocate

Cc: Port Melbourne Historical Society
Cr Bernadine Voss, Mayor, City of Port Phillip