



Advocacy Position Statement

Project/Site	Queen Victoria Market Renewal
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Summary

The National Trust of Australia (Victoria) conditionally supports the Queen Victoria Market Precinct Renewal as outlined in the Implementation Framework endorsed by the City of Melbourne in July 2015, subject to detailed design which minimises impacts on heritage values and traders. With the State Government effectively giving the Market Renewal the green light through its approval of planning controls in and around the Market, we anticipate the project will proceed generally as proposed in the Implementation Framework, however there are many heritage and design issues which are yet to be resolved. We will continue to work with the Market Renewal team to provide input into the Renewal and advocate for positive heritage outcomes on the site.

The National Trust recognises the Queen Victoria Market's National significance as one of the great nineteenth century markets of Victoria. It has been in continuous operation since the 1870s, and is the only Melbourne market to survive from a group of important central markets built by the City of Melbourne corporation. We also recognise the social significance of the Queen Victoria Market as a record of change and continuity in market activity over a long period and as an important shopping, leisure and meeting place for generations of Victorians and visitors to Melbourne. The complex of enclosed food halls, open sheds, shops, and stores perpetuates distinctive forms of trading, providing a very tangible continuity from the nineteenth century to the present. The social significance of the Market is reflected in its function as an affordable and diverse retail market serviced by small, independent businesses, from many different cultural backgrounds.

The National Trust expects these values to be maintained during and after the Market Renewal process. In particular, we expect the open character of the Market sheds to be maintained, and for the market to continue to be an affordable place to shop for locals and visitors.

Background

Council Agreement with Victorian Government, 2014

The Market Renewal is required to meet the terms of a 2014 agreement between the City of Melbourne and the State Government. Under the agreement, the State agreed that proceeds from



the sale of public land parcels to the Market's south would be reinvested into the Market's renewal, provided that Council meets the outcomes stipulated in the agreement, including:

1. Current car parking relocated by 2019, new open space on existing carpark by 2022
2. Queens Corner building by 2026
3. Franklin Street connection (New Franklin Street), roundabouts removed by 2019
4. Franklin Street stores retained and new development sites for mixed use development to follow in 2026
5. Enhance upper market sheds A, B & C by 2019, retain authentic character and experience

There was no public consultation on the terms of this agreement, effectively meaning that the City of Melbourne and State Government committed to the Renewal, and the key terms of the Renewal, without consulting with community stakeholders. As a result, the Renewal has become a divisive issue, and while the City of Melbourne has responded to community concerns regarding details of the Renewal implementation, the agreement means that many of the key outcomes are not negotiable.

In 2015, the City of Melbourne acquired the "Munro" site, a large site opposite the market on Queen and Therry Streets, to assist with the facilitation of the Market Renewal. The State Government Agreement was varied to recognise this.

Planning Amendment C245

In 2015, the City of Melbourne prepared Planning Amendment C245 to facilitate the Market Renewal, including more intensive development around the market. The proposed controls represented a departure from restricted height limits and large setbacks intended to provide a transition from the higher built form of the central city to the very low scale of the Market.

A Planning Panel hearing took place in May 2016. The Trust and Melbourne Heritage Action were jointly represented by Barrister Daniel Robinson at a 7-day Planning Panel hearing in May, and made an extensive submission against the proposed controls, arguing that a transition from the higher built form of the central city to the low scale of the Market should be retained. The Planning Panel recommendations tempered some of the originally proposed controls, recommending a discretionary 100m height limit for the Munro site. It was later revealed in the media that the City of Melbourne was proposing a 200m tower for the Munro site, to be delivered in partnership with developers PDG Corporation.

The Minister for Planning finally announced the approval of the controls in July 2017, including a height limit of 125m for the Munro site. As of 25 July 2017, the controls are yet to be formally gazetted.

Business Case, Queen Victoria Market Precinct Renewal Program, SGS Economics & Planning, June 2017

In July, the City of Melbourne released for the first time details of the Business Case for the Renewal, prepared by SGS Economics & Planning. The Business Case concludes that Market renewal is essential to ensure the future viability of the Market, and in particular, that dedicated below-ground operational facilities are essential to address key issues including compliance with health and safety



standards, and the financial sustainability of the Market. While the release of this information is welcome (albeit too late to inform community input into the Master Plan and Implementation Framework), we have identified some key concerns regarding the heritage values of the Market.

The Business Case also looks at options for the provision of below-ground services, canvassing options for business as usual (Option 1), limited below-ground services at the Munro site with at-grade services in A-D sheds (Option 2), and the Council's preferred option of below-ground services and carpark (Option 3). The report asserts that Option 2 would limit public access to A-D sheds, and create a "hard edge" along Peel Street, and would result in a permanent adverse impact on the Market's heritage values. Conversely, the proposal for below-ground services would involve the removal, restoration and reinstatement of market sheds. This option also has potential for adverse impacts on the Market's heritage values and would need to be very carefully managed. In a press conference to announce the Government's approval of planning controls for the site, Premier Daniel Andrews expressed his hope that the sheds would not need to be removed in order to be restored. The Premier did not directly oppose the removal and reinstatement of the sheds, saying "If they can be left in place that would probably be a better outcome, but if it's not possible to get a respectful outcome in terms of heritage and the best facilities for traders, customers and tourists, then we'll take a different approach."

The plans outlined in the Business Case finally confirm that the preferred entrance for below-ground areas would be via D-Shed, which is in the location of the Jewish section of the former cemetery. It is our understanding that all remains in this part of the cemetery have previously been disinterred, and that the City of Melbourne has been consulting with the Jewish Community regarding the proposal. However we continue to have concerns about the visual impact of access to the underground services and carpark on the market sheds. Similarly, no details have been provided regarding the nature and location of lift and stair access to basement levels. As the Market is included on the Victorian Heritage Register, all works will be subject to a permit application with Heritage Victoria, which will provide an opportunity for traders and the community to make further submissions. In preparation for these works, the City of Melbourne recently gave itself permission to construct a temporary market pavilion along Queen Street which would provide for the relocation of traders in A-D shed during renewal works.

Retail Plan

Also of concern is the statement in the Program Delivery section of the Business Case (p66) which states "Design of a new Fresh Food Market place in Q2, position Queen Victoria Market's iconic fruit and vegetables in a refreshed environment that combines the restored heritage sheds with quality presentation stalls, lighting and ambient climate control". Although it's not clear how this would be achieved, it is a clear departure from the current market environment. Although the 2017 Retail Plan provides some detail regarding the how and why of the renewal process, it raises a number of potential issues regarding one of the Market's fundamental heritage values – its core function as an affordable, accessible and diverse retail market serviced by small, independent businesses. And while we support the broad aims of increasing the Market's trading area by relocating services, and providing for additional opening hours, this should not be at the expense of the Market's core function.



In addition to the proposed removal and reinstatement of A-D Sheds, the retail plan further reveals that Sheds H and I are proposed to be “removed, refurbished and reinstated”, with underground services to be provided below, however no further detail has been provided on how this would be undertaken, or the impact on existing traders managed.

The Retail Plan for Quarter 2 (page 38) refers to “weather protection”, and the option of “fixed stalls” in sheds A-D. It’s unclear what form these changes would take, however given that the significance of the sheds derives from the open-air nature of the sheds, this is cause for concern. Similarly, in regard to the Peel Street edge of the market sheds, the plan states “The sensitive adaptation of this edge of the market’s heritage fabric will also serve as a form of weather protection for the western end of Q2.”

The Retail Strategy also contemplates a significant shift in the Market’s fresh food offer, stating that Meat & Fish Hall traders will be “encouraged to evolve over time to incorporate a greater focus on value add, take home meals and food cooked on site”. This appears to be in response to one of the underlying assumptions of the project regarding changing customer needs, however no supporting evidence of this shift in demand is provided. In our view, an emphasis on “value added” products has the potential to undermine the culture and accessibility of market trading. This “gentrification” of the market’s fresh food offer would also necessarily impact on prices, meaning that the Market may no longer be an affordable choice for all Melbournians.

We note that the Strategy includes recognition of Traditional Owners, including the transfer of three F-Shed shops for use as an interpretation centre/retail shop. This is strongly supported, provided that this is done in consultation with Victoria’s Aboriginal community and providing that the existing traders can be relocated. We also welcome the proposal in Quarter 3 for the restoration and interpretation of the Old Cemetery Wall, and we expect that further interpretation of the cemetery will be undertaken as part of the transition of the current carpark to open public space.

We also support the proposed adaptive reuse of the Franklin Street Stores, however we have concerns about the scale of development proposed behind the stores, with detail regarding the controls on this part of the site yet to be provided as part of the Minister’s approval of C245. The design of public open space will also be key, with New Franklin Street effectively excising the Franklin Street stores from the rest of the market site. A render by the City of Melbourne shows the Franklin Street edge of the market impacted by New Franklin Street, as well as development behind the stores.