



20 June 2018

Mr Steven Avery
Executive Director
Heritage Victoria
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East Melbourne
VIC 3002

Email: conservation@nattrust.com.au
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T 03 9656 9818

Re: Permit application P24397 –Porter Prefabricated Iron Store (VHR2243)

Dear Mr Avery,

We write in regard to the above permit application to relocate the Porter Prefabricated Iron Store [the Store], including dismantling, conservation and re-erection works.

The National Trust strongly opposes the permit as it currently stands. We submit that insufficient evidence has been provided to justify the relocation of the building based on the need for site remediation; that the relocation of the building could have potentially severe and irreversible impacts on the fabric of the place; and that the proposed alternate location is not appropriate. In summary, we submit that the building should be retained, conserved and restored in-situ.

Cultural Heritage Significance

The Porter Prefabricated Iron Store is classified by the National Trust at the State Level (see classification report attached) and is included in the Victorian Heritage Register as a now rare example of the many prefabricated iron buildings which were imported into Victoria during the Victorian gold rush in the 1850s. It is an early example of the use of the building material, galvanised corrugated iron, and the only known surviving example in Victoria of a prefabricated building manufactured by major English manufacturer JH Porter which is still standing.

Site Remediation

Development Victoria have commissioned Purcell to prepare a Heritage Report and Impact Assessment to accompany a Heritage Permit to relocate the Store, including dismantling, conservation and re-erection works. The National Trust acknowledges that Purcell have not been commissioned to assess any alternatives to the proposed relocation of the building, including the option to retain the building in-situ.

In the Heritage Report, Purcell have outlined that the relocation of the building must happen to 'allow the site remediation works to be undertaken' (pg. 4). We submit that Development Victoria have not provided sufficient evidence regarding the contamination of the site and the need for remediation to support this statement. If the main reason behind relocation is based on the need for site remediation, we submit that sufficient evidence to justify this should be provided as part of the advertised permit application. Based on this evidence, we would suggest that alternate modelling to retain the building on site should be explored as a matter of highest priority.

Impact of Relocation

The National Trust does not believe that the destructive impact on the fabric of the building through the process of dismantling, relocation and re-erection have been recognised.

The National Trust supports the view of Professor Miles Lewis AM FAHA, that relocation would severely and irreversibly impact the fabric of the building. On the advice of Professor Lewis, we are particularly concerned that dismantling the building would mean the replacement of the corrugated iron cladding which is specifically recognised in the Victorian Heritage Register Statement of Significance. Further, Professor Lewis has identified that moving the building in one piece would also be unacceptable as the cast iron element would be liable to fracture under the stress.

Professor Lewis has assessed the building as being of international importance as the sole surviving structure by JH Porter, and that to relocate the building would undermine a proposed World Heritage listing of the structure.

Current and Proposed Location

The National Trust does not agree with the view that the relocation is justified on the basis that it has been relocated in the past. As this relocation took place 90+ years ago (c.1920-1944), we submit that the location and context now form part of the cultural heritage significance of the place. As such, to now remove the building from this location, would be to impact the cultural heritage significance of the place.

We also have concerns regarding the proposed alternate location of Fairfield Park. While this location will, as indicated by Purcell, 'improve public interface with the structure' and allow opportunities for engagement and interpretation, we do have concerns regarding vandalism and security. If it is determined that the building must be relocated, which the National Trust does not support, than a more appropriate location (preferably located within lockable grounds where it will be used appropriately), should be determined as a matter of priority.

Permit Conditions

If the relocation of the building is to proceed, which the National Trust does not support, then we submit that robust and comprehensive permit conditions should be prepared to accompany the permit. The National Trust supports the preliminary advice provided by Purcell in the Heritage Report in regards to Storage and Re-Erection, and would encourage further consultation with their Heritage Consultants to determine further suitable permit conditions. In particular, we would suggest specific permit conditions which required the re-erection of the building to take place within a specified pre-determined timeframe, with failure to do so liable for legal action.

Conclusion

Based on the above points, the National Trust believes that the proposed dismantling, conservation and re-erection of the Store will have a detrimental impact on the structure of the building, and the historic fabric of the registered object. The National Trust firmly believes that the building should be retained, conserved and restored in-situ in line with Burra Charter principles. Please do not hesitate to get in touch on 9656 9837 if you have any further questions or concerns.

Kind Regards,

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

Felicity Watson
Advocacy Manager

Attached: National Trust Classification Report, Porter Prefabricated Iron Store (File No. B5311)



NATIONAL TRUST

Every moment an amazing story

Victorian Heritage Database place details - 6/6/2018
Porter Prefabricated Iron Store



Location:

111 Queens Parade, FITZROY NORTH, YARRA CITY

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number:

Listing Authority: HI

Extent of Registration:

Statement of Significance:

The Porter prefabricated iron store was manufactured in England, probably between 1853 and 1856, by John Henderson Porter, an early innovator of galvanised corrugated iron buildings and the major manufacturer in the mid-nineteenth century. He established his business in London, and from at least 1839 was exporting various iron products, such as portable iron fences and bedsteads, around the world. He was manufacturing prefabricated iron buildings, including lighthouses and other industrial buildings, from about 1842. In 1850 he transferred his works to Birmingham and by c1853 he had entered into a short-term partnership, Porter Brothers & Stuart, but seems to have discontinued his business by 1856. The date of manufacture, original owner, location, and use of the Porter building now at North Fitzroy are unknown, but it was probably manufactured between 1853 and 1856 and appears to have been moved to its present location from elsewhere.

The Porter prefabricated iron store is a free-standing rectangular-plan shed with a cast and wrought iron frame of standardised components bolted together, is clad with heavy gauge vertical corrugated iron of 5¼ inch (135 mm) pitch, and has a segmental arched corrugated iron roof. It was designed as a modular structure of three equal bays, and is 9.25 m long, 6.1 m wide and 4.02 m high to the top of the roof. At each corner are external wrought iron angle posts, and internally along the long side of the building are two cast iron stanchions, cruciform in section with flanges to allow for the connection of horizontal girts at three levels. The stanchions are branded 'J H PORTER BIRMINGHAM'. A perimeter roof purlin supports the curved iron roof. Three walls of

the building are intact, but the wall on the south side has been removed and replaced with a wire mesh gate. In each short side is a centrally-located door with a window above. In the west end wall on either side of the door are two twelve-pane cast iron sash windows with external sheet iron shutters. At the top of one frame is the brand name 'PORTER BROTHERS & STUART BIRMINGHAM'. The building is painted internally and externally. The former fifteen-pane timber sash window in the west end has been replaced by a plain glazed window.

The Porter iron store is of historical and technical significance to the state of Victoria.

The Porter prefabricated iron store is historically significant as a now rare example of the many prefabricated iron buildings which were imported into Victoria during the Victorian gold rushes. It is a reflection of the economic and social conditions in the early 1850s, when there was a great increase in population and a rush of labour to the goldfields, and both labour and building materials were scarce. It is an early example of the use of a building material, galvanised corrugated iron, which was to become closely linked with Australian building, especially for utilitarian buildings.

The Porter prefabricated iron store is technically significant as a now rare example of the early use of galvanised corrugated iron for the manufacture of prefabricated buildings, and of the prefabrication system of the major English manufacturer J H Porter. Most of the early manufacturers of corrugated iron buildings were British, and J H Porter was an early innovator of such buildings, and probably the first prefabricator. The Porter prefabricated iron store is the only known surviving example in Victoria of a prefabricated iron building manufactured by J H Porter which is still standing. It is significant as an example of a prefabricated structure with an arched roof, a form with which Porter is particularly associated.

Adopted from Heritage Victoria Statement: 26/09/2012

Classified: 17/02/1983

Revised: 03/08/1998

See also Prefab Store formerly at 71 Little Malop Street, Geelong. B2840.

Description

Heritage Study	
Year Construction Started	
Architect / Designer	
Architectural Style	
Heritage Act Categories	
Municipality	["YARRA CITY"]
Other names	
History	