



6 Parliament Place
East Melbourne
VIC 3002

Email: conservation@nattrust.com.au
Web: www.nationaltrust.org.au

T 03 9656 9818

20 August 2020

Michael Dowel
Planning Officer
Glen Eira City Council
PO Box 42
Caulfield South 3162

Re: GE/DP-33539/2020: Jewish Arts Quarter, 7 Selwyn Street, Elsternwick

Dear Mr Dowel,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment regarding Permit Application GE/DP-33539/2020 which proposes to demolish the existing building, the Kadimah Cultural Centre & National Library (Kadimah), and construct an eight-storey building for the proposed Jewish Arts Quarter located at 7 Selwyn Street, Elsternwick.

1. Background

The National Trust of Australia (Victoria) (National Trust) is the state's largest community-based heritage advocacy organisation actively working towards conserving and protecting our heritage for future generations to enjoy, representing 30,000 members across Victoria. As Victoria's premier heritage and conservation organisation, the National Trust has an interest in ensuring that a wide range of natural, cultural, social and Indigenous heritage values are protected and respected, contributing to strong, vibrant and prosperous communities.

The National Trust maintains a Heritage Register of Significant Places, including buildings, landscapes, gardens, trees, and public art. The integrated artworks within the Kadimah completed by eminent Polish-born sculptor Karl Duldig are classified by the National Trust at the State level (File no. B6319). The artworks comprise a ceramic bas-relief facade sculpture titled the Great Awakening; eight stained glass windows—six memorial windows and two rectangular windows titled Poet and Muse—and; two bronze plaques modelled on the emblem of the 'Kadimah'.

The National Trust has some concerns about the proposal which we believe should be taken into consideration as part of the assessment of the application.

2. Elsternwick Estate and Environs Precinct (HO72)

We believe the proposed height and scale of the development would have an unacceptable negative heritage impact on the Elsternwick Estate and Environs Precinct (HO72), and in particular, significant views to and within the precinct.

We note the following attributes of HO72, as identified in the *Glen Eira Heritage Management Plan 1996*, which is included as a reference document at Clause 22.01-4 of the Planning Scheme:

The Elsternwick Proposed Urban Conservation Area is locally significant for its nineteenth and early-twentieth century building stock and to the extent that it demonstrates a past way of life.

We also note the following objective of Clause 22.01-2;

- *To preserve the scale and pattern of streetscapes in heritage precincts*

These concerns could be addressed through a reduction in height of the proposed development to 4 to 5 stories, subject to further modelling of impacts, to maintain the values of the Elsternwick Estate and Environs Precinct.

3. Karl Duldig artworks

We understand that the cultural heritage significance of these artworks has been acknowledged by the applicant, and that there are plans to incorporate these artworks into the new development. We note that the ceramic bas-relief sculpture and six stained glass windows will be placed in display units located in the lobby opposite the lifts.

We strongly support the retention and incorporation of these artworks into the new development; however, we believe that this solution is too static and does not convey the significance of the inter-related artworks in their original context. The artworks were specifically commissioned to be integrated into the original building, which at the time, was an unusual example of the Jewish community commissioning artworks for a public building. Collectively, these artworks strengthen and reflect the purpose of the building through references to Jewish culture, tradition and history.

We also strongly object to the removal of the artwork from the public realm, in particular the removal of the *Great Awakening* from the Kadimah facade. Throughout his life, Duldig was an advocate for public art in the city and open space, and the *Great Awakening* remains the only extant public realm sculpture by Duldig in its original location in Victoria.

We also note that no plans have been provided regarding the retention of the two rectangular stained glass windows or the bronze plaques. These pieces are integral to the significance of the suite of works, and any plans for the retention and incorporation of these artworks must include all original pieces.

We strongly advocate for the new building design be revised to fully incorporate Duldig's suite of works so that they be given appropriate prominence within the building. The incorporation and management of these artworks should also be done in consultation with the Duldig Studio Museum & Sculpture Garden, and other relevant stakeholders.

4. Archival Recording

Should this application be approved we recommend that an archival recording of the existing building on the site be undertaken, either as a condition of any permit, or through a Section 173 agreement. While we understand that the building is not currently protected by a Heritage Overlay, we note that it was identified as a place of significance in the City of Glen Eira's Post-War and Hidden Gems Heritage Review. We therefore believe it is important to record the values of the building, including its aesthetic values, as well as its social value and connections with the community. It may also be appropriate to recognise the significance of the existing building through on-site interpretation, as a condition of any future permit.

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposal. I welcome you to contact our Heritage Advocacy Advisor Freya Keam on 9656 9818 or at freya.keam@nattrust.com.au to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely,

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

Felicity Watson
Executive Manager—Advocacy
National Trust of Australia (Victoria)