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# Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens (Australia) No 1131

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## 1. BASIC DATA

*State Party:* Australia

*Name of property:*

Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens

*Location:*

Melbourne, Victoria

*Inscription:* 2004

*Brief Description:*

The Royal Exhibition Building and its surrounding Carlton Gardens were designed for the great international exhibitions of 1880 and 1888 in Melbourne. The building and grounds were designed by Joseph Reed. The building is constructed of brick and timber, steel and slate. It combines elements from the Byzantine, Romanesque, Lombardic and Italian Renaissance styles. The property is typical of the international exhibition movement.

*Date of ICOMOS' approval of this report:* 17 March 2010

## 2. ISSUES RAISED

*Background:*

This property was inscribed on the World Heritage List without any formal buffer zone. 2004 ICOMOS evaluation mentioned that if the site were inscribed the Commonwealth government would 'endorse' the Heritage Overlay Zones as the buffer zone for the site.

The Victorian Government enacted amendments to the Heritage Act 1995 (VIC) in 2004 to enable the implementation of a buffer area around any world heritage places in Victoria. The buffer zone is referred to in Victorian legislation as a World Heritage Environs Area (WHEA). The legislation requires the development of a Strategy Plan for the WHEA.

A draft strategy plan was developed by the Executive Director, Heritage and released for public comment in 2007. The Heritage Council of Victoria (HCV) called for public submissions and held a hearing in 2008. Twenty

two submissions were considered by the HCV. Following the hearing the HCV amended the Strategy Plan. The Minister for Planning made further amendments to the Strategy Plan in October 2009 and approved it on 21 October 2009.

In January 2010, the State Party provided the World Heritage Centre with the *World Heritage Environs Area Strategy Plan: Royal Exhibition Building & Carlton Gardens* that establishes a buffer zone for the property inscribed on the world Heritage List.

The Strategy plan describes in details the extensive public consultations begun by the State Party in 2004 for the creation of the buffer zone; it reviews the history of the area and the existing heritage controls; it identifies the areas of greater and lesser sensitivity and the heritage designated properties within or near the proposed buffer zone. It also describes the views to and from the Exhibition Building and the Carlton Gardens that should be protected. The Strategy plan covers all the important urban planning and regulatory issues that may impact the proposed buffer zone and the listed property. It describes the tools already in place and makes recommendations for modifications to existing regulatory instruments and for new ones.

*Modification:*

Description

The listed property area covers 26 ha and the proposed buffer zone is 55.26 ha (excluding the listed property area). It extends approximately 150 m to the West and South of the property and 200 m to the North and East. It respects the urban tissue and is aligned to cadastral or property lines. This area includes land within the City of Yarra Heritage Overlay precinct known as the "South Fitzroy Precinct" (HO 334), and land within the City of Melbourne Heritage Overlay precinct known as the "Carlton Precinct" (HO 1).

New Controls

The City of Melbourne and Yarra will need to adopt citations and make amendments to their planning instruments to protect views and Victorian Heritage Register amendments to Statements of Significance to ensure the contributory role they play within the buffer zone is adequately considered in the assessment of permit applications.

Existing Heritage Controls

In terms of existing heritage controls, the proposed buffer zone includes a number of properties on the Victorian Heritage Register; land and properties within the City of Yarra Heritage Overlay precinct known as the 'South Fitzroy Precinct' (HO 334); and land and properties within the City of Melbourne Heritage Overlay precinct known as the 'Carlton Precinct' (HO 1).

Heritage Overlay controls, some of which are included in the Victorian Heritage Register, are also included in the

buffer zone. Other planning scheme controls also apply in some cases including height controls specified under various Design and Development Overlays. While it is understandable that industry and government would not wish to restrict development activities in an area adjacent to the capital zone it is disappointing that in effect only places on the actual boundary of the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens will have restrictions placed on future development, with the exception of St Vincent's Hospital which will have no heritage restrictions.

Places on the National Heritage List are subject to the provisions of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth) (EPBC Act), including the EPBC Act Regulations and management principles relating to places of National heritage significance.

Properties included in the Victorian Heritage Register are subject to the provisions of the Heritage Act 1995 (Vic). The intention of the Act is to prevent places and objects which are included in the Register from being demolished or changed in a way that has the potential to affect or diminish their heritage value. Permits are typically required from Heritage Victoria for works such as extensions, interior works, new constructions, demolition or relocation, excavation, subdivision, changes of colour schemes and signage, new fences, new pathways or driveways, and landscape works beyond regular maintenance.

Properties included in the Heritage Overlay are subject to the Heritage Overlay provisions of the planning schemes. Before deciding on an application for a proposal, the responsible authority is required to consider a range of 'decision guidelines' which address issues to do with heritage significance, character and appearance of heritage places, and heritage impacts.

The South Fitzroy Precinct (HO 334) in the City of Yarra is subject to CL. 22.02 'Development Guidelines for Heritage Places'. This is a local planning policy which applies to all land covered by the Heritage Overlay in Yarra. Precinct citations for the South Fitzroy Precinct include a history and description of the precinct area and a statement of significance. They emphasise the importance of the nineteenth century building stock, street patterns and urban infrastructure, and the high density of generally low scale development.

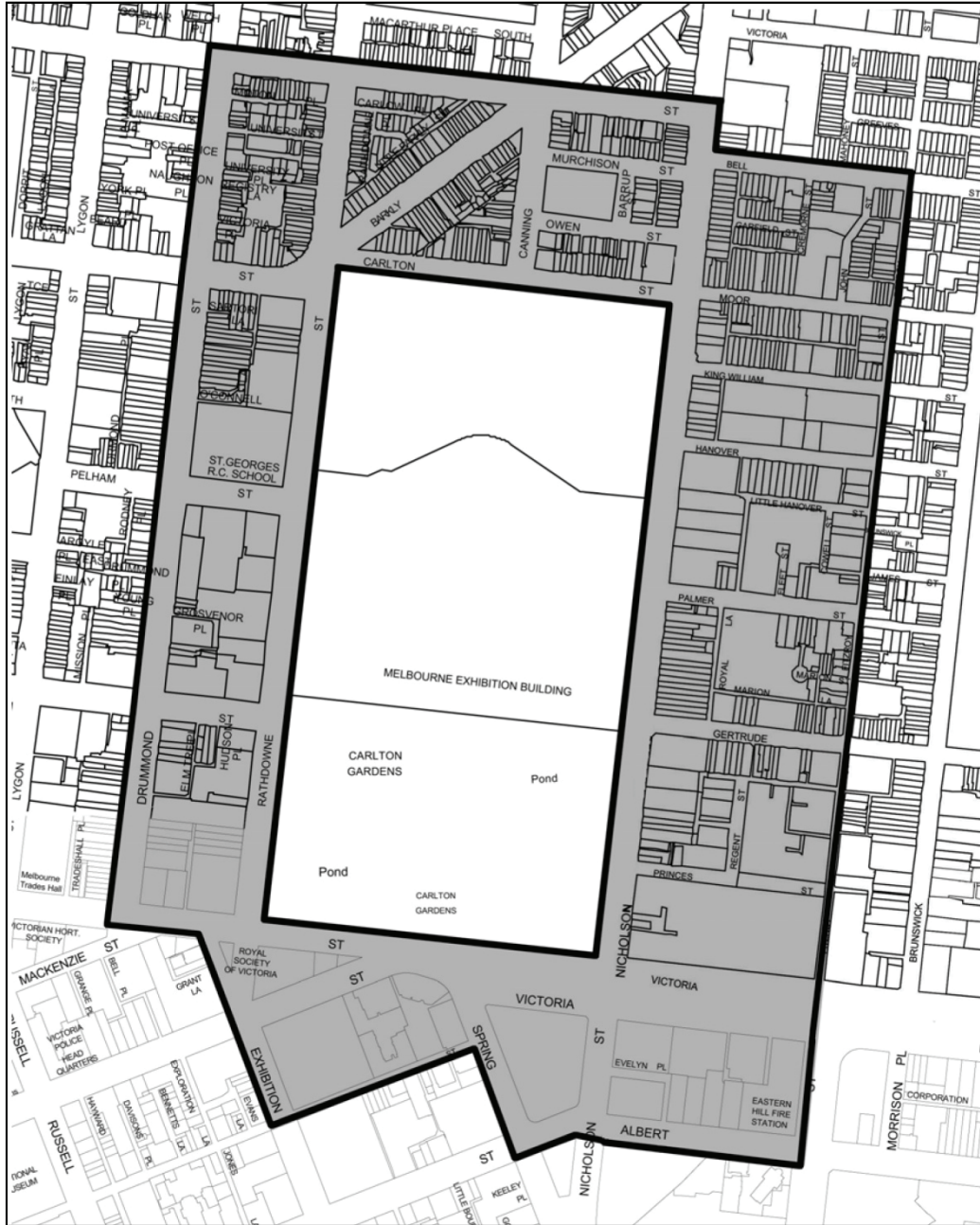
Other citations and regulations also apply to the proposed buffer zone and are further described in the Strategy plan.

ICOMOS considers that the proposed buffer zone should ensure adequate and efficient protection for the inscribed property.

### 3. ICOMOS RECOMMENDATIONS

#### *Recommendation with respect to inscription*

ICOMOS recommends that the proposed buffer zone for Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens, Australia, be **approved**.



Map showing the boundaries of the proposed buffer zone