

bryce raworth

conservation • urban design

19 victoria street
st kilda vic 3182
phone 03 9525 4299
fax 03 9525 3615
admin@bryceraworth.com.au

29 June 2018

**Planning Department
City of Yarra
PO Box 168
Melbourne, Vic 3121**

To Whom It May Concern

***Re: 1-11 Gordon Street, Cremorne
Proposed partial demolition and new works***

This letter was prepared on behalf of the owners of the subject site at 1-11 Gordon Street, Cremorne in support of an application for works. It comments on the heritage impacts of a proposal to partially demolish an existing former office and factory on the site and construct a multi-storey office development.

The site has been inspected (externally) and also its environs. A review has been undertaken of relevant sections of the *Yarra Planning Scheme*, including the City of Yarra's Development Guidelines for Sites Subject to the Heritage Overlay at *Clause 22.02*, Heritage Overlay at *Clause 43.01*, the *City of Yarra Review of Heritage Overlay Areas 2007* (Revised February and May 2017) and the *Yarra Heritage Database*. Also referenced is the *Heritage Gaps Study: Review of 17 Heritage Precincts* prepared by Context Pty Ltd (Revised October 2016). This letter should be read in conjunction with the drawings and other documentation prepared by *Fieldwork Projects Pty Ltd* in relation to this application.

1-11 Gordon Street is a large rectangular portion of land with a primary street frontage onto Gordon Street to the south, a secondary frontage onto Walnut Street to the west and also to a laneway to the north. The site comprises two separate titles, 1-9 Gordon Street and 11 Gordon Street. This part of Cremorne is flat in topography.

The *Heritage Gaps Study: Review of 17 Heritage Precincts* included the following history, description and statements of significance for the former office and factory at 1-9 Gordon Street.

Place history

Gordon Street, Richmond was created by a subdivision in the late nineteenth century. The MMBW Plan shows that Gordon Street was exclusively residential in the late nineteenth century. This site remained vacant until the early twentieth century.

It appears that the present factory building at 1-9 Gordon Street was built in stages. The Davison Pty Co. acquired the still vacant site in 1916 and by 1917 had erected a factory, which manufactured confectionary (RB, SM). The valuation of the factory had doubled by 1925, which suggests major alterations or rebuilding (RB). A c.1924 aerial photograph of the nearby Bryant & May factory shows a two storey building in the position of nos. 1-3, with the present single storey (identifiable by its distinctive parapet profile) occupying nos. 5-9 (SLV collection).

In 1928 the factory is listed as vacant for one year until 1929 when J.B. Rees bathing cap manufacturer becomes the occupant of no.1, while nos. 3-9 is listed as vacant. By 1930 the factory was owned by F & H Challingsworth and in the Directory for that year Rees is listed at no.1, no.3 is vacant and no.9 is occupied by 'Halpin' (RB, SM). The 'Halpin' referred to by the Directory was Hugh Halpin who founded the Nuttelex company in 1932. By 1935 H.W. Halpin, margarine manufacturers is the sole tenant occupying nos. 1-9. The name of the firm changes in the next year to Nuttelex Food Products and then in 1937 Nuttelex is occupant of 1-3 only, while Hodge, Moody & Co, Pty Ltd manufacturing chemists occupied 5-9. In 1939 Dorf products, motor car polish manufacturers are also listed at 5-9. The factories at nos. 1-3 and 5-9 were also listed separately in the rate books from 1935-36 onwards, which suggests further improvements were made (RB, SM). Another undated but c.1930s 'Airsby' aerial of the Bryant & May factory shows that the two storey building seen in earlier images has been replaced by the present single storey building.

Description

No. 1-9 Gordon Street is a single storey interwar factory, constructed in red brick. As suggested by the History, it appears to have been built in two stages comprising one building at no.1-3, and the other at no.5-9. The façade is divided into regular bays by evenly spaced pilasters that in no.1-3 extend above the parapet height at either end, while at no. 5-9 the pilasters step up in height toward the middle, as does the parapet. The windows to no. 1-3 are triple casements with toplights, while those at no.5-9 are double casements with toplights.

Statement of significance

What is significant?

The former Nuttelex office and factory, constructed c.1917 to c.1935, at 1-9 Gordon Street, Cremorne is significant. It is a single storey interwar factory, constructed in red brick, which appears to have been built in two stages comprising one building at no.1-3, and the other at no.5-9. The façade is divided into regular bays by evenly spaced pilasters that in no.1-3 extend above the parapet height at either end, while at no. 5-9 the pilasters step up in height toward the middle. The windows to no. 1-3 are triple casements with toplights, while those at no.5-9 are double casements with toplights.

Non-original alterations and additions to the building are not significant.

How it is significant?

The former Nuttelex office and factory is of local historic and architectural significance to the City of Yarra.

Why it is significant?

The former Nuttelex office and factory is historically significant as tangible evidence of the industrial development of Cremorne during the interwar period. In the twentieth century Richmond became one of the centres of manufacturing in Melbourne and Cremorne was one of three areas designated for industry within the municipality. This factory is associated with one of the small to medium sized industries in Cremorne that manufactured a product, Nuttelex Margarine, which was the first margarine manufactured in Australia and became a 'household name'. This factory is also significant for its association with Nuttelex as the first building occupied by the company after its formation in Melbourne in 1932, and was continuously occupied by the company for over 40 years. (Criteria A & H)

The former Nuttelex office and factory is historically and architecturally significant as a good example of a small interwar factory complex with typical brick construction and utilitarian form with minimal detailing. The dividing of the façade into bays separated by pilasters is typical of factories of this era. (Criterion D)

11 Gordon Street contains a single storey, double frontage Victorian timber dwelling set back behind a narrow front garden.

Gordon Street is a one-way street with parallel parking on each side. Opposite the subject site it contains single storey rendered masonry and timber Victorian cottages and a modified single storey brick industrial building. Walnut Street is narrow laneway bordered by a modern three-storey commercial development on its west side. The narrow service lane along the north side of the subject site is bordered by a two-storey

commercial development on its northern side. The site's secondary frontages do not face onto heritage environments.

The *Review of Heritage Overlay Areas 2007* lists the subject site as 1-3 and 5-9 Gordon Street (Former Nuttelex Factory) and grades it 'Individually significant', in the context of a 3 tier grading system defined at *Clause 22.02* as follows:-

Individually significant: The place is a heritage place in its own right. Within a Heritage Overlay applying to an area each individually significant place is also Contributory.

Contributory: The place is a contributory element within a larger heritage place. A contributory element could include a building, building groups and works, as well as building or landscape parts such as chimneys, verandahs, wall openings, rooflines and paving.

Not contributory: The place is not individually significant and not contributory within the heritage place.

1-9 Gordon Street is shown as subject to an individual Heritage Overlay, HO519 in Heritage Overlay Map 08, although it has no entry in Council's Heritage Overlay Schedule at *Clause 43.01*. As such, it is also subject to the provisions of *Clause 43.01*, the Heritage Overlay and the associated policy at *Clause 22.05*. The site is not located adjacent to any heritage overlays. The cottages on the south side of Gordon Street opposite the site are not subject to any heritage overlays.

The purpose of *Clause 43.01* is as follows:

To implement the State Planning Policy Framework and the Local Planning Policy Framework, including the Municipal Strategic Statement and local planning policies.

To conserve and enhance heritage places of natural or cultural significance.

To conserve and enhance those elements which contribute to the significance of heritage places.

To ensure that development does not adversely affect the significance of heritage places.

To conserve specified heritage places by allowing a use that would otherwise be prohibited if this will demonstrably assist with the conservation of the significance of the heritage place.

Before deciding on an application, in addition to the decision guidelines in *Clause 65*, the responsible authority will need to consider, as appropriate:

- *The State Planning Policy Framework and the Local Planning Policy Framework, including the Municipal Strategic Statement and local planning policies.*
- *The significance of the heritage place and whether the proposal will adversely affect the natural or cultural significance of the place.*
- *Any applicable heritage study and any applicable conservation policy.*
- *Whether the location, bulk, form or appearance of the proposed building will adversely affect the significance of the heritage place.*
- *Whether the location, bulk, form or appearance of the proposed building is in keeping with the character and appearance of adjacent buildings and the heritage place.*
- *Whether the demolition, removal or external alteration will adversely affect the significance of the heritage place.*
- *Whether the proposed works will adversely affect the significance, character or appearance of the heritage place. [...]*

Clause 22.02 provides the following heritage policy with respect to demolition:

22.02-5.1 Demolition

[...]

Removal of Part of a Heritage Place or Contributory Elements

Encourage the removal of inappropriate alterations, additions and works that detract from the cultural significance of the place.

Generally discourage the demolition of part of an individually significant or contributory building or removal of contributory elements unless:

- *That part of the heritage place has been changed beyond recognition of its original or subsequent contributory character(s).*
- *For a contributory building:*
 - *that part is not visible from the street frontage (other than a laneway), abutting park or public open space, and the main building form including roof form is maintained; or*
 - *the removal of the part would not adversely affect the contribution of the building to the heritage place.*
- *For individually significant building or works, it can be demonstrated that the removal of part of the building or works does not negatively affect the significance of the place. [...]*

Clause 22.02-5.7 offers the following guidance for new developments at heritage places, and alterations and additions to them.

22.02-5.7 New Development, Alterations or Additions

22.02-5.7.1 General

Encourage the design of new development and alterations and additions to a heritage place or a contributory element to a heritage place to:

- *Respect the pattern, rhythm, orientation to the street, spatial characteristics, fenestration, roof form, materials and heritage character of the surrounding historic streetscape.*
- *Be articulated and massed to correspond with the prevailing building form of the heritage place or contributory elements to the heritage place.*
- *Be visually recessive and not dominate the heritage place.*
- *Be distinguishable from the original historic fabric.*
- *Not remove, cover, damage or change original historic fabric.*
- *Not obscure views of principle façades.*
- *Consider the architectural integrity and context of the heritage place or contributory element.*

Encourage setbacks from the principal street frontage to be similar to those of adjoining contributory buildings; where there are differing adjoining setbacks, the greater setback will apply.

Encourage similar façade heights to the adjoining contributory elements in the street. Where there are differing façade heights, the design should adopt the lesser height.

Minimise the visibility of new additions by:

- *Locating ground level additions and any higher elements towards the rear of the site.*
- *Encouraging ground level additions to contributory buildings to be sited within the ‘envelope’ created by projected sight lines (see Figure 1)*
- *Encouraging upper level additions to heritage places to be sited within the ‘envelope’ created by projected sight lines (for Contributory buildings refer to Figure 2 and for Individually significant buildings refer to Figure 3).*
- *Encouraging additions to individually significant places to, as far as possible, be concealed by existing heritage fabric when viewed from the front street and to read as secondary elements when viewed from any other adjoining street.*

Discourage elements which detract from the heritage fabric or are not contemporary with the era of the building such as unroofed or open upper level decks or balconies, reflective glass, glass balustrades and pedestrian entrance canopies. [...]

22.02-5.7.2 Specific Requirements (where there is a conflict or inconsistency between the general and specific requirements, the specific requirements prevail)

Corner Sites and Sites with Dual Frontages

Encourage new building and additions on a site with frontages to two streets, being either a corner site or a site with dual street frontages, to respect the built form and character of the

heritage place and adjoining or adjacent contributory elements to the heritage place.

Encourage new buildings on corner sites to reflect the setbacks of buildings that occupy other corners of the intersection. [...]

Industrial, Commercial and Retail Heritage Place or Contributory Elements

Encourage new upper level additions and works to:

- *Respect the scale and form of the existing heritage place or contributory elements to the heritage place by being set back from the lower built form elements. Each higher element should be set further back from lower heritage built forms.*
- *Incorporate treatments which make them less apparent. [...]*

Proposed Demolition

It is proposed to partially demolish the existing structures on the site and construct a multi-storey office building. The extent of demolition will involve removing most of the north and east elevations, all of the interior fabric and the roof structure of the former Nuttelex Factory at 1-9 Gordon Street. The facades to Walnut Street and Gordon Street will be retained. All of the house and other structures at 11 Gordon Street will also be demolished.

Council policy guidelines allow for the demolition of parts of heritage places if ‘*the removal of part of the building or works does not negatively affect the significance of the place.*’ The key fabric identified as significant in the statement of significance for 1-9 Gordon Street is the principal street elevations to Gordon and Walnut Streets. The roof structure and the interiors are not referenced in the citation for the site and these parts of the building are not visible from the public realm. The rear north laneway elevation is utilitarian in character and not in a prominent or busy location. Corner returns to both the north and east elevations will be retained to communicate the original three-dimensional form of the building. The extent of demolition will not diminish an overall understanding the original form and character of the office and factory to an unacceptable degree. The demolition of 11 Gordon Street is acceptable given it is not subject to a heritage overlay.

Proposed New Works

An 8 storey building envelope will then be constructed that will be integrated with, but setback from, the retained heritage facades, the latter forming a podium element. A basement level will extend across the whole development site, accommodating largely car parking, with bike storage and service spaces on its eastern and northern sides. At ground floor the land to the east of the retained facades is to be developed as an extended podium that is complementary to the retained facade but differentiated in terms of materials and design.

In plan, the new building will have a varied footprint with a serrated geometry along its south side and curved form along the north side. The upper levels will abut the eastern property boundary at first floor and have varying, modest setbacks along the remaining frontages behind modest balconies and gardens areas at first floor. Above the first floor, the minimum setback behind the heritage facade will be between 2 and 3.4 metres along Gordon Street and between zero and 1.4 metres above the infill podium element at 11 Gordon Street. The upper level setback will be approximately 1.3 metres along Walnut Street, with a greater setback above the corner. The roof will include lift access and service plant mid-way along its north side, and include a large terrace area including a pergola.

The external character to the new built form will be clearly contemporary, with glazed facades to Gordon and Walnut Streets. The infill podium to the east end of the Gordon Street frontage will be of precast concrete with galvanised mesh service doors and a galvanised metal door to the entry ramp to the basement car park. The central portion of the north elevation will be finished with precast, ribbed concrete and sections of grey metal mesh, with glazing to each side.

In assessing this scheme, it is noted that Council policy as provided above allows for additions to heritage buildings in heritage overlays and encourages design that is

responsive and respectful of the heritage values of graded buildings on the site. The paradigm of incorporating heritage office and factory frontages into new multi-storey developments as street podiums is well established in the City of Yarra and other inner city municipalities. Relevant Council heritage policies for the assessment of the scheme are those relating to 'New Development, Alterations or Additions', 'Corner Sites and Sites with Dual Frontages' and 'Industrial, Commercial and Retail Heritage Place or Contributory Elements'.

While the new works will involve a major appreciable change to the site, the original form and character of the early twentieth century office and factory will remain clearly legible. The upper levels to the scheme incorporate modest setbacks, but nevertheless can be seen to meet the general objectives of visual separation that are sought under heritage policy at *Clause 22.02*, assisted by the intention to have a visually lightweight upper built form. The site is relatively narrow in depth, which limits the scope to incorporate substantial setbacks while achieving the desired development height. The upper levels will be sufficiently set back behind the retained parapet line to preserving its silhouette. A contrast will be achieved between the heavy character of the brick masonry facade and the light, glazed form of the new upper level building envelope that emphasises the podium element within the overall architectural composition. The greater setback of the upper levels at the south east corner of the site is a positive aspect of the scheme. The location new vehicle entry point to the basement in the infill podium at 11 Gordon Street rather than in the retained heritage facade is another favourable aspect of the scheme.

Modifications to Heritage Facades

The scheme will involve some changes to the existing configuration of door and window openings to the retained facades to Gordon and Walnut Streets. At 1-3 Gordon Street, these changes will comprise replacing a timber swing door with a window and refurbishing an existing pedestrian doorway. At 3-9 Gordon Street, the pedestrian entry fabric will be replaced for the same reason. A larger entry new primary entry to the building will be created by removing one of the brick pilasters and the window and wall fabric of the combined bays. Two large rectangular window openings will be inserted in the Walnut Street frontage with steel framed windows, replacing four smaller windows in this location.

The changes to the entries to Gordon Street elevation are required to provide access that is building code compliant, allow for the ongoing contemporary use of the building and facilitate its street activation. They represent relatively minor interventions, with the overall form of the building including the regularly spaced pattern of bays and the parapet line being maintained. Most of the double and triple hung windows described in the citation for the site are being retained, including those at each far end of the frontage. The new double-bay width pedestrian entry is being inserted in a logical central position relative to the overall composition of the facade, corresponding to the highest portions of the factory's stepped parapet line. These changes will have only a limited impact on the overall character of the facade.

The Walnut Street frontage to the building is a secondary side elevation of a lower degree of significance relative to the Gordon Street facade. It is plain in character and does not feature double hung sash windows. As such, the insertion of larger windows to this elevation is considered acceptable.

In conclusion, the proposed development scheme for 1-11 Gordon Street, Cremorne represents an acceptable design response with regards to heritage considerations in terms of its impacts on the existing former Nuttelex office and factory. The scheme demonstrates an appropriate, considered response to the policies and provisions at *Clauses 43.01* and *22.02* of the *Yarra Planning Scheme*, and on this basis is acceptable.

Yours sincerely

GUY MURPHY & BRYCE RAWORTH