

INDEPENDENT PLANNING PANEL  
APPOINTED BY THE MINISTER FOR PLANNING  
PLANNING PANELS VICTORIA

IN THE MATTER of Amendment C387 to the Melbourne Planning Scheme

BETWEEN:

**MELBOURNE CITY COUNCIL**

Planning Authority

-and-

**VARIOUS SUBMITTERS**

**AFFECTED LAND:** 137 individual places and 5 precincts within the suburb of Melbourne

**PART B (PART 2) SUBMISSION OF THE PLANNING AUTHORITY**

**I. POSTWAR PLACES (1945-1975)**

**A. 178-188 WILLIAM STREET**

1. The office building at 178-188 William Street, also known as '*Prudential Building*' and '*Douglas Menzies Chambers*' (current name), is identified as Significant within the HGHR and recommended for individual Heritage Overlay HO1377 on the basis of its historical (Criterion A) and representative (Criterion D) significance.
2. The individual place citation for the site is located within the HGHR Volume 2b at pages 1253-1274.
3. This site has an interim individual Heritage Overlay.

**Submission 21**

4. Submission 21 objects to the inclusion of the site within the Heritage Overlay on the basis that the HGHR overstates the architectural significance of the building on the site which may be representative in materials and method of construction but is unremarkable in overall architectural expression and does not meet the threshold for individual heritage significance. Further, the association with Peter McIntyre is not of

great import as it is not representative of the architect's body of postwar work. The submission also references low gradings of the site in previous heritage studies.

### **Management Response**

5. The Management Response at pages 39-42 provides that Council agrees with the assessment of GJM Heritage that:
  - a) the assessment of the site was undertaken in accordance with PPN1 and against the criteria set out in the Practice Note and it is considered that the site meets the threshold for the application of an individual Heritage Overlay;
  - b) the building is a fine and highly intact representative example of a Post-War Modernist commercial building that demonstrates important aspects of this architectural style;
  - c) PPN1 provides no guidance for the minimum age for places to be assessed or listed within a local Heritage Overlay though it is general practice that a generation should pass before determining whether a place is of heritage value;
  - d) the end date for the study of 1975 is consistent with the timeframe for other prominent heritage studies as well as surveys of the period;
  - e) the HGHR is the most comprehensive review of heritage buildings since the 1990s. Accordingly it is reasonable to expect that public and professional recognition of heritage warrants reconsideration (with particular regard to the assessment of postwar places); and
  - f) the HGHR provides sufficient justification to substantiate the significance of the place and the building warrants the application of an individual Heritage Overlay.
6. Accordingly, no changes were recommended to the Amendment in response to the submission received.

### **Permit/permit application**

7. This site does not have any relevant live permits.

### **Evidence of Mr Gard'ner & Mr Reeves**

8. The evidence of Mr Gard'ner is that the building is of local significance: as it has a clear association with the postwar building boom which transformed Melbourne into a high-rise city (Criterion A); and is a fine and highly intact representative example of a Post-War Modernist commercial building (Criterion D).
9. Further, Mr Gard'ner notes that the building has not been identified as aesthetically significant and its significance is not predicated on its association with its architect; rather it is considered to be of historic significance for its association with the postwar building boom and of representative significance for clearly demonstrating the principal characteristics of a Post-War Modernist commercial high rise building;
10. Mr Reeves does not consider the building meets the threshold for an individual Heritage Overlay on the basis that it appears to be a typical example of speculative multi-storey office buildings that were proliferating at the time and while intact is of only limited aesthetic interest. Further, Mr Reeves considers the comparative analysis to be inadequate as it equates the building with superior and more distinctive examples.

### **Evidence of Mr Raworth**

11. The Council submits that the Panel should not accept the conclusions of Mr Raworth because:
  - (a) he appears to suggest that unless a building compares favourably with buildings on the VHR it is inappropriate for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay;
  - (b) he treats the considerations in Reference Tool D from the VHR Guidelines as a precondition to inclusion in Criterion D and proceeds on the basis that they are a checklist which requires satisfaction of all the listed considerations;
  - (c) he is too dismissive of the "limited historical and representative interest" of the building.

### **Position of the Council**

12. Council acknowledges the evidence of Mr Reeves and his view that this building does not meet the threshold for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay. However, Council

maintains its position that identification of the place as Significant in the HGHR and the Amendment is appropriate in accordance with the evidence of Mr Gard'ner. In the circumstances, Council requests the Panel gives particular attention to the suitability of inclusion of this place in the Heritage Overlay.

**Carly Robertson**

Counsel for the Planning Authority

Instructed by Melbourne City Council

26 August 2021

