

City of Melbourne Planning Scheme

Amendment C258

Submission to Planning Panels Victoria

On Behalf of Professionals Australia Regarding 152-160 Miller Street West
Melbourne

Prepared by Perry Town Planning



August 2018

Our Services Include Strategic Planning, Statutory Planning, Project Management, Market Research, Property Consulting

Perry Town Planning Level 13/30 Collins Street Melbourne Vic 3000 P (03) 9662 1999 F (03) 9662 2044 E info@town-planning.com.au www.town-planning.com.au

ABN: 74 086 212 437

Introduction:

1. Perry Town Planning acts on behalf of the Association of Professional Engineers, Scientists and Managers Australia (trading as Professionals Australia) in relation to this matter. Professionals Australia is the owner of the property known as 152-160 Miller Street, West Melbourne, which is the subject of this submission to the Panel.
2. Professionals Australia seeks to respond to the proposed changes to the Melbourne Planning Scheme through Amendment C258 which revises the local heritage planning policies, with the incorporation of new heritage statements and replace the A to D grading system with the significant/contributory/non-contributory grading system.
3. Our client's property at 152-160 Miller Street West Melbourne has "significant" in the new Heritage Places Inventory.
4. In summary, it is submitted that:
 - a. The property does not demonstrate significant historical or aesthetic significance.
 - b. The significance of the building's design and past occupancy has been overstated in the justification for such a key classification of the property.
 - c. Although the building was designed by Marcus Martin, a prominent architect at the time of the buildings construction, the building is not of a style or use for which the architect was famous or notable.
 - d. The building has been substantially altered over the last fifty years to a point whereby the architect's original design has been substantially altered.

Existing Conditions:

5. The property fronts Miller Street and is located at the far southern end of Anderson Street and Stawell Street with pedestrian and vehicle access to the site available from each road. The building was until recently used as an office for the Forestry Division of the CFMEU. It is now the office of Professionals Australia. The main presentation of the building is to Miller Street and the elevated section of Dynon Road. The ground floor of the building is currently used for vehicle parking and office use, the upper floor is used for meeting rooms, open plan offices and document storage etc.

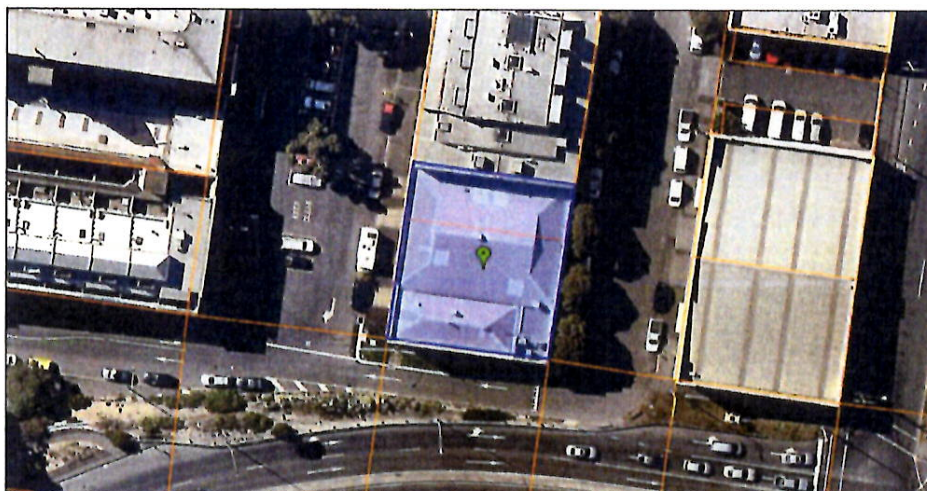


Figure 1 Adjacent roads are (Miller St) to the south, (Stawell St) east and (Anderson St) to the west.

6. The subject site is set within an area dominated by commercial and industrial properties of varying sizes, ages and built form.
7. The land is within the Mixed-Use Zone under the Melbourne Planning Scheme. It is also included in the Design & Development Overlay Schedules 26 and 28. A property to the immediate north was removed from the overlay following the approval of Amendment C207.

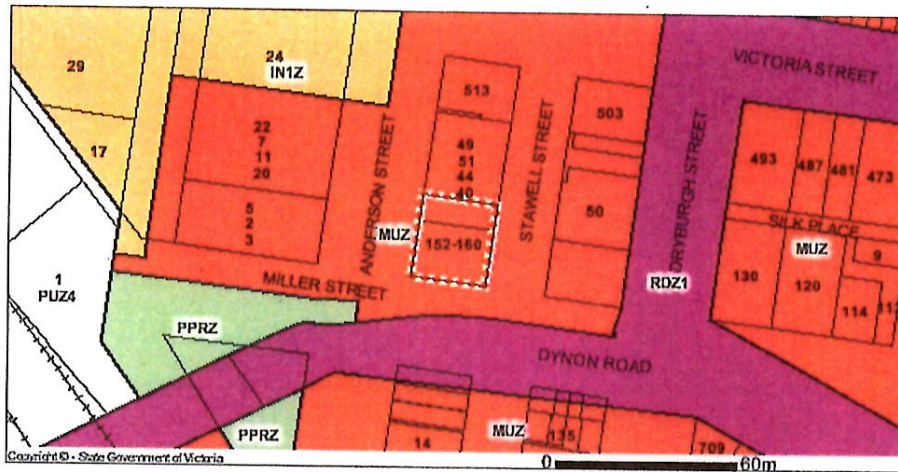


Figure 2 The site is within the Mixed Use Zone (MUZ)

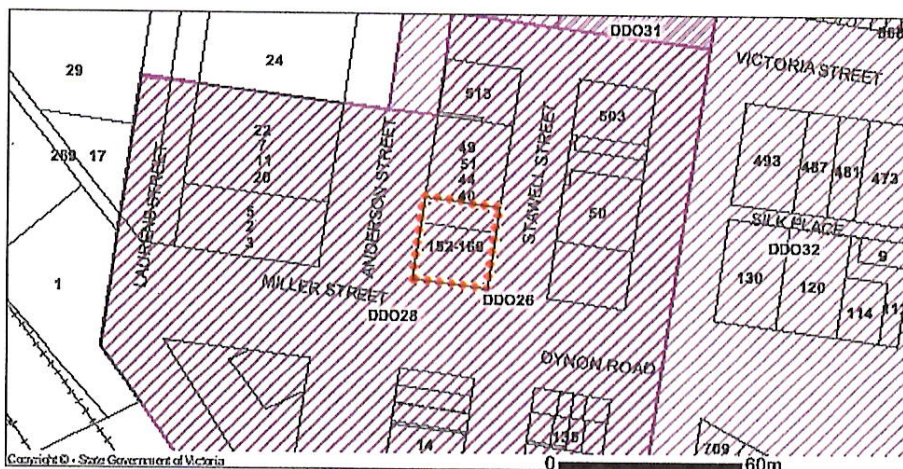


Figure 3 Schedules 26 and 28 of the Design and Development Overlay apply to the site

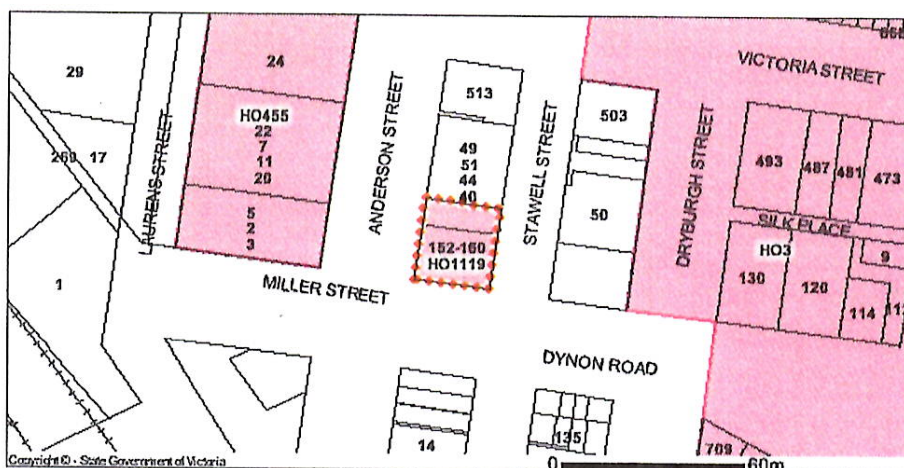


Figure 4 Schedule 1119 of the Heritage Overlay also applies

8. The majority of the land surrounding the site is within the Mixed-Use Zone and several properties are in the process of transformation into residential apartments.



Figure 5 The site in context with surrounding buildings

9. Over time, the property has been utilized for a variety of purposes including as a building materials store, trade sales office, and union office. The varied usage and lack of continuity of building occupancy over time limits its historic significance. There are no remaining features which indicate that this property was a building materials supply store or associated with the Sisalkraft Company which is an assertion that has been advanced in support of the heritage classification.
10. The Miller Street building was probably one of many regional sales offices in Australia to locally store and sell Sisalkraft products.
11. Therefore, the Sisalkraft Company and the subject site has been overstated in the Statement of Significance and this view was supported by the C2007 Panel which concluded:

The headquarters of Sisalkraft and its factory was in Sydney and it appears that this was a branch office. The association of the name with the Sisalkraft Research Scholarship and the Sisalkraft Theatre at the former University of Melbourne School of Architecture demonstrates that the company was a

generous sponsor of the architectural profession and little relationship can be drawn with this building (page 44 C207 Panel Report).

12. If the historical significance of the building relies to a large extent on the association of the building with Sisalkraft Distributors P/L, this is a tenuous connection. The property was used as a store/warehouse and sales depot from 1954-1974, as a PMG phone installation depot (later as Telstra) from 1974 to 2006 and a CFMEU branch office from 2006 till 2017. Sisalkraft only occupied the building for 20 years out of a total of nearly 60 and throughout that time it was as a warehouse/store.
13. There are no remaining physical features which indicate that this property was a building materials supply store or associated with the Sisalkraft Company. The history of the Sisalkraft Company is more closely linked to the Homebush area of Sydney which is where the Sisalkraft material was first imported from the UK and USA and where eventually it was manufactured at a dedicated facility. The Miller Street building was probably one of many regional sales offices in Australia to locally store and sell the new product.
14. Therefore, the link between the Sisalkraft Company and the subject site (including west Melbourne) has been overstated in the Statement of Significance and the property does not merit specific inclusion within the heritage overlay.
15. The building was originally designed within the office of architect Marcus Martin who was a significant and important architect in the first half of the 20th century. His primary expertise was in the design of residential buildings but 152-160 Miller Street is a commercial building and was always a functional and rather bland building in contrast to his notable residential designs. Martin was most famous for his elegant white houses in South Yarra and Toorak (mainly Domain Road, Caroline and Avoca Streets) and his other significant buildings were kindergartens and maisonette/town houses. He was also notable for the design of the Lady Gowrie Child Care Centre in Carlton.

16. 152-160 Miller Street does not exhibit Martin's architectural themes. The building purely functional and is of little aesthetic value. This view was supported by the C207 Panel which commented:

It is certainly not a typical example of the work of Marcus Martin, who was better known for his residential designs for well-to-do clients. Without a close examination of the nature of his practice at this time, it is unreasonable to draw any conclusions about the role of this building in the collection of his work. For example, did he actually design it or was it simply a product of his office? (page 45 C207 Panel Report)

17. The building does not feature a style or application of materials which would present as a significant example of Marcus Martin's work. It is an unremarkable functional example of 1950s commercial buildings, of which there are numerous examples across West Melbourne and Victoria.

18. It is interesting to note the recent planning history of the site.

Property Address	152-160 Miller Street WEST MELBOURNE VIC 3003	
Permit Number	Description	Date Lodged
TP-2006-298/A	Increase office floor area to ground level and partial waiver of on site car parking requirement	17/08/2011
TP-2006-886	Erect a business Identification sign	22/09/2006
TP-2006-298	Change of use of ground level to office and associated building alterations and partial waiver of on site car parking requirement.	30/03/2006
TP-2004-900	Construction of 3 additional levels to the existing building and its use as 29 dwellings, a shop and 29 associated car parking spaces	3/09/2004
TP-2002-691	Alter and extend existing building to 4 storeys for use as 21 dwellings and associated car parking	15/07/2002
TP-1994-1053	Erect advertising signs	14/10/1994
CM-11249	Alterations to the existing building.	23/02/1987

19. The Statement of Significance 2013 exhibited with previous Amendment C207 stated:

"Although not a remarkable design the building is externally well preserved with the only major change being the matching bricking in of one of the loading doors on the north east elevation" (My emphasis) Page 158

20. Over the 60-year life of the building, there have been many alterations and additions which have substantially changed the appearance and the structure from the original design. The south elevation to Miller Street has had a loading bay included, thereby disrupting the appearance of the window features including the spandrels and alternating bricks.
21. Over the past eleven years there have been three planning permits granted for redevelopment of the site, two of which included substantial alterations and extensions the other significant changes to the Miller Street and Anderson Street elevations at ground level.

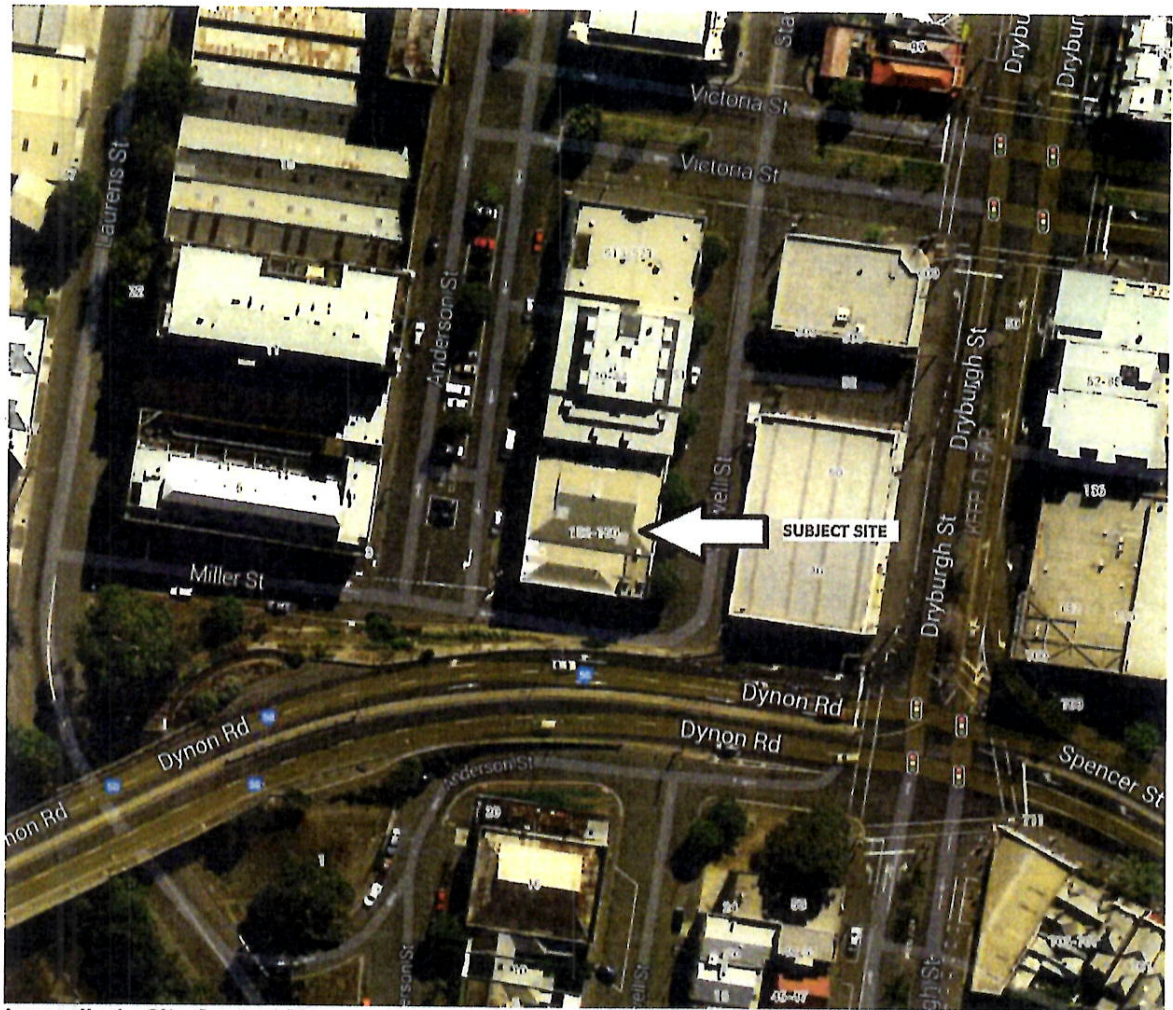
Conclusion

22. The use of the property between 1954 and 1974 as a building supplies store and sales rep office, does not sustain any argument of historic significance. The former use of the building for building supplies was commonplace in Victoria during the 20th Century and the development and use of 152-160 Miller Street as a warehouse limits its historical significance.
23. The building is an unremarkable example of Marcus Martin's work and any aesthetic qualities of the building have been eroded over time as a result of significant additions and alterations to each elevation of the subject site. Most notably, second storey additions have been introduced to the east and west elevations. The architectural detail of the building is relatively minor and any association with the architectural work of Marcus Martin is limited.
24. With the passage of time, the site should be considered for redevelopment given its location within the Arden Macaulay Structure Plan Area. The location of the land within the Mixed-Use Zone of the Melbourne Planning Scheme provides a wide range of redevelopment opportunities which may unreasonably limited by the current heritage designation. It will unnecessarily compromise the commercial or residential redevelopment potential of the site.

25. We therefore request that the designation of the building should be removed from specific heritage nomination. It is noted that the site is not nominated in the West Melbourne Heritage Review 2016.
26. The Council retains planning control over any future development of the land and can ensure that any development in the future respects the context of the site and the surrounding use and development. However, it is submitted that there is insufficient justification for the classification that has been imposed on the site.

Perry Town Planning

August 2018



Appendix 1 : Site Context Map



Appendix 3 (a) : Miller Street Elevation



Appendix 3 (b) Miller Street Entrance to Property



Appendix 3 (c) : Stawell Street Elevation