



Addendum Buildings of Special Character

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1. Introduction

Following the completion of the *West Melbourne Urban Character Analysis* report, Claire Scott Planning was engaged by the City of Melbourne to prepare an addendum to the report, identifying the buildings of 'special character' within the West Melbourne Structure Plan study area.

The purpose of the study was to identify those buildings that are intrinsic to the urban character of West Melbourne, contribute to the diverse and variegated streetscapes of the area, and demonstrate a link to the history of the place.

The identification process was to exclude those buildings currently covered by the Heritage Overlay (HO), or proposed to be covered by the HO as part of Amendment C258. Residential dwellings were also excluded from the study, as they are not suitable for adaptive reuse, although it is recommended that their retention also be encouraged (e.g. with the HO) as they add further to the diverse and fine grain nature of many of the streetscapes.

Once the buildings of special character are confirmed, it is intended that the inclusion of incentives in the planning scheme will be investigated, to encourage the retention of their three dimensional form.

2. Urban character of West Melbourne

The areas of West Melbourne surveyed for this study have a mixed urban character, with many sites and buildings undergoing a transformative process. Some former industrial buildings have been adapted for residential and other uses, while others are still operating as small factories or mechanical workshops. Across all precincts, older brick warehouses, of a variety of scales, are a strong character element. Narrow bluestone laneways strengthen this mixed historic character, and provide views of the side elevations of many old industrial buildings, as well as providing good adaptive reuse opportunities. There are also some examples of individual buildings of distinct architectural interest due to their current or former use, their era of construction, or interesting detailing.



3. Criteria for special character

The following criteria were used to select the buildings of special character:

- The building is an older brick warehouse, ideally with sandstone detailing, that demonstrates a link to the industrial history of the area.
- The warehouse is located adjacent to a laneway, and while the façade may be painted and/or in poor condition, the side elevation is intact, and the three-dimensional form of the older, industrial building can be seen from the public domain.
- The front elevation of the warehouse/building contains interesting detailing and provides visual interest at street level.
- The building is distinctive architecturally, either due to its current or past use, or architectural era, and adds to the variety of building types and styles within the area.
- The building is part of a diverse and interesting group that visually demonstrates the layers of history of the area.
- The warehouse/building has large window openings at street level, with potential for a positive interface with the public domain.
- The warehouse/building is large and voluminous and is well suited to adaptive re-use because of its size and location.



4. Adaptive reuse & incentives

Older buildings, and particularly the former industrial brick warehouses and workshops of West Melbourne, are an important part of its cultural landscape. They provide tangible links to the history of the area, and together with the mix of other building types and forms, give West Melbourne its character.

These buildings link the current world to the work and working lives of the past inhabitants of the area. They can demonstrate technical and economic achievement, and industrial processes and procedures that have risen and declined over time. The retention of these types of buildings reinforces an area's urban character and identity.

All of these buildings of special character throughout West Melbourne offer opportunities for retention (or part retention), and reuse. Adaptive reuse of a building involves its conversion to accommodate a different use other than which it was designed for. This practice breathes new life into a site and area, and adds another layer of history to its story.

When done successfully, adaptive reuse can contribute to the building of social capital and can play a significant role in the renewal and regeneration of large urban areas.

The retention and reuse of existing buildings is also a more environmentally responsible approach, and a longer-term solution.

Retaining existing buildings provides a number of environmental benefits, including minimising demolition waste, reducing resource consumption, and retaining the building's embodied energy i.e. the energy and materials already consumed and used constructing a building.

*"Demolition and equivalent new construction, no matter how energy efficient, typically require decades to equal the energy savings of rehabilitating an existing building."*¹

As described, the adaptive reuse of buildings is increasingly valued not just for its contribution to environmental sustainability, but also social sustainability, including supporting and developing communities, retaining links to the past and, many other social advantages involved in recycling an older building.

Authorities have an important role in establishing good economic conditions and a planning framework that will encourage the retention of older buildings of special character and their adaptive reuse. The buildings identified in this report are at risk as they are not protected through the planning scheme by the Heritage Overlay, and no incentives currently exist for their retention.

Further, it is very important that any incentive scheme encourages the three dimensional retention of the buildings, rather than just

their facades – facadism is a practice that lacks integrity and destroys any understanding of a valued building's true scale, form and place in the urban fabric.

The retention of the three dimensional form of buildings of special character could be incentivised through a link to the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) controls proposed for West Melbourne. The FAR sets a limit on the amount of development that can occur on a site. It is calculated as the ratio of a new building's total floor area in relation to its lot size. The FAR controls for West Melbourne are proposed to be mandatory, and are to be implemented as part of a suite of built form controls, including maximum building height limits and design objectives.

However, if a building of special character was to be retained as part of a development, the retained floor area amount (or part thereof) could be deducted from FAR calculations for the remainder of the site. This would effectively produce a 'development bonus' scenario that rewards the three-dimensional retention of buildings of special character with an increased FAR allowance.

An incentive scheme such as this would be consistent with the philosophy that underpins the City of Melbourne's current Floor Area Uplift Scheme, attractive to the development community, and would breathe new life into those buildings that are intrinsic to the history and urban character of West Melbourne.

¹ Quote from Tanner Kibble Denton Architects, Justine Clark (for Heritage Victoria), *Adaptive Reuse of Industrial Heritage: Opportunities and Challenges*, 2013

Spencer Precinct: Buildings of special character



Spencer Precinct: Buildings of special character



1. Cnr, Spencer & Stanley Streets



2. 82-86 Stanley Street



3. Warehouse, 67 Roden Street



4. Cnr Stanley & Spencer Streets



5. Warehouse, Mansion House Lane

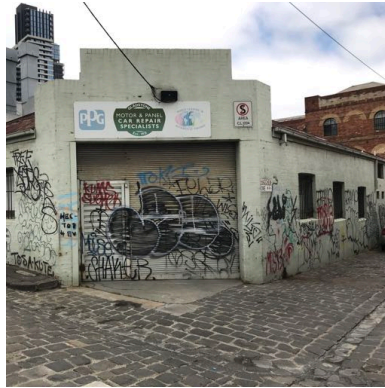


6. Warehouse, Mansion House Lane

Spencer Precinct continued.



7. Workshop, 17 Stanley Street



8. Workshop, laneway off Stanley Street



9. Warehouses, 118 Rosslyn Street



10. Warehouses, 96-110 Rosslyn Street

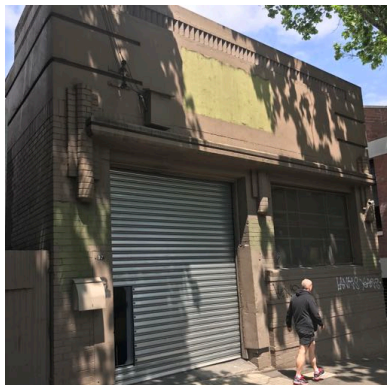


11. The Kenshikan, Rosslyn Street

Flagstaff Precinct: Buildings of special character



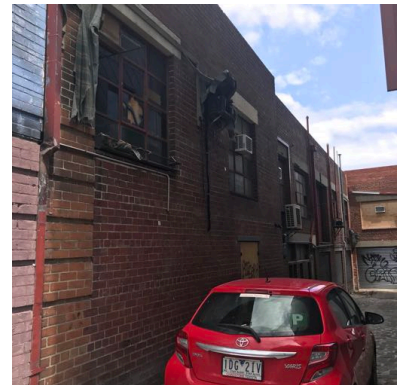
Flagstaff Precinct: Buildings of special character



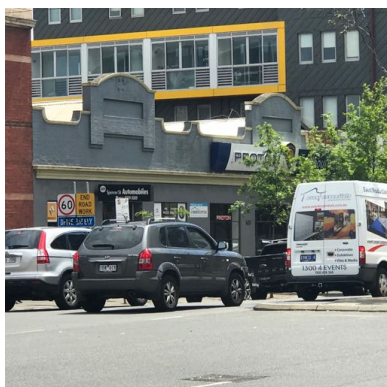
1. Workshop, 99 Dudley Street



2. Workshop, 93 Dudley Street



3. Warehouse, 419 Spencer Street



4. 405-407 Spencer Street



5. Metropolitan Fire Brigade, Batman Street



6. Warehouse, 50 Batman Street

Flagstaff Precinct continued.



7. Office building, 42-48 Batman Street



8. St. James Close, Batman Street



9. Islamic Council of Victoria, 66 Jeffcott Street



10. 510-516 La Trobe Street



11. Converted warehouse with saw tooth roof, La Trobe Street



12. 460-462 La Trobe Street



13. 456 La Trobe Street



14. Warehouse, 33-35 Dudley Street

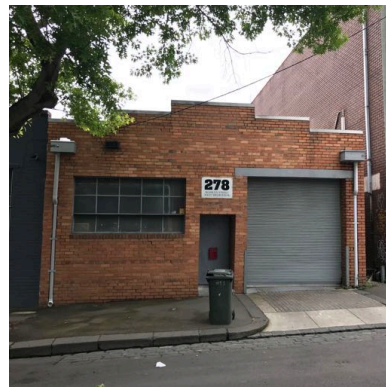
Adderley Precinct: Buildings of special character



Adderley Precinct: Buildings of special character



1. 280 Rosslyn Street



2. 278 Rosslyn Street



3. 260 Rosslyn Street



4. 252 Rosslyn Street



5. 179 Stanley Street



6. Warehouse, cnr. Stanley & Adderley Streets

Adderley Precinct continued.



7. Warehouse, Rosslyn Street



8. 154 Stanley Street



9. Warehouse, 128 Stanley Street

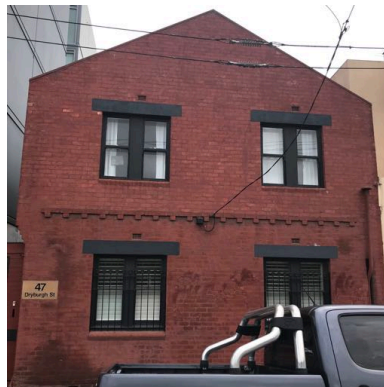
Station Precinct: Buildings of special character



Station Precinct: Buildings of special character



1. Warehouse, Anderson, Miller & Stawell Streets



2. 47 Dryburgh Street

