

Expert Witness Statement to Panel
Amendment C426melb
Melbourne Planning Scheme

31-33 Millswyn Street, South Yarra

Prepared under instruction from Roger Yelland & Co.
October 2023

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1.0 Introduction

1. This statement of evidence was prepared under instruction from Roger Yelland & Co. Legal Practitioners, on behalf of the Estate of Rachel Madga Hornung. It comments on heritage issues associated with Amendment C426melb, specifically in relation to the subject site at 31-33 Millswyn Street, South Yarra.
2. Inter alia, Amendment C426melb proposes that the subject site be identified as a significant graded place in the South Yarra Precinct (HO6).
3. My instructions are to prepare an expert witness statement considering the appropriateness of the proposed regrading of the subject site, having regard to relevant heritage considerations.
4. I note that there is no private or business relationship between myself and the party(s) for whom this report is prepared other than that associated with the preparation of this statement and associated advice on heritage issues.

2.0 Authorship

5. This statement was prepared with assistance from Sally Beaton of Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd. The views expressed are my own.

3.0 Sources of Information

6. The analysis below draws upon an external inspection of the site and a review of the Amendment C426 documentation, which included a proposed citation for the South Yarra Heritage Precinct, Area 2, completed by GJM Heritage. I have also referred to the following documents:
 - *Melbourne Planning Scheme –Clause 43.01*
 - *Report to the Future Melbourne Committee, South Yarra Heritage Review – Planning Scheme Amendment C426, 19 September 2023.*
 - *Planning Practice Note 1: Applying the Heritage Overlay* (August 2018).
 - *North Melbourne Heritage Review Methodology Report* (Lovell Chen, July 2022).
 - *Melbourne Planning Scheme Incorporated Document: Heritage Precincts Statements of Significance February 2020* (Amended April 2022)
 - *Panel Report Melbourne Planning Scheme Amendment C258 Heritage Policies Review* (21 May 2021).
 - *City of Melbourne Heritage Review: Local Heritage Policies and Precinct Statements of Significance Methodology* (Lovell Chen, September 2015, updated May 2016).
 - *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture* (eds. Philip Goad & Julie Willis, 2012).
 - *Thematic History: a History of the City of Melbourne's Urban Environment* (Context Pty Ltd, for the City of Melbourne, 2012).
 - *City of Port Phillip Heritage* (Version 36, December 2021).
 - *City of Port Phillip Heritage Policy Map* (December 2021).

- *Survey of Post War Heritage: Stage 1* (Heritage Alliance, October 2008).
- *South Yarra Conservation Study* (Meredith Gould, 1985).
- City of Melbourne Building Permit Application Files.
- Historical newspapers (assessed via the Trove website).
- Australian Institute of Architects (Victorian Chapter) Register of Twentieth Century Buildings.
- 'Dictionary of Unsung Architects' <http://www.builtheritage.com.au/resources.html>
- Certificate of Title Vol 8364 Fol 641A.

4.0 Author Qualifications

7. I have Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Western Australia and have worked as a heritage consultant for the past 23 years. I commenced my career in 2000 at Palassis Architects, a Perth based architectural and building conservation firm. My role at Palassis Architects included the preparation of conservation management plans and heritage assessments for the East Perth Redevelopment Authority.
8. From 2002 to 2004 I was employed at Allom Lovell & Associates (now Lovell Chen) where I assisted in the preparation of conservation management plans and heritage studies for the municipalities of Greater Shepparton and Bass Coast Shire.
9. I have been employed at Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd since 2004, and I am currently an associate director of that firm. Over the past two decades I have gained considerable experience across a broad range of heritage and conservation projects, including assessing the significance of individual sites and precincts, assisting in the preparation of expert witness statements, and providing advice on technical issues relating to the conservation of building fabric. I have authored numerous heritage impact statements in support of permit applications for sites of local, state and national significance and contributed to masterplans for RMIT, Geelong Grammar School, Methodist Ladies College, and Trinity Grammar School. My experience extends to the documentation of conservation works for heritage buildings such as Melbourne Grammar School, Loreto Mandeville Toorak and the Australian Catholic University (Fitzroy campus).
10. Commencing in 2008, I was part of the project team for the *City of Stonnington Heritage Overlay Gap Study*, a municipal wide survey carried out with the objective of identifying precincts of potential heritage significance. I was involved in all stages of the gap study from the initial identification of potential heritage places through to the preparation of citations for Amendment.
11. The success of the gap study lead to my further involvement with heritage studies for the City of Stonnington relating to shops, dairies, stables, transport infrastructure and interwar houses. I have had further experience with municipal heritage studies acting as lead heritage consultant for the *Frankston Central Activities District Heritage Review* (2010) and *Frankston City Post War Modernist Heritage Study – Stage 1* (2012).

12. In 2013 I attended the Conservation of Traditional Buildings summer school, held at the Australian National University, Canberra.
13. I was the project heritage consultant for the Clendon Centre at Loreto Mandeville Hall, Toorak by Architectus [winner of the AIA (Victorian Chapter) Henry Bastow Award for Educational Architecture, 2022] and the Melbourne Grammar School Myer Music Centre by Peter Elliot Architects [winner 2022 AIA Heritage Architecture Award (Creative Adaptation) and Educational Architecture Award].
14. Since October 2021 I have held the position of heritage advisor to the City of Stonnington and have also acted as heritage advisor to the City of Frankston.
15. I am a member of the Society of Architectural Historians of Australia and New Zealand (SAHANZ) and the Victorian Environmental and Planning Law Association (VEPLA).

5.0 Declaration

16. I declare that I have made all the inquiries that I believe are desirable and appropriate, and that no matters of significance which I regard as relevant have to my knowledge been withheld from the Panel.



Martin Turnor

6.0 History and Description

17. The subject site at 31-33 Millswyn Street, South Yarra, is located on the west side of Millswyn Street, a short distance north of Toorak Road. It is occupied by a three storey block of flats, constructed in 1962 to a design by Michael Feldhagen. The site had previously been occupied by a brick villa, which was offered for sale in March 1962 as a '*magnificent development site*'.¹ By May of the same year Feldhagen had drawn up plans for flats on the site for new owners Samuel Hornung and Rachael Madga Goldstien.² A building permit application was lodged on 29 July 1962 for a '*new building*' (ie the flats) at an estimated construction cost of £31,000.³ The flats were advertised for rent in February 1963 using typical real estate hyperbole: '*Distinctive Design and First Class Finish, combine to offer True Luxury Living at a Realistic Rent*'.⁴ Each flat comprised a carpeted living room, a bedroom with fitted robes, a kitchen with Laminex benchtops, and a tiled bathroom.⁵
18. The building has a flat roof and walls of slim, rock-faced concrete bricks. The front facade is clad in Besser blocks, painted white, forming a decorative 'fish scale' pattern. The side elevations are articulated by small, square window openings alternating with floor to ceiling windows. The street frontage is enclosed by a breeze block wall. It is noted that the original design, lodged as part of the building permit application in 1962 with the City of Melbourne, depicted the eastern elevation i.e., the street frontage, to be finished with what was likely grey concrete bricks, per the side elevations, rather than the decorative concrete block pattern that eventuated.

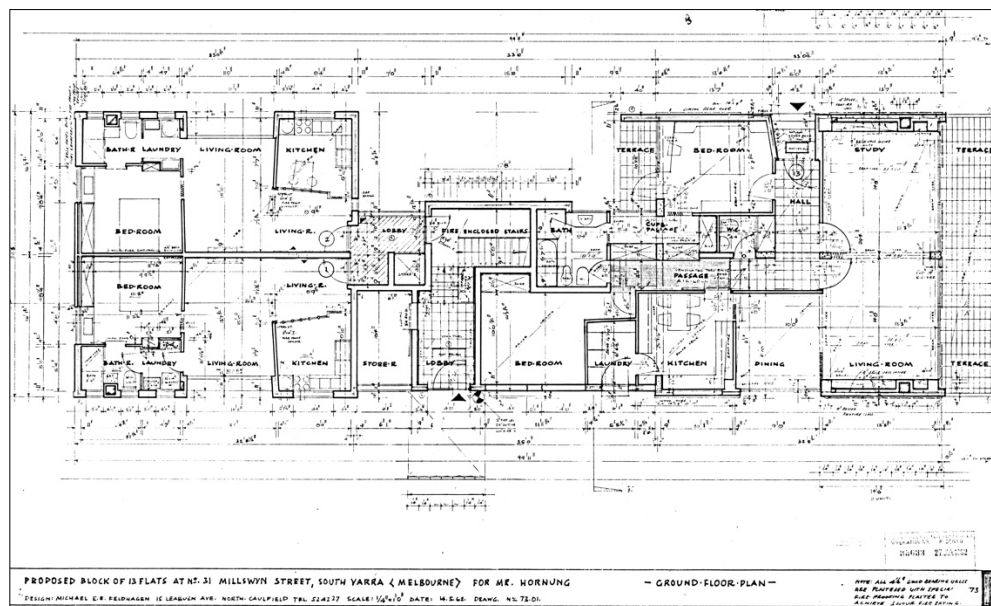


Figure 1 Ground floor plan, 1962. Source: City of Melbourne.

¹ *Australian Jewish News*, 30 March 1962, p.19.

² City of Melbourne Building Application Plan Permit No. 35633, refer also Certificate of Title Vol 8364 Fol. 641A

³ City of Melbourne Building Application Index, No. 35633.

⁴ *Age*, 13 February 1963, p.15.

⁵ *Age*, 13 February 1963, p.15.

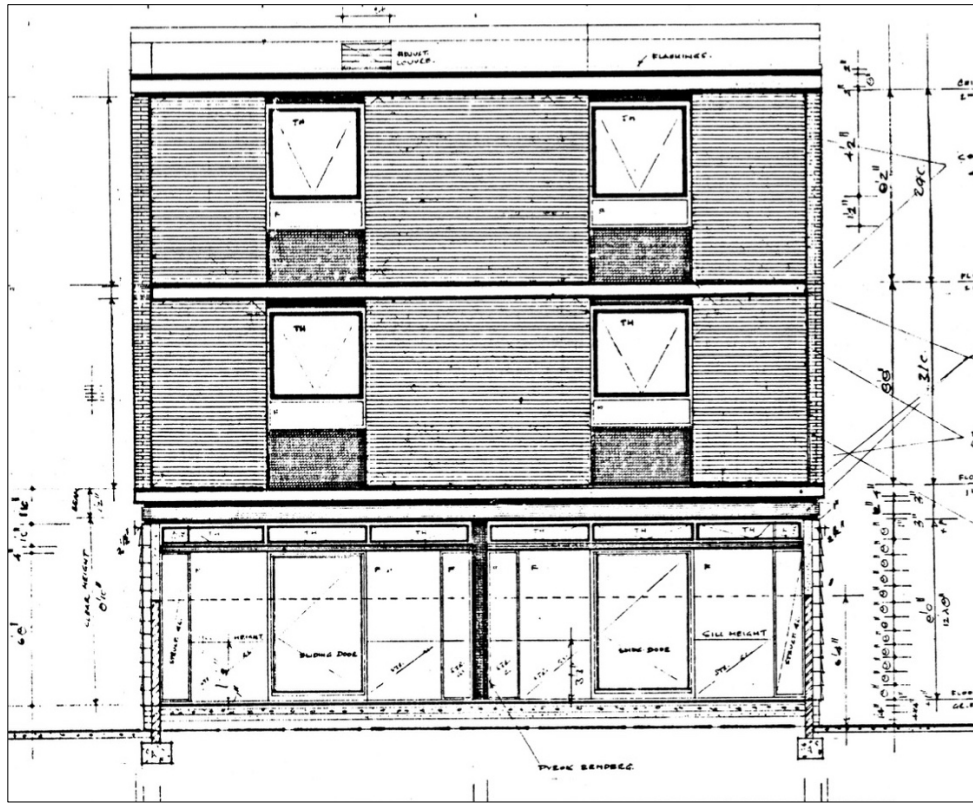


Figure 2 Extract from the original drawings lodged for a building permit application with the City of Melbourne in 1962. Source: City of Melbourne.

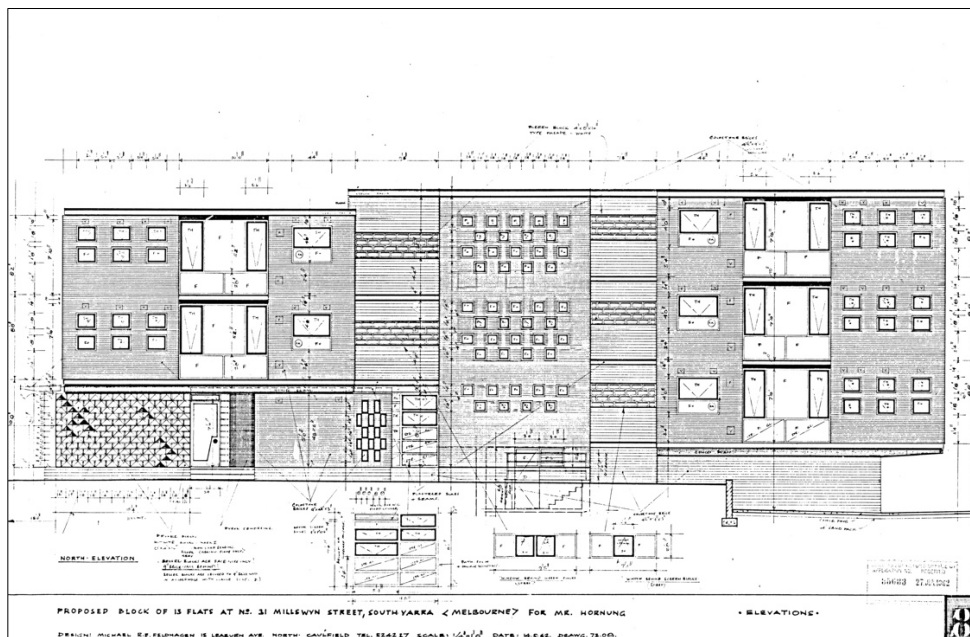


Figure 3 North elevation, 1962. Source: City of Melbourne.

19. The designer of the flats, Michael Feldhagen was born in Breslau (now Wroclaw in western Poland) in 1932.⁶ He studied architecture at the prestigious Berlin University of the Arts in the 1950s and after graduation was employed in an architect's office in Berlin. The city was at the epicentre of cold war tensions, culminating in the 'Berlin Crisis' of 1958 when the Soviet premier issued an ultimatum for western powers to pull out of West Berlin. Alarmed by the political turmoil, Feldhagen migrated to Australia with his wife Helga and their young daughter. They arrived in Melbourne on 13 September 1958. Feldhagen was initially employed at the Housing Commission of Victoria before joining the office of European émigré architect Ernest Fooks in 1960. Around 1963 Feldhagen established his own practice. He did not seek to become a registered architect, possibly because of the difficulties in having overseas qualifications recognised by the Architects Registration Board.
20. Feldhagen's body of work includes large houses for Jewish builders with whom he regularly worked, as well as numerous blocks of flats. He formed a construction company in 1970 but was faced with dwindling commissions as the decade wore on, leading to a declaration of bankruptcy in 1975. Feldhagen nonetheless resumed practice as an architectural designer, employing his son as draftsman. He retired in the 1990s and passed away in 2013, aged 80.



Figure 4 Front (east) elevation.

⁶ Biographical information on Feldhagen is drawn from: <http://www.builtheritage.com.au/resources.html>



Figure 5 *South elevation.*



Figure 6 (left) *Rear (west) elevation.*



Figure 7 (right) *The external wall to the stairway at the centre of the north elevation.*

7.0 Heritage Status

21. The subject site is not included on the Victorian Heritage Register or the Register of the National Trust of Australia (Victoria). It was ungraded in the 1985 *South Yarra Conservation Study*.
22. As noted, Amendment C426melb proposes that the subject site be identified as a significant graded place in HO6. A significance heritage place is defined in the *Heritage Places Inventory – March 2022 (Amended February)* as:

... individually important at state or local level, and a heritage place in its own right. It is of historic, aesthetic, scientific, social or spiritual significance to the municipality. A significant heritage place may be highly valued by the community; is typically externally intact; and/or has notable features associated with the place type, use, period, method of construction, siting or setting. When located in a heritage precinct a significant heritage place can make an important contribution to the precinct.

23. While the South Yarra Heritage Overlay Precinct has existed for several years, a formal Statement of Significance for the precinct was only gazetted during the City of Melbourne Amendment C258 (July 2020).
24. The documents exhibited by the Melbourne City Council in support of the current Amendment C426melb included a citation prepared by GJM Heritage, which contained an updated Statement of Significance for the South Yarra Precinct, providing detailed information relating to each sub-area. The Statement of Significance for the South Yarra Precinct, Area 2 (gazetted as part of the interim control) is reproduced below:

What is significant?

The South Yarra Precinct, South Yarra, incorporating an area in the Parish of Melbourne South developed from the 1840s, is significant.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the precinct include (but are not limited to):

- *Area 2, including:*
 - *early pattern of subdivision of the land comprising four 9 ½-acre allotments (Crown Allotments 15, 16, 17 and 18) sold in 1849. Residential subdivision by 1850 created wider principal streets (Millswyn Street and Park Street) with large villa blocks. Smaller blocks for workers' houses were created by mid-Victorian subdivisions in narrower street such as St Martins Lane, Little Park Street and Hope Street (including former Montpelier Place), and similar 1880s subdivisions of Mason Street and Leopold Street*
 - *mixed-era residential buildings including a high concentration of refined architect-designed buildings, particularly evident along Park Street, and represented in other streets such as Millswyn Street, Domain Road and Toorak Road*
 - *early suburban subdivisions and nineteenth century building stock, especially with consistent pre-1901 streetscapes in Domain Street, Hope Street, Mason Street and Leopold Street*
 - *nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial buildings in the intersection of Domain Road and Park Street, and along Millswyn Street*

- *the low-scale external form of buildings developed pre-World War I (typically one to three storeys); featuring original hipped and gabled roof forms (sometimes with parapets); early chimneys; timber and masonry construction and finishes (some painted and rendered); the pattern and size of original fenestration; stylistic detailing; and early iron palisade fences on stone plinths or retaining walls*
- *the low-scale external form of buildings from 1918–45 (typically one to four storeys) featuring masonry construction and finishes (some painted and rendered), original hipped, gabled and flat roof forms (sometimes with parapets); intact early chimneys; the pattern and size of original fenestration; stylistic detailing; and early low masonry fences (some with integrated letter boxes and garden beds)*
- *the typical external form of post-1945 buildings (with varying heights); which have masonry and concrete construction and finishes; original hipped, gabled and flat roof forms (sometimes with parapets); early chimneys; the pattern and size of original fenestration; stylistic detailing; and early fences and landscaping (including masonry or stone fences, garden edging, garden beds or retaining walls)*
- *early subdivision patterns as evidenced in the hierarchy of principal and secondary streets and lanes (including the layout and width of streets), allotment sizes, and setbacks from property boundaries*
- *public space elements including:*
 - *the Golden Wych Elm (*Ulmus glabra* 'Lutescens') at 2 Clowes Street*
 - *street trees, especially mature London Plane trees (*Platanus x acerifolia*) planted along Arnold Street and Adams Street and in a verge along Bromby Street*
 - *a group of mature trees planted on the stretch of reserve along the Yarra River (opposite 1–45 Alexandra Avenue), including two Canary Island Date Palms (*Phoenix canariensis*), *Washingtonia* (*Washingtonia robusta*), *Schinus* *Peppercorn Tree* (*Schinus areira*) and *Eucalyptus* *Bangalay* (*Eucalyptus botryoides*)*
 - *two mature Moreton Bay Figs (*Ficus macrophylla*) at the triangular traffic island at the corner of Toorak Road and St Kilda Road*
 - *extant street lamp (55 Bromby Street) and street lamp bases (outside 1–9 and 19 Park Street, at the corner Park Street and Mason Street, at the corner Toorak Road and Park Street, and outside 1 Walsh Street)*
 - *asphalted footpaths, bluestone kerbs and gutters, and the lanes with bluestone pitchers and central drains*
- *views into and out of the adjoining parks and gardens.*

Early fences and landscaping contribute to the significance of the precinct.

More recent (post-1980s) alterations and additions to significant and contributory buildings are not significant.

How is it significant?

South Yarra Precinct, South Yarra, is of local historical and aesthetic significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why is it significant?

South Yarra Precinct is historically significant for its demonstration of a predominantly residential development pattern that spans from the 1840s through to the postwar period.

The concentration of high-quality building stock in the precinct demonstrates the significant influence of wealth and privilege in this part of Melbourne. This is reflected in the prestigious location and desirability of the area associated with its elevated position, proximity to the river and pleasant parkland setting. Area 2 retains most housing stock from the Victorian period. Substantial terraces and detached villas developed by prominent property owners are interspersed with smaller working-class houses built for their servants and those who worked in trades. Several boarding houses, guesthouses and private hotels were established in Park Street. Occupying elevated land and in close proximity to the city centre, merchants, professionals and wealthy speculators were drawn to the area. Owing to the social cachet of the area, graziers established town houses here from the mid nineteenth century or later retired to the area. Subsequent suburban subdivisions and nineteenth-century building stock are well represented across the South Yarra Precinct, especially with consistent Victorian streetscapes in Domain Street, Hope Street, Mason Street, Leopold Street (Area 2) and Airlie Street (Area 5). (Criterion A)

Throughout the twentieth century, remaining vacant lots were taken up for further residential development. From the interwar period, South Yarra became a focus for flat development in Melbourne where low-rise blocks of flats became a lucrative form of investment in the aftermath of the stock market crash of 1929 and subsequent Depression. This is particularly evidenced by the interwar streetscapes in Marne Street (on the site of the Maritimo estate, in Area 3), developed over a short period 1928–40. The popularity of flat development continued into the postwar period. Area 3 is distinguished for its collection of a high number of architecturally designed, mostly interwar, luxury blocks of flats and houses. Fairlie Court and St Leonards Court (the former Fairlie and St Leonards estates, in Area 5) represent similar concentration of interwar development at smaller scale. Area 1 is predominantly characterised by interwar and postwar flats interspersed with Victorian-era building stock. Area 4 also had a similar phase of active flat development following demolition and subdivision of Victorian era properties such as Salisbury (42–66 Walsh Street), Riahva (at the corner of Toorak Road and Punt Road) and Fairholm (55–77 Walsh Street). The South Yarra Precinct is distinguished for its array of mixed-era development. This resulted in the area having a rich combined architectural and streetscape character. (Criterion A)

The South Yarra Precinct is also significant for its retention of nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial and industrial buildings in St Kilda Road (Area 1), Millswyn Street and the intersection of Domain Road and Park Street (Area 2). The latter was the location of one of the earliest commercial developments in the suburb, and was substantially renewed around the time of the electrification of tram lines in 1927. The emergence of automobile-related businesses in the 1910s and 1920s in St Kilda Road (Area 1) and St Martins Lane (Area 2) is evidence of relatively early car ownership in the area. (Criterion A)

The South Yarra Precinct is of aesthetic significance primarily as a prestigious residential area of mixed character that has developed and evolved from the 1840s through to the present day. This layering of development has resulted in the area having a rich combined architectural and streetscape character. This mixed character is unified by a general consistency in building quality, height, setback, form, and a pattern of fenestration and materiality that harmonises buildings of different historical eras and architectural styles within a cohesive urban setting. The precinct's character is enriched by its public realm elements, which include a mix of wide and finer grade streets that have mature and semi-mature deciduous and evergreen trees, bluestone kerbs and guttering, asphalt footpaths and a network of bluestone lanes (the latter are a particular feature of Areas 2 and 5). Throughout the precinct oblique views are possible due to the generous side setbacks of many buildings. This allows buildings to be viewed three-dimensionally, including roofscapes of hip and gable roof forms clad with slate or terracotta combined with

chimneys and parapets. The aesthetic quality of the precinct is further enhanced by its proximity to parklands; it is bound by Fawcner Park to its south, and the Royal Botanic Gardens, and Yarra River to its north. (Criterion E)

Within the precinct there are streets that have a particularly high uniformity that demonstrate subsequent subdivision patterns. These include the intact Victorian streetscapes along Hope Street, Mason Street, Park Street and much of Leopold Street (Area 2) and Airlie Street (Area 5) which retain a large proportion of Italianate style houses. It includes interwar streetscapes of Marne Street (Area 3), St Leonards Court (Area 5) and (to a lesser degree) Fairlie Court (Area 5). These are characterised by an eclectic range of interwar styles and influences, including Arts and Crafts, Georgian Revival, Old English, Moderne, Mediterranean and Spanish Mission. Of note is the large number of interwar Georgian Revival residences, particularly in St Leonards Court and Fairlie Court (Area 5). Area 2 retains a group of intact interwar shops at the corner of Domain Road and Park Street. Early commercial development can also be observed along Millswyn Street (although all buildings are now used for residential purposes). (Criterion E)

The precinct is distinguished by its high concentration of refined architect-designed buildings. This is particularly evident along Park Street, Domain Road and Toorak Road (Area 2) and Marne Street (Area 3) for Victorian and interwar architecture respectively, however such places are not confined to any one section of the precinct nor to any one development period. This, coupled with the general high quality of architectural design and materiality, provides an unusually rich aesthetic quality to the streetscapes across the entire area. (Criterion E)

The precinct contains a large number of blocks of residential flats from the interwar and postwar periods. While those from the interwar period tend to be large luxury flats, the later postwar flats reflect the changing urban landscape seen in much of inner city Melbourne. Through its high concentration of refined architect-designed building stock the precinct demonstrates the influence of the many middle and upper-middle class arbiters of taste who chose to live in the area. The postwar buildings themselves sit comfortably side by side with earlier development due to their scale, form and materiality. (Criterion E)

8.0 Discussion

25. As noted, Amendment C426melb proposes that the subject site be changed from a non-contributory place in the South Yarra Precinct (HO6) to a significant place. There are two key issues to be addressed in determining whether the subject site should be included in HO6 as a significant building, being (1) contribution that post war flats of this kind make to HO6 and (2) the level of significance of the building itself.
26. In respect to the contribution that the subject site makes to the heritage character of the precinct, the existing statement of significance for the South Yarra Precinct, prepared by Lovell Chen and gazetted as part of Amendment C258 in July 2020, made only a fleeting reference to buildings constructed in the postwar period, stating 'later development, of the 1940s and after, is generally stripped of ornamentation, with plain walls and limited detailing'. The statement of significance provides a history South Yarra of almost 3 pages in length, of which only a single sentence is dedicated to post war flat developments:

*The popularity of flat block developments continued into the post-war period, with the Argus noting that ‘many small attractive blocks of flats ... are regarded as good investments’.*⁷

27. Reference is made to the aesthetic/architectural significance of the interwar and ‘later’ flat blocks ‘of which the precinct has many distinguished examples’ but does not further elaborate on the importance of the post war flats other than a brief reference to the Robin Boyd designed Domain Park high-rise apartments.
28. The Lovell Chen statement of significance was informed by reference to the *Thematic History: A History of the City of Melbourne’s Urban Environment* (Context Pty Ltd, for the City of Melbourne, 2012). That document hardly mentions post war flat development other than describing “numerous ‘six-pack’ blocks erected in South Yarra, East Melbourne, North Melbourne and Carlton.”⁸
29. It is also worth noting that the Lovell Chen statement of significance was prepared with regard for community and stakeholder consultation. Meetings were conducted with key internal and external stakeholders, including City of Melbourne heritage advisors, representatives from the National Trust and the Melbourne Heritage Action Group. The summary of the stakeholder and community feedback does not suggest that post war flat development was at the forefront of the participants’ concerns:

*Participants felt that South Yarra embodied the development pressures of Melbourne throughout history, from grand gold rush mansions to interwar flats ... The interwar flats were highlighted as playing a significant role in shaping the area as an apartment area. Participants strongly supported adding interwar period development to the Statement of Significance.*⁹

30. Given that the Lovell Chen statement of significance was adopted in the relatively recent past, it could reasonably be argued that an appreciation of the historical and aesthetic/architectural value of many post war buildings has not changed in any meaningful or considerable way and if post war buildings were to be considered of meaningful value with the South Yarra Precinct, then the Lovell Chen statement of significance would have described their worth in greater detail.¹⁰
31. The currently proposed statement of significance references post-1945 buildings but does not make a strong or compelling case in identifying their significance and how they contribute to the precinct, being that the only substantial mention of their value within the precinct is the reference to their ‘typical external form’ and their historical importance as a demonstration of ‘...the changing urban landscapes seen in much of inner city Melbourne’. This is a broad brush observation applicable to a number of municipalities – it does not explain how post war flats specifically contribute to the significance of the South Yarra Precinct.

⁷ Melbourne Planning Scheme Incorporated Document: Heritage Precincts Statements of Significance February 2020 (Amended April 2022)

⁸ *Thematic History: A History of the City of Melbourne’s Urban Environment*, p.65.

⁹ City of Melbourne Local Heritage Policy Review: Summary of engagement findings, p. 10.

¹⁰ City of Melbourne Heritage Review: Local Heritage Policies and Precinct Statements of Significance Methodology, p.15.

32. The statement of significance comments that *'The postwar buildings themselves sit comfortably side by side with earlier development due to their scale, form and materiality'*. I would generally contest this statement too, and would argue that post war flat development was, by and large, intrusive to the valued heritage character of the South Yarra Precinct. While there is certainly a growing appreciation of post war architecture in Melbourne, I do not believe that the statement of significance provides a strong enough argument that, *prima facie*, virtually all building stock of this era contributes to the heritage character of the South Yarra precinct.
33. I note that the subject site forms part of Area 2 of HO6, described in the South Yarra Heritage Review as *'the most consistent streetscapes of nineteenth century building stock in the HO6 area, with cohesive streetscapes of Italianate terraces and detached villas'*. The Review includes maps of building stock from various phases of development – the map for 1945-1970s shows only 11 buildings. This is not significant number and suggests that this period of development was not highly consequential, in other words it might be considered an minor endnote to the overall history of this part of South Yarra.



Figure 8 Extract from the South Yarra Heritage Review showing post war development in Area 2 of the South Yarra Precinct. Note the relative small number of post war buildings.

34. Comparisons can be made with the approach to post war flats taken by the recent *North Melbourne Heritage Review*, completed by Lovell Chen and Extent in 2022 on behalf of the City of Melbourne. It did not identify post war flats in the existing North and West Melbourne Precinct (HO3) as being of significance. Specifically, this building type was graded non-contributory (some examples of which are illustrated below). The notable exception to this is Hotham Gardens - Stage1. Constructed in 1959-1961, Hotham Gardens – Stage 1 is identified as being of historical significance as an example of post war ‘slum’ clearance developed by private industry as own your own flats, designed with input from some of Melbourne’s pre-eminent mid-century architects, including Roy Grounds, John Mockridge, John Murphy and Roy Simpson.
35. On the basis that post war flats were not identified as being of significance in a very recent heritage review of predominately residential heritage precinct in the very same municipality, a much stronger case would need to be made to explain why post war flats are of significant value in the particular context of South Yarra.

Ungraded Post war flats in the North and West Melbourne Precinct (HO3)



Figure 9 (left) 26-28 Brougham Street.
Figure 10 (right) 49 Brougham Street.



Figure 11 (left) 51 Brougham Street.
Figure 12 (right) 28 Canning Street.





Figure 13 (left) 19 Chapman Street.



Figure 14 (right) 7 Curran Street.



Figure 15 (left) 417 Dryburgh Street.



Figure 16 (right) 469 Dryburgh Street.

36. I do not believe that the *South Yarra Heritage Review Thematic Environmental History* (TEH) can be relied upon to demonstrate the significance of post war flats to the development of the area. Section 3.6.3 of the TEH 'Flats maisonettes and duplexes' is principally concerned with prestigious interwar architect designed flats. The ubiquitous 1960s 'six pack' flats do not garner a mention. Section 3.6.4 'Post war residential development' mainly relates to houses of the professional classes and 'established money'.¹¹ Post war flats are discussed in Section 3.6.5 'Protecting the character of South Yarra' but only in the sense that they were seen to threaten the character of the area:

From the 1950s onwards there was increased pressure in [South Yarra] to develop larger blocks for flats. As the pattern of old homes being replaced by blocks of flats continued, there was mounting concern from a section of the community that the character of the area was being lost. The competing interests of development on the one hand and the protection of the established character of the area on the other intensified in the 1960s. In 1972, a report to the City of Melbourne by heritage consultant James Colman recommended that the historical and architectural character of the area be protected as a "conservation area" along the lines proposed by the Town and Country Planning Board and the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works i.e. an area of special architectural and historic character worthy of preservation¹²

¹¹. *South Yarra Heritage Review Thematic Environmental History*, p.74.

¹². *South Yarra Heritage Review Thematic Environmental History*, p.76.

37. Accepting that flat development is a major theme in the development of South Yarra it is best demonstrated in the area's interwar flats, which were often designed by leading architects of the day and which by virtue of their design quality helped to reinforce the social cachet of the suburb.
38. While there is a growing appreciation of post war architecture in Melbourne, I do not accept that the proposed statement of significance provides a strong enough argument that virtually all building stock of this era contributes to the heritage character of the South Yarra precinct.
39. The South Yarra Heritage Review offers the following brief commentary on the significance of the flats on the subject site:

The front façade of the building is clad in precast concrete panels with a distinctive 'fish scale' pattern, that wraps around the building at ground level with rock faced slim concrete bricks above. The building is further distinguished by an unusual fenestration pattern along its northern elevation with small square openings and floor to ceiling windows elsewhere. The high breeze block front wall appears original.

40. This does not provide sufficient basis for the change in the status of the building from non-contributory to significance, as proposed by Amendment C426melb. In the first instance, the façade is not clad in precast concrete panels – it is standard brick construction faced in Besser 'Hi-lite' blocks. That aside, the building follows typical approach adopted in the design of blocks of flats in the 1960 whereby the basic flat roofed rectilinear building envelope was dressed up with featurist elements, with the intent of creating some visual interest in views from the street. Narrow split faced concrete blocks and breeze blocks were in widespread use in the 1960s. Accepting that good architecture can be created from standard materials and basic construction techniques, the subject building presents as an awkward amalgam of varying wall surfaces and window types.
41. Useful comparisons can be made with the post war flats that are proposed for individual heritage overlay controls as part of Amendment C426melb, namely: Fairlie Flats at 54-60 Anderson Street (1961), Sheridan Close, 485-491 St Kilda Road, Melbourne (1950-53) and Domain Park, 191-201 Domain Road, South Yarra (1960-62). The refined modernist simplicity of Fairlie Flats is demonstrative of the skill of architects Yuncken Freeman. Domain Park stands out for as a landmark high rise apartment building by the pre-eminent post war modernist architect Robin Boyd.
42. Whereas Fairlie Flats and Domain Park are demonstrative of luxury flats that helped to reinforce the social cachet of South Yarra, the subject building is more closely aligned to the basic six pack flats.



Figure 17 (left) Fairlie Flats, 54-60 Anderson Street.

Figure 18 (right) Domain Park, 191-201 Domain Road.

43. Accepting that Amendment C246melb does not seek to apply an individual heritage overlay control to the subject site, it is proposed to be graded significant. By definition, a significant place is individually important at a state or local level *in its own right*.
44. At present, to be identified as a place of local significance sufficient to warrant application of the Heritage Overlay, a place should meet one or more of the criteria to a degree that meets a threshold level of local significance. The South Yarra Precinct has been identified as meeting criterion A and criterion E. The subject site would need to meet one or both of these criteria to warrant a significant grading. I do not believe that the subject site meets criterion A or E, as demonstrated in an assessment against the criteria as follows.

Criterion A: Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).

45. As addressed above, the category of post war flats to which the subject building belongs do not make an important contribution to the significance of the South Yarra Precinct, or the City of Melbourne more generally.

Criterion E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).

46. The subject building does not demonstrate unique or exceptional aesthetic characteristics. With reference to the proposed statement of significance for the South Yarra Precinct, this is not a refined architect designed building.
47. The apparent haste with which it was designed does not suggest a carefully crafted bespoke design – noting that the site was acquired by the Samuel Hornung and Rachel Madga Goldstein in 1962 with Michael Feldhagen having plans ready for lodgement of a building permit application in May of the same year.

48. Feldhagen was presumably able to provide a quick turnaround from the point of commission to the finished product by drawing on commonly occurring design motifs in his work, such as the grid of small, square bathroom windows. While Feldhagen may have had a prolific output, his body of work is of varying quality and includes some very pedestrian flat designs (illustrated below), and is on the whole not indicative of a highly accomplished or innovative architect/designer. His bankruptcy in the 1970s could be taken as evidence of his lack of success.

Examples of flats designed by Michael Feldhagen



Figure 19 (left) 99 Westbury Street, Balaclava.



Figure 20 (right) 247 Inkerman Street, Balaclava.

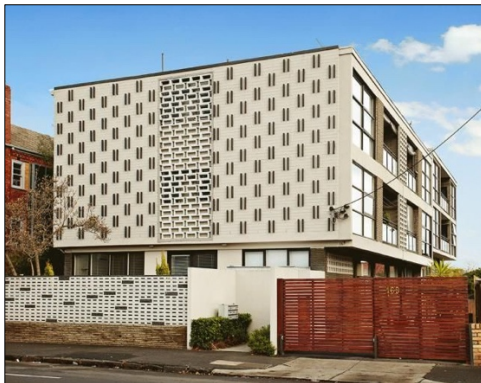


Figure 21 (left) 169 Hotham Street, Balaclava.



Figure 22 (right) 46 Ormond Esplanade, Elwood.



Figure 23 (left) 844 Malvern Road, Armadale.
Figure 24 (right) 181 Power Street, Hawthorn.



Figure 25 (left) 24 Eildon Road, St Kilda .
Figure 26 (right) 1 Hartpur Avenue, Elwood.



Figure 27(left) 621 Toorak Road, Toorak. It can be attributed to Feldhagen on stylistic grounds. Note the grid of small, square windows on the side elevation, as found on the flats at 31-33 Millswyn Street.



Figure 28 (right) 263 Dandenong Road, Prahran. It can also be attributed to Feldhagen on stylistic grounds. Note the 'fish scale' concrete blocks to the façade.

49. It is acknowledged that the Michael Feldhagen designed flats at 247 Inkerman Street and 169 Hotham Street are identified as significant places in Heritage Overlay precincts in the City of Port Phillip (HO315 and HO7 respectively). To the extent that this might be seen as a precedent for applying a significant grading to the flats at 31-33 Millswyn Street, it needs to be recognised that Balaclava is in a different municipality and has a pattern of development and built form character that is very much different from that of the South Yarra Precinct.
50. Further to the above, I note that the City of Port Phillip has proposed a serial listing known as the 'Feldhagen Group Listing 1', to be comprised of the hitherto mentioned flats at 169 Hotham Street and 247 Inkerman Street, as well as the flats at 99 Westbury Street, Balaclava – the latter presently has no Heritage Overlay controls.¹³ Given the merit of the 'Feldhagen Group Listing 1' has not been tested at a Panel hearing, I would contend that it cannot be taken as evidence of the significance of the similarly designed Feldhagen flats at 31-33 Millswyn Street.

9.0 Conclusion

51. Having regard for the above, it is my view that the flats at 31-33 Millswyn Street, South Yarra are not of sufficient architectural/aesthetic or historical significance to be made a significant graded place within HO6, as proposed by Amendment C426melb. The flats should remain a non-contributory place in HO6.

¹³ *City of Port Phillip Heritage Review*. Place Name: Feldhagen Group Citation No.2445.

