



ROYAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF VICTORIA INC.

239 A'Beckett Street, Melbourne 3000

2 December 2020

City of Melbourne,
GPO Box 1603,
Melbourne VIC 3001.

Attention: Team Leader – Heritage Strategy

Amendment C387melb

The Royal Historical Society of Victoria (RHSV) is a peak body representing approximately 340 community historical societies throughout Victoria. Since its formation in 1909, the RHSV has been a stakeholder in the City and a partner of the City in the development and improvement of the City, particularly in regard to preserving and making effective use of its significant heritage assets, so much a factor in the City's success. The RHSV Heritage Committee continues the RHSV's longstanding commitment to the preservation of our heritage, believing that we are all entrusted with the tasks of maintaining the legacy of the past for the good of future generations. This is particularly so in the central city.

The RHSV, both as a heritage body and as a stakeholder in the City, strongly supports Amendment C387melb. We have followed the work done by the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review and we have been pleased to note that the study has been exemplary in its conduct. We commend the Melbourne City Council Urban Strategy section and Heritage Team for their excellent work. The study is exemplary and once implemented will provide a sound and solid base for heritage protection and development of the CBD within this context.

Implementation is urgent to provide clarity and certainty for developers and for property owners. The excellent work done for the Review gives Council a unique opportunity to progress heritage conservation as well as development. Melbourne's historic fabric is crucial to its charm and to its ability to attract visitors. Maintaining what remains of it is one of the most significant challenges facing Council. The historic fabric of Melbourne provides the atmosphere and the charm to draw people back to the City following the difficult period from which we are just now emerging.

That atmosphere and charm owe much to Melbourne's Victorian heritage. In his classic *Victorian Cities* (1963: 277ff), Lord Asa Briggs described Melbourne as one of the world's greatest and most intact Victorian cities. 'Seldom', Briggs argued, 'can domestic architecture have produced such a rich variety of "imposing" styles' as in Melbourne' (p. 289). But while the Victorian side of Melbourne is what first captures attention, followed closely by the interwar Art Deco buildings, the modernist architecture of the period following World War II is also fundamental to the city's charm and amenity. It is one of the great virtues of C387melb that it recognises, analyses and protects this aspect of the city's built form in listing the significant post-war buildings. Increasingly, these will become as essential to Melbourne's identity as the City's Victorian heritage.

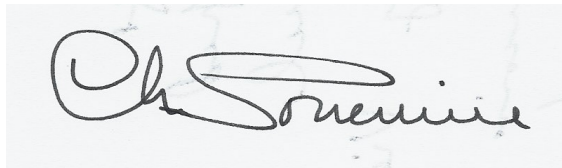
If we have a criticism of the study, it is that it stops in 1975. Experience has shown that delays in carrying out heritage studies result in losses, often significant. There is a great deal of outstanding post-1975 architecture in the City. Twenty years into this century, it is time to consider the heritage of the late 20th Century. A study covering the period 1975-2000 is urgently needed and we hope and trust that Heritage Strategy is looking at carrying this out soon after C387melb is formally adopted.

We therefore urge Council to maintain Amendment C387melb in its current state. No doubt there will be some property owners who will see the Amendment as possibly limiting the profit they can draw from their sites, but the good of all property owners and ratepayers will be served by maintaining and enhancing the City's ability to provide an attractive place to work, live and visit. Amendment C387melb will do a great deal in this direction by maintaining what makes Melbourne unique among world cities, its substantial heritage.

Amendment C387melb provides ample opportunity for development to accommodate future growth whilst ensuring that the charm which makes the City so attractive is maintained. The alternative is for Melbourne to become one of so many major cities which the visitor can barely remember.

We trust that the Amendment will be maintained intact and will go on to the next stage of the process and be implemented in 2021.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light grey background. The signature is cursive and reads "Ch Sowerwine".

(Professor) Charles Sowerwine, FAHA,
Chair, Heritage Committee,
Royal Historical Society of Victoria.