

# ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL 19 FEBRUARY 2020



## **12.2 CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN: ST KILDA PUBLIC LIBRARY**

**EXECUTIVE MEMBER: CHRIS CARROLL, GENERAL MANAGER, CUSTOMER AND CORPORATE SERVICES**

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### **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 This report presents for Council's noting a revised Conservation Management Plan for the St Kilda Library.





## 2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The St Kilda Library, designed in 1971 and completed in 1973 by prominent Canberra architect Enrico Taglietti, is of aesthetic, historical and social significance to the City of Port Phillip as a public institution.
- 2.2 In 1993, the original library was extended to produce its current form. The extension was based on a design by architects Ashton Raggatt McDougall (ARM). Twenty seven years have since elapsed.
- 2.3 The St Kilda Library was first identified as a building of heritage significance in 1992, when it was assessed as an "A"-grade building in the *St Kilda Twentieth Century Architectural Study* by Robert Peck von Hartel Trethowan, and as a significant place in the *Port Phillip Heritage Review* by Andrew Ward, 1998.
- 2.4 The St Kilda Library was then subsequently included in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the *Port Phillip Planning Scheme* as part of precinct H07.
- 2.5 Recognition of the Library as a heritage place of local significance is unusual given the relatively young age of the building at that time.
- 2.6 A conservation management plan was first produced for the St Kilda Library by Allom Lovell & Associates in 2003, shortly after inclusion within the Port Phillip Planning Scheme. That conservation management plan was produced only ten years after the 1993 extension by ARM, a period considered by best practice heritage guidelines to be insufficient to quantify the significance of the Library with its extension.
- 2.7 It is generally accepted that a human generation (approximately 25-30 years) should pass after the creation of a place or object before it is considered for heritage listing at any level.
- 2.8 The passage of time now allows the cultural heritage values of the place to be more rigorously and objectively assessed.
- 2.9 As such, it is now possible to assess the St Kilda Public Library, as evolved, in a manner that has not previously been possible. This work was therefore undertaken to reaffirm the cultural and architectural significance of the St Kilda Library through today's lens.
- 2.10 This work is essential in providing guidance for the management of the St Kilda Library asset.

## 3. RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 3.1 Notes the *St Kilda Library Conservation Management Plan (2019)*, which updates and supersedes the 2003 version.
- 3.2 Notes that the *Conservation Management Plan* will help ensure that the future use, management and upgrades of the Library enriches rather diminishes its assessed heritage values.
- 3.3 Thanks the contributors to the Conservation Management Plan, including the respondents to the community survey of June and July 2019 *Have Your Say: What do you value about St Kilda Library?*



#### 4. KEY POINTS/ISSUES

- 4.1 The *Carlisle Street Structure Plan* (2009) establishes a vision and strategies for the development of Carlisle Street Activity Centre for the period 2019 to 2024. Two of its strategic directions (2 and 4) relate to the St Kilda Library and its environs.
- 4.2 St Kilda Library has been subject to incremental physical change since the mid 1980s in response to changing community needs and expectations. This pressure to evolve can be expected to continue, so alterations and additions will likely be necessary.
- 4.3 Future capacity for change to achieve the strategic directions should be guided by updated conservation principles and recommendations of the revised Conservation Management Plan.
- 4.4 It is anticipated that in 2020-2021, a project will be undertaken to review and update planning and design controls in St Kilda to align precinct objectives with key Council Strategies. A revised Conservation Management Plan will be used to inform future precinct planning for the Carlisle St Civic (West) Precinct to facilitate the use and development of the St Kilda Library as a key cultural hub and learning centre (as per Port Phillip Planning Scheme Policy 22.11-4).
- 4.5 The St Kilda Library is also subject to the provision of the *National Construction Code* and *Disability Discrimination Act* 1992. Work or refurbishment of a heritage building may have the potential to trigger a requirement to make the entire building comply with the *current* standards of the code.
- 4.6 If inappropriately managed, these actions have the potential to negatively and irreversibly impact the heritage fabric of the Library.
- 4.7 Research for a revised Conservation Management Plan commenced in late 2018 by Heritage Consultants Lovell Chen.
- 4.8 At the time of research, the architect of the original Library, Enrico Taglietti, was 93 years old. This presented a rare and unique opportunity for the project team to timely canvass the opinion of the original and surviving architect on the heritage place.
- 4.9 Accordingly, a workshop was held on January 8, 2019 with Enrico Taglietti, Lovell Chen and Council officers at St Kilda Town Hall. Enrico Taglietti passed away shortly after in May 2019.
- 4.10 A meeting was also held on January 21, 2019 with ARM, the architects of the 1993 extension, where the opinions of directors Ian McDougall and Howard Raggatt were sought.
- 4.11 The revised Conservation Management Plan was undertaken over several months and completed later in 2019.
- 4.12 It clarifies the cultural heritage significance of the place overall, and some key architectural aspects that should be preserved, irrespective of how the use of the building may need to evolve.
- 4.13 The Conservation Management Plan is appended to this report as Attachment 1.

#### 5. CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDERS

- 5.1 As part of the research conducted for the revised Conservation Management Plan, the project team sought to identify individuals or groups with a readily identifiable



connection to the place, through establishing evidence of special community interest or associations.

- 5.2 Initial research found very few individuals or groups who had a strong, ongoing association with the St Kilda Library.
- 5.3 In absence of individuals and groups with an obvious or overt connection to place, it was decided that a formal process of community engagement was to be conducted, to establish such individuals and groups are currently present in the community.
- 5.4 Between 25 June and 16 July 2019, a “Have Your Say” survey was hosted on the City of Port Phillip website. The survey was promoted through several channels, including a board mounted at the Library, the Port Phillip website home page, and social media. Submissions were sought on what people value about the St Kilda Library and why.
- 5.5 It was found that, generally speaking, individuals and organisations who have an interest in the St Kilda Library fall into one of two categories. The first category being statutory and/or services authorities responsible for ensuring the appropriate management of the place. The second category being individuals, groups or entities with an interest in the building and/or services that it provides.
- 5.6 Stakeholders who fall under the second category are The City of Port Phillip, library service personnel, library users, special interest groups and the general public.
- 5.7 Seventy-nine submissions were received, from 426 visitors to the survey.
- 5.8 Ten responses were received with comments regarding the building's architectural qualities, with many others recalling personal associations with the building.

## **6. LEGAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The recommendations of this Council report are not considered to have any legal or risk implications.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPACT**

- 7.1 Council is responsible for allocating public money to the management of the municipal property portfolio. The Conservation Management Plan will help City of Port Phillip appropriately care for this important civic building, and ensure that financial investment made in it will enhance its heritage value.
- 7.2 The costs of producing the Conservation Management Plan total approximately \$52,000, plus Officer time.

## **8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

- 8.1 The recommendations of this report are not considered to have any environmental implications.





## 9. COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 9.1 Heritage buildings create a sense of place, adding local character and identity. The Conservation Management Plan supports City of Port Phillip in its custodianship and management of the heritage asset on behalf of the community.

## 10. ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICY

- 10.1 This report closely aligns with strategic Direction 4 of Council Plan: “We are growing and keeping our character”.
- 10.2 It also aligns with Direction 6 of Council Plan in supporting “transparent governance and an actively engaged community”.

## 11. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

### 11.1 TIMELINE

- 11.1.1 With this report the updated St Kilda Library is formalised.

### 11.2 COMMUNICATION

- 11.2.1 City of Port Phillip is committed to prudently managing its heritage assets.
- 11.2.2 The new Conservation Management Plan helps us understand and embrace the inherent heritage qualities and values of the St Kilda Library.
- 11.2.3 It provides guidance on how the heritage significance should be respected in any future use, management, alteration or repair of the facility.

## 12. OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT INTEREST

- 12.1 No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any direct or indirect interest in the matter.

**TRIM FILE NO:** 52/02/09

**ATTACHMENTS** 1. Conservation Management Plan