

LAUNCESTON CITY COUNCIL

MEMORANDUM

FILE NO: DA0628/2016

DATE: 16 February 2017

TO: Catherine Mainsbridge Town Planner

FROM: Fiona Ranson Urban Design and Heritage Planner

Heritage and Urban Design Report - Town Hall 18-28 St John Street Launceston, Civic Square 69A Cameron Street Launceston, Public Library 71 Cameron Street, Launceston, Henty House 91-97 Charles Street Launceston, 75-77 Cameron Street, - Passive Recreation - public park; Community Meeting and Entertainment - community activities and events; redevelopment of Civic Square involving demolition, construction of new structures and associated works, vegetation removal and plantings, external lighting and community information signs

Dear Catherine,

Civic Square is considered to be of heritage significance due to the presence of structures of historic and architectural importance to Launceston and Tasmania, and also for its location along the historic city axis between the former Governor's Cottage and the opening of the Cataract Gorge onto the Tamar Estuary. This significance is broadly understood and has been formally recognised with the heritage listing of a number of properties surrounding the space at both the local and state level, and also with the inclusion of the space in the City Civic Precinct developed from the precincts proposed by the Launceston Heritage Study 2007.

The statements of significance provided by the applicant are considered to be sound and the statements made in response to these are also considered to be valid.

The Square is also considered to be important as a cultural space for the city serving a civic purpose over the past 35 years for passive and active recreation uses, as well as a base for political gatherings. However it is recognised that the space has always been relatively 'under-utilised' and the proposed redevelopment of the square is considered to support these uses as well as

There is no demolition of fabric which is considered to be of significance within the heritage listed portions of the site proposed as part of this application. The only concern I have in regard to demolition is the removal of the Mirek Marik fountain currently situated to the north of the LINC, however the title upon which this sculptural work is located is not heritage listed and therefore I can only request that the future of this piece be considered as part of the development and that the work be treated with respect.

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There is no vegetation on the site which is contemporary with the buildings which form the basis of the heritage listings on the site. The removal of vegetation proposed as part of this application is largely due to condition and perceived safety issues in a public space and although some of the larger eucalypts were part of the original design of the Square in the 1970s, and will be missed, they are proposed to be replaced and it is considered that an overall improvement is to be made in regard to the landscaping of the space.

The materials and design aesthetic proposed for the development of play spaces, furniture, landscaping and signage are contemporary, and this is considered to be appropriate in this eclectic and continually evolving inner city space. The proposed elements are also of a scale, form type and colour scheme which are not considered to have an adverse impact on the important views through the square. It is also noted that many of the forms to be utilised have been proposed in order to present an interpretation of the history of the space and the city for visitors, and to provide connections between the past and the present, especially for the engagement of young people with the use of elements of natural and cultural history. This is considered to be admirable

Conclusion:

The proposed redevelopment of Civic Square is not considered to have any detrimental impact on the heritage significance of the heritage listed properties subject to this application, or the surrounding area.

The scale and design of the elements proposed are considered to be appropriate to the scale, aesthetic, and integrity of the space, and the features and events they are intended to support should increase the use and improve the amenity of the Square and this area of the inner city of Launceston.

Therefore I support approval of this application in regard to heritage and urban design aspects, and request only that the existing fountain sculpture be protected and re-located in appropriate manner.

Fiona Ranson
Urban Design and Heritage Planner