

27 May 2016

Dr Rhonda McLaren  
Manager — Secretariat  
Heritage Council of Victoria  
PO Box 2392  
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

NTAV ref: L10270

Dear Ms McLaren,

**Re: Permit Appeal — Camperdown Botanic Garden and Arboretum (H2256) - Submission in Reply**

Further to our submission on 24 March 2016, the National Trust makes the following comments regarding the amended plans relating to permit P23732.

The National Trust of Australia (Victoria) continues to support the decision of the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria to refuse the construction of six cabins, swimming pool, jumping pillow, excavation and associated works.

The National Trust continues to have strong concerns about the impact of the proposed works on the heritage Arboretum. We do acknowledge that the amended plans remove many of the works from encroaching into the Tree Protection Zones (TPZs) of mature trees within the Arboretum. The exception to this is the proposed Jumping Pillow which now encroaches on the significant *Quercus canariensis* (T6) and *Ulmus minor 'variegata'* (T1) within the accepted 10% of the TPZ. However, simply re-siting the proposed elements is not sufficient to fully address our other concerns.

The National Trust acknowledges that some attempt has been made to address the concerns we raised in our original submission in regards to ensuring the ongoing presence of mature trees within the Arboretum. We note that the amended plans now make provision for the introduction of eight new specimen trees to be located within the park. However, the rationale behind the proposed locations of these new tree plantings not given nor is the species of specimen identified. We submit that were a permit granted, that species selection and placement is to be to the satisfaction of Heritage Victoria.

In regards to our concerns over parking, we note that one designated parking bay has been inserted into the plan for each of the proposed new 2-3 bedroom cabins. However, we submit that this is insufficient given the number of vehicles visitors to each cabin can be expected to have on site. No

provision has been made for the appropriate parking of trailers or additional visitor's cars nor is there any provision to prevent the continued parking of vehicles underneath the canopy of significant trees. As stated in our original submission and by Mr Galbraith, one of council's expert witnesses, car parking beneath the canopies potentially causes severe soil compaction and this impacts on a tree's long-term viability. This is unacceptable in a place recognised as of state significance for its trees. We support Mr Galbraith's recommendation that car parking should be outside of the TPZs (Arboricultural Report, p.11). We also support his recommendation that an updated tree management plan be produced and adhered to as part of any permit condition, were a permit granted.

The introduction of additional cabins will result in an unacceptable level of intensification on the site for at least the next 21 years (the term of the current lease). While the buildings are removable we expect it is unlikely that such a removal would occur within the duration of the current lease. The introduction of these cabins would result in reduced space for planting new trees and reduce the ability of management to respond to the changing needs of the significant trees within the boundaries of the park. Unlike temporary camping, the cabins cannot be easily re-sited to respond to the needs of the trees.

The National Trust refutes the claim of Mr Lovell that the introduction of the proposed cabins will have a lessened heritage impact than the continued use of these areas for caravan parking. In his Main Submission, dated 9 May 2016, Mr Lovell refers a number of times to the less intrusive nature of the proposed cabins when compared to either temporary or annual caravan encampments. However, no evidence to support this claim is given, except for a passing comment in his closing statement that the 'bright white' colouring of caravans and annexes is less desirable than the 'modest' colourings proposed for the cabins (pp.27, 31). We respectfully disagree with this statement as placement of caravan bookings on powered sites can be responsive to conservation actions. The National Trust maintains its request to see a landscaping plan prepared that considers the heritage of the Arboretum and the landscape aesthetic to be conserved.

Further, the National Trust submits that the relocation of the cabins in the amended plans does not resolve our concerns. The views over the volcanic landscape from the Arboretum are significant and historically were integral in choosing the original site of the Gardens and Arboretum. Significant views are not confined to the formal gardens to the west of the park. It is important to the ongoing heritage significance of the site that views from within the Arboretum and caravan park areas be maintained as well as those from the formal Botanic Gardens. The proposed introduction of new built form into the park area will negatively impact those views over the volcanic landscape.

Regarding the construction of the pool, the National Trust finds that the permit application continues to contain conflicting information regarding the nature of the excavation. It is noted that in the amended plans the surrounding walkways are now to be bluestone paving as opposed to decking. It is unclear as to how this will be achieved without an increase in earthworks and no detailed design or layout of these works has been supplied. In the original Swimming Pool Impact Assessment, lodged with Heritage Victoria on 21 September 2015, it states that 'decking and steps

will be installed to accommodate ground level changes', the implication being that the natural slope of the site was to be left intact around the excavated pool site. However, with the change of decking to bluestone paving the implication is now that the extent of the earthworks is to be increased to provide a level surface on which to lay the paving. This increase in earthworks is unacceptable and the implied decision to use bluestone paving as a means of increasing the net heritage value of the site is inappropriate.

The National Trust acknowledges that there has been a change in fencing style for the pool in the amended plans to that of a pre-galvanised steel frame with a 'heritage' green powdercoat finish, however, we continue to question its appropriateness, as the location of the fence will also create a visual barrier on the sensitive northern boundary of the park. As noted in Mr Lovell's report, 'it is desirable that this edge not be presented as more permanently built-up so that the legibility of the Arboretum as extending across this boundary is maintained.' (section 8.1.1. p.28). The National Trust submits that the introduction of the pool fence will inhibit such a reading and this is unacceptable. We also support the Executive Director's assertion that 'while not part of the application the future need for shade structures is highly likely' which would further inhibit the continuity of this landscape. (Executive Summary on Behalf of the Executive Director, for the Lakes and Craters Caravan Park, p.5)

Further to this point the, proposed planting of garden beds to south of swimming pool is inconsistent with the design of the Arboretum. However, the landscape plan could be a condition on a permit granted, where the plantings are to the satisfaction of Heritage Victoria.

In regards to the installation of the jumping pillow, the National Trust submits that the installation of a jumping pillow would have a negative impact on the heritage significance of the site and rejects the claim that there is 'no foreseeable indirect impacts on heritage' (section 3.6 Jumping Pillow impact statement submitted with amended plans). We do not accept that evidence has been submitted for the high demand for this facility and it does not reflect the historic use of the site.

With regard to the new buildings proposed, we reiterate that the use of so called 'heritage' colours and finishes such as dark green paint, and a beige and green jumping pillow, is not considered to be an adequate design response for new additions to a heritage place.

The expansion of the caravan park's sewerage system is of concern as it extends into the northern section of the Arboretum. Whilst the amended plans demonstrate that these additional sewerage lines avoid the TPZs of the relevant significant trees, the expansion of the sewerage system will prevent any future tree plantings in this area while the system remains in use.

Regardless of these issues, the National Trust remains unassured that the installation of the cabins, swimming pool and jumping pillow, with their associated services, excavation and retaining walls, will be reversible additions to the landscape. There is no legal requirement for reinstatement should these assets be disused in the future. Further, we do not consider that these elements are

compatible with the historic use of the site for camping and caravanning, but rather are modern additions that are out of step with the historic use of the place.

Finally, the National Trust continues to support the assessment of Heritage Victoria that the addition of the new buildings and structures proposed will result in no net benefit to the heritage of the site, and will limit the space available to establish new trees across the Arboretum. The applicant states that in undertaking these upgrades that they are seeking to enhance the identified heritage significance of the place but we submit that these proposed changes do not achieve this.

The National Trust looks forward to the opportunity to participate in the scheduled Permit Hearing for this matter in Camperdown on 6-7 May.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of the initials 'R.M.' followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line that tapers to the right.

Rosalind Mearns  
Community Advocate