

30 June 2016

Mr Tim Smith  
Executive Director  
Heritage Victoria  
GPO Box 2392  
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

Tasma Terrace  
4 Parliament Place  
East Melbourne  
Victoria 3002

Email: [info@nattrust.com.au](mailto:info@nattrust.com.au)  
Web: [www.nationaltrust.org.au](http://www.nationaltrust.org.au)

T 03 9656 9800  
F 03 9656 5397

**Re: Permit Application No. P24863**

Dear Mr Smith,

I refer to the above application for the proposed development of the D Division exercise yards (part) and adjacent land to the south and east. Outlined below are our concerns in relation to this proposal.

**Perimeter Walls**

The proposed development includes two openings in the D Division wall (which is of primary significance to the site), which are to be finished with “a slender metal frame” introduced into the cut bluestone. We note that wall openings proposed for the nearby development at 11 Urquhart Street (subject to Permit No. P24265) are proposed to be finished with “concrete pilasters in an abstract geometric form”. It is concerning that a uniform approach is not being taken to wall openings across the site. From a heritage perspective, the approach being taken in the current permit application is certainly less intrusive than the “abstract geometric form” of the 11 Urquhart Street proposal.

We further note that a design approach for wall cuts and apertures was developed as part of the “Pentridge Design Guidelines and Masterplan”, February 2014. Heritage Victoria should ensure that the approach to finishing wall openings is consistent across both the southern (Pentridge Village) and northern (Pentridge Piazza) parts of the site. Such requirements should be reflected in any permit conditions for this development.

The proposed removal of the razor wire would impact on the understanding of the history of the site, as it provides an important layer evoking the role of the prison as a place of incarceration. A significant portion of razor wire should be retained on the perimeter wall to interpret the security measures in place during the latter stages of the prison’s operation. It is important that this is visible from the public realm.

**Impact on Significant Views**

At 9.5m–10.5m high, the proposed height of townhouses in the D Division exercise yards exceeds the specified height indicated at page 18 of the *Pentridge Village Design Guidelines and Masterplan*, which states that the “Height of new development should be no greater than 2 storeys” [which equates to approximately 6.6m]. The impact of this additional height is evident in the photomontage prepared by MAP Architecture and Design which shows the visibility of the townhouses looking east

from Warden's Walk. The height of the proposed townhouses also exceeds the height of the perimeter wall (5.5m–6m). The height of the townhouses should be reduced to the two storeys specified in the *Pentridge Village Design Guidelines and Masterplan*, and should be in line with the height of the perimeter wall. This would clearly demarcate the D Division precinct from surrounding development.

Furthermore, as noted in the Heritage Impact Statement, “new works in the southern and eastern portions of Lot 23 will result in the loss of views of D Division” from Urquhart Street to High Street. At 9m, the height of the Urquhart Street townhouses is significantly higher than the bluestone perimeter wall (5.5–6m), therefore impacting views of D Division and registered walls. Similarly, at 14m, the height of units addressing High Street aligns with the parapet of D Division, obscuring views of it and the perimeter wall. The height of these townhouses should be reduced to address these impacts in line with the *Pentridge Village Design Guidelines and Masterplan* which states that

*Building height in this area should generally range from 2–4 storeys and should generally be responsive to a detailed site analysis, building envelope capacity and viewline assessment detailing the impact of design on identified views of D Division and heritage registered walls.*

[p19]

We further note that the townhouses planned in the Eastern and Western exercise yards, as well as to the south of the D Division perimeter wall, have extremely small setbacks from the perimeter wall. Of particular concern are Units 23–27, which almost abut the wall. This proximity to the perimeter wall, combined with landscaping indicated on the drawings, would significantly impact the ability to read the perimeter wall as a continuous defining element when viewed from Wardens Walk and adjacent pedestrian access ways. Setbacks from the perimeter wall should be increased to minimise this impact.

### **Implementation of Heritage Audit Management Plan**

The National Trust understands that Future Estate is bound by a covenant pursuant to Section 85 of the *Heritage Act 1995* which requires the implementation of the *Heritage Audit Management Plan*, July 2007, prepared by the Heritage Council of Victoria (see Annexure 1).

The Trust further understands that Future Estate has not yet progressed the implementation of this Management Plan, which includes management and maintenance requirements for identified Heritage Infrastructure. In particular, we note the following requirements:

#### **1. Heritage Infrastructure—Building, Walls, Roofs, Fences, Gates and Associated Elements (pp3–8)**

It is unclear whether Future Estate has progressed the auditing and maintenance of Heritage Infrastructure as required by the *Heritage Audit Management Plan*. It would therefore be appropriate for provisions for implementation, as well as specific conservation works, to be included in any permit conditions for the proposed development.

#### **2. Implementation of Heritage Infrastructure—Interpretation Material (pp9–12)**

It is the Trust's understanding that Future Estate has not yet commenced the implementation of this component of the *Heritage Audit Management Plan*, which includes provision for site interpretation and a museum. It would therefore be appropriate for these requirements to be included in any permit conditions for the proposed development.

### Conservation of Ronald Bull Mural:

The *Heritage Audit Management Plan* includes a requirement to:

*Ensure that the Ronald Bull mural in F Division is inspected every two years or more frequently if necessary by an appropriately qualified paintings conservator and undertake conservation in accordance with the conservator's recommendations.*

The Trust is concerned about reports by members of the local community who have recently inspected the Ronald Bull Mural in F Division that it is deteriorating and requires attention from a conservator. The National Trust therefore requests that Heritage Victoria **urgently** seeks an undertaking from Future Estate to fulfil their obligations to conserve this important mural before it deteriorates any further. It is our understanding that the mural is also on the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register. Work should therefore be undertaken in accordance with the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* and in consultation with appropriate Aboriginal stakeholders, including the Office of Aboriginal Victoria.



Figure 1: Ronald Bull Mural, F Division (Michael Hamel Green, inspected 12 November 2015)

### Interpretation of Burial Plots east of D Division

The Heritage Impact Statement prepared by Lovell Chen for the proposed development notes that the burial plots are to be “acknowledged through a future interpretation scheme, the nature of which is to be determined”. It is concerning that provisions for this have not been made as part of this permit application, given requirements under the Covenant with the Heritage Council, and the impact of the proposed development on the surrounding exercise yards and D Division. A requirement for interpretation for this area should therefore be included in any conditions for the proposed development.

## Conclusion

The Trust believes that in its current form, this proposal would have unreasonable impacts on significant views to D Division and registered perimeter walls. Furthermore, the proposed design exceeds height limits set out in the *Pentridge Village Design Guidelines and Masterplan*, August 2009. This should be addressed through a decrease in height of the townhouses, as well as increased setbacks from D Division and perimeter walls. A portion or razor wire should also be retained along the perimeter wall to interpret another layer of the site's history.

While the National Trust accepts that development at Pentridge is necessary to enable the conservation of historic fabric and a viable use for the site into the future, it is important for a balance to be achieved between development and conservation. However, while permit applications have been submitted for two substantial developments on the site since the site was purchased by Future Estate, we are concerned that they have done little to progress their obligations contained in *Heritage Audit Management Plan*. The requirements of this Plan should therefore be tied through strict permit conditions to any permits issued for new work.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'F. Watson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Felicity Watson  
Senior Community Advocate

Annexure 1: *Former Pentridge Prison Heritage Audit Management Plan*, July 2007, Heritage Council of Victoria