

Tuesday, 14 November 2017



The Hon. Richard Wynne MP
Minister for Planning
Level 16, 8 Nicholson Street
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

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East Melbourne
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Re: APM Boiler House, Alphington

Dear Minister Wynne,

We write with regard to your decision under Section 43(1) of the *Heritage Act 1995* to call in the Recommendation by Heritage Victoria to include the APM Boiler House on the Victorian Heritage Register, a Recommendation which was upheld by the Heritage Council in their report under Section 44(1) of the Act, dated 5 June 2017.

The National Trust is disappointed in this decision, and is seriously concerned about the implications of this extraordinary action. In our view, this decision is at odds with the Government's commitment to strengthening heritage protection through the *Heritage Act 2017*, which came into force on 1 November.

We note that the nomination to the Register was supported by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria), as well as prominent experts in the field of architectural history. This decision is therefore of significant interest to the architectural community, as well as the community more broadly. This has been reflected in consistently negative feedback received from our members and supporters regarding the decision not to include the Boiler House on the Register.

While we acknowledge that the potential for adaptive re-use, contamination, and condition are relevant issues for consideration in the management of heritage places, these issues have no bearing on whether or not a place is of heritage significance, and should be considered at permit stage.

The National Trust is committed to raising community awareness about industrial and post-war heritage, and we were therefore also disappointed by the disparaging language used to justify the decision. In particular, we note your comment that "The old power station is an eyesore, a relic of the past and needs to go." We respectfully say that such comments have the potential to undermine the community's understanding and appreciation of our heritage, and that protecting "relics of the past" is in fact the key objective of heritage conservation.

We welcome the announcement that \$5.1m will be spent on heritage measures at the site, and advocate for some of these funds to be invested in a comprehensive archival recording of the APM Boiler House, including photographs and measured drawings.

Given the scientific and technical significance of the building, we also respectfully suggest that, at a minimum, a representative sample of the curtain wall structure be retained and held in a public collection, to enable future architectural historians, architects, and engineers, to study the structure.

We note that there is currently no institution in Victoria dedicated to architectural history, and suggest that there may be an opportunity to explore the feasibility of a museum of architecture to house significant architectural archives and collections. We are aware of a number of collections of architectural fabric and archival material which have significant educational value, yet are currently inaccessible to the public. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss such a proposal further.

The National Trust of Australia (Victoria) would be happy to assist with any initiatives to record and interpret the history of the APM Boiler House, and welcome you to contact my office on 9656 9802 if you would like to discuss this matter further.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'S' followed by a horizontal line that tapers to the right.

Simon Ambrose
Chief Executive Officer