

Analysis of the heritage issues:
proposed redevelopment

**Coptic Orthodox Church
Diocese of Melbourne
88-154 Park Road
Donvale**



Statement of evidence to the VCAT
January 2011

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1.0 Introduction

This statement of evidence has been commissioned by the owners of the subject site, The Coptic Orthodox Church, Melbourne Diocese. It makes reference to the application for redevelopment of the site at 88-154 Park Road, Donvale. The application is for a sports and multi-function centre on the south of the subject site.

A former monastery complex, built in the 1930s, currently occupies part of the site. I have not been instructed to undertake substantial new research into the history of the property, as the history and development of the site have been well set out in earlier documents. In particular, two detailed reports prepared in the past in relation to the site by Lovell Chen dated March 2009 (*Heritage Appraisal* and *Statement of Heritage Impacts*), submitted as part of the application documentation. The primary intent of this statement is to assess the impact that the proposed redevelopment will have upon the character and significance of the former monastery and the broader site.

2.0 Sources of Information

The analysis below draws upon site visits and inspections of the site, along with a review of the City of Manningham's Heritage Overlay policy (**Clause 43.01**), Heritage Policy (**Clause 21.11**) and Cultural Heritage Policy (**Clause 22.03**) and the related heritage studies and conservation objectives for the area.

As noted above, I have also been provided with copies of the Lovell Chen *Heritage Appraisal* and *Statement of Heritage Impacts* (dated March 2009). This statement should be read in conjunction with the drawings and other documents submitted with respect to the application and present appeal, the key drawings being the amended plans dated 3 December 2010.

3.0 Author Qualifications

A statement of my qualifications and experience with respect to urban conservation issues is appended to this report. Note that I have provided expert witness evidence on similar matters before the VCAT, Building Appeals Board and Heritage Council on numerous occasions in the past, and have been retained in such matters variously by municipal councils, developers and objectors to planning proposals.

4.0 Summary of Views

In summary, I find the application for approval of alterations and additions to the existing complex at 88-154 Park Road, Donvale, to be acceptable with regard to heritage considerations as outlined below.

- The subject site is within an individual heritage overlay (HO128) under the Manningham Planning Scheme. The Coptic Orthodox Church – Diocese of Melbourne (former Whitefriars Carmelite Monastery) is considered to be of local and regional significance to Manningham.
- The proposed development, while proposing a substantial building for this extensive site, strives to achieve a visually recessive outcome, and thus to not detract from the historic and aesthetic qualities of the former monastery and the broader site. This is to be achieved through the proposed building's siting on a recessive sports field on the site, on which the amended scheme for the site has been lowered in height a further four metres.
- The proposal is part of a master plan for the revitalisation of the site, which will enable its ongoing use and conservation.
- The west elevation of the former Whitefriars Carmelite Monastery, nearby which the proposed development will be situated, is defined architecturally by its irregular massing and eclectic detailing. A contemporary building of the type proposed, while visible on the site, will not have a detrimental effect upon the aesthetic qualities of this existing building, nor the broader site, due to the extent to which the two are to be visually and physically separate.
- The sports pitch upon which the proposed development will be situated contributes little to the overall historic integrity of the site. It was not, like many parts of the site, a formally planned and landscaped area. The development of this part of the site will therefore have a minimal impact upon the broader complex.

In light of the above, it is my view that the proposed development has been prepared with appropriate regard for the purposes and decision guidelines of **Clauses 43.01, 21.11 and 22.03** of the Manningham Planning Scheme.

5.0 History and Description

History

As noted previously, the history of the site has been well documented in earlier reports, notably the *Heritage Appraisal* prepared by Lovell Chen in March 2009, and on this basis the history is provided here in summary form.

1802	First Carmelites (lay associates transported as convicts) transported to Sydney.
1882	Carmelites established in the Melbourne parish of Sandridge (Port Melbourne).
1928	First Australian Novitiate founded at Albert Park
1930	The Novitiate and House of Studies moves to <i>Whitefriars</i> at Kew.
1936	Following the expansion of the student house at Kew, a 116 acre property (the former site of a sanatorium) is purchased by the Order at Doncaster East (now Donvale). Schemes for the Whitefriars Monastery are prepared by Fritsch and Fritsch, and by Payne and Dale, with those of the latter being selected.
1937	The landscape of the Whitefriars Monastery is designed by Hugh Linaker. The Whitefriars Carmelite Monastery is opened in August by the Bishop of Sale, with residency of a small community beginning there in October.
1938	The Whitefriars Monastery is featured in the <i>Journal of the Victorian Institute of Architects</i> .
1949	Unrealised plans for the chapel of the monastery are prepared by Tom Payne.
c1957	The establishment of an educational institution on the site, to the north of the monastery, is proposed. Plans are prepared by Tom Payne.
1961	Whitefriars College is opened.
1962	Plans for the accommodation and facilities wing are prepared.
1963	The accommodation and facilities wing is built.
c. 1975	The site is subdivided between the Monastery and Whitefriars College.
1999	The Carmelite Novitiate and House of Studies relocate to Port Melbourne.
2002	The Whitefriars Monastery is purchased by the Coptic Orthodox Church – Diocese of Melbourne in January. It becomes the Diocese Headquarters of the Church.

Description

The subject site is situated on the northeast corner of Park and Heads Roads, Donvale. It is a large, triangular, sloping site, consisting of 22 acres (8.9 hectares), and the subject site has both indigenous and introduced established trees throughout its grounds.

The former Whitefriars Carmelite Monastery is situated towards the centre of the subject site, with its entrance facing the corner of Park and Heads Roads where the main entrance to the complex is situated. To the south of the former monastery is a sports pitch, concealed at its north end from the complex of buildings by a high bank and mature trees.

The former Whitefriars Carmelite Monastery consists of three Romanesque-inspired apricot/cream brick buildings, the former Monastery (the main building), a kitchen wing and an accommodation wing. The original design of the complex was never realised, and consequently it has an irregular plan that includes an arcaded cloister; a projecting two-storey entrance hall; and behind this a four-storey tower.



Figure 1: Lawn area, contained within the circular drive, towards the front of the monastery.



Figure 2

The former Whitefriars Carmelite Monastery

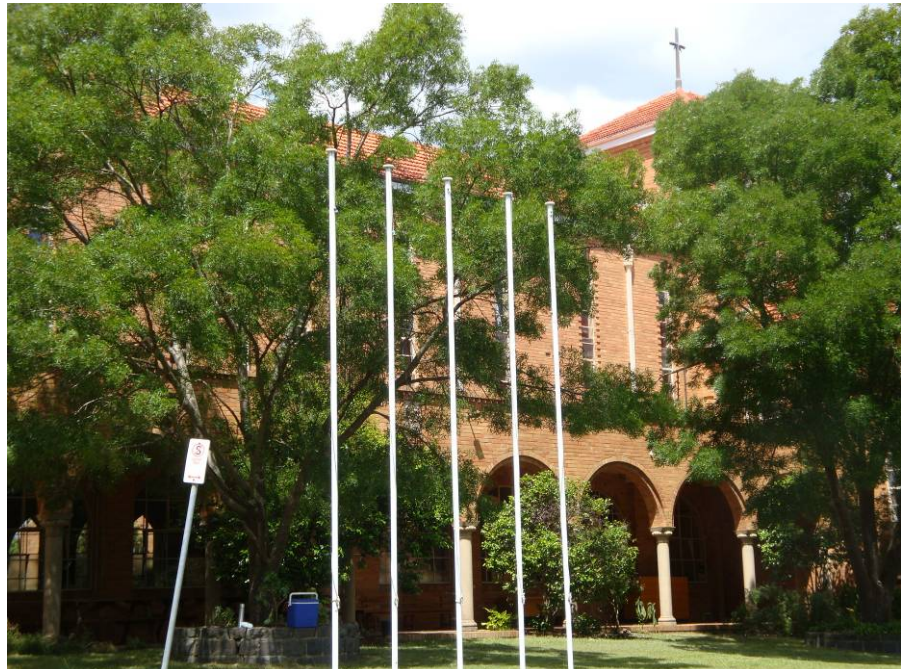


Figure 3

The arching on the ground floor at the front of the former Whitefriars Carmelite Monastery.



Figure 4 The projecting entrance and four-storey tower of the former Whitefriars Carmelite Monastery.



Figure 5 Sports pitch to the south of the former Whitefriars Carmelite Monastery, the site for the proposed development, looking northeast towards the former monastery (partially obscured by mature trees).



Figure 6: Archway of the 1963 accommodation wing. The bridge that this arch supports connects the wing with the main monastery building.



Figure 7: Cloister at the rear of the complex.



Figure 8: A reproduction of Michelangelo's Pietà in the cloister.

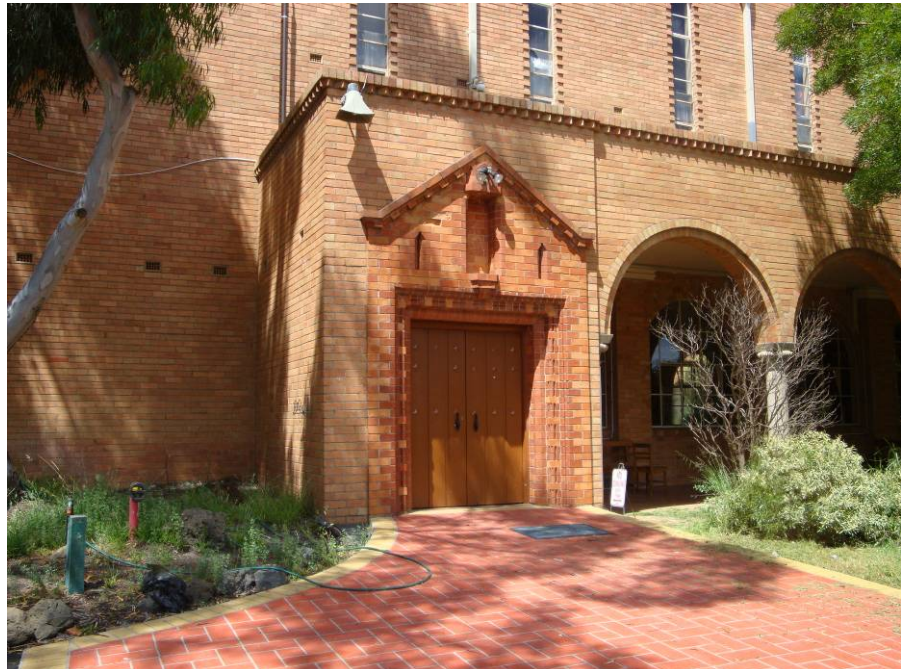


Figure 9: Synthetic stone Romanesque columns on the arcade, and one of the gabled entrance porches. Saw tooth corbelling, seem along the cornice of the building, is an element visible on buildings throughout the complex.



Figure 10: Entrance arch dressed in Hawkesbury freestone.

The building has a series of terracotta tile roofs (hip and gable). There are a variety of windows upon the facade, with tall, narrow, corbelled windows being the predominant feature on the west elevation. The decorative treatment of the former Monastery includes synthetic stone Romanesque columns on the arcade of the principal elevation, apricot brick around an entrance to the west of the arcade, an arch of the entrance dressed in Hawkesbury freestone, and saw tooth corbelling forming the cornices of the building. The complex is built upon a clinker brick base.

A service wing is situated at the south of the former Monastery. Due to the many additions to this wing since its original construction, it comprises a series of separately roofed, yet internally connected, structures. These are pitched roofed, in a combination of metal roofing, and tile. The wing is more utilitarian in character than much of the remainder of the complex, however it does have elements that unify it with the other buildings including the saw tooth corbelling and salmon colour brick. It also has some metal-framed, stilted arched windows, which date to the first stage of the wing's development. The 1963 accommodation wing is two-storey and has salmon coloured brickwork. An arched bridge connects this wing to the main monastery building.



Figure 11: The accommodation wing.



Figure 12: Rear of the kitchen wing.

6.0 Listings and controls

Manningham City Council

The site is covered by HO128.

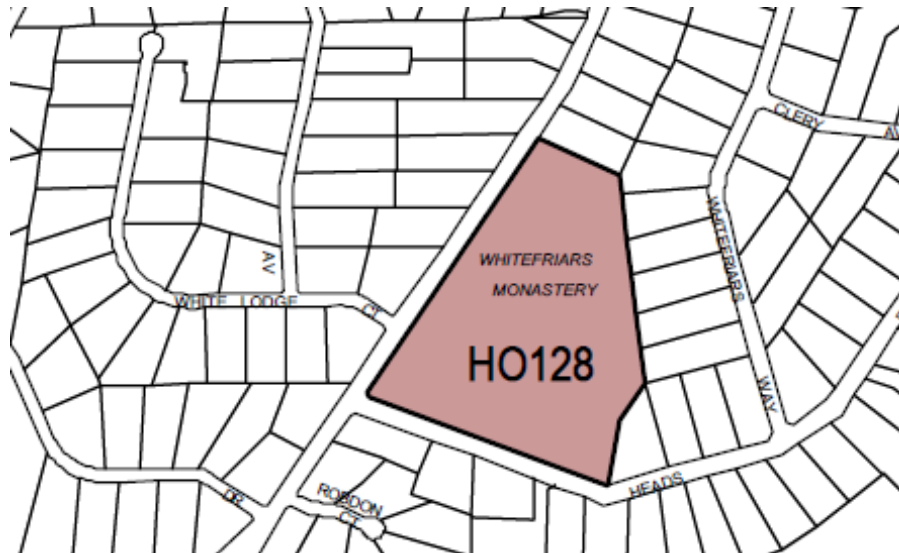


Figure 13: Heritage Overlay map for (HO128) showing the location of the review site.

The former Whitefriars Carmelite Monastery, 88-154 Park Road Donvale, is subject to an individual heritage overlay in the Manningham Planning Scheme. The *Manningham Heritage Study Review* (Context Pty. Ltd. 2006) notes that the building is significant for being:

Of regional architectural significance as an early design of Tom Payne architect; Payne went on to design the chapel at Newman College. Locally significant as an important landmark in the district. There are fine vehicular and pedestrian gates and bluestone posts remaining from the earlier institution.¹

7.0 Heritage Overlay

As noted above, the site is covered by a heritage overlay precinct (HO128). As such it is subject to the provisions of **Clause 43.01**, Heritage Overlay. The purpose of the overlay is as follows:

- *To implement the State Planning Policy Framework and the Local Planning Policy Framework, including the Municipal Strategic Statement and local planning policies.*
- *To conserve and enhance heritage places of natural or cultural significance.*
- *To conserve and enhance those elements which contribute to the significance of heritage places.*

¹ Context Pty. Ltd., *Manningham Heritage Study Review*, 2006.

- *To ensure development does not adversely affect the significance of heritage places.*
- *To conserve specifically identified heritage places by allowing a use that would otherwise be prohibited if this will demonstrably assist with conservation of the significance of heritage places.*

Before deciding on an application, in addition to the decision guidelines in **Clause 65**, the responsible authority will need to consider, as appropriate:

- *The State Planning Policy Framework and the Local Planning Policy Framework, including the Municipal Strategic Statement and local planning Policies.*
- *The significance of the heritage place and whether the proposal will adversely affect the natural or cultural significance of the place.*
- *Any applicable statement of significance, heritage study and any applicable conservation policy.*
- *Whether the location, bulk, form or appearance of the proposed building will adversely affect the significance of the heritage place.*
- *Whether the location, bulk, form and appearance of the proposed building is in keeping with the character and appearance of adjacent buildings and the heritage place.*
- *Whether the demolition, removal or external alteration will adversely affect the significance of the heritage place.*
- *Whether the proposed works will adversely affect the significance, character or appearance of the heritage place.*
- *Whether the proposed subdivision will adversely affect the significance of the heritage place.*
- *Whether the proposed subdivision may result in development which will adversely affect the significance, character or appearance of the heritage place.*
- *Whether the proposed sign will adversely affect the significance, character or appearance of the heritage place.*
- *Whether the lopping or development will adversely affect the health, appearance or significance of the tree.*

Manningham's Heritage Policy, **Clause 21.11**, provides guidelines for the conservation of heritage places. The Objectives of the policy are:

- *To enhance cultural heritage through the retention and protection of significant buildings, precincts, trees and landscapes.*
- *To minimise impacts on heritage places as a result of changes to adjoining land uses and development,*
- *To protect sites of archaeological significance.*

The strategies of **Clause 21.11** are:

- *Identify and assess the cultural significance of heritage places and sites of archaeological significance.*
- *Discourage the demolition and destruction of heritage places.*
- *Encourage the retention of heritage fabric in development proposals.*
- *Encourage initiatives that preserve and enhance Manningham's cultural heritage.*
- *Protect and enhance the unique heritage values of the Warrandyte Township Heritage Precinct.*

- *Require that an assessment be undertaken by a suitably qualified archaeologist, for development proposals in areas where there is a known or potential site of archaeological significance.*
- *Consider the preparation of amendments to the Heritage Overlay schedule to allow prohibited uses, where the use is unlikely to have a detrimental impact on adjoining land and which may assist with the ongoing preservation of the heritage building.*
- *Encourage the use of existing buildings in the Heritage Precinct on the north side of Yarra Street, Warrandyte for a limited range of commercial uses and to discourage the use of the buildings for any other purpose.*

Clause 22.03 Cultural Heritage Policy is also concerned with the preservation of heritage places. Its objectives are consistent with those of **Clause 21.11**, being:

- *To recognise, protect, conserve, manage and enhance identified cultural heritage places.*
- *To ensure that the significance of cultural heritage places involving the aesthetic, historic, scientific, architectural or social value of a heritage asset to past, present and future generations, is assessed and used to guide planning decisions.*
- *To encourage the retention of cultural heritage places and ensure that these places are recognised and afforded appropriate protection to enrich the character, identity and heritage of the municipality.*
- *To ensure that the subdivision of a cultural heritage place does not adversely affect the identified aesthetic, historic, scientific, architectural or social value of the heritage place or other features identified in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay.*
- *To promote the identification, protection and management of sites and areas of archaeological significance including aboriginal cultural heritage.*

The policies for new buildings and works, and for vegetation, within **Clause 22.03**, provide a basis for the assessment of development of heritage places:

New buildings and works or additions to buildings

- *Additional buildings or works on the site of a heritage building and/or located within a heritage precinct conserve, enhance and be responsive to the heritage place and/or precinct.*
- *The development of cultural heritage places be compatible with and not adversely affect the heritage value and significance of the cultural heritage place and/or precinct.*
- *Development adjacent to heritage places and precincts responds positively to the heritage place in terms of its bulk, setbacks, materials, colour scheme and form.*
- *The design of new buildings not “mock” the heritage building and/or precinct, but rather complement the original fabric and design characteristics of the heritage building and/or precinct in terms of bulk, style, materials, setbacks, colour scheme and form.*

Vegetation

- *The removal or lopping of vegetation identified as making a significant contribution to the setting and heritage value of a heritage place is strongly discouraged.*

- *Removal or lopping of significant vegetation may be supported in limited circumstances, including where parts or all of the vegetation is dead, dying or presents an immediate risk.*

As discussed below, it is my view that the proposed works have been prepared with sufficient regard for the objectives of **Clauses 43.01, 21.11 and 22.03**.

8.0 The proposed development

It is proposed to build a two-storey sports and multi-function centre towards the south of the subject site. The centre will comprise a swimming pool, gymnasium, café, basement car park and auxiliary spaces. This development will incorporate bridges, ramps and pergolas that will provide pedestrian links to the existing building on the site. A new entrance drive from Park Road will be constructed, and a car park built will be built over the existing tennis courts.

The former Whitefriars Carmelite Monastery is subject to a Heritage Overlay (HO128). Consequently any decisions made regarding this site must be sensitive with regard to how development may impact upon its heritage value.

It is the setting of the complex, elevated above an expansive lawn forecourt, enclosed by the circular drive, which contributes to much of the aesthetic qualities of the former Whitefriars Carmelite Monastery. The football oval, despite claims to the contrary (Willys Keeble, Heritage Adviser to Council, 19 March 2010), contributes little to this setting. This sporting field is obscured by landscaping, and sinks in a basin formation at the end closest to the monastery building. Therefore the proposed development, being located in this recessive area, will not impact to any appreciable level upon the identified aesthetic qualities of the former Monastery as set out in Council's citation and statement of significance. It is, however, recommended that the forecourt remain as a lawn, and no car parking, paving or pathways be imposed upon this space.

Council has raised concerns that the proposed development 'is too large and bulky for this sensitive location...', and has suggested that it ought to be placed further to the west of the former Monastery. In response to these concerns, an amended scheme has been prepared for the purposes of this VCAT application for review. The amended proposal has lowered the building by 4 metres, and reduced the length of the proposed building by 2.6 metres. I note that this reduction is greater than that advised by Lovell Chen in its *Statement of Heritage Impacts* for the site (March 2009).

At present, the former Monastery is barely visible from the sports pitch, given the depth of the pitch and the established trees that border this area. Sinking of the site will assist in concealing the proposed development from view. It is recommended that additional landscaping, sympathetic to that already established on the subject site, be undertaken around the proposed development in order to make the sports and multi function centre more recessive, and help it to integrate with its the

landscaped environment. This issue is addressed in more detail in the landscape evidence of Stephen Schutt.



Figure 16 The former Whitefriars Carmelite Monastery, looking northeast from the sports pitch. The roof of the four-storey tower of the west elevation is concealed by existing trees on the site.

Council had also expressed concern about other aspects of the original proposal and its architectural design, arguing that it detracted from the architectural significance of the building. Council raised concerns that the proposed development was unsympathetic to the ‘simple severity...’ of the former Monastery. It is noteworthy that the existing building is an unusual, if not awkward, composition of elements, mostly due to the complex never being completed to Dale’s design. Its composition is complex, rather than simple (although its detailing is reasonable simple for an historicist design of this kind). This is has been further affected by additions including those to the kitchen wing and a new wing for accommodation completed in the 1960s.

Given the scale, prominent siting and complex massing of the former Monastery, the proposed development will not clash with or overly dominate the architectural character of any distinct and ordered composition, or identifiable rhythm.

The design of the proposed development is contemporary, and a building of this character would in many locations be unsuitable in terms of style, scale and material. However in this instance, the proposed development is to be situated upon a recessive portion of the site, separated from the main building. It will be isolated, physically and visually, from the most notable architectural features of

the former Whitefriars Carmelite Monastery, which include the Romanesque arcade, dressed stone entrance, and the ordered rear cloister.

A revised landscape plan has also been prepared as part of Stephen Schutt's evidence that endeavours to create a landscaped environment to the front of the proposed new building, maintaining to the extent possible the character of the area and also providing a leafy interface between the new building and the old, softening and filtering the contrast in period and character between the two.

Any impact of the proposed development upon the former Whitefriars Carmelite Monastery and its historical integrity will be minor. Assessed against the benefits that the proposed sports/multi function centre will bring the Coptic Orthodox Church and the wider community, providing a sound basis for the ongoing use of the place and thus the conservation of the key attributes of the site into the long term future, the benefits will outweigh any minor impact the development may have on the heritage value of the site.

Having regard to all the above, I am satisfied that the proposed development is acceptable from a heritage perspective.

9.0 Declaration

I declare that I have made all the inquiries that I believe are desirable and appropriate, and that no matters of significance which I regard as relevant have to my knowledge been withheld from the Tribunal.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bryce Raworth', with a period at the end.

BRYCE RAWORTH

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CONSERVATION•URBAN DESIGN
CONSERVATION CONSULTANTS
ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIANS

BRYCE RAWORTH
M. ARCH., B. A. (HONS), ICCROM (ARCH)

Bryce Raworth has worked with issues relating to heritage and conservation since the mid-1980s, and has specialised in this area since establishing his own consultant practice in 1991. **Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd, Conservation•Urban Design**, provides a range of heritage services, including the assessment of the significance of particular sites, preparation of conservation analyses and management plans, design and/or restoration advice for interventions into significant buildings, and detailed advice regarding the resolution of technical problems relating to deteriorating or damaged building fabric.

Since 2004 Raworth has been a member of the Official Establishments Trust, which advises on the conservation and improvement of Admiralty House and Kirribilli House in Sydney and Government House and The Lodge in Canberra. As a member of the former Historic Buildings Council in Victoria, sitting on the Council's permit, planning and community relations committees, Raworth has been involved with the registration and permit processes for many registered historic buildings. In 1996 he was appointed an alternate member of the new Heritage Council, the successor the Historic Buildings Council, and in 1998 was made a full member. At present he provides regular advice to architects and private owners on technical, architectural and planning issues relative to the conservation and adaptation of historic buildings, and is occasionally called upon to provide expert advice before the VCAT. He is currently the conservation consultant for the cities of Stonnington and Kingston and conservation consultant to the Melbourne Heritage Restoration Fund.

Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd has prepared conservation plans for a number of registered historic buildings, including Walter Burley Griffin's Essendon Incinerator. The company's experience with institutional buildings has led to preparation of conservation plans for the Mac.Robertson Girls' High School, Castlemaine Gaol, J Ward, Ararat, the former Russell Street Police Headquarters, Ballarat State Offices, Camberwell Court House, Shepparton Court House and the Mont Park asylum precinct.

With respect to historic precincts, the company has provided detailed advice towards the resolution of heritage issues along the Upfield railway line. The company is currently contributing to redevelopment plans for the former Coburg Prisons Complex (comprising Pentridge Prison and the Metropolitan Prison) and the former Albion Explosives Factory, Maribyrnong. In 1993 Bryce Raworth led a consultant team which reviewed the City of Melbourne's conservation data and controls for the CBD, and in 1997 **Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd** revised the former City of South Melbourne Conservation Study with respect to the area within the present City of Melbourne. The firm is currently undertaking heritage studies on behalf of the cities of Melbourne and Kingston and is completing documentation for significant heritage places and areas in the City of Stonnington

In recent years **Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd** has also provided documentation and advice during construction on the restoration of a number of key registered and heritage overlay buildings, including the Ebenezer Mission church and outbuildings, Antwerp, the former MMTB Building, Bourke Street West, Melbourne, the former Martin & Pleasance Building, 178 Collins Street, Melbourne, and the former Uniting Church, Howe Crescent, South Melbourne. At present the office is documenting substantial restoration works to the MOMA at Heide, Templestowe Road, Bulleen, to the Church of the Sacred Heart, Grey Street, St Kilda, and to the Coburg Prisons Complex (including the Pentridge Prison entry buildings and walls to Champ Street).

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STATEMENT OF EXPERIENCE

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BRYCE RAWORTH

- Professional Status:** Conservation Consultant and Architectural Historian
- Current Positions:** Conservation consultant to the cities of Kingston and Stonnington
Conservation consultant to the Melbourne Heritage Restoration Fund
Member, Official Establishments Trust
- Organisation Membership:** Royal Australian Institute of Architects
- Professional Experience:** independent practice as conservation consultant and architectural historian from January 1991 (ongoing). Services include: identification and assessment of the significance of sites and complexes; preparation of guidelines regarding the safeguarding of significant sites; provision of technical, design and planning advice to architects, owners and government on issues relating to the conservation of sites of cultural significance; expert witness advice on conservation issues before the VCAT
- member, Historic Buildings Council (architectural historian's chair) 1993-1996; member, Heritage Council (architect's chair) 1998-2002
- conservation consultant to the cities of Brighton, Northcote and Sandringham (1989 only), Essendon, Hawthorn and Kew (1989-1994), Melbourne (1993-2009) and Prahran (1992-1994)
- established the Metropolitan Heritage Advisory Service on behalf of the Ministry for Planning & Environment - this service was offered to the cities of Brighton, Essendon, Hawthorn, Kew, Northcote and Sandringham in 1989-90
- Studies:** Certificate of Architectural Conservation, ICCROM (International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and the Restoration of Cultural Property at Rome), 1994
- Master of Architecture by thesis, University of Melbourne, 1993 (thesis: *A Question of Style: Domestic Architecture in Melbourne, 1919-1942*)
- B. Architecture (First Class Honours), University of Melbourne, 1986
- B. Arts (Second Class Honours, Division A), University of Melbourne, 1986
- Committee Membership:** Twentieth Century Buildings Committee, National Trust of Australia (Victoria), 1990-1994 (Chairman 1992-1993)
- RAIA Jury, Conservation Category, 1995, 1996, 1998 and 2001 Awards (Chairman 1996 & 1998)

Awarded:

Henry and Rachel Ackman Travelling Scholarship in Architecture,
1987-88

JG Knight Award, conservation of Heide 1, Royal Australian Institute
of Architects, Victorian Chapter, 2003

Lachlan Macquarie Award for heritage (commendation),
conservation of Heide 1, Royal Australian Institute of Architects
National Award program, 2003

Palladio Scholarship, Venice, 2006