



## **Heritage Council Registration Hearing**

### **Eltham War Memorial Buildings, 903 – 907 Main Road, Eltham**

**Hearing** – 17 February 2021

**Members** – Ms Margaret Baird (Chair), Ms Megan Goulding, Ms Maggi Solly

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#### **DETERMINATION OF THE HERITAGE COUNCIL**

**That the place is not to be included in the Heritage Register** – After considering the Executive Director’s recommendation and all submissions received, and after conducting a hearing into the matter, the Heritage Council has determined, pursuant to section 49(1)(c)(i) of the *Heritage Act 2017*, that the Eltham War Memorial Buildings complex, 903 – 907 Main Road, Eltham, is not of State level cultural heritage significance and is not to be included in the Victorian Heritage Register, but refers the recommendation and all submissions to the Nillumbik Shire Council for consideration for an amendment to the Nillumbik Planning Scheme.

**Margaret Baird (Chair)**  
**Megan Goulding**  
**Maggi Solly**

**Decision Date** – 4 May 2021

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As a peak Heritage body, the Heritage Council is proud to acknowledge the Traditional Owners as the original custodians of the land and waters on which we meet, and to acknowledge the importance and significance of Aboriginal cultural heritage in Victoria. We honour Elders past and present whose knowledge and wisdom has ensured the continuation of culture and traditional practices. The site subject of this determination is part of the traditional land of the Woi Wurrung (Wurundjeri) peoples of the Kulin Nation. The Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* is the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation.

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## PERSONS WHO LODGED WRITTEN HEARING SUBMISSIONS, APPEARED AND MADE VERBAL SUBMISSIONS AT THE HEARING

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, HERITAGE VICTORIA ('THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR')**

Written submissions were received from the Executive Director. Ms Clare Chandler, Heritage Officer - Assessments appeared and made verbal submissions at the Hearing on behalf of the Executive Director.

### **ELTHAM DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.**

Written submissions were received from Mr Jim Connor, President of Eltham District Historical Society, who appeared and made verbal submissions at the Hearing.

### **MS CATHERINE RUSSELL, COMMITTEE MEMBER – ELTHAM COMMUNITY ACTION GROUP INC.**

Written submissions were received from Ms Catherine Russell, a committee member of Eltham Community Action Group Inc. who appeared at the Hearing and made verbal submissions.

### **DR ANDREW LEMON**

Written submissions were received from Dr Andrew Lemon, who appeared at the Hearing and made verbal submissions. Dr Lemon called the Hon. Assoc. Prof. Judith Smart, who had given a written statement of evidence and then gave expert witness evidence at the Hearing and was available for cross examination.

### **PROFESSOR JULIE WILLIS**

Written submissions were received from Prof. Julie Willis. Professor Willis appeared and made verbal submissions at the Hearing.

### **MRS LYNNSAY PRUNOTTO**

Written submissions were received from Mrs Lynnsay Prunotto. Ms Michaela Prunotto appeared and made verbal submissions at the Hearing on behalf of Mrs Lynnsay Prunotto.

### **MS SUE DYET**

Written submissions were received from Ms Sue Dyet. Ms Dyet appeared and made verbal submissions at the Hearing.

## **OTHER PERSONS WHO LODGED WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS BUT DID NOT APPEAR OR MAKE VERBAL SUBMISSIONS AT THE HEARING**

**Ms Leigh Northwood on behalf of Nillumbik Shire Council**

**Mr Andrew Barras**

**Mr Graham Fildes**

**Ms Robyn Joseph**

**Miss Felicity Bing (associated with Eltham Pre-School)**

**Ms Catherine Johnson**

**Ms Zheng Wu (associated with Eltham Pre-School)**

**Mrs Jenny Daw**

**Mrs Larysa Sutherland (associated with Eltham Pre-School)**

**Ms Jo-Anne Barker**

**Professor Hannah Lewi (Docomomo Australia)**

**Ms Janet Boddy**

**Mrs Rosemary Aitken**

**Mrs Lauri Widdup**

**Ms Natalie Duffy**

**Ms Sarah-Jane Mackintosh (associated with Eltham Pre-School)**

**Professor Andy Herries**

**Dr Robert Duncan (associated with Eltham Pre-School)**

**Mr Harry Floyd (associated with Eltham Pre-School)**

## INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

### THE PLACE

01. On 18 May 2020, the Executive Director made a recommendation to the Heritage Council, pursuant to section 37(1)(a) of the *Heritage Act 2017* ('the Act'), that the Eltham War Memorial Buildings complex, comprising the war memorial gates, Eltham Pre-school, Eltham War Memorial Hall, and the former Infant Welfare Centre, located at 903 – 907 Main Road, Eltham (together, 'the Place') should not be included in the Victorian Heritage Register ('the Register').
02. The following descriptions of the Place and its history are given on pages 3 and 4 of the Recommendation, are not endorsed by the Heritage Council and are included for information purposes only:<sup>1</sup>

#### **'WHAT IS AT THE PLACE?'**

*The Eltham War Memorial Buildings are located on a sloping site on western side of Main Road in the Melbourne suburb of Eltham. Along the Main Road frontage are the war memorial gates (1954) and a formally landscaped terrace area (2010s). This area also includes a World War I obelisk which was re-located to the site in 2012. Stepped down from this area is a row of single storey cream brick buildings comprising an Infant Welfare Centre (1952), Pre-School (1956) and War Memorial Hall (former Children's Library, 1961). A Senior Citizen's Centre (1967) lies to the rear of these buildings on the western side of the site.*

#### **WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF THE PLACE?**

*In 1943, like many community organisations in Victoria, a Women's Auxiliary in Eltham began fundraising for a war memorial for the Eltham community. The Eltham War Memorial Trust was formed in 1945 at a meeting of the Eltham Progress Association. It was decided at this time that the memorial should take the form of facilities for children. The Trust purchased the block of land on Main Road Eltham in late 1945. The foundation stone was laid by the Governor Sir Dallas Brooks at a ceremony in November 1950. It was reported at this time that a creche, soldiers rest rooms, children's library and remembrance garden would be constructed once funds became available. The architectural firm A K Lines & MacFarlane (later A K Lines, MacFarlane & Marshall) designed the first component of the complex – the Infant Welfare Centre (equivalent to a Baby Health Centre). It opened in November 1952. The war memorial gates, including a wrought iron arch with the words 'Eltham War Memorial', were installed in 1954. Community fundraising events were held regularly throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, particularly by the Women's Auxiliary of the War Memorial Trust. A K Lines, MacFarlane & Marshall called for tenders for the library and pre-school buildings in July 1955. The pre-school was completed in 1956. The Children's Library opened in November 1961. A strip of land on the north of the site was utilised for the Country Fire Authority building. Memorial gardens, including the stone retaining walls along Main Road, were installed in the 1960s. The Children's Library was re-named the Eltham War Memorial Hall in 1966. The War Memorial Trust handed the site to the Eltham Shire Council in 1965. The Senior Citizens Centre was completed in 1967. The landscape surrounding the buildings was progressively changed to meet contemporary needs. The street*

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<sup>1</sup> Footnotes from the original excluded

*frontage was further altered in the 2010s by relocation of a World War I obelisk to the site and installation of a formally landscaped terrace area.'*

### THE NOMINATION

- 03.** On 13 December 2018, the Executive Director accepted a nomination ('the Nomination') to include the Place in the Register. The extent of the Nomination was described as 'the land covering 903-907 Main Road, Eltham, VIC, 3095, specifically including the war memorial gates and three Eltham War Memorial Buildings, namely Eltham Pre-school (along with its playground areas), Eltham War Memorial Hall and the former Infant Welfare Centre'. The mapped extent of the Nomination included the Senior Citizen's Centre which lies to the rear of the site on its western side.

### RECOMMENDATION OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

- 04.** On 18 May 2020 the Executive Director, pursuant to section 37(1)(a) of the Act, recommended that the Place should not be included in the Register ('the Recommendation').

### PROCESS FOLLOWING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

- 05.** Public notice of the Recommendation pursuant to section 41 of the Act commenced on 20 May 2020 for a period of 60 days.
- 06.** Twenty-five written submissions were received in response to the Recommendation, pursuant to section 44 of the Act ('section 44 submissions'). Twenty-four of the section 44 submissions lodged objected to the recommendation not to include the Place in the Register and several of those requested that a hearing be conducted in relation to the Recommendation.
- 07.** In accordance with section 46(2)(a) of the Act, a Heritage Council registration hearing was required to be held. A Heritage Council Regulatory Committee ('the Committee') was duly constituted to consider the Recommendation and submissions received in response, to conduct a hearing and to make a determination. Prospective registration hearing participants were then notified that a hearing would be conducted and it was requested that all persons who wished to participate in the hearing process lodge a completed *Heritage Council Form B – Registration Hearing Participation Form*. Seven persons ultimately responded that they wished to participate in the hearing process.

### HEARING ARRANGEMENTS AFFECTED BY THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS ('COVID-19')

- 08.** Hearing participants were advised on 31 July 2020 that, due to State Government advice in relation to COVID-19, all Heritage Council hearings that had previously been adjourned until further notice were now being conducted by way of videoconference. Participants were advised that the registration hearing in relation to the Place had been scheduled for 17 February 2021 ('the Hearing') and that the Microsoft Teams™ online platform would be used to conduct the Hearing by videoconference. Further specific technical guidance on how the Hearing would be conducted was provided.

### PRELIMINARY, PROCEDURAL AND OTHER MATTERS

#### SITE INSPECTIONS

- 09.** The Committee conducted a site inspection of the Place on 5 February 2021, accompanied by the Heritage Council Hearings Manager. The site inspection was

facilitated by Nillumbik Shire Council and all COVID-19 protocols were observed. No submissions were sought or received at the time of the site inspection.

## CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

- 010.** At the Directions Hearing, the Chair invited Committee members to make declarations in relation to any matters that may potentially give rise to an actual or a perceived conflict of interest. No other conflicts were declared by other Committee members at the outset of the Hearing process and none were raised by other participants.
- 011.** During the Hearing, at a point when place naming conventions arose in submissions, the Chair declared her involvement in the 2020-21 review of the State-wide naming rules for places in Victoria under *the Geographic Place Names Act 1998*. Also during the Hearing and following verbal submissions in relation to early women architects in Victoria, including submissions relating to a previous Heritage Council registration hearing in relation to the Esme Johnston House at 38 Grosvenor Street, Brighton (Bayside City Council), Ms Solly declared that she had sat on that Esme Johnston House hearing committee. No concerns were raised by Hearing participants in response to the above declarations by the Chair and Ms Solly, respectively.

## FUTURE USE, MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLACE

- 012.** The Committee notes that it is not its role to consider future development proposals nor to pre-empt the consideration of potential future permit applications under the Act. Pursuant to section 49(1) of the Act, the role of the Committee is to determine whether or not the Place, or part of it, is of State-level cultural heritage significance and whether or not the Place, or part of it, is to be included in the Register.
- 013.** The Committee notes that some submissions did refer to the future use, management or development of the Place. According to the effect of section 44(4) and section 49 of the Act, the Committee has not considered these matters in reaching its determination.

## ISSUES

- 014.** The following section is not intended to be a complete record of submissions that were made to the Committee. It is a summary of what the Committee considers to be the key issues, followed by an explanation of the position that the Committee takes on them.
- 015.** Any reference to 'Criteria' or to a particular 'Criterion' refers to the *Heritage Council Criteria for Assessment of Places of Cultural Heritage Significance* (as adopted by the Heritage Council on 4 April 2019). Please refer to **Attachment 1**.
- 016.** The Committee has referred to the assessment framework in *The Victorian Heritage Register Criteria and Threshold Guidelines* as adopted by the Heritage Council on 4 April 2019 ('the Guidelines') in considering the issues before it. Any reference to steps 1, 2 or 3 refers to the assessment steps contained in the Guidelines.

## SUMMARY OF ISSUES

- 017.** The Executive Director recommended that the Place should not be included in the Register and submitted his view that the Place did not satisfy the State-level threshold in relation to any of the Criteria. The Executive Director agreed that the Eltham War Memorial Buildings were of cultural heritage significance, but not at the State level, submitting that the Place may be of potential local significance but that many similar places were constructed in Victoria during the relevant historical

period. The Executive Director ultimately concluded that the Place cannot be elevated above other similar places in Victoria and there was insufficient evidence to find otherwise. The Executive Director in the Recommendation and in submissions suggested that the buildings and features of the Place may be of local significance and suggested the Heritage Council may wish to refer the matter to Nillumbik Shire Council for consideration of an amendment to its Planning Scheme.

- 018.** The majority of section 44 submissions objected to the Executive Director's recommendation not to include the Place in the Register, and the majority of the section 44 submissions made the following central arguments:
- that the Place should be included in the Register as significant to the history of Eltham and Victoria for its associations with the phases of construction of war memorials and of pre-school and infant welfare facilities and because of the history and involvement of women in its design, funding and completion;
  - that the Place is rare as a complex of infant-related war memorial buildings, and rare for the involvement of women in the founding of the Place;
  - that the Place is largely intact and the buildings are very good examples of post-war Modernist buildings; and,
  - that the Place is significant to the people of Eltham, who have a longstanding connection to it that is ongoing.
- 019.** Submissions received in relation to the Place generally referred to Criteria A, B, D, E, G and H in their arguments and the Committee has therefore not considered it necessary to refer to either Criteria C or F specifically in this document.

## **CRITERION A – IMPORTANCE TO THE COURSE, OR PATTERN OF VICTORIA'S CULTURAL HISTORY**

### ***Summary of submissions and evidence***

- 020.** The Executive Director assessed the Place as not meeting the threshold for Criterion A at a State level and submitted that the construction of the Place in part reflected the availability of land, local fundraising efforts and the socio-economic status of local residents. The Executive Director acknowledged the association of the Place with the important phase of constructing community facilities as functional war memorials following WWII and also recognised the influence of women in the foundation of the Place and the general tendency for women to lead in the establishment of community facilities, with the establishment of maternal child health care centres being strong evidence of this phenomenon. The Executive Director found, however, there were a great number of similar facilities extant across the State and submitted that the Place does not allow the phase to be understood better than others with the same associations. The Executive Director noted that the pre-school, for example, was one of a great number constructed in response to the post-war baby boom and that these historical associations of the Place were shared across Victoria.
- 021.** Ms Russell's submission was that the Place as a complex is a better example of a war memorial constructed as a community facility than many of the standalone buildings in the Register, and that the Place represents a well-documented shift in both historical attitudes to women and their role in making history. Ms Russell submitted that the association between the Place and a group of strong, industrious and capable women was not merely one of fundraising but also of being directly involved in the sizable project and that this is of significance at a State level in the terms of Criterion A.

- 022.** Dr Lemon submitted that the historical associations of the Place with the post-war construction of war memorials, with facilities centred on children and with the history of women in Victoria resonate beyond the local community and referenced the stories of influential individuals, veterans and community groups. Dr Lemon submitted that Criterion A would likely be met at a State level.
- 023.** Mrs Prunotto submitted that the Place is a stronger expression of a functional war memorial than a standalone building and that the background to the creation of the buildings is historically important.

### ***Discussion and conclusion***

- 024.** The Committee acknowledges the contribution of women in the foundation of the Place and is grateful for the assistance provided by the extensive material in participants' submissions illuminating this contribution. The Committee is of the view that the association of women in particular with places such as the Place is a cohesive and persuasive narrative that is clearly part of the history of the Place. The Committee is also persuaded that this narrative is an underappreciated one in terms of historical representation in formal records such as the Register. The Committee further recognises there is momentum in the broader Victorian community to address this gap in recording the association between women and significant places but considers that this is not something unique to the Place. The Committee was ultimately not persuaded that, in this instance, there is evidence to elevate the significance of the Place in the terms of Criterion A.
- 025.** The Committee recognises the historical importance of this association and the significance of the Place to the people of Eltham for this reason. The Committee also accepts that the development of the Place and other similar functional buildings and complexes as war memorials during the second half of the twentieth century, and the provision of pre-school and child health facilities, each made an influential contribution to Victoria's cultural history. The Committee agrees that the Place has clearly been associated with important events and people and recognises that the Place is associated with post-WWII history, the provision of pre-school and infant care and the development of Eltham and the surrounding region.
- 026.** The Committee is not satisfied, however, that the association of the Place with the relevant historical phases can be understood, either through its fabric or through documentary evidence, better than most other war memorials or infant health and pre-school centres in Victoria with substantially the same types of associations. The Committee is of the view that there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that the association between the Place and the construction of such community facilities (either in and of themselves or as functional war memorials) is of State level cultural heritage significance to Victoria.
- 027.** The Committee determines that the Place does not satisfy the State level threshold in relation to Criterion A and is not of historical significance to the State of Victoria.

### **CRITERION B – POSSESSION OF UNCOMMON, RARE OR ENDANGERED ASPECTS OF VICTORIA'S CULTURAL HISTORY.**

#### ***Summary of submissions and evidence***

- 028.** The Recommendation and the Executive Director's submission noted the existence of a great number of other intact examples of WWII memorials and facilities for children and argued that, while the Place may be of interest as a complex of buildings, it does not meet the threshold for Criterion B for rarity at a State level as it is not rare or uncommon as a place demonstrating the phase of the erection of functional WWII community memorials. The Executive Director



also submitted that arguments made that the Place was rare or uncommon as a complex with facilities for babies and children constructed as a war memorial relies upon too many qualifiers in the terms of the exclusion guidelines within the Guidelines.

- 029.** The submissions of Dr Lemon and Ms Dyet argued that the Place is rare and satisfies Criterion B at a State level, chiefly in respect of it being a post-war complex of child and infant-related facilities.
- 030.** Professor Willis submitted that the co-location of the individual buildings of the Place is rare for its type and that, while the individual buildings are consistent with other examples, it is the co-location that is unique.

### ***Discussion and conclusion***

- 031.** The Committee has considered all submissions to the Hearing that the Place is rare, uncommon or unusual. The Committee is of the view that, whether or not the Place was to be considered as a complex or whether or not buildings within it were considered individually, it is not one of a small number of places or objects remaining that demonstrate the phases of the erection of functional World War II community memorials or the provision of community services for babies and children. The Committee is not persuaded that the co-location of several buildings of the same class at the Place, whether two or three buildings (and excluding the more recent senior citizen's building), necessarily 'increases the rarity' of the Place or its parts within a class type. Similarly, the Committee agrees with the Executive Director that the argument that the Place would meet Criterion B as a facility for babies and children constructed as a war memorial does rely on multiple qualifiers in the terms of the exclusion guidelines.
- 032.** The Committee finds that the Place does not meet the threshold required to satisfy the requirements of Criterion B at a State level as it is not in possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history.
- 033.** The Committee determines that the Place does not satisfy Criterion B at a State level.

### **CRITERION D – IMPORTANCE IN DEMONSTRATING THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERISTICS OF A CLASS OF CULTURAL PLACES AND OBJECTS**

#### ***Summary of submissions and evidence***

- 034.** The Recommendation noted that WWII memorials as a class were erected in a range of forms and therefore frequently belong to different classes of Place, including monuments, pools, halls and clubs (but can also be within the class of war memorials – for example the Shrine of Remembrance). The Recommendation considered that the Place forms part of the classes of post-war baby health centres and post-war pre-schools/kindergartens, recognised that the Place had a clear association with this historical phase and that the principal characteristics of these classes are evident in its physical fabric. The Executive Director's view, however, was that the Place does not satisfy Criterion D at the State level because it is not a notable example of the relevant classes and that the Place is not a fine, highly intact, influential or pivotal example within the abovementioned classes of place.
- 035.** Ms Russell's submission was that the Place is significant and unique as a complex of 'child-related buildings', as compared with an assessment of significance of either a standalone baby health centre or kindergarten as part of an isolated consideration. Ms Russell submitted that the scale and siting of the buildings, together with many changes to the surroundings, impacted this assessment.

- 036.** Dr Lemon submitted that the Executive Director's submission was unnecessarily concerned with the issue of the Register being diluted by the inclusion of the Place within its class and submitted that the Place was unique in many ways as an intact and architecturally and culturally significant complex, that continues to be used, and is a better exemplar than others in its class. Dr Lemon submitted that the particular history and elements of the Place as a complex were better characterised as the qualities of the Place, rather than qualifiers to assist its inclusion, and submitted that those qualities included its distinctively modest design and its functionality related almost entirely to children. Dr Lemon submitted that, with remediation to the surroundings, the Place would be recognised as a fine, highly intact, influential or pivotal example within its class.
- 037.** Professor Willis' submission focused on the architecture of the Place, particularly its co-location of civic buildings, which Professor Willis submitted is highly unusual and, while the individual buildings are consistent with other examples, Professor Willis concluded it is their co-location that is rare. Professor Willis submitted that the Place was a fine example of '1950s civic modernism'. Professor Lewi in her submission also argued that although of utilitarian design, the Place was not typical but exemplary, and an increasingly rare survivor of the popular initiative to construct 'useful war memorials' after WWII and submitted there are very few extant examples of such a cohesive memorial precinct of a baby health centre and pre-school.
- 038.** Mrs Prunotto submitted that the examples the Recommendation used to compare the Place with other similar places are not apt and are either post-war baby health centres or post-war pre-schools. Mrs Prunotto submitted that the Place should instead be considered in the class of war memorials as that is how the buildings were intended, and that the Place is a better example than the two child-related memorials listed in the Victorian Heritage Database.

### ***Discussion and conclusion***

- 039.** The Committee has considered the evidence and submissions concerning Criterion D. The Committee considers that the Place is a relatively intact, well-designed and pleasant place and that its features and functionality clearly make an important aesthetic and social contribution to the immediate streetscape and to Eltham. The Committee agrees with the Executive Director that the Place must be characterised within the post-war baby health centre and post-war pre-schools/kindergartens place type, as that is the function the buildings serve. The Committee views as instructive the Executive Director's example of a 'memorial swimming pool' belonging within the class of swimming pools, despite the fact that it might have been constructed as a war memorial.
- 040.** It is the Committee's view that the Place cannot be properly identified as 'notable' in the terms of Criterion D within its class. The Committee considers that other similar extant pre-school and baby and maternal health centre complexes are notable in other ways and is not satisfied that the Place is necessarily more notable, or a better exemplar, as compared with other places discussed within the Recommendation and submissions that fall within the class. In relation to the other examples in the Register, the Place is certainly different from others within the class, but the Committee expects that similar buildings or complexes are each unique in some distinct way.
- 041.** The Committee has carefully considered the question of the design and influence of the Place as a complex of co-located buildings. The Committee notes that the Guidelines warn against defining a class of place too narrowly. The Committee is of the view that the classes variously suggested by submitters for the Place are too narrow, such as the class of 'complexes of three co-located infant-related buildings' and do not assist in assessing the Place and comparing it and its component parts to other similar places. In any case, the Committee agrees with

the Executive Director that in order for the Place to meet the threshold to satisfy Criterion D, the Place (or parts of it) must be significant to the State of Victoria as notable within the class of pre-school or baby health centres. The Committee finds that the buildings and features of the Place do not demonstrate fine, notable or influential characteristics within their class.

- 042.** The Committee does not conclude that the Place (or parts of it) is a notable, fine or exceptional example of a community pre-school and baby health facility or that it illustrates the characteristics of these classes of place better than others within the class.
- 043.** The Committee determines that the Place does not satisfy Criterion D at a State level.

## **CRITERION E – IMPORTANCE IN EXHIBITING PARTICULAR AESTHETIC CHARACTERISTICS**

### ***Summary of submissions and evidence***

- 044.** The Executive Director submitted that the physical fabric of the Place reflects the aesthetic characteristics of civic buildings from the period, including its Modernist-influenced design, but considered that the Place has not received critical recognition or wide public acknowledgement of exceptional merit and submitted that it therefore does not satisfy Criterion E at the State level.
- 045.** Dr Lemon, Ms Dyet and others submitted that the changes over time to surrounding gardens and features of the Place may detract from the appearance of the buildings. Ms Russell submitted, in relation to Criterion E, that protecting the Place through inclusion in the Register would create greater awareness and appreciation of it.
- 046.** Mrs Prunotto provided descriptions of the aesthetic characteristics of the buildings of the Place and argued they are a functional and beautiful example of Modernist civic architecture from the post-war period. Mrs Prunotto submitted that the relocation of the cenotaph was insensitive and has affected the presentation of the Place.

### ***Discussion and conclusion***

- 047.** The Committee recognises the many distinctive characteristics of the Place, including its mid-century architectural characteristics, Modernist features, modest scale, unobtrusive siting below the road level, allowance for visual connections within, space for mothers and prams and its interconnectedness as a complex.
- 048.** Assessment against Criterion E was not the key issue addressed by Hearing participants and relatively few submissions were made specifically in the terms of the Criterion. The Committee considers that there is perhaps a higher threshold, in terms of architectural or aesthetic merit, for Criterion E as compared with Criterion D. The Committee finds that, although the Place makes an aesthetic contribution to the local streetscape and character of the nearby Eltham village, there is little evidence that the aesthetic characteristics of the Place were or are appreciated or valued by the Victorian community at a State level in the terms of the Guidelines. Acknowledging the suggestion by some submitters and others that the aesthetic qualities of the Place have been impacted by new features, the Committee notes its task is to consider the Place and its extant buildings as they are, not as they were or might have been. In any case, the Committee finds there is insufficient evidence the Place as a whole has been widely recognised as being of 'high aesthetic quality' at a State level, which is one of the tests used for assessing a Place against Criterion E.

- 049.** The Committee determines that the Place does not satisfy the State level threshold for cultural heritage significance in relation to Criterion E.

### **CRITERION G - STRONG OR SPECIAL ASSOCIATION WITH A PARTICULAR PRESENT-DAY COMMUNITY OR CULTURAL GROUP FOR SOCIAL, CULTURAL OR SPIRITUAL REASONS**

#### ***Summary of submissions and evidence***

- 050.** The Recommendation acknowledged the attachment of the local community to the Place and submitted that there was clear evidence of an attachment between the Place and current and former users, and with the Eltham community more broadly. The Executive Director noted that the recent inclusion of the Italian Ossario in the Register demonstrates the resonance of social value and significance across the State (in that case to the broader Italian community in Victoria) but submitted that there is no evidence in the current case of that type of resonance across the Victorian community. The Executive Director concluded that there is no evidence that the social values of the Place resonate at a State level and submitted that Criterion G is not likely to be satisfied at a State level.
- 051.** Ms Russell argued that the Register was not sufficiently representative of the significance of women in the foundation of places such as the Place and that a well-documented shift in attitudes in society to the position of women should be recognised by the Register. Ms Russell's submission was that the Place was significant at a State level particularly because of the women associated with it and provided background information about the role of women in initiating the Eltham War Memorial Trust and fundraising, designing and managing the project, along with their continual use of the complex. The submission highlights the role of Louise Officer, Vera Addison, Jessica MacFarlane, Beatrice Morrison, Dr Barbara Meredith, Doris Officer and others in the development and construction of the buildings. Ms Russell also responded to the Executive Director's view that the Place was not likely to satisfy Criterion G at a State level by noting that the Place was one of eighteen featured on a WWII-related website.
- 052.** Professor Lewi, Dr Lemon, Ms Prunotto and Ms Dyet all made submissions that agreed substantially with Ms Russell's submissions and provided documentation about the Place's social significance, particularly its association with important women, in arguing that the Place satisfied the State level threshold for Criterion G.

#### ***Discussion and conclusion***

- 053.** The Committee acknowledges the longstanding associations with the Place referred to in many submissions. The Committee notes the strong attachments to the Place in its functions as both a war memorial and as a facility for babies and children, recognises that the Place has played an important role in the local community since the 1950s and appreciates the time depth of these attachments. As an indication of the local community's passion for and association with the Place, the Committee notes the submissions of Professor Willis that the realisation of the Place was a 'deeply rooted expression of the Eltham community's interest in the project of post-war reconstruction'. The Committee agrees with Professor Willis, but a local community's deep and longstanding connection to a place cannot always result in the inclusion of that place in the Register.
- 054.** The Committee agrees with the recognition given by the Executive Director in respect of that deep and longstanding association. It also agrees with the Executive Director that many Victorian suburbs have long established war memorials and facilities for babies and children, respectively, that the local

community has a strong attachment to. However, that strong attachment between the Place and the community in which it is located is not necessarily evidence of a strong example of the type of association that would satisfy Criterion G at a State level.

- 055.** The Committee recognises that community activism relating to the use and development of the Place, in particular by women associated with the Place, resulted in its foundation. The Committee is of the view, however, that there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that this association has the ability to resonate beyond the Eltham community. Many community facilities that are comparable with the Place have similar associations with their respective communities. To reach the threshold sufficient to satisfy Criterion G, however, it must be demonstrated that the Place represents a strong example of such an association by reason of a relationship with important historical events in Victoria or an ability for these associations, histories and experiences to be interpreted by the broader Victorian community.
- 056.** The Committee has reviewed all the material in relation to Criterion G and considers that it does not support an argument that the Place satisfies Criterion G at a State level.

## **CRITERION H - SPECIAL ASSOCIATION WITH THE LIFE OR WORKS OF A PERSON, OR GROUP OF PERSONS, OF IMPORTANCE IN VICTORIA'S HISTORY**

### ***Summary of submissions and evidence***

- 057.** The Recommendation noted the Place's direct association with the Eltham War Memorial Trust, with the Women's Auxiliary of that Trust and with individuals Louise Officer and Stanley Addison and recognised that this contribution is important, of interest and valuable to the community of Eltham. The Executive Director's submission was that the contribution to Victoria by the people associated with the Place is not the type of strong or influential contribution to the course of Victoria's history that can be recognised at a State level in the terms of Criterion H, and that the Place does not satisfy Criterion H in relation to those associations.
- 058.** Many of Ms Russell's submissions in relation to Criterion G, as summarised above, are relevant to the discussion of Criterion H but have not been repeated here.
- 059.** Mr Connor's submission pointed to the ongoing role of women in the establishment of the Place. Mr Connor's submission was largely concerned with the role of the Eltham Women's Auxiliary and Eltham War Memorial Trust, and the contributions of individuals Louise Officer, Beatrice Wanliss Morrison, Vera Addison, Stanley Simpson Addison and of architect Jessie MacFarlane as one of the earliest woman architects working in a Melbourne firm. Mr Connor's submission asserted that the Place satisfies Criterion H on the basis of these associations and, in his verbal submission, argued that the Place is valued by the Eltham community who contributed to its establishment and by mothers from the Eltham community for these historical attachments.
- 060.** Dr Lemon submitted that a range of individuals and groups associated with the Place made a strong or influential contribution to Victoria's history but that Ms Officer in particular was a person of global and national significance who, as Dr Lemon said, acted locally. Dr Lemon relied on the evidence of Associate Professor Smart, whose evidence was that the historical record in relation to organisations such as the Women's National League was incomplete and that women who served at the State level such as Ms Officer typically performed work locally while their work was important as a foundation of State and national wellbeing. Associate Professor Smart's evidence was that Ms Officer's

contribution is of importance at a State level and that without her expertise the Place would not have come to fruition. Her evidence included extensive background information about aspects of women's history and political advocacy relating to the Place, and biographical information about Ms Officer and the other women involved in the history of the Place.

- 061.** Professor Willis submitted that there very few examples in the Register of women architects and that Jessica MacFarlane made a significant contribution to the development of architecture in Victoria as one of the few early examples of a woman architect as a named partner in a firm.

### ***Discussion and conclusion***

- 062.** The Committee agrees with the argument made by several submitters that Jessica MacFarlane was an important early woman architect in Victoria and possibly one of the earliest to be a named partner in an architectural firm. The Committee considers that the role of Ms McFarlane as an architect associated with the Place has import but that, principally due to a lack of evidence as to her strong or influential contribution to the course of Victoria's history, the association does not meet the threshold test to satisfy Criterion H at the State level. Similarly, the Committee agrees with the Executive Director's submission that the work of the Eltham War Memorial Trust, the Women's Auxiliary of the Trust, Ms Officer and/or Mr Addison cannot be said to have made a strong or influential contribution to the course of Victoria's history more broadly in the terms of Criterion H.
- 063.** The Committee recognises Associate Professor Smart's evidence of the fundraising effort, principally by women, in the realisation of the Place.
- 064.** However, in reviewing all of the material, the Committee finds it cannot conclude the Place satisfies Criterion H at a State level and determines that the Place does not satisfy Criterion H at a State level.

### **CONCLUSION**

- 065.** The Committee recognises that the Place is of significance to, and is valued by, members of the community of Eltham. The Committee agrees with all Hearing participants that the Place and its functions have played an important role in the lives and society of the people of Eltham throughout the Place's history. The Committee also recognises the extensive research completed by Hearing participants and commends all participants for their efforts in relation to the submissions made, which have allowed for a more complete understanding of the Place than had existed before the Hearing process.
- 066.** At least one of the Criteria must be satisfied at a State level in order for a place to be included in the Register. The Committee determines that the Place does not meet the State level significance threshold for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register in relation to any of the Heritage Council Criteria.
- 067.** After considering the Executive Director's Recommendation and all written submissions received, and after conducting a Hearing in relation to the submissions, the Heritage Council has determined, pursuant to section 49(1)(c)(i) of the *Heritage Act 2017*, that the Eltham War Memorial Buildings complex at 903 – 907 Main Road, Eltham, is not of cultural heritage significance to the State of Victoria and is not to be included in the Victorian Heritage Register, but refers the recommendation and all submissions to the Nillumbik Shire Council for consideration of an amendment to the Nillumbik Planning Scheme to recognise the heritage values of the Place to the local community.



## **ATTACHMENT 1**

### **HERITAGE COUNCIL ASSESSMENT CRITERIA FOR INCLUSION OF PLACES OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE**

CRITERION A	Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history
CRITERION B	Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history.
CRITERION C	Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Victoria's cultural history.
CRITERION D	Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places or environments.
CRITERION E	Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.
CRITERION F	Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.
CRITERION G	Strong or special association with a particular present-day community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.
CRITERION H	Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history.

**These were updated by the Heritage Council at its meeting on 4 April 2019, and replace the previous criteria adopted by the Heritage Council on 6 December 2012.**