

Heritage Council Regulatory Committee

Hardrock Nunawading (Climbing Centre)

16-18 Varman Court, Nunawading, Whitehorse City, Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Country

Members – Dr Steven Cooke (Chair), Mr David Helms, Ms Maddison Miller

DETERMINATION OF THE HERITAGE COUNCIL

The Heritage Council has considered a request to review the Executive Director’s decision to refuse to accept a nomination to include Hardrock Nunawading (Climbing Centre) at 16-18 Varman Court Nunawading, Whitehorse City, Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Country in the Heritage Register. Pursuant to section 30(5)(a) of the *Heritage Act 2017* the Heritage Council has determined to affirm the decision under review and refuse to accept the nomination.

Dr Steven Cooke (Chair)
Mr David Helms
Ms Maddison Miller

Decision Date – 15 April 2026

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As a peak heritage body, we acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the Country that we call Victoria, as the original custodians of Victoria's land and waters, and 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 Aboriginal culture and traditional practices.

INTERESTED PARTIES

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

Information was received from the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria ('the Executive Director') in relation to the refusal of the nomination.

NOMINATOR

Ms Irene Moser ('the Nominator') nominated Hardrock Nunawading (Climbing Centre), located at 16-18 Varman Court, Nunawading, Whitehorse City for inclusion in the Heritage Register. The Nominator provided additional information in relation to the Nomination.

OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES

MS SUE FLOYED

Ms Floyed was notified of the matter as the owner of Hardrock Nunawading (Climbing Centre). During the course of the Nomination Review, Ms Floyed advised the Heritage Council she was no longer the owner of the property located at 16-18 Varman Court, Nunawading, Whitehorse City. Ms Floyed provided information in relation to the current condition of the Place.

GLMH INVESTMENT PTY LTD

GLMH Investment Pty Ltd was notified of the matter as the current owner of the property located at 16-18 Varman Court, Nunawading, Whitehorse City. Although notice was given to GLMH Investment Pty Ltd, no additional information was received from GLMH Investment Pty Ltd in relation to the refusal of the nomination.

WHITEHORSE CITY COUNCIL

Whitehorse City Council ('WCC') was notified of the matter as the responsible authority for the area in which Hardrock Nunawading (Climbing Centre) is located. Although notice was given to WCC, no additional information was received from the WCC in relation to the refusal of the nomination.

INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND

THE PLACE

01. Hardrock Nunawading (Climbing Centre), located at 16-18 Varman Court, Nunawading, Whitehorse City ('the Place') is a concrete industrial-style building which housed an indoor climbing facility until it was sold in December 2025.
02. The Place is located on Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Country.

THE NOMINATION

03. On 12 December 2025 an application to nominate the Place ('the Nomination') for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register ('the Register') was lodged with the Executive Director, pursuant to section 27 of the *Heritage Act 2017* ('the Act').
04. The Place was nominated for inclusion in the Register under the following Criteria of the Heritage Council, as set out by *The Victorian Heritage Register Criteria and Threshold Guidelines* ('the Guidelines') [**Attachment 1**]:¹
 - 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 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; and

DECISION OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

05. Pursuant to section 29 of the Act, the Executive Director may refuse to accept a nomination if it is considered that the nominated place or object has no reasonable prospect of inclusion in the Register.
06. On 16 January 2026, the Executive Director notified the Nominator of his refusal to accept the Nomination on the grounds that the Place has no reasonable prospect of inclusion in the Register.

REQUEST FOR REVIEW

07. On 13 February 2026, the Heritage Council received a request for a review of the Executive Director's refusal to accept the Nomination of the Place, pursuant to section 30 of the Act. A Heritage Council Regulatory Committee ('the Committee') was appointed to consider the request for review, information received in response to it, and to make a determination, as delegated by the Heritage Council pursuant to sections 13 and 15 of the Act.
08. In the request for a review, the Nominator provided information relating to the Place's potential to satisfy the following Criteria at State-level:
 - 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 D – Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects;
 - 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;

¹ <https://assets.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/assets/VHRCriteriaandThresholdsGuidelines2022.pdf> (updated by the Heritage Council on 1 December 2022).

- Criterion G – Strong or special association with a particular present-day community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons; and
- Criterion H – Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria’s history.

PRELIMINARY, PROCEDURAL AND OTHER MATTERS

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

- 09.** Committee members were invited to make declarations in relation to any matters that may potentially give rise to an actual or apprehended conflict of interests. The Committee members were satisfied that there were no relevant conflicts of interest and made no such declarations.

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

- 10.** On 5 March 2026, the Committee requested from the Executive Director all information used in determining to refuse the Nomination.
- 11.** On 5 March 2026, the Committee wrote to the Nominator, WCC and Ms Floyed and afforded each party an opportunity to provide any additional information that they felt may assist the Committee in undertaking the nomination review.
- 12.** On 5 March 2026 Ms Floyed responded to the Committee, advising a change in ownership to the Place. On 6 March 2026, the Committee wrote to GLMH Investments Pty Ltd, and afforded it the opportunity as the current owner of the Place to provide any additional information to assist the Committee in undertaking the nomination review.
- 13.** The Executive Director, the Nominator and Ms Floyed responded to the Committee’s requests for further information. No additional information from WCC or GLMH Investments Pty Ltd was received by the Committee.

ISSUES

- 14.** The following section is not intended to be a complete record of information provided to the Committee. It is a summary of what the Committee considers to be the key issues, followed by an explanation of the position the Committee takes on each issue.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES

- 15.** Interested parties provided the Committee with a range of additional material in relation to whether or not the Place has a reasonable prospect of inclusion in the Heritage Register.

REASONABLE PROSPECT OF INCLUSION

Information received

- 16.** The Nominator provided information relating to the Place’s potential to satisfy State-level Criteria A, B, D, E, F, and H at State-level.
- 17.** In providing further information to the Committee, the Nominator also provided social media posts from the local and Victorian climbing communities, and photographs of the Place’s interior.
- 18.** In providing further information, the Nominator and Ms Floyed advised the Committee that recent significant demolition works may have been undertaken to the Place. The Nominator stated that ‘The outer walls and some support beams were the only structures left’ and provided copies of correspondence with WCC in relation to these prospective works. In providing further information to the Committee, the Executive Director reiterated the position that the Place has no prospect of satisfying any Criteria at State-level.
- 19.** The Committee has considered the information provided in further information, including in relation to significant recent changes to the Place. Information relating to the Place’s intactness and condition notwithstanding, the Committee considers it is bound by section 30 of the Act to carry out and determine

a review of the Executive Director's decision to refuse to accept a nomination to include the Place in the Heritage Register based on the information before it. The Committee has proceeded accordingly.

Criterion A - Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history

- 20.** It was the view of the Nominator that the Place satisfies Criterion A at State-level, being 'the first indoor climbing facility in Victoria', submitting that the construction of the Place 'was the historical moment that made rock climbing a viable sport for every Victorian'. The Nominator further submitted that the Place 'served as a model from which rules, rules, regulations and guidelines for artificial climbing walls, safety equipment, safety monitoring and maintenance in Australia were derived', and noted that episode 5297 of the television show *Neighbours* was filmed there.
- 21.** In relation to Criterion A, the Executive Director acknowledged that the Place is associated with the historical theme of indoor rock climbing in Victoria. However, the Executive Director noted that, in accordance with the Guidelines, in order for Criterion A to apply at State-level, the historical theme must have made a 'strong or influential contribution to Victoria'. The Executive Director compared the Place to sporting facilities and venues which have satisfied this State-level threshold and are included in the Heritage Register, including Flemington Racecourse (H2220); the Melbourne Cricket Ground (H1928) and the Olympic Swimming Pool (H2038). It was the conclusion of the Executive Director that 'currently, indoor rock climbing has not made a strong or influential contribution to the history of Victoria, in a similar manner to AFL football or cricket'.

Criterion B – Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history

- 22.** The Nominator put forward the view that the Place had the potential to satisfy Criterion B at State-level for the following reasons:
- Textured climbing walls that resemble rock have become more rare;
 - The Place is a distinctive monument to a formative period in Victoria's indoor rock climbing history; and
 - The roof climbing feature at the Place is unique in Australia, and other features including the 'flake' and 'chimney' are also rare.
- 23.** The Executive Director found that Criterion B had no prospect of being met at State-level, concluding that 'climbing centres are not rare'.

Criterion D – Importance in demonstrating the particular aesthetic characteristics

- 24.** The Nominator suggested that the place may have the potential to satisfy Criterion D at State-level, for the following reasons:

As Hardrock Nunawading was built before the guidelines on artificial climbing structures were written, and subsequently served as a prototype for the guidelines, it demonstrates the characteristics of climbing centres, in their most aesthetic form.

- 25.** The Executive Director formed the view that Criterion D was not satisfied at State-level for the following reasons:
- The climbing walls at the Place are typical in the class of indoor climbing facilities;
 - The Place has much in common with other climbing centres and does not represent the sport of indoor climbing better than similar places; and
 - In accordance with the Guidelines, the historical theme associated with the Place (in this case, the history of indoor climbing) must have had a strong or influential contribution to the broader history of Victoria.

Criterion E - Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics

- 26.** The Nominator suggested that the Place may satisfy Criterion E at State-level, describing the 'elaborate concrete surfaces' at the Place as 'the most aesthetic visuals I have observed in climbing centres'. The Nominator further commented on the 'beauty in the frame structures and trusses that connect them', comparing the appeal of the Place to the Murtoa Grain Store (VHR H0791).

27. In relation to Criterion E, it was the view of the Executive Director that in order for the Place to satisfy this Criterion at State level, there should be evidence that its aesthetic characteristics are 'beyond the ordinary' or outstanding. The Executive Director concluded that the level of public and critical recognition received by the Place did not indicate its aesthetic characteristics to be 'beyond the ordinary' or outstanding.

Criterion F - Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period

28. The Nominator put forward the view that the Place has the potential to satisfy Criterion F at State-level, as the imitation of natural rock at the Place 'took artistic skills as well as the creativity to work out how a reliable, durable and safe frame could be combined with malleable substances that contribute softer, rounder features for look and feel'. The Nominator further submitted that given no standards for 'Artificial Climbing Structures' were in place at the time of the Place's construction, the builder was required to be 'inventive'.
29. In relation to Criterion F, it was the view of the Executive Director that the Place does not contain physical evidence that clearly demonstrates creative or technical achievement for the time in which it was created. It was the conclusion of the Executive Director that 'indoor climbing centres did not draw upon breakthrough technology in their construction.'

Criterion G – Strong or special association with a particular present-day community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons

30. The Nominator put forward the view that the Place has the potential to satisfy Criterion G at State-level, stating that the Place has always been known for its climbing community, and has been a 'favourite for kids' birthday parties, school outings, scout groups and holiday adventures of people from Whitehorse City'. The Nominator also included social media posts from community members in support of this position.
31. In refusing to accept the Nomination, the Executive Director found that the Place 'does not have a strong or special association with the community or cultural group which resonates across the State'. The Executive Director provided the Shrine of Remembrance (VHR H0848) as an example of Place included in the Heritage Register under Criterion G, and which is 'well-known across Victoria, and attracts visitors from around the [State]'.

Criterion H – Strong or special association with a particular present-day community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons

32. The Nominator put forward the view that the Place has the potential to satisfy Criterion H at State-level, providing a list of prominent climbers who have connections to the Place.
33. The Executive Director found that the Place has no prospect of satisfying Criterion H at State-level, stating that it 'does not have a special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history'. The Executive Director acknowledged the association of the Place with the people of Nunawading, but was not satisfied there was evidence of association with any people or groups of importance to the history of the State of Victoria.

Discussion

34. The Committee has reviewed the information and evidence provided with the Nomination, in addition to further information received from the Nominator, Ms Floyed and the Executive Director throughout the nomination review process.
35. The Committee notes the thorough and detailed materials prepared by the Nominator in requesting this review, and the value ascribed to the Place by some members of the local Nunawading and rock climbing communities.
36. The Committee notes the submissions of the Nominator regarding a perceived lack of appropriate comparable examples provided by the Executive Director in the notice of refusal, between the Place and registered places with similar associations.

37. The Committee acknowledges that there are less nationally iconic comparators in the Heritage Register associated with sports and recreational pursuits located in suburban and regional areas which may have better clarified and articulated the Executive Director's position (for example, St Kilda Bowling Club [VHR H1913] and the Maryborough Municipal Olympic Swimming Complex [VHR H1319]).
38. Nevertheless, having thoroughly reviewed the material provided by all interested parties, the Committee is persuaded, based on the information before it, that the Place has no prospect of satisfying the steps required to satisfy the State-level threshold for any of the Criteria, as set out in the Guidelines.
39. The Committee also notes that, even if it had been persuaded the Place may have satisfied the State-level threshold for any of the Criteria, the demolition that is reported to have occurred since the Nomination may have proved fatal to any prospect of inclusion on the Heritage Register.
40. The Committee is therefore satisfied that there is no prospect of the Place being included in the Heritage Register, and finds that it is appropriate for the Nomination to be refused. The Committee adopts the position of the Executive Director, and attaches the Executive Director's notice of refusal at **Attachment 2**.

CONCLUSION

41. The Heritage Council has considered a request to review the Executive Director's decision to refuse to accept a nomination to include Hardrock Nunawading (Climbing Centre) at 16-18 Varman Court Nunawading, Whitehorse City in the Victorian Heritage Register. Pursuant to section 30(5)(a) of the *Heritage Act 2017* the Heritage Council has determined to affirm the decision under review and refuse to accept the nomination.

Attachment 1

Heritage Council criteria for assessment of places and objects 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 and objects.
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 adopted by the Heritage Council at its meeting on 1 December 2022, and replace the previous criteria adopted by the Heritage Council on 6 December 2012.

Attachment 2

Notice of refusal of the Executive Director to accept a nomination to include Hardrock Nunawading (Climbing Centre), located at 16-18 Varman Court, Nunawading, Whitehorse City, Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Country

16/01/2026

Irene Moser

Via email: [REDACTED]

Dear Irene

**NOTICE OF REFUSAL – NOMINATION OF HARDROCK NUNAWADING (CLIMBING CENTRE), 16-18
VARMAN COURT NUNAWADING, WHITEHORSE CITY TO THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER**

Thank you for your nomination dated 12 December 2025 for the above place to be considered for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register.

Under the *Heritage Act 2017* (the Act), the Executive Director may refuse a nomination if they consider that a place or object has no reasonable prospect of inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register. After carefully considering the material you have provided, the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria has decided to refuse your nomination.

For a place or object to be included in the Victorian Heritage Register, it must be of significance at a State level. On the basis of the material provided and further investigations, it is considered that the place has no reasonable prospect of inclusion in the Register.

Place summary

Hardrock Nunawading is a concrete industrial-style building that houses an indoor climbing facility. The indoor climbing centre is one of Victoria's earliest, operating from c.199?. The climbing centre caters to recreational climbers of all abilities and interest levels and is known for its high 'climbing roof.'

Rationale for nomination refusal

For the purposes of this initial examination the place as a whole has been considered, including the climbing walls.

Nomination

The nomination was made under:

- 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 E (Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics),
- Criterion F (Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period) and
- Criterion G (Strong or special association with particular present day community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons).

No reasonable prospect

The Executive Director is of the view that there is no reasonable prospect of the inclusion of this place in the Register, when considered against the tests in the [Criteria and Threshold Guidelines](#) for State-level significance.

Criterion A

- The place is associated with indoor rock climbing.
- However, for Criterion A to apply, **the historical theme (ie: the sport or recreational pursuit itself)** must have made a strong or influential contribution to the history of Victoria.
- As a relatively new sport established in the 1990s, and as a relatively niche activity, indoor rock climbing has not made a strong or influential contribution to Victoria.
- The places below are included in the Victorian Heritage Register under Criterion A.
 - Olympic Swimming Pool (H2038) – associated with swimming and the Melbourne Olympic Games
 - The Melbourne Cricket Ground (H1928) – associated with cricket and AFL
 - Flemington Racecourse (H2220) – associated with the Melbourne Cup
 - Victoria Park (H0075) – associated with the Victorian Football League and the Collingwood Football Club
 - Djarrak (Bells Beach) (VHR H2032) - associated with surfing.
- Indoor Rock Climbing has only recently been included in the Olympics (since the 2020 Tokyo Games).
- Currently, indoor rock climbing has not made a strong or influential contribution to the history of Victoria, in a similar manner to AFL football or cricket.

Criterion B

Indoor rock climbing centres are not rare.

Criterion C

The place does not contain evidence of cultural heritage significance that is not currently visible and/or well understood or available from other sources (such as archaeological deposits).

Criterion D

Hardrock Nunawading is not a notable example for its demonstration of the principal characteristics of indoor rock climbing centres. This is because:

- The climbing walls at Hardrock Nunawading are typical in the class of indoor climbing facilities and it has much in common with other climbing centres and does not better represent indoor climbing better than similar places.
- Importantly, under the Criteria and Threshold Guidelines the historical theme (ie: the sport or recreational pursuit associated with the place) must have made a strong or influential contribution to the broader history of Victoria.

Criterion E

The aesthetic characteristics of the place are **not** 'beyond the ordinary' or outstanding (as demonstrated by critical recognition within a relevant art, design, architectural or related discipline within Victoria, or wide public acknowledgement of exceptional aesthetic qualities expressed in publications, print or digital media, painting, sculpture, songs, poetry, literature, or other media).

Criterion F

Hardrock Nunawading does not contain physical evidence that clearly demonstrates creative or technical achievement for the time in which it was created. Indoor climbing centres did not draw upon breakthrough technology in their construction.

Criterion G

Hardrock Nunawading does not have a strong or special association with a community or cultural group which resonates across the State. Websites and Facebook community posts tend to indicate that the rock climbing community in Victoria has a stronger attachment to outdoor rock climbing places like Mount Arapiles. An example of a registered place with State-level cultural significance is the Shrine of Remembrance which is well-known across Victoria, and attracts visitors from round the state.

Criterion H

Hardrock Nunawading does not have a special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history. There may be a strong association between the place and people in Nunawading, but not to any people or groups of importance to the history of the State.

Right to review

Under section 30 of the Act, you have the right to request a review of the refusal of the application. Nomination reviews are conducted by the Heritage Council of Victoria, an independent statutory body, and must be made on the prescribed form. More information about nomination reviews can be found on this website: <https://heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/protecting-our-heritage/how-we-make-decisions/nomination-reviews>

Any request must be lodged within 28 days of receiving this letter and be accompanied by the prescribed fee of 25 fee units (from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026, this is \$420.25). Some nominators may be eligible for a fee waiver if they are a not-for-profit society, association or club (other than a charity) or a person who is an eligible beneficiary within the meaning of the *State Concessions Act 2004*. If you have any queries about the process to review a refusal of a nomination, please contact the Heritage Council of Victoria on 03 8572 7949 or email heritage.council@transport.vic.gov.au

Please note that the Executive Director must inform the owner and the local government authority, and the responsible authority if applicable, that a nomination has been refused. A version of this letter has been sent to these parties.

Yours sincerely



GEOFFREY AUSTIN

Manager, Heritage Register
Heritage Victoria

(As delegate for Steven Avery, Executive Director, Heritage Victoria pursuant to the Instrument of Delegation)