

**Submission
No 109**

**INQUIRY INTO THE PROTECTIONS WITHIN THE VICTORIAN
PLANNING FRAMEWORK**

Name: Mr Greg Spark

Date Received: 31 January 2022

Inquiry into the protections within the Victorian Planning Framework

Mr Greg Spark

Organisation Name:
Your position or role:

YOUR SUBMISSION

Submission:

I am a VBA registered quantity surveyor (QS-25234) with over 40 years experience in the Australian and UK construction industries working primarily on existing buildings and sites that more often than not have Heritage Listings.

Please see attached my CV which outlines the significant buildings and site which I have worked on during my working career. I have indicated that I am happy to speak to your Planning Framework Review Panel. I have attached a UK Sunday Times article – ‘PLANNING SPECIAL – Losing the Plot’ published on 18 Sept. 2016. I think your Planning Review panel needs to read this article. Notwithstanding it is now 6 years old and covers the problems of UK Planning, it is still highly relevant and applicable to the Australian and Victorian Planning which is based on the UK planning laws and regulations. In both Australia and the UK, Planners have lost the plot.

I also think privatisation of building surveyors has created another failed profession that creates problems rather than resolving problems for the betterment of our built environment.

FILE ATTACHMENTS

File1: [61f72613831e0-G Spark CV - 2 july 2021.pdf](#)

File2: [61f7261383cce-G Spark submission re Vict Planning Framework.docx](#)

File3: [61f7261383f27-UK Planners losing the plot - Sunday Times 18 sept 2016.pdf](#)

Signature:

Gregory Spark

Greg Spark
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]



spark

ABN 37 030 928 836

02 July 2021

Attention: To whom it may concern

Dear,

Re: Curriculum Vitae
For: Gregory Spark

I am a VBA registered quantity surveyor with over thirty years construction industry experience working mainly on existing buildings. For the past 15 years, I have been pricing numerous works to heritage listed buildings.

For 4 years until November 2019, I was the HBS Group Estimator and over that time I prepared Tenders for over 120 jobs with a total tender value exceeding \$158 million, successfully winning 38 Tenders with a total value exceeding \$52 million.

Notable Victorian heritage registered buildings that I priced and won for HBS Group include:–

- **Royal Exhibition Building** – Protection and Promotion project
- **Princess Theatre, Melbourne** – external façade restoration and roof plumbing work
- **Alexandra Fountain restoration, Bendigo** – sculpture repairs and fountain restoration
- **St Peters Catholic Church, Toorak** – Stone façade and roof plumbing repairs
- **A'Beckett St Drill Hall, Melbourne** – terracotta roof repairs and roof plumbing upgrade; a DDA upgrade to entrances, stairs and balconies.

While in the UK I worked on cost planning and Bills of Quantities for proposed works to upgrade heritage listed London Tube stations: Earls Court, Russell Square and Paddington. I also worked for Bechtel as part of Rail Link Engineering, a project management consortium managing the conversion of St Pancras Station into London's high speed railway terminus. I also worked on a number of heritage listed active prisons, preparing cost plans of the Chief Fire Officers prioritized works to make these prisons fire safe.

Please review my attached CV that notes significant projects that I have worked on over the past 30 years both here in Australia but also the United Kingdom where I lived and worked from 1997 to 2003.

While working in England I completed the **RICS Diploma of Building Conservation**, a 2 year part correspondence course that included lecture weekends, site inspections, numerous assignments and final year exams. My chosen final year thesis was *The cost planning of building conservation works*. During this course I was pleasantly surprised that English Heritage had adopted Australian building conservation philosophy, so my studies included the Burra Charter, the use of Conservation Management Plans and Heritage Impact Statements.

Since leaving HBS Group in November 2019, I have been working for a variety of builders and architects including works to Victorian Heritage Registered buildings for:–

- Cathedral Stone, assisting James Charlwood with:
 - **RMIT Francis Ormond Building and the former Magistrates Court Building**, stonework repairs for McCorkell Constructions, by doing the Cathedral Stone progress claims assessments, variations and preparing the Final Account.
 - **Nicholas Building, 37 Swanston St Melbourne**, works involving a hazard reduction survey and make safe works to the faience façade, by assisting Cathedral Stone in contract administration
 - **St Ignatius Catholic Church, Richmond**, assisting Cathedral Stone in the preparation of a Tender for stonework and roof plumbing repairs to the church spire.

- Nigel Lewis, Heritage Architect, on the following Victorian Heritage Register listed projects:-
 - **The Cabin, Bickleigh Vale**, assisted scoping and pricing the stone repairs to Edna Walling's studio Cabin
 - **Caringal Flats, Tahara Rd Toorak**, assisted in assessing the external painting and finishes restoration to the flat facades.

I am a quantity surveyor with a good knowledge and understanding of all traditional building trades and services, such that I can prepare work methodologies and construction programs that excite others to want to be involved in the proposed works.

I am proud to be able to say projects for which I prepared the Tender Price, Work Methodology and draft Construction Program, HBS Group received the

Master Builder's Association Victoria Best Specialist Contractor Award:-

- **2018 – Alexandra Fountain, Bendigo** – fountain restoration including sculptures, plumbing and lighting works
- **2019 – Princess Theatre, Melbourne** – façade and roof plumbing repairs

Over nearly twenty years I have read enough Conservation Management Plans, Heritage Impact Statements, Heritage Permits and Heritage Permit Exception statements to know that I am also capable of drafting these important documents.

I have also read and priced the plans and specifications prepared by architects who would be liaising with Heritage Victoria for either a Heritage Permit or an Exemption, and I am confident in saying I established and continue to have a good working relationship with all these architects.

I hope my CV is of interest and I look forward to meeting you

Yours Sincerely

Gregory M Spark



Curriculum vitae

Name [Redacted]

Address [Redacted]

Contacts [Redacted]

Qualifications Australian qualifications:
1972-1974 Bachelor Economics (LaTrobe University)
1984-1987 Bachelor Construction Economics (RMIT)
United Kingdom qualifications:
1999-2001 RICS Diploma of Building Conservation
(College of Estate Management, Reading UK)
[Redacted] Conservation Work

Affiliations Associate of the Australian Institute of Quantity Surveyors
Member of the Australian Institute of Building
[Redacted]

Subscriptions National Trust Victoria
RICS Building Conservation Forum (UK)
[Redacted]

Board Experience 2004 to 2014 Collingwood Children’s Farm Committee of Management,
[Redacted]

Nationality [Redacted]

Summary of employment March 2016 to present – HBS Group (was Heritage Building Services) - Estimator
May 2008 to present – Greg Spark & Associates Pty Ltd – QS estimating services
2006 to 2008 Heritage Building Services - Estimator
2005 to 2006 Donald Cant Watts Corke – Senior Cost Planner
2003 to 2005 Baglin Partners – Senior Quantity Surveyor
2001 to 2003 Bechtel Ltd (UK) as Senior Cost Engineer in Rail Link Engineering
RLE was the Project Management consortium for the
new high speed rail service into St Pancras London
2000 to 2001 Birse Construction Ltd (UK) - Estimator
1997 to 2000 Currie & Brown (UK) – Senior Cost Planner and PQS
1992 to 1997 DG Jones & Partners – Senior Quantity Surveyor
1985 to 1992 Baglin Partners & formerly as ‘Bennetti, Baglin & Cordia’ - QS



Relevant Work experience

Date	2018
Employer	HBS Group
Project / Client	Solid plasterer repairs Supreme Court of Victoria
Role/responsibility	Conduct site inspection and prepare quotation for solid plaster cornice stabilisation and plaster repairs. Approx value of works – \$ 7,000
Date	2018
Employer	HBS Group
Project / Client	Reinstatement of plastered archway in Chapel Xavier College, Senior Campus Kew
Role/responsibility	Conduct site inspection and prepare quotation for solid plaster work to demolish an plastered masonry infill to a former large archway and then make good the archway reveals including the archway impost / stringcourse & the moulded plaster plinth/skirting. Approx value of works – \$ 31,000
Date	2018
Employer	HBS Group
Project / Client	Royal Exhibition Building Protection & Promotion major project Museum Victoria
Role/responsibility	Estimator / Described, measured and priced conservation works, seek sub-contractor prices for elements of the conservation works. Assisted in tendering and assessing subcontractor quotes for new works. Assisted in preparing project methodology, construction program and head contractor preliminaries. HBS won the work in a select tender Approx value of works – \$ value – confidential
Date	2018
Employer	HBS Group
Project / Client	A'Beckett St Drill Hall - DDA upgrade / Dept. Environment, Land, Water and Planning
Role/responsibility	Estimator / Described, measured and priced works, seek sub-contractor prices for elements of the Works. HBS won the work in a select tender Approx value of works – \$ value – confidential



Date	2018
Employer	HBS Group
Project / Client	High rise housing commission tower – lobby smoke screens upgrade (Fitzroy - Atherton Gardens) / Dept. of Health & Human Services
Role/responsibility	Estimator / Described, measured and priced works, seek sub-contractor prices for elements of the Works. HBS won the work in a select tender Approx value of works – \$ value – confidential
Date	2018
Employer	HBS Group
Project / Client	High rise housing commission tower – 45 flat upgrade (Drummond St Carlton) / Dept. of Health & Human Services
Role/responsibility	Estimator / Described, measured and priced works, seek sub-contractor prices for elements of the Works. HBS won the work in a select tender Approx value of works – \$ value – confidential
Date	2018
Employer	HBS Group
Project / Client	High rise housing commission tower – 45 flat upgrade (Fitzroy - Atherton Gardens) / Dept. of Health & Human Services
Role/responsibility	Estimator / Described, measured and priced works, seek sub-contractor prices for elements of the Works. HBS won the work in a select tender Approx value of works – \$ value – confidential
Date	2017
Employer	HBS Group
Project / Client	Princess Theatre Spring St Melb - façade & roof plumbing repairs / Marriner Group
Role/responsibility	Estimator / Described, measured and priced works, seek sub-contractor prices for elements of the Works. HBS won the work in a select tender Approx value of works – \$ value – confidential



Date	2017
Employer	HBS Group
Project / Client	Donkey Wheel House, Bourke St Melbourne – façade repairs / Donkey Wheel House
Role/responsibility	Estimator / Described, measured and priced works, seek sub-contractor prices for elements of the Works. HBS won the work in a select tender Approx value of works – \$ value – confidential
Date	2017
Employer	HBS Group
Project / Client	St Peter's Catholic Church, Toorak stone façade & roof plumbing repairs / Parish of St Peter's
Role/responsibility	Estimator / Described, measured and priced works. HBS won a select tender Approx value of works – \$ value - confidential
Date	2017
Employer	HBS Group
Project / Client	Alexandra Fountain Bendigo – fountain render, ironwork & plumbing restoration / City of Greater Bendigo
Role/responsibility	Estimator / Described, measured and priced works. HBS won a select tender Approx value of works – \$ 330,000
Date	2017
Employer	HBS Group
Project / Client	Manchester Unity Building - concrete repairs to lift tower / MUB body corporate
Role/responsibility	Estimator / Described, measured and priced works. HBS won a select tender Approx value of works – \$ value confidential



Date	2017
Employer	HBS Group
Project / Client	A'Beckett St Drill Hall - roof repairs and roof plumbing upgrade / Dept. Environment, Land, Water and Planning
Role/responsibility	Estimator / Described, measured and priced works. HBS won a select tender Approx value of works – \$ 240,000
Date	2017
Employer	HBS Group
Project / Client	Bigge Park stone perimeter fence upgrade / Liverpool City Council, NSW
Role/responsibility	Estimator / Described, measured and priced works. HBS won a open tender Approx value of works – \$ 1,320,000
Date	2016
Employer	HBS Group
Project / Client	Incinerator Art Gallery terracotta roof & roof plumbing restoration / Moonee Valley Council
Role/responsibility	Estimator / Described, measured and priced works. HBS won a public tender Approx value of works – \$ 165,000
Date	2016
Employer	HBS Group
Project / Client	Melb. Uni. Dental School - Façade repairs / University of Melbourne
Role/responsibility	Estimator / Described, measured and priced works. HBS won a select tender Approx value of works – \$68,000
Date	2016
Employer	HBS Group
Project / Client	High rise housing commission tower – 90 flat upgrade (Racecourse Rd Kensington) / Dept. of Health and Human Services
Role/responsibility	Estimator / Described, measured and priced works. HBS won a select tender Approx value of works – \$ 5,350,000



Date	2016
Employer	HBS Group
Project / Client	QVWC Fire escape stair DDA upgrade/ Queen Victoria Women's Centre
Role/responsibility	Estimator / Described, measured and priced works. HBS won a select tender Approx value of works – \$135,000
Date	2016
Employer	HBS Group
Project / Client	Our Lady of Sacred Heart Church, Randwick Sydney/ Parish of Our Lady
Role/responsibility	Estimator / Described, measured and priced works. HBS won a select tender Approx value of works – \$150,000
Date	2016
Employer	HBS Group
Project / Client	St Thomas A'Beckett Church, Lewisham, Sydney/ NSW Catholic Archdiocese
Role/responsibility	Estimator / Described, measured and priced works. HBS won a select tender Approx value of works: \$2,000,000
Date	2016
Employer	HBS Group
Project / Client	St Michael Catholic Church Wagga Wagga bell tower repairs/ NSW Dept of Finance
Role/responsibility	Estimator / Described, measured and priced works. HBS won open public tender Approx value of works: \$211,000
Date	2013
Employer	David Dyson-Holland as QS for FPPV Architects
Project / Client	Vic. Parliament Façade Restoration Stage 7/ Victorian Government
Role/responsibility	Describe, measure & price façade restoration works. – stonework, render, lead & copper roof plumbing, joinery, metalwork, BWIC services, preliminaries Current Tender: \$value –Confidential



Date	2013
Employer	Heritage Building Services
Project / Client	Sydney Town Hall Façade Restoration / City of Sydney
Role/responsibility	Review architect drawings and describe, measure & price façade repair – stonework, lead & copper roof plumbing, seismic strengthening of parapet & roof features. Current tender - \$value - Confidential
Date	2013
Employer	Joseph Capogreco – architect
Project / Client	Valuation of 2001 refurbishment of 1930s ‘Art Deco’ apartment block / Joseph Capogreco
Role/responsibility	Describe, measure and price (in 2001 costs) refurbishment work to 4 apartments, external facades & site, for Capital Gains Tax purposes. \$value – confidential
Date	2013
Employer	PM&R Residential Construction & Project Management
Project / Client	Alterations & additions to existing west melb residential warehouse/existing owners
Role/responsibility	Describe, measure & price successful tender for alterations & new works to existing residential warehouse in West Melbourne. Approx. value – \$509000
Date	2012
Employer	PM&R Residential Construction & Project Management
Project / Client	Shop conversion to new shop with residence above /existing owners
Role/responsibility	Prepare tender estimate incl. demolitions, propping & protection to retained facade, describe, measure & price all trade works. Approx value \$1.3 million
Date	2012
Employer	PM&R Residential Construction & Project Management
Project / Client	Family games room & cabana /
Role/responsibility	Describe, measure & price all trade works for successful tender. Approx value - \$200,000



Date	2012
Employer	St Joseph's Church Collingwood
Project / Client	Preliminary Estimate of cost to restore fire damaged church / St Joseph's Church
Role/responsibility	Assess repairs to retained fire damaged masonry structure and rebuild as church and multi-purpose community hall. Approx value \$2,300,000
Date	2012
Employer	HBS Group
Project / Client	Toorak House façade restoration / Swedish Church
Role/responsibility	Describe, measure and price all façade restoration work. Approx value \$300,000
Date	2012
Employer	HBS Group
Project / Client	Old Engineering Building / University of Melbourne
Role/responsibility	Describe, measure & price the façade repairs to the north & west elevations of the Old Engineering Building. Approx value \$175,000
Date	2012
Employer	David Dyson-Holland as QS for FPPV Architects
Project / Client	Vic. Parliament Façade Restoration Stages 5 & 6/ Victorian Government
Role/responsibility	Describe, measure & price façade restoration works. – stonework, render, lead & copper roof plumbing, joinery, metalwork, BWIC services, preliminaries Current Tender: \$value –Confidential
Date	2012
Employer	Paul Scorpo
Project / Client	New single storey residence in 3 pavillions/ Paul Scorpo
Role/responsibility	Preliminary Estimate of proposed residence, office and garage at Merricks North Approx, value – \$1,000,000



Date	2012
Employer	Collingwood Children's Farm, Collingwood
Project / Client	New Café & store/ Collingwood Children's Farm
Role/responsibility	Tender estimate of proposed works Approx. value \$365,000
Date	2012
Employer	Central Goldfields Shire Council
Project / Client	Tender estimate of cost to reconstruct timber bell tower / Central Goldfields Shire Council
Role/responsibility	The timber bell tower on top of a brick tower Maryborough 1880s Victorian Fire Station was taken down because of safety fears and I prepared an independent estimate of the cost to make good and reinstate the timber tower on the Fire Station to assist in the tender evaluation of two local contractors who quoted to do the Works
Date	2011
Employer	Cathedral Stone
Project / Client	Heritage Stonework / Toroutrong Reservoir Victoria – Melbourne Water & Boulderstones Alliance
Role/responsibility	Prepared successful tender for the reinstatement of heritage stonework to the Clearwater channel outlet, the Plenty River Spillway and an historic stairway - approx. value of project - \$3 million
Date	2011
Employer	Cathedral Stone
Project / Client	Wesley Church Melbourne – east façade restoration / Wesley Church
Role/responsibility	Prepared successful tender to repair sandstone window traceries and attached columns - approx. value of project - \$ 64,000
Date	2010
Employer	Grocon
Project / Client	120 Pitt St Sydney / Colonial First National
Role/responsibility	Assisted in assessing & pricing a Grocon Tender to restore the former headquarters of the Commonwealth Bank (known as the Money Box) value of project - \$130 million



Date	2008
Employer	Heritage Building Services
Project / Client	Sydney Central Station sandstone restoration / NSW Railcorp (Sashi Narasimhial 0400321549)
Role/responsibility	Prepared successful tender for this staged project to restore sandstone walls and balustrade to the ramps and shops on the west side of the station including the bridge over Edie Avenue. This involved major traffic controls and consultation with stakeholders incl. Railcorp, station administration, Metro Light Rail, City of Sydney, RTA, police, taxi operators, buses and coach operators and shop tenants. Trades involved included stonemasonry, steel fabrication, asbestos removal, encapsulated scaffold work areas, traffic management, - approx. value of project - \$3 million
Date	2008
Employer	Heritage Building Services
Project / Client	Fitzroy Town Hall façade restoration / Yarra City Council (Project Architect – John Briggs 0411 228 515)
Role/responsibility	Prepared successful tender for façade restoration involving reinstating missing sections of balustrades and urns on the parapet, paint stripping and making good cement rendered facades and repainting timber windows and doors
Date	2008
Employer	Heritage Building Services
Project / Client	Ripponlea Plant Conservatory restoration / National Trust of Victoria
Role/responsibility	Prepared successful tender for restoration of the plant conservatory. Trades included cast iron, glazing, woodwork, tessalated tiles and painting including putting a steel frame in the basement to stabilize the existing concrete suspended slab – approx value \$150,000
Date	2008
Employer	Heritage Building Services
Project / Client	Queen Victoria Market cement render restoration to market offices and shops / Melbourne City Council
Role/responsibility	Prepared successful tender estimate for project involving removing drummy, delaminated and cracked render, making good base coat and applying new skim coat to entire face. Make good and repaint external woodwork and roof plumbing. Supervising architect – Lovell Chen (Fraser Brown)



Date	2007
Employer	Heritage Building Services
Project / Client	Immigration Museum render repairs to parapet walls and main façade/ Museum Victoria
Role/responsibility	Prepared successful tender for project involving removing inappropriate modern paint
Date	2007
Employer	Heritage Building Services
Project / Client	Bishopscourt chimney and roof restoration , Darling Point Sydney / Anglican Church Property Trust . Project Architect (Noel Bell Riddley Smith – Pam Jeffrey)
Role/responsibility	Reconstruction of sandstone chimneys,, slate roofs, copper roofs and copper roof plumbing including repairs to roof joinery and repainting. Approx value \$ 2 million
Date	2007
Employer	Heritage Building Services
Project / Client	341 George St Westpac headquarters restoration , Sydney / St Hilliers
Role/responsibility	HBS were sub-contracted by St Hilliers to restore the scagliola facades to the main banking chambers, restore steel windows and carry out minor repairs external facades generally
Date	2007
Employer	Heritage Buildings Services
Project / Client	State Library of Victoria make safe inspection of stone facades/ State Library of Victoria (Margaret Ford)
Role/responsibility	Assist stonemason doing make safe survey of façade and record works. Prepare estimate of cost to make good. Approx value \$225,000



Date	July 2005
Employer	Donald Cant Watts Corke (Rory Pincott - Director – 03 9417 4567)
Project / Client	New entrance, shop & café restaurant at Australian Centre for Moving Images, Federation Square, Melbourne
Role/responsibility	Prepare & price cost plans – Sketch Design, Design Development and Pre Tender Estimate for \$1.73 million alterations to existing building to create a better presence and access onto Federation Square by relocating box office & information counter, establishing a bar /café lounge facility, establishing a retail shop and relocating CEO and boardroom. Builder has now been appointed.
Date	July 2005
Employer	Donald Cant Watts Corke (Stephen McCoullough - Director – 03 9417 4567)
Project / Client	Wesley College Cato Hall Upgrade Glen Waverley Campus / Cox Architects (Jonathan Gardiner 9650 3288)
Role/responsibility	Prepare & price cost plans – Sketch Design, Design Development and Pre Tender Estimate for \$1.6 million construction work to remove existing stage & tiered seating, floor coverings and replace with new tiered sitting incorporating open biobox, new roof and floor finishes and upgrade of mechanical and electrical facilities and audio visual equipment. Currently at PreTender document stage
Date	January 2004 – March 2004
Employer	Baglin Partners
Project / Client	St Mary Star of the Sea Catholic Church Slate roof & fleche restoration; West Melbourne / Catholic Church
Role/responsibility	Prepared specification and tender documents for restoration of fleche and upper roofs. This work was to be done as lump sum contract with construction management by a main builder
Date	November 2003 to January 2004
Employer	Baglin Partners
Project / Client	Bellinzona Guest House reconstruction, Hepburn Springs; Grange Group of Companies
Role/responsibility	Initial estimate to rebuild historic guesthouse and conference facilities after the guest house was completely destroyed by fire. This work was for the insurers and the estimate had to be prepared using only a 1984 floor plan and recent photographs



Date	December 2003
Employer	Baglin Partners
Project / Client	St Marks Church Manse alterations & additions , Fitzroy; Philip Murdoch & Resources Residential Project Management
Role/responsibility	Measured and priced proposed alterations and additions to the St Marks vicarage This work was for a builder who successfully tendered for the work specified by Falkinger Andronas.
Date	2001-2003
Employer	Bechtel Ltd, UK as part of Rail Link Engineering (RLE)
Project / Client	St Pancras Station modernisation / London & Continental Railways
Role/responsibility	As Senior Cost Engineer in RLE assisted in tender evaluation and post contract administration of the contract covering the restoration of St Pancras Station – approx value of works – £450 million
Date	2001
Employer	Birse Construction Ltd
Project / Client	LUL Marble Arch Station Refurbishment ; London Underground
Role/responsibility	Prepared Stage B estimate for demolition, painted plastered blockwall partitioning, terrazzo flooring, ceramic wall tiling, VE suspended ceiling system and fixtures and fittings to all station entrances, ticket hall, offices & amenities, escalator shafts, concourses, passages & stairs to & including platforms. Review tender documents (NEC Option C (target costs with activities schedule)
Date	2001
Employer	Birse Construction Ltd
Project / Client	LUL Leicester Square Station Refurbishment ; London Underground
Role/responsibility	Prepared builder's quantities for demolition, terrazzo flooring, ceramic tiling and VE suspended ceiling system to all station escalator shafts, concourses, passages & stairs to platforms. Review tender documents (NEC Option A (activities schedule) and prepare technical report summarizing the scope of works as part of a tender submission. Attend contractor's tender settlement meeting and assist in completing tender submission



Date	1998 – 2000
Employer	Currie & Brown
Project / Client	LUL Earl's Court Station Modernisation ; London Underground
Role/responsibility	Preparation of stage E cost estimate, revising estimate and providing cost advice to assist in the phasing of the works to meet LUL budget constraints. Prepare invitation to tender and co-ordinate tender document issue. Prepare tender evaluation
Date	1998 – 2000
Employer	Currie & Brown
Project / Client	LUL Russell Square Congestion Relief Project ; London Underground
Role/responsibility	Preparation of bills of quantities for the refurbishment of the ticket hall, offices & staff amenities. Revise bills of quantities to incorporate changes in scope of works and building services requirements.
Date	1999
Employer	Currie & Brown
Project / Client	London Gateway 2 – an internet telecommunications switching station conversion in a historic but derelict and gutted five storey 1950s industrial building. Works included new offices, amenities, plant rooms and external works; Level 3 Communications.
Role/responsibility	Prepared preliminary estimates and revisions to master cost plan, measured structural steel, concrete, external drainage, external cladding, roofing, repairs to existing external masonry & stucco, internal blockwork, plasterboard partitions, internal doors, raised access floors
Date	1999
Employer	Currie & Brown
Project / Client	British Telecom Measured Term Contract (MTC) tender analysis ; British Telecom
Role/responsibility	Assisted in the tender evaluation for MTC work for maintenance and urgent repairs to BT properties in the 5 outer London areas. Work involved reviewing over 30 separate submissions to confirm the submissions were compliant and contained all key deliverables as required by BT's invitation to tender and tender documents. Prepare an excel spread sheet comparison matrix of the tenders for each area for a price sensitivity analysis of the submissions. Assist in the preparation of the tender reports



Date	1999
Employer	Currie & Brown
Project / Client	HM Prison Service Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations Audit; HM Prison Service
Role/responsibility	Inspected ten prisons and provide preliminary estimates for prioritised remedial works to prisons to meet the requirements of their HM Fire Inspectorate compliance notices
Date	1998
Employer	Currie & Brown
Project / Client	LUL East Ham station upgrade; Birse Construction Ltd
Role/responsibility	Prepared builder's quantities for demolition, brickwork, roofing, all finishes, doors, windows, fixtures and fitments, external paving & street furniture
Date	1998
Employer	Currie & Brown
Project / Client	LUL Paddington station upgrade; Birse Construction Ltd
Role/responsibility	Prepared builder's quantities for demolition, suspended ceilings, doors, screeds & toppings, plaster & renders, tiling, painting, sanitary fixtures, fixtures & fitments, signage, enabling works, BWIC services. BQ was structured in three work areas
Date	1986 – 1992
Employer	Baglin Partners
Project / Client	Scots Church spire and external stone facades; Collins St, Melbourne / Scots Presbyterian Church
Role/responsibility	Listed stone clad brick church in the central business district of Melbourne. Reconstruct top 1/3 of spire, damaged by lightning in the 1930s & poorly rebuilt with an inappropriate stone. All external walls of the church were cleaned and decayed stone replaced with indents or new stone and pointing made good. Work also involved replacing lightning protection, make spot repairs to slate roof, make good certain roof flashings & gutters, clean leadlight windows and fix wire mesh screens. Preliminary estimate, prepared measured schedule of works, pretender estimate, tendering works, post contract administration, interim valuations, final account. Approx. value: \$5M
Date	1992
Employer	Baglin Partners



Project / Client	North Melbourne library alterations & extension; Melbourne City Council
Role/responsibility	Refurbishment of a listed 1880s High Victorian stucco masonry building. Work involved making good stucco facades, replacing slate roofs, lead flashings & guttering, all internal finishes, fixtures and fittings, building services. Preliminary estimate, cost planning, bills of quantities, pretender estimate, tendering, interim valuations, final account. Approx. value: \$2M
Date	1991
Employer	Baglin Partners
Project / Client	Victorian Supreme Law Court Stonework restoration on south & west elevation; Melbourne; Victorian Public Works Department
Role/responsibility	Listed High Victorian stone public building. In conjunction with heritage architect, conduct a visual inspection of the south elevation and assess the anticipated stonemasonry repairs and estimate the likely cost of the current stage of stonemasonry works being carried out by the Public Works Department masons
Date	1990
Employer	Baglin Partners
Project / Client	Old Treasury Building entrance balustrade restoration; Melbourne; Victorian Public Works Department
Role/responsibility	In conjunction with heritage architect, conduct a visual inspection of external stone balustrades to the west entrance and prepare a measured schedule of works and estimate of anticipated cost
Date	1989
Employer	Baglin Partners
Project / Client	St Patricks Cathedral Upper stonework restoration; Melbourne; Lodge Brothers, Stonemasons.
Role/responsibility	Assist stonemasonry firm prepare a tender bid for stonemasonry repairs to the Cathedral. Prepared a measured schedule of works including preliminaries for contractor to price.



Date	1988
Employer	Baglin Partners
Project / Client	Queen Victoria Market Elizabeth Street shops and offices restoration, Melbourne; City of Melbourne
Role/responsibility	Refurbishment of listed Victorian masonry two storey terraced shops and converting former 1 st floor residences into the market administration offices. Work involved making good external stucco masonry, slate roofs and roof plumbing. . Preliminary estimate, cost planning, tendering, post contract administration, interim valuations and final account

GREG SPARK SUBMISSION to the Victorian Planning Framework Review.

I am a VBA registered quantity surveyor (QS-25234) with over 40 years experience in the Australian and UK construction industries working primarily on existing buildings and sites that more often than not have Heritage Listings.

Please see attached my CV which outlines the significant buildings and site which I have worked on during my working career. I have indicated that I am happy to speak to your Planning Framework Review Panel.

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I also think privatisation of building surveyors has created another failed profession that creates problems rather than resolving problems for the betterment of our built environment.

GREG SPARK comments on to Yarra Council for its C269 Planning Scheme Review.

The following is an updated version of my comments to City of Yarra for its C269 review of the Yarra Planning Scheme. Many of the comments I made need to be considered in any general review of Victorian Planning Framework.

Community engagement

The recently legislated Local Government Act 2020 requires Victorian Councils to adhere to the principles of community engagement and adopt *deliberative engagement practices*.

Arrangements now need to be put in place that enable the community to participate in key decision making processes and that these become the norm rather than the exception. At its core, **deliberative engagement** is about putting people – be they citizens, residents or other affected individuals – closer to the affairs of government and decision makers. It puts conversations, diverse perspectives and understanding at the **centre of decision-making**.

I do not think Yarra’s C269 considers deliberative engagement practices at all and it could be inserted in many sections of the Planning Scheme.

Context – Yarra a municipality of many of Melbourne’s first suburbs

The economic value of a place comes from its context. The intrinsic value of a historic place comes for its heritage context. In Yarra with 70% of the municipality covered by heritage overlays, it is heritage that is the most important component of context and the underlaying purpose of the planning scheme and land use controls generally and heritage precinct regulations in particular should be to protect the Context from which those values emerge. The former municipalities of Richmond, Fitzroy and Collingwood concurrently developed but in their own unique ways that there could be a Heritage Overlay developed for each of those former municipalities that then is combined in the Yarra Planning Scheme.

2.02 Vision

The vision in the Yarra City Council Plan and Community Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021 is for the municipality to be: “A vibrant, liveable and sustainable inner-city that the

community can be proud of' and Yarra believes its Planning Scheme will form the spatial response to the council's vision.

NOTE: What follows is from the Yarra Planning Scheme C269 review and the coloured and bold text highlights the points I have added or wish to underline.

The spatial vision for the municipality is:

Yarra will be one of Melbourne's most attractive inner-city municipalities, with a strong sense of history, a diverse population and a dynamic economy. The city's prominent retail strips will attract visitors from across Melbourne and beyond, who are drawn to a vibrant range of shops, artistic and cultural offers and a popular night-time economy. The local economy will include important health and education precincts, businesses seeking to locate in popular activity centres and employment precincts, and a growing number of creative industries and niche manufacturers. Yarra's historic neighbourhoods and heritage assets will be **preserved and enhanced**, with development revitalising areas with capacity for change. New housing will be provided **through encouraging alterations and additions to existing housing stock in the Residential Zones which will provide more homes** in a range of sizes to meet the needs of the population, and be supported by the necessary community facilities and infrastructure. High quality urban design, **particularly in the Public Realm of streetscapes and the open spaces of Yarra's parks and gardens** will respect the city's **unique** heritage and built form character to provide new public and open spaces, and improved connections for walking and cycling. Landscape and natural assets will be well managed, with enhanced connections to the Yarra River and its surrounding parks and recreation areas.

Through environmentally sustainable development the municipality will reduce its carbon footprint and become resilient to climate change. **Traditional building trades used basic building materials and Craft learnt trade skills (ie pre 1950s approach to construction) to make buildings that produce the most sustainable developments. For example traditional brick and stone masonry laid in lime mortars can create buildings that will last 100s of years and can be easily altered and reworked or demolished and rebuilt whereas cement based brick masonry and concrete buildings will struggle to last 75 years and when they are demolished the modern cement based building materials will be end up in landfill or crushed for road base.**

Making lime for building mortar uses less energy than cement and while lime mortar production releases CO₂, when lime mortars are used the lime mortar sets by absorbing CO₂ purposes. Cement production requires a huge amount of energy and releases far more CO₂ which can never be recovered in the building process or building demolition.

Yarra will be a city proud of its history and prepared for the future.

2.03 – Strategic directions

Housing

The Pandemic has made us all experience a paradigm shift in how we live and work. We have been instructed to stay at home and to work at home.

The focus for Yarra should be promoting and supporting private housing growth in the **Residential zones**. Yarra should assist property owners by producing design guideline as reference documents and prescribed design development overlays that are provide for fast

track approval for alterations and additions that meet an approved criteria for home owners to create:–

- **multi-functional housing** to facilitate more work and study activity at home.
- **multi-generational housing** that facilitates extended families wanting to live and care for each other rather than having their elderly going to retirement villages and care homes and or their small children being cared for by grandparents rather than using childcare centres.
- **multi-key housing** as share housing for adults to live part connected and part independent living areas that combined or divided into separate living areas with their own entrances. For example mews housing on laneways that provide separate living to the main house. This would facilitate adult children transitioning to independent living, it could provide affordable bedsit accommodation for singles or couples, and it could be accommodation for a live in housekeeper or nurse caring for elderly or physically or visually impaired people.

Activity centres

Within activity centres, residential housing on **Commercial 1 or mixed use sites** should be confined to commercial residential businesses such as public and private hotels.

Activity centres should also allow for low cost youth hostel type back packer dormitory accommodation.

When private housing is introduced into commercial zones it often has a detrimental outcome on commercial activities. For example private housing may prevent or restrict hotels and bars providing late night entertainment.

Natural environment

Climate change

I do not agree with the State Government and local inner city councils like Yarra's making statements like:– *Increased population in the inner city can bring sustainability benefits through more efficient use of existing infrastructure, more people being able to access existing services, local recreation and employment opportunities, increased use of sustainable transport modes and reduced sprawl on Melbourne's fringe.*

Yarra is already one of the most densely populated municipalities and it is Victorian Government and not Yarra's responsibility to reduce the peri-urban sprawl.

Built environment and heritage

Demolition of existing buildings should be discouraged.

The economic, environment and often social and cultural responsible response should always be in the first instance to be: **adaptive reuse instead of demolition.**

For every dollar spent not on new build but on rehabilitation existing buildings results in more direct jobs executing the works and more indirect jobs supplying associated materials and services to the project.

Yarra needs to allow commercial and mixed use sites to transitioning into commercial residential as public hotels, backpacker youth hostel accommodation or concierge managed private hotels. The worst situation is to allow remotely body corporate managed and controlled private apartment complexes in commercial zones.

The only good thing that can be said for remotely controlled body corporate management of residential housing is that it makes local government appear agile and compassionate.

New buildings should be considered like human beings in that they need to be respectful to their neighbours.

New construction in a heritage area needs to be well designed, properly built using relevant building materials and appropriately scaled in relation to the adjacent buildings.

The economic value of real estate comes from its Context – its value is derived not from what is spent on the building structure but where the building is located.

The economic, environment and often social and cultural responsible response to functional obsolescence is adaptive reuse. For every dollar spent not on new build but on rehabilitation of buildings results in more direct jobs executing the works and more indirect jobs supplying associated materials and services to the project.

The touchstone for global public policy is sustainability. In relation to the built environment local government needs to appreciate and value the age of a lot of its built environment.

Apartment living has increased in in Melbourne particularly municipalities like Yarra but unfortunately new apartment developments are rarely done to suit more diverse groups of people such as large families and share households. If it is to become a predominant form of housing over the next 15 years, apartment developments need to move away from being numerous 1 or 2 bed apartments to being 3+ bed apartments done in say 2+1, 3+2 etc configurations up to say 8 or 10 bed apartments that can multi-generational and or multi-functional apartments.

The large public housing estates of large high rise apartment buildings set in landscaped grounds are likely to be replaced in the next 20 years with medium density of medium height of social housing mixed with private apartment buildings set in communal gardens as well as public landscaped grounds.

In areas worthy to have a Heritage Overlay, all new buildings needs to be constructed using traditional trades using traditional materials.

Local council planning schemes need to acknowledge ALL significant heritage sites. Yarra's planning scheme noted the World Heritage significance of the Royal Exhibition Buildings and Carlton Gardens which is located in the City of Melbourne but failed to note Abbotsford Convent precinct being listed on the Australian National Heritage Register.

Looking around recent developments in inner Melbourne, commercial and mixed use properties that have transitioned to residential apartments have generally not been a great success and often these private apartment complexes cause conflict with the often noisy night economy.

In the past 10 years, apartment developments have failed to become more diverse and to better suit large families and share households.

Over the next 20 years, most of the Victorian Govt. high rise public housing towers built in the 1960s and 1970s using concrete frames and floors with precast concrete walls – these buildings are increasingly becoming structurally fragile and this will likely result in these towers will need being demolished and replaced.

The Victorian Government should not proceed with any infill new developments around existing high rise housing like the proposed medium rise public housing it is proposing to create on the Collingwood housing estate if it will make the demolition of the existing high rise towers more complex

Natural environment

Government should consider native flora and fauna not just in large reserves like Yarra Bend Park but also large city parks and gardens like Edinburgh Gardens, Fitzroy and Treasury Gardens and the Royal Melbourne Botanic Gardens.

Consider the three significant water corridors in the City of Yarra:-

- 1 Yarra River and its tributaries,
- 2 Darebin Creek and
- 3 Merri Creek.

These corridors are significant environmental assets with unique flora and fauna but these water corridors also each serve a number of functions, such as:-

- a. providing for leisure and recreation,
- b. forming habitats to enhance biodiversity,
- c. acting as the city's 'green lungs', and
- d. managing water flow and stormwater. The low-lying land around the waterways are susceptible to flooding..

Where these water corridors provide pedestrian and cycle links – consideration must now be given to provide separate pedestrian walks and bikeways in high traffic locations like Dights Falls to Gipps Street via the Abbotsford Convent and the Collingwood Children's Farm.

Climate change

Reduce the urban heat island effect by increasing urban forest including street trees.

Increasing the urban forest will require planning for power distribution and telecoms companies to progressively relocate all cabling to underground conduits.

Climate change is resulting in more intense storms and lightning strikes. Having power and telecom cabling undergrown will diminish the likelihood of power or communication blackouts.

Built environment and heritage

To maintain the context of the area in locations of heritage significance – this can be achieved through construction conservation that is a positive, well informed and collaborative approach to building conservation.

Value the public realm as a public asset that supports people who live, work and visit the area.

Assess each street and laneway for its capacity to contribute to the wellbeing of community and to supporting the natural environment. Have an urban forest strategy that acknowledges that heritage trees also contribute to climate sustainability.

Preserving and enhancing (not protecting) heritage buildings and streetscapes while still allowing appropriate development is a key driver for inner city municipalities like Yarra and Port Phillip .

Local government needs to carefully manage future development to ensure they do not erode local areas' valued historic character

Preserve and enhance the municipality's highly valued heritage places will help retain and promote the local area's distinctive character and sense of history.

Retain and if necessary adapt historic buildings is the most concrete means of connecting with the past.

Reinforce inner city municipalities like Yarra, by promoting low-scale residential neighbourhoods by encouraging the conversion of garages and sheds along laneways being developed into mews housing. This will allow for more multi-generational housing, shared housing and multi-functional housing that better accommodates working at home.

It would be better to ensure mid-rise buildings are only approved in appropriate locations **generally** within major and neighbourhood activity centres and employment lands or major regeneration areas.

Preserve and enhance the historic built form, character and function of streets and laneways as a significant feature of the area's urban structure and character.

Housing

Local government needs to manage the scale, intensity and form of residential growth ensuring by promoting the multi-functional and multi-generational development of existing residential housing stock. This should be done in a way to be different across a municipality and it should vary depending on the capacity of the municipalities residential zones to accommodate housing growth within the physical and strategic context of each area.

Local councils should supports the provision of additional and improved social housing (including public and affordable housing) in only the redevelopment of Commercial or mixed use sites. This will ensure residents who need of this type of accommodation are close to their support services, and they will be living in locations that will have relatively easy access to essential services as well as employment opportunities.

Local government like Yarra often expouse support for diverse community through facilitating accessible, adaptable, affordable housing options.

To support a diverse community local government need to provide:–

- diverse housing that provide for sole persons, couples, families and shared households.
- housing options for people with disabilities,
- crisis accommodation for older persons, students and those in need.
- for a range of affordable housing types appropriate to the needs ie very low, low and moderate-income households.
- greater housing choice for key workers – police, fire and ambulance, healthcare and local council employees, so they and their family members can all live and work within their municipality.
- For the supply of additional social housing and improvements to existing social housing.

Economic development

Diverse economy means that different land uses often overlap or vary within short distances. Mixing private residential in close proximity with commercial, industrial and entertainment areas creates more challenges *than* opportunities to manage environmental and amenity impacts and enhance of activity centres and precincts.

Municipalities with pre WW1 heritage areas like Yarra and Port Phillip should be aiming to build on the economic value of tourism. In response to the temporary loss of international tourism for at least a few years, the focus should now be be national and local tourism.

In areas that have significant sites like the World Heritage listed REB & CG, UNESCO has inscribed WHEA buffer zone which provides opportunities and advantages for local businesses to focus on heritage tourism.

The national heritage listed Abbotsford Convent also provides an opportunity to expand heritage tourism by creating an buffer zone around the Convent.

In its Heritage Tourism Strategy and Action Plan 2020-2030, UNESCO notes: ‘Heritage is our legacy from the past what we live with today, and what we pass on to future generations. Our cultural and natural heritage are both irreplaceable of life and inspiration’.

Future developments in Activity Centres need to be complimentary to the night economy by residential developments being hotels and youth hostel style dormitory accommodation, rather than private apartments remotely managed by body corporates.

Transport

With car parking bays being lost to allow for expanding footpath dining, To allow for increased accessibility to shops and offices, Yarra will progressively convert approximately half of the 1 hour metered parking in activity centres into free ½ or ¼ hour parking, Former commercial vehicle loading zone bays will be converted into free ¼ hour parking.

Apartment developments will be required to provide for off street parking for their visitors and essential services such as police, ambulance, district nursing and food deliveries.

Enhance Yarra as a safe place to walk or cycle, and to increase the number of people walking or cycling, by converting high use shared paths in to separate bike roads and pedestrian walks.

Encourage developments to prioritise sustainable transport modes. All new apartment developments will be required to provide off street parking that includes charging points for electric vehicles.

Supermarket carparks and petrol stations will be encouraged to include for electric car recharging bays.

Infrastructure

Require the electricity supply authority and the telecom companies to progressively relocate their cabling underground.

Open space

For large parks like Edinburgh Gardens that have high levels of use, Yarra will establish Committees of Management that will allow both local residents and sports clubs using the parkland to have a say in how the parks are used and what amenities and facilities are installed for public use.

15.01 – Urban Design

Support development that improves the quality of the public realm.

Where the public realm has a Heritage Overlay, support developments that will preserve and enhance the cultural significance of the area.

Development adjacent to or within a Heritage Overlay

Any development adjacent to building or site that is individually significant or has a contributory heritage grading, will have regard to height, street wall height, setbacks, building form and siting of the adjacent heritage properties.

Provide a sympathetic and respectful design response appropriate to the heritage of the area.

Use materials and finishes that **are typical for** the heritage place.

Laneways

Promote development abutting a laneway that:

- Provides additional multi-functional multi-generational residential accommodation within existing Residential Zone areas
- Support the conversion of laneways into private managed carriageways to provide increased property security; to stop laneways being used as public toilets and provide a more shared and valued open space primarily for residents of properties that abut that laneway.
- Provides a safe and well-lit environment for users of the laneway.

Boulevards

Support development along Alexandra Parade, Queens Parade, Victoria Parade and Hoddle Street that:

- Maintains the heritage fabric and landscaped character comprising avenue trees and kerbing along Yarra's historic boulevards – Hoddle Street, Victoria Parade, Alexandra Parade, and Queens Parade.
- Improve the historic landscape character of Hoddle Street following the VicRoads intersection and road lanes upgrade .

Development adjacent to a public open space

Facilitate development that:

- Provide additional public accessible open space
- Avoids overshadowing

15.01 – Building design

- When the development site is covered by a Heritage Overlay, request traditional building materials and methods of construction be used on facades visible from the street to preserve and enhance the heritage character of the area. This should apply to both repairs and alterations to existing buildings as well as new infill developments.

Mid height development

Support mid-rise development that:

- In areas covered by a Heritage Overlay, utilize traditional materials and construction methods to preserve and enhance the historic fabric of the area.

Provides a scale that reflects the heritage and context of the boulevard.

Front fences and gates

Reflect the predominant character of fencing and boundary treatments in the street in terms of the heritage character of the streetscape as well as considering height and permeability, and clearly defines the boundaries of a site.

Provide privacy and security that allows natural surveillance between the building and the street.

Carparking, loading facilities and outbuildings

Require carports, car spaces, external car stackers, garages, loading facilities and outbuildings to be:

- Set back behind the front building line (excluding verandahs, porches, bay windows or similar projecting features) to appear visually recessive when viewed from the street.

- Located at the rear of a building, in an area of lower pedestrian activity.

Require car parking, including basement car parking and external car stackers, to incorporate high standards of design and amenity, and provide each parking bay with charging points for electric cars.

New apartment developments shall include off street parking for visitors, deliveries and emergency vehicles, district nursing and meals on wheels vehicles, etc.

15.01 – Landmarks

Strategies

Provide adequate setback and building separation to maintain clear sky between the identified architectural elements of the landmark and new development such that new developments have height limits and setbacks that maintain clear sky at least for the same distance as the visible height of the viewed landmark.

Minimise light spill from new development that would reduce the visual prominence of identified illuminated landmark signs at night time.

In foreground of a view to a landmark, support developments that utilize traditional building materials and construction methodologies that enhance the historic character of the viewed landmark and the historic character of the area.

Introduce a new Planning Scheme incorporated document covering Landmark visit controls similar to what has been created for the Shine of Remembrance in the Kings Domain.

There are a lot more landmarks that could be added to a prescribe list and views should not be just a couple of noted views for particular locations.

15.03 - World Heritage Environs Areas

The local municipalities should have a Heritage Overlay eg Yarra HO361 that matches the UNESCO inscribed plans for the World Heritage Environs Area (WHEA) buffer zone around the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens. Sadly the Yarra HO361 does not match the WH buffer zone.

The Yarra section of the WHEA buffer zone is bounded by Nicholson St, Victoria Parade, Fitzroy Street & Bell Street but given the consistency of similar mix of historic building types, the buffer zone should really be extended east to Brunswick Street.

There are 2 prescribed protected views of the REB from particular reference points in Gertrude St and Marion Lane but with the new REB dome walk & promenade deck, within the buffer zone there should be consideration given to views both to and from the REB are equally important.

Yarra Planning Scheme needs to acknowledge Abbotsford Convent as an Australian National Heritage listed site including the need to assess an appropriate Buffer Zone.

A WH or NH buffer zone should be appreciated as an opportunity for the local area to benefit from being close to a site of great cultural significance.

Policy application

This policy applies to all land within **the** World Heritage Environs Area

The ‘World Heritage Environs Area’ (WHEA) surrounds the World Heritage listed Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens. The WHEA, which includes land within South Fitzroy, acts as a ‘buffer zone’ for the World Heritage property and provides a setting and context of significant character for the World Heritage property.

UNESCO defines the WHEA with an inscribed map that includes the section of Fitzroy South that is bound by Nicholson Street, Victoria Street, Fitzroy St and Bell St

Objectives

In 2004 The Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens (REB & CG) became the first place in Australia to receive a UNESCO World Heritage listing as well as one of the first three places to be included on the Australian National Heritage List.

The REB & CG is an outstanding example of Palace of Industry and its setting, is a site used by the global international exhibition movement to showcase technological innovation and change, and over the 19th and 20th centuries this helped promote a rapid increase in industrialisation and international trade through the exchange of knowledge and ideas by trade shows and exhibitions.

The Victoria Heritage Act (the Act) was amended in 2004 to include a section on World Heritage. The Act required the government to consider and declare an area around the REB & CG to be the World Heritage Environs Area (WHEA) to act a buffer zone in order to protect the world heritage values of this special Heritage Place and to develop a WHEA Strategy Plan (Strategy Plan) for that area. The current Victorian Heritage Act 2017 provides for World Heritage in Part 9

The Strategy Plan aims to:–

- protect the World Heritage values of the REB and CG
- protect significant views and vistas to and from the REB and CG.
- to maintain and conserve the significant historic character (built form and landscapes) of the WHEA.
- to ensure new development in the area has regard to the prominence and visibility of the REB and CG.

The WHEA encompasses an area under the jurisdiction of both cities Melbourne and Yarra. Amendments to Melbourne Planning Scheme required both municipalities to also make amendments to their Municipal Planning Schemes.

In 2009 C118 Amendment to the Yarra Planning Scheme included objective 15: ‘To protect the setting and context of the World Heritage Listed Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens by managing future development within the WHEA; and protecting views to the REB from Gertrude St and Marion Lane through the application of the Design and Development Overlay.

Yarra has had a Statutory obligation to:–

- introduce a new Local Heritage Policy into the Yarra Planning scheme, which contains specific guidance for the development of land immediately surround the World Heritage Site and generally for development in the buffer zone;
- amend the Yarra Design and Development Overlay to properly address Heritage and in particular to properties within the WHEA buffer zone
- makes consequential changes to the Municipal Strategic Statement and other Local Policies within the Planning Scheme as required to properly integrate the Local Heritage Policy in the Yarra Planning Scheme.

The WHEA additionally derives from the requirements of the ‘Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (2005) to which Australia is a State Party, and which provides for the identification of a ‘buffer zone’ for World Heritage properties.

The WHEA acts as a ‘buffer zone’ to the REB and CG site, and assist in conserving and protecting the World Heritage values of this site through managing and controlling developments outside the site but within the WHEA.

The buffer zone will continue to demonstrate and share the heritage values and aspects of significance which are attributed to Yarra’s Fitzroy South as noted in Heritage Overlay HO 334.

In addition, Yarra will develop a new local policy ‘Development Guidelines for Heritage Places in the WHEA.

The WHEA is of historical and social significance for its association with the World Heritage listed Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens.

The buffer zone is also of historical and social significance for incorporating important and intact areas of residential, commercial and institutional development within the early Melbourne suburbs of Carlton and Fitzroy.

The WHEA buffer zone includes properties which directly address the site and can be seen from the site, to provide an immediate setting and context of significant heritage character to the historical character for the REB and CG

The WHEA is also significant for demonstrating aspects of local historical development, and for contributing to the historical character of the municipality, with development which preceded, was broadly contemporary with or followed the 1879-1880 construction and development of the REB. The Yarra portion of the WHEA buffer zone is an area of architectural and aesthetic significance. It retains substantially intact nineteenth century streetscapes, particularly on Nicholson Street and Gertrude Street. These streetscapes display a comparatively high proportion of original nineteenth form and fabric including two-storey, with some three-storey residential and commercial developments, interspersed with prominent institutional properties.

Strategies

Yarra will ensure new developments within the buffer zone that:

- retain and conserve individually significant and contributory places, including contributory fabric, form, architectural features and settings.
- retain and conserve the valued heritage character of streetscapes.
- retain the predominantly lower scale form of development which provides a contrast to the dominant scale and form of the Royal Exhibition Building.
- avoid consolidation of allotments in residential areas that would result in the loss of evidence of typical nineteenth century subdivision and allotment patterns.
- protect direct views and vistas to the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens from abutting streets and other views and vistas to the dome available from streets within the buffer zone and in particular Gertrude Street, Marion Lane and in Victoria Parade immediately east of the junction with Nicholson Street.
- discourage the introduction and proliferation of permanent structures and items such as shelters, signage (other than for historic interpretation purposes), kiosks and the like around the perimeter of the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens in order to:
 - avoid impacts on the presentation of the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens, including impacts on axial views along treed alleys and avenues.
 - minimize inappropriate visual clutter around the perimeter of the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens.

Consider the WHEA Strategy Plan Statement of Significance in the new developments
Heritage Impact Statement

Protect significant views and vistas to and from the REB & CG.

Maintain and conserve the significant historic character (built form and landscapes) of the area.

Have regard to the prominence and visibility of the REB & CG.

will be appreciated when viewed from the recently completed Publicly Accessible Promenade Deck at the base of the REB dome offering elevated views out of the REB to the WHEA and beyond.

consider building scale and height controls on proposed developments within the buffer zone by understanding the development relationship or reference to the World Heritage listing of the REB & CG.

consider the proposed development impact on views and vistas of both to and from the REB dome.

Yarra will amend the Yarra Heritage Strategy 2019-2030 to include a note of Yarra's statutory obligations and requirements with respect to Victoria's Heritage Act 2017 – part 9 – World Heritage with respect to WHEA policy implementation within City of Yarra jurisdiction.

Yarra will update its detailed Planning Policies that relate in particular to the buffer zone but to heritage generally to:-

- retain significant and contributory places
- retain of heritage character of streetscapes
- retain of predominately lower scale development
- avoid consolidation of allotments
- protect direct views and vistas of the REB & CG from surrounding streets and public spaces within Yarra
- minimize inappropriate visual clutter and proliferation of permanent structures such as shelters, signs, kiosks, etc
- develop a Design Guide to assist buffer zone property owner's wanting to repair and enhance their property.
- Introduce a new Planning Scheme Incorporated Document covering REB vista controls, as well as a reference document explaining the significance of the REB and the WHEA with respect to heritage and vista control, similar to what has been created for the Shrine of Remembrance

To consider as relevant the following documents to support a Heritage Impact Statement for proposed changes to properties within the WHEA the following documents:-

- Heritage Act, Victorian Government 2017.
- Burra Charter, the Australian ICOMOS Charter for places of cultural significance (Aust. ICOMOS 2013)
- Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens World Heritage Management Plan generally & in particular:-
 - o Attachment A: REB and CG Conservation Management Plan (Victoria Dept. of Transport, Planning & Local Infrastructure October 2013)
 - o Attachment D: World Heritage Environs Area Strategy Plan: REB and CG (Victoria Dept. of Transport, Planning & Local Infrastructure October 2013)

- ICOMOS Position Paper – World Heritage and Buffer Zones (International Expert Meeting on World Heritage and Buffer Zones, Davos, Switzerland. March 2008).
- Hansen Discussion Paper – ‘ Review of the World Heritage Strategy Plan for the REB & CG World Heritage Environs Area’ (Vic Dept of Environment, Land, Water & Planning. April 2020)
- Shrine of Remembrance Vista Controls, April 2014. Incorporated document for Melbourne, Port Phillip & Stonnington Planning Schemes.
- Shrine of Remembrance ‘Managing the significance of the Shrine’ July 2013, a Planning Scheme Reference Document for Melbourne, Port Phillip & Stonnington Planning Schemes.

15.03- National Heritage Environs Area

The Victorian Government and Yarra Council should both take steps that acknowledge a site of National Heritage significance. The Yarra Planning Scheme should include a section that defines a National Heritage Environs Area in a similar manner to the World Heritage Environs Area around the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens.

The Yarra Planning Scheme should include:–

Policy application

This policy applies to all land within a proposed City of Yarra National Heritage Environs Area (NHEA) defined by the Public Realm and streets surrounding the Abbotsford Convent and the Abbotsford Precinct Heritage Farmlands (AC & APHF).

This Policy is in addition to the Policy application noted in the previous section 15.03-1 Heritage.

Objectives

The AC & APHF is the former Abbotsford Convent of the Good Shepherd complex is an outstanding example of a place which demonstrates Australia’s social and welfare history, especially in regards to the role of religious and charitable institutions in this history over the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The APHF upon which the former convent and the Collingwood Children’s Farm is sited, is the oldest continually farmed land in metropolitan Melbourne and represents a fine example of a working inner-city convent farm in a major city.

In August 2017 the precinct covering the AC & APHF receive an Australian National Heritage listing. In response to the this listing, Yarra now acknowledges that an a buffer zone should be established around the AC & APHF in order to protect the areas heritage values of this significant Heritage Place, and Yarra proposes to develop a NHEA Strategy Plan for that area.

The Abbotsford Convent NHEA Strategy Plan aims to: –

- protect the National Heritage values of the AC & APHF

- protect significant views and vistas to the AC & APHF
- to maintain and conserve the significant historic character (built form and landscapes) of the NHEA.
- to ensure new development in the area has regard to the prominence and visibility of the AC & APHF.

Yarra proposes to: –

- introduce a new Local Heritage Policy into the Yarra Planning scheme, which contains specific guidance for the development of land immediately surrounding the AC & APHF
- amend the Yarra Design and Development Overlay to properly address Heritage and in particular to properties within the NHEA buffer zone
- makes consequential changes to the Municipal Strategic Statement and other Local Policies within the Planning Scheme as required to properly integrate the Local Heritage Policy in the Yarra Planning Scheme.

The NHEA acts as a ‘buffer zone’ to the AC & APHF precinct and assist in conserving and protecting the National Heritage values of this site through managing and controlling developments outside the site but within the NHEA.

The buffer zone will continue to demonstrate and share the heritage values and aspects of significance which are attributed to Yarra’s Abbotsford as noted in Heritage Overlays HO6 to HO9 .

In addition, Yarra will develop a new local policy ‘Development Guidelines for Heritage Places with particular reference to the NHEA as a Planning Scheme Reference document.

The NHEA is of historical and social significance for its association with the National Heritage listed AC & APHF.

Strategies

Yarra will ensure new developments within the buffer zone that:

- retain and conserve individually significant and contributory places, including contributory fabric, form, architectural features and settings.
- retain and conserve the valued heritage character of streetscapes.
- retain the predominantly lower scale form of development which provides a contrast to the dominant scale and form of the AC.
- avoid consolidation of allotments in residential areas that would result in the loss of evidence of typical nineteenth century subdivision and allotment patterns.
- protect direct views and vistas to the AC & APHF from abutting streets and other views and vistas to the AC available from streets within the buffer zone.

- discourage the introduction and proliferation of permanent structures and items such as shelters, signage (other than for historic interpretation purposes), kiosks and the like around the perimeter of the AC & APHF in order to:
 - o avoid impacts on the presentation of the AC & APHF, including impacts on axial views along treed alleys and avenues.
 - o minimize inappropriate visual clutter around the perimeter of the AC & APHF.
- Consider the NHEA Strategy Plan Statement of Significance in the new developments requiring a Heritage Impact Statement
- Protect significant views and vistas to and from the AC & APHF.
- Maintain and conserve the significant historic character (built form and landscapes) of the area.
- Have regard to the prominence and visibility of the AC & APHF.
- consider building scale and height controls on proposed developments within the buffer zone by understanding the development relationship or reference to the National Heritage listing of the AC & APHF

Yarra will amend the Yarra Heritage Strategy 2019-2030 to include a note of Yarra's obligations and requirements with respect to NHEA policy implementation within City of Yarra jurisdiction.

Yarra will update its Planning Policies that relate in particular to the buffer zone but to heritage generally to:-

- retain significant and contributory places
- retain of heritage character of streetscapes
- retain of predominately lower scale development
- avoid consolidation of allotments
- protect direct views and vistas of the AC & APHF from surrounding streets and public spaces within Yarra
- minimize inappropriate visual clutter and proliferation of permanent structures such as shelters, signs, kiosks, etc
- develop a Design Guide to assist buffer zone property owner's wanting to repair and enhance their property.
- Introduce a new Planning Scheme Incorporated Document covering REB vista

To consider as relevant the following documents to support preparation of a Heritage Impact Statement for proposed changes to properties within the WHEA: –

- Heritage Act, Victorian Government 2017.

- Burra Charter, the Australian ICOMOS Charter for places of cultural significance (Aust. ICOMOS 2013)

16.01 – Location of residential development

New housing development also needs to be located in residential zone to allow existing housing stock to become more multi-functional with work at home activities.

Planning regulations needs to make it easier to add extra living areas and bedrooms ie - to facilitate multi-generational living or multi-functional uses of a residential home to better accommodate working at home activity..

In activity centres, Planning should only allow commercial residential – public and private hotels that include 24/7 concierge front door management as well as low cost youth hostel dormitory accommodation. This will help facilitate the night time economy of the associated activity centre.

Commercial residential should include off street parking for guests and staff.

Private residential accommodation managed by remote body corporate authorities are more likely to cause conflict with the music and dance venues operating in the associated activity centre.

There should be no private residential developments that have floors that cannot be reached by a fire brigade extension ladder. Private residential apartments should have bookable off street parking for tenant visitors, emergency vehicles, meals on wheels or nursing care service vehicles.

High rise or high density housing complexes should be made to practice evacuation drills similar to commercial office and retail buildings.

Aged care facilities need to include for off street parking for visitors and emergency vehicles.

All new off street parking should now include charging points for electric vehicles.

16.04 -Housing affordability

Key workers should include council employees wishing to live within the Municipality.

Affordability of housing is dependent on who owns and manages the property as well as where the property is located.

Buildings need to be built fit for purpose and housing to used by people who have been marginalized and possibly suffered mental health issues is not cheap and affordable to build. This type of housing needs to have robust cabinetry, fitments and fixtures and internal solid core doors where elsewhere a semi-hollow core door would suffice. Bathrooms need to be designed and constructed for disabled person use and for nurse assisted bathing.

If local government wants to help people through the provision of affordable housing, it should be either through a NGO that provides rooming house accommodation for specific

groups – single older women, marginalised young men and women, etc. Each group has particular housing needs that must be considered.

Affordable housing generally requires financial support by either the government or private benefactors and it also requires proper management.

The Yarra Planning Scheme Affordable Housing section should remove the guidelines that suggest suitable affordable housing can be provided by developers doing major residential developments unless the target group for the affordable housing will be essential workers or council employees and it is made affordable by subsidizing the rent.

17.01 -Employment

strategies

Support developments that involve adaptive reuse of historic buildings

Support developments that use traditional materials and workmanship for new build to maintain the availability of traditional materials and skills to ensure there is more trades capable of doing appropriate repairs in the future.

Support developments that provide affordable workspaces and broken plan configurations that facilitates appropriate pandemic physical separation and mechanical ventilation.

Support developments that provide for off street staff and visitors parking with charge points for electric car recharging.

In managing transport within to and from a major employment precinct it should just encourage (not prioritise) walking and cycling over car and truck based transport.

18.02 – Road system

Develop a principal bike network (PBN) through Yarra that links schools, activity centres and Council building, by using quiet roads and streets and pedestrian crossing that are managed during school times. The PBN should avoid roads that have slow peak hour traffic where cyclists are subjected to diesel fumes and particulates. For example it would be healthier for cyclists to use Gold St or Napier St rather than Wellington St, Smith St or Brunswick St

Discourage novice or tourist cyclists using roads incorporating the tram network.

The Yarra PBN should be developed so that a unaccompanied 13 year old can safely cycle from say Fitzroy North to Cremorne.

This section on the road system needs to be expanded to explain in more detail how Yarra will manage roadways as an important part of the public realm particularly along streetscapes covered by a Heritage Overlay.

This section should note the current Principal Freight Network and arterial roads that are VicRoads controlled and managed, as well as explain the interface between Yarra and VicRoads.

18.02 – Car parking

The objective needs to separate the worthy objective of promoting travel by sustainable modes by controlling and managing car parking.

The strategy always be to increase the availability of car parking spaces preferably off street and having adequate car parking for the location.

Off street parking now needs to include charging points for electric cars.

2+ hour metered car spaces in activities should allocate a percentage of the meter charge to progressively upgrade the parking bays to include electric car charging points

Car share providers to pay appropriate fees for being the allocation and sole use of street parking bays.

Link cycling with rail transport by encouraging the development of cycle shops next to railway stations to provide cycle maintenance or secure storage.

Encourage the provision of ride sharing vehicles, motor cycles and rickshaws at railway stations in lieu of long term car parking. Yarra should encourage VicTrack to close long term parking at stations like West Richmond and Clifton Hill and replace them with ride sharing economic taxi services

To comply with the Council's deliberate engagement obligations, allow residents to have a say on how car parking is provided in their street.

Allow 60deg angle rear to kerb parking which facilitates safer loading and unloading and safer access out into traffic.

19.02 Public Open Space

Remove the strategy to 'facilitate improved links between open spaces within the city and other municipalities to form a network. Stop thinking about shared paths in and through parks and gardens.

For our large parks and gardens like Edinburgh Gardens, Clifton Hill Quarries, Victoria Park, Citizens Park, Burnley ovals etc, create Committees of Management and comply with the Council's deliberate engagement obligations. Committees of Management would include local residents, dog owners and sporting clubs that use that particular park area.

Encourage the formation of dog owner clubs in parks like Edinburgh Gardens.

All water fountains should have dog bowls that can be discharged to a drain and not the ground where discharged water creates a quagmire.

In parks and gardens with high public vibrancy and dog off lead areas, like Edinburgh Gardens, relocate commuter cycle traffic to perimeter paths or adjacent roadways.

Discourage skateboard and bike traffic through dog off lead areas.

19.02 Public open space contribution

Explain what residential developments or subdivisions will involve a public open space contribution.

Give local people adjacent to the proposed development the opportunity to have a say on how the public open space contribution is to spent or whether the locals would prefer land for open space in lieu of cash payments.

19.03 Water sensitive urban design

This policy needs to be expanded to clarify how Yarra will integrate water sensitive design in the public realm – streetscapes, parks and gardens.

The Edinburgh Gardens rainwater garden should be more correctly named a drain garden and it needs to be fenced to stop dogs and children playing in the gutter water.

Yarra needs to explain how it will reintegrate urban water in the landscape of its streets and roads.

Link water sensitive design with Yarra's urban forest strategy. Yarra to progressively install porous asphalts to footpaths in parks and gardens like Edinburgh Gardens

Consider as relevant: – City West Water guide for trees and shrubs adjacent to a water or sewer asset.

19.03 Waste

Rewrite this policy to make it clear the strategy is relevant to a proposed new development or how Yarra will be operating within the public realm or what is expected of property owners with respect to managing waste on private properties.

Yarra to explain its policy for managing waste and recycling in parks and gardens and along streets with high pedestrian traffic.

Yarra to explain how property owners can dispose of hazardous materials.

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This is a tale from the front line of the housing crisis. It is a story of thwarted ambitions and paper dreams, crazy conditions and soaring costs. It is also the story of millions of tiny bad decisions — and no one knows the ending.

Cuts, constant rule changes and Nimby politics have created a postcode lottery in the planning system that is damaging attempts to ease the housing crisis. Despite the government's frequently stated and much-lauded pledge of 1m new homes by 2020, homeowners and developers in the worst-hit areas say they are forced to "wait and wait and wait" for a decision, whether they want to replace their windows or build 4,000 new homes.

For Charlotte and Gareth Thomas, Britain's planning crisis meant a six-year struggle before they were allowed to put a balustrade around their roof terrace in Chiswick, west London. At the other end of the spectrum, Tony Pidgley, the Barnardo's boy who set up Berkeley and has become one of the country's most influential housebuilders, says the red tape would have sunk him had he started today.

So, does Britain have a planning crisis? "Yes," Pidgley declares across his boardroom table.

In a country where you can be prosecuted for painting your yellow Somerset cottage a soft blue, streamlining the planning system is not as simple as it sounds. Over time, repeated efforts by successive governments to cut red tape have achieved the opposite. As the latest attempt, in the shape of the Neighbourhood Planning Bill, begins its journey through parliament, Home investigates one of the world's most complex planning systems.

THE BIG PICTURE

More than 240,000 applications — almost one in five — have suffered delays over the past five years, according to Home's analysis of government data published on Thursday. More than a third of applications for housing developments of all sizes were not processed in time. Where you live determines your chances: Newham, in east London, is the worst place to apply for an extension, granting only 54%, while Rushmoor, in Hampshire, allowed 100%.

In southeast London, Bromley approved just a quarter of large residential schemes, yet 52 councils allowed all of them. "It's a

lottery, and that frustrates people," says Kevin McCloud, the presenter of Grand Designs and chairman of Hab Housing. "You don't know until you try."

In 2014, Marina Sergides, 38, tried to help her sister, who had cancer, by applying to rebuild and subdivide the family's investment flat and shop below in north London. Enfield council took almost a year to approve it — after she threatened legal action. By then, her sister had died. "We wanted to sell it to get my sister and her two young children a house," says Sergides, a lawyer.

An unsafe side wall meant the place had to stand empty (lost rent: £50,000) and would not sell until the works were done. The council "completely ignored" their calls, yet asked for a double bed to be changed to a single on plans, and required Sergides to sign a legal undertaking (bill: £1,500) to pay a £1,200 charge she had

already settled. "Nothing got done, at a huge financial and emotional cost."

A council spokesman says Enfield decides 78% of minor applications in time and had "extensive contact" with Sergides. "While regrettably the application did take longer to determine than set out in government targets, this was initially in agreement with the applicant to secure a positive outcome."

It is self-builders and small builders who suffer most. In an exclusive survey by the Federation of Master Builders (FMB), small and medium firms named land availability (67% of respondents) — closely linked to planning — and the planning system itself (50%) as the two main constraints on building more homes. Thirty years ago, such firms built two-thirds of all residential properties; now they supply less than a third.

"We all bemoan the dominance of a handful of large housebuilders, but the only way to reverse that is to remove the barriers to smaller firms," says Brian Berry, the FMB's chief executive. The number of self-builds has fallen from 17,000 to 12,000 homes a year

Losing the plot...

We need 1m new homes by 2020, but our planning system isn't up to the job. From new towns to side returns, and even garden sheds, applying to build is a frustrating postcode lottery. By Martina Lees

Masterclass

■ Don't withdraw your application if you're asked to do so, says Martin Gaine, of Just Planning. Getting a refusal gives you a right of appeal and issues to address.

■ After a rejection, talk to the planning officer. They might accept a tweak if you resubmit (for a fee of £172 in England).

■ Appeal. If you disagree with the decision, or if it was made after the eight-week time limit, you are likely to succeed if the reason given conflicts with national policy (such as refusing a 1.9ft extension) or is too subjective (a dislike of metal cladding, say). Appealing is free and there is no hearing. The planning inspector rules on paper evidence alone.

■ Building your own home? Use a planning consultant and make payment conditional on consent.

■ To find a plot, scour the council's planning portal for failed applications that could be altered and resubmitted.

■ When doing works on a listed building, use its history to your advantage. If there have been haphazard changes, you can argue for additions.

in the past decade, adds Michael Holmes, spokesman for the National Homebuilding & Renovating Show.

England needs at least 300,000 new homes each year to tackle the shortage, yet only 140,000 were completed in the year to March. "The only way to get the right output is to get more players on the pitch," says Andrew Whitaker, planning director of the Home Builders Federation (HBF).

CONSTANT CHANGES

In the 1970s, the Encyclopaedia of Planning Law and Practice had three volumes, now it has nine. "They have added and added, but never taken away," says Robert Adam, a classical architect. Even though he has spent almost half a century navigating the system, his outline application to knock down his late father's seaside bungalow in Poole, Dorset, and replace it with two houses was refused last month. "I still don't understand why," he says as he leafs through his 10-document submission, including an energy statement ("No one could tell me what that is") and a pledge to pay

£760 for affecting heathland three miles away. "This is what I do. An ordinary person? Not a cat's chance in hell."

He plans to appeal against the council's decision that he failed a "sequential test" for showing that there are no other plots in the whole of Poole on which you could build one house without a risk of it being flooded by 2126.

To get consent for about 400 homes, developers must submit "a Transit van full of documents that no one will ever read", says Steve

Sanham, development director at Hub, which builds flats for private rent. That can include environmental impact assessments costing £35,000 ("You could almost build an affordable home for that"), and testing scale models in wind tunnels. Charles Mills, head of planning at the property consultancy Daniel Watney LLP, says that is fine for large-scale projects — "These things should be rigorously tested" — but for small applications, "there should be simplification".

The House of Lords economic affairs committee described the market as an "oligopolistic" one, in which

the eight largest firms control the pace of building of more than half of all new homes in the country, but even for the big players, the complexity can get too much. In a case so fraught it came up at a cabinet meeting, a campaign to protect nightingales scuppered 5,000 proposed homes at the former Lodge Hill army camp, near Rochester, Kent. Land Securities pulled out after spending £11.3m on the plans, which were approved by the council, but then taken over by ministers for a public inquiry.

"Small and medium housebuilders don't have the financial wherewithal to work through this," says Lord Kerslake, a crossbench peer and former head of the civil service. In the FMB poll, 95% of smaller builders thought red tape was increasing or unchanged.

"It's all done at risk. A lot of it is box-ticking. A lot of it doesn't make sense," says Gregg Joslin, managing director of Alfred Homes, a small Winchester-based firm. After being "completely blanked" for a year, he is pulling out of a Berkshire village site where he spent £150,000 on plans

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→ for seven £1m-plus houses. (The smallest fee was the application itself, at £385 per home.) For a self-builder, upfront reports can cost £20,000.

Over the past 20 years, planning has seen nine rounds of reform and five new laws, with the sixth under way. Almost three-quarters of planners feel the constant changes have reduced their ability to deliver, the Royal Town Planning Institute reports. "Every time you change anything, you slow it down," says Trudi Elliott, its chief executive. "You're not going to crack it by another round of tinkering with the planning system."

Steve Sanham tells of "empty cathedrals of cycle parking" required by narrow rules. He has to build parking for 400 bikes at 200 Hub flats in east London – next to a station with about 1,000 cycle spaces. "I'm a cyclist, but I'd much rather put some flats there." Even McCarthy & Stone, whose average buyer is 79, was asked to build cycle storage at new retirement homes in

Chichester, West Sussex, and Basingstoke, Hampshire. Conflicting rules cause further delays. Manju Grewal, an administrator, fought for a year to extend her semi in west London by 6 metres (19ft), which is permitted under national rules, so her third son would no longer have to sleep in the living room. Hillingdon council rejected her application, but the family won on appeal. "They kept on changing their rules," says Manju, 47. "The whole thing was stressful."

CUTS AND DELAYS

Meanwhile, the budgets of council planners have almost halved since 2010 – the biggest cuts across all of local government, according to the National Audit Office. "If you cut meals on wheels, mental healthcare, even refuse collection, people are outraged," Kevin McCloud says. "If you cut planning, nobody knows." Birmingham city council has only two conservation officers, down from seven in 2009, to protect 2,000 listed buildings

and 30 conservation areas. One self-build firm estimates that it now takes an average of two years to get your new house through the planning system, even though the statutory time limit for deciding minor applications is two months.

"You can't get anyone to pick up the phone," Sanham says. Even Pidgley says he struggled for six weeks to reach a local planner when applying to build a tennis court and pool at home.

Tactics used across planning departments mean official figures mask the full extent of delays. First, planners refuse to register an application, as the clock then starts ticking. "They know how to play this game," Pidgley says of his current battle with one council. "Oh no, there is not enough detail. Then you didn't do an environmental study. Oh, you missed the long-haired frog."

Close to the deadline, councils ask you to withdraw and resubmit. "We're minded to approve, but it needs further work" really means, "We should have done this work

EIGHT MONTHS ON, WE ARE STILL WAITING FOR A DECISION

Mark and Joanne Stevenson, with their children, Emily, 4, and Rebecca, 15, applied for permission to build a four-bedroom family home on this village plot near Cambridge. Nine months on, they are still waiting for a decision that should have been made within eight weeks. The council has taken so long that the flood-risk data has changed, which means they will have to build the floor 30cm higher, and have had to spend an extra £900 on a second flood-risk report. "We expected to have built the house by now," Mark says. "We are trapped in the process. In the absence of a decision, we have no basis for an appeal and have no alternative but to wait"





John Lawrence/Getty Images

weeks ago but we've run out of time," says Martin Gaine, founder of the consultancy Just Planning. Withdrawals save officers from having to write refusal reports and do not drag down their approval rates. "Although the government may say that its stats show a better-performing planning system, there is some smoke and mirrors," Gaine adds.

Home's analysis of official data shows that 10% of applications were undecided in the past year, more than twice the level in 2008-09, suggesting that withdrawals are on the rise. Redbridge, in east London, and Plymouth, in Devon, had most undecided applications, at 42%. Plymouth council said it had decided all substantial applications within the time limit, as well as 94% of minor ones and 90% of extensions, over the quarter to June. It added: "We only ask applicants to withdraw applications when it is agreed as the most appropriate route." Redbridge was unable to comment.

Another common council practice is asking you to extend the time either in

writing or with a planning performance agreement (PPA). Use of these measures has doubled to 56,000 in the past year. More than half of schemes with 10 or more homes had PPAs in the past year. Even after several time extensions, decisions can still appear in figures as "on time". "People always agree. They fear not getting permission," Gaine says. "I have had an application with Ealing, west London, for almost a year under 'agreed extensions'."

Once an application is officially late, planners abandon it. "If it takes more than eight weeks (without an agreed extension), it usually takes a year," Gaine adds.

Cuts to upfront advice can lead to low-quality applications. Oadby and Wigston council, in Leicestershire, has no duty planners for basic questions: Newham, in east London, charges a hefty £2,268 for pointers on building one house. Neighbours can feel poorly consulted in London boroughs such as Croydon and Ealing, which place notices on lamp-posts instead of sending

"A bunker mentality has developed – councils look purely at written policy"

letters on new applications.

For larger schemes (usually 10 homes or more), getting consent is just the start. Ticking off conditions and signing Section 106 agreements, which state how much affordable housing and infrastructure must be built or paid for, usually takes far longer than the planning decision itself. One of Berkeley's regeneration projects in the capital, with 1,000-plus homes, has so far had 540 conditions and 70 Section 106 obligations. (The new Neighbourhood Planning Bill aims to cut down on all but essential conditions.)

Because of council cuts, Section 106 talks are an unequal contest, according to Lord Best, the cross-party housing campaigner. "I have sat round the table

where... a large housebuilder is represented by two slick gentlemen on very high salaries, with a mass of financial information at their disposal, and somebody who is covering for maternity leave is representing the planning department on the other side, looking pretty mystified," he told the House of Lords economic affairs committee.

Section 106 delays caused McCarthy & Stone to lose several sites that, instead of much-needed housing, became a BMW dealership in Brighton, a discount supermarket in Leeds and a McDonald's drive-through in southeast London.

"McDonald's, of course, doesn't have an affordable housing requirement," says Gary Day, the retirement developer's land director.

"A bunker mentality has developed within councils," says Gaine, who was a council planner in east London. "You feel harassed from all sides." Under-resourced but pressed to meet national targets while residents think "you allow too much", planners can become reactive. "Rather

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→ than proactively make places, they look at stuff purely in terms of written policy, because they can defend themselves." Afraid of opposition, they tell you to "mimic next door". And afraid of the planners, applicants won't submit innovative designs in the first place. "That's one reason houses are so boring and boxy."

Pas and Aylar Ruggiero wrestled with planners for six years, spending £40,000, before they could build a five-bedroom house in Yelling, Cambridgeshire, to share with their children Bayram, 12, and Gabriella, 1. A medieval thatched cottage had burnt down on the site.

"The council wanted another 15th-century cottage," says Pas, 62, an IT entrepreneur. A presentation by Model Projects, a London architectural practice, which designed their 4,000 sq ft open-plan dream, eventually persuaded the local planners that the house was as "of its time" as its predecessor had been. Yet the Ruggieros still had to wait 18 months for the planners to clear 21

conditions, "like which bricks they were happy with", before they could start. "When they finally agreed the bricks, they had been discontinued."

Martin Tett, spokesman for the Local Government Association (LGA), which represents councils, denies that planning is the barrier to building. "Britain's housing crisis is complex. Councils are approving nine in 10 applications, while hundreds of thousands of homes that have been given planning permission are yet to be built." In the year to June, more than 80% of all planning applications were processed on time – "a five-year high", Tett says. "However, local government wants to do more." (See panel, page 17.)

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) says the proportion of substantial applications that are delayed has fallen from 43% to 17% since it announced in 2012 that developers could go over the heads of poorly performing councils and apply to the Planning Inspectorate. "We've got Britain building

again, with almost 900,000 homes built since the end of 2009 and more than 250,000 planning permissions delivered last year – the highest on record and up 70% on five years ago," the DCLG says. Plans to introduce competition into the planning system by allowing private companies to process (but not decide) applications alongside councils, "will help speed up the process".

PERFORMANCE LOTTERY

David Snell, 71, has completed 13 self-builds and written a book about it – *Building Your Own Home*, now in its 18th edition – yet even he was defeated by planning in Lydd, East Sussex. The 0.3-acre plot, surrounded by houses, had permission in place for a large four-bedroom house.

"I only wanted to build a two-bedroom bungalow," he says. "The neighbours were overjoyed, but the first thing the planning officer said to me was, 'Bungalows are not favoured by us.' Then you just wait and wait and wait, no one makes a decision, and

it drags on and on and on."

Eighteen months and three failed applications later, Snell gave up, reapplied for a four-bedroom house identical to the previous consent and sold the plot. "The neighbours were quite upset." He is now building a home in Gloucestershire for himself and his wife, Linda, 57, to retire to. "The planners in the Forest of Dean were excellent."

Planning services have become a postcode lottery. "About a third of local authorities are very good, a third are very poor and a third are in the middle," says Andrew Whitaker, of the HBF, as he describes the "planning attitude crisis". "It's not the tools, it's how they're used." Most of the southeast, which has the biggest housing need, falls in the "very poor" category, he adds.

Home's analysis reveals a north-south divide in approvals. The 10 councils most likely to refuse an extension or application for up to nine homes are all in London and the southeast, while the north dominates those most likely to grant



NORTH YORK MOORS: 94% OF EXTENSIONS APPROVED



NEWHAM, LONDON: 54% OF EXTENSIONS APPROVED

TA Images/Paul Williams/Alamy, Getty Images



How should we tackle the crisis?

Give local planners more resources The Local Government Association (LGA) wants central government to raise its cap on the planning fees councils can charge. That has an impact on services and "has meant council-tax payers have had to subsidise planning applications by about £450m over the last three years", says the association's Martin Tett. Increases must be ring-fenced for planners and linked to performance, adds Lord Kerslake, former head of the civil service. The government consulted on this in February.

Plan for whole regions Dame Kate Barker, the economist who blew the whistle on the housing crisis with her government review in 2004, says there is no wider system to plan for growth across multiple councils in and around London and other big centres. "The removal of regional planning has made it harder to answer the question — there's overspill. Where is the best place for it to go?"

Devolution deals such as those in Manchester can solve this, says Nick de Lotbiniere, director of planning at Savills estate agency.

Move to a zonal system The housing charity Shelter suggests giving councils and communities strong zoning powers to permit development in areas through local and neighbourhood plans. The zones should have detailed design briefs based on research into what residents want, adds Nicholas Boys Smith, of the think tank Create Streets.

Give localism teeth Charge council tax on developments that are not completed quickly.

Free up small sites To boost housebuilding by smaller firms, allocate and give permission to more modest sites. This year, the mayor of the French village of Berrien, in Brittany, saved the local school from closure by selling 10 "oven-ready" plots to families for £1 a square metre.

Require less upfront For small schemes, councils shouldn't ask for a pile of costly reports, only those needed to decide on the principle of development. Make the rest conditional for stages of the build.

Cut down conditions Time will tell if the new Neighbourhood Planning Bill reduces conditions, which can hold up schemes long after they gain consent.

Boost housing for older people Exempt retirement schemes from charges to fund affordable housing. This saves NHS spending and frees up family homes for the next generation.

Change the culture Planners must be enablers, not regulators, says Judith Salomon, strategic planning director at the housebuilder Berkeley. We should return to the Victorian presumption that "you can do what you like with your property, as long as you don't harm anyone else", adds the architect Robert Adam.

such consents. Yet there is no pattern in hold-ups for extensions: the worst performer was Blackpool, where 46% of homeowners waited more than two months for a decision, followed by Oxford (45%), Brighton and Hove (42%) and Walsall (42%).

Eight of the 10 councils with the most enforcements — a sign of system failure — are in London, topped by Newham, with 320 notices issued. When Barnet, eighth among the enforcers, told Corina Painter that her housebound 74-year-old mother's new brick-built greenhouse breached planning rules, she complied. In the mistaken belief that it did not need consent, builders had attached it to the rear of her north London bungalow.

On Just Planning's advice, Painter, 48, a finance lawyer, demolished part of the greenhouse to create a 40cm gap, which made it an outbuilding needing no permission. The council nevertheless issued an enforcement notice, which would have made the house hard to sell, and removed it

only after Painter instructed planning lawyers at a cost of £2,800. She says it was as if they were trying to prove a point, "even though I was trying to find a solution". "It is absurd that all she needed to do was remove a tiny part of the back," Gaine says. "Surely the council could have used its discretionary powers to allow the whole thing to stay?"

Where are the good councils? "If you want to build an exciting house, go to a national park," Kevin McCloud says. They attract the best planners, so "you'll probably get consent far more easily than somewhere else. It's absurd." Exmoor, the Lake District, Northumberland and the Yorkshire Dales national parks have approved more than 80% of applications under 10 homes in the past year.

Beyond national parks, grand designs are welcome in Wigan and Greater Manchester, which granted 98% of minor residential applications, but not in Barking and Dagenham, east London, which came bottom of the chart with 34% approvals.

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→ Smaller rural councils had the worst delays for big residential applications: decisions on all five schemes in North Dorset and all three in Rossendale, Lancashire, ran over the statutory three-month limit. Yet Shepway, in Kent, approved the regeneration of Folkestone harbour, including 1,000 homes, with a standing ovation, recalls Nick de Lotbiniere, director of planning at Savills estate agency. "That's never happened in my career."

Why such inconsistency? The LGA's Martin Tett says: "Every area is different... and communities want to be able to have a say. There are also cases where developers will ask for a decision to be delayed, for example to provide more information to support it."

Tony Pidgley puts it down to political culture: "If a local authority is pro-development, if it cares about its people, the system works. If it's not, if it's driven by Nimbys, they use the system to stop us."

THE PRICE OF NIMBYISM
 Lord Kerslake recalls a parish council meeting debating a

small rural development in Essex where "the only person who spoke up for this scheme, in the face of a whole set of objections, was a young father who couldn't find a place to live near where he worked. It brought home to me the insider/outsider problem — whose voice gets heard."

A survey of 20,000 adults by the housing charity Shelter found that 69% of people are open or neutral to homes being built nearby. Only 11% strongly opposed it — but they are three times more likely to be vocal about it.

To address this, ministers brought in neighbourhood plans that let all residents shape development around them. Since 2011, about 200 such plans have become law, and almost 2,000 of the 9,000 parish councils in England have taken the first step towards making one.

Government research (using a small sample) shows that neighbourhood plans allocate land for 10% more housing, on average, than in a council's local plan. But more than half of those drafted were protectionist, the Turley



Best and worst councils for extensions

Most likely to approve		%
Rushmoor, Hampshire	100	
Darlington, Co Durham	99	
Borrow-in-Furness, Cumbria	98	
Geelling, Nottinghamshire	98	
Redditch, Worcestershire	98	
Least likely to approve		%
Newham	54	
Waltham Forest	65	
Southend-on-Sea	66	
Hillingdon	71	
Enfield	71	

Source: DCLG

planning consultancy found. One such plan, for a village near Wallingford, in Oxfordshire, decided that the necessary number of entrances from the congested main road was four — the number already in place.

One battle in a leafy part of north London shows the cost of it all. Haringey's planners recommended that six family houses should go ahead within the footprint of the back-garden garages now on the site — a long-time haven for fly-tippers. But the land is surrounded by more than 30 neighbours who opposed the scheme. After 200 objections, the elected committee refused the application. On appeal, it was overruled, with costs awarded to the developer.

In the three years this has taken, the value of those six houses — still unbuilt — has jumped by 60% to about £1.5m each. "That's the real price of planning," says the scheme's agent, who asked not to be named. "It is paid by the end buyer." In other words, by you.

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