

Carlton Inn Stakeholder Meeting #2

23 November, 2pm–3pm

Tasma Terrace, 6 Parliament Place, East Melbourne

Attendees:

Susan Crowe	Carlton Community History Group
Greta Bird	Carlton Residents Association
Warren Green	Carlton Residents Association
Cr Jackie Watts	City of Melbourne
Cr Rohan Leppert	City of Melbourne
Rohan Storey	Melbourne Heritage Action
Felicity Watson	National Trust
Caitlin Mitropoulos	National Trust
Abi Belfrage	The History Dept
Jo Bain	Community advocate
Tim Staindl	Resurrect the Corkman
Duncan Wallace	Resurrect the Corkman
Brad Jessup	Melbourne Law School

Tim Staindl and Duncan Wallace Resurrect the Corkman have initiated an application for orders with VCAT, and the respondents (companies owning the Carlton Inn site) have been served. The application includes proposed orders to reconstruct the hotel. Reported that the State Government and Council have also initiated a VCAT appeal seeking largely the same orders. The Practice Day Hearing will be on 2 December, with the Compulsory Conference scheduled on 13 January, and the Hearing on 6 February. The Resurrect the Corkman and Government/Council matters are scheduled for the same dates and times. Resurrect the Corkman has contacted Maddocks, who are representing the Government/Council, with a view to cooperating on the matter.

Cr Rohan Leppert Cr Leppert confirmed the joint action between Government/Council, and reported that Council is taking the lead on planning issues, while the government is pursuing building issues.

Duncan Wallace Resurrect the Corkman is concerned that the Government will settle with the respondent prior to the hearing, which is why the group hasn't withdrawn their separate action. Raised the fact that mixed messages have been coming from the government and Council regarding the outcome being sought (eg Cr Robert Doyle's comments in the Herald Sun—"I want the facade of the pub back but it might not be a pub"; "I'm not against there being some hospitality use at the front and maybe a modest development at the back." Reported that Resurrect the Corkman is seeking an order for the hotel to be rebuilt as

close as practicable to its condition prior to demolition.

- Warren Green** Raised the issue that VCAT is bound by the planning scheme amendment—raised the question of whether further development is precluded under the amendment.
- Brad Jessup** Noted that VCAT can't grant a permit in the context of enforcement orders.
- Cr Rohan Leppert** Noted that Council will use the Design and Development Overlay (Amendment C299) as a baseline for public consultation in future. Reported that once the enforcement order issues are dealt with, Council will decide how to move forward.
- Duncan Wallace** Looking at the future of the site, Resurrect the Corkman does not want the site to remain in the hands of the current owners. The Group is currently looking at methods of transfer—the owner could sell the site with the encumbrance of the enforcement order, or the government could compulsorily acquire the site and on-sell it. Resurrect the Corkman has been in discussions with a local institution to look at a buy-out offer with the community.
- Rohan Storey** Noted that it would be ideal for the site to be owned by a not-for-profit Trust.
- Duncan Wallace** RtC is looking at a co-op model for ownership, so it's spread across many people rather than placed in the hands of a single owner. The institution RtC is in discussions with is interested in investing in student amenity, and the site could potentially be used as a pub and accommodation.
- Felicity Watson** Raised the issue that it may not be possible to salvage original materials for reconstruction due to contamination issues. Noted a historical report which suggests that the interior bluestone arches used material salvaged from cottages previously on the site. Media reports indicate that the material taken to Cairnlea has now been removed; unclear where it has been moved to.
- Cr Rohan Leppert** Cr Leppert said that he can't see the state government acquiring the site and undertaking reconstruction under current controls. The future of the site will depend on whether the owner has the will to rebuild—if not, the state government may feel that they need to unencumber the land and allow it to be developed.
- Warren Green** Raised the issue that there needs to be a new concept for penalties. Comment that the whole reason this illegal demolition has happened is because developers make profits regardless. Illegal demolition should result in an automatic encumbrance on the land. Noted that more than a site-specific response is required—the response to the Carlton Inn needs to set a

strong precedent.

- Abi Belfrage** Wants to be involved in policy discussions. Put some questions to the group—What do we want to achieve with legislative change? Can we harness community knowledge and present something to the Minister?
- Felicity Watson** The National Trust can draft a position document. Requested group members to send input regarding potential policy reform, and case studies and examples to include.
- Duncan Wallace** Reported to the group on the Localism Act in the UK, which allows the community to have first right of purchase of places registered as having social value (eg pubs).
- Jo Bain** Commented on the sense of powerlessness within the community, and how we can better engage the community with heritage. We don't always recognise our heritage until it's gone—we need to find a new way to engage and use heritage to empower people.
- Jackie Watts** Confirmed that we should be pursuing a double aim—reconstruction and policy reform.
- Abi Belfrage** Raised the issue of social significance—is this an opportunity to explore this further? Noted that the social significance of the hotel is not included in the heritage citation in the planning scheme. Is this an artefact of the expert who prepared it, and their expertise?
- Felicity Watson** Agreed that this is a fundamental flaw in the heritage system, and a major debate within the heritage profession. The current system is biased towards architectural significance. This issue has played out with various campaigns across Melbourne, such as the London Hotel and Ngara in Kew.
- Reported to the group that Abi Belfrage has undertaken a significant amount of archival research to document the history of the place and assist with the case for reconstruction. Felicity thanked her for her excellent work. RtC asked if a copy could be forwarded to them (Abi Belfrage to share via dropbox).
- Tim Staindl** StC would like to connect with the City of Melbourne to discuss the upcoming VCAT hearing. Cr Rohan Leppert to put the group in touch with Council officers briefing Maddocks.
- Agreed Actions**
- **All to send Felicity Watson suggestions for policy position document.**
 - **Felicity Watson to develop draft policy position document for review.**