

Former Hoffman Brickworks 72-106 Dawson Street, Brunswick H0703 P31711

We wish to object to the issuing of a permit and urge the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria to refuse the application on the following grounds.

Firstly, the Brick Pressing Shed (B5) and Steam Engine House (B6), and the equipment in the Brick Pressing Shed, are listed on the Victorian Heritage Register. They have been acknowledged as key heritage sites by Heritage Victoria, Moreland Council and The National Trust. The Brickworks is one of the most significant nineteenth century industrial sites in Brunswick and Melbourne as a whole. It is one of only surviving Brickworks in Melbourne, meaning that what remains of the site should be protected and treasured. There are very few locations where the industrial history of Melbourne can be experienced, as many sites have been removed or drastically altered over time.

The application if approved, would have a detrimental impact on the cultural and heritage significance of the rest of the Brickworks site, including the remaining iconic kilns and the chimneys. The height of the proposed apartment tower would be visually overwhelming on the Brickworks site, lessening the visual prominence of the chimneys in the Brunswick skyline. Further, the overall heritage significance of the Brickworks site is greatly enhanced by the Brick Pressing Shed, Steam Engine House, and the heritage machinery located on the site. In addition to being significant in themselves, they greatly assist with maintaining a sense of the original atmosphere and layout of the overall Brickworks site. If these buildings were removed, it would have a significant and irreversible impact on the overall heritage character of the Brickworks site.

Attempting to evoke the existing buildings with design elements such as colour schemes, a gabled roof wing, and corrugated steel cladding is not sufficient to mitigate the loss of this significant piece of Brunswick's history. The proposed building is much larger than the original and does not bear a strong resemblance to it. In any case, a new replacement building would be a poor substitute even if it more closely resembled the originals.

Relocating the machinery to an interpretative centre will also not be sufficient to mitigate the impact of the proposal under the application. The opportunity to view this kind of heritage machinery in its original location where it was operated presents a rare educational opportunity for visitors and residents to appreciate the history of the site in place. The machinery also greatly enhances the overall heritage significance and character of the Brickworks site, as visitors and residents can see evidence of the kinds of activities that occurred here in their authentic setting.

The application if approved would further have a detrimental impact on the industrial heritage of Brunswick as a whole, which is an integral part of Brunswick's history.

With respect to the extent to which refusal would impact reasonable and economic use of the site, we see no reason why the building must be demolished for the site to be restored and given new use.

As residents of the Brickworks, we love living in this unique historical location, and seeing these historically significant buildings every day. We would be saddened to see the heritage character of the Brickworks greatly reduced. We hope that the application will be refused, and that the buildings will instead be appropriately and respectfully restored so that future generations can enjoy and appreciate this piece of Brunswick's history.