

Heritage Council Registrations and Reviews Committee

Former Factory, Office and Residence of TW Sherrin

32-34 Wellington Street, Collingwood, Yarra City Council

DETERMINATION OF THE HERITAGE COUNCIL

After considering the Executive Director's recommendation, pursuant to Section 49(1)(b) of the *Heritage Act 2017*, the Registrations and Reviews Committee has determined that the Former Factory, Office and Residence of TW Sherrin is not of cultural heritage significance to the State of Victoria and is not to be included in the Victorian Heritage Register. The Committee has also determined to refer the Executive Director's recommendation to Yarra City Council for consideration of inclusion of the place in the Heritage Overlay of the Yarra Planning Scheme, pursuant to Section 49(1)(c)(i) of the *Heritage Act 2017*. This decision was reached having considered the assessment against the Heritage Council's criteria and information included in the Executive Director's statement of recommendation. The Heritage Council's reasons for determining that the place is not of cultural heritage significance at the State level are outlined below.

Prof Andrew May (Chair)
Mr Rueben Berg
Mr Paul Coffey

Decision Date – 26 April 2019

INTRODUCTION

THE PLACE

- 01.** The Former Factory, Office and Residence of TW Sherrin (the Place) is a small, single-storey brick building with simple gabled-roof. The building's unadorned Edwardian style façade displays a curved rendered parapet, contrasting vertical brick strips, frameless openings, banks of windows and recessed horizontal brick panels.
- 02.** The following background information is taken from page 3 of the Executive Director's recommendation for the Place (the Recommendation):

"WHAT IS AT THE PLACE?"

The Former Factory, Office and Residence of TW Sherrin, 32-34 Wellington Street, Collingwood is a small single-storey brick industrial building of simple gabled-roof form. The asymmetrical front façade of the building is in an unadorned Edwardian style with rendered curved parapet, contrasting vertical brick strips (overpainted), frameless openings, banks of windows and recessed horizontal brick panels. The simple interior of the building has exposed timber trusses and later partitioning and skylights.

WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF THE PLACE?

The Former Factory, Office and Residence of TW Sherrin, 32-34 Wellington Street, Collingwood was used by TW Sherrin to produce leather sporting goods from 1894 until his death in 1912. Sherrin lived at the premises during this period. The business was continued by generations of the Sherrin family until closure of the factory in 1982. Sherrin first occupied an existing timber shop on the site, however this was rebuilt after fire destroyed the building in 1915. A second fire caused damage to the rebuilt factory building in 1928.

The Sherrin brand became well-known due to its association with Australian Rules Football from the late nineteenth century to the present day and large numbers of footballs were produced at the factory in Collingwood over a period of eighty years. The Sherrin football became the official ball of the Victorian Football League when it was formed in 1897 and the Australian Football League when it was formed in 1990. Despite the sale of the business to American-owned company Spalding in 1969, Sherrin-branded footballs were produced at the Collingwood factory until closure in 1982. After closure, the Collingwood property was sold by the Sherrin family and the building has since been used for a number of purposes, including as manufacturing premises and an art gallery.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

- 03.** On 10 January 2019, the Executive Director recommended that the Place not be included in the Victorian Heritage Register (the Register) under section 37(1)(b) of the *Heritage Act 2017* (the Act). The Executive Director further recommended that the Heritage Council consider exercising its powers under section 49(1)(c) of the Act to refer the Recommendation to the relevant planning authority for inclusion of the Place in the Heritage Overlay. The Recommendation was advertised for 60 days.

REFERRAL PURSUANT TO SECTION 15(3)

- 04.** At a meeting of the Heritage Council (the Council) on 4 April 2019, it was determined, in accordance with section 15(3) of the Act, that the Recommendation

be referred to the Registrations and Reviews Committee to make a determination pursuant to section 49 of the Act, as delegated in the *Instrument of Delegation*.

MEETING OF THE REGISTRATIONS AND REVIEWS COMMITTEE

- 05.** A meeting of the Registrations and Reviews Committee (the Committee) was held on 8 April 2019. The section below outlines the discussion of the Committee.

ISSUES

- 06.** The Committee raised questions about the Executive Director's assessment against Criterion A, Criterion B, Criterion G and Criterion H in the Recommendation and the use of comparison sites.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES

Criterion A

- 07.** The Committee is not convinced by the recommendation of the Executive Director in relation to his assessment of Criterion A. The Committee is of the view that an assessment against the development of Australian rules football, as a movement that is of importance to the course of Victoria's cultural history, is required. The Executive Director's assessment of the Place in relation to 'the sporting industry' is broad and does not address the importance of Australian rules football to the history of Victoria.
- 08.** In addition to an assessment against the development of Australian rules football, it is the Committee's view that more extensive investigation is warranted on the ability of the site to demonstrate small-scale manufacturing of iconic sporting equipment. The manufacture of sporting equipment by the Sherrin family was internationally recognised and a more fulsome investigation of this is necessary, including their manufacture of internationally-recognised boxing and cricket equipment.
- 09.** The Committee was not convinced by the Executive Director's argument that the form and fabric of the Place does not demonstrate the historical use. The current building is readable as a small-scale factory and, with relevant historical documentation, the Place may demonstrate its historical association. A c1950s photograph of the interior of the Former Factory suggests production activity more akin to a cottage industry around a work bench than a larger-scale industrial process discernible in any significant or bespoke built form.
- 010.** If, as is acknowledged in the Executive Director's recommendation, the Sherrin football has historic value, then it would follow that the site where it was developed and manufactured over a significant period of time may be worthy of inclusion in the Register.
- 011.** If, as tentative additional evidence suggests, the Sherrin cricket ball has historic value (including its possible use in the famous 1930s bodyline series), then it would also follow that the site where it was developed and manufactured over a significant period of time may be worthy of inclusion in the Register.
- 012.** The Committee is of the view that, due to a lack of evidence in the Recommendation, the Place does not meet the threshold for inclusion in the Register under Criterion A at this time.

Criterion B

- 013.**The Committee accepts the Executive Director's view that the Place is not rare as a site with a demonstrated association with the sporting industry. However, the Committee would again have liked to have seen an assessment of the site for its association with the development of Australian rules football and cricket, and/or as a small-scale manufacturer of an iconic Victorian and Australian product. The development of both Australian rules football and cricket is integral to the Victorian identity and this Place has been identified as the original and preeminent site of manufacture of the equipment at the center of these games. An assessment which more completely considers the historical documentation with the remaining fabric would have been of assistance to the Committee.
- 014.**The Committee is of the view that the comparison against sports stadiums is not adequate. If it is the case that other, more appropriate, comparative sites cannot be identified then this of itself may provide evidence of rarity.
- 015.**The Committee is of the view that, based on the information before it, the Place does not meet the threshold for inclusion in the Register under Criterion B at this time.

Criterion C

- 016.**The Committee agrees with the recommendation of the Executive Director and finds that the Place does not meet the threshold for inclusion in the Register under Criterion C.

Criterion D

- 017.**The Committee agrees with the recommendation of the Executive Director and finds that the Place does not meet the threshold for inclusion in the Register under Criterion D.

Criterion E

- 018.**The Committee agrees with the recommendation of the Executive Director and finds that the Place does not meet the threshold for inclusion in the Register under Criterion E.

Criterion F

- 019.**The Committee agrees with the recommendation of the Executive Director and finds that the Place does not meet the threshold for inclusion in the Register under Criterion F.

Criterion G

- 020.**The Committee was not convinced by the argument put forward by the Executive Director in his recommendation that there is no evidence of a direct association between the Place and a community or cultural group. It is the Committee's view

that an absence of evidence without clear methodological reference or discussion is not sufficient to state that the Place is not of cultural heritage significance.

- 021.** The Committee is of the view that further investigation is warranted into the social significance of the Place to the current day Australian rules football and perhaps cricketing communities. It is acknowledged that, at times, establishing a link between a community and a place is difficult, but the Committee believes that in some cases, such as this, further testing is warranted.
- 022.** Notwithstanding the comments above, the Committee is of the view that, due to a lack of evidence, the Place does not meet the threshold for inclusion in the Register under Criterion G at this time.

Criterion H

- 023.** The Committee was not convinced by the Executive Director's argument that the Place does not satisfy Criterion H. The Executive Director stated that there is no direct association between TW Sherrin and the current building as a result of changes in the physical fabric. It is acknowledged, however, that historical resources exist which illustrate this association. TW Sherrin and his nephew Syd Sherrin are key figures in the genesis and development of the games of football and cricket, and through their industrial skills had a formative influence particularly on the game of football in Victoria and nationally. This association is evident through the documentary evidence and is both enduring and close.
- 024.** It is the Committee's view that a more fulsome investigation of the contribution of TW Sherrin and the Sherrin family to the history of both the sporting goods industry, and more specifically the development of Australian rules football in Victoria, should be undertaken.
- 025.** The Committee is of the view that there is not enough evidence in the current assessment to determine State level significance, therefore the Committee has determined that the Place does not meet the threshold for inclusion in the Register under Criterion H at this time.

Comparisons

- 026.** The Committee is of the view that its consideration of the Place for inclusion in the Register was hampered due to a lack of relevant sites for comparison. In the Recommendation, the Executive Director compared the Place to other sites associated with Australian rules football such as sporting grounds or grandstands. While comparison with Australian rules football facilities is relevant, the Committee would have been assisted if the Recommendation had also provided examples of other sites related to small-scale manufacturing, particularly those with associations with iconic Victorian (and Australian) products, and sites associated with the manufacture and development of sporting equipment.

CONCLUSION

- 027.** After considering the Executive Director's recommendation, pursuant to Section 49(1)(b) of the *Heritage Act 2017*, the Committee has determined that, based on the evidence before it, the Former Factory, Office and Residence of TW Sherrin is not of cultural heritage significance to the State of Victoria and is not to be included

in the Victorian Heritage Register. The Committee has determined to refer the Executive Director's recommendation to Yarra City Council for consideration of inclusion of the Place in the Heritage Overlay of the Yarra Planning Scheme pursuant to section 49(1)(c)(i) of the *Heritage Act 2017*.

ATTACHMENT 1

HERITAGE COUNCIL CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT OF PLACES OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

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

These were adopted by the Heritage Council at its meeting on 7 August 2008, and replace the previous criteria adopted by the Heritage Council on 6 March 1997.