

Statement of recommendation from the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria

Werribee Satellite Aerodrome, VHR H1884
Princes Highway (Geelong Road) Werribee, Wyndham City
Wadawurrung Country



Executive Director recommendation

I recommend to the Heritage Council of Victoria (Heritage Council) that the Werribee Satellite Aerodrome, located at Princes Highway (Geelong Road), Werribee in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) be amended.

In accordance with section 62 of the *Heritage Act 2017* (the Act), I suggest that the Heritage Council determine to:

- Include additional land
- Removing land of no cultural heritage significance.



STEVEN AVERY
Executive Director, Heritage Victoria
Date of recommendation: 15/03/2023



The process from here

The Heritage Council publishes the Executive Director's recommendation (section 41).

The Heritage Council will publish the Executive Director's recommendation on its website for a period of 60 days.

Making a submission to the Heritage Council (sections 44 and 45)

Within the 60 day publication period, any person or body may make a written submission to the Heritage Council. This submission can support the recommendation, or object to the recommendation and a hearing can be requested in relation to the submission. Information about making a submission and submission forms are available on the [Heritage Council's website](#).

Heritage Council determination (sections 46 and 49)

The Heritage Council is an independent statutory body. It is responsible for making the final determination to include or not include the place or object in the VHR, or amend a place or object already in the VHR.

If no submissions are received the Heritage Council must make a determination within 40 days of the publication closing date.

If submissions are received, the Heritage Council may decide to hold a hearing in relation to the submission. The Heritage Council must conduct a hearing if the submission is made by a person or body with a real or substantial interest in the place or object. If a hearing does take place, the Heritage Council must make a determination within 90 days after the completion of the hearing.

Obligations of owners of places and objects (sections 42 and 43)

The owner of a place or object which is the subject of a recommendation to the Heritage Council has certain obligations under the Act. These relate to advising the Executive Director in writing of any works or activities that are being carried out, proposed or planned for the place or object.

The owner also has an obligation to provide a copy of this statement of recommendation to any potential purchasers of the place or object before entering into a contract.

Further information

The relevant sections of the Act are provided at Appendix 1.

Recommendation

State-level cultural heritage significance of the place

The State-level cultural heritage significance of the place was recognised in November 2000 by its inclusion in the VHR. The current extent of registration comprises both land and buildings.



Amendment application

On 2/02/2023 the Executive Director accepted an application to amend the registration of this place.

The application proposed that an additional strip of land to the northeast be included with the registration. It noted that there are imminent plans to dismantle and re-erect Hangar 1 in a new location closer to Hangar 2. Heritage Victoria issued a permit for these works, and associated landscaping, in December 2022 (P26668). This permit also provides for the removal of the Workshop (B3). These permit applications have been made in the context of long term plans to further subdivide the land and construct housing.



As Hangar 1 is wider than Hangar 2, it necessitates widening the extent of registration to provide an appropriate setting for the relocated building. It is recommended the extent of registration is increased now to accommodate the relocated hangar before the permit is acted upon.

It is also recommended that a small strip of land along the northern edge of the extent of registration is removed to accommodate a boundary realignment.

Further changes to the extent of registration may be considered in future after the works are complete.

Reasons for the recommendation

Additional land

The Executive Director recommends that the Heritage Council amend this registration because in accordance with s.49(1)(d)(ii), 'the land surrounding the place is important to the protection or conservation of the place or contributes to the understanding of the place.'

Reasons under section 49(1)(d)(ii)

- Inclusion of an additional area will provide an appropriate setting for both hangars once Hangar 1 is relocated.
- Inclusion of an additional area of land around the hangars will enable works that could potentially impact on the conservation of the buildings, such as drainage and landscaping, to be managed under a permit process.



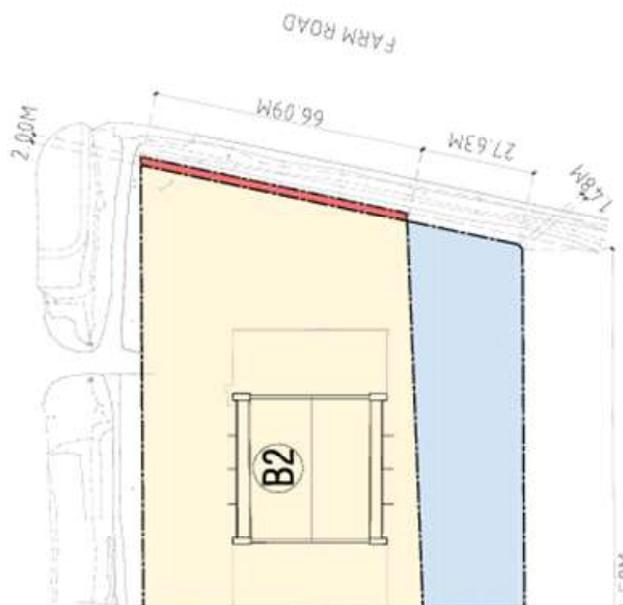
View from approximate boundary of new proposed extent of registration, looking towards Hangar 2.



View north towards Hangar 2. Hangar 1 will be relocated to this location.

Removal of land

It is proposed to remove a small strip of land from the north-eastern edge of the extent of registration. A planned boundary realignment in this area will integrate a 2m strip of land into the road reserve for the purposes of constructing a shared path. It is proposed to remove this 2m strip of land from the extent of registration so the extent aligns with the proposed property boundary. This land contains no features of significance and does not contribute to the overall conservation and protection of the buildings.



The 2m strip of land proposed for removal is indicated in red above.



Land proposed for removal from the extent of registration.

Further information

Traditional Owner Information

The place is located on the traditional land of the Wadawurrung people. Under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*, the Registered Aboriginal Party for this land is the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation.

Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register

The entire place is within an area of Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity. Aboriginal cultural heritage has been recorded in the vicinity.



Statutory requirements under section 40

Terms of the recommendation (section 40(3)(a))

The Executive Director recommends that the registration of the Werribee Satellite Aerodrome in the VHR is amended.

Information to identify the place or object (section 40(3)(b))

Number: H1884

Category: Registered Place

Name: Werribee Satellite Aerodrome

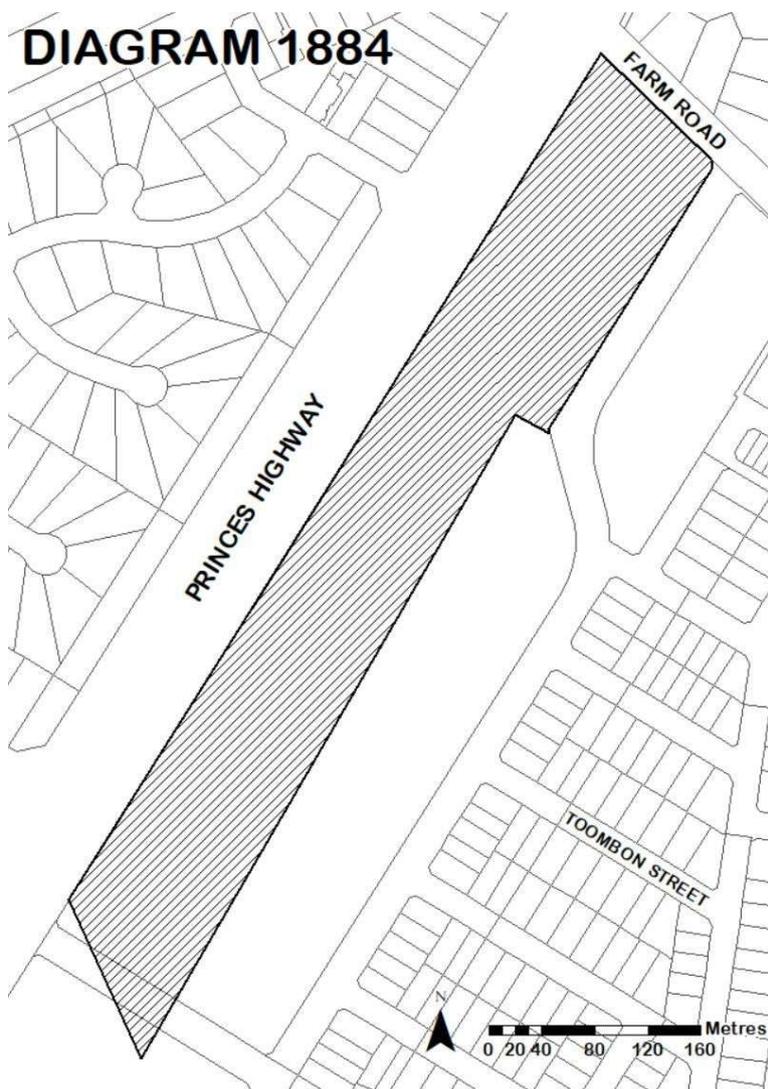
Location: Princes Highway (Geelong Road), Werribee

Municipality: Wyndham City

Proposed extent of registration

The Executive Director recommends that the extent of registration for Werribee Satellite Aerodrome be gazetted as:

All of the place shown hatched on Diagram 1884 encompassing part of Lot P on Plan of Subdivision 9076890, part of RES 1 on Plan of Subdivision 907683 and part of R1 Plan of Subdivision 907683.





Aerial Photo of the Place Showing Proposed extent of registration



Note: This aerial view provides a visual representation of the place. It is not a precise representation of the recommended extent of registration. Due to distortions associated with aerial photography some elements of the place may appear as though they are outside the extent of registration.

Rationale for the extent of registration

The recommended extent of registration comprises the remaining aircraft hangars that are key to the place's cultural heritage significance. It includes sufficient land around the buildings to provide for their protection, conservation and understanding. The proposed extent of registration will align with proposed subdivision boundaries where appropriate.

It is noted that the Werribee Satellite Aerodrome was once a vast complex that included five hangars, accommodation, workshops and wide areas of airfield. The broader airfield has been gradually subdivided over time, and most of the structures removed. The significance of the place now largely resides in the surviving hangars themselves which utilise an innovative truss structure that exemplifies war time expediency and the adaptation of wartime building techniques from the United States to local materials and conditions.

The recommended extent of the registration is the same as the nominated extent of registration.

It should be noted that everything included in the proposed extent of registration including all the land, all soft and hard landscape features, plantings, all buildings (including exteriors, interiors and fixtures), any archaeological features and any objects integral to the understanding of the cultural heritage significance of the place is proposed for inclusion in the VHR. A permit or permit exemption from Heritage Victoria is required for any works within the proposed extent of registration, apart from those identified in the categories of works or activities in this recommendation.

Appendix 1

Heritage Council determination (section 41)

The Heritage Council is an independent statutory body that will make a determination on this recommendation under section 49 of the Act. It will consider the recommendation after a period of 60 days from the date the notice of recommendation is published on its website under section 41.

Making a submission to the Heritage Council (section 44)

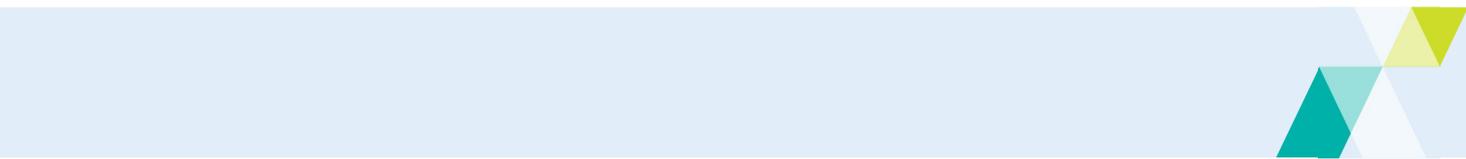
Within the period of 60 days, any person or body with a real and substantial interest in the place or object may make a submission to the Heritage Council regarding the recommendation and request a hearing in relation to that submission. Information about making a submission and submission forms are available on the Heritage Council's website.

Consideration of submissions to the Heritage Council (section 46)

- (1) The Heritage Council must consider—
 - (a) any written submission made to it under section 44; and
 - (b) any further information provided to the Heritage Council in response to a request under section 45.
- (2) The Heritage Council must conduct a hearing in relation to a submission if—
 - (a) the submission includes a request for a hearing before the Heritage Council; and
 - (b) the submission is made by a person or body with a real or substantial interest in the place or object that is the subject of the submission.
- (3) Despite subsection (2), the Heritage Council may conduct a hearing in relation to a submission in any other circumstances the Heritage Council considers appropriate.

Determinations of the Heritage Council (section 49)

- (1) After considering a recommendation that a place or object should or should not be included in the Heritage Register and any submissions in respect of the recommendation and conducting any hearing into the submissions, the Heritage Council may—
 - (a) determine that the place or part of the place, or object, is of State-level cultural heritage significance and is to be included in the Heritage Register; or
 - (b) determine that the place or part of the place, or object, is not of State-level cultural heritage significance and is not to be included in the Heritage Register; or
 - (c) in the case of a recommendation in respect of a place, determine that the place is not to be included in the Heritage Register but—
 - (i) refer the recommendation and any submissions to the relevant planning authority for consideration for an amendment to a planning scheme; or
 - (ii) determine that it is more appropriate for steps to be taken under the Planning and Environment Act 1987 or by any other means to protect or conserve the place; or
 - (d) in the case of a recommendation in respect of additional land which has been nominated to be included in the Heritage Register as part of a registered place in accordance with section 32, determine that the land be included in the Heritage Register if—
 - (i) the State-level cultural heritage significance of the place would be substantially less if the land or any part of the land which is or has been used in conjunction with the place were developed; or
 - (ii) the land surrounding the place is important to the protection or conservation of the place or contributes to the understanding of the place; or



- (e) determine that the object is integral to understanding the cultural heritage significance of a registered place or a place the Heritage Council has determined to be included in the Heritage Register.
- (2) The Heritage Council must make a determination under subsection (1)—
 - (a) within 40 days after the date on which written submissions may be made under section 44; or
 - (b) if any hearing is conducted into the written submissions, within 90 days after the completion of the hearing.
- (3) A determination that a place or part of a place, or object, should be included in the Heritage Register may include categories of works or activities which may be carried out in relation to the place or object for which a permit under this Act is not required, if the Heritage Council considers that the works or activities would not harm the cultural heritage significance of the place or object.
- (4) If the Heritage Council determines to include a place in the Heritage Register, with the consent of the owner of the place, the Heritage Council may determine to include in the Heritage Register additional land of the owner that is ancillary to the place.
- (5) If a member of the Heritage Council makes a submission under section 44 in respect of a recommendation, the member must not take part in the consideration or determination of the Heritage Council.
- (6) The Heritage Council must notify the Executive Director of any determination under this section as soon as practicable after the determination.

Obligations of owners of places and objects (section 42)

- (1) The owner of a place or object to whom a statement of recommendation has been given must advise the Executive Director in writing of—
 - (a) any works or activities that are being carried out in relation to the place or object at the time the statement is given; and
 - (b) any application for a planning permit or a building permit, or for an amendment to that permit, that has been made in relation to the place but not determined at the time the statement is given; and
 - (c) any works or activities that are proposed to be carried out in relation to the place or object at the time the statement is given.
- (2) An advice under subsection (1) must be given within 10 days after the statement of recommendation is given under section 40.
- (3) The owner of a place to whom a statement of recommendation has been given must advise the Executive Director in writing of an application, permit or amendment if, before a determination under section 49 or 52 in respect of a place—
 - (a) an application for a planning permit or a building permit or for an amendment to that permit in relation to the place is made; or
 - (b) a planning permit or building permit or an amendment to that permit in relation to the place is granted.
- (4) An advice under subsection (3) must be given within 10 days after the making of the application or the grant of the permit or amendment.
- (5) The owner of a place or object to whom a statement of recommendation has been given must advise the Executive Director in writing of the following activities or proposals if, before a determination is made under section 49 or 52 in respect of a place or object—
 - (a) any activities are carried out in relation to the place or object that could harm the place or object;
 - (b) any activities are proposed to be carried out in relation to the place or object that could harm the place or object.
- (6) An advice under subsection (5) must be given within 10 days after the owner becomes aware of the activity or the proposal, as the case requires.



- (7) If, before a determination is made under section 49 or 52 in respect of a place or object, a proposal is made to dispose of the whole or any part of the place or object, the owner of the place or object must advise the Executive Director in writing of that proposal.
- (8) An advice under subsection (7) must be given at least 10 days before entering into the contract for the disposal of the place or object.
- (9) The owner of a place or object who proposes to dispose of the whole or any part of the place or object before a determination is made under section 49 or 52 in respect of the place or object must, before entering into a contract for that disposal, give a copy of the statement of proposed contract, is to acquire the place or object or part of the place or object.

Owners of places and objects must comply with obligations (section 43)

An owner of a place or object to whom section 42 applies must comply with that section.

Penalty: In the case of a natural person, 120 penalty units;

In the case of a body corporate, 240 penalty units.



Existing registration details

Existing category of registration

Registered place

Existing extent of registration

1. All of the buildings (including concrete aprons) marked as follows on Diagram 1884 held by the Executive Director:

B1 Hangar 1

B2 Hangar 2

B3 Workshop

2. All the land marked L1 on Diagram 1884 held by the Executive Director being part of the land described in Certificate of Title Volume 10446 Folio 721.

Existing statement of significance

What is significant?

The Werribee Satellite Aerodrome was constructed in 1942 on land leased from the Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works in 1940. It served throughout the Second World War as a satellite to the nearby Point Cook and Laverton RAAF airfields. The aerodrome consisted of five timber trussed hangars, a workshop building and an area of accommodation and administration buildings. The airfield was grass with no formed runways. In 1952 the land, including the buildings was returned to the MMBW. Only the hangars and workshop building remain. The hangars are unique in Victoria being the only examples of a type of timber truss design originating in the United States and using steel sheer connectors to produce clear spans of 130 feet (39.6m) and 96 feet (29.3m). The design, produced by the Allied Works Council and adapted to use unseasoned Australian hardwoods, was first employed at the much larger United States Army Air Force base at Tocumwal NSW. At Werribee only one of the five hangars was of the larger 130' span. Timber was used for these buildings because of the shortage of other building materials and because the type was well understood by American engineers on the Allied Works Council. After 1942 this method of construction of aircraft hangars was abandoned in Victoria in favour of the prefabricated steel Bellman type hangars of which scores remain throughout the State. The Werribee buildings, are clad in corrugated iron and asbestos cement, have concrete floors and aprons, and full height sliding doors. They have been used since the 1950s as storage by Melbourne Water and are in reasonable condition considering their age and method of construction.

How is it significant?

The Werribee Satellite Aerodrome is historically and architecturally significant to the State of Victoria

Why is it significant?

The Werribee Satellite Aerodrome is of historical significance as an example of the many temporary airfields that were constructed across Australia in the early years of the Second World War, particularly after the entry of the Japanese into the war.

The aircraft hangars at the Werribee Satellite Aerodrome are architecturally significant as unique examples of their type in Victoria. The trusses which provide the large clear span required for aircraft are unusual for being fabricated from relatively short lengths of (initially) unseasoned Australian hardwood joined by patented TECO steel sheer connector plates. This technology of expediency, especially in the case of Hangar 1, produced the largest clear span timber trussed building seen in Victoria. Later hangars such as at Tottenham RAAF Stores Depot utilised nailed arches to achieve a similar span.



Existing permit policy and permit exemptions

Permit exemption policy

The significance of the Werribee Satellite Aerodrome resides mainly in the unique building type, in particular, the timber trusses. While there is some value in retaining some sense of its having been a World War Two airfield, this is secondary to the importance of retaining the buildings as building types rather than as components of an RAAF airfield.

Specific permit exemptions

- Routine repairs and maintenance which replace like with like.
- Replacement of corrugated asbestos sheeting with corrugated metal sheeting.