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Submission to:

HERITAGE COUNCIL VICTORIA

Place: Preston Market

Location: The Centreway Preston,

City of Darebin

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DADA -Vice President

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1. In collaboration with the groups that I represent, I make our submission to the Heritage Council regarding the recommendation of the Executive Director in relation to the Preston Market and the whole site.
2. In response to the Executive Director's recommendation to the Heritage Council that: "the place not be included in the Victorian Heritage Register";
3. We do not accept his findings on the basis that we have new compelling evidence from a primary source publication (by the principal architect Barry Pearce of the architecture company "Structural Consortium P/L").
4. We believe that this publication entitled 'Foundations' in some libraries and will provide more detailed and revealing documentation-(Foundations) and visual information to Criterion (E and F) that we anticipate, will support and enhance our application to protect the buildings that make up the original Preston Market.
5. We believe too, that the new information puts into question, the findings from consultants Context, the peer review, and as a consequence reports that have been produced by Darebin Council and the VPA.
6. We think that insufficient work has been carried out on the history of the Preston Market site and the car park area and that more detailed and thorough work needs to be carried out.
7. For example, from old aerial photos, we see houses located on Cramer St and one old homestead located in the northwest corner of the site. We know that numerous brick buildings associated with tanneries were also located in the central area of the site and also under the asphalt of the current car park..
8. Before any of the site is disturbed, namely the car park area, that since this has been an area of high human and industrial activity that archeological digs would have a high potential to uncover and reveal any relics or artefacts from the past, pre the Preston Market.

Criteria E Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics

9. The design and construction of the Preston Market was revolutionary, not evolutionary both in breaking from traditionally accepted architectural methods and styles and through innovation and the application of new technical achievements.
10. We think that the young Structural Consortium partners were avant guard in their brave yet imaginative concepts.
11. Ahead of their time in their attempt to capture the spirit of Australian architecture by adapting concepts borrowed from Europe and America and making these concepts all-Australian and appropriate for Australian conditions.
12. The architects for the Preston Market, like the aspirations of many of their contemporaries, where post war Modernist architecture in Australia was to some extent seen as an experiment, whereby the designer was pushing boundaries by searching for and combining new and old ideas pushing the limits of physics, geometry and biology and new-age materials to produce innovative design.
13. This is borne out in new ideas of architects like Harry Seidler, originally from Austria who was heavily influenced by the Bauhaus' Walter Gropius and first expresses the principles of the Bauhaus in Australia that sounds as if describing the Preston Market with these quotes:
 - *'The visual essence of modern architecture was not the ponderous solidity of traditional architecture, where everything is built to four walls around a room and spaces that were finite. But rather our eyes seek transparency, lightness....being able to look through things.'*
 - *'Aesthetically, we want dematerialisation.'*
 - *Claimed ' the dissolution of conventional solidity.'*

From Wikipedia

14. Robin Boyd's design philosophy, like that of the Preston Market architects were to be :
 - *'cost effective, high quality, functional buildings, through effective design, use of local and simple materials and prefabrication methods'*

From Wikipedia

15. As one of their earliest projects, the space frame roof and the concrete curtain walls of Preston Market, were similarly aligned with such design philosophy and architectural principles and some think, should satisfy the test of state significance.

16. Here we contend that, where the Executive Director states:

- *" the Space Frame roof of the Preston Market" is "one of the earliest uses of this technology in Victoria".*

We would argue that this was more than likely the first and probably the only example of such a Triodetik roof canopy design to be used on a market that was purpose designed and built employing local suppliers in Victoria, and trail-blazed a new path for the design and construction industry, producing a rare and novel product for the type of building.

17. And we say that the fabric of the place is of historical and aesthetic interest:

- *"Preston Market is the classic case of a commercial complex, which has been designed imaginatively, and built economically, with strict attention to the developers commercial objectives".-Foundations pp9*

18. However in most sheds, the Space Frame roof is currently partially concealed due to clutter that over time, has been added.

19. In the shed that houses the deli section, the Spaceframe roof is almost entirely concealed for practical purposes.

20. Therefore, its full visual impact is drastically diminished, due to the addition of cladding, advertising signage, plumbing, wiring and electrical fittings and hanging planters that disrupt the visual lines of sight of the roof structure.

21. As a consequence, its distinctive appearance when looking up from underneath it or from a distance is lost.

22. Here, we make the point that the importance of the fabric of Preston Market has not been recognised or acknowledged by other parties, thus the aesthetic features and creative adaptations have, we believe, been understated or down played to the public over the recent past.

23. A likely lack of knowledge or neglect or indifference has meant that over time, the built form of Preston Market has not received the necessary maintenance, acknowledgement or respect that it deserves.
24. There has been a lack of any initiative to educate, promote or celebrate the technical achievements within the building.
25. In our opinion, this lack of sensitivity has led to a lack of understanding and this in turn, has led to a total lack of appreciation of the architects, their achievements or the structure itself.
26. However, when one looks up at the space frame roof one notices many of the elements and principles of design and one is constantly amazed by its engineering and technical achievement and for its optical kinetic elements as a representational sculpture.
27. It's easy to take the spectacle of the expanse of the structure for granted, but with knowing, one is in awe and wonder at such a rhythmic arrangement and technical achievement. In the case of the Space Frame canopy, when you notice its exceptional features and merits, they bring a sense of joy and pride, then it's very difficult to un-notice them.
28. From the perception of the community, this would make for an even stronger attachment to the place.
29. We know that, the Preston Market fabric possesses a high degree of intactness and integrity and is a pivotal example of a place that, through its design and technical innovation and aesthetic, encapsulates a key evolutionary stage in urban optimism and a spirit for the future.
30. This is the reason why we strongly believe the physical fabric is of significance to Victoria.
31. On display, is a fusion of geometry, engineering and art, so that we are seeing a complex combination at play, that creates a perception of optical illusions of 2D and 3D.
32. As you walk under the exposed space frame roof, one's eye adjusts and identifies changing shapes and shapes within shapes, as shown in the photograph on the front page of Foundations Magazine.
33. Each line transcends into a triangular shape then into pyramids and rows of four cornered pyramids that fade - as seen in the photograph front page of the "Foundations" publication. There is a certain beauty in the arrangement of patterns and repeating shapes in these triangulated modules, just as we see beauty in nature through repetition of line, shape and colour. Operating Manual for Spaceship Earth - Richard Buckminster Fuller

34. We submit that the Preston Market satisfies the test because the nature &/or scale of the achievement is OF A HIGH DEGREE or is **'beyond the ordinary'** for THE PERIOD IN WHICH IT WAS UNDERTAKEN as evidenced by:

- recognition of the place/object as a BREAKTHROUGH in terms of design, fabrication or construction techniques; or

- recognition of the place/object as a successful solution to a technical problem that EXTENDED THE LIMITS of existing technology; or

- recognition of the place/object as an outstanding example of the CREATIVE ADAPTATION of available materials and technology of the period.

35. The influential and well known American thinker/designer/innovator/inventor Richard Buckminster Fuller, whose ground breaking ideas in the use of technology- (that is, putting knowledge into practice), were evidently a strong influence on the architects of the Preston Market.

36. Concepts emanating from the German Bauhaus such as "form follows function", also inspired and influenced the roof structure with its flat, expansive, bold but austere design.-Barry Pearce

37. The German Brutalist Style with its industrial aesthetic created stark forms using beton brut (raw concrete) in the manner of Le Corbusier, that inspired the architects use of the tilt up concrete curtain wall method, made in situ because the concrete sections were larger and of such irregular shapes, making handling and transportation more difficult and costly at the time.

38. As the architect Renzo Piano, the genius behind some of the worlds most famous modern buildings said, "Architecture is the art of making structures, it is the expression of change and is creating a sense of place," and we think that Preston Market, while more modest, ticks all of these boxes.

Criteria F Importance in demonstrating a high degree of technical achievement at a particular period.

1. With reference to the Space Frame roof, a comparison has been made between the Space Frame canopy on Collins Place. With respect, we would argue that to compare the space frame of Preston Market to that of Collins Place is like comparing apples and oranges with the differences far outweighing the similarities.

2. Collins Place was built at a cost \$270 million, while the Preston Market was built for about \$2 million.
3. The Preston Market was built in 1 year and 2 years of prior planning , while Collins Place was started around the same 1969-70, but took 11 years to complete for various reasons.
4. The scale and grandeur of Collins Place is in the vertical plane, where as the scale and grandeur of Preston Market lies in its horizontal plane.
5. Since the Preston Market Spaceframe was completed much earlier, we speculate that it's quite possible that this Spaceframe design was the inspiration and influencing factor for numerous such applications on warehouses, stadiums and factories.
6. Where as there may be some similarities in the concept, it is the differences in their intent, purpose, selection of materials and construction methods that make the "Meccano" like Space Frame roof of Preston Market like no other, so rare and unique;
7. Constructing the Market
 - *"The prefabricated steel shaped units were assembled on site. Each measured 4ft (base) and 3ft 6 ins(deep)"*
 - *"The units were assembled by being **bolted** into bottom cord angles spanning the width of the building. This resulted in the desired flat-plate effect and made provision for a low-pitch roof and column free spacing." pp 8*
8. The Spaceframe Technique
 - *'The 'Spaceframe' technique was gaining wide currency in Europe and the U.S.A. but had not been used in Australia'. Foundations, pp 8*
 - *'It was essentially a Triodetic form of construction involving the building of pyramid shaped units. These units act as column-free support and are quickly assembled.'*
pp 8
 - *'We decided to introduce this technique to Australia and incorporate it within the Preston Market'. pp 8*
 - *' We tested the 'Spaceframe' system through the construction of our own pyramid units simultaneous to the testing conducted by other companies in relation to other constructional techniques. We chose the Spaceframe technique'. pp8*

- 'containing novel or unusual features that were not widely replicated anywhere else in Victoria' - Foundations pp...

9. In the architects publication, produced at the time -Foundations-Preston Market Issue '70- pp 7, states in:

10. **The Approach** that Preston Market:

- *"was to be Melbourne's first true market in sixty years. The existing markets were either antiquated in appearance and old fashioned in their merchandising techniques, or suffered from "supermarket" characteristics. This therefore called for a creative approach to Preston Market in terms of its design and construction; one which would give birth to a market incorporating both a traditional atmosphere and modern retailing practices. In this context the bold use of colour and novel design techniques were considered to be fundamental to conceiving a "market with a difference".*

11. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, the word "novel", coming from Old English, based on Latin *novellus* "new, young, fresh, and is defined as- "If anything is new and original that it's never been seen before, used or even thought of before, call it novel.

12. The use of the word "novel" goes some way to demonstrating a high degree of technical achievement for the period.

13. The Preston Market Structure was the "brainchild" of the partners of Structural Consortium P/L - Barry Pearce, David Rayson and Noel Henderson which helped to launch their company.

14. The Space Frame structure consists of threaded tubular rods that were made and assembled locally by Standard Steel (p13) and galvanised locally, at Johns and Waygood and assembled from regular straight pipe, fixed to joiner plates using bolts and nuts that with three struts made triangular shapes, then by arranging four triangles to make a four cornered pyramid so going from 2D to 3D to produce modules on site then assembled to make a whole flat canopy, the assembly of which was achieved speedily and with limited human resources.

15. In contrast, the Collins Place Space Frame roof was designed by Mero, using ball mount connectors that were fabricated in Germany and erected by local contractor Rigfield. - www.collinsplace.com.au

16. Thin walled, large diameter welded, hollow steel tubular modules with a deep draft were chosen for Collins Place, in contrast to the shallow depth of the Preston Market Space frame. - en.m.wikipedia.org Collins Place

17. Designed as an atrium to maximise available daylight and protect visitors from wind and rain, the function of the Collins Place roof is designed to support the weight of very thick clear glass or plastic sheets. - Architecture au.com, I. M. Pei's (U.S.A.) Australian legacy, in conjunction with Bates Smart & McCutcheon.
18. Whereas, the Preston Market Space Frame roof structure was designed and built by local human and material resources, to be light weight in itself, supporting a lightweight roofing material. Each modular roof unit once assembled, was efficiently craned onto steel columns in each of the buildings requiring a minimal workforce.
19. We are of the view that Preston Markets' Spaceframe roof, the glass screen walls and concrete curtain walls, demonstrate *a high degree* of creative and technical achievement at a particular period. The nature and scale is "beyond the ordinary" for the period and would satisfy the tests through:
- *recognition of the place/object as a BREAKTHROUGH in terms of design, fabrication or construction techniques; or*
 - *recognition of the place/object as a successful solution to a technical problem that EXTENDED THE LIMITS of existing technology; or*
 - *recognition of the place/object as an outstanding example of the CREATIVE ADAPTATION of available materials and technology of the period.*
20. The following points demonstrate our reasons for state level significance.
- Exceeded known technical limits in order to solve engineering problems
 - Reduced construction time to less than 12 months, 1969-70
 - Maximised the feeling of spaciousness within each of the buildings with column free construction technique. Foundations, pp8
 - Applied Buckminster Fullers adherence to "*doing more with less*" ("*the most with the least*") for budgetary constraints, and, clearly a reference to the awareness and application of sustainability principles at the time, to minimise and conserve the earth's natural resources, being particularly relevant today. - www.newyorker.com/magazine 1966 Buckminster Fuller, Intellectual Outlaw, and Spaceship Earth, YouTube
 - Set out to optimise floor to roof canopy space with some glass partition walls, that impacts the trader and visitor lived experience.
 - Designed to maximise adaptability, portability, and ease of access (the cruciform) through the layout and floor plan for stall holders and shoppers

alike “with the six separate buildings, all of them linked to a central market complex” - Foundations, pp 8

- Designed to limit the full intensity of direct sunlight while maintaining a moderate temperature under the roof.
- Designed to give a feeling of protected open space; lofty and airy, a sense of inside/outside all under one roof and on one level.
- It's apparent unobtrusive, weightlessness in appearance with the arrangement of thin threaded steel struts supported by sparse thin vertical columns.

21. These are many of the key attributes evident in the existing layout and structure.

Summary

1. While Council acknowledges in their submission to Heritage Victoria – “that there are key attributes of the built form that imbue the site with social significance”.
2. This is not recognising any value or significance of the innovation in the built form itself, and that the key attributes which they expect to replicate, cannot be replicated satisfactorily because a proposed new building would have totally different structure and layout, thus offering no assurance to the community of any of the attributes that they claim to be so unique and important.
3. The question arises - How do you transpose the tangible and intangible attributes that have been there from the beginning or have developed over 50 years of successful market operation into another location?
4. We say that it is the building that houses those tangible and intangible assets (the vibe, the space, enables the social and cultural diversity, the number and mix of traders, the openness and light as when traversing from one building to the next and its soul) embedded in the place, that has built up over the years and cannot be separated successfully.
5. The attributes work together in an integrated way, to make a positive lived experience but these alone cannot be easily replicated and the ongoing success of the market in a building and different location is therefore severely jeopardised.

6. Some relevant comments made from the recent community consultation in Councils surveys referring to the Preston Market say:

-“It feels like streets not buildings”

-“spaces feel public not private”

These are a few examples of intangible attributes that will not be replicated.

7. On Councils second page, they state that: “ *there are **likely** to be better planning controls than a Heritage Overlay (in isolation for protection of the key attributes such as the incorporated plan, or a design and development overlay)*”.
8. Here, we would argue that all measures would be preferable, in fact desirable in order to fully protect the built form of the Preston Market.
9. Besides, the community has not been presented with any prepared documents that might give us confidence or certainty that what is proposed, will protect the market buildings.
10. Further, we strongly believe that the existing built form of the Preston Market continues to be under threat, as shown in recent VPA/DCC documents where the language has changed in - Guiding Principles & Summary of Objectives, from talking about *‘the’* market, to that of *‘a’ thriving fresh food market*; a subtle but very important distinction. - Preston-Market-Planning-Review-VPA-October-2018, Recommendation 2.1, 2.3 and 3.1- “ *Review the location of the Preston Market building within the site*” which the community was not aligned with.
11. As well, in the recent *‘Welcome to Preston Market Precinct- Community Drop-In- www.yoursaydarebin.au Community Engagement Display Boards, under Configuration of the Precinct pp 4-5*, shows six scenarios or layouts with just one (Scenario One) of the Six Scenarios, with the market situated in its original/existing location, and showing 5 other Scenarios with the market located in various other locations.
12. For most in the community, this manipulation of surveying produces bias that is not reflecting community sentiment.
13. In the same document, above, we note that Mary St. is shown in the illustrations, however the other municipal streets The Centreway and The Strand make up one of Councils claimed key attributes, that is “*the wide cruciform pedestrian streets that offer a stage for activities or encounters*” are not evident, which to the community is inconsistent with their main point. Check website- <https://vicroadsmaps.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html>

14. We fear that these factors together reveal a strong indicator of a concerted endeavour to establish a smaller market located under a new residential tower in order to ultimately completely demolish the existing market.
15. It is more than three years since we, the community have been defending the Preston Market, and in all of that time and before, we have maintained the view that Preston Market has significant merit and should be considered worthy of State level protection.
16. We conclude with a final extract from pp 12 of the Foundations Magazine that states:
17. ' Already the Preston Market is proving to be the forerunner of a completely new range of construction techniques that I am sure in years to come, will change our whole concept of building'.
18. This is the unheralded legacy of the Preston Market.