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Advisory group recommends Preston Market be moved and rebuilt

Preston Market has operated for more than 50 years at its Murray Rd site. But bombshell leaked reports call for drastic changes, despite the popular shopping hub's heritage significance.

Richard Pearce, Preston Leader

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 A confidential report suggests the popular Preston Market be rebuilt in a new location.

Preston Market will have to be rebuilt and moved to Cramer St if it wants to survive, confidential reports say.

The documents, summarised in a leaked Darebin Council briefing seen by Leader, include a review that found the popular market had local heritage significance and recommended it be protected.

But the independent study found the buildings were “nearing the end of their life” and renovating them would be “uneconomical and unrealistic”.

The council commissioned Root Partnership in July 2019 to advise on the state of the market site.



 A heritage review determined the market should be protected by a heritage overlay.

The report also determined rebuilding the market in its existing location would cause significant disruption to traders, while moving it would allow them to continue operating.

In another report, MGS Architects analysed three potential market locations: the same place, moving it east and moving it south to Cramer St.

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Leaving the market where it was scored poorly on street exposure, impact to traders during development and for overshadowing from taller buildings.

The report noted a Cramer St address would “give the market the greatest chance of economic viability and success into the future”.

The notes suggest having a market at the southern end of the site would prevent taller buildings, like the approved apartment towers, from overshadowing Preston Oval.

It also warned a transition could take 15 years.



 The market is known for its use of spaceframe technology. Picture: Darebin Libraries

A third report, a heritage review by RBA Architects and Heritage consultants, concluded the market was “of local historical, aesthetic, technical and social significance” and should be protected.

The briefing document noted it would still have heritage significance if 75 per cent of the spaceframe roof was retained, concrete walls were recreated, and it retained the same layout and wide walkways.

But Darebin Appropriate Development Association president Maria Poletti said she did not see how the market could be moved or rebuilt while preserving the heritage values.

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Ms Poletti said the claim the market needed to be moved to flourish was “totally false” and was just an excuse to allow high-density high rise apartments to be built.

“The market has survived and flourished for 50 years in its current position,” she said.

The council declined to comment on the confidential briefing.

The reports will be presented to councillors in a public council meeting at a later date.

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