

# FRONTIER HERITAGE PTY LTD

ATF The JB Discretionary Trust

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## HERITAGE IMPACT STATEMENT :-

**See Yup Temple (Chinese Temple)  
76 Raglan Street, South Melbourne (H0219)**



This Statement forms part of a Heritage Permit application for:-

Temporary Works required to the existing building and front garden area to provide for Chinese New Year (2025, 2026 and 2027) and to facilitate ongoing worship during the restoration works program for the fire damaged main Temple building.

**Date:** 29 October 2024 (Revised 6 November 2024)

**Reference:** Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) number H0219  
**Pre-App Ref:** P40146

**Prepared for:** See Yup Temple Inc.

**Prepared by:** Janet Beeston

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## 1. Introduction and Background

This Heritage Impact Statement for the proposed temporary works at the See Yup Temple, South Melbourne (H0219) has been prepared by Janet Beeston, Frontier Heritage Pty Ltd.

These proposed temporary works are required to provide for ongoing worship activities at the site, including additional provisions for Chinese New Year for the 3 year period that it is anticipated will be required to restore the fire damaged main Temple building.

The scope of works for which this permit application applies is for temporary works in two categories as follows –

1. Temporary Works for the duration of the Temple Restoration project (3 years)
2. Temporary Works to facilitate Chinese New Year (10 week period, once per year for the 3 years).

The drawings of the proposed temporary works have also been prepared by Frontier Heritage Pty Ltd. The drawings, dated 6 November 2024 are identified as follows –

24-015 TT1 RevA	Existing and Demolition Plan – West Garden Area
24-015 TT2 RevA	Existing and Demolition Plan – East Garden Area
24-015 TT3 RevA	Proposed Plan – West Garden Area
24-015 TT4 RevA	Proposed Plan – East Garden Area
24-015 TT5 RevA	Pod and Marquee Elevations
24-015 TT6 RevA	1866 Building Floor Plan – Temporary Works
24-015 TT7 RevA	1901 & 2002 Buildings Floor Plans & Elevation – Temp Works.
24-015 TT8 RevA	Temporary Marquee #3 – Plan and Elevations

## 2. Why is the place of cultural heritage significance?

The Statement of Significance in the Victorian Heritage Register entry for the subject site states:

*The See Yup Society Temple at Raglan Street, South Melbourne was erected in 1866 for the See Yup Society, as the principal centre of worship and death registry for the Cantonese in Victoria. See Yup means four towns of Canton. The temple, flanking pavilions and enclosed axially arranged forecourt were designed by architect George Wharton, tenders being called in April 1866. The buildings and associated fences are in the style of the classical revival enhanced by contrasting oriental detail and statuary.*

*The See Yup Society Temple, South Melbourne, was the most important centre of Chinese worship in Victoria in the nineteenth century and integral with the turbulent history of the Chinese people in Victoria in that era. The building group, unique in Victoria as an historical document and architecturally important as an outstanding work by architect George Wharton, is notable for the apparent axial and spatial qualities and the successful fusion of classical with traditional Chinoiserie details and statuary. The See Yup Temple has been partially restored by the See Yup Society in conjunction with the National Trust but is still in need of extensive rehabilitation work.*

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## 3. Proposed Works

As noted above, all the works proposed are temporary works to facilitate ongoing worship at the site and to provide for Chinese New Year festivities for the following 3 years, which is the time frame likely to be required to complete the restoration works to the main temple building at the site.

The temporary works that are proposed to remain in place for the duration of the main temple restoration period (**3 December 2024 – 15 March 2027**) are as follows :

- A 6 x 3 metre Pod installed in the garden area,
- Stud framed, plywood clad and painted temporary walls in the 1901 and 2002 buildings at ground floor level to provide for temporary storage of fire damaged objects etc.,
- Removal of the disabled toilet from the passageway on the east side of the main temple building to provide public access through to the ancestry halls,
- Removal of a dead tree and two self seeded small trees from the existing garden area,
- Removal of the bamboo from the east side of the garden area and the lopping of one limb of the larger tree on the east side of the garden.

The temporary works that are proposed to remain in place for an approx.. 10 week period for the next 3 Chinese New Years (**3 December 2024 – 3 March 2025; 19 January 2026 – 30 March 2026; 4 January 2027 – 15 March 2027**) are as follows :

- Installation of 2 marquees at the northern end (nearest the temple buildings) of the garden (one on each side of the existing stone path),
- Installation of a portable disabled accessible toilet in the garden area towards the south east corner of the garden (as indicated on the drawings).

A third marquee is proposed to be installed in the forecourt of the 1901 building. This marquee, which will be a frame with roof cover only (no walls) will be installed on **3 March 2025** and will remain insitu until **15 March 2027**. This marquee is required to provide weather protection for worshippers to the Guan Dai deity inside the 1901 building which will be open on weekends and other special occasions after Chinese New Year 2025.

The proposed Pod will be a simple rectangular structure with a door and window in the east end, a triple sliding glazed door arrangement on the southern side and plain walls on the north and west. The roof will be a simple slope of 4 degrees across the north south direction. The windows and doors are of black powdercoated aluminium and the external cladding on all sides will be dark stained timber battens.

The Pod will be provided with electrical power and an air conditioning unit installed with the condenser unit sitting on the ground on the north side of the Pod, as indicated on the drawings.

The Pod will remain on site for the 2 ½ years (Dec 2024-Mar 2027). The marquees will be installed for the three x 10 week (nominally) periods noted above, as will the portable disabled accessible toilet. The larger of the marquees will be constructed around and over the Pod, fully encompassing it within the marquee.

Ramp and stair access will be provided to access the marquee. A stair system will be supported on the marquee floor framing and will cantilever over the raised bluestone edging to the stone path – there will be no fixings required to the existing stone path or edging. The two marquees will have lighting and fans installed within. They will be open

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on two sides and enclosed with framed and glazed walls on the other sides. A solid floor framing system will be installed in both marquees.

The marquees are installed with the structure supported on 400 x 400 steel plates that are placed on the ground on timber blocks (as required) and the frame is braced and tied down to the 500 x 500 x 580 concrete blocks which also sit on the ground around the marquee floor area as indicated on the drawings.

There will be the need for some minor ground levelling in select areas to facilitate the Pod and Marquee installations. Following the removal of the bamboo and the relocation of the random bluestones in the garden area some ground levelling will occur. The floor level of the marquees will necessarily be determined by the existing concrete slabs that will remain beneath the garden seats that will be temporarily removed for the marquee installation.

Monitored security is also proposed to be installed as part of this application. Due to the marquees being removed at the end of each Chinese New Year period, the security camera proposed for the garden area will be a wireless unit.

## **4. Options considered**

These temporary works have been carefully considered to minimise the impact on the remaining buildings and garden area, but at the same time necessarily providing the essential space for continuity of worship practices.

Larger, and more permanent structures were considered, including a single marquee that would extend across the central pathway within the garden area. In order to maintain the visual link through to the main temple building from the Raglan St garden entrance, the proposed marquee has been divided into two separate marquees with the central pathway remaining clear between them.

It is anticipated that restricted access to the existing buildings (the ancestry halls) will be provided and the main worshipping will be in the garden area with Guandi and the Tai Shui god in the Pod structure within the marquee.

## **5. Information to support an assessment against sections 101(2) and 101(3) of the Heritage Act 2017**

The proposed works will be temporary only and will enable to the worshipping function of the place to continue while the restoration works to the fire damaged main temple are appropriately scoped and implemented.

## **6. Reasons why the proposed works should be supported.**

The proposed works are temporary only. When the marquee is removed at the end of the Chinese New Year period each year, the ground area will be reseeded with lawn and maintained accordingly until the following year marquee installation.

## **7. Summary of impacts and conclusion**

The proposed works are essential to provide for the ongoing worship function of the place and more particularly to facilitate the activities associated with Chinese New Year for the following few years until the main Temple building is restored and the original worshipping function reinstated.

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The proposed works have been carefully considered and documented to minimise impact and to enable these activities to continue on the site without impacting upon the restoration project investigations and documentation etc.

The impact on the heritage significance of the place is very minor, not only due to the works being temporary in nature but also as the works to the existing buildings is limited and no physical evidence will remain when the temporary walls are removed.

These works will enable the ongoing use of the place for its original purpose, for which the heritage significance of the place is strongly linked.

The temporary works will all be totally reversible and therefore, when removed, no remaining impact will exist.

## **8. Recommended conditions and staging**

The recommended staging would be the dates nominated for the three Chinese New Year 10 week programs and the dates provided for the installation of the third marquee which will not be installed until the end of Chinese New Year 2025..

There are no conditions recommended for this permit application.

**End of report.**