

An aerial photograph of the Lancemore Mansion Hotel, a large, multi-story building with a complex roofline, surrounded by extensive green parkland, trees, and winding paths. A circular garden is visible near the top center of the building.

Lancemore Mansion Hotel, Werribee Park

HERITAGE IMPACT STATEMENT

320 K Road, Werribee South, VIC 3030

May 2025

Prepared for

LANCEMORE
MANSION HOTEL

Prepared by

LOVELL CHEN

A series of five horizontal lines in blue, green, yellow, orange, and red, stacked vertically.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

This report was prepared on the lands of the Wurundjeri people who have been custodians of this land for thousands of years. We acknowledge their stories, connection to land, water and culture which is embedded in Country. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present and acknowledge that this report includes a post-contact history that forms only a small part of the ongoing story.

Werribee Park is located on the lands of the Bunurong people, who are, and have always been the custodians of this land. We pay our respects to the Elders past and present, and acknowledge the stories, traditions and cultures of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Quality Assurance Register

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| Project no. | Issue no. | Description | Issue date | Approval |
|-------------|-----------|---------------------------------|------------|----------|
| 20240619 | 1 | Draft Heritage Impact Statement | 01/05/2025 | MK |
| 20240619 | 2 | Heritage Impact Statement | 26/05/2025 | MK |
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Referencing

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Cover image: Oblique aerial photograph of Werribee Park Mansion, tennis courts and existing temporary marquee

Source: Nearmap, image date December 2024



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1.0 Introduction

This Heritage Impact Statement (HIS) has been prepared on behalf of the Lancemore Mansion Hotel to accompany a permit application to Heritage Victoria in relation to the temporary events marquee installed in the northernmost tennis court at Werribee Park, located at 320 K Road, Werribee South, on Bunurong Country (Figure 1).

Werribee Park currently operates as a tourist destination, with the mansion open as a historic house, a café in the Library Wing and offices in the South-East and Theatre Wings. The mansion is set within large grounds with formal gardens and recreational/farming areas beyond the immediate setting of the mansion.

A hotel and spa (Lancemore Mansion Hotel, Werribee Park) operates in the St Joseph's Wing and a new addition to the north-west of the Werribee Mansion. The existing marquee and associated services are associated with the hotel and as noted above, are installed in the tennis courts located south of Werribee Mansion (Figure 2)

This application is for the retention of the existing marquee on site for a period of three years.

Reference has been made in the preparation of this HIS to the *Werribee Park Metropolitan Park Conservation Analysis*, prepared by Allom Lovell Sanderson Pty Ltd in 1985.

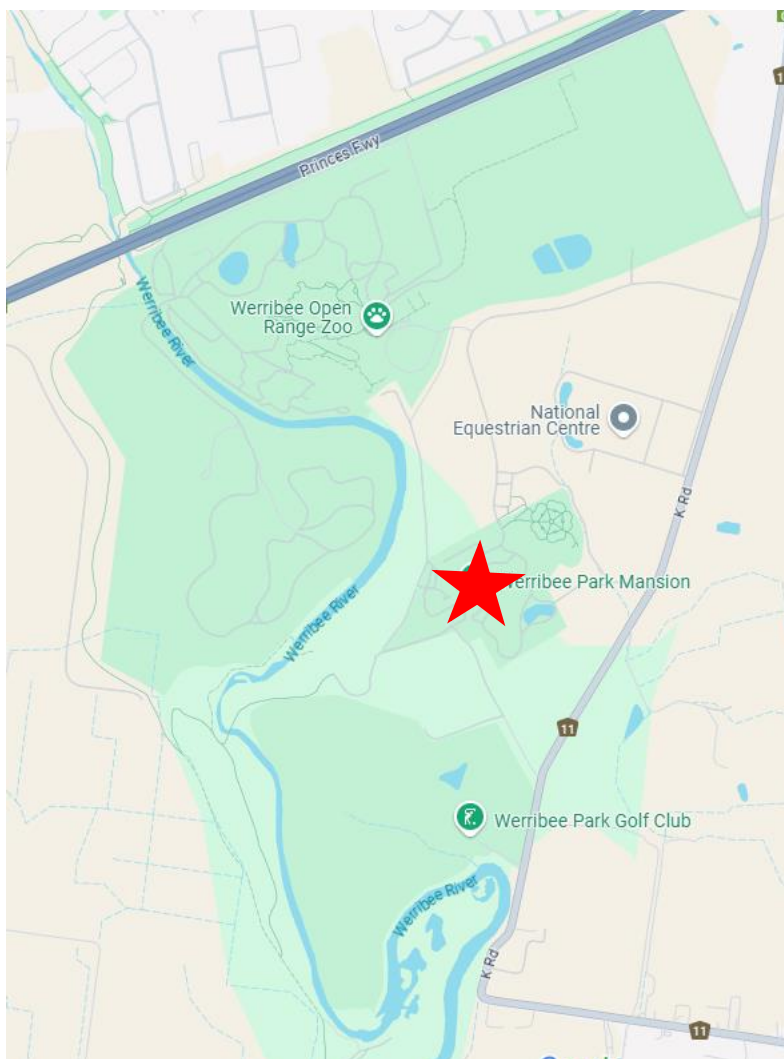


Figure 1 Location plan for Werribee Park, the approximate location of the marquee indicated by the star

Source: <https://www.google.com/maps>



Figure 2 Aerial image showing the location existing temporary marquee in proximity to Werribee Park Mansion
Source: Nearmap, captured March 2025

1.1 Background

Permit P23433 was issued by Heritage Victoria on 26 August 2015 for the ‘temporary erection of a marquee and associated services, catering tent, toilets, fences, gravel path, tree removal and landscape works.’ These works have been utilised to provide additional events space for the Lancemore Mansion Hotel. This permit was subsequently amended, most recently in June 2022, to increase the validity of the permit and amend the timeframe for removal of the approved works. The amended permit requires the removal of the approved works in August 2025.

Discussions were held with Heritage Victoria in February 2025 in relation to the potential for retention of the existing marquee structure on site on a permanent basis. Pre-application comments were received from Heritage Victoria on 26 February 2025 as follows:

There continues to be concerns, consistent with that raised in earlier discussions, regarding the impact on the setting caused by the marquee. The area in question, which was originally an orchard (removed in the 1920s to accommodate a tennis court), contributes to the garden setting surrounding Werribee Mansion. The marquee’s opaque nature obstructs views of the surrounding open garden and is not sympathetic to the aesthetic values of the place. A PVC marquee is not intended to be a permanent structure as the fabric has a limited lifespan, the long-term retention is not considered appropriate...

... the original permit P23433 cannot be extended as the elongated time frame is beyond the original intent and spirit of the permit. For any retention of the marquee beyond 26 August 2025 a new permit is required. A permit will be considered for one year period to allow for a permanent solution to be resolved and a new permit applied for that work.... There is a level of comfort with the introduction of a permanent structure to this area which is lightweight and designed to be more discrete, sympathetic, and recessive.

This application relates only to the retention of the existing marquee in place as indicated in the above comments. Section 5.1.2 of this HIS addresses the timeframe to retain the existing marquee and allow for the development and approval of a permanent solution.

2.0 Heritage controls and listings

2.1 Victorian Heritage Register

Werribee Park is included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) as place number H1613, and is identified as being of architectural, historical, scientific (horticultural), archaeological, and aesthetic significance to the State of Victoria.

The VHR extent of registration is indicated at Figure 3 and is described as follows:

1. All of the land marked L1 on Diagram 1613A held by the Executive Director being all of Crown Allotments 1, 2, 3A and 3B Section 5 Parish of Deutgam, all of Crown Allotment 5 and part of Crown Allotment 6 Section A Parish of Mambourin.

2. All of the buildings and features marked as follows on Diagrams 1613A, 1613B, 1613C and 1613D held by the Executive Director:

- B1 Woolshed
- B2 Shearers' house
- B3 Hastie's house
- B4 Werribee Mansion
- B5 Mansion laundry, covered cistern and drying yard
- B6 Mansion gate lodge
- B7 Chirnside homestead
- B8 Bellenger's house
- B9 Implement shed
- B10 Stables
- B11 Blacksmith's shop
- B12 Men's quarters
- B13 Ration store
- B14 Glasshouse (sunken)
- B15 Glasshouse
- F1 Sheep dip
- F2 Mansion gates
- F3 Victoria State Rose Garden
- F4 Parterre and fountain
- F5 Lake and grotto
- F6 Water tank
- F7 Chirnside homestead ha-ha wall
- F8 Former duck pond
- F9 Covered cistern
- F10 Ruins in the orchard

F11 Ford

F12 Burial site

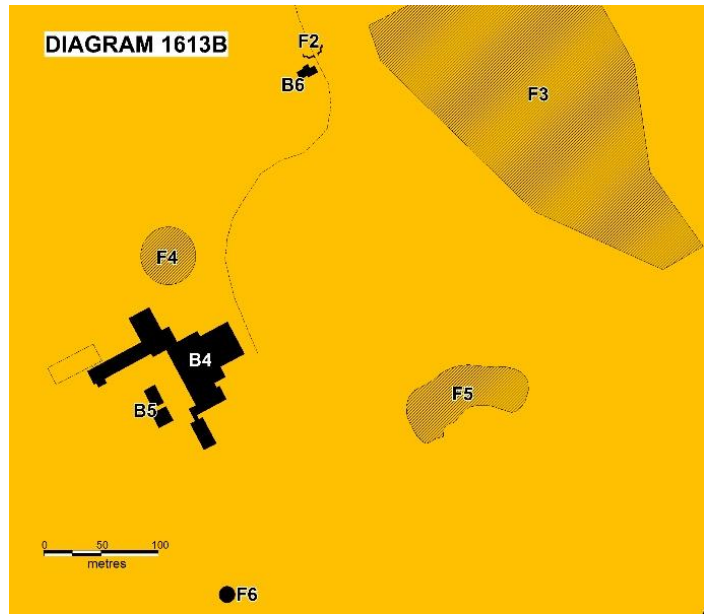
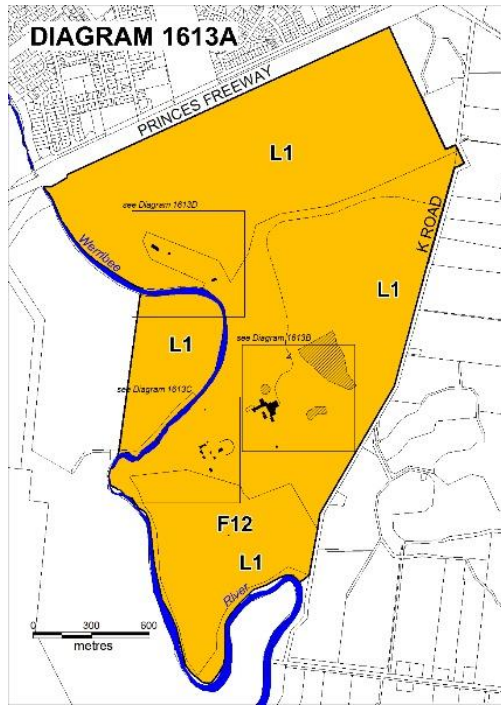


Figure 3 Werribee Park Plan A – Extent of Registration 2012 (left) and Werribee Park Plan B 2012 (right)
Source: Victorian Heritage Database

The full statement of significance for Werribee Park is attached in Appendix A. The permit exemption policy further states that ‘all of the buildings and features identified in the extent of registration are integral to the significance of the place’, and that ‘the importance of the Werribee Park lies primarily in its layers of development and planting which combine to create a cultural landscape of considerable individuality and diversity. The Grotto and lake, the Ha Ha Wall, iron hurdle fencing and the half sunken glasshouse are all of outstanding significance.’ The tennis courts are not specifically mentioned in the VHR statement of significance, extent of registration or permit exemptions/policy.

A suite of permit exemptions form part of the VHR registration, however these are not relevant to the proposal for the retention of the existing marquee on site.

2.2 Wyndham Planning Scheme

Werribee Park is individually identified as HO64 of the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (HO) of the Wyndham Planning Scheme. The mapped extent of the HO matches the VHR extent of registration.

The statement of significance for the place as included in the *City of Wyndham Heritage Study* (Context, 1997) is as follows:

Werribee Park is of national significance as the centre of the Chirnsides' pastoral empire, a vast and influential enterprise. The family played an important role in the development of rural enterprises in Werribee, including the Closer Settlement Scheme and Metropolitan Farm. The Corpus Christi College played a role in supporting the Italian migrants who were to become significant in Werribee's market gardening development. Its setting within a rural landscape substantially unaltered from the grazing lands of the early Chirnsides, and now distinctive within the largely irrigated Werribee farming landscape.

Pursuant to Clause 43.01-2 of the Wyndham Planning Scheme, a heritage place which is included in the VHR is subject to the requirements of the *Heritage Act 2017*. No permit is required under the Heritage Overlay to develop a heritage place which is included on the VHR, other than an application to subdivide a heritage place.

2.3 National Trust of Australia (Victoria)

Werribee Park is classified by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) as a place of State significance (B1475). The statement of significance for Werribee Park as prepared by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) is as follows:

One of Australia's grandest and most architecturally sophisticated mansions, notable especially for fine freestone exterior; its largely surviving and partly restored interiors and furnishings; its extensive garden, lake and grotto; its gatehouse and the partially surviving avenue of trees along the line of the driveway to the town of Werribee; the surviving former homestead, ha-ha, and outbuildings; the woolshed and other more distant structures; the old ford and the general relationship of the river to the property and the successive homestead sites.

The mansion, built in 1874-7, is an unusually symmetrical pyramidal composition in a Roman Renaissance Revival style with some scholarly Palladian details and exquisite ornamental carving, and is the only major freestone house in Victoria. The architect is claimed to have been London-born James Henry Fox, quantity and measuring surveyor to the Victorian Government and architect also of 'Chatsworth House' in Hopkins Hill. Deleterious additions made in the twentieth century, particularly the large wing to the west, are excluded from the Classification. The open setting of the property is of significance and the views from the old homestead to the south-east and south-west are critical to it.

The mansion was built for brothers, Andrew and Thomas Chirnside - Scottish-born pastoralists and as such is a unique example of the material existence of the very wealthy in 19th century Victoria. The Chirnside family have significance in the Victoria for their many pastoral ventures. The grounds are also of historical significance, having been laid out by W.R. Guilfoyle, Curator of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens.

There are no statutory requirements as a result of this classification.

3.0 Description

The proposed works are contained within the tennis courts area to the south of the Werribee Park Mansion (Figure 4). The first tennis courts were constructed in 1924, and additional courts were added in 1930 and 1952 to form the current layout¹, although the tennis courts have long since been disused for this purpose. An image of the tennis courts in 2015 prior to the installation of the marquee is provided at Figure 5 and the remaining tennis courts to the south of the marquee at Figure 6. The footprint of the total of six tennis courts is still legible with metal wire fence and mature landscaping defining the boundaries. The robust landscaping surrounding the tennis courts have created a secluded area to the tennis courts (evident at Figure 7 and Figure 9). The 2015 and 2025 oblique aerial images at Figure 4 and Figure 5 also indicate that there has been very little change to the broader surrounding landscape following the introduction of the marquee. The two southern courts remain redundant in situ.

The existing marquee and associated services are shown in Figure 8 and Figure 9, and include brush fencing and lighting, as well as portable toilets and the like located to the rear (south) of the events marquee.

¹ Allom Lovell Sanderson Pty Ltd, *Werribee Park Metropolitan Park Conservation Analysis*, 1985, p. 287.



Figure 4 Oblique aerial image of Werribee Park Mansion with the location of the tennis court indicated
Source: Nearmap, image date December 2024

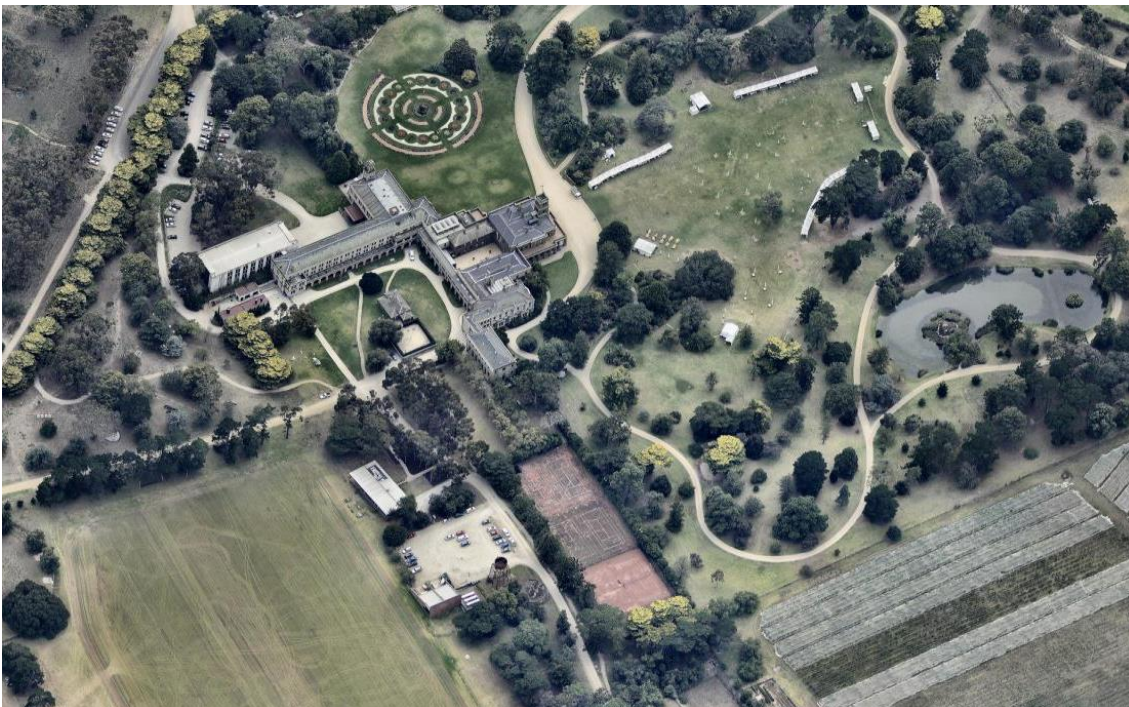


Figure 5 Oblique aerial image of the tennis courts prior to the installation of the marquee
Source: Nearmap, image date March 2015



Figure 6 View to the remaining (unused) tennis courts to the south of the marquee



Figure 7 View west from the open garden towards the tennis courts, with mature trees screening the tennis court boundary



Figure 8 View south to the existing marquee, temporary fencing and pedestrian pathway



Figure 9 View north to the rear of the existing marquee and associated services and the surrounding mature vegetation

4.0 Proposed Works

The proposal is for the temporary retention of the existing marquee and associated services for additional time (three years). During this time, design development for a permanent events structure would be developed, including all relevant stakeholder engagement and undertaking the required approvals processes.

There is no change to the existing marquee, services or surrounding landscape as part of the proposal for the retention of the existing structure.

5.0 Assessment of Heritage Impacts

5.1 Relevant considerations

The key considerations under the Heritage Act are as follows:

- S. 101(2)(a) the extent to which the application, if approved, would affect the cultural heritage significance of the registered place or registered object
- S 101(2)(b) the extent to which the application, if refused, would affect the reasonable or economic use of the registered place or registered object.

5.1.1 *The extent to which the application, if approved, would affect the cultural heritage significance of the registered place [S101(2)(a)]*

In the following assessment of heritage impacts, reference has been made to the VHR statement of significance and the relevant sections of the *Werribee Park Metropolitan Park Conservation Analysis*.

In considering the extent to which the temporary retention of the existing marquee and services would affect the cultural heritage significance of Werribee Park, it is noted that the location of the marquee, encompassing a section of the tennis courts to the south of the mansion, is not identified as contributing to the significance of the place in either the statement of significance or the conservation analysis. Additionally, as noted above, the tennis courts at Werribee Park are not identified as registered features within the VHR extent of registration and no significance is attributed to the tennis courts in the VHR statement of significance. In considering the architectural, historical, scientific (horticultural), archaeological, and aesthetic significance of Werribee Park, this assessment notes as follows:

Werribee Park is of architectural significance for the number of intact buildings and features constructed during the late 19th century. The temporary retention of the proposed marquee will not result in any impact on or change to the intact buildings and features in the registered place, or the visual relationship between these.

Werribee Park is of historical significance for its association with the early establishment of permanent European settlement of the Port Phillip District, its association with Thomas, Andrew and Robert Chirnside and for its use as the first major Catholic seminary for secular priests in Victoria. There will be no impact on the historical associations of Werribee Park from the temporary retention of the existing marquee in place on part of the tennis courts.

Werribee Park is of scientific (horticultural) significance for its rare and outstanding collection of trees, none of which will be affected by the temporary retention of the existing marquee in place.

Werribee Park is of archaeological significance for its demonstrated and potential archaeological values relating to the early use and development of the place. No subsurface works are proposed or required that would result in an adverse impact on archaeological remains, ruins or burial site within the registered place.

Werribee Park is of aesthetic significance for its extensive size and collection of planting, landscape styles and features, including formal gardens. As is evident in a comparison between aerial images of this location from 2015 and 2024 (Figure 4 & Figure 5), the broader Werribee Park and open gardens to the north and east of the tennis courts, as well as mature vegetation surrounding the tennis courts has been unaffected by the introduction of the

marquee in this location. There will be no adverse impact on the layout, boundaries, early plantings and garden features that are fundamental to the significance of the place from the temporary retention of the existing marquee in place.

The *Werribee Park Metropolitan Park Conservation Analysis* identifies the tennis courts to be of no significance and that they do not warrant specific conservation action. The marquee and all associated services are located entirely within the boundaries of the tennis courts, and no part of the marquee and services provided extend into the broader registered place, i.e. the pedestrian path between the tennis courts and the mansion was already in place prior to the installation of the marquee.

In terms of potential for visual impacts and proximity to registered buildings and features, the existing marquee, at its closest point, is located approximately 60 metres from the Theatre Wing addition of Werribee Mansion (B4) (and more than 130 metres from the Main Mansion). It is located approximately 45 metres from the water tank (F6) to the south-west. There are no other registered buildings or features in proximity to the marquee. In addition and as noted above, the tennis courts boundary is surrounded by mature trees and vegetation to all four sides that generally conceals views to the tennis courts and marquee/services from the open gardens to the east (Figure 7), the mansion to the north (Figure 10) and open car park to the west. The extent and robust nature of this surrounding vegetation is such that the existing temporary marquee is generally concealed and does not obstruct views to or within the open gardens surrounding the tennis courts.

Accordingly, there will be no adverse impact on the cultural heritage significance of the place from the proposed temporary retention of the existing marquee for an additional three years.



Figure 10 View to the tennis courts and surrounding vegetation from the north

5.1.2 *The extent to which the application, if refused, would affect the reasonable or economic use of the registered place [S101(2)(b)]*

Recognising the pre-application comments from Heritage Victoria suggest that consideration would be given to a permit for a one year period to allow for a permanent solution to be resolved and a new permit applied for that work, this application is for the retention of the existing marquee on site for an additional three years. This is because, as noted above, the hotel and spa currently operates in the St Joseph's Wing and a new addition to the north-west of the Werribee Mansion. The marquee is directly associated with the operation of the hotel at Werribee Mansion and supports events including weddings that, often, are planned and scheduled more than a year in advance.

In addition, it is noted that due to the time involved for the development of a design for a permanent structure, including all required stakeholder and specialist consultation and the required approvals process, including under the *Heritage Act 2017*, a permit period longer than 12 months will be required for this process to be completed. It is anticipated that a period of three additional years will be sufficient for this purpose.

As detailed above in Section 5.1.1, the existing marquee and services are located in a discreet location within the registered place, are visually unobtrusive/concealed in views and no part of the existing marquee affects the arrangement or open nature of the gardens surrounding the tennis courts. It is therefore suggested that the retention of the existing marquee, which is actively utilised as part of the reasonable use of Werribee Park for the provision of tourist/hotel services, for an additional three years is required and appropriate. A refusal of the application will significantly impact this business operation within the registered place. The intention is that the existing marquee will be replaced with a permanent structure in this location to continue this use associated with events held at Werribee Park.

6.0 Conclusion

The proposal for the retention of the existing temporary marquee and services for an additional three years will not result in an adverse impact on the heritage values of Werribee Park. No addition to the structures already in place is proposed, and the intention of this application is to allow sufficient time for a permanent solution to be developed and approved. The proposed works will support the on-going use of Werribee Park as a tourist destination with no additional or ongoing adverse impact on the assessed significance of the registered place.