

HERALD AND WEEKLY TIMES BUILDING

HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8 Exhibition Street and 74-76 Flinders Street, Melbourne

September 2026

Prepared for

BATES SMART

Prepared by

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

This report was prepared on the lands of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung 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.

The Herald and Weekly Times Building is located on the lands of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung 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.

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Project no.	Issue no.	Description	Issue date	Approval
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Cover image: Herald and Weekly Times Building, Flinders Street façade

Source: Lovell Chen, July 2026

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1.0 Introduction

This Heritage Impact Statement (HIS) has been prepared for GPT Property Management to accompany a permit application to Heritage Victoria (HV) for alterations to the existing canopy at the Exhibition Street entrance to the Herald and Weekly Times Building (Figure 1). It is respectfully acknowledged that the Herald and Weekly Times Building is located on the land of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people.

1.1 Documentation

In the preparation of this HIS, the following documentation has been referenced:

- Architectural Drawings prepared by Bates Smart, dated HVP00.000, HVP01.000, HVP03.002, HVP09.004, HVP11.201, all revision A and dated 27 July 2026
- 8 Exhibition Street Entry Canopy: Options, prepared by Bates Smart, dated 27 July 2026
- GPT Commercial Statement

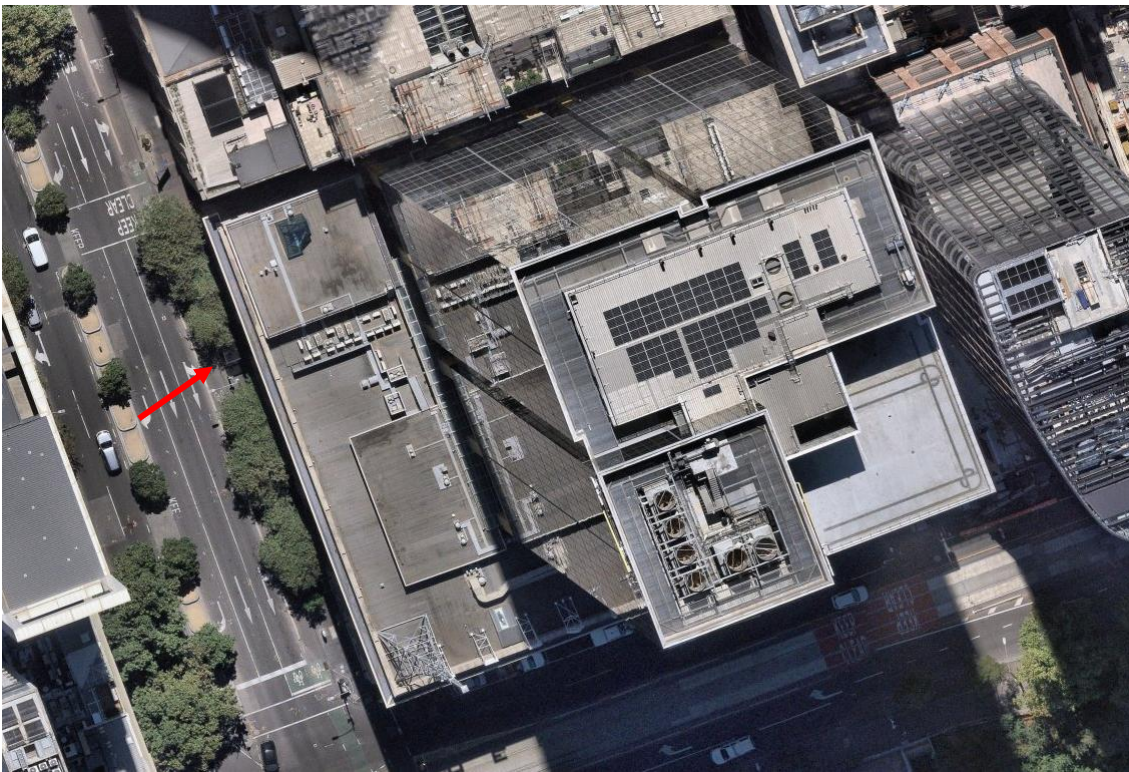


Figure 1 Aerial image showing the site of the Herald and Weekly Times Building; the red arrow indicates the location of the canopy to Exhibition Street entry
Source: Nearmap, capture date 14 February 2026

1.2 Pre-application meeting

A pre-application meeting was held with HV officers on 23 April 2026 to discuss a broader scope of works, which included the addition of a canopy to the Exhibition Street entrance of the building. In the written pre-application response, a brief summary of the file history for the property was provided, including identification of permit P29453 which was issued in 2018 for upgrade works, including a canopy to the Exhibition Street entrance of the building (being the current canopy). The advice provided by HV, with specific regard to the canopy, is as follows:

The need for improved visibility and lighting of the Exhibition entrance is acknowledged, however, the canopy should remain as slimline as practical to avoid additional bulk external to the significant façade. Effort should be made to maintain the transparent nature of the current canopy by considering options to introduce under-canopy strip lighting as an alternative to horizontal lightbox. Any reduction in the height of the metal cladding is strongly encouraged. Information as part of the previous permit P29453 revealed the current canopy design was justified and supported due to its lighter, more transparent character than the 2005 iteration. A new design that adds visual bulk to the canopy would be difficult to support. Should the current design be pursued, a permit will be required. A revised version may be suitable for approval via an exemption.

A separate permit exemption application was lodged for the balance of the proposed works and this has been granted by Heritage Victoria (P42169). Please note that the Bates Smart drawings indicate some of the works to the Exhibition Street entry which have already been considered as part of the permit exemption. These works include the upgrades to wall mounted signage, entry threshold treatment, and the surrounds to the glazed sliding doors.

2.0 Heritage Controls and listings

2.1 Victorian Heritage Register

The Herald and Weekly Times Building is included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) as place number H1147, for its historical and architectural significance. The extent of the registration is described as follows and shown in Figure 2:

AMENDMENT OF REGISTER OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Historic Building No. 1147:

Herald and Weekly Times Building, 44-74 Flinders Street, Melbourne, City of Melbourne.

Extent:

To the extent of:

1. All of the building known as the Herald & Weekly Times Building, including the two radio towers, the illuminated "Herald Sun" sign, the lamps and the poster cases, marked B-1 on Plan 605838 endorsed by the Chairperson Historic Buildings Council and held by the Director, Historic Buildings Council.
2. All of the land marked L-1 on Plan 605838 being part of the land described in Certificate of Title Volume 7547 Folio 183 endorsed by the Chairperson, Historic Buildings Council and held by the Director, Historic Buildings Council.

[Victoria Government Gazette No. G20 23 May 1996 pp.1338-1339]¹

¹ Victorian Heritage Database, The Herald and Weekly Times Building, <https://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/places/4719>, accessed 22 July 2026

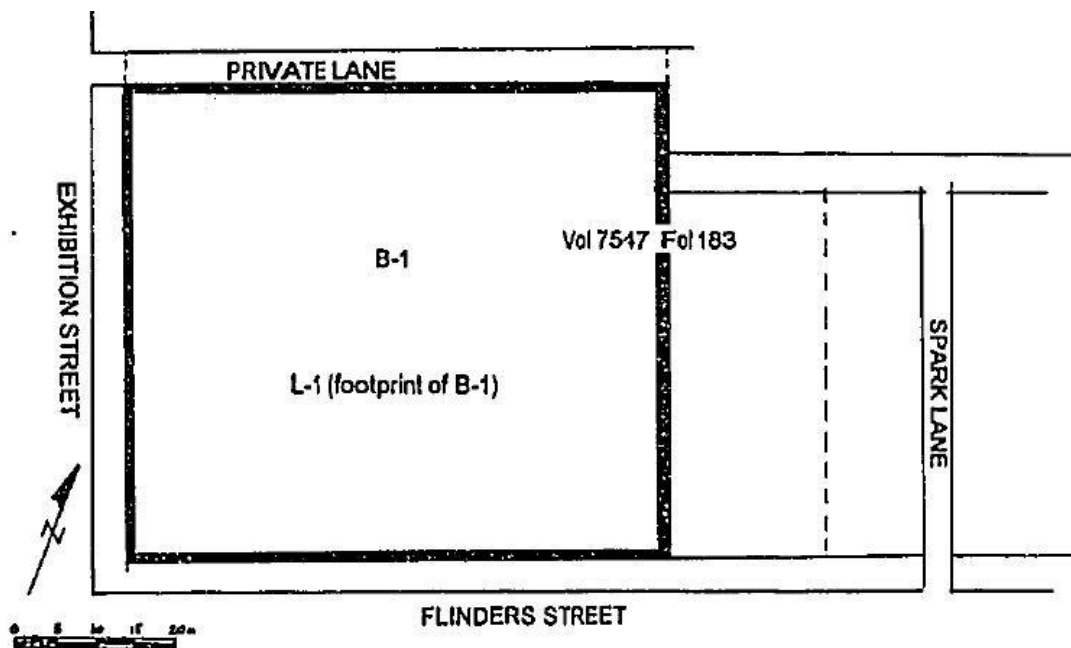


Figure 2 Plan H1147 showing the extent of registration for the Herald and Weekly Times Building (H1147)
Source: Victorian Heritage Database

The statement of significance for the place is reproduced below:

What is significant?

The Herald and Weekly Times Building was constructed in stages between 1921 and 1928 to the designs of notable architects HW & FB Tompkins. The main building dominates the corner of Flinders and Exhibition Streets. The building is a five storey, concrete encased steel frame structure with a commercial, neo-classical facade of giant order Ionic pilasters on both major facades. Notable interior elements [extant at the time of registration but since removed with Heritage Victoria approval] include panelling and vacuum tube in the foyer area, the marble and terrazzo-lined front stairwell, the foyer, doors and panelled offices along the Flinders Street side. Notable external details include the bracketed lights at the base of each pier. The building was the home of the Herald, the Sun News-Pictorial, and the Herald-Sun. Other specialist publications have included the Sporting Globe, Home Beautiful and Who's Who. Victoria's leading country newspaper, the Weekly Times, was also based here. The Herald-Sun is a descendent of Victoria's oldest newspaper, the Port-Phillip Patriot, first published in 1840. In 1930 the steel radio tower was added for the radio station 3DB which broadcast from the building.

How is it significant?

The Herald and Weekly Times Building is of historical and architectural significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Herald Building is historically significant for housing the publication of the Herald, the Sun News-Pictorial, and the Herald-Sun, which together have been the most popular Victorian newspapers since the 1920s. The building is also associated with the editorship and chairmanship of Sir Keith Murdoch, the most important newspaper figure in Australia in the inter-war period.

The Herald Building is architecturally significant for its monumentality and neo classical styling, which combined with the roof-top neon signs and the twin radio towers, conveys an image of the power and dominance of the print media in the first half of the twentieth century. It is an early example of the commercial neo classical Beaux-Arts influenced idiom in Victoria.²

2.2 Melbourne Planning Scheme

The Herald and Weekly Times Building is also individually identified as HO766 in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (HO) of the Melbourne Planning Scheme. The property is identified as a significant (VHR) place in the *Heritage Places Inventory March 2022 (City of Melbourne, August 2025)* which is an Incorporated Document to the Melbourne Planning Scheme.

The mapped extent of the HO differs from the VHR extent of registration as it applies to the south-west section of the building (being the original 1921-3 building extent) (Figure 3). Notwithstanding this, and pursuant to Clause 43.01-3 of the Melbourne Planning Scheme, no permit is required under the HO ‘to develop a heritage place which is included in the Victorian Heritage Register, other than an application to subdivide a heritage place of which all or part is included in the Victorian Heritage Register’.



Figure 3 Plan showing the extent of the HO which applies to the south-west corner of the subject site
Source: Vic Plan

² Victorian Heritage Database, The Herald and Weekly Times Building, <https://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/places/4719>, accessed 22 July 2026

3.0 Brief history and description

The Herald and Weekly Times Building is located at the north-east corner of Flinders Street and Exhibition Street; Sargood Lane extends along the northern boundary of the site. The building was constructed in two stages during the 1920s to designs prepared by HW and FB Tompkins. A substantial redevelopment of the site occurred in the early 2000s, with the construction of a multi-storey tower rising behind the retained building facades to Flinders and Exhibition streets.

The commercial tower building is currently entered via an original entrance from Flinders Street, and an entrance created during the 2000s to Exhibition Street. Both entries provide access to an internal lobby space and the central tower circulation core located at level 2.

Prior to the redevelopment of the site, the Exhibition Street entry was fitted with a roller door which appeared to provide vehicle access into the building (Figure 4). The roller door was replaced with recessed sliding glazed entry doors in the early 2000s and a canopy which formed a soffit to the recessed entry and extended over the footpath (Figure 5). This original canopy incorporated downlighting, 'Ernst & Young' signage together with the street number, and was a solid form. The entry was updated in 2020, which included a replacement of the canopy which incorporated glazing set within a steel frame, black cladding to the fascia and updated signage (current canopy; Figure 6 and Figure 7).



Figure 4 1995 view of the Exhibition Street elevation, showing the roller door to the entry prior to the redevelopment of the site
Source: Victorian Heritage Database



Figure 5 Image of the canopy which had been in place since at least 2007, showing the lighting and soffit
Source: Google Street view, March 2013



Figure 6 Current canopy and entry arrangement from Exhibition Street
Source: Lovell Chen, July 2026



Figure 7 View from the opposite side of Exhibition Street showing the current arrangement of the Exhibition Street entry and canopy
Source: Lovell Chen, July 2026

4.0 Proposed works

The proposal involves the alteration of the existing canopy to the Exhibition Street building entry.

The works include:

- Removal of existing fascia cladding to the existing canopy (the existing metal framing and glazed panels to the canopy will be retained)
- Installation of an illuminated light box to the underside of the canopy
- Installation of new black metal cladding to the canopy to a height of 600mm
- Installation of new backlit '8X' signage fixed to each of the three sides

5.0 Reason for the works

A wholesale upgrade of the building entries and lobby spaces is to be undertaken to provide enhanced circulation spaces and greater amenity for tenants and visitors to the building. The upgrade of the Exhibition Street entry, as the primary entry point to the building, will form part of this scope of works.

Following feedback from key stakeholders, issues were raised with regard to the legibility and visibility of the Exhibition Street entrance in the broader streetscape. These issues are also linked to the leasing potential of the building and the need for a clearly defined and attractive building entrance for new and future tenants. The proposed works seek to address the issues raised and enhance the visibility of the building entry, while responding in a balanced manner to the heritage context of the building.

6.0 Assessment of heritage impacts

Section 101 of the *Heritage Act 2017* sets out the considerations which must be made by the Executive Director in determining a permit application under the Act. The relevant considerations are reproduced below:

S101(2)(a) The extent to which the application, if approved, would affect the cultural heritage significance of the registered place or registered object.

S101(2)(b) The extent to which the application, if refused, would affect the reasonable or economic use of the registered place or registered object.

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

The following section provides an assessment of the proposed scope of works, together with consideration of views of the building and the entry from Exhibition Street.

Canopy works

The existing canopy, comprising its steel framed structure, glazed roofing, gutter configuration and fixing to the building is to be retained. This is a non-original element, added in 2020 (replacing an earlier canopy) with the approval of Heritage Victoria. The retention of the existing structure ensures that as part of the current scope of works there will be no physical change or impact on the heritage fabric of the building.

The proposed alterations seek removal and replacement of the existing metal fascia cladding and signage, and the installation of a lightbox beneath the canopy. As addressed in the Commercial Statement prepared by GPT, and summarised below (Section 6.2), the intent of the proposed works is to enhance the visibility and legibility of the Exhibition Street entrance when viewed from a distance. As the entry from Exhibition Street is the principal entry to the building and the commercial tower, this entry needs to be clearly distinguishable in the street to assist with wayfinding. Various options were considered by the design team and key stakeholders when developing the scheme. These options are identified, together with commentary regarding the key considerations in the Bates Smart '8 Exhibition Street Entry Canopy: Options' document. The retention of the existing canopy (Option 1), in its current arrangement, has been deemed to be unsuitable given the stakeholder feedback received regarding its limited visual presence in the streetscape. Option 2 sought to take a more commercial approach with the canopy clad in a large format LED digital display. Following heritage advice with regard to Option 2, a more subtle design was developed which maintained the illumination but incorporated cladding (800mm in height) and signage more in keeping with the existing arrangement (Option 3). Further refinement of this design, lead to the development of Option 4 which reduced the height of the canopy cladding to 600mm (current proposal). The illumination of the entry is required to demarcate the building entrance and to enhance safety, as there is currently no other illumination provided at the entrance.

The proposed installation of the lightbox to the soffit will remove the transparent presentation of the canopy, and the metal cladding to the fascia will increase the height of the canopy (in the order of 300mm). The transparent nature of the canopy has been in place since 2020, when the existing canopy replaced a solid canopy in the same location (Figure 4). While the existing glazed roof provides some visibility of the façade when standing beneath the canopy, the overall presentation of the building and its significance is not reliant on the retention of visibility through the canopy. The illumination of the lightbox will be programmable and will provide warm down lighting to the entrance only. It will have no impact on the overall presentation of the building and its existing lighting scheme.

The black metal cladding to the fascia will adopt a similar presentation to the existing canopy, albeit to an increased height. The 600mm height of the canopy will provide a greater level of visibility to the canopy, but will not obstruct views of the heritage building or its features. In the overall context of the building presentation to Exhibition Street,

the canopy is a minor element located to the northern end of the building. The increase in the height of the fascia will have no impact on the appreciation of the façade and the moulded render detailing above the canopy will remain.

The modification to the signage will remove tenant identification signage from the canopy, and reduce the signage to only building identification signage. The backlit '8X' will be visible but will be a discrete element to the fascia of the canopy. The location of the signage, adjacent to the building façade, will also ensure that it is readable from a distance and not obstructed by the street trees along the kerb. The installation of the signage to the fascia of the canopy will have no impact on the presentation or significance of the building.

It is further noted that as the proposed scope of works retains the existing structure, the proposed additions are a reversible outcome and if it is desired in future to reinstate the glazed canopy this could be achieved.

Views

The Herald and Weekly Times building has a robust and monumental presence in the streetscape which relates to its siting at the corner of Flinders and Exhibition streets (Figure 8), its height, scale and incorporation of a substantial ground level plinth, giant order Ionic pilasters and large-scale windows through the building design. The streetscape presence of the heritage building when viewed from both Flinders and Exhibition streets remains largely as it was originally completed in the late 1920s.

The canopy to the Exhibition Street entry identifies this entrance to the building at the northern end of the Exhibition Street elevation. It is understood as a contemporary element and a canopy in this location has been in place since the redevelopment of the site in the early 2000s. Its current presentation is as a minor façade element. The proposed alterations do not seek to substantially change the presentation of the canopy, but through lighting to the soffit and signage, will enhance its visibility in the context of the building façade in the streetscape context. The presence and monumentality of the existing heritage building is such that an increase in the height of the canopy in the order of 300mm will have no impact on the significance of the place. The canopy will continue to present as a contemporary, yet minor façade element, and will not compete with the presentation, detailing or design of the Exhibition Street elevation.

With the exception of the greater height to the canopy, the views along Exhibition Street from the north and south will remain unchanged and the presentation of the heritage building will be maintained. These views are provided at Figure 9 and Figure 10. In these views, the canopy will continue to present as contemporary addition and will not obstruct or conceal heritage fabric. Similarly, in front on views from the western side of Exhibition Street the canopy will present as a minor façade element in the context of the whole building elevation.

Importantly, the four original lamps to the Exhibition Street elevation, which are specifically identified as registered elements, are to be retained and will not be impacted by the works to the canopy. The lamps are physically separated from the location of the canopy and, due to this separation, the presentation of the lamps as independent façade elements, and as a detail which returns from the Flinders Street elevation, will be maintained. The canopy will also have no impact in more distant views of the lamps along Exhibition Street due to the sloping nature of the site and building form which falls toward Flinders Street.



Figure 8 View of the Herald and Weekly Times building from the south-west corner of Flinders and Exhibition streets
Source: Lovell Chen, July 2026



Figure 9 View of the existing canopy looking south along Exhibition Street from Sargood Lane
Source: Lovell Chen, July 2026



Figure 10 View of the existing canopy looking north along Exhibition Street near the corner of Flinders Street
Source: Lovell Chen, July 2026

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

A detailed Commercial Statement has been prepared by GPT which outlines the necessity for the alterations to the canopy from a reasonable use and an economic perspective. In summary, the stakeholder feedback has indicated that the entry from Exhibition Street, which is the primary entrance to the building and the commercial tower, is not clearly identifiable in the streetscape. This concern raises issues of wayfinding, safety and incompatibility with the premium nature of the commercial tower within the CBD context. Further, there are direct economic impacts which arise from the ability to lease spaces within the building.

The proposed upgrades to the canopy are considered a balanced outcome from a heritage perspective, whereby the significance of the heritage building is retained while providing greater visibility and legibility to the Exhibition Street entrance. If refused, and the existing entry treatment (or similar) is maintained, the wayfinding and safety issues raised in the Commercial Statement would not be rectified and there would be continued impact on leasing spaces within the commercial tower. The upgrade to the Exhibition Street entry will also be in keeping with the overall upgrade of the building's entries and lobby spaces which support the ongoing operation of the commercial tower.

7.0 Conclusion

The proposed alterations to the existing Exhibition Street entry canopy will have no physical impact on the heritage fabric of the Herald and Weekly Times building, and the visual impacts arising from the minor change to the height of the canopy cladding are negligible in the overall context and presence of the building. The views of the Exhibition Street building elevation will be maintained, as will the monumental form of the building as it presents at the corner of Flinders and Exhibition streets. The historical and architectural significance of the building, as it relates to the former building use, associations, design and signage/radio masts, will not be detrimentally or adversely impacted by the proposed alterations.