

FRONTIER HERITAGE PTY LTD

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HERITAGE IMPACT STATEMENT :-

Catani Gardens

Beaconsfield Parade and Jacka Boulevard, St Kilda (H1805)



(Image by Xtraordinary Events)

This Statement forms part of a permit application for:-

The temporary installation (1 December 2025 – 29 April 2026) of a Ferris Wheel on the existing lawn area adjacent to the St Kilda Yacht Club building within Catani Gardens.

Date: 30 October 2025

Reference: Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) number H1805

Prepared for: Xtraordinary Events

Prepared by: Janet Beeston

1. Introduction and Background

This Heritage Impact Statement for the temporary installation of a Ferris Wheel on the lawn area within Catani Gardens, Beaconsfield Parade, St Kilda (H1805) has been prepared by Janet Beeston, Frontier Heritage Pty Ltd.

It is noted that a Heritage Permit has been granted for the same Ferris Wheel installation on the same site for the past four years (P35824 Nov 2021-May 2022 and P37516 Nov 2022-May 2023 and P38682 23 Nov 2023– 3 May 2024 and P40327 9 Dec 2004 – 30 April 2025). Frontier Heritage Pty Ltd assisted with the application made in the last four years and are now assisting with this current application, including this Heritage Impact Statement which is essentially an updated version of the same document submitted in the previous years.

The drawings of the proposed works to the place which describe the proposed temporary installation of the Ferris Wheel, have also been prepared by Frontier Heritage Pty Ltd. The drawings, dated 25 Sept 2024 are identified as follows –

24-016 A01 Location and Site Plan

24-016 A02 Ferris Wheel Plan

2. Why is the place of cultural heritage significance?

Catani Gardens at Beaconsfield Parade and Jacka Boulevard, St Kilda are included in the Victorian Heritage Register (H1805). The place is a site of historical, aesthetic, architectural and scientific (horticultural) importance to the State of Victoria as described in the following Statement of Significance.

What is significant?

Catani Gardens comprise approximately 6 hectares of landscaped garden developed on foreshore reclaimed in the period from 1890 to c1916. The St Kilda Foreshore Trust Committee, set up in 1906 to reclaim and beautify the entire St Kilda foreshore, appointed Carlo Catani to design the Gardens as part of a larger foreshore plan extending to Point Ormond. The main landscaping and planting were completed by the late 1920s. The prime landscape feature of the Gardens is its extensive use of palms arranged in rows and grand avenues along principal axes of the Gardens, with secondary promenades of Monterey Cypress, and smaller pathways and specimen plantings (including the indigenous Coastal Tea Tree, Coastal Banksia, and She-Oak) adding interest and intimacy. Palms, lawns, and paths dominate the Gardens, with horticultural displays apparently never an important feature. The planted lava rock retaining wall on the west side supports an embanked lawn, with bays of inbuilt bench seats facing the sea. Other early park furniture includes lava rock drinking fountains. Monuments in the Gardens include the Sali Cleve Drinking Fountain (1911), Captain Cook Monument (1914), and Cenotaph (1925).

How is it significant?

The Catani Gardens are of historical, aesthetic, architectural and scientific (horticultural) importance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Catani Gardens are historically important for their association with Italian born Public Works Department engineer Carlo Catani, who achieved widespread

public recognition for his visionary schemes of public works including the Alexandra Gardens, Alexandra Avenue, and Lake Catani at Mount Buffalo. The Gardens also have historical significance as the major work in a foreshore development scheme which cast St Kilda as a fashionable seaside resort in the Continental manner. The European resort character of Catani's original design concept sets the Gardens apart from other foreshore schemes. The layout, planting and monuments evoke St Kilda's heyday as a resort for promenading, reflecting both Edwardian formality and the festivity of a seaside resort. The Gardens also have significance for pioneering a multi-government Trust purely for the purposes of foreshore beautification and leisure, paving the way for similar schemes, notably at Geelong's Eastern Beach Reserve.

Catani Gardens have scientific (horticultural) significance for their outstanding collection of palms including three intact avenues of uniform sized Phoenix canariensis, and an exceptional stand of Washingtonia robusta. The Phoenix canariensis are believed to represent the greatest concentration of palms in a Victorian public garden.

Catani Gardens are of aesthetic significance for their seaside location, both reflected and enhanced through the extensive use of palms. Catani's palm landscape has since been extended and palms have become a major theme throughout St Kilda. The combination of open lawns, pathways, vistas, specimen planting, walls, monuments, and garden furniture all contribute to the aesthetic significance.

The monuments have historical and aesthetic significance. The Cenotaph, design by G H Alsop and J C Aisbett with models by Paul Montford, memorialises those locals who served and died in World War 1 and expresses the trauma of those events. It is a notable example of the distinctive war memorial design deriving from British architect Sir Edwin Lutyens and distinguishes by high quality craftsmanship, subtle design and setting. The Sali Cleve drinking Fountain has aesthetic significance as a delightful folly and rare example of the Beaux-Arts style. It is the only known public piece in bronze by noted architectural designer and artist C A Irwin. The Captain Cook statue, a replica of the Sir John Tweed statue in Cook's birthplace Whitby, has historical significance as the major Victorian monument of Cook at that time.

3. Existing Conditions, Current Use and Constraints & Opportunities of the place :-

The Catani Gardens are in good condition and are being well maintained by the City of Port Phillip.

The current use of the gardens continues the original function which was as a public recreation reserve. It was created shortly after the completion of the reclamation of the land along the St Kilda foreshore from Fraser Street to the north through to Elwood. This was completed soon after 1911 and 'forty thousand loads of fill were used to reclaim this 16 acres (6.5 hectares) of sand hillocks and foreshore'.

Originally the gardens intended users included picnickers, excursionists and promenaders who flocked to the pleasure gardens, particularly in summer. In more recent times, the modern picnickers, excursionists and promenaders enjoy the Catani Gardens as do the many visitors to the organised sporting and recreational events that are held regularly in the gardens.

4. Proposed Works

The works will involve the installation of a Ferris Wheel and associated facilities, including a section of fence of 1.8 metre height on the circular lawn area just north of the St Kilda Yacht Club building within Catani Gardens (refer to drawings A01 and A02).

The construction of the temporary installation is scheduled for 1 December 2025 and will remain on the site until it is dismantled on 29 April 2026.

The proposed works will be subject to the requirements of the City of Port Phillip 'Heritage Conditions – Catani Gardens' events usage regulations (refer to attached 2 page document) and will include the following process and procedure for the installation and the dismantling –

INSTALLATION AND DISMANTLING OF FERRIS WHEEL

Tree Protection

The City of Port Phillip provide a tree protection zone plan; however, the proposed location of the Ferris Wheel is not near any of the trees within Catani Gardens. All vehicles for the set up of the wheel will be brought onsite through current roads and pathways and will have a spotter with each vehicle as it is brought onsite. The crane movements will not go near any of the trees in the garden nor lift over the top of any trees.

Vehicle access

All vehicles will be brought onsite with spotters to walk them from roadways, through the garden on pathways in the garden to the place of set up and back out again once set up is complete.

Ground cover/protection

Track matting will be used to protect the ground at all times under all vehicles, trucks, cranes, containers etc.

Location of materials delivered to site

All materials delivered onsite stay on the truck until it is assembled as part of the Ferris Wheel structure.

Construction of Ferris Wheel

The Ferris Wheel construction takes 4 days with one truck and trailer, 1 crane, 1 telehandler, 5 x 40 foot containers and 1 x 20 foot container. Please refer to the attached bump in and bump out schedules for the 4 day processes.

Damage repair

Any damage caused will be repaired at the cost of the Ferris Wheel operators. The Ferris Wheel has been installed in many high profile locations such as Moseley Square Glenelg, where there is a large War Memorial next to the set up site and the wharf in Darwin, where there are many restrictions and buildings in close proximity to the set up area. These locations require great care to be taken in the setup, operation and dismantling of the wheel to ensure there is no damage caused.

DURING FERRIS WHEEL OPERATIONAL PERIOD

Site maintenance

The City of Port Phillip will manage the regular maintenance of the site including lawn cutting etc as part of their regular schedules for the Catani Gardens.

Site rubbish

The Ferris Wheel operator will be responsible for maintaining the garden area as a clean and rubbish free area.

SITE RE ESTABLISHMENT

The condition of the site will be monitored by the City of Port Phillip as part of their permit process for the event. Any damage that is identified by the City of Port Phillip will be repaired, including lawn reinstatement where required, at the cost of the operator.

5. Options Considered

The location of the temporary Ferris Wheel has been determined in conjunction with the City of Port Phillip (CoPP) Events team and Council. The proposed location is the same site as was granted a Heritage Permit for the same installation for the previous three years.

The process for the selection of this site has included the following events. Initial consultation with the St Kilda Sea Baths management began in July 2020 with the intent of locating the Ferris Wheel within the carpark. Structural Engineers were engaged to design the necessary steel reinforcement on the carpark to support the wheel infrastructure. This option was presented to DELWP in February 2021 and was not supported due to the need to place two of the Ferris Wheel support blocks within native salt bush garden beds.

As a result of discussions with CoPP Events Services, two further locations within the South Beach Reserve were proposed and presented to Council. The Council rejected the location of South Beach Reserve due to Councillors being of the opinion that the reserve was too busy over summer to place a Ferris Wheel there. The applicant took the proposal back to the following Council meeting with the results of an online petition receiving over 150 signatures seeking a reverse of Council's decision to refuse the South Beach Reserve location. The Council held firm on the original refusal and requested the applicant submit another alternative location for consideration.

In September 2021, the applicant presented two further options for the location of the temporary Ferris Wheel to CoPP staff. One option was near to the Skate Park which the CoPP staff rejected for a number of reasons including public safety and the other was the lawn area within Catani Gardens which ended up being the site approved by both Council and Heritage Victoria for the temporary installation in 2021/22. This current application is for the temporary installation of the same Ferris Wheel on the same site.

It is noted that the temporary installation of the Ferris Wheel on the subject site for the past four summers has been very well received by locals and visitors to Catani Gardens over the summer of 2021/22, 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25 and there were no heritage impacts remaining following the removal of the temporary installation in May 2022, May 2023, May 2024 and May 2025.

6. Impact of the Proposal on the Cultural Heritage Significance of the Place. (s.101(2)(a) of the *Heritage Act 2017*)

There will be some physical and visual impact on the cultural heritage significance of the place due to the installation of the Ferris Wheel. Importantly, the impact will be temporary due to the installation being limited to a five month period from 1 December 2025 to 29 April 2026.

The physical impact will be minimal. The proposed location is a large open lawned area with no tree protection zones in the vicinity (refer to attached CoPP Catani Gardens Tree Protection plan). In addition, the installation will be largely supported on blocks (200 x 150mm) raising the wheel structure framing and ticket box above the lawn (refer to drawing A02). The components of the installation that will be in contact with the ground (lawn) will be limited to the support blocks, the ramp, the generator and the surround fence.

The visual impact is inevitably a result of the size of the Ferris Wheel. The wheel has a diameter of 33 metres, and it is proposed to be installed in an east west position which is essentially at right angles to the adjacent road (Beaconsfield Parade) and the foreshore.

The principal views along the radiating paths to and from the central rotunda will not be impacted upon by the wheel due to its proposed location south of the radiating paths adjacent to the two storey St Kilda Yacht Club building. In addition, the nature of the wheel and its supporting structure enables views through it.

Critically, the proposed works associated with the Ferris Wheel installation are reversible and will be reversed at the end of April 2026 when it will all be removed from the site. The physical impact will be reversed with the removal of the installation and the CoPP have stringent processes and procedures to ensure any resultant impact on lawn and landscape generally is rectified (refer to attached documentation from the City of Port Phillip). The visual impact will be totally reversed with the removal of the installation in late April 2026.

**7. Reasons Why the Proposal Should be Supported.
(s.101 (2)(b) and (f) of the *Heritage Act 2017*)**

The temporary installation of the Ferris Wheel in Catani Gardens, as per the drawings submitted with this application should be supported as a reasonable, publicly accessible temporary use of part of the significant place. There will be minimal impact on the heritage significance of the place as noted above, and the impact will be reversed when the structure is removed in late April 2026.

8. Conclusion

The works proposed to Catani Gardens in relation to the installation of a Ferris Wheel for 5 months over the 2025/26 summer will have minimal and temporary impact on the place.

At the same time, the proposed works will encourage public use of the Catani Gardens generally. The Ferris Wheel cabins will enable an appreciation of the heritage context of the place which will be viewed from 33 metres above enabling an overall appreciation of the gardens.

The proposed location of the Ferris Wheel has been determined in close consultation with the City of Port Phillip. Stringent rules and regulations that protect the heritage values of the place are enforced by the CoPP through the Public Event Agreement process that will be required for this project.

It is recommended that a Heritage Permit be granted for the temporary installation of a Ferris Wheel and associated infrastructure within Catani Gardens as documented.

End of report