

Heritage Impact Statement  
For  
Alterations and Additions to  
Football Club Rooms  
Central Park, 10-18 Main Street, Stawell  
VHR No. 2284



May 2023

Prepared for the Shire of Northern Grampians

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**This Heritage Impact Statement forms part of a permit application for:**

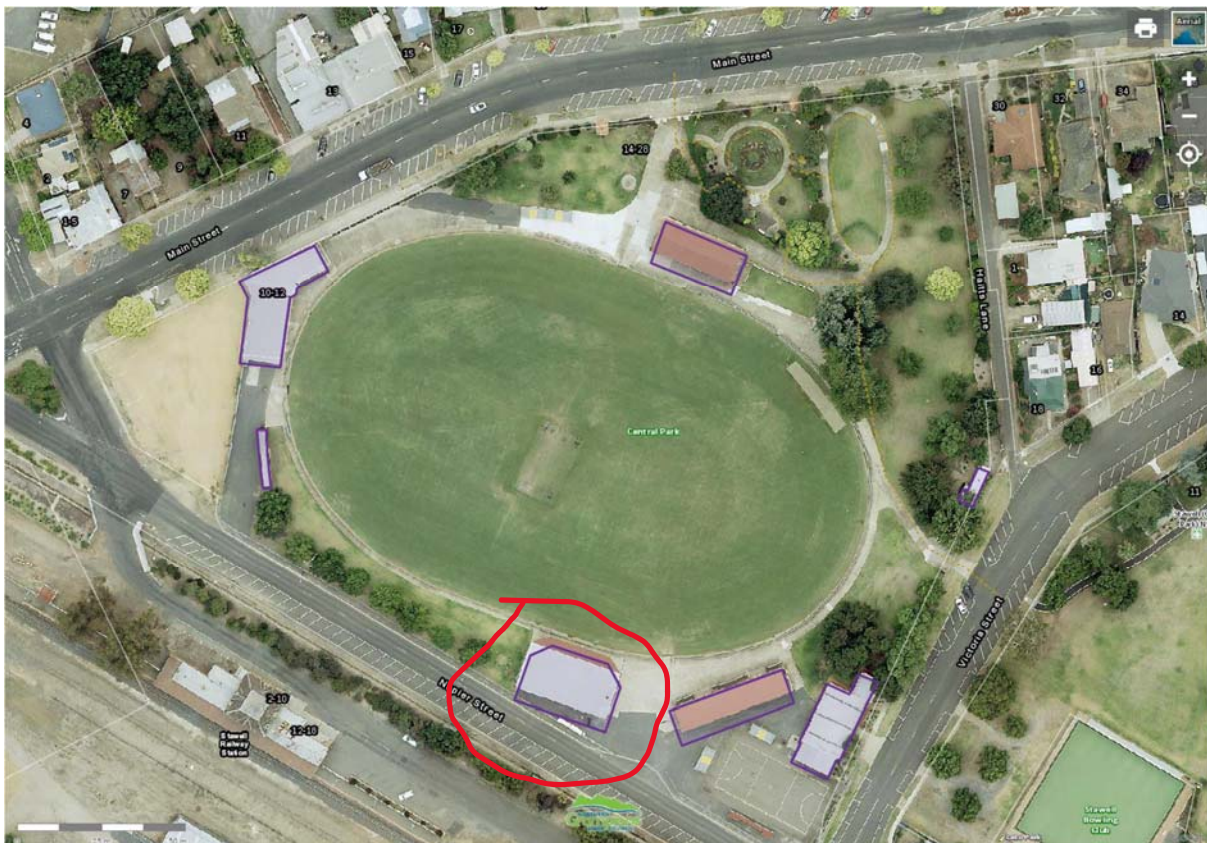
Alteration and Addition to the Football Club Room as set out in the documentation by Davidson Architecture.

Pre-application meeting number: P38064 Summary of pre-application feedback from Heritage Victoria

An application was made for a preapplication meeting. Written advice from Ms Anne Gove was received. A copy is attached. A copy of the response from the architect is also attached. A copy of a further advice from Ms Gove is also attached.

**Address and location description:**

Central Park is located at 10-18 Main Street Stawell and has frontages to Victoria Street, Napier Street and Haits Lane. The whole site is included within the Registered Place but the Football Club rooms building is not included as a significant component. The Football Club Rooms building is on the south side of the land as shown in the aerial photograph below.



Location of Football Club Rooms Building circled in red.

**Significance of the place**

Central Park at Stawell is located near the centre of Stawell and comprises a sports oval, a timber grandstand and other buildings and a number of memorials, set amidst ornamental gardens and lawns. The site was used from the 1860s by the local gold miners as a cricket ground and later as a football ground but is best known as the site of the Stawell Gift, Australia's oldest, richest and most prestigious short-distance footrace. The Stawell Athletics

Club was formed in 1877 and held its first meeting on Easter Saturday 1878 at the botanical reserve.

By 1884 the Gift had become an international event, with runners from around Australia competing against those from Europe and America. In 1898 the Easter meeting was held for the first time at Central Park, where a new timber grandstand was built, designed by the Melbourne architects Kempson & Conolly. The Memorial Gates, made by the local foundry of Kay & Company, were added in 1903, in memory of the fifty-seven Stawell men who volunteered to serve in the Boer War. The Stawell Gift meeting has been held at Central Park every Easter since 1899, apart from the war years of 1942-5. It has grown to a three-day event, culminating in the Stawell Gift race, a handicap race now (since 1973) of 120 metres, with a first prize in 2011 of \$40,000.

Central Park is a reserve of about 7 hectares with views south towards the Grampians. It comprises a grassed sports ground, elaborate cast iron memorial entrance gates supported by masonry pillars, two brick ticket offices, an old timber grandstand and two other newer brick stands, several memorials to past runners and large open areas, including ornamental gardens and lawns. The central feature is the sports oval, around which is a diverse range of mature and semi-mature trees, including both native and exotic species. Between the grandstand and Main Street is a small ornamental rose garden, enclosed by a thick hedge and with a memorial sundial and stone seat.

#### **How is it significant?**

Central Park at Stawell is of historical, architectural and social significance to the state of Victoria.

#### **Why is it significant?**

Central Park is historically significant for its long association with the Stawell Gift, Australia's oldest, richest and most prestigious short-distance footrace, which has been held at Stawell every Easter since 1878 (apart from the war years of 1942-45), and at Central Park since 1898. The Gift reflects the importance of athletics events as a recreational activity in the nineteenth century, and the continuing popularity of foot racing as a professional sporting event since then. Central Park is associated with the gold mining origins of the town of Stawell, having been used by the miners as a cricket ground as early as the 1860s, and the origin of the Gift lies in the running races held by the Stawell Miners' Association from 1873. Central Park is of social significance as the site of the running of the Stawell Gift, one of Australia's greatest sporting events.

The significance of the place is embodied in the continuing use as the home of the Stawell Gift foot race and in the oval, trees, early grandstand, memorial gates and Main Street ticket boxes.

#### **Why are the Works Required?**

The works are being undertaken to meet gender equity requirements and accessibility requirements.

**Existing condition of the place.**

The Football Club rooms were designed and built by Mr Reg. Smith of Stawell in 1972 and opened in 1973.<sup>1</sup>

The existing building is not included in the Heritage Victoria Registered plan of significant buildings and is not referred to in the statement of significance. The building is a valued community asset for the Stawell Football Club and is regularly used throughout the year. The building is also used during the Stawell Gift for functions.

The building is a two storey structure of light brown face brickwork with the walls marked by brick pilasters. The roof is a long skillion with an asymmetrical gable over the north elevation clad in metal decking. The north section in Manor Red corrugated roofing. The cantilevered upper floor on the north elevation is clad corrugated metal with a ribbon of windows overlooking the oval. The south elevation facing Napier Street has been subject to the accretion of services. There is some evidence of earlier changes to openings on the north and east elevation. There is an external metal fire escape on the west elevation.

**Current use of the place.**

The place is used as a public sports ground hosting cricket, football and netball matches and the annual Stawell Gift Foot race. The Stawell Football Club Change Rooms is the home of the Stawell Football and Netball Club.

**Constraints and opportunities resulting from the significance of the place.**

Central Park is constrained by the limited areas for development due to the significant buildings and trees within the place. The opportunity is to upgrade the existing non-significant building to ensure the continuing use as a cricket, football and netball centre for the City of Stawell, the Shire and Region as a whole. The facilities are also used to support the annual Stawell Gift.

**Proposal**

The proposed works are as detailed on the documents prepared by Davidson Architecture Version H4.

The proposal is to undertake careful alteration and additions of the existing building to provide for gender equity in the change rooms and access for all to the building in line with current best practice.

The proposed works generally retain the form and fabric of the existing building with some alterations to fenestration and opening. The infilling of existing openings to be undertaken on the external facades with retrieved bricks from the new openings and with matching mortar joints.

The proposed addition is on the south side of the building away from the Oval. It is a minor addition in scale with building. This addition is set off from the existing building to provide a clear demarcation between old and new work. The addition provides for a lift shaft for access to the first floor, lift foyer, storage and plant room. The addition is clearly marked as an extension by the break between the two sections and the use of new materials.

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<sup>1</sup> Personal comment to Mr John Kindred from Mr Reg Smith April 2023

The south façade is proposed as a sporting mural. The proposal as shown is for the placement of the mural only as the content of the art has yet to be commissioned. This has been a community driven idea that has been proposed for Central Park in other locations such as the east wall of the Hall of Fame on adjacent land (outside the Heritage Victoria Registered area) with the mural clearly visible from Central Park. The current proposed location is such that the mural is not visible from within Central Park and therefore has no visual effect on the heritage significance of the place. The mural will be visible from Napier Street but this will have little visual impact on the heritage significance of the place as the existing building obscures views into the significant place. The existing south façade of the building is not enhanced by the existing services along this wall. The pre application comments regarding the mural has resulted in the end walls being left blank and the mural having a border.

There will be limited external lighting to illuminate the mural as shown in attached night rendering and electrical plan. The lighting of the mural will not impact on the oval or significant structures in Central Park.

### **Conclusion**

It is my opinion that the proposed works will have little physical or visual impact on the significance of Central Park. The existing non-significant building will appear similar in form and materials from the main views from within the Park. The changes will be to openings and not to the overall form when viewed from the north. The addition to the rear is clearly defined as introduced work and is screened from the views to the north by the retained section of the building. The mural on the south wall will not be seen from the main views from the north and although visually prominent from the south, Napier Street, will not impact on views into Central Park any further than the existing south elevation of the Stawell Football Club Change Rooms building.

Wendy Jacobs  
3 May 2023