

Queen Victoria Market, 65-159 Victoria Street Melbourne, (VHR H0734)

Q&As

December 2023

What is the Queen Victoria Market?

The Queen Victoria Market (QVM) is included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR H0734) and is significant as one of the great nineteenth century markets of Victoria. It is remarkably intact and has been in continual use as a retail market since the 1870s.

QVM is also significant as the site of Melbourne's first official cemetery which was in use from 1837. It closed in 1917 and the site still contains an estimated 6,500 to 9,000 burials.

What has happened?

On 26 June 2023, Heritage Victoria received a permit application for works at QVM consisting of conservation and adaptive re-use of the Franklin Street Stores, replacement of the carpark with a park and the projection of two towers into the airspace above the Franklin Street Stores.

These works are part of a proposal to develop the land south of the Queen Victoria Market. The proposal is known as Gurrowa Place and also includes buildings which are not on registered land.

On 20 December 2023, the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria approved the application on the grounds that:

- The towers are the most impactful part of the proposed development, but they are largely outside the extent of registration and cannot be considered under the *Heritage Act 2017*. Tower Three and the Queens Corner Building are wholly outside the extent of registration and Towers One and Two partially cantilever into the airspace above the Franklin Street Stores canopy. The basement of Towers One and Two is also partially within the extent of registration.
- The cantilever of Towers One and Two over the Franklin Street Stores canopy will have a limited impact on the cultural heritage significance of QVM when considered in the context of the place in its entirety.
- The proposed conservation works to the Franklin Street Stores are a positive heritage outcome and will remove unsympathetic accretions, reconstruct removed elements and return the Stores to an earlier and more appropriate appearance.
- Replacement of the existing carpark with public open space (Market Square) represents the former use of the place as a cemetery, is more respectful of the estimated 6,500 to 9,000 burials still remaining at the place and will be carried out in a way which will not substantially disturb the subsurface area.

What happens next?

The owner or a person with a real and substantial interest in the place may request a review of the Executive Director's determination to issue the permit, or any conditions of the permit. A request for a review must be made to the Heritage Council of Victoria within 60 days of the refusal of the application.