

Application for exclusion



Before you start

Please call Heritage Victoria to discuss your application prior to its lodgement

Telephone: (03) 7022 6390

Email: heritage.registrations@transport.vic.gov.au

What does exclusion from the Victorian Heritage Register mean?

Exclusion from the Victorian Heritage Register will result in a 5-year period during which Heritage Victoria will be unable to accept nominations for the place or object for the Victorian Heritage Register. For more information refer to the Heritage Victoria website.

Who can apply for an exclusion?

Exclusions can only be applied for by a government asset manager, a government Department Head, a public authority, or an Administrative Office Head when the application is in facilitation of a major development which costs at least \$5 million.

If you don't know whether you are able to make this application, please contact us on the above details.

Who can complete this form?

This form must be completed a person with an appropriate level of knowledge and experience in the identification and assessment of places, objects, or land in order to determine heritage significance or value, being a person with a relevant tertiary qualification and/or extensive relevant experience.

What is the fee for applying?

An application for exclusion requires a fee payment. For all fee details visit [Heritage Victorias's website](#)

Your details

Please confirm or update your details before proceeding.

First name

■■■■■

Last name

■■■■■

Business or organisation name

Lovell Chen

Position title

Heritage consultant

Contact number

■■■■■

Please see the *Privacy collection statement* for information on how the details you provide will be used.

Contact details

Who is the applicant for this Exclusion Determination? The applicant is a government asset manager or public authority

Please provide the contact details for the person acting on behalf of the public authority / government asset manager for this application below.

Details for the government asset manager or public authority

**Name of *Minister/*entity
/*public authority** Homes Victoria

***ABN/*ACN/*ARBN** 88139482080

Position title Chief Development Officer, Housing Development

First name [REDACTED]

Last name [REDACTED]

Email [REDACTED]

Contact number [REDACTED]

Postal address 50 Lonsdale Street, GPO Box 4057

Suburb Melbourne

State Victoria

Postcode 3001

Country Australia

I am also the owner of this place Yes

Do you have other relevant contact details you want to provide us Yes

The works involve common property No

Additional Contact details

First name	
Last name	
Email	

Additional Contact details

First name	
Last name	
Email	

Additional Contact details

First name	
Last name	
Email	

Additional Contact details

First name	
Last name	
Email	

Pre-application details

Have you had a pre-application discussion with Heritage Victoria in relation to this application?

No

Major development

Provide a brief description of the major development to which the application relates

Proposed demolition of tower at 33 Alfred Street, North Melbourne and redevelopment of the site by Homes Victoria.

Estimated cost of the major development (\$)

Failed to convert value: 660000000000

Impact of major development on place or object The proposal includes the demolition of the tower at 33 Alfred Street, North Melbourne

Details of the place or object

Type Place

Place or object details

Place or object name Public housing tower at 33 Alfred Street, North Melbourne.

Address 33 Alfred Street , North Melbourne.

Responsible Authority MELBOURNE CITY
MINISTER FOR PLANNING

Victorian Heritage Inventory number (if any)

National Trust reference number (if known) N/A

Has the place or object previously been identified in a heritage study? If yes please give details. The housing commission tower at 33 Alfred Street has not been assessed or identified in a heritage study.

Does this place have a local Heritage Overlay (HO) within a planning scheme? No

Briefly describe the extent of the place and what it includes The extent of the place includes the tower at 33 Alfred Street North Melbourne and all of the land shown as lots 1, 2, 3, 4 , 5, 6, 7, 8, 15, 16 and 17 shown on the extent diagram.

If you are including part of a land parcel, identify that part All of the land shown as lots 1, 2, 3, 4 , 5, 6, 7, 8, 15, 16 and 17 shown on the extent diagram and copy plan TP845338K for Volume 08879 Folio 347.

Is the proposed major development to be carried out entirely on Crown land? No

Heritage Council criteria

Assessment of State-level significance

Include reasons why the place or object should not be included in the Heritage Register. These must be reasons based on the assessment criteria published by the Heritage Council. This means you must provide reasons why the place or object does not meet the threshold of State-level cultural heritage significance

in relation to each of the criteria selected. For further information on the Heritage Council criteria and thresholds please refer to [their guidance](#).

CRITERION A See attached report.

CRITERION B See attached report.

CRITERION C See attached report.

CRITERION D See attached report.

CRITERION E See attached report.

CRITERION F See attached report.

CRITERION G See attached report.

CRITERION H See attached report.

Other Information

Information in this section should demonstrate why the criteria selected for assessment are the relevant criteria. It should provide the evidence that supports the assessments. Information should be based on robust research and analysis. Exclusion determinations can be overturned if significant new information is identified.

Physical description See attached report.

History of the place or object See attached report.

Comparative analysis See attached report.

You can view recent Heritage Council decisions through [Austlii](#).

Aboriginal cultural heritage values (where known)

Who are the traditional Aboriginal owners of this place or object? Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation

Does this place or object have Aboriginal cultural heritage values in addition to non-Aboriginal cultural heritage values (shared values)? N/A.

Note: If the place or object is of cultural heritage significance only on the grounds of its association with Aboriginal tradition, Aboriginal traditional use, or Aboriginal archaeology, it may be appropriate for registration in the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register. Please contact [First Peoples – State Relations](#)

Key sources See attached report.

Condition of the place or object

Condition Good

Is there any damage to the fabric (the materials from which the place or object is made)? No

Intactness and integrity

How much of the original form or appearance remains? See attached report.

What alterations are present and why was the place or object altered? See attached report.

Have the changes or alterations affected the heritage value of the place or object? See attached report.

Supporting documents

You must provide all required documents before submitting your application

Certificate of Title Copy of plan_VOLUME 08879 FOLIO 347.PDF
Copy of title_VOLUME 08879 FOLIO 347.PDF

Cost of works Attachment 5 Signed Applicant Statement - XD Application 33 Alfred Street.pdf

Photographs 33 Alfred St_Exclusion Determination Citation.pdf

Extent Diagram Aerial Plans_33 Alfred Street North Melbourne.jpg
Extent Diagram_33 Alfred Street.tif

Additional Information Attachment 4 Letter of consent - XD Application - 33 Alfred Street.
pdf
33 Alfred St_Exclusion Determination Citation.pdf

Fee calculation

Heritage fees are determined in accordance with the Heritage Regulations 2017.

Details of fees are listed on the [Heritage Victoria website](#).

Fee to be paid: \$7838.40

Details of the fee calculation Application for Exclusion from the Victorian Heritage Register Fee for lodging an application for Exclusion from the Victorian Heritage Register. Regulation: 6D

Fee payment

Payment method EFT

Attention to details

BSB



Account and reference number



EFT confirmation I confirm that the fee has been paid via EFT

Proof of payment



Declarations & privacy

Declarations

I state that the information I have given on this form is correct to the best of my knowledge.

I declare that the application has been made to facilitate the development or delivery of a project where the cost of the project is no less than \$5 million.

Privacy statement

Heritage Victoria is a branch of the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP). Heritage Victoria is committed to protecting personal information provided by you in accordance with the principles of the Victorian privacy laws. The information you provide, and anything provided in relation to this process or any subsequent decision pertaining to the site card, will be used for the following purposes:

- correspond with you about your application
- to inform Heritage Victoria in making a recommendation or a decision as to the matter.
- the material may be made available to the public through a public notice process as required under the Heritage Act 2017, to the Heritage Council of Victoria for use in a public hearing, or to the Minister for Planning in making a determination.
- to provide information about the site card, including the initial application and subsequent regulation of that site card, where requested by successive owners of the property or consultants engaged in relation to the property

Your contact details may be used by DTP or its contracted service providers under confidentiality agreements to survey you about your experience with DTP.

The information you provide may be made available to:

- any person who may wish to inspect your proposal until the process is concluded. In this instance, the 'process' includes not only the current site card application but also any further aspects of Heritage Victoria regulation under this site card process.
- relevant officers in DTP, other Government agencies or Ministers directly involved in the heritage process.

If all requested information is not received, DTP is unable to process your request.

You may access the information you have provided to DTP by contacting heritage.victoria@transport.vic.gov.au

NO. 33 ALFRED STREET, NORTH MELBOURNE HOUSING SITE (HOTHAM ESTATE, STAGE 2)



DATE INSPECTED	13 August & 17 October 2024	CURRENT HERITAGE CONTROLS	N/A
DATE OF COMPLETION	May 1968	TOWER TYPOLOGY	'Y' (or 'star') plan block
LEVELS	12 storeys	CONSTRUCTION	Concrete House Project (CHP) large panel system
DESIGNER/ARCHITECT	Chief Architect's Branch, Housing Commission of Victoria	BUILDER	Housing Commission of Victoria, construction division, CHP
ENGINEER	W P Brown & Associates	COUNTRY	Wurundjeri



Figure 1 View of the 'Y' plan tower from Alfred Street



Figure 2 View from Boundary Road



Figure 3 The entrance faces Alfred Street: note modern canopy and infilling of ground level undercroft



Figure 4 Oblique aerial view of the North Melbourne housing site, looking north (February 2024): 33 Alfred Street indicated
Source: Nearmap



Figure 5 Living room in 12th level apartment



Figure 6 Lift lobby

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

Housing Commission of Victoria high-rise tower programme

The provision of public housing has been the responsibility of the Victorian state government since the passage of the *Housing Act* (Victoria) in November 1937. The Act, which followed recommendations made by the Slum Reclamation Board, established the Housing Commission of Victoria (HCV) which was tasked with demolishing slums (areas of concentrated poverty and insanitary housing), determining standards for construction, providing accommodation for people of limited means and undertaking town planning. A panel of architects was appointed to oversee the HCV in 1939.¹

Early types of HCV housing included the Experimental Concrete Houses, Port Melbourne (1939, VHR H1863, Figure 7) and low-rise family housing estates (including Kitchener Street, West Brunswick, 1939-40, for example). This was followed by the escalation of 'slum reclamation' from the mid-1950s, whereby large areas of housing deemed to be sub-standard were compulsorily acquired, demolished and redeveloped. These new estates, commencing with the Molesworth Estate, North Melbourne from 1948 (since redeveloped), comprised blocks of flats and, subsequently, blocks of 'walk-ups' and maisonettes, which were to become prevalent at the Commission's inner urban housing sites, including at Carlton, Collingwood, Fitzroy, Kensington, Flemington, North Melbourne, Richmond and Prahran. The HCV also delivered large scale housing estates in the outer suburbs and regional areas.



Figure 7 'Experimental Concrete Housing', Fishermans Bend, 1939 (VHR H1863)
Source: Heritage Victoria, Victorian Heritage Database

¹ Renate Howe, 'Reform and Social Responsibility: the establishment of the housing commission', in Renate Howe, ed., *New Houses for Old: Fifty Years of Public Housing in Victoria 1938-1988*, Ministry of Housing and Construction, Melbourne, 1988, p. 38.

The tower form was a distinct phase in the provision of public housing by the HCV across the metropolitan area from the early 1960s – the programme was delivered between 1962 and 1975. The construction of towers, generally on land cleared of ‘slums’, signalled a shift in approach, drawing on international precedents of the mid-twentieth century. The introduction of high-rise developments responded to a need for greater efficiencies, and to facilitate provision of open space across the estates while retaining density.² It was grounded, philosophically, in an acceptance of modernism as a force for social progress and urban renewal.

Melbourne’s high-rise towers (with four exceptions³) apply the system of precast concrete panels developed by the Commission from the mid-1940s; the ‘Concrete House Project’ (CHP) was established by the Commission at a former Commonwealth munitions factory at Holmesglen. Precast and prestressed load bearing concrete panels were produced in huge volumes, initially for single-storey houses (5,000 were complete by 1953).

A ‘Development Section’ was formed at the CHP factory in 1954. The Commission then engaged consultant structural engineer W P Brown and Melbourne University Professor of Civil Engineering, A J Francis, to examine the feasibility of extending the system to taller forms. They reported back that up to ten storeys was feasible with the existing panel thickness and reinforcement.⁴ During the 1950s and early-1960s a series of prototypes was developed, including two, three, four and eight-level walk-up blocks of flats. The units were stacked vertically, with walls placed directly over the walls of the floor below, carrying loads directly to the ground and enabling use of light weight floor panels.

The HCV’s programme of high-rise towers commenced with ‘Emerald Hill Court’, South Melbourne in 1962 – the 16-storey tower was a facsimile of a British precedent, and did not apply the Commission’s structural system. The tower was co-located with four-storey walk-ups constructed of HCV’s Large Panel System (LPS), and public open space. Other mixed estates, where a single tower was co-located with walk-ups, included the Hotham Estate Stage 1, North Melbourne (1963), the Reeves Street development, Carlton (1965-66) and ‘Inkerman Heights’ on Inkerman Street, St Kilda (1966).

The towers, almost all of which are of 12 or 20-storeys, adopted a number of plan forms – referred to colloquially as ‘T’, ‘Z’, ‘Y’, ‘E’ etc blocks. This variety enabled the delivery of units of varied size, consistent with different life stages. Of the 47 towers built, 24 were ‘Z’ blocks.

PLACE HISTORY

In December 1963, the HCV announced plans for 1,804 new high-rise flats to be located at four of its housing sites. These were an extension to the Debneys Park Estate, Flemington⁵; an extension to the Holland Estate, Kensington; the High Street Estate, Carlton; and the second stage of the Boundary Road (Hotham) estate in North Melbourne. The shift from mixed estates was prompted, in part, by reports of difficulties experienced by residents in the Commission’s four-storey walk-ups.⁶

Two of the four estates announced in December 1963. the High Street Estate, Carlton and the Hotham Estate Extension, North Melbourne, included three tower types, to cater for different life stages. The 12-storey star or ‘Y’-

² *Home Truths*, Winter 1963, p. 4.

³ The exceptions are: 200 Dorcas Street, North Melbourne (Emerald Hill Court); 76 Canning Street, North Melbourne (Hotham Estate Stage 1); and the two red brick towers at 141 Nicholson and 20 Elgin street, Carlton.

⁴ Peter Mills, *Refabricating the Towers*: PhD thesis, Monash University, December 2010, pp.106-107.

⁵ The housing site as then referred to as the Debney Meadows estate.

⁶ Peter Mills, *Refabricating the Towers*: PhD thesis, Monash University, December 2010, p. 102; *Home Truths*, Summer 1964, p.1

blocks' of three-bedroom flats would cater for large families with small children, replacing the stilted four-storey walk-ups at the mixed estates.

HCV estates in North Melbourne

North Melbourne was an early focus for Commission's slum clearance activities, particularly the central and western parts of the suburb. The Molesworth Estate, comprising the block bounded by Abbotsford, Haines, Curzon and Molesworth streets, was redeveloped by the Commission with two or three-storey blocks of flats in the mid-late 1940s.⁷ A smaller estate was developed by the HCV in 1955; the block bounded by Lothian, Arden, O'Shanassy and Abbotsford streets.⁸ This was followed by a mixed estate that included the second high-rise completed by the Commission (the tower at 76 Canning Street). This mixed estate – aka Hotham Estate Stage 1 – was on a reclamation area that had been declared in 1958. Plans prepared by mid-1960 show the walk-up blocks arranged informally around the site, accompanied by two 14-storey 'Y' blocks. This was superseded by a scheme featuring a 16-storey slab block with balcony access to seven two-bedroom flats per floor, and without private balconies. It was this scheme that was delivered, albeit at 20 storeys.

The 'Y' block tower at 33 Alfred Street, North Melbourne was constructed in 1967-68, in conjunction with two other towers at the Hotham Estate Stage 2 (sometimes referred to as the Boundary Road extension of the existing Hotham Estate). The 'Y' block (Type 65) derived from same panel set used in the first 'Z' blocks at the Debney Park Estate (12 Holland Court, Figure 8), the Reeves Street Estate, Carlton and all subsequent Large Panel System tower iterations.

Three wings of balcony-accessed three-bedroom flats radiated from a central lift core, with fire stairs at the end of each wing. To compensate for the sloping site, an additional floor was built on the south side. The 12 and 13-level building included 139 three-bedroom flats, as well as 13 two-bedroom flats and a laundry on each floor.

The 'Y' blocks had the largest floor area of any of the Commission's towers. As well as being constructed of the HCV's standardised panels and details, they included the same projecting living-room bays, albeit with an additional bedroom bay creating three transverse-wall bays between each protruding living room bay. The lifts of the 'Y' blocks stopped at every floor, as opposed to the skip-floor lifts for the 'Z' blocks.

Battery casting

One difference from the panel system applied to the 'Y' blocks lay in the method of manufacture of the panels. Concrete handling and vibrating gear for battery casting had been installed at the Concrete Houses Project factory at Holmesglen by September 1965. The system was first trialled for the block of lone-person flats at Inkerman Street, St Kilda, with the sets of vertical batteries made of concrete rather than steel, a strategy to save costs on small runs of panels.

⁷ Renate Howe, *New Houses for Old: 50 years of public housing in Victoria 1938-1988*, Ministry of Housing & Construction, Melbourne, 1988, p. 42; *Herald*, 8 March 1948, p. 3.

⁸ Housing Commission of Victoria, *Annual Report*, 1955-56, p. 41.



Figure 8 View of walk-ups and completed 12 Holland Court tower, 1965
Source: Housing Commission of Victoria, *Annual Report*, 1964-65

Battery casting was also undertaken outside the factory. HCV Director Bradley had been impressed by on-site battery casting systems he had observed during a study tour of LPS used in Europe⁹, particularly the system developed by the British Building Research Station. On-site casting of load bearing wall and floor panels in vertical batteries allowed for lighter and thinner panels; panels manufactured on site only had to be craned once. It was anticipated that the flat casting trays at the factory would still be required for production of external walls with aggregate finish and for thinner internal walls. Use of vertical batteries was planned for upcoming Lone Person 'T' blocks and 'Y' blocks.¹⁰

By October 1966, the battery-casting system had been used both in the factory and in the field, presumably including the 'Y' blocks,¹¹ and in the same year was reported that the CHP factory was able to produce panels at a rate faster than slum land could be reclaimed.¹²

The details of continued use of the battery casting system and where it was applied are not well documented in the HCV files examined to date, but it appears that battery casting continued to be used at least for the 'Y' blocks and for the various configurations of Lone Person blocks. While of interest in terms of the history of the CHP operations, the battery casting system did not result in any obvious differences in these towers from those where all the panels were cast flat in the factory.

No 33 Alfred Street, North Melbourne

No. 33 Alfred Street was part of the Hotham Estate Stage 2, which comprised the block bounded by Alfred, Sutton and Melrose streets and Boundary Road. Planning for the estate extension had commenced in 1962, with a

⁹ HCV commissioners undertook international study tours to inspect Large Panel Systems in 1958 and 1960.

¹⁰ Peter Mills, *Refabricating the Towers: The genesis of the Victorian Housing Commission's high-rise estates to 1969*, PhD thesis, Monash University, December 2010, pp.291-292; VPRS1808/P0 Unit 65 File E15 Economies of High Rise Flat Construction.

¹¹ The Commission directed that the CHP report on the economics of this form of casting. Extract of Minutes of Commission mtg No.1799 5/10/66, VPRS1808/P0 Unit 65 File E15 Economies of High Rise Flat Construction.

¹² Housing Commission of Victoria, *Annual Report*, 1964-65 pp.9 & 12; Housing Commission of Victoria, *Annual Report*, 1965-66, p. 13.

recommendation to rezone the block as residential.¹³ The land had been acquired by the mid-1960s, and in mid-1964, a proposal for three different tower types at the estate had been made by the Chief Architect's Branch, including the 12-storey 'Y' block (see 1968 site plan at Figure 9.¹⁴ Preparation for building works at the Hotham Estate Stage 2 site commenced with the HCV's acceptance of a tender for the substructure of the 20-storey 'Z' block (12 Sutton Street) in December 1965.¹⁵ This was followed by tenders for the substructure of the 12-storey 'Y' block (33 Alfred Street), accepted in June 1966,¹⁶ and for the 'Z' block superstructure, accepted in October 1966.¹⁷ The block can be seen at Figure 11 as nearing completion.¹⁸

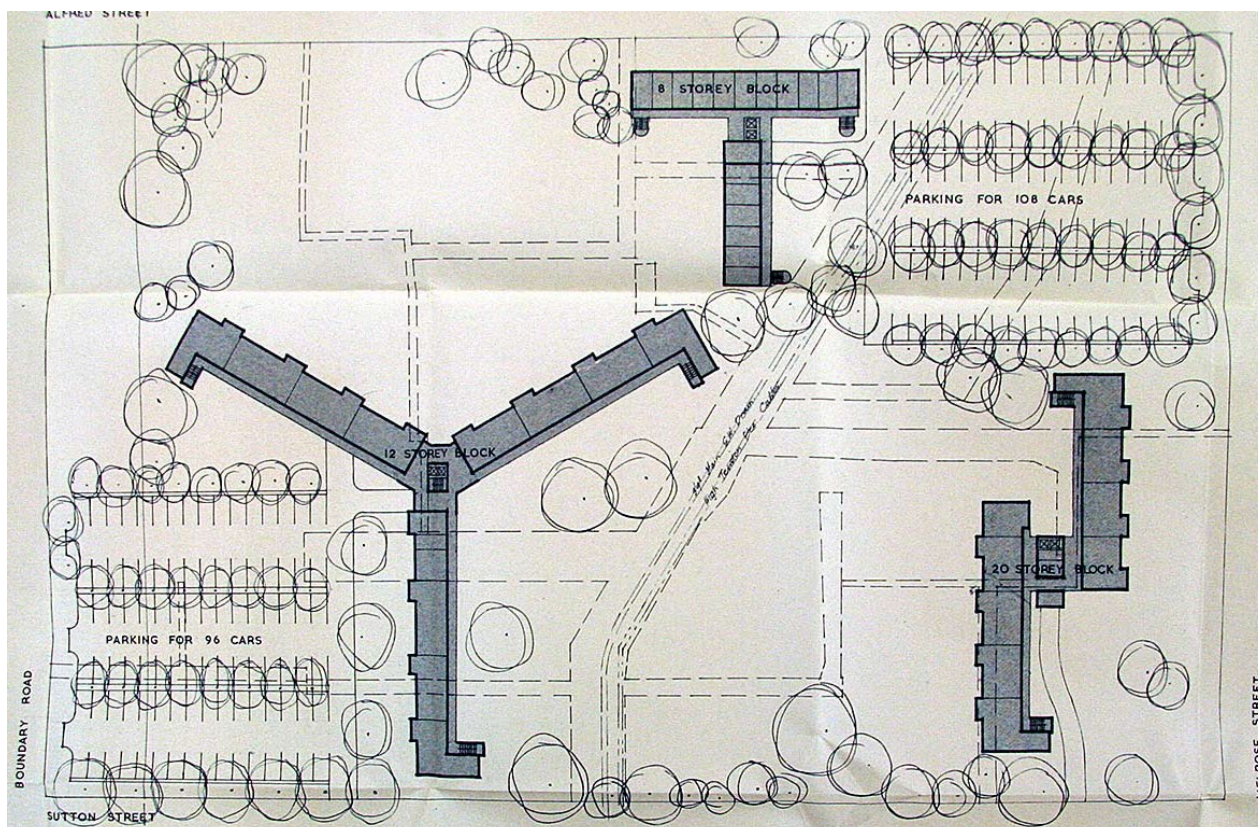


Figure 9 Planned arrangement of tower accommodation at Hotham Estate Stage 2, 1968: the as-built locations of the eight and 20 storey blocks were amended from this plan
Source: N18, North Melbourne Boundary Road, VPRS 1808/P0, 119, Public Record Office Victoria

- 13 Property Control Officer, 14 March 1962, Unit 19 File N18 North Melbourne Boundary Road no. 2 Hotham Estate 3/1962-5/1967, VPRS 1808/P0 Unit 19, Public Record Office Victoria.
- 14 Memo, Chief Architect, 24 June 1964, Unit 19 File N18 North Melbourne Boundary Road no. 2 Hotham Estate 3/1962-5/1967, VPRS 1808/P0 Unit 19, Public Record Office Victoria.
- 15 CAB to Messrs W.P. Brown & Ass., 22 December 1965, File N18 North Melbourne Boundary Road no. 2 Hotham Estate 3/1962-5/1967, VPRS 1808/P0 Unit 19, Public Record Office Victoria.
- 16 CAB to Messrs W.P. Brown & Ass., 30 June 1966, File N18 North Melbourne Boundary Road no. 2 Hotham Estate 3/1962-5/1967, VPRS 1808/P0 Unit 19, Public Record Office Victoria.
- 17 CAB to Messrs W.P. Brown & Ass. re Contract 6621, 30 June 1966, File N18 North Melbourne Boundary Road no. 2 Hotham Estate 3/1962-5/1967, VPRS 1808/P0 Unit 19, Public Record Office Victoria..
- 18 Housing Commission of Victoria, *Annual Report, 1967-1968*, p. 8.



Figure 10 The 20-storey tower at 12 Sutton Street, North Melbourne (adjacent to 33 Alfred Street) under construction in 1966: note earlier tower at 176 Canning Street at right, part of the Hotham Estate Stage 1
Source: Housing Commission of Victoria, *Annual Report, 1965-1966*, p.14



Figure 11 The Y block tower at 33 Alfred Street (right), nearing completion, 1967
Source: Housing Commission of Victoria, *Annual Report, 1966-1967*, p.14



Figure 12 Oblique aerial view of the three towers at the North Melbourne housing site, 1968
Source: Housing Commission of Victoria, *Annual Report*, 1968-69, p. 19

DESCRIPTION AND INTEGRITY

Description

No. 33 Alfred Street, North Melbourne is a 12-storey tower constructed on a 'Y' shape plan. The broader estate is located within the block bounded by Alfred, Melrose and Sutton streets, and Boundary Road, which also comprises two other late 1960s towers, the 20-storey tower at 12 Sutton Street ('Z' block) and the 12-storey tower at 159 Melrose Street ('T' block). The balance of the site includes areas of car parking to the north-west, south-west and south-east of the 'Y' block, grassed areas with mature trees, two enclosed playground areas and a community garden area enclosed by fencing.

The three identical wings of the 'Y' block tower are equally spaced around a central lift and service core. Each wing is a rectangular flat-roofed volume with single loaded corridors (originally open-sided balconies, but long since enclosed) providing access to two and three-bedroom apartments from the central lift core. There are fire stairs at the end of each wing. Internal treatments throughout are utilitarian and hard-wearing.

The building is of a precast load bearing concrete panel construction, for both walls and floors, elevated by slightly tapered concrete stilts. The panels in this 'Y' block were manufactured using the on-site battery casting systems, with on-site casting of load bearing walls and panels in vertical batteries allowing for lighter and thinner panels.

The primary (long) elevations have consistent gravel coated cement walls with paired (bedrooms) or triple (living room) window openings. Living areas project slightly from the main walls, creating a repetitive rhythm of projecting and recessed elements across these elevations. There is an additional bedroom bay compared to 'Z' block towers, creating three transverse-wall bays between each protruding living-room bay.

The ground floor – originally open to provide uninterrupted vistas – has generally been infilled, to create office spaces and amenities – there is an area of open concourse to the south wing. The entry canopy, located at the north of the central core, is modern (date not established).

Integrity

In the main, alterations to 33 Alfred Street are typical of the HCV towers. They include:

- Balconies infilled with metal framing and glazing;
- Modified/upgraded common areas (notably the lifts and foyers);
- Replacement of the entry enclosure;
- Infilling of the majority of the ground level undercroft; and
- Refurbishment and retrofitting of apartments throughout. At 33 Alfred Street, three-bedroom units on the upper levels have been consolidated as six-bedroom apartments.

The car park at the corner of Boundary Road and Sutton Street is original (1960s); the car parks to the north-west and east of the tower are later. The playgrounds and enclosed community garden area were also later additions.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

No. 33 Alfred Street, North Melbourne is one of 40 high-rise residential towers delivered by the HCV between 1963 and 1975 that employ a consistent structural system. The arrangement between ground floor and level 1 comprises in-situ reinforced concrete portal frames and a central core structure housing lifts, utilities, and lobbies. Most portal frames have post-tensioned beams and some of the buildings have infill shear walls and/or masonry walls between portal frame columns. The typical structure between level 1 and the roof uses precast concrete construction. This includes precast wall panels, floor slabs, and stairs. The towers typically have windows through precast panels across external elevations. Precast concrete panels are also used as partitions within individual units. This structural solution was applied in several plan form configurations, the most common of which was the 'Z' tower. As noted, a key consideration in the diversity of plans was the requirement for accommodation suited to a range of life-stages.

Completed in May 1968, 33 Alfred Street was the last of the four towers designed in the 'Y' configuration – the arrangement was conceived to provide larger apartments for families. It was preceded by 510 Lygon Street (completed May 1967) and a pair of co-located 'Y' blocks at the Horace Petty Estate, South Yarra, 2 Simmons Street (February 1968) and 259 Malvern Road (August 1967, Figure 13). Factors in the discontinuation of the 'Y' block arrangement were inefficiency, with only 76 per cent of the total floor space as living space; and cost, noting that 'Y' towers required two cranes for construction.

The four 'Y' blocks, each of which is extant, were built to essentially the same specifications, and demonstrate comparable levels of integrity. They were constructed at the approximate midpoint of the HCV's high-rise programme.



Figure 13 The two 'Y' block towers at the Horace Petty Estate, Prahran, 1967: view looking east
Source: Housing Commission of Victoria, *Annual Report*, 1966-67, p. 10

ASSESSMENT AGAINST HERITAGE COUNCIL OF VICTORIA CRITERIA

The assessment below is based on *The Victorian Heritage Register Criteria and Threshold Guidelines*, assessing the cultural heritage significance of places and objects for possible state heritage listing, endorsed by the Heritage Council of Victoria, 6 December 2012, reviewed and updated 1 December 2022.

CRITERION	ASSESSMENT	APPLICATION
CRITERION A Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history	<p>The Step 1 test (applicability of the criteria) is met. The 12-storey public housing tower at 33 Alfred Street, North Melbourne has a clear association with the history of public housing in Victoria generally and more specifically with the Housing Commission of Victoria's high-rise tower programme of the 1960s and early 1970s. There is evidence of the historical association, both physical and documentary.</p> <p>The Step 2 test (for State significance) is not met. The tower does not allow the historical association to be understood better than most other places in Victoria with substantially the same association.</p> <p>Completed in May 1968, 33 Alfred Street was constructed at the approximate midpoint of the HCV's high-rise programme. It was the last of the four 'Y' towers delivered by the Commission. This arrangement provided accommodation for families. 'Y' blocks were discontinued primarily for reasons of cost and spatial inefficiency.</p> <p>The 'Y' blocks, including 33 Alfred Street, applied the Commission's structural system of stacked precast concrete panels. The system evolved from Concrete House Project, which was established at a former Commonwealth munitions factory at Holmesglen in 1944.</p>	Criterion does not apply at the state level
CRITERION B Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history	<p>The Step 1 test is not met. While 33 Alfred Street, North Melbourne has an association with historical processes and events (as for Criterion A), it does not have rare or uncommon features for the purposes of this criterion. The tower was one of four 'Y' blocks delivered by the Commission. The model applied the Commission's structural system of stacked precast concrete panels. Of the 44 extant HCV towers, 40 applied this system.</p> <p>At the time of writing the high-rise towers were not rare (there were 44 of them). The Victorian Government had, however, stated its intention to demolish the towers between now (2025) and 2051. As such it can be anticipated that they will become increasingly rare over the next 26 years and may, in time, be regarded as endangered. It is not, however, considered to be appropriate to ascribe Criterion B on the basis of a potential future condition.</p>	Criterion does not apply at the state level
CRITERION C Potential to yield information that will contribute to an	<p>The Step 1 test is not met. Further investigation of or research into the public housing tower at 33 Alfred Street has limited potential to yield evidence of heritage significance that is not currently visible, well understood or available from other sources.</p>	Criterion does not apply at the state level

CRITERION	ASSESSMENT	APPLICATION
understanding of Victoria's cultural history	As is the case for other HCV reclamation sites, there exists some possibility of archaeological evidence associated with the 'slums' that were removed in the 1960s. If material evidence is extant in-ground it is likely to be fragmentary, given the comprehensive nature of the clearance programme.	
CRITERION D Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects	<p>The Step 1 test is met, in that the 'Y tower is one of a class of places (public housing towers) that has a clear association with the history of public housing in Victoria generally and more specifically with the Housing Commission of Victoria's high-rise tower programme of the 1960s and early 1970s.</p> <p>The Step 2 test is not met. The tower is not 'a notable example of the class in Victoria', having regard for the guidance provided by Reference Tool D.</p> <p>The tower is not a <i>fine</i> example. It displays characteristics of the class (public housing towers) but not in a manner that these would be considered to be of a higher quality or historical relevance than is typically the case.</p> <p>It is also not <i>influential</i> or <i>pivotal</i>. The tower at 33 Alfred Street was not the first example of this sub-type, but more relevantly, the 'Y' block as a typology was not an influential or pivotal type of the high-rise towers, being only used in a small number of estates in 1966-69.</p>	Criterion does not apply at the state level
CRITERION E Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics	<p>The HCV high-rise estates and towers – including 33 Alfred Street – share presentational characteristics that are consistent and readily legible across the group. They are easily understood and identifiable, and they loom large, both physically and in popular culture. As part of this, depending on the viewer, the towers may provoke a positive or negative response. This is not interpreted as an aesthetic value, however, rather it relates to the broader understanding of the towers as part of Melbourne's collective history.</p> <p>With reference to the Step 2 test, no evidence has been uncovered to date that 33 Alfred Street has been recognised within the architecture profession or more widely as 'out of the ordinary' or 'outstanding' on the basis of its architectural design or other aesthetic qualities. The tower is capably resolved, but not of architectural distinction for the period.</p> <p>As for most of the HCV high-rise public housing towers, 33 Alfred Street could be seen as a local landmark by virtue of its contrasting scale and form in its low-rise setting – noting, however, that the 'Z' block at 12 Sutton Street, within the same estate, is 20 storeys. However, such visibility and prominence in and of itself is not considered to be indicative of aesthetic significance.</p>	Criterion does not apply at the state level

CRITERION	ASSESSMENT	APPLICATION
	With regard to planning, the 'Y' form design was driven by efficiencies and accommodation requirements, rather than aesthetic considerations. While distinctive, the form is not considered to be of aesthetic significance.	
CRITERION F Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period	<p>No evidence has been identified to suggest that 33 Alfred Street satisfies this criterion. Over the course of the high-rise programme (1962-75) a common set of standardised panels, connections and details remained consistent. These were applied in varied configurations – Z, E, Y etc plans – to provide units of varied size. The Y block arrangement did not require any substantive technical or construction developments.</p> <p>The HCV's Large Panel System applied to the high-rise towers was a successful application of existing technologies, which was itself the outcome of iterative refinements and overseas influences over a sustained period.</p> <p>The model was, however, not widely replicated or repeated. Indeed, the structural vulnerabilities inherent in the cost-efficient design meant that the model had been broadly superseded by the early-1970s.</p>	Criterion does not apply at the state level
CRITERION G Strong or special association with a particular present-day community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons	<p>While a detailed analysis of social value has not been investigated specifically for 33 Alfred Street, no evidence has come to light to suggest that there exists a community whose strength of connection to the tower has the potential to 'resonate[s] across the broader Victorian community' (the state threshold test).</p> <p>It is possible that communities comprising tenants (or potentially broader communities) exist and are found to have an association with the tower. If that is the case, it can reasonably be anticipated that these associations would be at the local, as opposed to state level.</p>	Criterion does not apply at the state level
CRITERION H Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history	It is not considered that this criterion applies to 33 Alfred Street. As is the case for all of the high-rise public housing towers, the strength of association is primarily with the HCV, as opposed to a 'person or group of persons'.	Criterion does not apply at the state level

CONCLUSION

The high-rise public housing tower at 33 Alfred Road, North Melbourne does not satisfy any of the Heritage Council of Victoria criteria.