



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

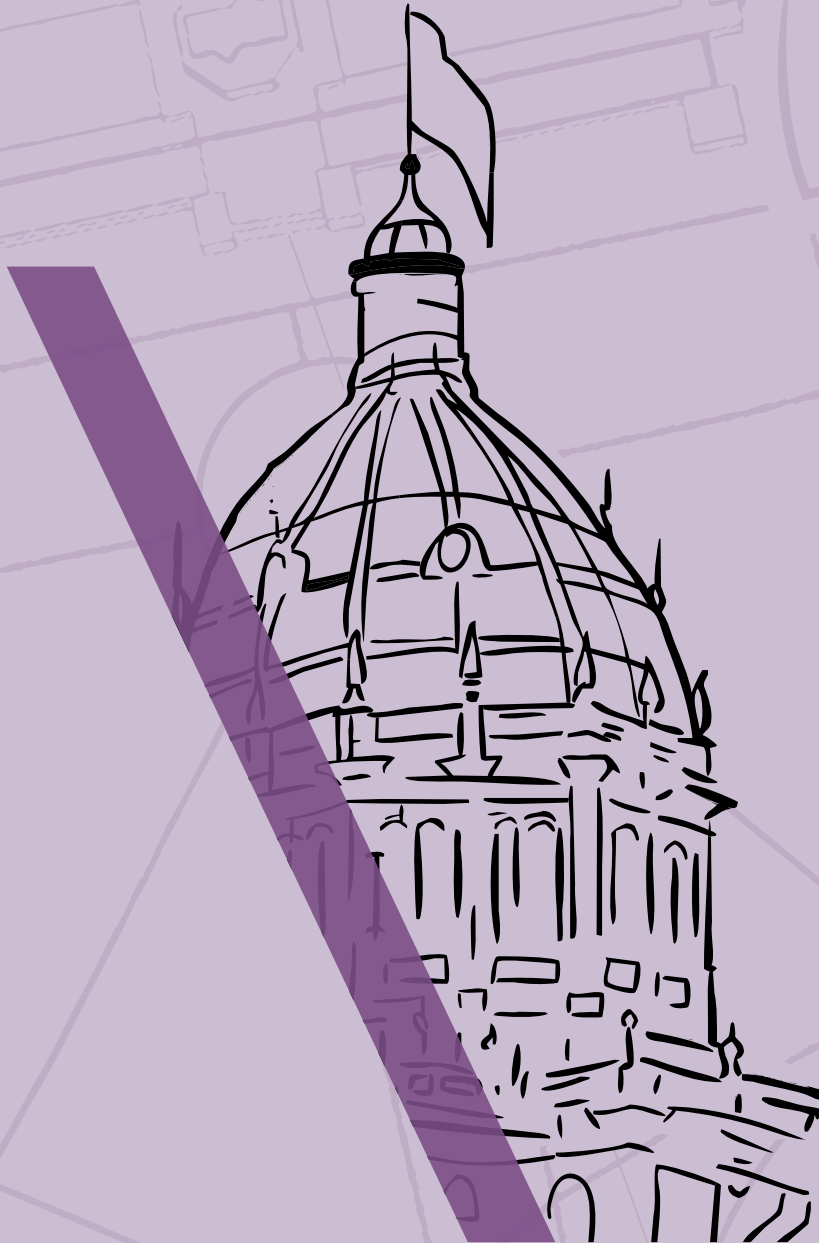


Royal Exhibition Building

Royal Exhibition Building & Carlton Gardens

Exhibition Reserve Master Plan

Part 5 of 5 of the World Heritage Management Plan



Prepared for the World Heritage Steering Committee for the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens.

The World Heritage Management Plan (WHMP) for the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens consists of five parts; this Exhibition Reserve Master Plan is Part 5.

The five parts are as follow:

- Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens Overview Site Management Plan; Part 1 of the WHMP
- Traditional Owner and First Peoples' Cultural Values for the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens; Part 2 of the WHMP
- Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens Heritage Management Plan; Part 3 of the WHMP
- Carlton Gardens Master Plan; Part 4 of the WHMP
- Exhibition Reserve Master Plan; Part 5 of the WHMP

All five parts should be considered together as the complete WHMP. The Overview Site Management Plan provides overarching guidance. Users should refer first to the Overview Site Management Plan to understand the framework for the WHMP and the overarching policies and principles for managing the site. Individual parts respond to different management requirements and proposed outcomes across the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens. For this reason, the parts may be used individually when being practically applied by the responsible management bodies.

Users should refer to the World Heritage Environs Area Strategy Plan in conjunction with the WHMP for strategic guidance for planning and management in the World Heritage Environs Area.

Exhibition Reserve Master Plan:
Part 5 of 5 of the World Heritage Management Plan

Prepared by OCULUS for Museums Victoria.

Date of publication: July 2022

Contributors

OCULUS – Lead Consultant / Landscape Architecture
Greenshoot Consulting – Engagement and Cultural
Warren and Mahoney – Architecture
Conservation Studio – Conservation Architect
Right Angle Studio – Events
Arup – Transport and Structural
Plan Cost – Cost Planner

OCULUS

Melbourne

Level 2, 33 Guildford Ln
Melbourne, VIC
+61 3 9670 0699

Sydney

Level 1, 5 Wilson St,
Newtown, NSW
+61 2 9557 5533

Canberra

Room 2, Pavilion Studios,
14 Kendall Lane,
Canberra, ACT
+61 2 9557 5533

Washington DC

Level 3, 1611 Connecticut Ave
+1 202 588 5454

ACN 074 882 447

ABN 34 074 882 447

oculus.info

Contents

Acknowledgement of Country	4
1. Vision	5
2. Introduction	6
2.1 Purpose of this Master Plan	6
2. Introduction	7
3. The Place	8
3.1 Heritage Significance	11
3.2 Planning and management responsibility	12
4. Guiding Principles	14
5. Recommendations	19
6. Reserve Precincts	20
6.1 Western Forecourt	21
6.2 Eastern Forecourt	21
6.3 Southern Drive	22
6.4 Museum Plaza	22
7.0 Circulation	23
8.0 Fixture + Finishes	24
9.0 Management, implementation and review	25

Acknowledgement of Country

Museums Victoria acknowledges the Woi Wurrung (Wurundjeri) people of the eastern Kulin Nation on whose unceded Country the Royal Exhibition Building stands, and First Peoples language groups and communities across Victoria and Australia.

Our organisation, in partnership with the First Peoples of Victoria, is working to place First Peoples living cultures and histories at the core of our practice.



1. Vision

The area today known as the Exhibition Reserve has long been a place to gather, share stories and exchange ideas.

Together with the World Heritage listed Royal Exhibition Building, the surrounding forecourts and the Melbourne Museum, the Reserve will continue to be a major cultural destination for visitors and locals as well as a welcoming space that supports an array of informal uses.

2. Introduction

The Exhibition Reserve is the parcel of land in the centre of the Carlton Gardens containing the Royal Exhibition Building and Melbourne Museum. It is bound to the south by the South Gardens and Southern Drive and to the north by the Northern Gardens.

The site is inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List - Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens, and is one of only two listed sites in Victoria. The site is also included on the Victoria Heritage Register, National Heritage List and the City of Melbourne Planning Scheme. The site is also classified by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria).

Established on the traditional country of the Eastern Kulin, the site is linked to the historic International Exhibition movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Since the 1880s the site has been at the heart of many of Melbourne's stories serving as the setting for national narratives as well as more intimate moments and lesser known stories. It has hosted grand events including the opening of Australia's Federal Parliament and the 1956 Olympic Games.

Today the Royal Exhibition Building still plays a leading role in the life of Melbourne serving as the setting for exhibitions, concerts, banquets, university exams and most recently, vaccinations.

Museums Victoria will work in partnership with the City of Melbourne (managers of the Carlton Gardens) and the Royal Exhibition Building World Heritage Steering Committee to manage and care for the site and to tell and share its stories. It recognises its dual responsibilities to acknowledge and support the continuing connection of Woi Wurrung Peoples of the East Kulin Nation to this unceded Country and the responsibilities imposed by the site's World and National Heritage listings.

2.1 Purpose of this Master Plan

This Exhibition Reserve Master Plan is one of a suite of documents that make up the *Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens World Heritage Management Plan (2022)* (World Heritage Management Plan). The last iteration of the Master Plan was the 2007 Royal Exhibition Building and Exhibition Reserve Master Plan, which formed an attachment to the 2013 World Heritage Management Plan.

In 2020 the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens World Heritage Steering Committee commenced a review of the World Heritage Management Plan for the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens. This enabled a simultaneous review of the Exhibition Reserve Master Plan. Within the overarching planning framework for the World Heritage listed site, the Exhibition Reserve Master Plan includes a set of guiding principles, recommended actions and key works for Museums Victoria to ensure the Exhibition Reserve is appropriately managed and responsive to current and future needs.

The Master Plan has considered the conservation policies outlined in the Heritage Management Plan; specifically policies related to maintaining views and vistas in and out of the site with an emphasis on views of the Royal Exhibition Building Dome, policies for the forecourt spaces, policies for the plaza space, policies for Rathdowne and Nicholson Streets frontages, policies for painting and tree management.

The Carlton Gardens South and Carlton Gardens North are addressed in a separate, yet complementary master plan developed by the City of Melbourne, the Carlton Gardens Master Plan.

2. Introduction

2.2 Preparing this draft Master Plan

A key objective of the Exhibition Reserve Master Plan is to ensure the precinct is managed in accordance with its recognised cultural and heritage significance.

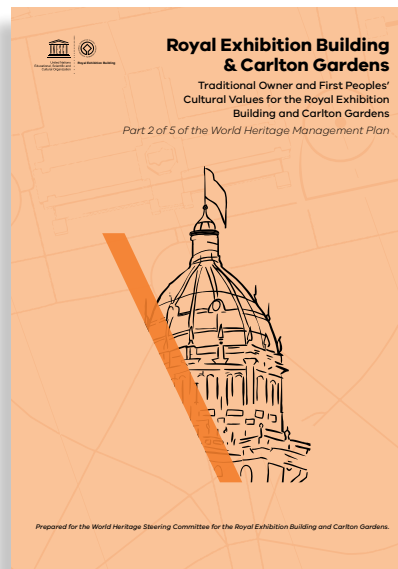
Underpinning this revised Exhibition Reserve Master Plan are two key reports:

- + *Traditional Owner and First Peoples' Cultural Values for the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens* (Traditional Owner and First Peoples' Cultural Values Report 2022), which outlines the cultural heritage significance of the combined site and surrounding area from the perspective of its Traditional Owners and the broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders people. This report was prepared by GML Heritage Pty Ltd.
- + *Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens Heritage Management Plan* (Heritage Management Plan (HMP) 2022), which outlines the overall heritage significance of the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens and sets out a series of policies and objectives for protecting and enhancing its historic features. This report was prepared by Lovell Chen and advertised for public comment in 2022. This report replaces the previous Conservation Management Plan for the site.

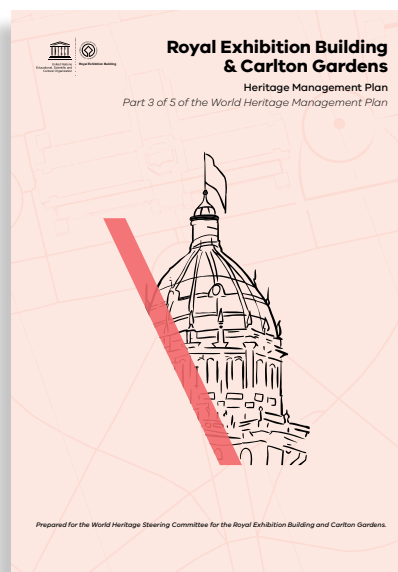
This Exhibition Reserve Master Plan also takes into account works completed and new community issues or needs identified since 2007. This includes new recommendations consistent with the contemporary understanding of climate change and the need to plan to mitigate for or adapt landscapes in response to these environmental challenges.

Other key reports used to prepare the revised Master Plan include:

- + Relevant recommendations from the *2013 World Heritage Management Plan*.
- + Responses from Engage Victoria stakeholder and community consultation for the World Heritage Management Plan Review conducted in June/July 2020 and again in 2021-22.



Traditional Owner and First Peoples' Cultural Values Report, prepared by GML Heritage, 2022.



Heritage Management Plan, prepared by Lovell Chen, 2022.

3. The Place

The land around current day Melbourne is the traditional lands of people of the Kulin Nation. The region of Victoria had an estimated population of 60,000 or more before European Colonisation. The site of current day Melbourne was a central location of abundant resources that was a regular meeting place for social and ceremonial gatherings, trade and law business.

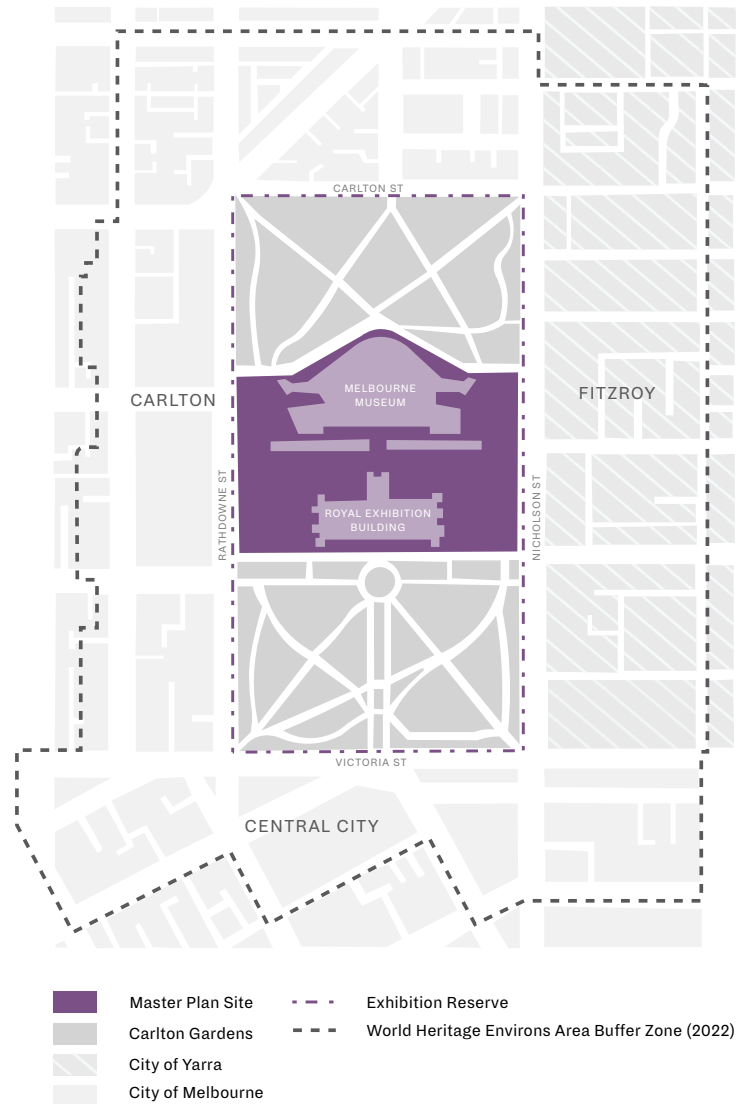
The land known as the Exhibition Reserve is the country of the Woi Wurrung (Wurundjeri), located north of the Birrarung and is on Silurian geomorphic land consisting of layers of mudstone, siltstone and sandstone, which date from approximately 443–416 million years ago.

The area of Carlton was said to be forest land principally timbered with Eucalyptus, Casuarina and Acacia. Due to the diverse and rich landscape and the elevation of the site it was used as camping grounds for First Peoples, especially during the wetter seasons and supported the lives of First Peoples long before colonial contact.

Carlton Gardens were originally set aside for public use as part of the 1839 subdivision of Melbourne and in 1856 the City of Melbourne gained management of the designated public park. The transformation of the site's landscape with formal hard landscaping and introduced species was a visible act of colonisation. Edward La Trobe Bateman was engaged by the City of Melbourne to design the gardens but it was redesigned by Joseph Reed in 1879 to create an ornamental pleasure garden for Melbourne's grand new Exhibition Buildings. The formal south gardens and east, south and west forecourts formed an integral part of the site's new design complementing the grandeur and opulence of the building – a layout that remains substantially intact today.

Since 1880 the building and surrounds have been used almost continuously for exhibitions and events with notable activities being baby shows, home shows, car shows, exams, parts of the 1956 Olympics, fashion festivals, White Night and the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show. The site has also been used for an array of formal and informal public uses including hosting the opening of Federal Parliament in 1901, a museum and aquarium, a hospital during the Spanish Influenza Epidemic, a cycling track, an RAAF Training Centre during WWII, a migrant hostel and a mass vaccination hub.

A museum returned to the Exhibition Reserve in 2000 when Melbourne Museum was constructed. Designed by Denton Corker Marshall, the Museum features Bunjilaka Aboriginal Cultural Centre, the Forest Gallery and the Pauline Gandel Children's Gallery.



View of Melbourne from the high ground of Eastern Hill (near Fitzroy), looking out across the settlement of Melbourne to Port Phillip Bay. Source: Traditional Owner and First Peoples' Cultural Values for the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens.

3. The Place



The Royal Exhibition Building and Exhibition Reserve as seen from above. Source: Nearmap.



The Eastern Forecourt is one of two heritage forecourts within the Reserve.



Opportunity to reprioritise a universally-accessible entrance via the Southern facade.



There are two vast areas of granitic sand at Museum Plaza.



The expansive promenade at the Melbourne Museum.



The gum grove at Museum Plaza.



Opportunity to reinterpret architectural artefacts.



Southern Drive is a popular yet informal east-west cycling route.



Museum Plaza is one of Melbourne's most popular skate destinations.



The Western Forecourt today. Photo: OCUI US.

3. The Place

3.1 Heritage Significance

World Heritage List

In July 2004 the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens was inscribed upon the World Heritage List of UNESCO's 'Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage'. The Royal Exhibition Building has outstanding universal value as the only surviving 'Great Hall' from a significant international exhibition. It symbolises the spirit and influence of the exhibition movement and retains a high level of authenticity both architecturally and in its continued use as an exhibition venue.

The Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens is the first built site in Australia to be added to the World Heritage list and meets one of the six Cultural Heritage criteria as outlined in the following justification from UNESCO:

Criterion (ii): The Royal Exhibition Building and the surrounding Carlton Gardens, as the main extant survivors of a Palace of Industry and its setting, together reflect the global influence of the international exhibition movement of the 19th and early 20th centuries. The movement showcased technological innovation and change, which helped promote a rapid increase in industrialisation and international trade through the exchange of knowledge and ideas.

In Australia, World Heritage sites are protected under the provisions of the Commonwealth EPBC Act., 1999 (amended 2003). Any works to World Heritage sites which will have a significant impact on the World Heritage values must be referred to the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water for assessment and approval under the EPBC Act.

National Heritage List

In July 2004, the site was also included on the National Heritage List, maintained by the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water under the EPBC Act. The site played a key role in the story of Australian Federation, with the opening of the first national Parliament held at the Royal Exhibition Building in 1901. The current interior decorative scheme reflects this period.

Victorian Heritage Register

The Royal Exhibition Building was added to the Victorian Government Buildings Register in 1982. In 1998 it was transferred to the Victorian Heritage Register, a register maintained by Heritage Victoria under the provisions of the Heritage Act 2017. In 2002 the registration was extended to include the Carlton Gardens.

City of Melbourne Planning Scheme

The Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens are identified as HO69 in the Heritage Overlay Schedule to the Melbourne Planning Scheme. However, for places listed on the Victorian Heritage Register, the provisions of the Heritage Act override the planning requirements of the Heritage Overlay.

All citations are included in the Heritage Management Plan.



The eastern elevation of the Royal Exhibition Building in 1885 showing original garden bed fencing, the French Fountain, and original gasoliers at the entrance to the building. Source: SLV

3. The Place

3.2 Planning and management responsibility

As a World Heritage listed site, planning and management responsibilities are specified under Commonwealth and State legislation as follows:

International obligations

The Australian Government has signed and ratified the UNESCO Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (the World Heritage Convention). Under the World Heritage Convention all countries that have ratified the convention are expected to protect the World Heritage values of the properties inscribed and are encouraged to report periodically on their condition. The Australian Government protects and manages the World Heritage values of World Heritage listed sites through the EPBC Act (1999) (Cth) (EPBC Act).

Commonwealth legislation

The EPBC Act requires that no actions are taken that would have a significant impact on the world or national heritage values of the site, and also requires the development of comprehensive management arrangements for the site. In 2004 the *Victorian Heritage Act* (2017) was amended to require the preparation of a World Heritage Management Plan for the site and a Strategy Plan for the precinct surrounding the site to assist in meeting the obligations required in the EPBC Act for a planning and management framework.

State legislation

In 1996, an amendment to the *Museums Act* (1983) vested the general control, administration and management of the Exhibition Reserve in the Museums Board of Victoria.

As a Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) listed site, the *Victorian Heritage Act* requires the approval of the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria, for any works in the Exhibition Reserve that have not been granted a permit exemption. The Heritage Council of Victoria is the appeals body for VHR heritage permits and refusals. It is acknowledged that the proposed changes to the Exhibition Reserve outlined within this Master Plan are subject to required approvals in accordance with the Heritage Act 2017, prior to any relevant works or activities commencing. At the time of publishing this report, approvals required under the Heritage Act 2017 have neither been applied for nor obtained.

The *Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Act* (2006) includes provision to protect registered places from harm and approval is required for works within the area registered as the Exhibition Gardens Meeting Place. The Registered Aboriginal Party for the land where Carlton Gardens is located is the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation.



Museum Plaza today showing granitic sand areas and raised lawns. Photo: OCULUS.

4. Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles have been established as a framework for the future development of the Exhibition Reserve.

The principles are informed by the Traditional Owner and First Peoples' Cultural Values Report and the Heritage Management Plan.

They also respond to key issues identified by Museums Victoria, stakeholder groups, specialist consultants and the community.



Image: Bunjilaka Aboriginal Cultural Centre. Photo: Museums Victoria

Principle 01

Embed a culturally responsive design approach

Provide Connection to Country opportunities and acknowledge the unbroken connection to First Peoples.

Actions:

- + Continue to work with Wurundjeri Elders and First Peoples stakeholders to amplify and celebrate First Peoples knowledge and culture across the precinct.
- + Create an arrival space at the entrance to Melbourne Museum that acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung as Traditional Owners and is welcoming to all people.
- + Embed cultural story and truth telling opportunities into a new interpretation strategy for the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens that reveals the rich history of the site and its surrounds, to be explored in collaboration with the City of Melbourne.
- + Introduce native and Indigenous planting to existing and new garden beds where appropriate that provide opportunities to learn about First Peoples' culture.

The Traditional Owner and First Peoples' Cultural Values Report will be used to inform the implementation of the actions listed above. Museums Victoria will ensure that all the relevant actions and principles in this Master Plan align with the recommendations of that report.

4. Guiding Principles

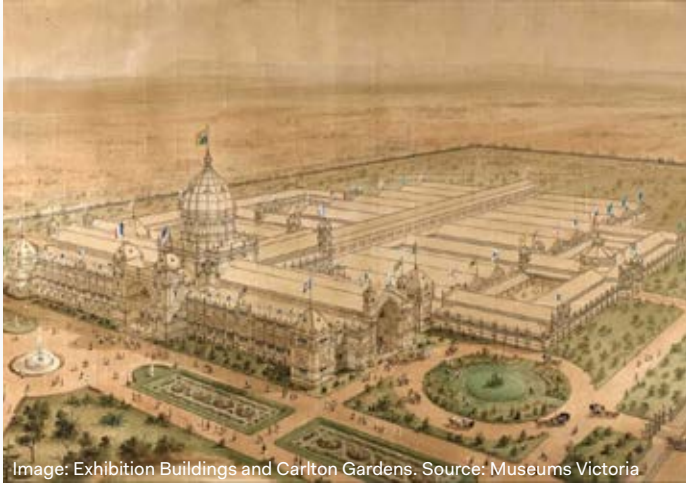


Image: Exhibition Buildings and Carlton Gardens. Source: Museums Victoria

Principle 02

Respect and enhance the site's heritage significance

Enhance and promote the UNESCO-listed World Heritage Outstanding Universal Values and other heritage values of the Royal Exhibition Building and surrounds.

Actions:

- + Develop an interpretation plan that continues to strengthen the heritage tourism offer.
- + Continue to conserve significant fabric of the Royal Exhibition Building including interior and exterior elements as part of a program of conservation works.
- + Re-landscape the entrance to the dome experience from the Southern Drive to reinforce the southern façade as the formal entrance of the Royal Exhibition Building and provide improved universal public access to the building interior and reconnect the building to the south garden.
- + Reduce car parking from the Southern Drive to the minimum required to support events and remove car parking spaces immediately adjacent to the southern entrance of the Royal Exhibition Building.
- + Review the existing bin area with the intention to move it away from the Royal Exhibition Building to a new enclosure at the eastern end of Southern Drive.
- + Undertake works to protect and improve the presentation of the Eastern Forecourt, including conservation of sections of the heritage gates, removal of obtrusive traffic management elements, and review of heritage features and pathways.

The *Heritage Management Plan* will be used to inform the implementation of the actions listed above. Museums Victoria will ensure all relevant actions and principles in this Master Plan align with those in that report.



Image: Fashion Redux event in Museum Plaza in 2019.

Principle 03

A world-class events space

Enhance the performance of Exhibition Reserve as a venue for small, medium, and large events to continue the Royal Exhibition Building's place as one of Melbourne's premier venues for artistic, cultural, and scientific innovation.

Actions:

- + Develop a temporary event management plan for the precinct that nominates locations and parameters for events to minimise visual impact and consider loading restraints.
- + Investigate the cost and feasibility of increasing the plaza's loading capacity to provide more event flexibility and opportunity.
- + Identify opportunities for the location of stages and the integration of the audio-visual setup to facilitate small and medium outdoor events, lectures, screenings and talks.
- + Explore how underutilised spaces of the Royal Exhibition Building could be used to enhance both event and heritage visitor experience.

4. Guiding Principles



Image: A post worker cycles through Southern Drive.

Principle 04

Safe and seamless movement through the site

Improve pedestrian, cycle, and service vehicle movement through the site through more clearly defined routes.

Actions:

- + Introduce a new site-wide wayfinding strategy in consultation with the City of Melbourne.
- + Provide better delineation for bicycles along Southern Drive to create a safer and more seamless through-site link when major events are not in progress.
- + Rationalise and reposition signs and bollards at both ends of the Drive to ensure better access for pedestrians and bicycles.
- + Review skateable areas to reduce conflict between pedestrians and skaters, with pedestrians having priority near the Museum building and entrance.
- + Reduce instances of goat trails and desire lines through lawn and garden beds through strategic interventions.
- + Encourage pedestrian movement through the gum avenues by reviewing the scale of obstructive built elements.



Image: Piazza Mazzini in Jesolo, Italy.

Principle 05

A great place to be

Develop the plaza as an iconic public space in Melbourne that draws local, interstate and international visitors and supports informal gathering and leisure activities.

Actions:

- + Identify and improve areas of the plaza that facilitate informal activities such as skating, roller-blading and games away from key movement routes.
- + Explore the replacement of the granitic sand surface to minimise glare, pooling and dust.
- + Introduce garden beds and new tree plantings to increase shade cover and biodiversity and minimise urban heat.
- + Create new seating and shade cover opportunities in Museum Plaza, for groups and individuals.
- + Make modest alternations to existing seating to improve comfort and reduce damage from skating.

4. Guiding Principles



Principle 06

A sustainable and resilient landscape

To embody First Peoples principles of Caring for Country, ensure all future works enhance the site's sustainability performance, including minimising potable water usage and high carbon intensive materials and uses where practicable. Ensure the Exhibition Reserve is designed to withstand a hotter, drier, and more unpredictable climate.

Actions:

- + Investigate an integrated water management plan to supplement irrigation demand with recycled water.
- + Proposed planting beds to be lower maintenance and high amenity and biodiversity.
- + Preference low water use trees and planting adapted to a changing climate.
- + Increase canopy cover to combat urban heat island effect.
- + Increase habitat opportunities to support urban biodiversity.
- + Minimise carbon footprint in all new works, where practicable.



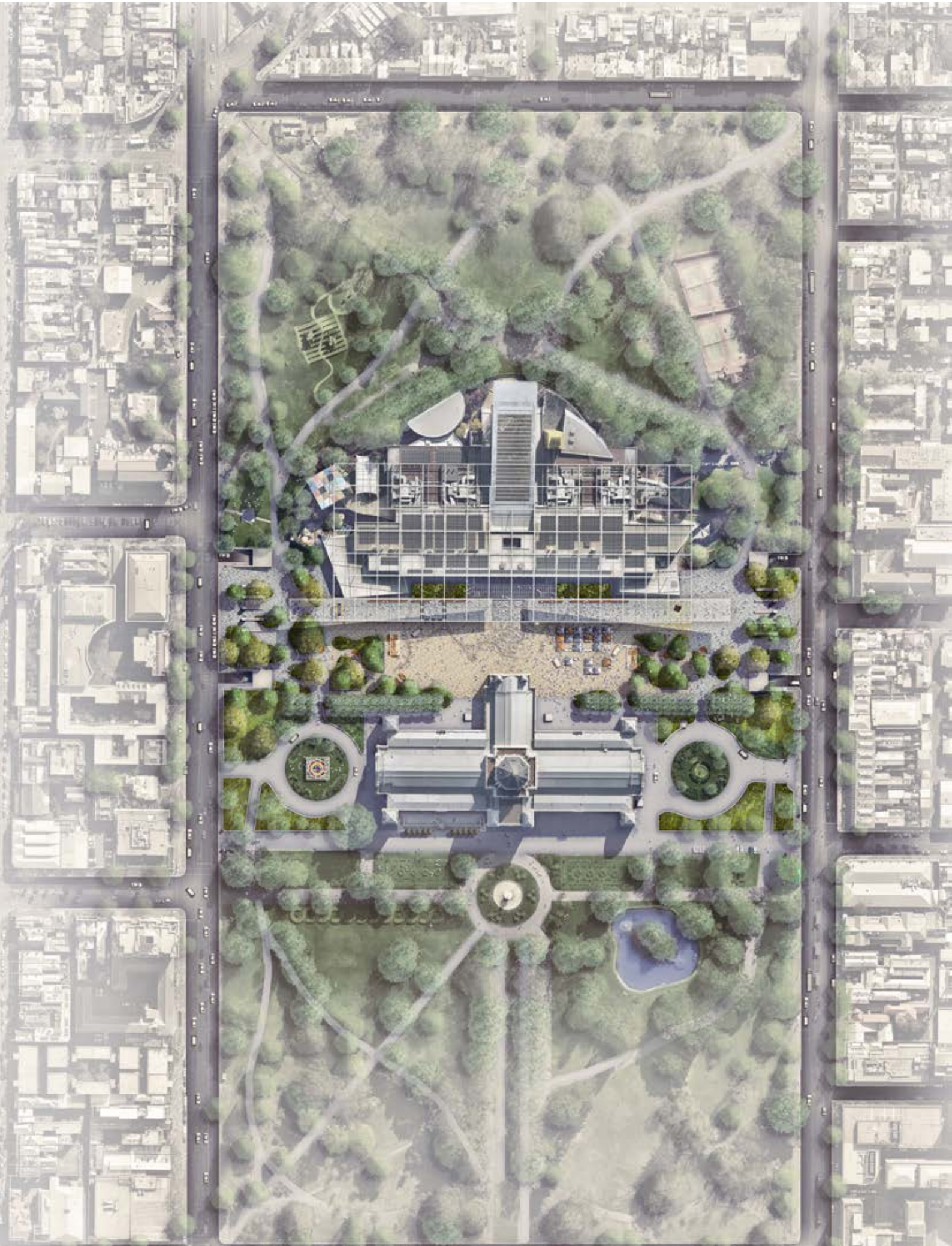
Principle 07

Collaboration and partnerships

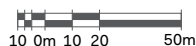
Continue to work in close co-operation with our World Heritage site partners to protect and promote the values of the site and provide a positive visitor experience.

Actions:

- + Ensure alignment with the vision and strategic objectives of the World Heritage Steering Committee for the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens.
- + Museums Victoria and the City of Melbourne continue to work cooperatively on projects of mutual interest at the site and share relevant information, plans and interpretation approaches, particularly in relation to the World and National Heritage values.
- + Explore opportunities to work with Traditional Owners on the development of the Museum grounds.
- + Through contract specifications, ensure the highest standards of work continues to be required by all open space, tree management and other maintenance contractors for the purpose of achieving good presentation of the site, at all times.
- + Museums Victoria and the City of Melbourne continue to share the use of recycled water from the storage tank, with the current agreement due to be renewed in 2024.
- + Explore opportunities for strategic partnerships on garden and landscape maintenance.



Precinct Plan



5. Recommendations

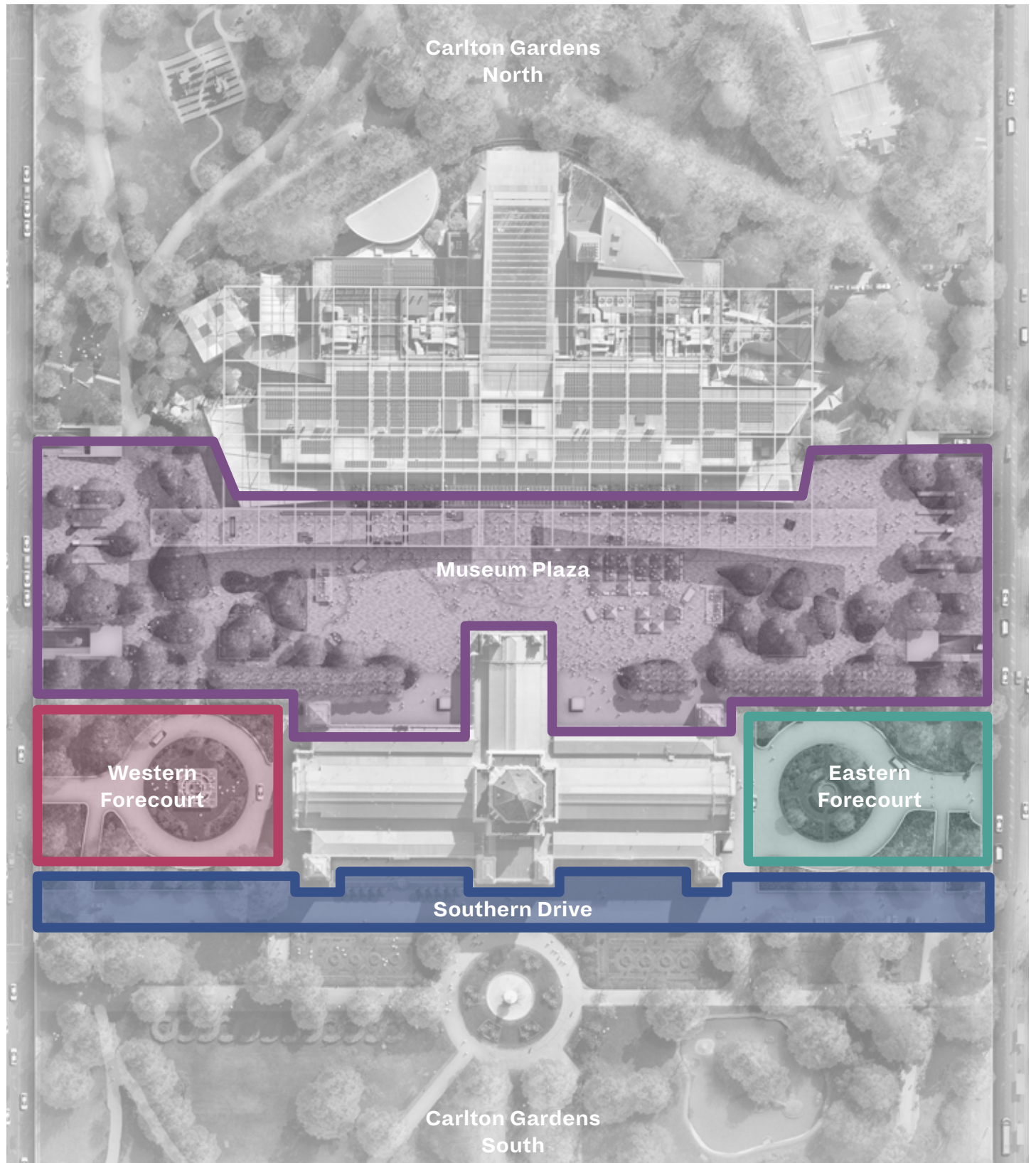


Legend

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| ① Native garden beds with trees | ⑨ New pavement material | ⑰ Reduce permanent parking |
| ② German Kiosk installation | ⑩ Remove blockages to existing avenue planting | ⑱ Move bins to a new location away from Royal Exhibition Building |
| ③ Partial deconstruction of existing planting plinths | ⑪ Shaded informal timber furniture | ⑲ New bike path delineation |
| ④ Western events space | ⑫ Restore 1880 design elements (edging + lighting) | |
| ⑤ New entrance landscape to Dome viewing deck | ⑬ Address informal path | |
| ⑥ Arrival space | ⑭ Retractable bollards | |
| ⑦ Dome viewing deck | ⑮ Conservation and relocation of Westgarth Fountain | |
| ⑧ Function deck | ⑯ Restore heritage gates | |

6. Reserve Precincts

Precinct Key Plan



6. Reserve Precincts

6.1 Western Forecourt

With the recent restoration of the Western Forecourt to its original 1880 design, this Master Plan only recommends minor works in this precinct, namely the consideration of a contemporary interpretation of the German Kiosk that was documented as being present in the 1880 and 1888 Exhibitions. It's plinth was uncovered during archaeological investigation during the restoration of the western forecourt. Whilst much research has been undertaken into the look and history of the German Kiosk, it has not delivered details on what the Kiosk might have looked like. This presents an opportunity to invite temporary commissions that interpret the German Kiosk and can tell further stories of the site.



The reinstated cast iron gasoliers at the western entrance to the Royal Exhibition Building. Matching cast iron gasoliers should be reinstated on the south and eastern entrances. Source: Conservation Studio.

6.2 Eastern Forecourt

The Master Plan recommends several projects to return the Eastern Forecourt closer to its original 1880 design. The changes include removing nonoriginal elements such as the existing lamp poles and the boomgate, both twentieth century additions, and restoring the original gates as was done in the Western Forecourt restoration, as well as original gasoliers at the entrance to the Royal Exhibition Building.

Considerations:

- + A study should be undertaken to determine a new location for the Westgarth Fountain within the Eastern Forecourt with a focus on restoring the fountain to working order and making it more accessible.
- + Reinstatement of cast iron gasoliers on the eastern entrance to the Royal Exhibition Building.
- + Address the desireline/goat track through the lawn.
- + Removal of the boom gate and restoring elements of the original gates at the Nicholson Street entrance, with retractable bollards for security.
- + Other minor restoration works to return the space closer to its original design, such as planting and garden edging.

6. Reserve Precincts



Colourised photograph of the Royal Exhibition Building in 1910 from Nicholson Street, showing original gates to Southern Drive and palisade fence. Source: SLV

6.3 Southern Drive

The Master Plan recommends several projects aimed at changing perceptions of this space being 'back-of-house', reorientating the Royal Exhibition Building toward Carlton Gardens and the city centre. Other measures seek to address pedestrian/cycle conflict and reduce the dominance of bins and car parking from the building's southern elevation.

Considerations:

- + Prioritise a universally-accessible entrance to the Royal Exhibition Building Dome Promenade.
- + Consider appropriate new line-markings to delineate pedestrian and cycle movement through the space.
- + Removal of permanent car parking and provision of a limited number of temporary spaces at the eastern side of the Southern Drive to support events.
- + Investigation of on-site management of rubbish bins to facilitate event use of the place in a manner that does not visually impact the façades and setting of the Royal Exhibition Building.
- + Restoration of elements of the original gates at the Nicholson Street entrance, with retractable bollards for security.

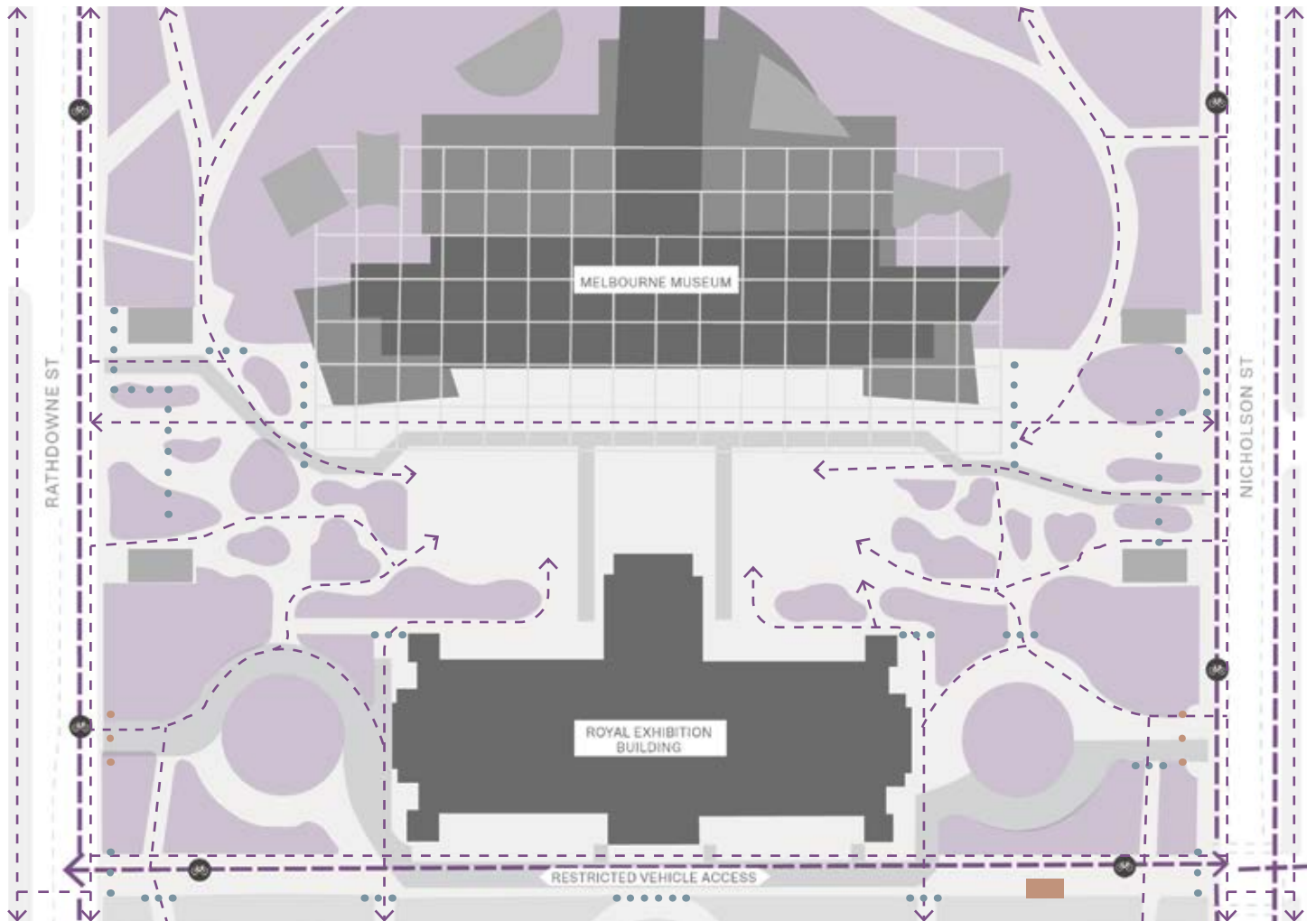
6.4 Museum Plaza

The Master Plan proposes significant works to the Museum Plaza precinct to transform the space into a place that is more comfortable and inviting, and acknowledges First Peoples deep and continuing connection to Country.

Considerations:

- + Replace current gravel areas with new paving material that could reference the geology of the site and make major events more viable. The paving design could be developed in collaboration with a contemporary artist.
- + Establish native planting in new garden beds that could also host small to medium trees, reducing heat and glare issues that currently exist, as well as offering garden journeys.
- + An arrival experience at the entrance to Melbourne Museum to celebrate First Peoples' culture and connection to Country, named in consultation with First Peoples.
- + Introduce informal furniture with shade structures to the plaza to encourage greater usage and major events to be better catered for with dedicated spaces and service infrastructure provided.
- + Separate skating zones from key pedestrian routes leading to the museum entrance.

7. Circulation



Legend

- Fire truck access
- Bin enclosure
- Bicycle circulation
- Pedestrian circulation
- Bollards (Retractable/ Fixed)
- Gates

8. Fixtures + Finishes

8.1 Garden edging

Since the post-war era there has been a shift in the form of the Carlton Gardens and the forecourt spaces moving away from dense planting in favour of lawn and concrete. The road edging in the western forecourt was moulded bitumen and the east forecourt later became concrete. A consolidated and consistent approach to garden, path and road edging should be adopted. This may be cast concrete, bluestone or asphalt.

8.2 Paving treatments

The use of asphalt as a finish for paths and roads is appropriate and should be used as a consistent finish.

8.3 Furniture

Within the Eastern and Western forecourts and the Southern Drive, a conscious effort should be made to minimise visual clutter. Where furniture such as lighting, seating and the like are required, they should be contemporary and carefully located. It is noted that some elements such as gasoliers are recommended to be reinstated.

9. Management, implementation and review

9.1 Management and cooperation

Although the Exhibition Reserve is managed by Museums Victoria and the Carlton Gardens is managed by the City of Melbourne, a coordinated approach to managing the whole site is essential to ensure the shared objectives of the Master Plan and the World Heritage Management Plan are realised.

A high standard of maintenance of the Royal Exhibition Building forecourts and Carlton Gardens is required to meet community expectations of a World Heritage listed site.

Recommendations relating to the management arrangements for the site are:

- + Museums Victoria and the City of Melbourne to continue to work cooperatively on projects of mutual interest at the site and share relevant information, plans and interpretation approaches particularly in relation to the World, National and cultural Heritage values. This can occur both directly and through the World Heritage Steering Committee structure.
- + Museums Victoria and the City of Melbourne to continue to share the use of recycled water from the storage tank, with the current agreement due to be renewed in 2024.
- + Through Museums Victoria contract specifications, ensure the highest standards of work continues to be required by all open space, tree management and other maintenance contractors for the purpose of achieving good presentation of the site at all times. Encourage the development of similar, consistent service standards across the entire site.

Museums Victoria continues to be actively involved as a member of the World Heritage Steering Committee for the site.

9.2 Implementation of the Master Plan

An implementation plan for future capital and renewal works over next five years will be developed once the revised Master Plan is approved by Museums Victoria. The directions of the Master Plan remain in place until the next review. If new issues or needs arise, which are not contemplated in the Master Plan, the vision and guiding principles set out in the Master Plan should be used to direct assessment and decision-making.

9.3 Review of the Master Plan

Currently the Heritage Act requires that the World Heritage Management Plan be reviewed every seven years. The next review of the Exhibition Reserve Master Plan should occur as part of the wider review of the World Heritage Management Plan.

