

Heritage Impact Statement

290 Park Street – Fitzroy North

Application for permit – Proposed Redevelopment

14 April 2026

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1.0 Introduction

This Heritage Impact Statement has been prepared on behalf of the owner of the site at 290 Park Street, Fitzroy North. It relates to a planning permit application for works to the property, which is included in the Heritage Overlay.

This report reviews the significance of the heritage place and comments on whether the proposed works are appropriate in character and detail, and whether they are acceptable in terms of the impact on fabric of identified heritage significance.

2.0 Sources of Information

The analysis below draws upon an external inspection of the property, as well as review of the following sources.

- *Yarra Planning Scheme – Clause 15.03 Heritage, Clause 43.01 Heritage Overlay.*
- *City of Yarra Review of Heritage Overlay Areas 2007*
- *City of Yarra Database of Significant Areas March 2024*

The discussion also has regard for a previous approval on the site, PLN22/0915. The approval was for demolition of existing buildings and construction of a new four storey mixed use building containing dwellings and a cafe (food and drink premises).

The report has been prepared by Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd, and is to be read in conjunction with drawings prepared by Architecture Architecture and submitted with respect to this application.

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3.0 Brief History and Description

The subject site comprises a large, rectangular shaped portion of land, with primary street frontages to Nicholson Street to the west and Park Street to the north, and a secondary frontage to Railway Lane to the east. The land is flat in topography.

In 1900, despite nearby commercial development in Nicholson Street, including a nineteenth century iteration of the Railway Hotel to the south, as well as residential development in Park Street, MMBW plans show that the subject site remained undeveloped. By 1920 the premises of a produce merchant occupied the site, addressed as 808 Nicholson Street, as evidenced in the *Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria*.

A produce dealer occupied a premises to the rear of this, addressing Park Street, by 1925. Site inspection indicates that this building was constructed as a single storey premises with a Neo-Classical style facade and sawtooth roof profile. This building has subsequently been considerably altered by the construction of a first floor addition directly above the facade, as well as changes to the central entry doors at ground floor level and overpainting.

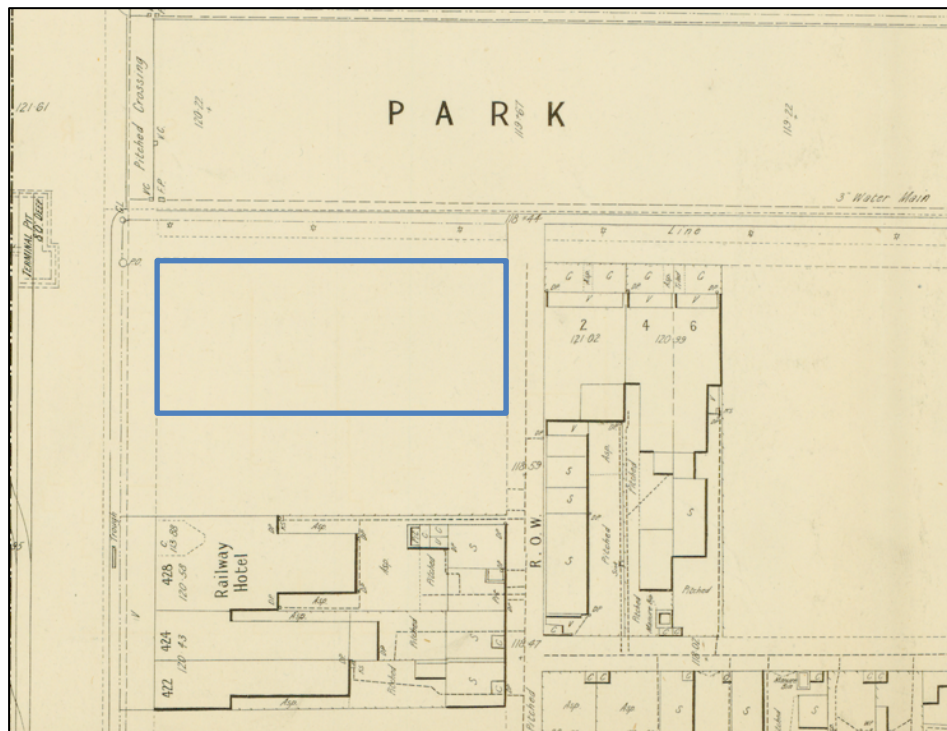


Figure 1 Detail of MMBW plan from 1900. The subject site (outlined in blue) is vacant at this time.
Source: State Library of Victoria.

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Figure 2 Aerial image of the subject site (indicated) and surrounds, 2023.
Source: Google Earth.

A c.1970-80 two storey commercial building known as 806-810 Nicholson Street occupies the remainder of the site, the c.1920 built form that formerly occupied the place having been demolished. Red brick facades to Nicholson and Park streets feature a cream painted rendered band to the parapet, with a similar band incised across the parapet of 290 Park Street.

The subject site is situated at the juncture of commercial premises in Nicholson Street to the south and residential buildings in Park Street to the east. Adjoining the subject site to the south is the two storey Railway Hotel, the original nineteenth century building appearing to have been given a new facade and enlarged sometime in the twentieth century. Further south at 796-798 Nicholson Street is a pair of two storey Boom style residential shop terraces, while to the corner of Liverpool Street at 786-794 Nicholson Street, a recently permitted six storey development is currently under construction. Opposite the subject site to the north is an at-grade carpark and the open grassland of the inner circle railway linear park.

To the east of the subject site, across Railway Lane, is a series of single storey residences, most of Victorian or Edwardian origins. At 288 Park Street is a double fronted polychrome brick dwelling with hipped roof, while further east at 284 and 286 Park Street are two single fronted houses with rendered facades and hipped roofs.

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Figure 3

The facade of 290 Park Street.



Figure 4

The east elevation of 290 Park Street with the red brick to the ground floor differentiated from the orange brick of the first floor.



Figure 5 The non-original entry door of 290 Park Street.



Figure 6 North elevation of the c.1970-80 building known as 806-810 Nicholson Street.

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Figure 7

The subject site as viewed from Nicholson Street.

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Figure 8

The Railway Hotel and two storey commercial buildings south of the subject site.



Figure 9

Recently permitted development under construction at 786-794 Nicholson Street.

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Figure 10

Single storey residential streetscape east of the subject site.

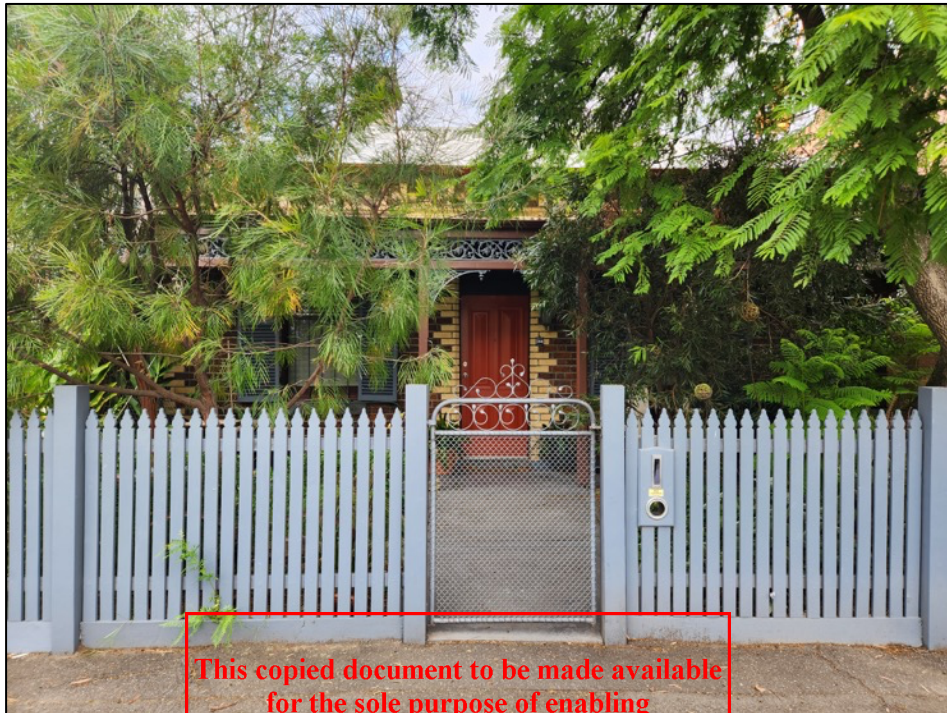


Figure 11 288 Park Street, east of the subject site.

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Figure 12 284 and 286 Park Street.

4.0 Listings and Controls

The site is situated along the western edge of the North Fitzroy Precinct, identified as HO327 in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the *Yarra Planning Scheme*. No external paint controls or internal alteration controls apply under the provisions of this overlay, though solar energy system controls do apply.

The opposite (west) side of Nicholson Street forms the eastern boundary of the North Carlton Precinct HO326, which encompasses all of the western side of Nicholson Street between Park Street to the north and Princess Street to the south.



Figure 13 Detail of the Heritage Overlay map, showing the location of the subject site within HO327 shaded blue.
Source: Yarra Planning Scheme

Significance

The statement of significance for the precinct in the *City of Yarra Review of Heritage Overlay Areas* is reproduced in part as follows:

How is it significant?

HO327 North Fitzroy Heritage Overlay Area (south of Holden St) is aesthetically and historically significant to the City of Yarra (National Estate Register [NER] Criteria E1, A4)

Why is it significant

The Government planned section of Fitzroy North (south of Holden St) is significant

[...]

- *For its late 19th century buildings that represent rapid growth and change in the character of the relatively remote suburb to an established residential and business area with a range of commercial and institutional buildings serving the wider population of North Fitzroy;*
- *For the aesthetic value of its suburban planning, with the combination of curving streets and garden reserves, and the vistas created by the intersections of standard rectilinear subdivision with the strong diagonals formed by St Georges Road and Queens Parade, the exceptionally wide streets and crescents, the triangular garden reserves, and focal views to buildings and parkland. This aesthetic is underscored by the built form seen in the construction of commercial and institutional buildings to the property alignment along a number of streets and on corners;*
- *The generous public domain, with street plantings of historic elms and 20th century plane trees,*
- *For its low rise streetscapes of intact Victorian and Edwardian buildings one and two-storey terrace and villa housing;*
- *For the range of Victorian and Edwardian-era building form and finish, from the modestly decorated timber cottages and stuccoed Italianate style houses, simply designed corner hotels and shops, to the rich variety of decorative buildings including an extraordinary concentration of decorative bichrome and polychrome brickwork and flamboyantly decorated Italianate residential and commercial terraces, banks and hotels, interspersed very occasionally with dominating narrow spire and tower elements of religious, commercial and institutional buildings.*
- *As one of Melbourne's early residential commuter suburbs served by train and cable tram services linking it to the city by 1888, with extensive Boom era terrace buildings and closely built row housing within this sub-area providing evidence of the effects of public transport on early development;*
- *As essentially a well preserved Boom-era suburb that, despite the abrupt economic collapse of the early 1890s, continued developing during the Great Depression years and into the first decades of the 20th century due to the amenity of its planning, parkland, local schools and shops and extensive public transport. This yielded both the generous frontages and sizes of the post-Depression villa houses and the row house forms and narrow frontages of the Boom era;*
- *For its traditional Victorian-era residential character, evoked by the formal presentation of the decorated façade to the street with its small ornamental front garden, low front fence, pedestrian gateway and front path, with the functional necessities of delivering coal, removal of nightsoil and occasional stabling provided by the back lanes;*
- [...]
- *For the contribution of well-preserved inter-war buildings, particularly the small intact inter-war houses where the building design has adapted to the prevailing built character of the area in siting, scale, decorative quality and stylistic variety.*

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The subject site at 290 Park Street is identified as a contributory graded place in the *City of Yarra Database of Heritage Significant Areas*, while 806-810 Nicholson Street is graded not contributory.

This is in the context of a tiered grading system, with definitions as follows:

Not Contributory - Not contributory to the identified cultural values of the heritage overlay area as stated in the Statement of Significance.

Contributory - Contributory to the identified cultural values of the heritage overlay area as stated in the Statement of Significance.

Individually Significant - A heritage place in its own right. Where an individually significant place is part of a broader heritage precinct, the individually significant place may also be contributory to the broader precinct.

Of the nearby buildings, the Railway Hotel to the south at 800-804 Nicholson Street is graded contributory, as is the pair of shop terraces at 796-798 Nicholson Street. 786-794 Nicholson Street further south is graded not contributory. To the east, the dwellings at 284, 286 and 288 Park Street are all graded contributory.

5.0 Policy Considerations

As the property is included in the Heritage Overlay, it is subject to the provisions of Clause 43.01.

The purpose of Clause 43.01, the Heritage Overlay, is as follows:

To implement the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.

To conserve and enhance heritage places of natural or cultural significance.

To conserve and enhance those elements which contribute to the significance of heritage places.

To ensure that development does not adversely affect the significance of heritage places.

To conserve specified heritage places by allowing a use that would otherwise be prohibited if this will demonstrably assist with the conservation of the significance of the heritage place.

Before deciding on an application, in addition to the decision guidelines in Clause 65, the responsible authority will need to consider, as appropriate:

- *The Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.*
- *The significance of the heritage place and whether the proposal will adversely affect the natural or cultural significance of the place.*
- *Any applicable statement of significance (whether or not specified in the schedule to this overlay), heritage study and any applicable conservation policy.*
- *Any applicable heritage design guideline specified in the schedule to this overlay.*
- *Whether the location, bulk, form or appearance of the proposed building will adversely affect the significance of the heritage place.*

- *Whether the location, bulk, form and appearance of the proposed building is in keeping with the character and appearance of adjacent buildings and the heritage place.*
- *Whether the demolition, removal or external alteration will adversely affect the significance of the heritage place.*
- *Whether the proposed works will adversely affect the significance, character or appearance of the heritage place.*

[...]

- *Whether the location, style, size, colour and materials of the proposed solar energy system will adversely affect the significance, character or appearance of the heritage place.*

Local heritage policy at Clause 15.03-1L includes the following development strategies:

New development, alterations or additions

Retain, conserve and enhance individually significant and contributory buildings as identified in the incorporated document in schedule to clause 72.04 'City of Yarra Database of Heritage Significant Areas.'

Promote development that is high quality and respectful in its design response by:

- *Maintaining the heritage character of the existing building or streetscape.*
- *Respecting the scale and massing of the existing heritage building or streetscape.*
- *Retaining the pattern and grain of streetscapes in heritage places.*
- *Not visually dominating the existing heritage building or streetscape.*
- *Not detracting from or competing with the significant elements of the existing heritage building or streetscape.*
- *Maintaining the prominence of significant and contributory elements of the heritage place.*
- *Respecting the following elements of the heritage place:*
 - *Pattern, proportion and spacing of elements on an elevation.*
 - *Orientation to the street.*
 - *Setbacks.*
 - *Street wall.*
 - *Relationship between solid and void.*
 - *Roof form.*
 - *Chimneys.*
 - *Verandahs and canopies.*
 - *Materials.*
- *Being visually recessive against the heritage fabric through:*
 - *Siting.*
 - *Mass.*
 - *Scale.*
 - *Materials.*
 - *Architectural detailing.*
 - *Texture, colours and finishes.*

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Protecting and conserving the view of heritage places from the public realm (except from laneways, unless fabric visible from laneways is identified as being significant in the Statement of Significance for the place).

Maintain views to the front of an individually significant or contributory building or views to a secondary façade where the building has two street frontages by not:

- *Building over the front of it.*
- *Extending into the air space above the front of it.*
- *Obscuring views of its principal façade/s.*

Setback additions:

- *To avoid facadism, where only the visible façade is retained and the remaining fabric is demolished.*
- *To maintain the visibility of the three-dimensional form and depth of a building.*

Retain or reinstate historic street and laneway fabric and infrastructure, including bluestone.

In circumstances where primary pedestrian access is provided from a laneway, allow for any reinstatement of the laneway fabric to provide universal access.

Demolition

Prioritise the conservation and adaptive reuse of a heritage place over demolition.

Prevent the demolition of individually significant or contributory buildings unless all of the following can be demonstrated:

- *The building is structurally unsound rather than in poor condition.*
- *Alternative stabilisation works have been investigated and are not feasible.*
- *The replacement building and/or works is appropriate for the heritage context.*

Prevent the demolition of any part of an individually significant or contributory building unless all of the following can be demonstrated:

- *The demolition will not adversely affect the significance of the heritage place.*
- *The partial demolition will contribute to the long-term conservation of the heritage place.*
- *The fabric does not contribute to the significance of the place or the area of demolition is not visible from:*
 - *The street frontage (other than a laneway), unless:*
 - *The principal façade addresses the laneway; or*
 - *The fabric visible from the laneway is identified in the Statement of Significance.*
 - *A park or public open space immediately adjoining the site.*
- *The demolition of part of the building allows its three-dimensional form to be retained and does not result in the retention of only the visible façade of the building and demolishing the remainder.*
- *The replacement building is a high quality design.*

Encourage applications for demolition to be accompanied by an application for new development.

Prevent the demolition of an individually significant or contributory building unless new evidence has become available to demonstrate that the building is not of heritage significance and does not contribute to the significance of a heritage place.

[...]

Commercial and industrial heritage places

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Articulate new facades by incorporating simple architectural detailing that does not compete with the more elaborate detailing of adjoining individually significant or contributory building.

[...]

Commercial heritage places

Encourage buildings and works to respect and respond to the existing proportions, patterning and massing of nineteenth and early twentieth century facades and streetscapes.

Maintain the prominence of the street wall through appropriate upper level setbacks.

Encourage new development in activity centres to respect the prevailing street wall height in the immediate area.

Conserve and enhance heritage shopfronts and verandahs.

Encourage new shopfronts to complement the general form and proportion of glazing and openings of adjoining original or early shopfronts, if any.

Maintain the existing canopy/verandah height of adjoining heritage buildings and the heritage streetscape.

Encourage a simple contemporary verandah design, consistent with the form and scale of adjoining verandahs.

Encourage inset balconies above the street wall rather than projecting balconies.

Incorporate an angled splay to buildings on street corners where these are present on adjacent or opposite corners.

[...]

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6.0 Proposal

The proposal for the subject site, as shown in drawings prepared by Architecture Architecture, involves total demolition of all existing built form on the site. It is then proposed to construct a seven storey apartment building with one basement level. The development will be massed and externally treated to present as a community of smaller architectural entities through variations in height, setbacks and architectural treatment.

Street wall heights measure two storeys adjacent to the Railway Hotel to the south, rising to seven storeys at the north-west corner of the site, with a four storey interface to Railway Lane to the north-east. The building will abut the northern and western street boundaries, with the facade aligned with Park Street. This elevation features a central entry way and open stairwell, with apartments with recessed balconies to either side. A flat roofed canopy sheltering the western end of the ground floor returns with a curved corner part way along the Nicholson Street elevation. Here the northern end of the west elevation is distinguished by vertical arrays of circular and rectangular window forms.

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Materials include warm toned brick and raked and textured concrete in warm tones to the walls, grey-green metal cladding to the canopy, and stainless steel mesh screens.

From a heritage perspective, the relevant considerations include the appropriateness of the proposed demolition and the new construction in the context of the streetscape and precinct, discussed in turn below.

Demolition

The two storey red brick building known as 806-810 Nicholson Street, as constructed c.1970-80, does not contribute to the valued character or appearance of the North Fitzroy Heritage Overlay area. The demolition of this building will have no impact on the heritage significance of the place and is supported on this basis.

While it is policy at Clause 15.03-1L to prevent the demolition of contributory graded buildings, the commercial premises at 290 Park Street makes only the most limited contribution to HO327. The single storey interwar building was substantially altered in the post war period by the dominating first floor addition, as well as the changes to the ground level entry door and overpainting. The result is a commercial building which does not reflect its 1920s origins, or relate to the residential character of the wider Park Street Streetscape.

In relation to this demolition, it is salient that Council's previous approval for the site (PLN22/0915) endorsed the total removal of the building. The rationale provided in the Delegate report is as follows:

Council's Heritage Advisor has provided the following response with regards to the proposed demolition.

"With regard to the demolition of the contributory heritage place at 290 Park Street, the information provided in the report prepared by Trethowan provides new evidence to demonstrate that the building has been substantially altered and cannot be considered a well-preserved example of an inter-war building. The building also does not form part of a consistent commercial streetscape, with the adjacent commercial property being graded non-contributory and the heritage streetscape to the east being predominantly residential. In this context, the demolition of the subject building complies with the policy direction of Clause 22.02."

Given the above it is agreed that the demolition of this building will not adversely affect the significance of the heritage place given the alterations which have occurred and which do not contribute to the heritage streetscape.

Notwithstanding the change in heritage policy from Clause 22.02 to Clause 15.03-1L, the heritage considerations relevant to demolition remain essentially unchanged, and are constant with regard to Clause 43.01 and the key question of 'Whether the demolition, removal or external alteration will adversely affect the significance of the heritage place'. The proposed demolition continues to be acceptable on this basis and in the context of the present application for development.

Built Form

Policy at Clause 15.03-1L generally encourages infill development in a Heritage Overlay to respect the pattern, rhythm, orientation to the street, spatial characteristics, fenestration, roof form, materials and heritage character of the surrounding historic streetscape.

The building presents a two storey 'shop-like' street wall component of brick construction at the south end of the Nicholson Street frontage, incorporating a plinth, broad arched opening at ground floor level and vertically oriented first floor windows. In scale, fenestration and materials this element is suitably responsive to the commercial streetscape to the immediate south, complying with policy for commercial heritage places at Clause 15.03-1L which encourages '*works to respect and respond to the existing proportions, patterning and massing of nineteenth and early twentieth century facades and streetscapes.*'

The second through fourth floor levels to the rear of this two storey street wall are appropriately set back from the street boundary by approximately 2.4 metres, in line with policy to '*maintain the prominence of the street wall through appropriate upper level setbacks*'.

At the street corner, the building shifts to a different expression, rising to seven storeys and returning at this scale to Park Street, taking advantage of the corner location and lack of heritage interface to the immediate north to achieve a stronger built form presence.

It is recognised that this scale could be inappropriate in a different location, for example within the middle of a run of two storey buildings as is typical in other sections of Nicholson Street. However, the site sits at the edge of the built form of the North Fitzroy Precinct, in a context that provides the opportunity for greater scale. The emerging built form context in Nicholson Street includes the six storey development currently under construction at 786-794 Nicholson Street, to the south of the subject site at the corner of Liverpool Street, and this will be viewed as a part of the immediate streetscape. Photomontage images of the approved development to that site which were provided as evidence to VCAT are found at Figure 14 and Figure 16 and are set against renders of the proposal prepared by the architects.

Furthermore, this portion of Nicholson Street is likely to see substantial development of scale in the future, as has been seen in comparable commercial heritage precincts within the City of Yarra in recent decades. A series of other nearby sites to the south along the east side of Nicholson Street do not contain graded buildings and may be redeveloped. These include the lots at 734-780 Nicholson Street, south of Liverpool Street, which are located outside of the Heritage Overlay. 734 Nicholson Street contains an unusually large, open transport depot site capable of receiving substantial, multi-storey built form. New development on the south-east corner of Nicholson and Liverpool Streets would likely reinforce a higher scale street wall along this part of Nicholson Street.

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Figure 14 Photomontage showing the approved development at 786-794 Nicholson Street to the right and the existing built form on the subject site at left.
Source: Eagle Vision, 2024



Figure 15 Render from the architectural documentation showing a similar view of the proposal that includes the streetscape to the south and the approved development at 786-794 Nicholson Street to the right.
Source: Architecture Architecture, 2026.

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Figure 16 Photomontage showing the approved development at 786-794 Nicholson Street as seen from the south. The commercial lots that can be seen to the right of the approved development are not included in the Heritage Overlay. Source: Eagle Vision, 2024.



Figure 17 Render from the architectural documentation showing a view from the south, with the approved development at 786-794 Nicholson Street to the right and the proposal to the left. Source: Architecture Architecture, 2026.

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In relation to the Park Street component of the new development, here the proposed envelope presents as four storeys, with a small envelope set back above which will service the surrounding roof terrace. This scale is generally comparable to the three and four storey scale of the southeastern envelope of the approved development under construction at 786-794 Nicholson Street at its Railway Place interface. While the neighbouring sections of both Park Street and Liverpool Street are of a low scale residential character, it is not unusual to find substantial transitions in scale where residential streets interface with major commercial/transport routes. In the City of Yarra, this is an outcome commonly seen along Smith Street and Brunswick Street, Collingwood, and Bridge Road and Swan Street in Richmond, for example.

The approach to scale within the site has been endorsed through initial feedback from the Office of the Victorian Government Architect (OVGA), as set out in the memorandum 'Great Design Fast Track Initial Observations, 10 September 2025'. This included specific recognition of the seven storey form at the west corner of the site and four storeys at the east boundary.



Figure 18 View of the construction at 786-794 Nicholson Street, adjacent to 1 and 3 Liverpool Street.

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Figure 19 *Photomontage showing the relationship between the approved development at 786-794 Nicholson Street and the residential buildings to the east in Liverpool Street.*
Source: Eagle Vision, 2024.



Figure 20 *Render from the architectural documentation showing the relationship between the proposed development and Park Street dwellings to the east.*
Source: Architecture Architecture, 2026.

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Materials are suitably respectful, incorporating face brick in warm tones to the envelopes that are adjacent to the Nicholson and Park Street heritage interfaces and the masonry character that predominates in these locations. The corner component transitions to a fluted concrete pigmented in a warm tone, complemented by the pale eucalypt of the canopy and mesh screens, adding visual interest.

It is policy at Clause 15.03-1L to 'maintain the existing canopy/verandah height of adjoining heritage buildings and the heritage streetscape' and 'encourage a simple contemporary verandah design, consistent with the form and scale of adjoining verandahs'. The proposed cantilevered canopy is interpretive of typical commercial canopies in Nicholson Street, with a metal clad fascia of appropriate width that matches the canopy to the Railway Hotel to the south in terms of height. The curved corner form is an appreciably contemporary response that is in keeping with the architectural language of the proposed host building.

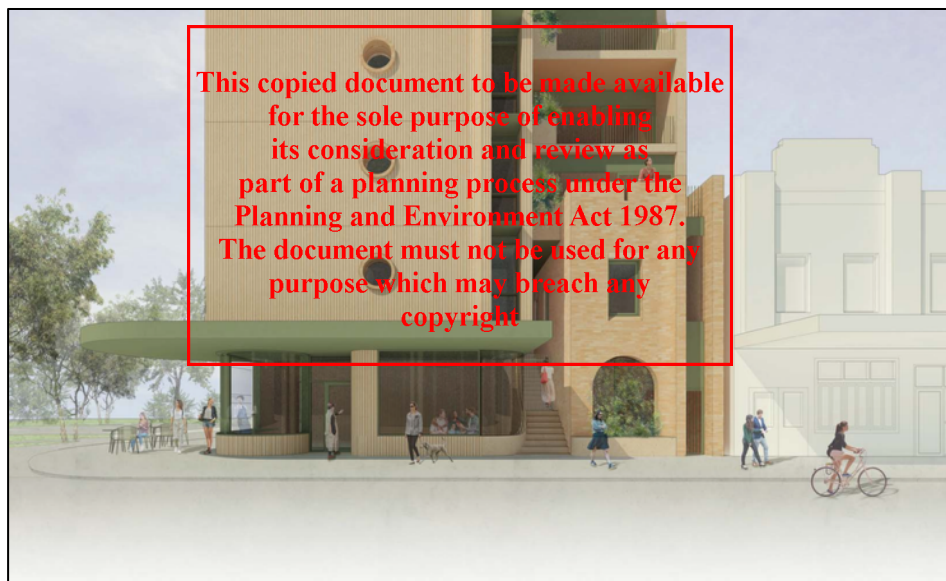


Figure 21 Render from the architectural documentation showing how the proposed canopy relates to that at the Railway Hotel to the south.
Source: Architecture Architecture, 2026.

Conclusion

The demolition of the existing buildings at 290 Park Street and the construction of the new development will not result in an adverse impact on the significance, character or appearance of the streetscape or wider Heritage Overlay precinct. Overall, the proposal is an appropriate design response to the objectives and design guidelines of Clause 43.01 and the heritage policies provided within Clause 15.03-1L of the *Yarra Planning Scheme* and is supported on this basis.