

Former Hoffman Brickworks Update from Heritage Victoria

3 November 2020

We wanted to give you an update on the Former Hoffman Brickworks site

The 1880s Former Hoffman Brickworks site in Brunswick is State heritage listed and protected by law. The site represents the development of Melbourne's brickmaking industry in the nineteenth century and the development of the city and suburbs in the twentieth century. The brick pressing shed is a rare surviving example of this type of building, which, with its machinery illustrates the brickmaking process which took place here. The former engine house at the corner of Dawson Street and Brickworks Drive is partially supported by the brick pressing shed.

Heritage Victoria's role is to provide for the protection and conservation of the cultural heritage of the State of Victoria. Best heritage practice is to do 'as much as necessary, but as little as possible' to change a heritage place. For this reason Heritage Victoria has a continued preference in all the circumstances for the appropriate preservation of this important place, while balancing safety considerations.

Emergency orders

You may be aware that a number of Emergency Orders have been issued by Moreland City Council for the site. The most recent order requires the careful dismantling of the roof and upper storey of the brick pressing shed. This order was made on the advice of structural engineers, and after careful consideration by Heritage Victoria and Council.

The dismantling works are expected to commence soon. Due to the structural issues with the building, it will be dismantled by workers from cranes. The hoppers and main conveyor system which sits above the hoppers, will remain in situ. Some other machinery in the upper storey will need to be removed. This is because it is attached to the roof structure, which will be dismantled. All the machinery associated with the brick pressing shed will remain on site, either in situ or in a protected area.

It is important that these works do not inadvertently result in further damage to the building. Heritage Victoria will continue to be closely involved throughout the dismantling process. We meet on site once a week at a minimum, and have direct lines of communication with the owner, engineer, make safe builder/project manager, and Council. Additionally, our compliance officers continue to make regular inspections of the site, and we have commenced an investigation into the condition of the buildings, and works undertaken.

Heritage Victoria recognises the importance of weatherproofing and security the building as soon as the dismantling works are complete. We will work closely with the owner to ensure the building is adequately protected to prevent further disrepair.

Heritage permit application

Heritage Victoria has received a heritage permit application from the owner of the brick pressing shed and engine house. The application proposes to demolish both buildings and construct a new building including an interpretation centre. The application was publicly advertised from 21 October – 10 November. Fifty-two submissions were received, and they must be considered before making a decision about the application.

More information

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