



Item Petition – Save Gasworks Park

A Petition containing 333 online signatures and 215 written signatures was received via change.org and local residents.

The Petition states the following: -

Victorian Youth Arts Precinct (VYAP) Development

A major schools theatre complex (VYAP) is proposed on the Multinet Site adjacent to Gasworks Arts Park. There has been little information provided to the public on this development, but it has been indicated that construction will start later this year and no Council Planning Permit is required.

The City of Port Phillip considered a petition and questions from concerned community members on 6 July 2022. Council resolved to investigate the heritage requirements; determine ownership of the brick wall separating the Precinct from the Park, and to request the Victorian Schools Building Authority (VSBA) to consult with Council on the project and establish a process to address community concerns.

Since the Council meeting no further information about the project or the process has been provided in response to follow up queries to the Council and the VSBA.

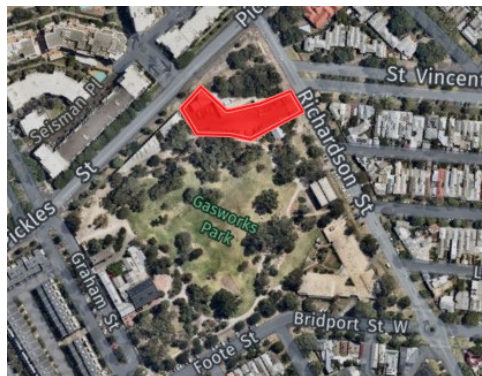
Retention of the brick wall is essential to preserve the amenity and character of Gasworks Arts Park. Its removal or provision of access/egress through the park to the VYAP will transform the Park into a thoroughfare for school related access from its many campuses and for the general public visiting the Precinct.

Current plans do not show provision for any car or bus parking. Day and night-time use is envisaged. Local amenity and convenience will be affected if it is not addressed.

OFFICER COMMENT

Project Background

Albert Park College and Victorian College of the Arts are building a Youth Arts Precinct (VYAP) in the old Multinet Depot next to Gasworks Arts Park.



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The project is State Government funded and will provide learning, performing and practice spaces for young artists. Originally scheduled for completion in Quarter 4, 2024, the project is currently behind schedule.

Under section 16 of the Act, the Minister for Education is exempt from obtaining planning permits for government schools therefore, the Victorian School Building Authority (VSBA) do not require a Council planning permit. For this reason, the community has not been provided with an opportunity to comment on the development.

At this time, the full plans for the project have not been released and the VSBA is currently developing a communications plan to share the details of the project with the community.

Current information on the project can be found on the [VYAP website](#) and [VSBA website](#).

Gasworks Wall

VSBA and the architects (Jackson Clements Burrows Architects) have indicated that there is an opportunity to open the site to the park, similar to how Gasworks Theatre integrates with the reserve. Ideas include lowering or removing sections of the wall and having entrances directly into the park.

Most of the current wall is on Department of Education and Training Victoria (DET) land and therefore any changes to those sections can be undertaken without Council approval.

Officers continue to work with VSBA to determine ownership for each section of the brick wall, as it crosses various title boundaries. We are awaiting survey drawings from the VSBA to better understand which sections belong to Council. Once this information has been obtained, Officers will present this to Council to decide how to progress. There are risk and safety issues to consider with joint ownership of the wall as maintenance and liability response currently sits with both parties.

The wall is within the heritage overlay that applies to the Gasworks precinct and is also included within the area on the Victorian Heritage Inventory. The heritage overlay only applies to the footings and therefore the wall above the footings can be removed without any further approvals.

Council Advocacy

Councillors met with the VSBA and their Architect in September 2022 to better understand the project.

The Mayor has prepared a letter to send to the Minister for Education. This letter will advocate for the VSBA to undertake formal consultation with Council on the design of the Youth Arts Precinct and request that a process be established by the VSBA or relevant State government departments or agencies for addressing local residents' concerns during planning, construction and following the opening of the Youth Arts Precinct. This advocacy will include bus and car parking consideration.

This letter was delayed due to the State Election and will be sent once the Minister for Education is appointed.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Receives and notes the Petition.

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2. Thanks the petitioners for their Petition.
3. Notes that the project is being built by the Victorian Schools Building Authority and therefore is exempt from any Council Planning Permits.
4. Notes that since the last petition was received Officers have been in discussions with Victorian Schools Building Authority regarding the ownership of the wall. The walls heritage status has been confirmed and a meeting between VSBA and Councillors held to understand more about the project.
5. Asks Officers to continue discussions with the VSBA to further understand the intention for the design and confirm ownership of the brick wall, presenting this to Council once determined.
6. Notes the Mayor will continue advocacy work with VSBA once the new Ministry is sworn in, but notes also that this project is being built by VSBA and remains exempt from Council's planning controls.
7. Encourages the petitioners to contact the representatives found on the VYAP website and VSBA website.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil