

6.0 CONSERVATION POLICY

6.1 Introduction

This conservation policy has been developed on the basis of the preceding assessment and analysis of cultural heritage significance of the Melbourne City Baths.

The conservation policy should form the basis of consideration of any future works and development of the baths, recognising that increasing public demand, an expectation of providing contemporary facilities, and continuing to meet community needs will inevitably drive an appetite for change. As a significant heritage place included in the VHR, with external and internal heritage controls, extensive change is generally not supported. However, sensitive, sympathetic and generally limited change is possible. The policies in this chapter provide guidance on such potential change, as well as a framework for ongoing conservation and management of the place in the context of its heritage values and constraints.

The policy should be adopted by the City of Melbourne and other stakeholders as a guide to the future management and protection of the City baths.

6.1.1 Understanding the place

The preceding chapter concluded that the Melbourne City Baths is of historical, social and aesthetic significance. As reflected in the place's inclusion in the VHR, the significance is at a state level. The City Baths is distinguished through retaining its major original internal components, albeit with original fabric and details often removed, updated or replaced. The internal components continue to help demonstrate aspects of the historic internal layout and function of the Edwardian indoor public bathing and swimming facility, which was originally designed to provide gender and class segregation. The City Baths is also notable for its vigorous architectural Edwardian Baroque expression and prominence in the context of the northern end of the city, the prominence and presentation enhanced by its triangular island site and high degree of visibility to all building elevations.

In terms of intactness and retention of original fabric, the exterior of the 1904 development is more intact than the interior, with the latter having been subject to extensive change during successive phases of twentieth century works.

6.1.2 Policies

The policies outlined below include both general and more specific policies. The former address significance and its conservation and management, Burra Charter and levels of significance; and conservation and management of fabric, including specialist advice and repairs and maintenance. The latter focus on specific components of the City Baths, including physical elements and spaces, and issues which relate to the management and operation of the facility. These are followed by policies relating to future use, adaptation, reconstruction, new development, curtilage and setting, views and vistas, recording, building services, risk preparedness, interpretation, archaeology and social values.

The policies are framed to:

- Maintain and conserve the significant fabric and forms of the City Baths.
- Ensure that future works are undertaken in a manner consistent with Burra Charter principles, and in accordance with statutory requirements.

- Support sensitive and appropriate future change, including adaptation, development works and activities which do not diminish the heritage significance and values of the place, and which sustain and support the operation and ongoing viability of the City Baths.

6.1.3 The Burra Charter definitions

The terminology used in this chapter is of a specific nature. The following definitions are from The Burra Charter: *The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 2013* (copy at Appendix A).

Place means a geographically defined area. It may include elements, objects, spaces and views. Place may have tangible and intangible dimensions.

Cultural significance means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations.

- › Cultural significance is embodied in the place itself, its fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places and related objects.
- › Places may have a range of values for different individuals or groups.

Fabric means all the physical material of the place including elements, fixtures, contents and objects.

Conservation means all the processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance.

Maintenance means the continuous protective care of a place, and its setting.

Maintenance is to be distinguished from repair which involves restoration or reconstruction.

Preservation means maintaining a place in its existing state and retarding deterioration.

Restoration means returning a place to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by reassembling existing elements without the introduction of new material.

Reconstruction means returning a place to a known earlier state and is distinguished from restoration by the introduction of new material.

Adaptation means modifying a place to suit the existing use or a proposed use.

Use means the functions of a place, including the activities and traditional and customary practices that may occur at the place or are dependent on the place.

Compatible use means a use which respects the cultural significance of a place. Such a use involves no, or minimal, impact on cultural significance.

Setting means the immediate and extended environment of a place that is part of or contributes to its cultural significance and distinctive character.

Related place means a place that contributes to the cultural significance of another place.

Related object means an object that contributes to the cultural significance of a place but is not at the place.

Associations mean the special connections that exist between people and a place.

Meanings denote what a place signifies, indicates, evokes or expresses to people.

Interpretation means all the ways of presenting the cultural significance of a place.

6.1.4 Levels of significance: Definitions

The approach taken with this report has been to identify areas and elements of primary, contributory and little or no significance at the City Baths. These definitions reflect the areas and elements of the place which are differentiated by their relative level of heritage significance and sensitivity. The different areas and elements are also illustrated in the elevations and plans included at Figure 110 to Figure 113.

Primary significance

Elements of primary significance are components of the original complex and are original or substantially original elements in terms of design, form, detailing and materials. These elements can incorporate some change but it is generally minor in extent; or where it is more extensive the elements themselves represent major original site components such as the former men's and women's pools.

Contributory significance

Elements of contributory significance are components of the original complex and include original elements which have been changed, in some cases quite extensively. They also include secondary (not major) elements of the site; and later sympathetic (if not faithful reconstruction) works to original elements such as the 1980s reworking of the main entrance and the fence to the front of the caretaker's residence.

Little or no significance

Elements of little or no significance are not original elements of the site. These include fabric associated with later works such as the 1980s additions which introduced new building forms to the site; and works which did not involve sympathetic reconstruction or reinstatement of original details.

6.2 Significance

6.2.1 Conserving significance

Policy: Conserving the heritage significance and heritage values of the Melbourne City Baths is the principal objective of this conservation policy.

The heritage significance of the baths is analysed in some detail in this report and articulated throughout. The policies identified below are aimed at conserving and managing this significance. Their adoption and implementation will ensure that the significant building fabric and heritage values are protected in the management of the place, including day-to-day management, and are not impacted by inappropriate works or actions.

Also, in planning works which may change the site from its current appearance and layout, consideration should be given to the assessed significance of the place overall and the potential impact of the works on that significance. A sensitive and respectful approach to adaptation and future development is required where significant elements and areas may be affected.

If alterations or changes are proposed, they should support the ongoing and viable use of the City Baths and should be undertaken in a manner which has minimal impact on significant fabric and on the original form and presentation of the affected element/area and its the heritage values.

6.2.2 The Burra Charter

Policy: The principles of the Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter 2013 should guide and direct all future conservation and related works to the significant elements of the Melbourne City Baths.

As noted, a copy of The Burra Charter is attached to this report at Appendix A.

The Burra Charter, which has been widely adopted across Australia by state heritage agencies and local government:

...sets a standard of practice for those who provide advice, make decisions about, or undertake works to places of cultural significance, including owners, managers and custodians.¹²⁷

The Burra Charter principles, which have been referred to in the preparation of this conservation policy, variously relate to conservation and management; a cautious approach; knowledge, skills and techniques; co-existence of heritage values; use; setting; location; contents; related places and objects; participation; and The Burra Charter process.

6.2.3 Levels of significance: Policies

Policy: The levels of significance identified at the City Baths reflect the relative significance of different elements and areas of the baths, and their relative sensitivity, and should inform the future approach to works.

The definitions of primary, contributory and little or no significance are included above at Section 6.1.4, illustrated in the elevations and plans included at Figure 110 to Figure 113. The policies included in this chapter address these different levels.

In straightforward terms, the elements of primary significance require more careful consideration and protection, and sensitive management; those of contributory significance are subject to some constraints but generally have greater flexibility in terms of their treatment; and those of little or no significance generally are subject to few or no constraints in their treatment, albeit within the context of the conservation and sensitive treatment of the whole of the heritage place.

Primary significance

Elements of primary significance should be retained and conserved. Their retention will ensure that the most original elements of the City Baths remain, supported by their conservation and careful management. These elements should not be demolished, removed or significantly altered to provide for adaptation and development, although some limited but sensitive change may be contemplated. The latter should only occur where the change supports the viable and ongoing use of the City Baths as an historic public bathing and swimming facility in the Melbourne CBD; and the works do not impact on or diminish the overall significance of the baths.

The elements of primary significance include:

Basement

- Original internal walls
- Bases of the former men's and women's pools
- Stair on south side of central offices/clinic (former men's stair)
- Base of chimney

Ground floor

- Original internal walls
- Former men's and women's pools with surrounding decks and associated changing boxes
- Women's slipper baths and Mikvah Bath
- Stairs and associated offices on south and north sides of entrance foyer (former men's and women's stairs) to the extent that they survive
- Stair and office at west end of former men's pool
- Stair at eastern end of former men's pool
- Base of chimney

First floor

- Original internal walls
- Gallery and viewing spaces to former men's pool
- Stair on south side of upper level of central pavilion to Swanston Street

Exterior

- Three remaining 1904 elevations to all adjoining streets (excluding the basement level of the Swanston Street entrance bay)
- Original 1904 roof forms including the cupolas
- Chimney

Contributory significance

Elements of contributory significance generally should be retained and conserved. Their retention will complement that of the elements of primary significance at the City Baths; and will support the overall conservation of the most original elements and areas of the baths. Generally, these elements should not be demolished, removed or significantly altered to provide for adaptation and development. However, they provide greater flexibility for change than the elements of primary significance, particularly where this change supports the viable and ongoing use of the City Baths as an historic public bathing and swimming facility in the Melbourne CBD; and the works do not impact on or diminish the overall significance of the baths.

The elements of contributory significance include:

Basement

- Light courts to the front of the complex (west side to Swanston Street)
- Original basement area overall including the spaces and rooms between original walls (which are of primary significance)
- Spaces internal to the original caretaker's residence

Ground floor

- Ground floor spaces including the spaces between original walls (which are of primary significance) and the originally open spaces which have been infilled and covered over
- Spaces internal to the original caretaker's residence
- Male and female members change rooms, ablutions and showers on the north side of the ground floor

First floor

- Upper level of central pavilion to Swanston Street (currently group fitness studio), including stairs on the north and south sides
- Small massage room on south side of first floor

Exterior

- Basement level of the Swanston Street entrance bay plus re-worked entrance stairs and openings (generally sympathetic reconstruction but not faithfully reconstructed)
- Fence to the former caretaker's residence (generally sympathetic reconstruction)
- Flagpole

Little or no significance

Elements of little or no significance can be retained, removed or replaced. They can also be altered. However, their replacement or alteration has the potential to impact on the elements and areas of primary or contributory significance, and on the significance and heritage values of the City Baths overall. Accordingly, planning such works to these elements should have regard to this report and the policies which support significance; and the works should not impact on or diminish the overall significance of the baths.

The elements of little or no significance include:

Basement

- All basement areas and spaces which were not included in the original 1904 development, including basement spaces (such as squash courts and other spaces) associated with the 1980s works on the east of the site

Ground floor

- The ground floor areas and spaces predominantly associated with the 1980s works on the east of the site

First floor

- All spaces and fabric associated with the 1980s building forms including training decks, gymnasium, cardio studio and cycle and stretch room

Exterior

- All external fabric of the 1980s building forms including roofs and external walls
- Fence to Swanston Street façade (not a sympathetic reconstruction)

6.3 Conservation and management of fabric

6.3.1 Specialist advice and skills

Policy: All work on the City Baths and its significant elements, save for routine maintenance, should be undertaken by suitably qualified practitioners with an understanding of the particular nature of the significance of the baths and its valued historic materials and details.

Utilising the input and expertise of suitably qualified and specialised practitioners, where works are proposed (other than routine maintenance) will assist in the proper conservation and management of the heritage values of the place. Technical advice may also be needed where work on significant fabric is proposed, and accordingly it is important to choose consultants and contractors with proven experience in the relevant field. The involvement of unskilled persons or volunteers in the conservation of the significant elements generally is not encouraged.

Qualified heritage practitioners can also advise on compliance with the statutory heritage requirements.

6.3.2 Repairs and maintenance

Policy: All future repairs and maintenance to the significant elements of the City Baths should be carried out within the principles established in The Burra Charter and in a manner consistent with the assessed significance of the place and individual elements and the conservation policy.

Repair work

The main aim of repair work is to retain as much as possible of the original or early fabric. It is generally recommended that repairs to significant buildings and structures should involve replacing 'like with like': i.e. the replacement of material (missing, deteriorated, broken, etc) with fabric to match the existing. Accepting this principle, it is also important to determine if the material proposed for replacement was appropriate in the first place (i.e. it may not be original); the advice of a qualified heritage practitioner should be sought on this. Wherever possible, only decayed fabric of a heritage structure should be replaced, instead of the whole host element.

Where the replacement of original fabric with 'like for like' is not feasible, through unavailability or in response to code compliance, the aim is to opt for a suitable material which will minimise the impact on the significance of the heritage place.

Repairs to significant elements/fabric should also be carried out by appropriately skilled staff or contractors and may require in some cases prior analysis of the composition of the fabric to be repaired/replaced (e.g. mortars, renders, surface treatments, etc).

Care and maintenance of fabric

The fabric of the City Baths is described in Chapter 3.

Regular monitoring of the condition of significant fabric is an important aspect of its care and maintenance. Broadly the approach to maintenance firstly should be to maintain the building fabric and ensure that significant original fabric does not deteriorate further; and secondly to maintain all existing early fabric. Ad hoc repairs or patch-ups should be avoided.

It is also recommended that regular inspections of the building fabric be undertaken to address maintenance issues, with a focus on susceptible areas such as guttering and downpipes, door and window openings and general drainage associated with the building. Other susceptible areas are the wet areas associated with the pools and change rooms, and the associated water supply; and areas where pool chemicals are stored.

Generally, day-to-day maintenance work can be carried out in accord with the conservation policies and without reference to a conservation specialist. However, major maintenance works should be undertaken under the direction of an appropriately qualified conservation practitioner.

6.4 Elements and spaces of the City Baths

Policy: Considered and sensitive treatment of the different elements and spaces of the City Baths will contribute to and enhance the overall significance of the place.

The following policies address specific elements and areas of the City Baths, including building components and spaces.

6.4.1 Interior

Policy: The overriding policy objective for the interior of the City Baths is the retention and conservation of elements and areas of primary significance, and the preferred retention of fabric of contributory significance, together with retaining evidence of the original internal layout and building programme. The latter includes remaining evidence of the historical gender and class segregation.

Basement

As a general policy, the remaining original internal walls of the basement, which are of primary significance, should be retained. Accepting this, some limited demolition may be possible where it will support and sustain the viable ongoing use of the baths. New openings which are sensitively detailed are preferred to more wholesale removal of the wall fabric. Where more removal is required (i.e. partial removal of internal walls) then wall nibs should be retained to provide evidence of the original wall and its location and form.

The basement spaces and rooms between the original walls (of contributory significance) can generally be fitted out with new fabric, as required.

Accepting the above, the basement spaces which are now the wellness room, physiotherapist and doctor's rooms, and the retail space at the south-west corner of the basement were historically (and respectively) the women's and men's second-class slipper baths and the original caretaker's residence. The original internal but perimeter walls which largely defined the extent of the slipper baths (or bath house) spaces as internal volumes survive; for the caretaker's residence, the original perimeter walls also survive, but not the internal walls as per the layout of the residence. Further demolition of the defining perimeter walls of these original internal volumes is discouraged, and any new fitout to these spaces should not further diminish or detract from an understanding of the original volumes.

The stair on the south side of the central offices/clinic is the former men's stair to the basement. This should be retained to provide ongoing evidence of the historic gender and class segregation. It is noted that its northern counterpart (women's stair) has been removed at basement level and provides access between ground and first floor only.

The external light courts to the front of the complex (west side to Swanston Street) are of contributory significance. While their overall form is original, the fabric at the base of the courts and the fences to Swanston Street are not original having been constructed in the 1980s and not to the same form and detailing as the original elements. Nevertheless, the courts provide evidence of the original planning and design of the baths, allowing light into the basement level men's and women's slipper baths. The light courts should be retained and not built out or over; also avoid overly 'cluttering' the spaces with hard landscaping, equipment or services, although limited services can be located here. The brick and concrete planter boxes are also modern elements which can be retained or removed.

The basement areas and spaces not included in the original 1904 development, including the later 1980s basement spaces can be fitted out and adapted as required, although such works should not impact on the bases of the former men's and women's pools, and the chimney.

Ground floor

As a general policy, the remaining original internal walls of the ground floor which are of primary significance – albeit more limited than what survives in the basement - should be retained.

The women’s slipper baths and Mikvah Bath should also be retained, including the original fabric and form as outlined in Chapter 3. These are important survivors of the original 1904 development and their substantial retention will provide ongoing evidence of the historic gender and class segregation at the baths, being the original first-class baths (the second-class baths were at basement level). The retention of the stairs and associated offices to the south and north sides of the entrance foyer (former men’s and women’s stairs), to the extent that they survive, will also provide this ongoing evidence.

The former men’s and women’s pools are major elements of the original baths design. It is also acknowledged that they have been refurbished over time, and modified, including removal of the original changing boxes and retiling of the pool surface and pool decks. Future refurbishment is likely to be required, given their heavy use and popularity, and their water holding function. As with any repairs to significant elements, the replacement of original and already modified fabric should be undertaken with sensitivity to the original design and materials, and should be based on historic evidence where possible. It is also important with the pools to ensure that new fabric is identified as such. Further, the decks and spaces around the pools should remain clear of clutter, allowing the pools to remain dominant visual forms within the City Baths interior.

The pool shells are original. In the event of a modification being proposed, such as an increase in the pool depth, or changes to the width and length, this would have an impact on the original shell. While it is preferred that this not occur, it may be that such change is required to ensure the ongoing viability of the baths. As stated elsewhere, it is also preferred that change occur in areas of little or no significance, such as the eastern area of the site, and that such an area should be first considered for new facilities of this nature. Therefore such works to the original pools should only be countenanced when they are absolutely necessary and there is no viable alternative.

As with the basement, the ground floor spaces which are now the guest male change rooms, and the staff room and sauna at the south-west corner of the ground floor were historically (and respectively) the men’s first-class slipper baths and the original caretaker’s residence. The remnant original perimeter walls largely survive and generally should be retained. This policy approach also applies to the male and female members change rooms, ablutions and showers on the north side of the ground floor, which were originally the laundry, wash house and baths workshop.

The ground floor spaces which were originally open spaces that have been infilled and covered over, which are of contributory significance, are also demonstrative of the original 1904 development and the separation of building components within the site. The large lounge area at ground floor with mezzanine above was originally the open triangular central courtyard which separated the gendered spaces and was key to the original circulation spine of the baths. Another example is the small triangular light court originally immediately east of the men’s slipper baths, which is currently occupied by the ground floor plunge pool.

While it is not suggested here that these spaces be re-opened to the sky, for the impact this would have on current operations, the spaces should still remain clearly defined within the baths complex. Principally this should be achieved through retaining the bordering walls; and desirably where possible the removal of later fabric which impacts on an understanding of these originally

open spaces. Other complementary means of retaining evidence of the location and extent could include the use of a subtly different material treatment to their floor surfaces. Whatever approach is adopted, the interpretation of these spaces would enhance their legibility and an understanding and appreciation of the original layout of the baths.

The ground floor areas and spaces not included in the original 1904 development, including the later 1980s spaces can be fitted out and adapted as required, although such works should not impact on the base of the chimney.

The open space at the east end of the site is of long-standing in that it has remained undeveloped since the mid-nineteenth century. It is also a remnant of a larger area of open space, most of which was built on and over during the substantial phase of 1980s works, and previously accommodated the second caretaker's residence. Accepting its longevity, this much reduced area has largely been an underutilised space in terms of the City Baths and its operation and presentation. It is not an area which has any particular significance in its form, fabric or character. The fence is also not original. It is therefore a space which could be retained as open, or appropriated for new works, which sustain and support the operation and ongoing viability of the baths.

First floor

The gallery and viewing spaces to the former men's pool is a major element of the original baths design and an element of primary significance. It is also substantially intact to its original state with timber seating and railings to four sides surrounding the pool. The gallery should be retained and provides very limited opportunity for change. Accepting this, contemporary compliance may require some change to the structure, for safety reasons. Such change may involve raising or enhancing the balustrade and/or providing addition handrails and the like. In the event of this, it is recommended that such change be minimised where possible, but to the extent that the safety standards and compliance are achieved. Such works should also be visually unobtrusive, involve limited physical change or impacts on significant fabric, and preferably be reversible. A number of statutory dispensations are also available for buildings of heritage significance. Such dispensations could apply throughout the site, where changes to meet compliance may be required.

The elements of contributory significance, including the upper level of the central pavilion to Swanston Street (group fitness studio) and the small massage room on the south side of the first floor were originally, and respectively, spaces dedicated to separate men's and women's vapour or Turkish baths, changing rooms, cooling rooms, vestibules and the like; and the tower room on the south side of the building. Maintaining the overall internal form of the upper level of the central pavilion is important, as a defined space within the complex. The stair on the south side is of primary significance, and its retention will provide evidence of the men's access to this level and the dedicated gender-specific facilities originally located here. The stair on the north side survives only at between ground and first floor level but is likewise of primary significance.

6.4.2 Exterior

Policy: The overriding policy objective for the exterior of the City Baths is the retention and conservation of fabric of primary significance, and the preferred retention of fabric of contributory significance, and the retention and enhancement of the original form and architectural expression of the baths.

West façade, including main entrance and fence to Swanston Street

The current entrance dates to the early 1980s and replaced the 1960s entrance which in turn had replaced the original 1904 entrance arrangement. The 1980s entrance is not a faithful reconstruction of the 1904 entrance, but a sympathetic part-reinstatement or re-building which was modified to meet the 1980s baths building programme and requirements.

In terms of potential future works to the entrance (which is of contributory significance) the following is a hierarchy of potential outcomes, from most preferred to acceptable in heritage terms. It is also recognised that ongoing operational requirements have to be met and will reasonably dictate the outcome for this modified element and area of the baths. However, any future changes to this element should be undertaken cautiously, and should anticipate the long-term planning for the baths rather than responding in an ad hoc fashion to short-term needs:

1. Faithfully restore and reconstruct the original 1904 entrance
2. Restore more of the original form of the 1904 entrance, including the original separate openings and entrances, but not undertake a full reconstruction including of the form of the steps
3. Retain current form and fabric generally

For options 2 and 3, it is recommended that some localised interpretation be introduced which explains that the entrance is not original and provides images or illustrations of the original form.

The front fence to Swanston Street and to the front of the former caretaker's residence at the south-west corner of the site is not original, and dates from the 1980s phase of works. While the form and detailing of that to the caretaker's residence is generally sympathetic to the original (hence its contributory significance), the remainder of the fence across the long building frontage diverges more significantly from the original design. The latter was solid, providing privacy to the window openings to the original men's and women's slipper baths at basement level. The open form of the current fence was never intended with the original design. The current fence is also the third on the site, with the previous fence being of blockwork construction, as illustrated in the images prior to the 1980s works.

If the opportunity arose, the preference in heritage terms is to restore the form and detailing of the original fence, including the solid brick panels, render detailing and bluestone base. If this is not contemplated for operational reasons, the 1980s fence (of little or no significance) can be further changed. However, it is important that new works to the fence retain the sense of the light courts being enclosed; and the fabric and detailing of works to the fence should also remain broadly sympathetic.

Elsewhere on the west façade, it is recommended that the former signage panels be restored or reinstated to the northern and southern pavilions at either end of the façade (as described in Chapter 3).

North and south elevations

The north and south elevations are generally highly intact (the south slightly less so). Evidence also remains on these elevations of the original tuck-pointing to the external brick walls, although it has mostly been lost to the Swanston Street elevation, which is more exposed to the weather. In heritage terms, the restoration and reinstatement of the tuck-pointing throughout is encouraged.

The integration of the 1980s works with the original 1904 building components is addressed elsewhere in this chapter. However in terms of the affected north and south elevations, to the west of the interface with the later fabric there should be conservation works to enhance the original wall materials and details. At these interfaces there is more in the way of 'blending' and 'blurring' between the new and old fabric. Should the opportunity arise with new works, then some unravelling or separating of old and new fabric should be undertaken. The sensitive areas are those associated with the chimney and eastern section of the original washhouse, as seen on the north elevation. These are examples of where new and old fabric coexists and the original element is not always clearly discernible.

In the interests of improving external security and surveillance, exterior lighting may be introduced to the outside of the building complex. However, this should be limited in extent and discretely placed to avoid visual impacts on the building. Up-lighting or similar may also be used in a manner which enhances the presentation of the building at night and highlights the significant architectural details.

Openings in external walls

The north elevation of the 1904 development is highly intact and generally speaking, opportunities for the introduction of new openings, or the significant modification of existing openings, is very limited for this elevation.

On the south elevation, two original openings towards the western have been modified but finished in original detailing. Further limited change could occur to these openings, in preference to the introduction of new openings.

On the western façade to Swanston Street, more extensive change has occurred including to openings, as described in Chapter 3. Further change could occur here, as outlined above, however this mainly relates to the main entry. The remainder of the façade is generally highly intact and highly visible, being part of the principal presentation of the site. At basement level, two fire escape doors have been introduced. Further change to these might be contemplated, but otherwise the opportunity for additional change to the basement level openings is very limited. The same applies to the ground and first floor openings.

The 1980s elevations provide the greatest opportunity for new openings and other works.

Figure 105 2018 aerial image of the City Baths, showing complex roof forms

Source Nearmap 23 August 2018



Figure 106 1945 aerial image of the City Baths, showing largely original roof forms

Source Land Victoria



Roof

As described in Chapter 3, the roof comprises original, modified and later components, although the original roof forms predominate; this can also be seen when comparing the current and 1945 aerial photographs at Figure 105 and Figure 106 respectively. The current steel roof cladding - including pitches with rolled seam detailing and others in corrugated steel - is not original having generally been replaced in a like-for-like manner as part of the 1981-3 works. The cupolas largely retain their original steel shingle cladding and detailing with some replacement. The 1980s roof components in the east of the site are clearly later.

The original roof forms which are described in Chapter 3 as 'a theatrical roofscape of cupola-crowned belvederes and balustraded parapets' should be retained and conserved. New cladding should replicate the original steel cladding, with rolled seam detailing, where present.

While later and modified roof components are less sensitive than original components, and can generally be modified or replaced, the high level of visibility of this site and its roof forms from the public realm means that works to all roof components, including later roof forms and works, can potentially have a visual impact on the place. It is therefore important that any changes to visible roof forms be undertaken with sensitivity to the form, materials and detailing of the original roofs. This is also not a site where introducing visible new and contrasting roof cladding would be acceptable. There may be the opportunity to install solar panels on less visible roof planes and valleys, but again this would only be acceptable where the subject section of roof has no or restricted visibility. Similarly, to date roof plant and platforms have largely been concealed from the public realm and this approach to concealment should continue to inform further works of this nature.

6.4.3 1980s additions and works

As noted in Chapter 2, the 1980s additions were intended to 'blend' with and into the original design. This blending occurred both internally and externally; and involved both sympathetic works to original details and elements, and entirely new works which had no basis or intention in the original design. The 1980s works are also in some cases difficult to identify and distinguish from the original fabric, especially at the interfaces of the new and original fabric.

As a general policy, the 1980s additions which introduced new building forms to the site can be demolished. While the 1980s works to the original elements of the site can also, as later fabric, be removed, such as action is potentially challenging in terms of replacing this fabric. Where it has been introduced in a sympathetic manner to complement the original design and form, and to not be visually jarring or incongruous, the replacement fabric should be similarly sympathetic. Accepting this, in preference any new or replacement fabric to the original parts of the baths' complex should be at least discernible in detailing, without striking a strong contrast, to avoid future confusion as to its origin. This was not always achieved with the 1980s fabric where the transition from original to new material has not been clearly expressed.

The above is distinct from reproducing missing elements or details of the place. Where an element is being considered for reconstruction, such as the original steps and entrance arrangement to Swanston Street, or the original front fence to Swanston Street, then a faithful replication or reconstruction is recommended as is consistent with The Burra Charter. This is also addressed below at Section 6.8.

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6.4.4 Objects, archives, ephemera and related material

Policy: Objects, archives, ephemera and related material associated with the City Baths have the potential to enhance the significance of the place and to contribute to ongoing research into the baths and their future interpretation and presentation.

The collection of objects, archives, ephemera and related material associated with the City Baths is extensive.

Figure 107 Current image of the clock



Figure 108 1980s image of the clock, as reproduced in 'The Ultimate Hoot'



Source City of Melbourne Art and Heritage Collection

Figure 109 c.1980s image, with Ingram's Clock at upper left

Source City of Melbourne Art and Heritage Collection



Much of it, including historic reports, photographs, plans, pamphlets, posters and the like has been accessed and drawn on in the preparation of this report. A selection of historic plans is reproduced at Appendix B, while historic images are reproduced throughout this report. Both the City of Melbourne and City of Melbourne Art and Heritage hold archives, with the former maintaining a vast collection of plans and drawings associated with works to the baths over many decades.

The objects are also of note and include many held within the baths such as honour boards and trophies, and objects associated with the pool's history. The clock, which is illustrated at Figure 107-Figure 109, was reputedly given or relocated to the baths from an unknown location, thought to be possible be regional railway station. A clock of the same make was removed from Castlemaine Railway Station; however, it is now on display in the tourist information centre in the Castlemaine Market Building.¹²⁸ The clock in the Bath's collection is an example of an object where the provenance, and therefore the significance, is not fully known or understood. More research is recommended to confirm and clarify the provenance of this and other objects associated with the baths, to further an understanding of their significance.

Regardless, the relevant and authentic objects and related material provide a rich resource for ongoing research and interpretation. The authentic items complement the baths and enhance an understanding of the historic use and function of the place.

6.5 Management and operational issues

While not a specific focus of this report, it is recognised that operators and managers of public pools, including municipal councils, 'must work within a diverse web of standards, state legislation and industry best practice'.¹²⁹

Issues which are regularly addressed in the management and operation of the City Baths include equitable access, visitor wear and tear, humidity and wet conditions, pool safety, management of pool chemicals and signage and way finding.

All these matters to a greater or lesser degree will require physical interventions into the place from time to time. Without detailing what they all might be, planning such interventions before their implementation should in most instances involve specialist heritage advice to ensure the interventions are achievable and supportable in heritage terms. This CMP, and the policies included below, should also be referred to.

6.5.1 Equitable (compliant) access

Policy: Future works to the Melbourne City Baths which provide for equitable access should be carried out within these conservation guidelines and be sensitive and responsive to the significance of the place.

Providing and maintaining equitable (compliant) access to the Melbourne City Baths is a statutory operational requirement; it is also generally supported in heritage terms as a means of ensuring continued public access to the significant historic baths.

Accepting this, the physical insertions and works required to provide this access can potentially impact on the heritage place. The introduction of compliant access internally also relies on the provision of flat floor plates creating level surfaces at each floor of the building. Without this, more lifts and ramps may need to be introduced.

As per the policy on 'Adaptation' (see Section 6.7 below) such works should in preference be limited in extent; concentrated in elements and areas of little or no significance; where involving significant elements and areas, the works should retain the maximum possible extent of significant fabric; and where possible should be reversible.

Internally, works to ensure or enhance equitable access between spaces and movement between levels can include ramps, platform lifts and more substantial enclosed lifts; and widening of doorways and new openings in walls. The interior to the City Baths provides some flexibility for works of this nature, given the areas of little or no significance, or in some cases, of contributory significance. These areas are less sensitive, and subject to the design may have the potential to accommodate these works. An opportunity for an internal lift occurs on the south of the site to Franklin Street, accessed off the modified door opening east of the original caretaker's residence. This provides access to a 1980s stair which could be adapted to a lift, subject to design and the resolution of other internal access issues.

Externally, the provision of equitable and more compliant access is more problematic given the high level of intactness (and primary significance) of the original 1904 part of the complex, but much less so in heritage terms where 1980s fabric is involved. The zero setbacks to both Victoria and Franklin streets would also render the provision of an external lift, set off from the building elevations, challenging. Non-original courts in the 1980s fabric could also accommodate new lifts, however such access at the east end of the site would not be on par with the principal address and access to the front of the building, at its west end. Consideration should also be given to the visual and physical impacts of a lift overrun.

Any works of this nature to the exterior should also result in a logical connection to the interior and should work with the internal circulation.

On Swanston Street, to the existing main entrance, the provision of a visible new lift or lift platform is particularly difficult. The significance of this façade, the prominence and primacy of the large central entrance bay, and the intact form and detailing of the facade overall render it especially sensitive in heritage terms. The Swanston Street elevations flanking the central bay with their regular rhythm and existing openings, setback behind the fence to Swanston Street and the light court inside the fence, also do not readily lend themselves to the placement of a lift or similar insertion.

Accepting this, the current configuration of the elevated entrance is not original. At street level, beneath the main entrance landing at the junction of the flanking entrance steps, an existing entry to the sports clinic in the original basement, could subject to sensitive design be utilised for the provision of this access through to a new internal lift to the upper floors.

A new and equitable public entrance could be considered for the south side of the site, to Franklin Street (this is discussed elsewhere, see Section 6.7.2 below). This would provide the opportunity for fully integrated equitable access.

6.5.2 Visitor wear and tear

Policy: Regular monitoring of visitor wear and tear will help to maintain and protect significant fabric from incremental damage over time.

As a place of public access, with a high level of visitation and use, there is the potential for significant fabric to be impacted over time by incremental damage. While much of the current fabric of the pools and changing rooms is not original, and the same obviously applies to the 1980s fabric and spaces, there is still considerable original fabric in the walls, windows, ceilings and roofs of the baths, which requires protection from damage. Regular monitoring of the condition of the fabric, especially in heavily trafficked areas, is recommended. This is also addressed above under 'Repairs and maintenance'.

6.5.3 Pool chemicals

Policy: The use of pool chemicals within the City Baths is strictly controlled and regulated, and requires particular care and vigilance in regard to protecting significant fabric.

The use of pool chemicals at the City Baths throws up especial challenges for a heritage place such as this, yet the City Baths cannot operate without using these chemicals. There are also stringent regulatory and safety requirements which have to be met in terms of the delivery, unloading, storage and carriage of these chemicals within the complex. All this has the potential to impact on heritage fabric, to ensure that standards are met.

The chemicals are presently delivered to an entrance on Franklin Street, in 1980s fabric. To be fully compliant, the delivery vehicle should be held within a dedicated bunded area internal to the complex, in the event of a chemical spill. There are also regulations surrounding spills, and immediate access to showers for the chemical handlers. From there, the internal carriage and storage of the chemicals is similarly strictly controlled. Future compliance is likely to be more difficult to achieve, rather than less.

As with other potential changes and interventions at the baths, careful planning is required in combination with obtaining specialist heritage advice to ensure the works are achievable and supportable in heritage terms. Undertaking such works in areas of little or no significance is again preferred, including in the 1980s components of the site which offer the greatest opportunity to improve the chemical delivery and storage.

6.5.4 Signage and way finding

Policy: A consistent format and graphic language for signage and way finding within the City Baths is preferred, as a means of being more sensitive to the heritage character of the complex.

As a public bathing and recreational facility, there are minimum standards to be met in regard to signage (informative, directional, etc) and way finding. There are also commercial tenancies within the complex.

Having such signage within and external to the heritage place is understood and accepted, however it is preferred – for the signage which is the responsibility of baths management – that a more consistent format and graphic approach is adopted, to help minimise visual impacts and the impression of a plethora of different signs. The location of the signage should also be carefully considered, to avoid physical impacts on heritage fabric.

6.6 Future use

Policy: Future use of the City Baths should have regard for those factors which have been identified in the statement of significance as contributing to its significance and should not detract from the identified cultural significance of the place.

The Melbourne City Baths was purpose-built as a public indoor bathing and swimming facility, and the heritage significance of the place is directly related to its design, construction and use over the last c. 110 years. It is preferable, from a heritage perspective, that the facility retain this historic (or related) function in the future, including a high level of public access. It is also acknowledged that retention of this use and function, and compliance with relevant legislation and regulations, will require changes to the fabric of the place from time to time. Such works may result in some loss of significant fabric but should on balance retain and sustain the historical use of the place which is an important attribute of its significance.

6.7 Adaptation

Policy: Future adaptation of and works to the Melbourne City Baths should be carried out within these conservation guidelines and be sensitive and responsive to the significance of the place.

6.7.1 Functional and physical adaptation

The City Baths has been modified and adapted over time, to accommodate changing needs. These changes include those which responded to evolving community expectations, such as the substantial works of the 1980s which introduced squash courts and the like. Other changes have included reconfiguration of the main entrance on Swanston Street on two occasions; those which are more in the way of minor adjustments to layout and internal spaces; and modifications to meet statutory obligations and pool operational requirements. However, throughout, the original arrangement of the two separate but principal pools has been retained, as has the relationships between the main original spaces, and the public circulation programme of arrival and entry from Swanston Street with generally unimpeded movement through the place to the swimming pools.

Future and on a ‘needs basis’ functional and physical adaptation of the City Baths is generally supported in heritage terms, provided it is undertaken with sensitivity to the significance of the place. This includes sensitivity to the historic character, fabric and detailing of the place, and to its historic and original internal layout. Future adaptation works should also not diminish the relationship between the two pools, and the entry area; and moreover this historical relationship should where possible be reinforced and strengthened.

Future adaptation works should also, as far as possible, be limited in extent and concentrated in elements and areas of little or no significance. These areas provide the greatest opportunity to achieve more extensive and flexible flat floor space, which would support current and anticipated baths’ operations and programs.

Where adaptation works include alterations to significant elements and areas, they should be designed to retain the maximum possible extent of significant fabric, and where reasonable and sensible, should be reversible. Adaptation works should also have regard for avoiding impacts on the external presentation of the original parts of the baths building, and on the circulation programme.

Where changes are made, and new fabric is introduced, such works should generally be distinguished and differentiated from the original. However, subtle distinctions are preferred here rather than overt or jarring differences, with the new materials and works being sympathetic in detailing and appearance. Given the particular use and environment of the baths, new materials should also be chosen with the conditions in mind in terms of robustness and ongoing maintenance.

Changing internal levels also pose problems within the complex, particularly between the 1980s works and the original 1904 ground and first floor levels. Attempts to address this should be concentrated in the 1980s works, rather than the original parts of the complex. This would require extensive removal of 1980s fabric, which raises no heritage concerns. It is also accepted that this is more likely to occur as part of a wholesale redevelopment of the eastern sections of the site (discussed below at Section 6.9).

Other more specific guidance on potential adaptation is provided elsewhere in this chapter, including at Section 6.2.3 above.

6.7.2 A new main entry?

While the significance and primacy of the existing main entrance to Swanston Street is recognised, it has been reconfigured on two prior occasions and even now, it fails to provide equitable and compliant access or a highly functioning entry and introduction to the City Baths. The constraints of working with a 1904 design and significant heritage fabric are substantial.

An alternative to making yet more physical changes to the main entrance could include consideration of introducing a new main, and compliant entry. For all the reasons outlined here in terms of the significance and sensitivity of the Swanston Street façade, a new or additional entry should not be introduced to this elevation. However, Franklin Street does offer this opportunity, particularly in the 1980s fabric in the eastern half of the elevation, or potentially in new fabric associated with new development in this area of the site. The design and presentation of such an entry should also ensure that it does not compete with or diminish the importance and prominence of the historic main entry. The latter should be retained as a functioning alternative entry, used by staff and/or tenancy operators. As a balancing action, the full original form of the Swanston Street entrance bay could also be reconstructed (see below).

Should this be considered, the siting, form and scale of a new entry to Franklin Street should not compete with or detract from the east end of the 1904 development, including the tower with cupola and gable end to the pool volume. Desirably the new entry should also be setback at this juncture, or another device used to facilitate the transition between the original and new fabric.

6.8 Reconstruction

As a general comment, reconstruction of removed or modified elements is not necessarily encouraged here, on a wholesale basis. Many original or early elements have been removed or significantly modified to accommodate changing uses at the site, including the main entrance to Swanston Street, Swanston Street fence, second caretaker's residence, boiler house (excluding the prominent chimney), and the original water towers.

Recognising that the evolved complex generally reflects current operational needs, the reintroduction or reconstruction of the missing elements would in most instances not support the operation and ongoing viability of the City Baths. However, there may be the opportunity to undertake some reconstruction in the context of balancing future works or development at the site. Elements associated with the main entrance to Swanston Street, such as the original steps and entrance arrangement or the original front fence, could lend themselves to reinstatement. Similarly, the original face brick treatment to the corner pavilions which has been rendered over could be reinstated.

Where an element is proposed to be reconstructed, then a faithful reconstruction based on documentary and other evidence is recommended as is consistent with The Burra Charter.

6.9 New development

Policy: Any future development of the Melbourne City Baths should be carried out within these conservation guidelines; be sensitive and responsive to the significance of the place; and support the ongoing operation and viability of the facility.

Elsewhere this conservation policy addresses future adaptation of the City Baths and provides guidance on what can be demolished and modified, largely in response to the different elements and areas of significance within the site.

As noted above, the 1980s additions can be demolished. It is also reasonable to consider their replacement, with new works that allow for spaces which are better suited to contemporary baths operations and recreational programmes. However, as a highly visible site, including the eastern area where the 1980s development is located and could be considered for replacement, there are constraints on what can be achieved. These constraints go to the form, height and scale, siting and integration of any new development in this area with the original 1904 development.

Regarding height and scale, in all instances the original 1904 development on the site should remain prominent and readable, with most new development set back to the east of the original works including the original roof forms. There may be the opportunity to place an addition in the location of the later mezzanine and roof deck in the centre of the 1904 development. However, this is potentially a visually sensitive area and any works proposed for this location should be modelled in detail to assess their visibility from the public realm and any impacts on the original building and roof forms.

Further east on the site, the chimney should also be retained and remain prominent and visible in any development of the site – as it was in the 1980s works. This places constraints on the height of new works in the eastern part of the site. The current two-three storey scale of the 1980s works is likely to be at the acceptable limit, although further below ground works in the east of the site can be contemplated as a means of achieving further internal space. A new level may be contemplated behind and inside the 1980s parapets, again at the east end, but this too would require detailed modelling and analysis of potential impacts on the chimney. This could work in conjunction with lowered floor levels in the 1980s components.

Regarding integration of the new and the old, and as already noted, the 1980s additions ‘blended’ with and into the original building and in some cases externally are difficult to identify and distinguish from the original fabric. In current heritage practice, this is not a desirable outcome, and the 1904 development should not lose its ‘identity’ through being incorporated into later works. On this basis it is preferred that new works in the east have a visible or discernible separation from the original components of the baths and avoid the outcome of ‘blurring’ the connection of the two major phases of development on the site. This notwithstanding, any new fabric abutting original parts should avoid striking a strong contrast or a strong discontinuity.

More generally in regard to the form, fabric and detailing of new works, new fabric should be sympathetic but still discernible as new. This is not a site where you would introduce entirely new building materials in an extensive way.

It is also recommended that any visible new roof forms – which inevitably will be visible here – are complementary to the original roof forms, but do not slavishly copy or reproduce these forms. As already noted, this is not a site where introducing visible new and contrasting roof cladding would be acceptable.

6.10 Curtilage and setting

Policy: The City Baths occupies a densely developed island site which is seen ‘in the round’; its curtilage and setting contribute to its 360 degrees appreciation and presentation.

The ‘heritage curtilage’ of a building, complex or site has been defined as ‘the area of land (including land covered by water) surrounding an item or area of heritage significance which is essential for retaining and interpreting its heritage significance’.¹³⁰ The curtilage can or should also be an area which is managed to the advantage of the heritage place, including the maintenance of heritage significance. For the City Baths, however, there is no land area to speak of belonging to or associated with the site which can be managed as a heritage curtilage, given the lack of setbacks to the building forms and the development to all property boundaries.

Nevertheless, the City Baths has a ‘setting’ which is the space around the complex that surrounds and adjoins the triangular island site. It comprises the footpaths and adjoining wide roadways of Swanston, Victoria and Franklin streets. This is a generous setting, albeit a ‘hard’ one, which contributes to the high level of visibility to all site elevations. Clark’s original design of the baths also provided for all the elevations to have architectural interest, notwithstanding the primacy of the west elevation to Swanston Street. This high level of visibility of the City Baths, within its setting, is expected to remain. Pedestrians can and will continue to experience and appreciate the development with its historic forms and detailing up close; while passing drivers on the adjoining roads will also continue to see the prominent site.

Franklin Street on the south side of the City Baths is one of the wide streets in the setting, which affords generous views of the historic building. It is understood that a Metro Rail station entrance will be constructed in this area, and that this development may involve the closure of Franklin Street to vehicles and creation of a landscaped pedestrianised plaza. While the details of this development are not fully known, the new station entrance should in preference be setback from the immediate context or south side of the station. It may impact on some proximate views of the City Baths, however maintaining some separation or 'free' space between the baths and the new station entry will help to limit any visual impacts in this area.

The establishment of the plaza, depending on its landscaped treatment, also has the potential to enhance the south setting of the baths although the original design took the roadway into consideration, and did not necessarily anticipate a park or similar in this location. In line with that, extensive plantings or large trees should in preference be avoided in close proximity to the baths' south elevation, to reflect the historic character of this aspect of the setting.

6.11 Views and vistas

Policy: There are views and vistas of the City Baths from some distances; these should be recognised and managed to ensure the views remain into the future.

Views and vistas of the City Baths, to varying degrees, can be had when approaching from the east, west, north and south.

From the east on Victoria Street, the 1980s additions to the baths are foremost in views, although the original chimney is prominent in these views. These easterly views of the chimney are important and should be managed for retention and not impacted further or concealed by any new development on the east of the site.

From the west on Victoria Street, views of the western façade and principal frontage open up as the viewer approaches the wide intersection with Swanston Street (notwithstanding the historic toilet block in the south-west of the intersection, which briefly impacts on these views). From this perspective, the viewer has the benefit of seeing the full force of the vigorous 1904 design, including the roof forms and prominent cupolas, and main entrance bay. The chimney is visible in these views. The red brick materiality of the baths, and the steel roof cladding and roof profile, also stand out in these views notwithstanding modern large-scale development in the background. The expansive intersection is of long standing and has for the history of the City Baths provided for generous views to the western frontage, enhancing its presentation. It is preferred that this intersection is not further 'cluttered' with tramways or related buildings, which might impact on these important and unfolding views from the west.

From the north on Swanston Street, the views when approaching are not as generous as those from the west, but again open up as the viewer approaches the intersection with Victoria Street. At the intersection, the long north elevation of the City Baths is visible to the viewer.

From the south on Swanston Street, the views are largely blocked by (RMIT) development on the east side of the street, with the City Baths becoming more visible as one approaches the intersection with Franklin Street. In normal circumstances, the south elevation is fully visible at this point, but is currently blocked by the Metro Rail development construction site and temporary building. When the latter is removed, the views from the south will return.

6.12 Recording

Policy: Where physical change is proposed with future adaptation or other works to the City Baths, including demolition or removal of existing elements and fabric of primary or contributory significance, then these elements should be recorded prior to such works commencing.

In the event of any significant change being proposed, it is good practice to record the existing fabric prior to works being undertaken. Such a record should be in the form of an archival quality photographic record undertaken in accordance with Heritage Victoria's Technical Note: Photographic Recording for Heritage Places and Objects.

6.13 Building services

Policy: The ongoing upgrading, replacement and introduction of services to the Melbourne City Baths should be undertaken with consideration of limiting or avoiding physical and visual impacts.

Upgrading, replacing and introducing new services to the City Baths is a required undertaking, and an aspect of the works to the place which help sustain its operations and viability. The introduction of lighting, mechanical ducting, fire and other building services should where possible be undertaken in a manner which has limited visual and physical impacts on significant fabric and areas. Existing service conduits and ducts should be re-used, and new services should in preference be introduced in less visible fabric, and less sensitive areas such as those of little or no significance. Such a programme would also allow for the future upgrade of services in a way that is clearly recognisable as a coordinated layer of new work and elements.

6.14 Risk preparedness

Policy: City Baths management should ensure that risk awareness and preparedness is 'built into' their daily and longer-term planning for the site.

City Baths management already address risk management and preparedness on a regular basis. The swimming function of the site, the use of pool chemicals, the public exercise programs – these all carry risks for participants and users of the site.

In terms of the heritage elements of the site, and the significant fabric, there are also risks arising from the use of the baths and its operations. Such risks include water damage and flooding, due to broken or leaking pipes and pools; chemical spillages; fire caused by electrical faults and equipment; and vandalism. In part these can be mitigated through the use of monitoring and surveillance, and regular maintenance and upkeep.

Risks from natural events are another category. The most likely of these include lightning strikes, storm damage, particularly wind and rain but possibly hail, with damage to the roof forms and windows. While these cannot be prevented their effects can be mitigated by the installation and maintenance of lightning conductors and through regular repairs and maintenance to the building fabric.

It is also possible for the building to sustain damage from traffic given its location adjacent to busy roads and lack of building setbacks. These, and other issues should be addressed through a risk preparedness plan.

6.15 Interpretation

Policy 18: Interpretation of and in the City Baths is critical to conveying and telling the important history of the place, and of ensuring a comprehensive understanding and appreciation of the significance of the place.

The current and future interpretation of the City Baths should be of the highest quality, as befits the significant history and heritage values of the place. It can draw on the rich collection of objects, images, ephemera and associated material, and address the important historical themes as outlined in the history chapter of this report and articulated in the assessment and statement of significance. Further research would also enhance an understanding of the themes and identify images and other illustrative materials to benefit the interpretation. The themes include (but are not limited to):

- Early history of the baths, and their establishment as the first municipal indoor public bathing and swimming facility in Melbourne
- Association with the much earlier 1860s municipal indoor baths on the site, believed to have been the first of its kind in Australia
- Distinctive Edwardian Baroque architecture of the baths, and the influences at play in the design
- Historic gender and class segregation
- Using the baths for hygiene
- Evolving recreational uses and programs at the baths
- Key events in the baths' history
- Famous people associated with the baths

At the very least, continuing the current practice of placing historic images and other items in the public spaces is encouraged. A more comprehensive program could go further, exploring the themes as outlined and utilising more sophisticated mediums and forms of interpretation. Allowing guided and supervised access into the currently restricted or less public areas of the baths could also be considered, subject to operational needs and the demands of visitor management.

6.16 Archaeology

Policy: While the City Baths is not an identified historical archaeological place, it was formerly the site of the 1860s public baths which in turn were the first of their kind in Australia.

In Victoria, known historical archaeological sites are included in the Victorian Heritage Inventory and protected under the *Heritage Act 2017*. Any excavation or sub-surface works at the baths, including digging foundations for new development, or other below ground works associated with pool services and the like, have the potential to uncover or disturb physical remains and/or artefacts associated with the earlier pool building on the site. In the event of such material being discovered or uncovered within the site, Heritage Victoria should be immediately contacted. They can then advise on whether there is any significance associated with the find, and the best course of action. This may lead to the involvement of an archaeologist.

6.17 Social value

Policy: A formal appraisal of public attachment (or social value) as related to the City Baths should be undertaken to enable a more comprehensive assessment against Criterion 'G' of the Heritage Council of Victoria criteria.

As noted in Chapter 4 of this report, a formal assessment of community attachment to the Melbourne City Baths has not been undertaken for this CMP. Commentary in this report regarding the potential for this heritage value to exist is therefore based on reasonable assumptions as opposed to evidence, and a full social value assessment of the baths should in preference be undertaken.

In the event that such groups/communities are confirmed, and the place is considered to meet the threshold for social value – including at the state level – the objective would be to work with those groups/communities to develop approaches to managing the value.

Concepts of communal attachment to places derived from experience and practice have achieved widespread recognition in heritage practice over the past 20 years. Over a similar period, challenges associated with the assessment and management of social value through existing statutory regimes have become increasingly evident.

A review of approaches to the identification, assessment and management of social value was the subject of a report prepared for the Heritage Council of Victoria by Lovell Chen and the Australian Centre for Architectural History, Urban and Cultural Heritage (ACAHU) in May 2018. The report (which is not public) makes recommendations for the preparation of guidelines to support heritage practitioners, community groups and statutory authorities to identify and assess places of social value to a community group, or groups, through the collection of an evidence base.

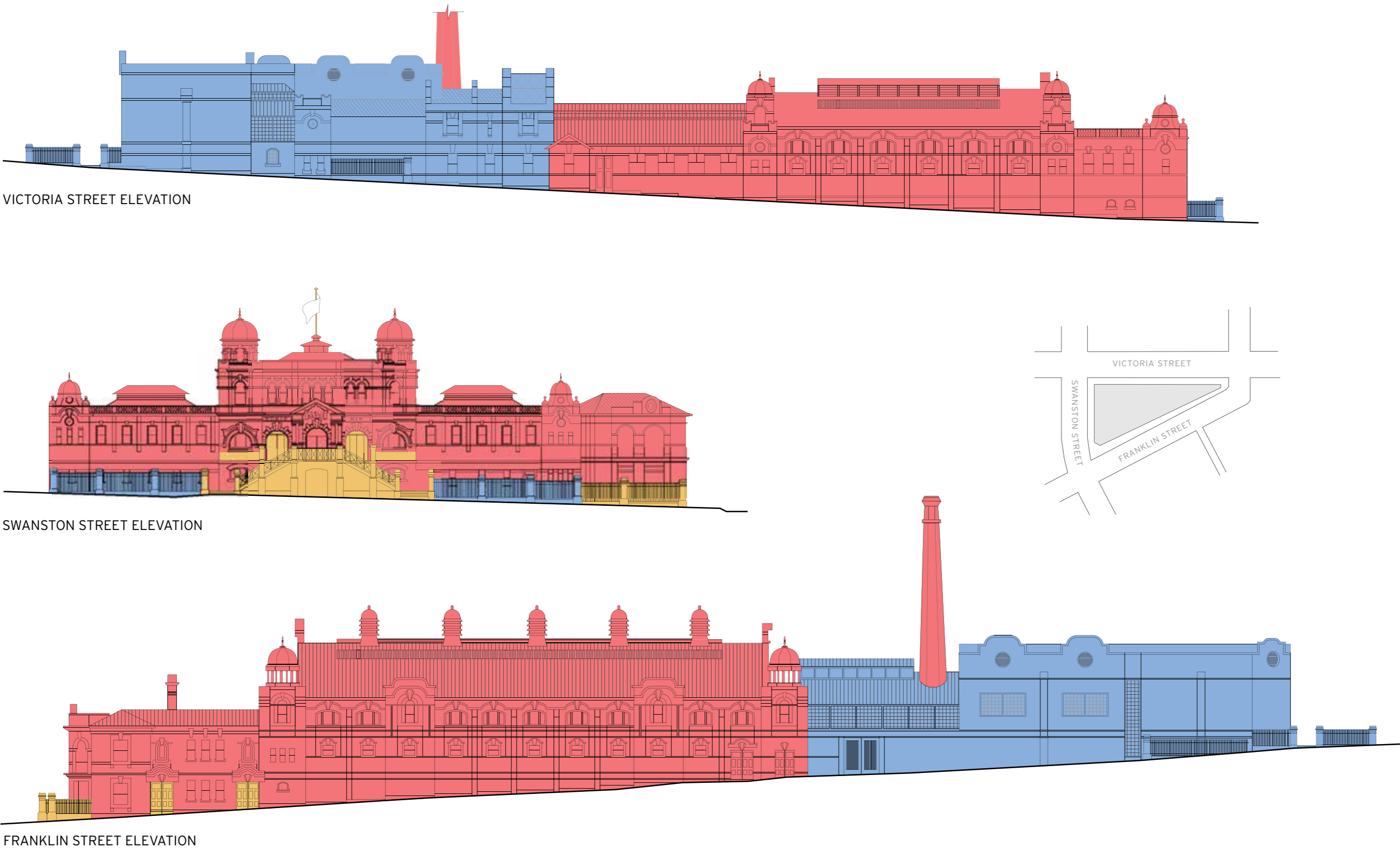
In most cases, methods for collecting evidence of social value will include a combination of background research, observation and direct engagement with community groups.


Regardless of which technique, or combination of techniques, is adopted, the outcomes should establish:

- The intensity of the group's attachment to the place;
- The length of time that the community (or communities) have retained an attachment to the place (time depth); and
- The nature of the community group, or groups, by whom a place is valued (large/small, united/fragmented, informal/formal etc).

Outcomes of the social value assessment may also inform future interpretation (see Section 6.15).

Figure 110 City Baths elevations, showing relative levels of significance



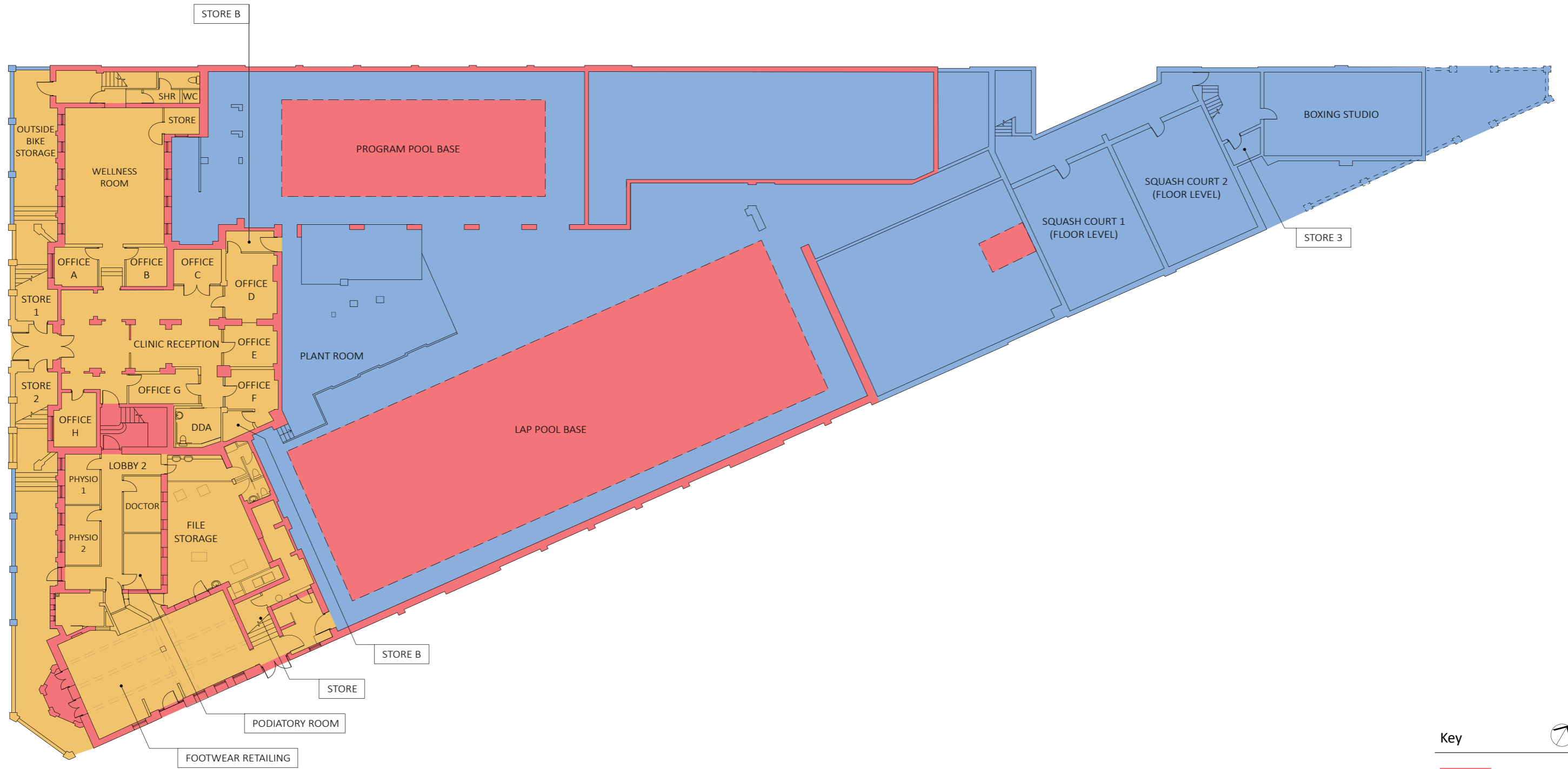
Key 


- Primary
- Contributory
- Little or no

VICTORIA STREET ELEVATION

SWANSTON STREET ELEVATION

FRANKLIN STREET ELEVATION



Key 

- Primary
- Contributory
- Little or no

Figure 111 City Baths basement plan, showing relative levels of significance

BASEMENT PLAN LEVELS OF SIGNIFICANCE

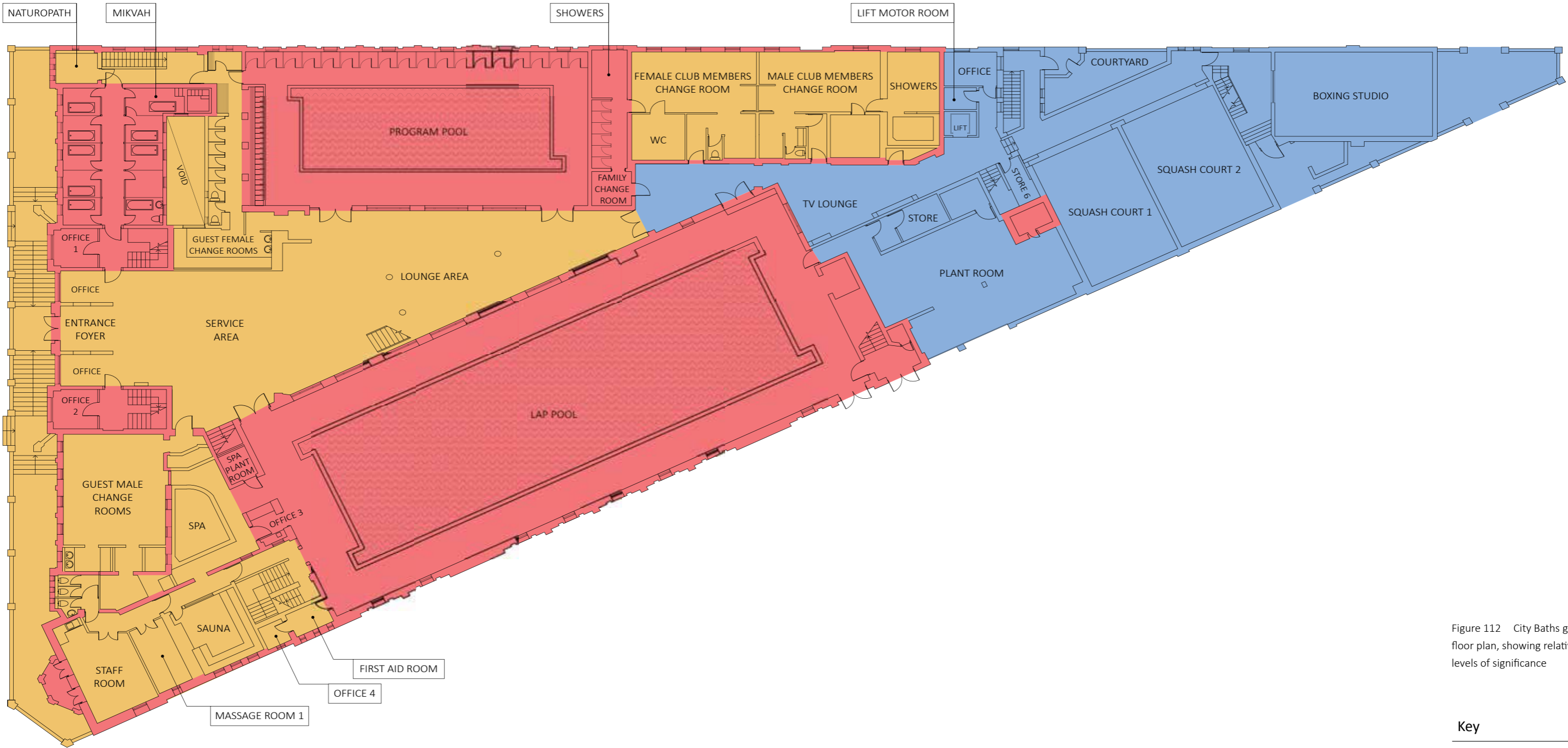


Figure 112 City Baths ground floor plan, showing relative levels of significance

Key

- Primary
- Contributory
- Little or no

GROUND FLOOR PLAN LEVELS OF SIGNIFICANCE



FIRST FLOOR PLAN LEVELS OF SIGNIFICANCE

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