

# Ivanhoe Library and Cultural Hub

## Fact Sheet - Heritage Considerations

September 2017



### What has heritage significance within the Ivanhoe Civic Precinct?

The Heidelberg Town Hall, opened in April 1937, is the only building within the precinct with heritage protection. Rapid urbanisation during the 1930s created the need for a large civic centre with office space for staff, council chambers and a public hall. The building, commissioned by the former Shire of Heidelberg, won the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects (RAIA) Street Architecture medal in 1939.

### Why is Heidelberg Town Hall so significant?

Heidelberg Town Hall, which is included on the Victorian Heritage Register, is considered the greatest expression of the inter-war brick Moderne style in Victoria. Buildings of similar heritage significance include Mac.Robertson Girls' High School (1934-1935) in South Melbourne and Camberwell's Church of Christ the Scientist, built in 1937, which also won an RAIA Street Architecture medal.

Heritage Victoria describes the building "as a confident expression of the expansion of municipal facilities" which followed rapid suburban expansion in the inter-war period.

Two architectural firms, Peck & Kemter and AC Leith & Bartlett, designed the new civic centre. Bartlett had recently returned from overseas where he was greatly influenced by recent European architecture. The building's external design owes much to Willem Dudok's Hilversum Town Hall in the Netherlands, built between 1924 and 1931, his most important and influential work which inspired several leading architects in Victoria.

Built by local contractor GS Gay, Heidelberg Town Hall stands at the highest point of Ivanhoe, with offices and auditorium separated by a 28-metre clock tower.

The building, with textured buff brickwork has little decorative detail on the outside. The Centre Ivanhoe portico was added in 1994.

Within The Centre Ivanhoe, the Great Hall, which can seat 700, has a parquetry floor, side alcoves, and curved balconies. Australian native timber, mainly Queensland maple is used within the hall, with much loved Art Deco style fittings including original light fittings, concealed lighting, clocks, some original signage, and chrome and marble fittings.

The former municipal offices next door, comprise a first floor Council Chamber, Mayor's office, and meeting rooms. In the early 1970s, the building was extended to house Council staff, which it did until April 2017 when staff moved to Banyule Council's new Greensborough office.

### Is the current Ivanhoe Library building heritage listed?

No. While the current library building is significant in the memories of many in the community who have used it since it opened in 1965, it is not heritage listed.

According to an independent 2011 Heritage Assessment, "the Ivanhoe Library is a relatively modest and conventional example of 1960s civic architecture, representative of the character of many similar structures in Victoria from that time." The assessment goes on to say the work of the library's architects "was for the most part not ground breaking or architecturally innovative" and "categorised as orthodox modernism, reflecting the aspirations of mainstream corporate and local government clients."

The assessment noted that the library no longer meets community need and that if the building was retained, it

would need to be adapted to an alternative use such as offices, with a new library developed to meet community needs and contemporary library standards.

As part of the Ivanhoe Library and Cultural Hub project, Council will, in conjunction with the community, farewell the current library building and ensure its commemoration within the new library.

### **Will the Ivanhoe Library and Cultural Hub effect the Town Hall's heritage status?**

No. While the new Ivanhoe Library and Cultural Hub will be a modern building, it will sit behind the Town Hall in the area of the 1970's extension, which has no heritage significance, and was itself an addition to the original 1930's building. This new extension to the heritage listed building is being designed and built using contemporary design and materials, but is being carefully designed to ensure that while it complements the Town Hall building, there is a clear distinction between the two buildings. The Ivanhoe Library and Cultural Hub will not obscure the important views of the heritage Town Hall.

### **Will Council meetings continue to be held in the Town Hall?**

Council meetings are continuing to be held in Council Chambers on the first floor. During construction of the Ivanhoe Library and Cultural Hub, when the area will be within a construction zone, Council meetings will relocate to Council's office in Greensborough.

### **Register for updates and keep informed**

If you want to keep up to date with this project:

- Visit [www.banyule.vic.gov.au/IvanhoeHub](http://www.banyule.vic.gov.au/IvanhoeHub)
- Visit [shaping.banyule.vic.gov.au/ivanhoehub](http://shaping.banyule.vic.gov.au/ivanhoehub) and sign up to be kept informed about the project's progress.

If you have any questions about the project, contact Robbie Colosimo on 9457 9943 or via [roberta.colosimo@banyule.vic.gov.au](mailto:roberta.colosimo@banyule.vic.gov.au)