

# Heritage Context

## Introduction

The Site was formerly used as the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works ('MMWB'), Western Regional Complex, and later the City West Water depot which ceased operation in 2015. A number of buildings associated with the former uses have since been removed, however scattered canopy trees, hard stand areas and an office building alongside the St Albans Road frontage remain. Ground works associated with the Stage 1 residential development have recently commenced on site.

This former MMBW Western Regional Complex building and its immediate surrounds are covered by a Heritage Overlay – Schedule 149. The Statement of Significance associated with the Overlay identifies that:

*The former MMBW Western Regional Complex is historically significant as a place that is associated with an important phase of growth of the Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works in the 1970s and 1980s. It provides tangible evidence of the significant expansion of facilities undertaken by the MMBW under the energetic leadership of chairman, Allan Croxford [sic], which in turn reflected the significant growth of Melbourne after World War Two. It is of architectural significance as a representative example of a suburban office building with Brutalist influences and has historical significance as an example of work of architectural firm A.K. Lines, MacFarlane and Marshall.*

The former MMBW Western Regional Complex building is of social and architectural significance. Any adaptive reuse of the building is required to preserve its significance and historical setting. Uses for the building are to align with its location within the Mixed Use Zone fronting St Albans Road.

## Policy

### **Local Planning Policies from the Planning Scheme of relevance to the Site include:**

Clause 22.01 – Brimbank Heritage Policy

This policy applies to all land covered by the Heritage Overlay and includes the following objectives:

- To conserve and enhance a range of buildings, features and precincts that strengthen community appreciation of heritage buildings and places by helping to convey how the municipality originated and developed over time.
- To ensure heritage places continue to be used, conserved and protected from demolition or removal.
- To ensure development, including alterations and additions to existing buildings, maintains the significance of the heritage place and integrates with the surrounding heritage buildings and streetscape.
- To ensure that the conservation of heritage places and precincts is based upon a clear understanding of the reasons for their significance.
- To improve community understanding about the value of heritage places and raise community awareness of appropriate conservation techniques.

The policy includes guidelines related to the demolition and removal of buildings, subdivision, and alterations and additions to existing buildings. These would be applicable to development of the former MMBW Western Regional Complex building and should be considered carefully.

## Heritage Overlay and Conservation Management Plan

Pursuant to the Heritage Overlay for this project, planning approval would be required for demolition (including in part) and alterations and additions to existing buildings and the removal of vegetation within the overlay boundaries. A Conservation Management Plan (CMP), prepared by Purcell Pty Ltd (not provided), forms part of the Development Plan and is intended to guide the conservation of the former MMBW Western Regional Complex building. The CMP indicates that a Heritage Impact Statement should be prepared as part of any future planning permit application seeking approval for use and, or development of the Site.

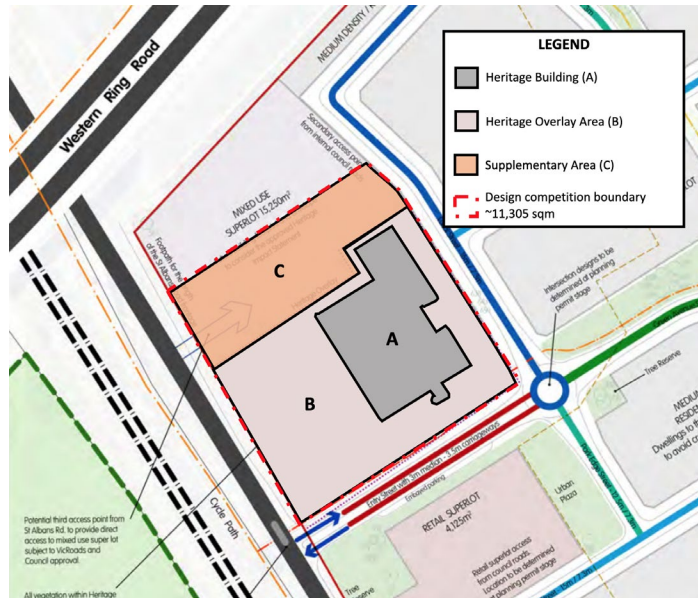
**High level guiding principles within the Heritage Impact Statement include, but are not limited to, the following:**

- Works to fabric of Primary Significance may be required in some instances, however, they should be avoided where possible;
- Alterations to the exterior of the building should be minimised, and where required, located on concealed facades or areas of Contributory Significance. They should maintain the principal exterior elevations and should not dominate or compromise significant aspects of the building;
- Internal works should retain and enhance areas of Primary Significance, and the double-height entrance foyer and adjoining spaces should be avoided. Any alterations to fabric and spaces of Contributory Significance should be undertaken in a cautious and sympathetic manner. Works should be concentrated within the open plan office spaces (defined as no significance);
- The building is highly unlikely to accommodate additional storeys above or below, i.e., proposing basements or constructing higher levels is discouraged.

- The building occupies a prominent position within landscaped grounds. It was designed to be visible on two key frontages, the west (St Albans Road) and south, and broad views of the building within a landscape are part of its architectural expression and significance;
- The building's relationship to the landscape should be retained when looking north / northeast by providing an adequate curtilage and ensuring no new structures are built within the Heritage Overlay boundary;
- The established landscaped setting of the building should be conserved and maintained, including the existing broad grassed area, garden beds and trees;
- New building works are contemplated to the north, with a carpark proposed adjacent to the heritage building;
- In general terms, no new development should be undertaken within the Heritage Overlay area and new buildings and structures on the broader site should not impinge on the important spatial and visual relationships between the existing building and landscape.

## Extent of Heritage Overlay

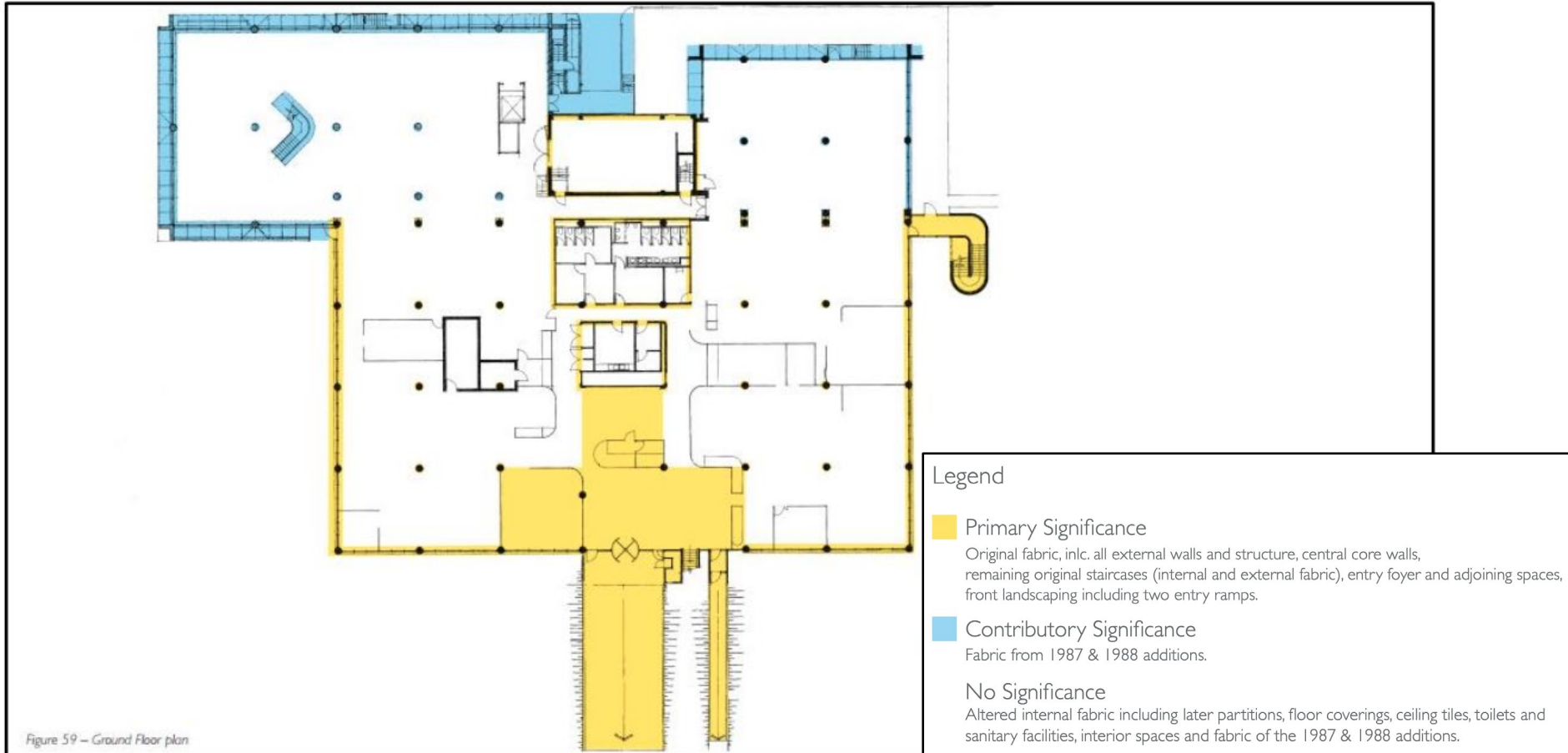
The legend in this plan has been updated (v2) to more accurately depict the competition boundary area at ~ 11,305sqm.



Note: Everything within the red dotted line boundary is in scope for the Competition, including the supplementary area 'C', which is not part of the heritage overlay.

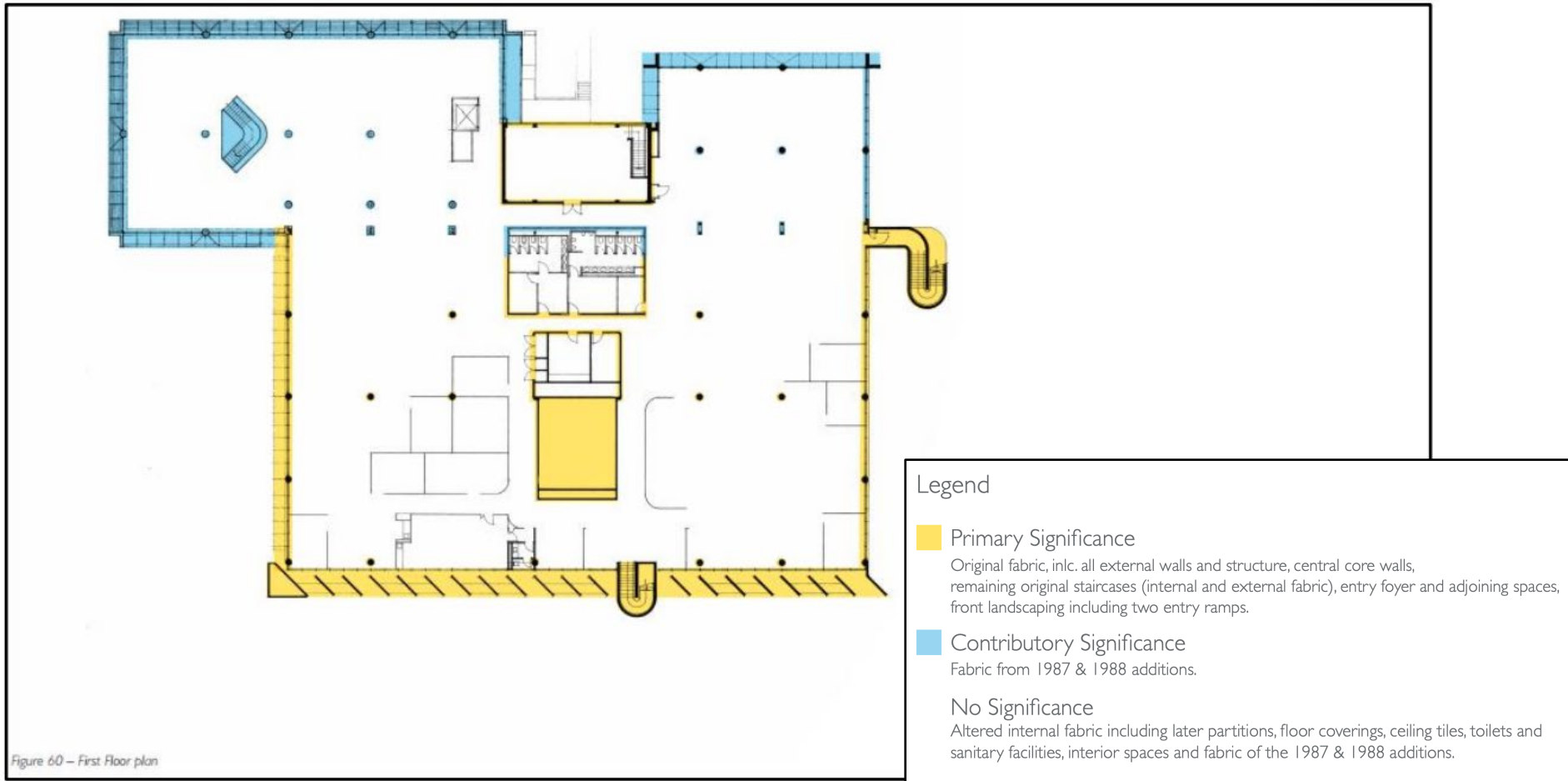
Whilst the majority of the site has previously been disturbed by earthworks associated with the building, car parks and roads, the maintenance and enhancement of the established landscaped setting of the building, including the existing broad grassed area, garden beds and trees should be considered. Any new landscape development should not diminish the overall significance of the landscape design and its interrelated role with the architecture, and new development proposed within the heritage overlay area should ensure the building's architectural expression and form is retained.

E. Heritage Context v2 (last updated 6th October 2023)



**Figure 9: Levels of Significance Drawings – Ground Floor Plan**

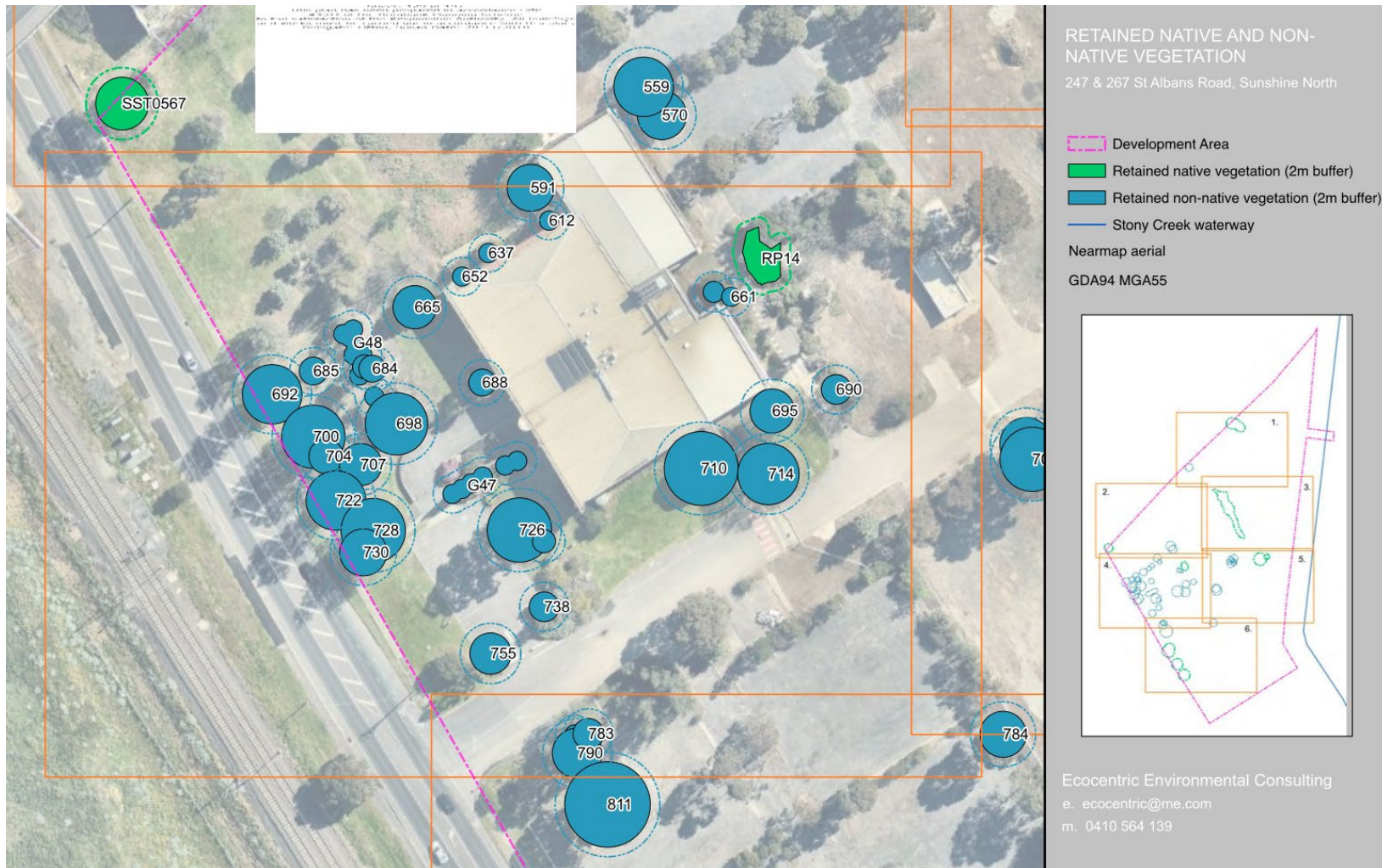
**Source: Purcell Pty Ltd**



**Figure 10: Levels of Significance Drawings – First Floor Plan**

**Source: Purcell Pty Ltd**

## Existing Vegetation



## Opportunity

In order for heritage places to survive for future generations it is important that they have or maintain a viable use. The Former MMBW Western Regional Complex was constructed as an office building, and has remained in use as an office until recently. The CMP recognises that this use may change in the future, and whilst constructed as an office building, the heritage significance of the place is not intrinsically linked to its use as an office. The design of the building, and the changes that have been undertaken to the open plan office spaces in the past, provide opportunities and flexibility for adaptive reuse with minimal impact on the significance of the place.

All works should be guided by both conservation management principles and the Burra Charter, and be informed by physical and documentary evidence. Works should not conflict with, or have a detrimental impact on, the cultural heritage significance of the place. The removal of later accretions represents an opportunity to enhance the heritage value of the site.

There is an opportunity to enhance the heritage value and understanding of the building and its landscape through the inclusion of interpretation on site. Such interpretation, and interpretive information, should be developed in conjunction with any adaptive reuse proposal for the building, and should be designed to allow for a broader understanding of the cultural heritage significance of the place, and transmission of its values to a wider audience.