



# **ROYAL EXHIBITION BUILDING & EXHIBITION RESERVE**

## **MASTER PLAN**

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# 1 Vision

In most great cities there is one building that epitomises its spirit and history. In Melbourne it is undoubtedly the Royal Exhibition Building.

Built in 1880, it is the only surviving example in the world of a Great Hall from a major international exhibition that is still used for its original purpose today. Its unique status provides Museum Victoria with the responsibility to ensure the building is maintained as an Australian icon and continues to be a sought after exhibition venue. Australians and international visitors can visit the building and appreciate its beauty and learn about its varied history.

The Royal Exhibition Building is the first building in Australia to receive World Heritage Listing and this Master Plan is one of a suite of documents that informs and supports the World Heritage Site Management Plan.

# 2 Executive Summary

The Royal Exhibition Building (REB) was erected for the Melbourne International Exhibition of 1880. It has survived largely intact, and for that reason and the fact that it continues to serve its original purpose as a venue for exhibitions and events, was inscribed by UNESCO on the World Heritage Register in 2004. The surrounding Carlton Gardens are included in the World Heritage listing. Museum Victoria is responsible for the stewardship of the REB and the City of Melbourne has responsibility for Carlton Gardens. This master plan and its equivalent for the Gardens have been prepared as a basis for a combined World Heritage Site Management Plan to be submitted by Heritage Victoria to the Department of the Environment and Water Resources of the Australian Government.

The key features of the Master Plan are these:

- The Royal Exhibition Building is now recognised for its international significance through World Heritage listing and for its national status (not least for being the place where the inaugural Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia was held) by being placed on the National Heritage List. It is also on the Victorian Heritage Register. These forms of recognition of the REB's importance place responsibilities on Museum Victoria as its guardian.
- Museum Victoria is committed to a dual-purpose approach to the operation of the REB. It is essential that it continues its historic function as a venue for

exhibitions and events, whilst at the same time public access and interpretation are fostered.

- Exhibitions and events are managed by the Commercial Department of Museum Victoria. Income from such events is essential for the care of the REB for which Museum Victoria receives no recurrent funding.
- Hirers are obliged to comply with strict guidelines designed to protect the REB and its reputation as well as health and safety requirements.
- A building of such a size and age requires constant care and attention to ensure the survival of the historic fabric and the safety of the public. All maintenance and repair works are guided by a Conservation Management Plan.
- At present, the prime means of interpretation is by daily guided tours led by members of staff of Museum Victoria and by publication of a guidebook written and published by the Museum.
- A great opportunity exists for enhanced public access and interpretation. It is envisaged that visitors would access the REB through a tunnel from Melbourne Museum in which they would experience virtual and other forms of presentation that would evoke the fascinating story of the Building and especially the two great exhibitions of 1880 and 1888.
- The tunnel would lead to a lift that would take visitors up to the gallery beneath the dome, to experience the stunning views of the REB's interior, before ascending to roof level.
- At the base of the dome, it is intended that the promenade is recreated, giving visitors the opportunity to experience one of the most popular attractions of late nineteenth-century Melbourne.
- It is planned that an archaeological excavation should take place to uncover traces of the German Garden that once graced the area to the immediate west of the REB now covered by tarmac, with the intention of recreating the circular garden.
- Enhancements to the Plaza between the REB and Melbourne Museum can make this a much more welcoming and usable space, incorporating external exhibits that relate to the themes of both buildings.
- Taken together, all these measures will transform access and interpretation of the REB, raising it to the status of a tourist attraction capable of appealing to an international audience.
- A scheme has been developed to harvest water from the roof of the REB for use irrigating Carlton Gardens and as grey water in toilets in the Building.
- A reduction in vehicle parking on the REB forecourts is desirable but will only be implemented if acceptable alternatives can be identified.
- The recommendations in the Master Plan have been subject of public consultation with local resident and heritage organisations and have been endorsed by the City of Melbourne. Further consultation will take place once the World Heritage Master Plan has been prepared by Heritage Victoria.

## 3 Master Plan

### 3.1 Purpose of the Plan

The aim of this Master Plan is to set out the long term vision for the future management of the Royal Exhibition Building and the Exhibition Reserve, areas of the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens World Heritage site that are managed by Museum Victoria.

### 3.2 Status of the Plan

This Master Plan will join the 'Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens Conservation Management Plan' (Allom Lovell & Associates and Context Pty Ltd, 2004) and the 'Carlton Gardens Master Plan' (City of Melbourne, 2005) to form the World Heritage Site Management Plan for the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens World Heritage site.

Management Plans are required for Australian World Heritage sites under the provisions of the Australian Government's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act, 1999* (amended 2003). The Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens World Heritage Management Plan will be released for public comment and presented to the Victorian Government Minister for Planning and the Australian Government Minister for the Environment and Heritage for accreditation. The accredited Management Plan will be enforced by law at both State and Federal levels.

### 3.3 Contributors

This Master Plan was developed by Museum Victoria's Royal Exhibition Building Master Plan working group. The project team consisted of Mandy Matthews, Linda Sproul, Richard Gillespie, Nicola Franklin, Emily Wrigglesworth, Jenine Fleming, Adrienne Leith and Sue Grieve.

The project team acknowledges the input of Patrick Greene, Kim Reason, Edmund Nolan, Ross McDonald and John Robison as well as the City of Melbourne and Heritage Victoria. Feedback was also sought from the Australian Department of the Environment and Heritage, the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) and local community groups such as Carlton Gardens Group and Carlton Residents Association.

## 4 Description and Significance of the Site

### 4.1 Location

The Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens World Heritage site is bounded by Victoria, Nicholson, Carlton and Rathdowne Streets, Carlton.

This Master Plan applies to the area of the Carlton Gardens that is managed by Museum Victoria, known as the Exhibition Reserve. The reserve is located in the centre of the gardens and contains the Royal Exhibition Building (including the east and west forecourts and the southern forecourt currently known as the southern drive), Melbourne Museum and the Museum Plaza. (refer Fig. 1)

The Carlton Gardens Master Plan also provides recommendations for some areas of the Exhibition Reserve, particularly the east, west and southern forecourts of the Royal Exhibition Building and the Rathdowne and Nicholson Street frontages to the Museum Plaza. These areas are also referred to in this Master Plan to maintain consistency for this document however, all recommendations are in accordance with the City of Melbourne's recommendations and it is understood that any works to these areas will be the result of a collaborative process between the two organisations.

### 4.2 Historical Context

In most great cities there is one building that epitomises its spirit and history. In Melbourne it is undoubtedly the Royal Exhibition Building. The building and its associated gardens are a rare intact reminder of the 19th century international exhibitions movement, which showcased the products of the industrial revolution, promoted the wonders of the technological age and fostered a global exchange of products and ideas.

The building and the exhibitions proclaimed to the world that Melbourne was an international city, with the wealth to spend on lavish display. The content of the exhibitions also had a transforming effect as the people of Victoria were exposed to the latest manufactures from all over the globe.

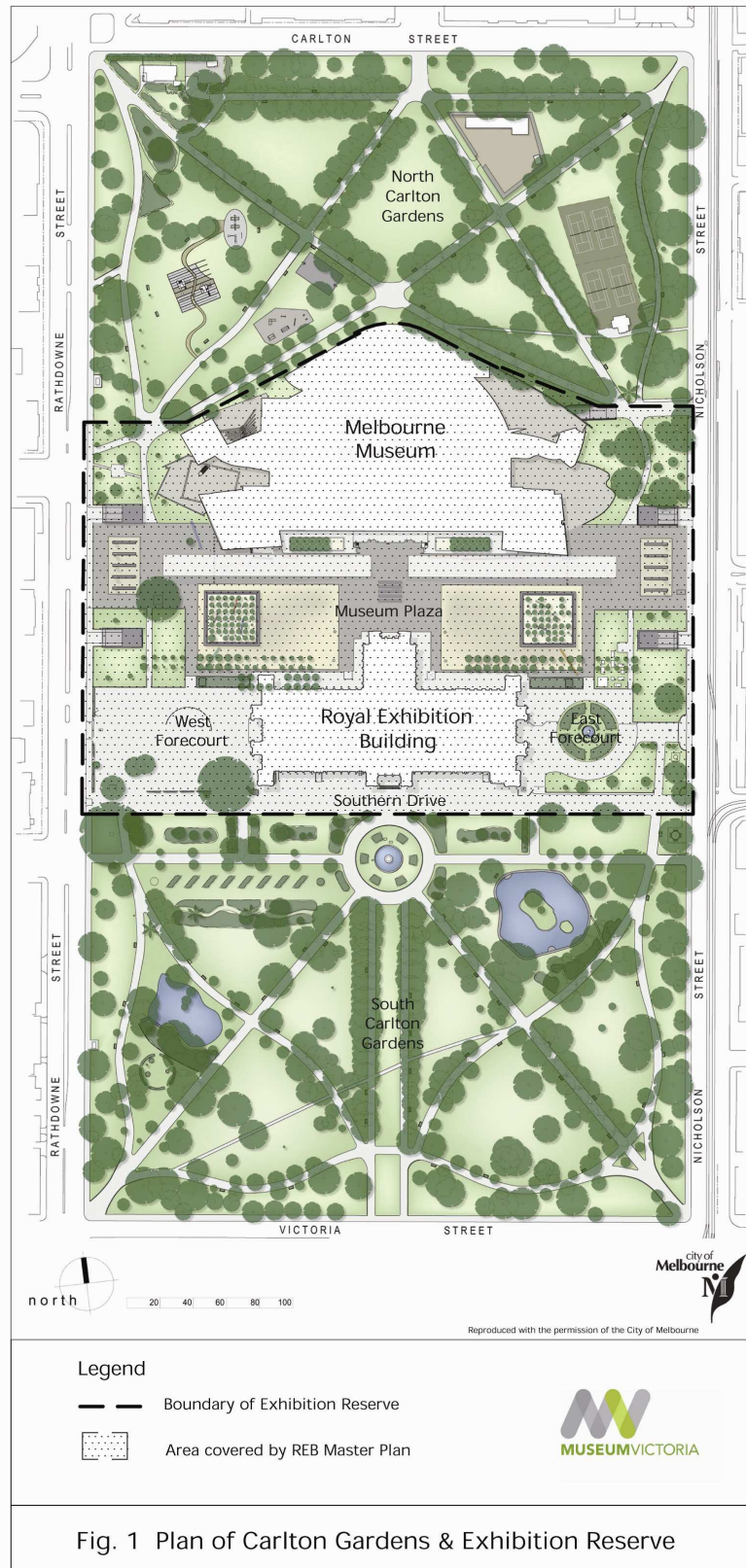
Constructed in 1879–1880, the Royal Exhibition Building was the centrepiece of the International Exhibition of 1880. Created by Melbourne's most prominent architectural firm of the time, Reed and Barnes, the design was the winning scheme in an architectural competition launched by the Trustees of the Exhibition. The interior of the building was initially decorated by John Mather, a noted easel painter and artistic decorator of the time. His scheme was largely painted over by Beeler & Davies, local art decorators who employed 200 painters to implement their flamboyant scheme in 1888. The interior was redecorated again in 1901 to mark the opening of the first Commonwealth Parliament in Australia. This contract was carried out by John Ross Anderson, a Scottish born decorator who trained in London and immigrated to Australia in 1882.

During the 20th century, the Trustees of the REB embarked on a number of building projects that resulted in the construction of new annexes at the east and west ends of the building.

These projects stirred up concerns for the original building's future and during the 1980s the State Government embarked on an ongoing conservation program for the Great Hall which resulted in the recovery and restoration of the 1901 internal decorative scheme, the refurbishment of the exterior of the dome and the replacement of the internal timber floor. During the late 1990s, the annexes were also demolished and the external north façade of the building was reconstructed as part of the development of the adjacent Melbourne Museum. The new museum, designed by architects, Denton Corker Marshall, opened in the Carlton Gardens in October 2000.

Throughout its history, the Royal Exhibition Building has been the location for many great events in Melbourne, including the opening of the first Australian Federal Parliament, the first Australian War Museum, and the Olympic Games. It still plays a leading role in the life of Melbourne, as a general exhibition hall and as a venue for concerts, religious services, banquets and university exams.

A detailed history of the Royal Exhibition Building is provided in the Conservation Management Plan.





### 4.3 Heritage Significance

#### *World Heritage List*

In July 2004 the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens was inscribed upon the World Heritage List of UNESCO's 'Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage'. The Royal Exhibition Building has outstanding universal value as the only surviving 'Great Hall' from a significant international exhibition. It symbolises the fundamental purpose of the exhibition movement and retains a high level of authenticity both architecturally and in its continued use as an exhibition venue.

The Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens is the first built site in Australia to be added to the World Heritage list and meets one of the six Cultural Heritage criteria as outlined in the following justification from UNESCO:

*Criterion (ii):* The Royal Exhibition Building and the surrounding Carlton Gardens, as the main extant survivors of a Palace of Industry and its setting, together reflect the global influence of the international exhibition movement of the 19th and early 20th centuries. The movement showcased technological innovation and change, which helped promote a rapid increase in industrialisation and international trade through the exchange of knowledge and ideas.

In Australia, World Heritage sites are protected under the provisions of the Commonwealth *EPBC Act., 1999 (amended 2003)*. Until there is an accredited World Heritage Management Plan, any works to World Heritage sites which will have a significant impact on the World Heritage values must be referred to the Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage for assessment and approval under the *EPBC Act*.

#### *National Heritage List*

In July 2004, the site was also included on the National Heritage List, maintained by the Australian Department of Environment and Heritage under the *EPBC Act*. The National Heritage values of the Royal Exhibition Building and the Carlton Gardens are outlined on pp. 3 – 4 of the Conservation Management Plan.

#### *Victorian Heritage Register*

The Royal Exhibition Building was added to the Victorian Government Buildings Register in 1982. In 1998 it was transferred to the Victorian Heritage Register, a register maintained by Heritage Victoria under the provisions of the *Heritage Act (1995)*. In 2002 the registration was extended to include the Carlton Gardens. A permit is required from Heritage Victoria in order to carry out works or activities to a registered place. At present, there are no permit exemptions in place for the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens.

In 2004, the *Heritage Act* was amended to provide specific protection for places of World Heritage significance. The World Heritage Management Plan will include policies designed to ensure that the world heritage values of the listed place are

identified, conserved, protected, presented, transmitted to future generations and if appropriate, rehabilitated.

#### *City of Melbourne Planning Scheme*

The Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens are identified as HO69 in the Heritage Overlay Schedule to the Melbourne Planning Scheme. However, for places listed on the Victorian Heritage Register, the provisions of the *Heritage Act* override the planning requirements of the Heritage Overlay.

## 4.4 World Heritage Obligations

The inscription of the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens on the World Heritage List requires the owners and managers of the site to meet the obligations of the World Heritage Convention. In Australia, the primary objectives for the management of World Heritage properties are set out on the Department of the Environment and Heritage website, (see [www.deh.gov.au/heritage/worldheritage/implications.html](http://www.deh.gov.au/heritage/worldheritage/implications.html)) as follows:

- to protect, conserve and present the World Heritage values of the property,
- to integrate the protection of the area into a comprehensive planning program,
- to give the property a function in the life of the Australian community,
- to strengthen appreciation and respect of the property's World Heritage values, particularly through educational and information programs,
- to keep the community broadly informed about the condition of the World Heritage values of the property, and
- to take appropriate scientific, technical, legal, administrative and financial measures necessary for achieving the foregoing objectives.

These principles are supported by the provisions of the *EPBC Act* which sets out to provide a co-ordinated approach to the conservation and management of significant cultural and natural environments.

## 4.5 Current Ownership & Management

The whole Carlton Gardens site was officially reserved for exhibition purposes through the *Victorian Exhibition Act* (1878). This legislation authorized the appointment of the Exhibition Commissioners, who would manage the site during exhibitions, and the Board of Trustees, who would manage the site thereafter. The Trustees continued to manage the site into the late-20th century, successfully amending the conditions of the Victorian Exhibition Bill in 1957 to provide them with greater control over building occupants and alterations.

The *Crown Land Reserves Act* (1978) permanently reserved the Carlton Gardens as public gardens and nominated the area now containing the Royal Exhibition

Building, Melbourne Museum and the space around the buildings as the Exhibition Reserve. Under the provisions of the Act, the City of Melbourne and the Minister for Conservation and Environment are Joint Trustees for the Gardens, with the City of Melbourne appointed as Committee of Management. In 1996, an amendment to the *Museums Act* (1983) vested the general control, administration and management of the Exhibition Reserve in the Museums Board of Victoria.

In June 2004, a Memorandum of Understanding was established between the Museums Board of Victoria and the City of Melbourne to ensure a joint and co-ordinated approach to the management of the whole World Heritage site.

A World Heritage Management Plan Steering Committee was officially appointed by the Victorian Minister for Planning in 2005 to prepare the World Heritage Management Plan. The committee is chaired by Heritage Victoria and includes representatives from the City of Melbourne and Museum Victoria.

## 5 Guiding Principles for Future Directions

### 5.1 The Vision

The guiding principle for the future management of the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens World Heritage site, as outlined in the Conservation Management Plan and the Carlton Gardens Master Plan, is the conservation of all elements of the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens that relate to the site's period of primary significance of 1880–1901. This is supported by the long term vision of restoring the Royal Exhibition Building to an integrated garden setting in accordance with the original 19th century design intent.

Museum Victoria supports this guiding principle with a range of objectives that aim to establish the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens as a World Heritage precinct for Melbourne, as outlined below:

- Develop a strategy for resourcing the on-going conservation of the site to ensure that a high level of conservation integrity is maintained,
- Develop a new range of diverse interpretive experiences that will enhance visitor experience,
- Improve infrastructure within the building in order to increase the viability and profitability of commercial business,
- Establish a high profile within the tourism industry to attract increased international and interstate visitors,
- Strengthen the relationship of the Royal Exhibition Building, both visually and conceptually, with Melbourne Museum and the Carlton Gardens,
- Consolidate partnerships with City of Melbourne, Heritage Victoria and Department of the Environment and Heritage.

### 5.2 Building Conservation and Major Works

#### 5.2.1 Building Conservation

Ongoing conservation works to both the interior and the exterior of the Royal Exhibition Building (REB) are essential to the longevity of the building as a premier public venue. Using the principles of *The Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter*, conservation of a building includes general maintenance as well as, where appropriate, the processes of preservation, restoration, reconstruction and adaptation. These types of works require a strong commitment from all stakeholders to ensure that ongoing care of the building's historic fabric remains an important element of the overall building works strategy.

Extensive conservation works have been carried out to the building since the 1980s. These have included major conservation projects such as remedial works to the dome, reinstatement of the interior decorative scheme, replacement of the roof cladding and reconstruction of the north façade following the removal of the annexes. Further works of varying scale are still required. Some of these works have already been identified in separate condition reports commissioned by the museum or through ongoing visual inspections by building management, with the larger projects including the replacement of the remaining timber flooring; structural repair of the dome; repair and repainting of the dome drum and cupola and general repairs and repainting of all external facades.

To assist with programming ongoing conservation works, a conservation based works survey of the entire building, surrounding fountains and other significant landscape features is currently being undertaken by a conservation architect. This survey will result in a prioritised works schedule that will provide a comprehensive summary of all necessary conservation works to the building. The schedule will be attached to this document as an appendix and will be able to be read in conjunction with the maintenance program to provide a valuable resource for programming conservation based works according to conservation objectives.

### **5.2.2 Building Maintenance**

In the past, building maintenance to the REB has been undertaken as required but without a clear plan or structure. In order to rectify this, a full condition survey of the building was carried out in 2003 by Connell Wagner as part of Museum Victoria's aim to put together a 25 year asset management plan for the site. The survey returned engineering assessments on all building services (ie. hydraulic, mechanical and electrical) as well as similar assessments on building fabric and finishes. The survey data has been compiled into a comprehensive electronic database that provides the museum with the capability to set priority objectives, plan short-term expenditure and justify long term investment.

The uppermost level of database information is concerned with the building's characteristics for example – size, use and occupancy – and the overall totals of maintenance expenditure. This data provides useful comparisons with other buildings in the Museum Victoria portfolio and enables cost analysis to be carried out to highlight any deficiencies in the current regime.

At the middle or intermediate level, detail is registered that provides condition, risk, and maintenance summaries for particular element groups / classes. At this level all maintenance requirements (planned, remedial and renewal) are identified along with the cost and the year in which the work should be undertaken.

The lower or operator level of the database provides a comprehensive maintenance program supported by detailed maintenance schedules identifying the extent and frequency of prescribed tests, inspections and service procedures. At this level the museum has the ability to select, define and assign specific work tasks and then

monitor and assess if the tasks are being performed in the required manner and time frame, enabling the museum to continuously assess the periodicity of the maintenance program to minimise tendencies towards either under or over-maintenance and to tailor the maintenance program to better suit the building and its performance requirements, which may vary from time to time.

Particular maintenance requirements have also been identified. These have been developed and assessed against the performance criteria for the building (Conservation Management Plan and Business Plan); the age & type of building engineering services; the design and specification of building engineering services and the maintenance history of the building as a whole. In addition, the maintenance program has been viewed in relation to other running costs of the building, as expenditure on maintenance has to compete with other high priority demands such as heating, lighting and cleaning. To ensure that a limited budget is allocated wisely a number of categories have been applied to help set priorities:

- Priority A: health and safety requirements, statutory duties and contractual and business obligations
- Priority B: minimising the deterioration of collection material (including building fabric) and other services
- Priority C: ideal environmental considerations.

### **5.2.3 Future Projects**

As well as ongoing conservation and maintenance works, there are also a number of major capital works that have been identified by the museum as desirable projects to pursue. These projects involve extensive conservation processes that would result in significant benefits to the presentation and interpretation of the building, enhancing both the visitor's experience and the commercial viability of the venue. These projects are summarised below and are wholly dependent on seeking appropriate funding.

#### *Construction of the dome promenade & access tunnel*

The dome promenade is an external viewing platform around the base of the dome that was open to the public in the 19th century. The experience of visiting the dome is no less evocative today as it was then, as there is a powerful contrast between the almost-unchanged 19th century vista north and the skyscrapers to the south. The re-opening of the promenade to the public will require extensive works to install new decks and walkways to comply with current codes. Linked to this redevelopment is the completion of the tunnel link between Melbourne Museum and the REB and the construction of a new public access tunnel between this link and a new lift required at the southern end of the building. The redevelopment of these spaces provides a significant opportunity to consolidate the visitor experience within the building and will be enhanced by the development of an immersive multimedia interpretative experience within the tunnel spaces.

### *Redevelopment of the REB basement*

The REB basement is now primarily used for the storage of Museum Victoria collections but in the longer term (5–10 years), the museum plans to relocate these collections to other collection stores which will provide a significant opportunity to develop new uses for these spaces which could benefit the functionality of the REB as a working building, such as constructing a commercial kitchen or providing additional storage areas.

### *Redevelopment of the Western Forecourt*

The redevelopment of the western forecourt will be a joint project between the Museum, City of Melbourne and Heritage Victoria. An archaeological dig would initially be undertaken to determine if there is any evidence of the original German Circle or other successive garden designs in the area to inform the new landscape design. The redevelopment will also need to address car and bus parking issues, which could be alleviated by the extension of the museum's underground carpark and the allocation of reserved bus parking on adjacent streets.

### *Redevelopment of the Southern Forecourt*

The redevelopment of the southern forecourt will also be jointly undertaken with the City of Melbourne and Heritage Victoria. The forecourt was originally the ceremonial entrance to the building consisting of a wide promenade with parterre gardens and giant flagpoles, large decorative urns and cast iron lamp standards flanking the formal entrance to the building. The northern section of the promenade, now known as the southern drive, has now become more orientated towards vehicle and service access, as the main focus of the building has shifted towards the east and north entrances. Redevelopment proposals for the southern forecourt will need to carefully consider how to maintain some level of vehicle access to this side of the building.

### *Water harvesting project*

In accordance with the environmental sustainability recommendations in both the Conservation Management Plan and the Carlton Gardens Master Plan, research has recently been undertaken on the potential for collecting rainwater from the REB roof for reuse as grey water within the building and to supply the Carlton Garden's ponds. This research has been completed with input from the City of Melbourne and Heritage Victoria and will be further developed when additional funding is secured.

## **5.2.4 Recommendations for Building Conservation and Major Works**

- i. Present the conservation works survey of the building in a detailed works schedule, prioritising all necessary works for the period of the Master Plan.
- ii. Present the maintenance survey information in a detailed works schedule, prioritising all necessary works for the period of the Master Plan (7yrs).

- iii. Set objectives and budgets for each financial year based on the maintenance and conservation works schedules.
- iv. Prepare feasibility studies or undertake further detailed development to prioritise major capital works projects and plan a strategy to obtain funding.
- v. Carry out all works to the building in accordance with the principles of *The Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter*.

## 5.3 Interpretation

The Royal Exhibition Building was inscribed upon the World Heritage List because it symbolizes the purpose of the 19th century international exhibition movement. The building's continuing use as an exhibition hall is also integral to the identity and significance of the building however, it is equally important that the heritage significance of the building be communicated to all parts of the community, and that the building remains accessible to visitors.

The REB currently operates under a dual use model with the ground floor of the building (approx. 7,000 sqm) used primarily for commercial events, and the gallery level of the building (approx 5,000 sqm) used primarily for daily tours of the venue and occasional bi-level events. The requirements of commercial use and heritage interpretation need to be appropriately balanced so that the building can be enjoyed as a World Heritage site while still enabling the continuity of the commercial function to ensure that the building continues to have a useful purpose in the community.

### 5.3.2 Tours of the Building

Public access into the REB is a key element in interpreting the building and there are a number of different types of tours that are already on offer or being planned for the future.

#### *Daily guided tours*

A guided tour of the building is currently offered to the general public by customer service officers from Melbourne Museum. This tour is available daily except during the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show and Melbourne Art Fair. There is potential to develop this tour into a product that is jointly managed through Museum Victoria's Visitor Programs and Commercial departments.

#### *Booked group tours*

Adult groups and inbound tourist groups currently pre-book guided tours of the building at specific timeslots on weekdays. These tours adopt the same format as the daily guided tours, although the content is adapted for the particular group's needs.



### *Specialist tours*

Specialist tours are occasionally offered through the calendar of events and associated advertising for Melbourne Museum. Led by experts with special knowledge of the building, including conservation architects, historians and curators, these tours will continue to be developed in collaboration with other relevant organisations.

### *VIP tours*

Special tours are currently offered to VIPs on an as-required basis.

### *Audio tours*

Self-guided audio tours within the Royal Exhibition Building are not currently practical, as occupational health and safety and security requirements do not enable visitors to have unsupervised access inside the building.

### *Future dome promenade tours*

The reopening of the dome promenade to public tours is an integral element of the interpretation strategy as the experience of climbing the stairs to the promenade and looking out at the expanding city was enjoyed by thousands of Melburnians in the 19th century and would greatly enhance the experience of visiting the building today. Refurbishment works to the promenade and construction of access tunnels are required before this tour can be offered however, it is anticipated that a visit to the dome promenade will feature as part of the regular guided tour.

## **5.3.3 Interpretation within the Building**

### *Interpretative signage*

Interpretative signs to convey the significance of the Royal Exhibition Building and its World Heritage status are proposed for several key areas inside the building. These signs are intended primarily for visitors who are attending commercial functions. Final locations of the signs are to be determined, but are likely to be located inside the northern, eastern and southern entrances and near the dome on the ground and first floors (there are currently signs on the first floor near the Dome, as part of the existing interpretive display). These new signs will be integrated with the proposed new signage system (see section 3.6).

### *Display*

A display interpreting the history of the Royal Exhibition Building from its construction in 1880 to Federation in 1901 was installed in the gallery of the north transept in 2001, as part of the celebrations of the Centenary of Federation. The display is accessible to tour groups and forms an important component of the guided tours and educational programs. It is proposed to redevelop this display to encompass the entire history of the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens, from 1880 to the present, including the building's conservation and the World Heritage listing.

### *Theatrette*

The Theatrette is located in the north-east corner of the gallery and was refurbished in 2005. It now has a complete audio visual system and provides seating for 100 people. While it is used for commercial functions as part of the hired space of the building, the theatrette also provides opportunities for special interpretive programs, including lectures, seminars and educational activities and these will be developed in line with the types of experiences being offered at other World Heritage sites.

### *Educational activities and resources*

Options for activities and resources for education audiences are being considered with the view to having them developed and launched progressively.

### *Discovery program*

The Museum's Discovery Program will produce an object-based *Royal Exhibition Building Kit* that can be hired by community groups and the education sector. The kit will focus on the building's social and architectural history, raise issues of how to determine historical significance and include activities that enable users to interpret buildings of historic interest in their own town or region.

### *Multimedia projections*

The museum has future plans to develop multimedia projections as part of the interpretive experience within the building. Installations could include virtual reconstructions of past exhibitions, particularly the 19th century international exhibitions, using original photos and stereographic panoramas and computer graphics as the basis for possible digital reconstructions.

## **5.3.4 External and Precinct Interpretation**

### *Interpretative signage*

Museum Victoria and other key government agencies have recently co-operated to produce five graphic signs within the Carlton Gardens, interpreting the building in its garden setting and providing information about the site's World Heritage listing. It is not envisaged that further external signs are required at present, until further redevelopment of the precinct or the western forecourt is undertaken. A sign is planned for Melbourne Museum's north terrace to interpret the northern section of Carlton Gardens. New signage to the precinct will be developed in accordance with the proposed new signage system.

### *Plaques*

There are a number of bronze plaques fixed to the building near the south and east entrances which commemorate various events within the building's history. While the plaques are valuable interpretive devices for visitors to the building, it is not desirable that additional plaques be added to the collection but rather that future requests for similar commemorations be dealt with through the general development of the interpretation of the site.

### *External lighting*

The Royal Exhibition Building has a long history of being illuminated at night, from the first electric lighting installed for the 1888 exhibition to the spectacular festoon lighting display for the 1901 celebrations for the first Federal Parliament. Festoon lighting is currently installed around the eastern, southern and western sides of the building and the reinstatement of festoon lighting to the northern side of the building would provide a more unified interpretation of the building at night and could be used in conjunction with modern lighting effects created with the modern colour washes and gobo units that have been installed on the plaza to light the northern side of the building for special events.

### *Flags*

Flags have long been associated with the history of the Royal Exhibition Building. Entries for the competition to design a national flag were displayed in the building, and the Australian Flag was first officially flown on 3 September 1901, from the dome of the building. This historical association is described in one of the existing external interpretive signs.

There is potential to display flags on the several flagpoles on the building, in association with key national events. For example, the Aboriginal Flag and the Torres Strait Island flag are currently flown during NAIDOC Week; state flags and the Federation Flag were flown during the Centenary of Federation in 2001.

### *Melbourne's Golden Mile heritage trail*

This self-guided heritage trail extends from the Immigration Museum to the Royal Exhibition Building and Melbourne Museum, and places the development of the Royal Exhibition Building within the context of Melbourne's development from 1834 to the end of the 19th century. The Royal Exhibition Building dome is the symbol of the walk, in markers on the city streets and accompanying literature. It is planned to establish a daily guided tour from the tourist information centre at Federation Square to Melbourne Museum, and finish this walk with a short tour of the Royal Exhibition Building.

### *Western Forecourt development*

The future redevelopment of the western forecourt offers considerable potential for adding to the interpretation of the Carlton Gardens site. The proposed archaeological dig in the forecourt will provide excellent opportunities for public programs.

## **5.3.5 Events**

### *Open Day*

The first public Open Day was held in July 2005 and attracted over 8,000 visitors. A second Open Day, held in October 2006, was also successful with over 7,000 visitors. On this day, access to the building is free and special tours and activities

are organised. The Open Day provides a great opportunity to engage the local community in the history of the building and enables the museum, City of Melbourne and Heritage Victoria to come together and share their knowledge with visitors. The Open Day is now planned as an ongoing annual event.

#### *Conferences and Symposia*

A multi-disciplinary conference examining the context of temporary exhibitions within Australia was held at Melbourne Museum during October 2006. This conference was developed in collaboration with the Heritage Council of Victoria, University of Melbourne and Monash and Deakin Universities. Other conferences and symposia will be held on the history of the Royal Exhibition Building, management of World Heritage sites, industrial and urban heritage and other related themes when opportunities arise.

#### *Public lectures*

Public lectures by distinguished commentators and heritage experts will also be held when opportunities arise. These events will be promoted in collaboration with key stakeholders, and will provide significant opportunities to enhance general public awareness of the site.

### **5.3.6 Publications, Merchandise & Website**

#### *Souvenir book*

Museum Victoria published in 2004 a *Guidebook to the Royal Exhibition Building*, written by Elizabeth Willis. It supplements the more detailed history of the building, *Victorian Icon*, written and compiled by David Dunstan in 1996. Both publications are still available.

#### *Future publications*

There is potential to develop a new detailed book (or books) on the Royal Exhibition Building or the 19th century exhibitions, drawing on the work of a number of scholars and research students. For example, the Sydney International Exhibition of 1879 has been the subject of a successful book, *Colonial City, Global City, Sydney's international exhibition 1879* (2000), with essays by a range of scholars and similarly, essays from a research symposium at the REB could form the basis of a new publication.

#### *Merchandise*

Museum Victoria holds reproduction rights for a number of fine photographs of the great exhibitions, Federation ephemera, and the external illuminations of the building in 1901. These have considerable potential to be made into postcards and related merchandise.

### *Website*

The Royal Exhibition Building website ([www.museum.vic.gov.au/reb](http://www.museum.vic.gov.au/reb)) is located on Museum Victoria's website and is managed by the museum's commercial department. The website currently contains an historical overview of the building and gardens, information on World Heritage, events and activities, and venue hire information. The website is reviewed regularly with new information added as it becomes available or as provided by other organisations.

### **5.3.7 Recommendations for Interpretation**

- i. Undertake further research on the development of the major visitor experience projects such as the dome promenade tour and the immersive multimedia experience in the tunnel link.
- ii. Continue to offer the general public regular tours of the building and assess the potential to further enhance the experience on offer.
- iii. Refurbish the interpretative display on the first floor gallery to encompass the entire history of the building and gardens.
- iv. Develop and implement activities and resources for educational audiences.
- v. Install new World Heritage interpretative signage for areas inside the main entrances of the building and near the dome on the ground and first floors in conjunction with the new signage system.
- vi. Investigate the potential to restore the festoon lighting to the north façade of the REB.
- vii. Develop guidelines for flying flags on the REB flagpoles.
- viii. Investigate opportunities for organising conferences and symposia on the history of the REB.
- ix. Investigate the opportunities to develop a new detailed book on the REB and produce postcards and other related merchandise from the existing photographic collections.
- x. Update and maintain the REB website as information becomes available.

## **5.4 Commercial Operations**

As the historical context of this document outlines, the REB was built for the purpose of showcasing large scale exhibitions and high profile events. This purpose continues today with Museum Victoria operating the building as a commercial venue for hire with approximately 50 events (mainly exhibitions) staged annually and over 440,000 visitors.

High profile annual events such as the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show, Victorian Hot Rod Show and the university exams have a long history at the

building. The biannual Melbourne Art Fair is also a premier event staged over both levels of the venue. In addition the REB was the host of the Prime Minister's Commonwealth Games luncheon in 2006 and Olympic dinner in 2000 and was the venue for the Centenary of Federation celebrations in 2001. More recently new events such as the Australian Heritage Home Show and the Autumn International Beer Festival have attracted large audiences. The ability of the venue to stage a varied mix of events, each with its own operational requirements is a key strength.

Commercial hirers of the venue choose to stage their events at the REB for a number of reasons but predominantly for the history, prestige and physical charm that the building and surrounding gardens can add to their event. It is an unquantifiable marketing tool for hirers as the REB generates interest in its own right which can complement events. Other positive attributes the venue can offer hirers are its proximity to the CBD, public transport and on site parking facilities. In a practical sense, the facilities offered to hirers are of a vital importance and they must be taken into consideration in any future redevelopment of the areas surrounding the building to ensure that the REB remains competitive and sustainable in the commercial market.

The World Heritage listing of the REB and Carlton Gardens has created a greater awareness of the building, which has translated to an increase in sales inquiries. An important component of operating the REB is to ensure that new and existing hirers of the venue conduct their events within the guidelines required to protect the venue and its reputation. Operational procedures are continually updated and implemented to take into account the physical condition of the building and the impact of staging events. In fact it is the events themselves and their operational requirements which drive the need to continually upgrade the services and infrastructure provided by the venue.

#### **5.4.1 Opportunities**

##### *Events*

There is potential to develop additional products for REB audiences that are more closely aligned with the commercial department, such as a 'premium' dining experience which would enable the general public to experience a large scale banquet or ball within the REB's spectacular setting.

##### *Melbourne Museum and the Plaza*

The REB, Melbourne Museum and the plaza are part of the Carlton Gardens Precinct. Cross marketing opportunities across the precinct are to be developed to increase awareness of Museum Victoria, the REB and Melbourne Museum. The plaza is a key avenue to achieve this as events from either venue can spill onto the plaza. The future redevelopment of the plaza will enliven the space and encourage outdoor activities associated with both venues. The plaza is seen as a key component of cross-promotional potential between Melbourne Museum and the REB.

### *Partnerships*

Due to the size and historical significance of the REB, a number of high profile cultural events have been staged in the REB (eg. Melbourne Festival events, Alfred Deakin Lectures). Such events do not generate the level of revenue commercial events generate. However, the importance of forging strategic links with such cultural institutions is acknowledged and encouraged.

### *Reaching a wider audience*

Recently completed infrastructure improvements will enhance access into the REB and plans for further development of the internal and external interpretation of the building have been highlighted elsewhere in this document. Such plans complement the commercial function of the building and will increase the number and size of audiences attracted to the venue. Commercial events and the wide range of visitors who attend such events will ensure the history and interpretation of the REB is communicated worldwide.

## **5.4.2 Recommendations for Commercial Operations**

- i. Maintain the current dual-use model for commercial use and public access and support the implementation of further heritage interpretation.
- ii. Continue marketing the REB as a venue for hire for large scale and high profile events.
- iii. Explore the opportunities for creating 'premium' events for the general public.
- iv. Explore the potential for cross-promotional opportunities within the Museum precinct.
- v. Forge strategic links with high profile cultural institutions and events.
- vi. Continue to assess and manage the impact that commercial events have on the fabric of the building.
- vii. Program the minor maintenance works funded through operating revenue in conjunction with the overall work schedules and carry out those works in accordance within accepted conservation guidelines.

## **5.5 Communication and Promotion**

### **5.5.1 Positioning of the Royal Exhibition Building**

There are two aspects to the positioning of the Royal Exhibition Building as it is one of Museum Victoria's portfolio of venues as well as part of the World Heritage site. Strategies for managing the building need to take into account these two positions as there will be situations when one position may take priority over the other according to the purpose of the communication or promotion.

An overall communications strategy for the World Heritage site is to be developed as a joint exercise between the City of Melbourne and Museum Victoria, with input from other relevant stakeholders such as Heritage Victoria. Within the context of Museum Victoria, the Royal Exhibition Building is considered an individual venue reflecting the values of national identity, pride and symbolism.

### **5.5.2 Audiences**

A wide range of existing and potential audiences for appreciating the cultural and heritage significance of the Royal Exhibition Building have been identified and include the following:

#### *International and interstate tourists*

Placement of the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens on the World Heritage List has already started to increase the number of international and interstate tourists wishing to visit the building. It is anticipated that the impact of World Heritage listing will increase steadily over the next few years, especially as the listing begins to appear in tourist guides, websites and specialist books on World Heritage sites.

#### *Melbourne and regional visitors*

Melburnians and Victorians have a longstanding awareness of the historical significance of the Royal Exhibition Building and its inclusion on the World Heritage List strengthens that awareness and provides an opportunity to increase understanding of the history of the building and to build a sense of community ownership.

#### *Commercial users and visitors*

Approximately 440,000 people use the Royal Exhibition Building each year through participation in commercial and community events held in the building. While their interest is primarily directed to the specific event they are visiting, there is the potential to provide some interpretation of the building at selected locations.

#### *Education groups*

With such a rich history, the Royal Exhibition Building has potential for both booked and online education audiences and strategies will be developed to create a niche within the various education levels and key learning areas.

#### *Special interest groups*

There are a variety of special interest groups that have specific interests in the building, including heritage groups such as the National Trust, architectural groups and community groups, such as Probus.

#### *Stakeholders*

Several major stakeholders have a direct association and interest in the building. These include the City of Melbourne, Heritage Victoria, State and Commonwealth



governments, UNESCO, City of Yarra, Carlton and Fitzroy resident associations and groups and visiting VIPs.

### **5.5.3 Strategies for Communication and Promotion**

- Develop the public profile of the REB as an iconic building that is part of the Museum Victoria portfolio.
- Increase awareness that the REB is part of a World Heritage site and promote what the listing means.
- Enhance community engagement with the REB as a heritage site and a key cultural focus in Melbourne.
- Increase awareness of the REB amongst Victorians.
- Develop partnerships with other key government agencies, such as Tourism Victoria and the City of Melbourne, to develop a Tourism Strategy to increase state, national and international tourism.
- Encourage the promotion of the REB and Carlton Gardens site as a World Heritage Precinct and support the development of an identity for the precinct in conjunction with other key government agencies.

### **5.5.4 Audience Evaluation and Analysis**

Museum Victoria's Marketing and Visitor Evaluation Department will continue to undertake analysis of visitors to the Royal Exhibition Building to ensure that communications and promotion material remain relevant to target audiences.

### **5.5.5 Recommendations for Communications and Promotions**

- i. Produce and maintain a general brochure incorporating information such as a map, brief history and information on World Heritage that would be distributed through Tourism Victoria, Tourism Australia, visitor information centres, hotels and backpacker accommodation, inbound tour operators and conference groups.
- ii. Provide accurate information in key travel guides and tourist publications.
- iii. Provide relevant information for publications and other materials specifically produced for the seniors market.
- iv. Provide an improved and enhanced website for REB and Carlton Gardens.
- v. Include details of the REB on key travel websites.
- vi. Liaise with the City of Melbourne with regards to the placement of billboards and other outdoor signage.
- vii. Increase the promotion of the REB at Melbourne Museum.

- viii. Ensure REB brochures are widely available throughout Museum Victoria venues.
- ix. Establish the REB Open Day as an annual event.
- x. Utilise the cross promotional opportunities with exhibitions held in the REB such as the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show and other hallmark events.

## 5.6 Signage Strategy

### 5.6.1 New Signage System

Signage within the site currently comprises a mix of styles. Within the Carlton Gardens the standard City of Melbourne signage style is used for directional and identification signage. Museum signage within the Exhibition Reserve follows the museum signage style. Museum signage includes identification and interpretive signage, directional signs near the museum entrance and signage to identify the Golden Mile heritage trail.

Currently these two disparate signage styles are located in distinct areas and signage has followed the predominant style of the immediate vicinity — Museum style signage on the north side of the Royal Exhibition Building and on the plaza, and Gardens style signage in the North and South Gardens, and at the east and west forecourts of the Royal Exhibition Building. A preferred approach is to have a comprehensive signage system for the whole site.

The new comprehensive signage system would suit both the built environment — heritage and modern — and a garden setting. The system would include complementary signage for both World Heritage and non-World Heritage areas of the site. World Heritage signage would be clearly identifiable and would provide a unique and immediately recognisable identity for the World Heritage Carlton Gardens and Royal Exhibition Building. Non-World Heritage signage, such as external museum directional signs, would sit comfortably within the suite of signage.

Within the Royal Exhibition Building there is no consistent style for signage. Signs have been installed in an ad-hoc manner over the years and comprise an inappropriate mix of styles and designs. The new signage system would include signage for the Royal Exhibition Building — statutory, operational, directional and interpretive.

Once commissioned, the new signage system would be presented to Heritage Victoria for approval enabling all signage that complies with the system to be permit exempt.

### **5.6.2 Event Promotion**

The promotion of events within the Royal Exhibition Building is important to its ongoing commercial viability. Prominent event signage helps to enhance the public profile of the Royal Exhibition Building as a functioning exhibition venue.

Signage to promote commercial events at the Royal Exhibition Building currently comprises the facility to install horizontal banners above the east and north entrances. Promotional banners are displayed for the duration of the event. Between events, the museum displays banners to promote tours of the building. The installation of additional fixing points for larger banners at the north and east entrances would provide the option to dress up each entrance for major events, such as Melbourne Art Fair and the Flower and Garden Show. The cost of producing these larger banners would limit their use to significant events only and it would be anticipated that they would only be displayed for about six to eight weeks each year.

Freestanding permanent advertising structures are not appropriate within the immediate curtilage of the Royal Exhibition Building. Consequently, an outmoded illuminated sign at Nicholson Street has been removed, and an inappropriate billboard structure on Rathdowne Street will also be removed. However, prominent street level signage is required for significant events. Temporary removable structures are envisaged as part of the signage system for the site. These structures would be similar to those used for the Melbourne Festival, or the temporary signage for the Commonwealth Games. The signage system would also include temporary directional signage for events.

### **5.6.3 Nicholson and Rathdowne Street Frontages**

Prominent signage to identify and promote the museum is located at the east and west forecourts in the form of large banners on the blades, as well as lettering attached to the carpark bulkheads. The banner blades are an integral part of the museum architecture, however the signage on the carpark bulkheads should be reviewed as part of the project to enhance the visual and landscape connections between the north and south Carlton Gardens.

### **5.6.4 Use of the World Heritage Logo**

The use of the World Heritage logo on signage should be restricted to significant signs only, such as identification and interpretive signs. As the 'higher priority' logo, the World Heritage logo should appear alone. Museum Victoria, City of Melbourne and other stakeholder logos (for example Heritage Victoria, Department of Environment and Sustainability) should not appear on signage.

Note: The formal plaque at the north entrance uses both the World Heritage and the UNESCO logos, however this is the only instance where both logos appear on permanent signage.

### 5.6.5 Recommendations for Signage

- i. Commission a signage system to provide a comprehensive signage design for the whole site and set out guidelines for how the system is to be used. The new system will include signage for the Royal Exhibition Building and will replace both the City of Melbourne style signs and the external museum style signs with a complementary style.
- ii. Investigate options for providing additional banners for major events at the entrances of the Royal Exhibition Building. Fixings to be in addition to fixing points provided for horizontal banners above the north and east entrances.
- iii. Accommodate event specific signage within the signage system, including temporary removable structures to provide prominent street level signage for significant events.
- iv. Review signage on the carpark bulkheads in order to enhance the visual and landscape connections between the north and south Carlton Gardens.
- v. Use the World Heritage logo only on appropriate and significant signs. As the 'higher priority' logo, the World Heritage logo should appear alone. Museum Victoria, City of Melbourne and other stakeholder logos should not appear on signage.

## 5.7 Forecourts and Landscape

### 5.7.1 South, east and west forecourts

The REB was originally constructed as the centrepiece of the Carlton Gardens with the three surrounding forecourts forming an essential component of the original 'palace-garden' design. The forecourts also marked the main entrances and exits from the exhibition hall, with the southern forecourt linking the building to the south gardens and the east and west forecourts providing access to and from Nicholson and Rathdowne Streets.

#### *Southern Forecourt*

The southern forecourt was originally designed as the main ceremonial entrance to the building and featured a broad terrace with formal parterres and the central Hochgurtel fountain, which marked the apex of the garden's radiating paths. The upper terrace, adjacent to the south façade of the building, (now known as the southern drive), extended between the east and west boundaries of the site to provide pedestrian access from adjacent streets. The northern edge of the parterres now forms the boundary between the Exhibition Reserve and the southern gardens.

The southern forecourt still forms a key vista within the southern Carlton Gardens, however the southern drive has been asphalted over for vehicle access and parking

and the large flag poles, decorative urns and lamp standards no longer survive. With the focus of the building now shifting towards the north entrance, the south entrance of the building is now only used for significant events, such as the Flower & Garden show which importantly, is the only event to still utilise both the building and the southern gardens.

The Conservation Management Plan and Carlton Gardens Master Plan both outline recommendations to reconstruct the south forecourt, as far as practicable, to reflect the period of significance (1880-1901). While this principle is supported by Museum Victoria, the practicalities of maintaining a working exhibition venue need to be considered as part of the redevelopment as it is anticipated that the southern drive will continue to play a supporting role in providing both vehicle and service access to the building.

The drive currently provides the main vehicle access route between the east and west forecourts and as the alternative route across the museum plaza to the north is not desirable, this will need to be maintained. There are also a significant number of on site car parking spaces at the eastern end of the drive that are utilised during commercial events. While it is generally accepted that the current number of vehicles parking around the building detracts from site and needs to be reduced, it is desirable that a limited number of parking spaces are retained at the eastern end of the drive (for use during commercial events only) and that alternative parking be provided elsewhere on the site, such as in a new underground carpark in the western forecourt. Service access will also need to be provided in the southern drive, particularly if the current waste compound in the western forecourt is relocated to the south side when the western forecourt is redeveloped. It may be possible to accommodate these less attractive but necessary functions on a lowered terrace adjacent to the western end of the south elevation and appropriately conceal them from view.

### *Eastern Forecourt*

The east forecourt was the principle pedestrian entry into the exhibition hall. It became known as the 'French Circle', as it contained the French Fountain in the centre of its circular garden, which was purchased by the Trustees and erected here after the 1880 exhibition. The forecourt provided an important link between the exhibition hall and the gardens, its structured layout of garden beds adding to the formality of the original design.

The general layout of the east forecourt has largely survived, with the central garden beds retained intact albeit in a slightly altered form. Four cast iron lamp standards still remain around the perimeter of the garden bed and the sandstone monument to the Honourable James Wood has also remained in the south-west corner of the forecourt since 1881. The pavement surface of the forecourt has changed from the original gravel to a combination of concrete and asphalt and the Westgarth Fountain, dating from 1888, was relocated from near the east entrance to a position closer to Nicholson Street after it was restored. The original design also featured

triangular grassed areas near the building and urns and bronze sculptures which have all now been lost

As with the southern forecourt, the objective outlined in both the Conservation Management Plan and Carlton Gardens Master Plan for the east forecourt is to reconstruct it, as far as practicable, to reflect the period of significance (1880-1901). This is supported by Museum Victoria however, as the east forecourt will continue to function as the main loading dock and one of two main public access points for commercial events, there are a number of operational issues that need to be considered in relation to this area.

The east entrance to the REB is the only entry that provides at grade access for vehicles. This, by default, makes the east forecourt the most appropriate area to operate as the main loading dock for bumping in and out commercial events. During these times, there can be many vehicles parked outside the building with just as many forklifts manoeuvring between them and it is essential sufficient space is maintained around the entrance to allow this process to operate safely. Additionally, when the loading dock is in operation, temporary restrictions on pedestrian access are also required for obvious safety reasons. Portable plastic barricades are currently used to mark out the loading area when it is in use, however it might be appropriate to investigate a more permanent solution, such as lift up bollards, to minimise the visual distraction of the barricades and reduce the workload on staff who set up and dismantle the barriers each day.

When the east forecourt loading dock is not in use, the area is considered a pedestrian zone, operating as one of the main public access points for shows (the north entrance being the other). During these times, vehicle access is controlled by the recently installed boom gates which have successfully reduced the number of unauthorised vehicles entering the forecourt. The position of the boom gates could be reviewed, particularly if the serpentine pedestrian path around the perimeter of the gardens is reconstructed. The reinstatement of this path would provide a significant contribution to improving pedestrian access between the north and south gardens

#### *Western Forecourt*

The west forecourt was the main pedestrian exit from the exhibitions and was known as the 'German Circle', as it contained a German kiosk in the centre of its circular garden beds during the 1880 exhibition. The west forecourt was similar in design to the east but was completely removed by 1956 when the area was asphalted for car parking. Currently, there is no evidence of any original features remaining above ground.

The west forecourt is currently primarily used for bus parking by groups visiting Melbourne Museum and as an exhibitor car parking and a secondary loading dock during larger commercial events. It currently contains a waste compound to the

north of the entrance and electronic security gates have recently been installed to provide more control over vehicle access.

As with the south and east forecourts, the objective for the west forecourt is to reconstruct it, as far as practicable, to reflect the period of significance (1880-1901). This concept is supported and it is generally understood that this project would be a co-ordinated effort between the museum, City of Melbourne and Heritage Victoria. It is also anticipated that an archaeological investigation would be undertaken as a precursor to the main project to inform the concept designs. Operational issues to be considered for this area include the retention of sufficient space to enable the west entrance to remain as a secondary loading dock during larger events, the potential relocation of the waste compound to a less visible area on the south of the building and the provision of alternative bus and car parking areas. There is an overall desire to reduce the amount of parking around the exterior of the building and it is unlikely that anything more than a drop off point could be accommodated for buses in the reconstructed landscape. However, it is an undeniable bonus to the building, as a commercial venue, to be able to offer car parking spaces to commercial clients and the reconstruction project could offer a significant opportunity to extend the museum underground car park to help alleviate some of the pressure once the above ground spaces have been removed or reduced.

### **5.7.2 Landscape Elements**

Planting within the Exhibition Reserve consists of the circular garden bed and surrounding trees in the east forecourt, several specimen trees in the west forecourt and the rectangular garden beds and rows of gums in the museum plaza that were established at the time of the museum's construction. Raised grassed planters were also created at this time along the frontages to Nicholson and Rathdowne Streets. Hard landscape elements include the remnants of paths extending between the north and south gardens well as a mixture of park furniture items such as bins, seats and bollards and the cast iron lamp poles retained in the east forecourt.

The Carlton Gardens Master Plan outlines a number of recommendations for managing the landscape within the REB's forecourts which generally aims to enhance the connection between the north and south gardens. In line with these recommendations, the museum supports the concepts of planting additional trees to the frontages of Nicholson and Rathdowne Streets, improving pedestrian access between the north and south gardens, maintaining the existing specimen trees in the west forecourt and removing any planting which detracts from the significance of the site.

With park furniture items, it is generally supported that specifically designed park furniture could be created for the Carlton Gardens which would be also used within the vicinity of REB. However, items within close proximity to the museum, ie around

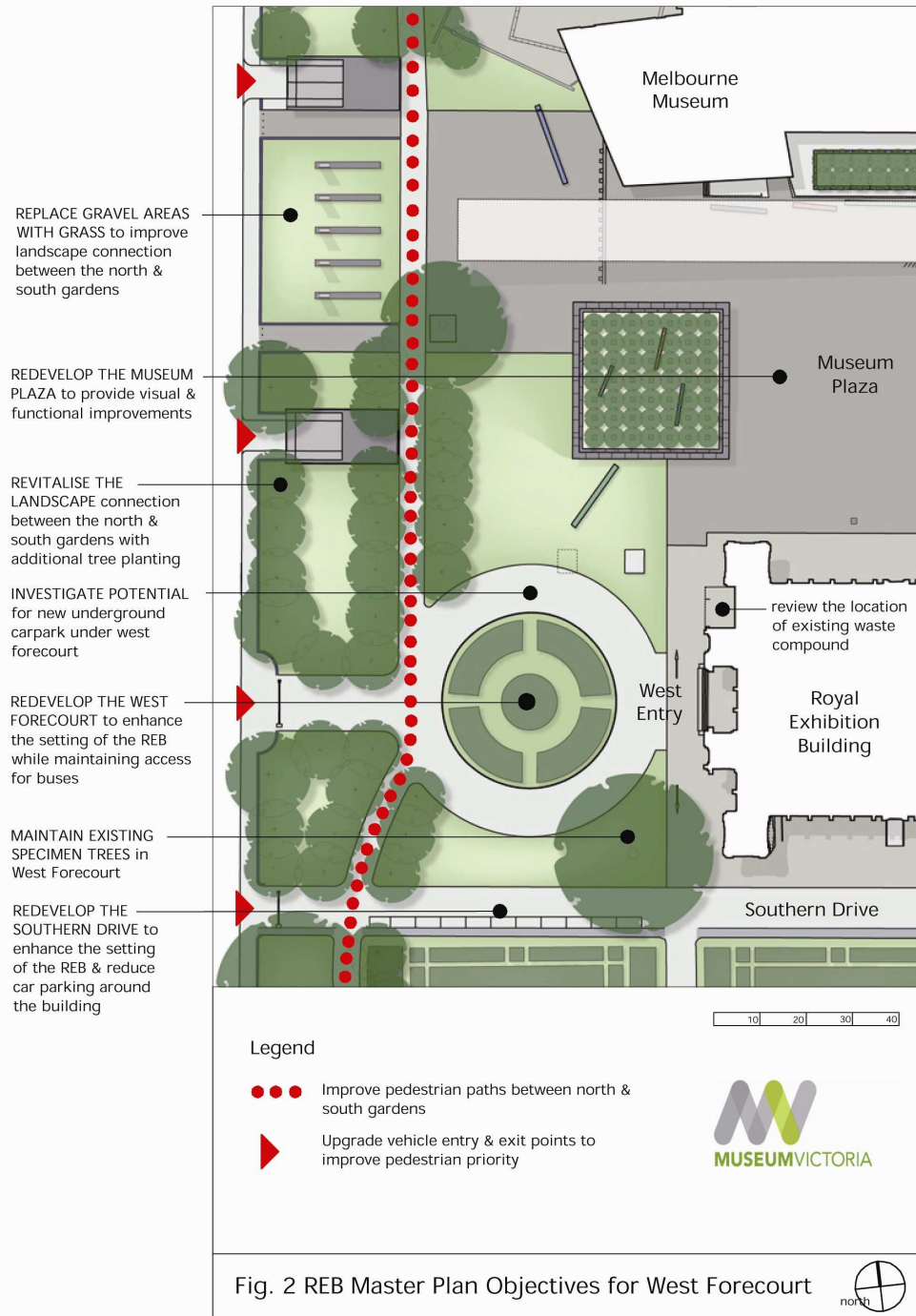
the museum and within the plaza, should adopt the museum style to ensure that the design integrity of this building and its immediate surrounds are maintained.

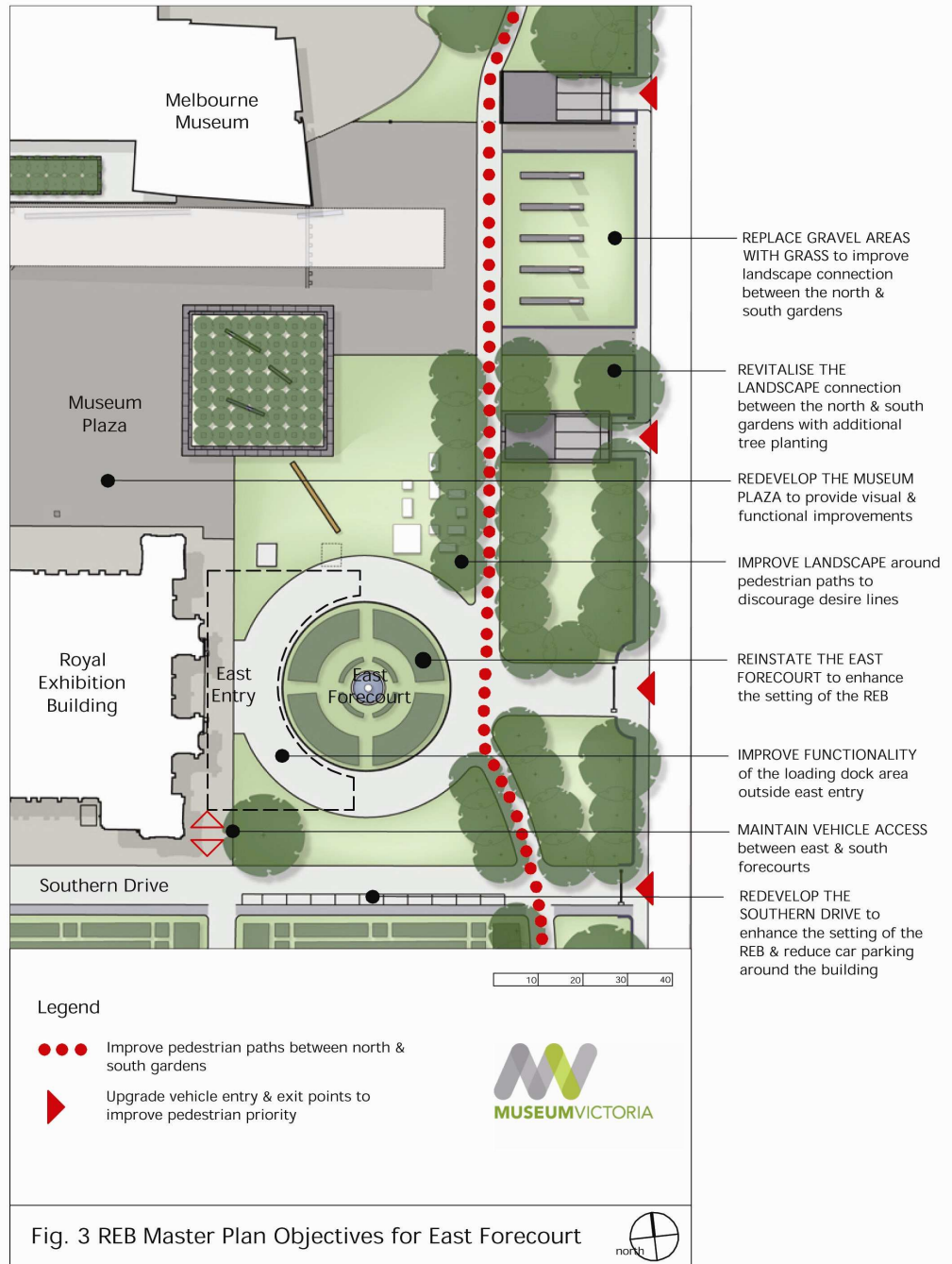
In line with these recommendations, all landscaping works within the vicinity of the REB, including the southern drive, the east and west forecourts, the frontages to Rathdowne and Nicholson streets and including the museum plaza, will be undertaken with the City of Melbourne to ensure that all landscaping is compatible with the character of the Carlton Gardens.

### **5.7.3 Recommendations for Forecourts and Landscape**

- i. Develop a strategy to secure funding for the future reinstatement of the southern and western forecourts.
- ii. Research and implement the necessary works to conserve the east forecourt.
- iii. Work with the City of Melbourne to improve the visual connection between the north and south gardens along the Rathdowne and Nicholson Street frontages.
- iv. Ensure there is a co-ordinated approach to all landscaping works within the vicinity of the REB including the Museum Plaza.







## 5.8 Pedestrian and Vehicle Movements

The Exhibition Reserve is primarily a pedestrian precinct with the main pedestrian routes across the site including the paths established along Nicholson and Rathdowne Streets between the north and south gardens; along the southern drive, used as a link between Gertrude and Queensberry Streets and across the plaza, either directly across between Nicholson and Rathdowne Streets or diagonally from the REB forecourts to the museum's main entry.

However, the current operational requirements of both the museum and the REB require vehicular access to the site in several locations. These include the plaza, used by emergency and other authorised vehicles; the REB and museum loading docks, used for loading or unloading purposes; the museum car parks, used by general visitors to both the museum and the REB and the western forecourt which is currently used to park school and other buses. In addition to this, cyclists also use the site, particularly across the plaza and along the southern drive. The museum has recently adopted the stance not to encourage cyclists on the southern drive due to potential conflicts between cyclists and exhibition related vehicles.

In the past, there have been some concerns about potential conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles on the site, particularly in relation to vehicles associated with loading and unloading at the REB and the museum. These vehicles are an essential element of the operation of the two venues and cannot be avoided. However, improvements at the locations where these areas overlap or are in close proximity to pedestrian paths could be undertaken with the City of Melbourne to ensure that the safety of pedestrians is maintained as a priority.

### 5.8.1 Pedestrian and Vehicle Movements

- i. Develop a plan for improvements, such as landscaping solutions and clear line marking, to increase pedestrian priority at all entrances and exits onto the Exhibition Reserve.
- ii. Manage loading and unloading associated with exhibitions at both the REB and Melbourne Museum in a way that ensures pedestrian safety.
- iii. Address the current and desired movements of pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles as part of the redevelopment of the Museum Plaza.
- iv. Maintain the long term objective to reduce vehicle parking in the southern drive and the western forecourt in the future redevelopment of these areas.
- v. Liaise with the City of Melbourne to ensure there is a co-ordinated approach to managing the site as a pedestrian precinct.

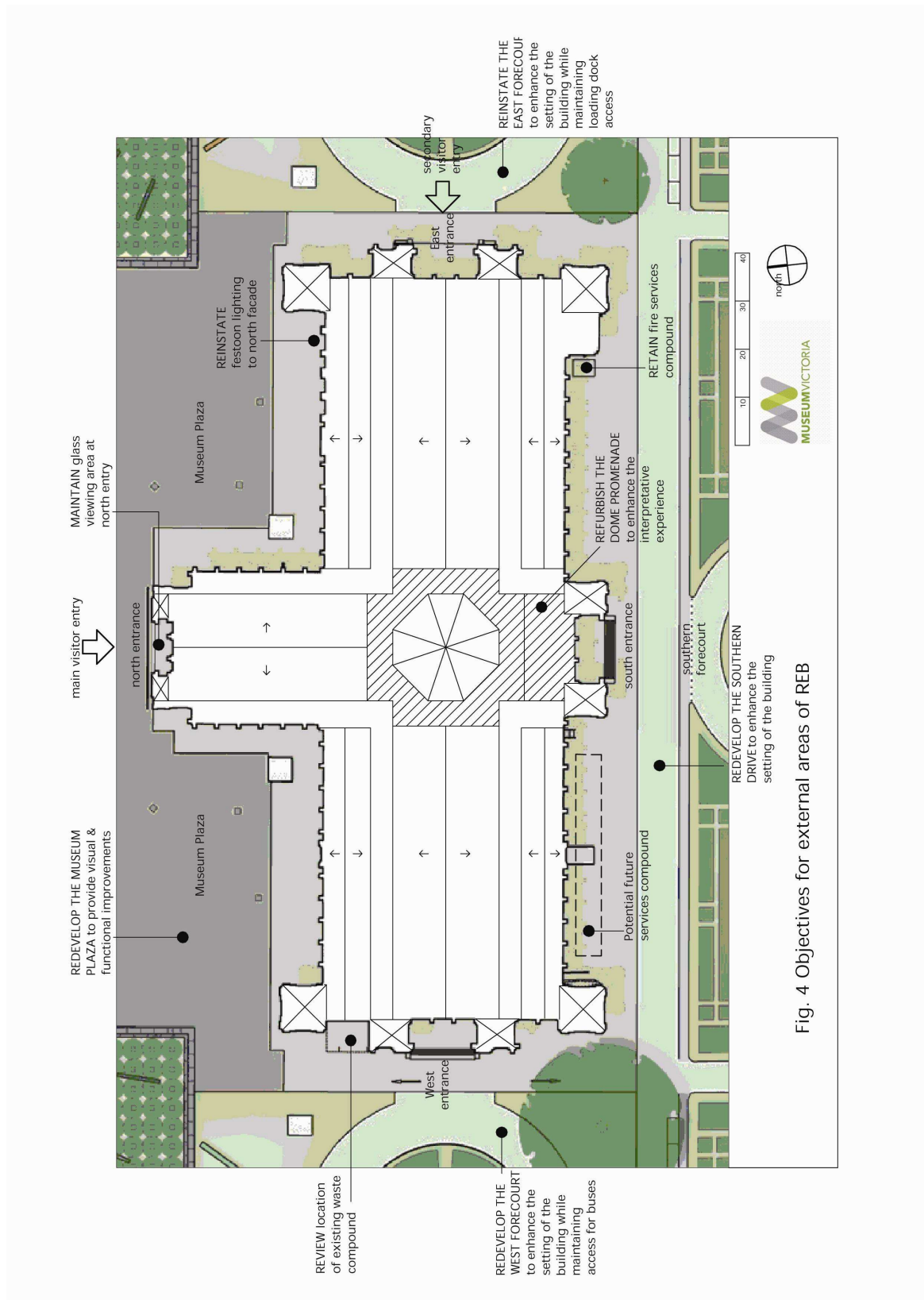


Fig. 4 Objectives for external areas of REB

## 5.9 Museum Plaza

The inscription of the REB and Carlton Gardens onto the World Heritage List has given Museum Victoria the impetus to improve the appearance and functionality of the Museum Plaza. The plaza was initially conceived as a place of congregation and introduction to the new museum but with the REB and Carlton Gardens now a World Heritage site, it is a timely opportunity to review how the plaza also addresses the Royal Exhibition Building.

The redevelopment of the plaza is being led by Museum Victoria with input from other relevant stakeholders. A concept design has been prepared by the museum's original architects to provide visual and functional improvements and to encourage more people to use the area outside organized events. Landscaping will be improved to provide a more welcoming environment while still retaining open spaces that are suitable for commercial hire.

With the focus of the REB now shifting towards the recently upgraded north entrance of the building, the redevelopment of the plaza will also welcome and orientate visitors to the REB as well as improve the visual links between the entrances of the REB and Melbourne Museum. This will be assisted by the regular opening of the timber doors at the north entrance allowing the new sliding glass doors to form a locked viewing area for the public when the building is not in use. Pedestrian and vehicular access through the space will also be reviewed, particularly the desire lines of pedestrians and the need to maintain access for emergency vehicles.

The plaza redevelopment will also take into consideration the recommendations in the Conservation Management Plan and Carlton Gardens Master Plan, particularly in relation to the adjacent REB forecourts and the selection of any additional trees. It is anticipated that concept designs for the plaza redevelopment will be available by the end of 2006.

### 5.9.1 Recommendations for the Museum Plaza

- i. Ensure the design brief for the redevelopment of the Museum Plaza will help orientate visitors to the REB's north entrance and improve the visual links between the REB and Melbourne Museum.
- ii. Ensure the design brief for the plaza takes into account the long term objective of returning the REB to an integrated garden setting.
- iii. Liaise with the City of Melbourne to ensure that the new design for the plaza is informed by and complementary to the proposed works to the REB forecourts and street frontages to Rathdowne and Nicholson Streets.



Fig. 5 Concept design for Museum Plaza.



## 6 Implementation

### 6.1 Management

There are several layers of management for the REB and Carlton Gardens World Heritage Site. At the World Heritage level, a Steering Committee has been appointed by the Victorian Minister for Planning, (the Minister responsible for heritage), to oversee the preparation and implementation of the World Heritage Management Plan.

The day to day management of the overall site is jointly co-ordinated between Museum Victoria and the City of Melbourne, who are also represented on the Steering Committee. These two organisations entered into a Memorandum of Understanding in 2004 and recognise that this agreement commits them to regular meetings to ensure there is ongoing communication and co-ordination in all matters relating to the site.

Museum Victoria's role is to manage the Exhibition Reserve, namely the REB, the REB forecourts, Melbourne Museum and the Museum Plaza. With the accreditation of the World Heritage Management Plan, Museum Victoria is responsible for managing the implementation of the recommendations for the REB and its immediate surrounds and this will be tracked and monitored at an operational level.

As part of this level of management, Museum Victoria will also continue its liaison with local community groups to ensure that there is an ongoing open forum between the museum and interested groups to allow the exchange of information in both directions.

### 6.2 Strategies for Implementation

The implementation of this Master Plan will commence after it has been endorsed by the Museums Board of Victoria. Where the recommendations are dependent on additional funding, Museum Victoria will need to undertake further research and development to enable funding submissions to be made accordingly.

To assist with the implementation of the recommendations in this Master Plan, Museum Victoria supports the following principles:

- Develop a World Heritage Precinct Communications Plan in partnership with City of Melbourne and Heritage Victoria and other relevant stakeholders. This plan would provide an overall vision for managing the presentation of the World Heritage site at a State level by providing broad guidelines for communicating, interpreting and conserving the World Heritage values of the site.
- Establish a funding strategy in partnership with other relevant stakeholders. A review of all potential funding sources such as the Victorian State Government

and its agencies and through the programs of the Australian Government, should be undertaken to establish broad guidelines for how funding will be sourced and maintained for the ongoing maintenance and conservation of the REB and to assist with prioritising the major capital works required to enhance the World Heritage value of the site.

- Ensure that all people involved with the management of the REB and its surrounding landscape are aware of and understand the heritage significance of the site.

### 6.3 Implementation Priorities

The following projects are essential for enhancing the visitor experience, providing a framework for ongoing building works and achieving the long term objective of returning the REB to an integrated landscape setting. These projects will be given priority for their implementation:

- Undertake further development of the proposed capital works projects and prepare funding submissions in accordance with the funding strategy.
- Maintain the daily public tours of the building and assess the potential for increasing the areas within the building that are accessible by the public.
- Refurbish the interpretative display on the first floor gallery to encompass the entire history of the building and the gardens.
- Develop the public profile of the REB as an iconic building that is now part of Museum Victoria.
- Develop a communication strategy to increase awareness that the REB is part of a World Heritage site.
- Commission a signage system to provide a unified and consistent design for all signage for the entire World Heritage site.
- Develop and implement a strategy for increasing pedestrian priority across all entrances and exits to the Exhibition Reserve.
- Develop a concept design for the redevelopment of the Museum Plaza that will provide a visual link between the REB and the Museum, help orientate visitors to the REB's north entrance and improve the general setting of the building.



## 7 Review of the Master Plan

Once the World Heritage Management Plan has been formally accredited by the Australian Government, the *EPBC Act* states that it must be reviewed at intervals of not more than 7 years. Accordingly, it is expected that this Master Plan will be reviewed and updated within the same time frame and at the time of writing this is anticipated to be in 2013.