Drowning by numbers: the commercial transformation of the Harold Holt pool

Anna Ely and Dr Peter Raisbeck
Abstract

The Harold Holt swimming pool complex designed by Kevin Borland and Daryl Jackson is one of the best remaining examples of Brutalist architecture in Australia. The building represents a high point in Borland’s architectural career and celebrates, in an ironic fashion, the life of Prime Minister Harold Holt who drowned off Cheviot Beach in 1967. This paper discusses Stonnington City Council’s 2006 proposal to redevelop the pool and the controversy this provoked among both architects and the local community. It begins by locating the pool and Borland’s work in relation to the New Brutalist style that emerged in England in the 1950s. The paper outlines how Stonnington’s privatisation of the pool services and the quality of its subsequent management led to the pool complex’s architectural and historic integrity being compromised. In order to support this contention, focus is placed upon the various additions and interventions that have been made to the pool since its construction. The paper then discusses how the council’s proposal and design came into conflict with the pool’s relationship to its site and landscape. Moreover, it addresses how contemporary notions of leisure are at odds with the 1950s model of outdoor pool complexes upon which the pool is based. Using the pool as an example, the paper concludes that an examination of how Australian Brutalist buildings should be approached in terms of both their heritage values and their technical conservation is overdue.

Introduction

Naming a swimming pool after a prime minister who drowned may seem a curious tribute, but it is the Australian appreciation of the irony that has helped make the Harold Holt Pool in Malvern, Victoria an Australian icon. However, the architectural qualities of the Harold Holt Pool were not so well appreciated. Indeed, architecturally, the pool’s form and material – glass, concrete and timber – conveys many valued Australian attributes, such as earthiness and power with minimum fuss. Its Brutalist architectural style reflects these qualities with élan (Figures 1-4).

The building’s architect, Kevin Borland, believed that community mattered and that it need not be divorced from the most advanced aesthetic experiments of the time. Indeed, more widely, Borland practised at a time when architectural ethics and ideology were bound to the needs of the communities who used public buildings in suburban Australia. In a sense it was part of a utopian vision of the 1960s and 1970s that saw the suburbs as places where public facilities could bind communities together by designing for all users equally. Borland’s ambitious scheme, including indoor heated pools, was as bold a municipal statement as was the idea of the original 1927 baths being placed in a garden setting. Together they are emblematic of forward looking architecture – and landscape architecture – making a significant civic contribution (Lovell Chen
2006). In the light of current proposals, with their emphasis on commercial imperatives, it is not hard to feel a certain nostalgia for that earlier era of the pool’s evolution.

The paper is concerned primarily with the architectural value of the original building and what has led to its transformation since its completion in 1969, with emphasis on the current proposal of 2009. This proposal is contained in the plans for the site developed by Stonnington Council (formerly City of Malvern) and their consultants (Figures 7 & 8). The current proposal will be seen to undermine seriously the architectural and cultural contributions represented by the pool in the park complex (Figures 2 & 3). Today the complex consists of three outdoor pools, ancillary facilities, significant landscape, and the indoor complex containing three pools and associated facilities. The current proposal consists of doubling the mass of the building, adding substantial floor space, reworking the original circulation and accommodation. The outdoor toddlers’ pool is being removed and works to the diving pool, landscape and ancillary facilities are unresolved. Importantly there is to be no significant conservation work to the original building.

**History and heritage value**

The pool that preceded Borland’s project was built in 1927 by the then Malvern Council. It was one of the first municipal pool developments and consisted of a large bell-shaped pool in a garden setting. It was inspired by the pool at Harrow in the UK, observed by the council engineer BM Coutie on his study tour to Europe where he was impressed by the trend to combine public pools with gardens (Lovell Chen 2006). It is the concept of the garden setting that has been substantially retained from the 1927 development and forms one of the crucial elements of the 1960s complex which is now threatened by the current proposal.

The heritage value of the pool building was recognised by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) in 1999, but was not recognised by the municipal authorities until, under the current proposal, architects Peddle Thorp Melbourne engaged Lovell Chen P/L to prepare a conservation management plan. As a consequence, the whole site gained Heritage Victoria Registration. The heritage value as set out in these documents derives from the site’s historical, social and architectural characteristics.
Historically the building is a memorial to the local federal member and prime minister Harold Holt. It also represents a continuity of the foresight shown by Coutie in 1927. Building an indoor pool, heated and open all year round, was a bold municipal proposal owing much to post-Second World War redevelopment and the impetus of the Melbourne Olympics (Lovell Chen 2006). The Melbourne Olympic pool in Swan Street was also designed by Borland with Peter McIntyre and Phyllis and John Murphy. Architecturally the building is significant for eschewing an historicist model of enclosure, its early adoption of Brutalism, its particular idiosyncratic expression: accomplished, innovative and subsequently highly influential. It is notable, too, for its placement in, and contribution to, the existing landscape and the subsequent contribution of both its architects – Kevin Borland and his junior partner Daryl Jackson – to contemporary architecture in Melbourne. It “is a landmark building in the context of Australian Brutalism” (Lovell Chen 2006).

**Brutalism**

The Brutalist style of the mid-twentieth century is easily distinguished within Modernism by its use of off-form concrete, industrial glazing, naked steel and materials in the raw. It uses bold abstraction, plasticity and contrasts domestic with institutional scale. It exploits and experiments with the possibilities of reinforced concrete particularly in suspending heavy masses over voids.
There is a geometric preference for the chamfer, sharp transitions and excavation of primary forms to express internal function as well as a strong relationship to site. Structure, connections and services are celebrated. Today we see this High tech architecture in buildings like the Pompidou Centre, but it grew out of the adventurous thinking of Archigram. High tech architecture emphasises accentuated beam linkages, laminated beams, wire bracing and tension rods suggestive of pre-war biplanes and Meccano sets (Lovell Chen 2006).

Brutalism is most closely associated with Le Corbusier’s Unité d’habitation, failed English social experiments in public housing, and epic Japanese works by Kenzo Tange and Kunio Mayekawa. It spread to the rest of the world (including Melbourne) via many routes. The term, ‘brutalist’ was coined by British architects Peter and Alison Smithson and comes from beton brut or beton matières referring to Corbusier’s use of boarded concrete or raw materials. Critic Reyner Banham later defined a subset called New Brutalism to describe the milieu of the Smithson’s and Team 10 in their efforts to reform CIAM. In attacking an alienating functionalism Team 10 called for a new humanism which was more about theoretical premises than linguistic means. Banham denoted it as an ethic rather than an aesthetic, a polemical reaction to contemporaneous agendas (Tafuri and Dal Co 1976). It was as much to do with urban design as Architecture. The Harold Holt Pool falls within the oeuvre of both these brutalisms.

Brutalism in Australia

Lovell Chen’s conservation management plan (2006) charts the development of Brutalism in Victoria, noting the very early use of off-form concrete by Frederick Romberg at Newburn and Stanhill in Queens Road, Melbourne. Though the first Brutalist buildings in Australia appeared in Western Australia in the early 1960s they were much in line with the Smithson’s formal brutalism, as were the early Melbourne examples such as the Total Carpark by Bogle and Banfield from 1965 and Boyd’s Menzies College at La Trobe University from 1968 (Taylor 1990). The Harold Holt Pool gathers together a much wider range of architectural interests, even more than the contemporaneous examples such as the expressionist Plumbers and Gas-fitters Union building by Graeme Gunn or Enrico Taglietti’s St. Kilda library. The later Brutalist monuments that appear as giant villas in Canberra are again of narrower concerns. As Taylor (1990) notes: “Related buildings by architects in other states were less politically committed and certainly less tough than those from the Melbourne Architects”.

Brutalism in the Harold Holt pool

The pool building, simply put, is a flat-roofed shed housing three pools. Glass curtain walls of aluminium-framed industrial glazing on the north and south facades are book-ended by concrete accretions of highly articulated elements: stairs, ramps and entry recess, accommodating circulation and support facilities. The building and outdoor pools are set among grassed berms with generous plantings of exotic and native trees. The roof is supported by timber trusses on laminated columns with pin joints on the leg of L-shaped concrete piers which support the upper ambulatory. The program suits an open-plan model. However, not only is the exterior worked for what Corbusian monumentality can be achieved at this small scale but, the circulation is wilfully and deterministically wrought, raising the visitor by ramp to the entry and lowering them again either by ramp to the northern outdoor pool sector or via...
the change rooms by stair down to the pool deck. The first level ambulatory linking to the west end and overlooking the pool where there is a seat for “the controller” adds to the theatricality. The overall impression from the main public aspect on the south is of a transparent glazed pavilion in a garden setting. Indoors it had, in its original form, the atmosphere of a temple animated with rippling light.

Prior to its alteration “the pool building was a powerful exemplar of raw brutalism dominating the field of Australian architecture at that time. Constructed in off-form concrete, concrete block and glass, its sweeping pedestrian ramps suggest Le Corbusier’s later projects and its glazing details recalled James Stirling’s breakthrough design for the Universities of Cambridge and Leicester” (Evans 2006).

Lovell Chen (2006) cite the influences of Corbusier for the monumental use of rough finished off-form concrete, the long approach ramps, heavy rounded return stairwells and vividly coloured strip windows. Stirling is cited for his glazing, Ralph Erskine for his laminated beams and upper level ambulatory and locally, Enrico Taglietti for his concrete use, as well as the massive highly rhythmic designs in concrete of John Andrews.

The architects

Both Architects have made a significant contribution to post-World War 2 architecture in Melbourne. In Melbourne during the 1970s Borland (d 2001) set the benchmark for creative domestic and small scale institutional architecture. The Harold Holt Pool being the high point was only eclipsed in experimental terms by the Clyde Cameron College designed with Bernard Brown and built 1975–1977 (Evans 2006). For Daryl Jackson, Borland’s junior partner, the Harold Holt Pool was an exploratory building and the first of his significant works in concrete as well as the first of several swimming pools (Taylor 1990). From the late 1960s with Evan Walker he built a substantial career with the Harold Holt Pool as a seminal work. Taylor (1990) describes Jackson and Walker’s buildings as being exemplary of the most convincing and consistent celebration of the Brutalist stance in Melbourne.

Interventions and modifications

The idea that the pool should be redeveloped as a leisure centre without regard for its architectural significance was reinforced by the way in which various modifications had been made to the pool over time. Since its construction, Borland and Jackson’s 1960s pool development has undergone two major architectural alterations and myriad minor ones, culminating in what is today a compromised work but one whose alteration may be successfully reversed with an appropriate development. It is our contention that this is an option that should be given serious consideration. The most difficult area to deal with is the north facade and the issue of the building’s transparency. If the current proposal proceeds these important aspects will be lost permanently.

In 1987 the council, now Stonnington Council, engaged Daryl Jackson Architects. A spa and therapeutic pool were added to the north side of the main pool hall. They were accommodated under a sloping glazed roof structure between the existing ramps which has interrupted the clear statement of horizontality of the north elevation. Again, as suggested above, this interference cannot be undone if any new works are added to the north elevation.

In works carried out by Rick Bzowy Architects in 1998 the timber open-web trusses, which had failed were replaced with steel tubular section trusses off the grid, and the central section of the roof was raised to introduce a translucent clerestory window facing south for two-thirds the length of the pool hall. The ceiling was replaced with white Luxalon, a ribbed aluminium ventilated ceiling system. According to Steve Morrell (the current council project manager and engineer) and Rick Bzowy (the architect at the time), these works carried out in 1998 were precipitated by the failure of the original timber trusses which caused the roof to collapse (Lovell Chen 2006). Rick Bzowy advises that the work was then carried out in some haste. While the failure was not fully investigated at the time, as a similar truss system had failed in Box Hill, it was assumed the trusses were under-designed (Bzowy 2009).
In 1999 air-conditioning ductwork was added by Beca Simons consulting engineers in consultation with Rick Bzowy. The circular section exposed ductwork that ringed the main pool hall was painted gloss white matching the replacement trusses (Figure 6). The strategy of using this form of exposed circular ductwork is quite in keeping with the aesthetic of Borland and Jackson, a High tech aesthetic which they continued to develop subsequent to the Harold Holt project. However the detailing of the ductwork and colour application in combination with white trusses, translucent clerestory glazing and white ceiling results in the eye being distracted and the form and articulation of the space being obscured. There are technical justifications for the introduction of light and reflective surfaces at ceiling level including for the translucent polycarbonate rather than clear glazing (Bzowy 2009). The form of clerestory window is also familiar to Jackson’s observers and appeared in Borland and Jackson’s early sketches for the ‘60s pool (Jackson 2009). Nevertheless it detracts from the singular concept of the original architectural statement, an effect exacerbated by the lack of transparency.

The plant room was later extended on the south facade facing High Street, also in consultation with Bzowy. Numerous reports prepared by the council suggest that the pool was perceived to be “dark” and needed to be “brightened up”. Against Bzowy’s advice white paint was applied to the concrete block work leading to the subsequent decision to paint the existing internal timber columns white (Bzowy 2009). These works have the cumulative effect of crowding and simplistically “brightening” up the space with the result completely undermining the severe almost monastic atmosphere conveyed by Ian McKenzie’s black-and-white photographs of the original pool. Many additional minor works have been carried out and almost universally contrary to the aesthetics, and ethic, of the original building; from the roofing of outdoor change rooms, infill glazing including of the manager’s cantilevered concrete box and the blocking off of the main circulation spine, to the use of blue paint on the raw concrete, incompatible signage and the general cultivation of an atmosphere of bustling bright retail struggling to counter Borland’s muscular and strangely spiritual space (Figure 4).

**Master planning (Intervention is Planned)**

The events leading up to the current proposal can be understood by referring to the Master Planning Study for the pool recommending a new gymnasium, offices and change rooms produced in June 1993 by Daryl Jackson Architects. Another study was produced in August 1993, by Lacey Management Services which reviewed the master plan and argued that “a decline in attendances will occur unless there is periodic upgrading of facilities”. In 1996 Stonnington Council produced a project report whose aim was to provide council with a basis to consider future action in terms of the pool’s wet and dry areas. Again, it was argued without substantiation that the pool’s facilities “were outdated and inappropriate” in relation to “current market needs”. In November 1996 A Leisure and Cultural Services Strategy was prepared for Stonnington Council by Strategic Australia Pty Ltd. This study concluded that the council should upgrade the pool’s sauna, steam room, jets-spa and change rooms in order to receive a grant from the department of Sport and Recreation Victoria.

The shift towards transforming the pool into a so-called leisure centre began in April 1998 when Michael King and Associates: Leisure and Tourism Planners undertook an Aquatic Facilities Development strategy. This consultant was charged with developing a master plan for Stonnington’s pool as well as the Prahran Aquatic Centre, including identifying a works program. As a result they argued that Harold Holt Pool, with no reference to its historic architectural value, was “tired” and “run down” and in need of refurbishment. They then went on to argue that “the key design objective of the next stage of development is to enhance the family/recreation and fitness focus to provide both a greater variety of activities” for both current and future users. This report gave little or no regard to the pool’s heritage values.

It proposed that the pool include “interactive play areas”, a multi-purpose dry programming space”, “on-site childcare facilities”, “improvements to food and merchandising outlets” and remarkably “development of waterslides to provide an increased variety of activities for young people”. King’s plan showed feasibility concept plans which incorporated all of these facilities; with the inclusion of an extensive water slide over the high diving pool which was now designated “leisure water”.

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In December 2000 Michael King and Associates developed a “Base Case Business and Financial Model” for the pool. This established a base case for forward revenues and expenses for the pool up until 2012. It indicated that the aquatic facilities provided in the centre were run at a loss and that the other services within the pool would offset this. In June of 2001 King produced a final report “Stonnington Aquatic Service Business Plan” which argued that the pool’s management could be tendered out. This report canvassed four different “management structures” for council’s consideration. These options suggest solutions to the issues surrounding the privatisation of the pool’s management. The RANS management group which had replaced council staff had been responsible for the management and operation of the pool since 1995. Indeed, between financial years 1996/1997 and 1999/2000 there had been a “significant increase in net loss”. RANS’s views as noted in the final 2001 plan appear to accord with, if not exactly match, the redevelopment proposals put forward by King and Associates in 1998. Again these concepts promote the idea of the pool as being a leisure centre focused on the concept of leisure water. For example in this report, RANS is quoted as saying that “there is a need to provide some form of moving water to amuse the teenage market”. This could include removing the diving pool and using the existing diving tower infrastructure for some other leisure/feature activity.” (Stonnington Aquatic Services Business Plan, Final Report, June 2001).

By November 2004 the strategy to redevelop the Harold Holt Pool as a leisure centre was set in concrete. A successful application was made to Sport and Recreation Victoria’s Community Facility funding program. SGL consulting group in association with Peddle Thorp Architects and Prowse Quantity Surveyors produced a final report outlining how the pool would be redeveloped. No mention was made of the pool’s iconic character or heritage values related to its architecture. This report argued that key features that should be included in high use aquatic facilities were, non-static water play areas, water slides, multi-ride areas, and “computerised light shows and sound systems”. Another feature of this new architectural type was what was described as Leisure Furniture which was “aimed to keep children and parents at centre’s longer (to encourage greater secondary spending on food/beverage/merchandising)”.

The current proposal

Stonnington Council’s proposal of 2006 sought to redevelop the pool complex by doubling the size of the main building and further adding significantly to the building’s footprint. A small
L-shaped indoor pool for learners is added and the external toddler’s pool is removed. Included in the program are a gymnasium, expansion and upgrade of services, administrative and retail areas and reconfiguration of the circulation. The new plans by Peddle Thorp Architects include the Conservation Management Plan by Lovell Chen, with design modifications contributed by Daryl Jackson of Jackson Architecture in 2007. The site planning options dictate massing on the north elevation of the existing building, massing on the south or along the western boundary in order to maintain the operational necessity of linking the new with the existing works. Any significant addition to the north or south would destroy the transparency of the building. A transparency which paradoxically ensures that the original building was indeed bright and well lit in terms of natural light. Although Jackson’s modifications have shifted some internal floor space to the west boundary the addition still obscures the existing building and the program remains a squeeze on the site.

If constructed, the 2007 version of the current proposal (Figures 7 and 8) would double the original volume of the main building and remove the outdoor toddler’s pool. After community protests in January 2009, tender documents lodged with Heritage Victoria now include a moon-shaped splash dish with fountains. Open space and some trees are removed from what at present is a rather lush looking entry. A closer examination of the plans indicate the change to the iconic circulation pattern in the existing building. It has been made redundant: the entry has been relocated from the first level to the ground so the existing entry ramp to the first floor leads to a redundant door. This isolates the upper floor change rooms which appear to be the main change rooms.

What you cannot see from the proposal but is apparent in perusing the tender drawings lodged at Heritage Victoria in January 2009 is that there is no commitment to restoring the diving tower or any documentation of works to restore, repair and maintain the existing building or landscape. Nor does it satisfactorily address Heritage Victoria’s conditions. Steve Morrell, project manager at Stonnington Council advises that minor landscape works are included in the budget and minimal conservation works to the original building are planned outside the budget, but “it is not a landscape project”. In the original Michael King concept plan the diving area was to be converted into a labyrinthine water slide. However, the conditions of the Heritage Victoria Permit of January 2008 include a requirement for extensive landscape works, the reinstatement of the diving pool, conservation works to the existing building and a reduction of intervention...
in the body of the original building. The documentation of the conservation works and a test of the addition’s transparency were to be included and submitted to Heritage Victoria for approval prior to works proceeding. Heritage Victoria’s negotiations with Stonnington on these conditions have been put on hold as of April 2009 and it is evident that costs have escalated not just as the building has expanded but as plant upgrades have also been incorporated. From an initial estimate of five million dollars, costs are now in excess of 13 million dollars. From conversations with Peter Brook (the director of Peddle Thorp) and Steve Morrell (the project manager at Stonnington Council) the tender process commenced in October 2008 has been put on hold pending the result of the council’s application to the federal government for additional funds. As neither conservation works to the existing building, the repair of the diving pool, nor major landscape works are included in this sum, finance for these important works would need to be found. We believe that the direction for the redevelopment was driven by the choice of architect, and looking at the register of works it is clear that between 1994 and 1997 Peddle Thorp, in association with Michael King, replaced Daryl Jackson as design architect of choice and appear to have set the direction for the development of aquatic facilities in Stonnington. It is reasonable to assume that this shift occurred because Peddle Thorp were able to argue that they could make the pool commercially viable.

Public opposition (and Heritage Victoria’s response)

The Harold Holt project became a divisive issue and attracted community opposition which spread to the broader architectural community in part due to and galvanised by Melbourne architect and critic Norman Day’s article in *The Age*, “Halt the makeover keep it brutal”, December 5, 2006. Day’s article suggested, importantly, that the original architect should be given some mandate to revisit the work in the first instance, and in the absence of the late Kevin Borland, Daryl Jackson who was co-author of the original building, would be the appropriate hand. Ongoing opposition to the development from community and the architectural profession and a change of leadership at council may have led to Daryl Jackson being commissioned in 2007 to review Peddle Thorp’s design.

Many observers, prompted by Day’s article and a ‘Save Harold Holt’ letter campaign, hoped that Jackson’s intervention in the process would result in an interrogation of the brief and even a revisiting of the community consultation process an area with which there was some dissatisfaction. Instead the project was altered in minor ways by moving the program to the western boundary increasing the building volume and not altering the architectural statement devised by Peddle Thorp. As suggested above an obvious critique would suggest that there was too much program being shoe-horned onto the site. Other siting options, including those in Lovell Chen’s Conservation Plan, appeared to remain unexamined, and neither had the conventional device of explicitly expressing the separation between new building and old building been adopted. Quite to the contrary, the new works appear to swallow the existing and the junction is indecipherable.

Failure of new design and public opposition

Community objections were vigorous and developed into a sustained campaign culminating in a demonstration on site on 17 December 2006, the anniversary of Harold Holt’s disappearance. The national media reported the sustained campaign, which led to the council’s development plans being regularly scrutinised as they proceeded to tender documentation. The community’s significant concerns were the method of consultation carried out, unnecessary “improvements”, the commercialisation and the cultural transformation of a national icon. The council and its officers’ apparent lack of appreciation of the quality and worthiness of the original building and its complex of pools in the garden setting appears to be shared by the current architect. This is evidenced by statements in public and to Heritage Victoria and the fact that in the scope of works as currently funded the landscape elements are undervalued, or not maintained. The toddlers’ pool and the diving pool are sacrificed and many significant architectural elements and details such as the entry, circulation and finishes and aesthetic are ignored. Heritage Victoria to its credit has drawn attention to these issues in its correspondence and in the permit conditions.
Familiarity with the work of Peddle Thorp further allows us to read into the current drawings the elements of a house style. This is evident in the juxtaposition of one particular aesthetic with another or more accurately the subsumption of the original architectural concept by the proposed works. It is not a scheme that delineates original from new, or sets up a dialogue with the existing. It undermines the integrity of the original by introducing unsympathetic materials and colours. The original has a palette of off-form concrete and natural stained timber with small areas of highlight colour on steel handrails. Now aluminium, for example, replaces stained timber and the white of the new building bleeds into the existing building where white was never used, thereby making it impossible to distinguish original from new or the first architect’s statement from the current.

This process of transformation mirrors public responses to modernist post-war architecture everywhere. Leadership is often provided not by heritage planners or bureaucrats but by interested parties, of which the local Melbourne Robin Boyd Foundation is an example. They come from outside the heritage system: architectural historians and academics, professional architects and in this case a small group of community users who valued the pool’s original aesthetic and ethic. Hopefully with public debate the work is re-examined and public opinion shifts as it did to the value of Victorian then Edwardian works, and as it is currently to an appreciation of the domestic architecture of the 1950s and 1960s. Even the controversial Federation Square, the butt of many grumblings overheard on the tram and in the media during construction, is widely acknowledged, though often begrudgingly, as a success in many ways, not least by the measure of the number of feet on the pavement. Over the last three years we have observed among the ardent opponents, all pool users to Stonnington Council’s recent management and proposed works an awareness and appreciation of the Brutalist style which was not a driving sentiment in the original opposition to the proposed works.

**Conclusion**

We would argue that the changes are largely reversible – and should be reversed – so the Harold Holt Pool can provide a national model of this optimistic and experimental period. The demise of the pool and its subsequent treatment raises important questions. First, how post-war modern architecture is dealt with in Australia. Second, about the privatisation of community services, and the commercialisation of previously public spaces. Third, the competency of councils, project managers and even architects to deal with post-war modern buildings of significant heritage value.

Stonnington Council and its architects remain to be convinced that the Borland Jackson complex should be preserved and that the views of the profession and the most engaged pool users are necessarily relevant to the discussion. Heritage Victoria’s modest requirements are seen as an impediment. It believes that the denizens of Malvern must forego the preservation of a national architectural icon of historical and social significance, that leisure water trumps swimming facilities, three pools and a pavilion in the park. Perhaps the ultimate irony is that this landmark civic-minded facility is being undermined by the same council that had the vision to build it.

**Postscript**

A concerted public campaign continued after the writing of this paper. It resulted in the City of Stonnington significantly modifying its plans for the Harold Holt Pool redevelopment and addressing some of the concerns outlined above. The built outcome includes some welcome revisions in terms of siting and landscaping and the retention of part of the toddler’s pool. The removal of paint from the existing building’s concrete elements provides a clue to the vision of the original architects. Significantly, the diving pool has not been refurbished. The authors’ conclusions about the likely negative impacts of the new works on the original building have been validated and concern for the lack of acknowledgement of the pool’s cultural and architectural heritage value by its custodians remains.
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