



ROYAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF VICTORIA INC.

239 A'Beckett Street, Melbourne 3000

15 August 2022

Cr Daniel Moloney, Mayor, and Councillors,
City of Ballarat,
25 Armstrong St South,
Ballarat 3350.

Dear Councillors,

Members of the relevant local Historical Societies have contacted us about the threat of demolition which faces Victory House, in Geelong Road, Canadian, following a recent Council decision. I write on behalf of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria (RHSV) in strong support of their position.

The RHSV is the peak body for 340 local history societies and as the historical society for central Melbourne. Since its founding in 1909, the RHSV has supported history, commemoration and preservation of heritage across Victoria.

We note that in addition to our member societies, both Ballarat Heritage Watch Inc. and the National Trust have expressed the greatest concern about this threat. Like these bodies, the RHSV points to the significance of Victory House as an extremely important part of Ballarat's heritage.

Victory House has a long association with prominent members of the Ballarat Chinese community. The Chung family occupied the house for over 100 years. In that time far too many reminders of the substantial Chinese presence on the Goldfields, and particularly in the Canadian Valley, have all but disappeared.

The Chinese Joss House in Ballarat, in a section of Geelong Road closer to Bakery Hill, survived until the 1960s but was demolished. Almost concurrently, moves to preserve Bendigo's Chinese Joss House by their Chinese community were to prove successful and it remains an important tourist destination and is served by the Tourist Tram.

Members of the Chinese community in Ballarat played a continuing part in the City's development and whilst that contribution was recorded at the Gold Museum Ballarat and in the Chinese Camp at Sovereign Hill, recent changes, particularly at the Gold Museum, seem to have diminished the accessibility of that record.

Ballarat is a supporter of the bid to achieve World Heritage Listing for the Victorian Goldfields. It seems to us that the retention of existing buildings and sites is germane to that intent, particularly when they testify so well to the Gold Rush and to Chinese involvement in the Gold Rush. The

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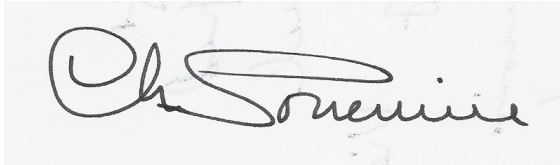
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City's rich Victorian buildings and street-scapes speak for themselves. It is the lesser, more humble buildings which are too easily overlooked and which therefore require protection in order that they too may speak to residents and visitors of today and of the future.

Given the loss of so much of Ballarat's tangible Chinese heritage and the increasing importance of tourism in general and linked to the Goldfields heritage and the World Heritage bid in particular, we believe it would be foolhardy for Council to sacrifice yet another heritage asset. At the very least, Council should commission a proper heritage study to determine the status of Victory House.

We ask therefore, respectfully but very urgently, that Council reconsider its decision and move to give the building Heritage protection.

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature is written in a cursive style and reads "Ch Sowerwine".

(Professor) Charles Sowerwine, FAHA, FRHSV,
Chair, Heritage Committee,
Royal Historical Society of Victoria.

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