'Posh People Love Gangsters'[1] Contested Heritage: Preservation Debates at the Former Pentridge Prison Site: 1993-2014.

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The former Pentridge Prison site in Coburg holds a place of notoriety in the collective memory of Melbournians. When it was closed in 1997, debates around which parts of the site are worthy of preservation began. Despite great tourist interest in former prison sites in Australia, commercial development was prioritised over tourism, due to the hugely profitable present state of the Melbourne real estate market. As dark tourism has not been taken up at Pentridge, this article focusses on the heritage and preservation debates at the former prison site. The way in which the site is preserved, what is prioritised and what has already been lost indicates more about the values of the present than what is worth preserving from the past. Through an exploration of the heritage debates around various parts of the Pentridge site; H-Division, Jika Jika, the burial sites and prisoner artwork, this article seeks to discover what makes a particular part of the site more worthy of preservation and protection. Once it was clear the state government were unwilling to preserve the entire site and it was sold to developers, only part of it would be preserved. This forced heritage advocates to decide on a hierarchy of the value of certain parts of the site. Ultimately, the age of a structure within the site and the previous tenancy of a celebrity prisoner always outweighed the socially historic aspects of the site. The article makes key judgements about the contextual nature of heritage and the complicated narratives that prisons leave behind, particularly in the Australian context.

Pentridge is undoubtedly a notorious icon in Melbournians' public consciousness. After one hundred and forty-six years as the main prison for Melbourne, Pentridge closed in 1997. Since then, it has gone from a place of incarceration to a place of residence and recreation. This article seeks to discover why the preservation of Pentridge has taken the form it does today through an analysis of heritage discourse and in particular, why only some parts of the former prison site are considered worth preserving. Previous scholarly work on the topic has focussed on the concept of dark tourism,

[1] Mark 'Chopper' Read, *Last Man Standing* (Momentum, Sydney, 2013) in John Silvester, 'Posh People Love Gangsters', *The Age,* 3 October, 2013, https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/posh-people-love-gangsters-20131002-2uspn.html, Accessed 28 July, 2017.

with the assumption that Pentridge would become a tourist site, as many other former prison sites in Australia have, most notably Fremantle and Port Arthur. The primary scholar in this area is Jacqueline Wilson, who has written widely on Pentridge's post-closure existence, with a focus on dark tourism and cultural memory.[2] Since Wilson's research over ten years ago, tourism at Pentridge has declined, with only one division open for tours organised by an external company. It is not an organised whole tourist site like Fremantle or Port Arthur. The questions of preservation and protection have become important to reanalyse in the context of the commercialised historical former prison site. This article considers the preservation of the site through the lens of heritage, as I argue that the preservation decisions made reflect particular heritage valuations made due to the cultural and social concerns of present day Australians. In particular, how the concerns of those local to the prison site have come into conflict with their local council, the state government, property developers and in some cases, other heritage advocates. Ultimately, heritage valuations always choose older buildings over those where socially and historically significant events occurred, especially when those events put a government's past actions into question. These contextual factors show that heritage tells us more about what is important to us in the present, than what we collectively believe is important about the past.

For the purposes of this article, heritage is defined as any 'activity concerned with the preservation, restoration and interpretation of historic buildings, landscapes and environments'.[3] Historian David Lowenthal argues that history and heritage are entirely different with the defining factor of history being a testable account of the past.[4] He argues that heritage lacks the critical analysis of history and is instead centred on narratives which aim to form cohesive identities. In addition, historian of memory Raphael Samuel argues against the implication that heritage is a conservative practice which creates national identity through shallow portrayals of the past.[5] I am sympathetic to these critical definitions of heritage, as through my research I have noticed that what is considered worth preserving is highly dependent on the social

[2] Jacqueline Wilson, *Prison: Cultural Memory and Dark Tourism* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2008), Jacqueline Wilson, 'Representing Pentridge', *Australian Historical Studies* 36, no. 125 (2005): 113-133.
[3] Graeme Davison and Chris McConville, 'Preface', in *A Heritage Handbook*, eds. Graeme Davison and Chris McConville. (St Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 1991), vii.
[4] David Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 121.
[5] Raphael Samuel, 'Politics', in *The Heritage Reader*, eds. Graham Fairclough et al. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), 274-294.

and cultural context of the time, and has no clear standard other than that it is important to someone or is sufficiently old.

Heritage performs a distinct function in post-colonial societies like Australia, where national identity is unstable and contested, as discussed by Australian historians Laurajane Smith and Graeme Davison. Smith argues that Australian interest in preservation since in the 1960s and 1970s is based in a 'conservation ethic'.[6] The conservation ethic assumes nothing we create now can ever possibly be as good as something that is being kept and preserved.[7] Davison argues that, for settlers, the nation lacked a grounding in a tangible deep time.[8] As more critical histories have shaken the white settler narrative of Australian history, the conservation of certain sites has become increasingly important so that marginalised histories are seen to be valued.[9] Heritage connects local communities and places with broader aspects of Australian identity and cultural memory. For Pentridge and the many former prison museums, this connection includes the theme of criminality. According to Wilson, criminality is associated with the key foundational aspects of Australian masculine identity, larrikinism and a casual rejection of authority.[10] Additionally, Australian historian Anne Bickford argues that '[t]he sites of former prisons have a particular fascination for Australians', as an extension of this preoccupation with convicts and criminality.[11] This often comes in the form of celebrity prisoners, for Pentridge these are figures such as Mark 'Chopper' Read (quoted in the title of this article), Ned Kelly, Ronald Ryan and Melbourne underworld identities such as Carl Williams.

The preservation of the former Pentridge prison site reflects how the commercialisation of a historical site leads to a shallow representation of its history that only exists due to pressure from local heritage advocates. This article first evaluates the heritage debates wrapped up in the closure of the prison and the questions brought up about the government's role in preservation. It then compares heritage discourse of the public ownership era with the new

[6] Laurajane Smith, 'Towards a Theoretical Framework for Archaeological Heritage Management', in *The Heritage Reader,* eds. Graham Fairclough et al. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), 65.
[7] Graeme Davison, 'Heritage Terminology', in *A Heritage Handbook.* Eds. Graeme Davison and Chris McConville. (St Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 1991), 34.
[8] Ibid., 35.
[9] Smith, 'Towards a Theoretical Framework', 65.
[10] Jacqueline Z. Wilson, *Prison: Cultural Memory and Dark Tourism* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2008), 181-182.
[11] Anne Bickford, 'Romantic Ruins', in *A Heritage Handbook*, eds. Graeme Davison and Chris McConville. (St Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 1991), 84.

tensions brought up once the site was sold to private developers. Then, it explores how the issue of burial sites is symptomatic of a preoccupation with 'celebrity prisoners'. Lastly, it compares the preservation of the Ronald Bull mural with the murals from Jika Jika to ultimately argue that the architectural value associated with age will always trump interest in social heritage and the wants of local people.

The Closure: Local and Public Interest in Heritage

The closure of the Coburg Prison Complex (H.M. Prison Pentridge and the Metropolitan Remand Centre) is directly associated with two key events: the election of the Jeff Kennett led Liberal Victorian State Government (1992) and a series of controversies that came into the public eye (since the mid-1980s). The state government began discussing the closure of Pentridge in March 1993. The prison officially closed in 1997 and the site was sold to private developers in May 1999.

The closure of Pentridge had been seen as increasingly necessary and somewhat inevitable after the Jika Jika division fire in 1987. As early as 1983 an Office of Corrections Masterplan identified the tension between the historical value of the prison buildings and the unsuitability of these buildings for prisoner accommodation:

> The notion that existing facilities and accommodation should continue in use unaltered, simply because the structures are of historic interest is nothing less than obnoxious.[12]

The Kennett government was motivated to take on this complex task as it provided an opportunity to privatise the Victorian prison system in line with Kennett's extensive application of neoclassical liberal economic reforms.[13] Kennett's privatisation agenda would eventually result in the closure of three of Victoria's most outdated prisons: Pentridge, Fairlea and Sale, which were replaced with three new private prisons.[14] By April 1993, discussions in Victorian State Parliament indicated that problems at Pentridge were

[12] Neilson Associates, *Office of Corrections Victoria, Corrections Master Plan Volume 1: Summary and Recommendations* (Melbourne: 1983), 441.
[13] Nicholas Economou and Costar, Brian. 'Introduction: The Victorian Liberal Model- A Kennett Revolution', in *The Kennett Revolution: Victorian Politics in the 1990s,* eds. Brian Costar and Nicholas Economou (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 1999), xi.
[14] Linda Hancock, 'The Justice System and Accountability', in *The Kennett Revolution: Victorian Politics in the 1990s,* eds. Brian Costar and Nicholas Economou (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 1999), 43.

unresolvable and suggested it be closed.[15] To discern the nature and extent of problems in Victorian prisons, the Minister for Corrections Pat McNamara commissioned an inquiry into the Victorian prison system (henceforth, the Lynn Inquiry) in August 1993.[16] The inquiry primarily considered the spread of drugs and corruption in prison, and concluded on Pentridge, that 'the integrity of all operations undertaken by Victorian Prison Industries Commission at H M Prison "C" is in question'.[17]

The official closure of Pentridge Prison in May 1997 (and Metropolitan Remand Division in December 1997) revealed the complicated relationship between local people and Pentridge, and the contrasting forms of remembrance by former prisoners as opposed to former prison guards. The closure involved a ceremony of five hundred current and former staff, representatives of the state government and media.[18] Notably, no former prisoners were invited to attend the ceremony.

After closure, local people began to stake their claim in the preservation of the Pentridge site, which begs the question, do posh people really love gangsters as Chopper Read suggested? The locals of Coburg have an ongoing complex relationship with the prison. A May 1997 front page article in the Moreland Courier on the closure of the prison illustrated the distaste in living near a prison for many locals:

> The suburb was renamed Coburg, but there was no escaping the massive gothic prison, looming over Sydney Rd. On Thursday the suburb came one big step closer to ridding itself of the institution.[19]

In the early 1990s, local people of the Coburg area became increasingly interested in the future of the site and asserted that they had a unique insight and connection to it. After meeting with McNamara, former Jesuit Pentridge Chaplain Peter Norden wrote an opinion piece in *The Age* arguing a preservation agenda. He identified the local and general Melbournian interest in the prison as an argument for heritage:

> Yesterday I met someone who had lived in Coburg all his life, right next to the prison, and he was intrigued to find out about life inside Pentridge… You don't have to live next door to Pentridge to want

[15] VIC, Parliamentary Debates, Legislative Council, Vol. 411, 29 April 1993, 561-562.
[16] 'Prison to Stay', *Coburg Courier*, 4 August 1993, 1.
[17] Peter Lynn, *Inquiry into the Victorian Prison System*, no. 39 (Melbourne: L.V. North Government Printer, 1993), 147. Prison 'C' refers to Coburg Prisons Complex.
[18] Nerida Hodgkins, 'Prison Doors Close for Good', *Moreland Courier,* 5 May 1997, 1.
[19] Ibid.

answers to these questions. Everyone in Victoria has a right to know.[20]

Norden was among the first to identify the unique position of Pentridge in Melbournian culture as a place of public interest and cultural significance. However, the prison's internal operations were not known about, even by those who lived next-door. Norden's statement that '[e]veryone in Victoria has a right to know'", indicates that the heritage and preservation of the Pentridge site was a matter of governmental transparency and public responsibility. In this statement, Norden is implying that while the history of the prison belongs to those who spend time there, as prisoners and as workers, it is a governmental responsibility to preserve the site, even if it means their mistreatment of prisoners is revealed.

At the beginning of 1994, members of the City of Coburg Council began to take interest in the future use of the site, though at this stage their priority was development, with the preservation of 'historically significant buildings' only as an afterthought.[21] This followed earlier news media speculation that the Pentridge prison site would be sold to housing developers to fund the building of the replacement private prisons, and that the bluestone buildings and walls would be protected by the National Trust.[22] These simplistic valuations of the structures of Pentridge reflects a heritage agenda only concerned with the oldness of buildings, rather than the social and cultural significance of them. As Davison argues, to preserve an old building in its 'original' form removes the ability of the building to tell the story of its life through its alterations.[23]

Tensions between local heritage and development continued through mid-1997 as debates continued over the future of the site. Local real estate agents began to promote the idea of development, to "change the whole view of people who regard Coburg as the place out near the jail (sic)" and to promote economic growth in the area.[24] Local resident Pat Burchell responded to the promotion of the 'new Coburg' by real estate agents and developers with a letter which insisted on the heritage of the site for Coburg's profile, where he said '[w]hen the prison goes, so does our place in public consciousness unless we do something to remember the history of the area'.[25] Burchell reflects a

[20] Peter Norden, 'Prison Reforms Leave the Honest Brokers in Shackles', *The Age*, 8 December 1993, 15.
[21] City of Coburg Ordinary Meeting Minutes, 7 February 1994, 8.
[22] Mark Forbes, 'Death Warrant for Pentridge', *The Sunday Age*, 28 August 1993, 1.
[23] Graeme Davison, *The Use and Abuse of Australian History* (St Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 2000), 141-145.
[24] Nerida Hodgkins, 'Prison Ideas Uncaged', *Moreland Leader*, 19 May 1997, 5.
[25] Pat Murchell, 'Pentridge Link', Letter to the Editor, *Moreland Leader* 9 June 1997, 14.

concern that while many Coburg residents had spent decades trying to distance their suburb from the prison, some were now concerned that without it, they would not have a unique identity within Melbourne. As heritage advocates began to see the inevitability of development, they started to compromise, in accepting that only some of the site could be preserved, the older buildings and bluestone were prioritised. Because local people were largely unaware of what occurred behind the prison walls, they have appealed to the apparently inherent value of old or 'original' buildings over the socially and historically significant parts of the prison that are more difficult to talk about and may bring past governments' actions into question.

Privatising Heritage: Developers, Locals and Heritage

As a result of Kennett's privatisation agenda, and a general impression that the public had funded Pentridge enough, the site was sold in May 1999. This section analyses how the heritage debate changed once the site was sold to private developers and which parts of the site, they were concerned with protecting to make profit out of or to appease local people and heritage advocates.

The Minister for Finance, Hon. R.M. Hallam justified the sale of the site as he argued it would be too expensive, at $2 million a year, for the state government to just keep the site in a safe condition.[26] The initial sale of the Pentridge site by the state government in May 1999 was opposed by heritage advocates due to fear that private ownership would afford less heritage protections and some felt that the former prison should remain a public asset. An *Australian* article reflected a degree of discomfort in selling off a public institution, noting that 'critics… make the point that Pentridge was a public asset.'[27] The National Trust criticised the sale of the site in general as the government was going 'against its own recommendations and (the) building protection agency' the recommendations being that of the 1996 Conservation Management Plan.[28] The Heritage Council objected to the sale of the site on the grounds that there was a complete lack of consultation and a concern that significant parts of the site had not been assured protection.[29]

[26] VIC, Parliamentary Debates, Legislative Council, Vol. 436, 7 October 1997, 9.
[27] Stephen Lunn, 'Heritage Watch: Site Lines', *Australian*, 24 May 1999.
[28] National Trust of Australia (Victoria), 'Pentridge Under Threat', Media Release. September 10, 1998.
[29] Sushila Das, 'Prison Sale Sparks Heritage Outrage', *The Age*, 11 September 1998, 3.

When initial sale of the Pentridge site occurred in May 1999 to Stock Constructions, many heritage advocates, including the National Trust, objected to the sale, with concerns about heritage protections. However, local people initially approved of the buyer as the Stock Constructions' managing director, Tony Foti had grown up in Coburg.[30] In a media release, introducing the four year project titled 'Grandview Square', Foti legitimised his position as a local of Coburg.[31] Foti was interviewed in a *Moreland Courier* article where he claimed that he "did not want to be painted as a saviour but believed he understood the site's significance better than most developers."[32] Foti acknowledged heritage concerns by stating that he had already met with the National Trust and Heritage Victoria and reassured them that 'bluestone walls and heritage buildings from the prison complex will be integrated into the development plans…".[33] Statements of support for Foti's proposal in the *Moreland Courier* came from the Coburg Historical Society, the Mayor, Coburg Traders Association and local school principals.[34]

It is perhaps unsurprising that the local council was willing to cede the small amount of influence they held over the future of the site, noting Richard Broome's earlier observation that throughout the operational life of Pentridge 'the Coburg Council saw it as a blot on the city which brought no rate revenue'.[35] However, the council's negative impression of Pentridge appeared to change temporarily as curiosity about the inner workings of the prison peaked in the first few years after closure. This was short lived, as the local council came to sympathise with the state government's financial concerns over preserving the site and agreed with its sale.

In the first year of developer control of Pentridge "the prison's ugly face (was) being torn down" by removing razor wire and levelling some of the perimeter walls, in a Moreland Courier article from February 2000.[36] As one of the Pentridge Piazza developers, Luciano Crema said:

> If you can remove the fact that it was a prison and just think of it as a new beginning... The history of this place is what makes it different

[30] National Trust of Australia, 'Pentridge Under Threat', Media Release, September 10, 1998.
[31] Foti, Tony. 'Heritage Values Integral to Coburg Prison Development.' Media Release. April 28, 1999.
[32] 'Scary Roots Inspire a Prison Developer', *Moreland Courier,* 10 May 1999, 9.
[33] Foti, 'Heritage Values Integral'.
[34] See Shelley Morrell and Hamish Carter, 'Patchwork Prison', *Moreland Courier,* 3 May 1999, 1. And Hamish Carter, 'Excitement of Prison Cell-Off', *Moreland Courier,* 10 May 1999, 8-9.
[35] Richard Broome, *Coburg*: *Between Two Creeks,* (Port Melbourne: Lothian Publishing Company, 1987), 291.
[36] 'Residents can Choose to Stay for Life', *Moreland Courier,* 7 February 2000, 8.

> and I think people will want to live there once they understand the concept.[37]

Crema's comment reflects the form of heritage produced by development companies. In her article about aesthetics and the architecture of incarceration, Yvonne Jewkes argues that the turning of old prisons into housing and hotels is commonplace in modern society and reflects the architecture of new prisons.[38] Jewkes argues that through this transition the prison goes from 'source of pride' to a 'barely noticeable feature of the contemporary city skyline'.[39] This is achieved through the simultaneous effect of new prisons being built to camouflage into their cities and the increase in carceral features in urban design (e.g. gated communities).[40] Profit is the primary motivation for development companies and therefore reflections of Pentridge's past are created to refer to nostalgia, and tend to be a more sanitised version of events. The attitude that the past of the site must be sanitised to make it 'liveable' echoes the key tension between developers' heritage and the preservation argued for by heritage advocates. Heritage advocates are committed to heritage to make sure future generations know about their past, even if it is through a shallow portrayal.

High Security Heritage: The Bluestone of H-Division in Conflict with the Social History of Jika Jika

When Pentridge is referred to in the media, and in conversations with Melbourne locals, its bluestone walls and buildings are almost always mentioned. Stephanie Trigg explains that old buildings, laneways and walls made of bluestone are considered historically significant and aesthetically appealing in Melbourne.[41] The symbol of bluestone confirms Pentridge's place in the historical identity of Melbourne. As a City of Melbourne report into Bluestone in Melbourne streets and laneways asserts, 'Bluestone is synonymous with the character of Melbourne'.[42] The original Conservation Management Plan saw this cultural importance and based itself around the retention of bluestone

[37] Farrah Tomazin, 'From Prison to Piazza, Pentridge gets a Makeover', *The Age*, 1 August 2002, 3.
[38] Yvonne Jewkes, 'Aesthetics and An-Aesthetics: The Architecture of Incarceration', in *The Arts of Imprisonment: Control, Resistance and Empowerment*, ed. Leonidas K. Cheliotis. (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 36.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Trigg, Stephanie, 'Bluestone and the city: writing an emotional history', *Melbourne Historical Journal* 44, no. 1 (2017) 41-53.
[42] City of Melbourne, *Operating Procedure: Bluestone in Melbourne's Streets and Lanes*, 2017, https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/operating-procedure-bluestone.pdf Accessed 7 October 2017, 5.

structures.[43] Bluestone is heavily associated with convicts and prisoners, with several gaols and cemeteries made of bluestone. For Pentridge, the bluestone convict association goes deeper, as prisoners quarried and built the bluestone for the prison at the nearby Merri Creek Quarry.[44] In a survey conducted by Jacqueline Wilson in 2001 as part of her research into Pentridge, local residents of Coburg 'almost all at some point mentioned the bluestone in terms of its visual aesthetic, historical significance, perceived authenticity and/or its unique connection to the Coburg Area'.[45]

In this section I compare the preservation debate around H-Division and Jika Jika, as they are the successive high security divisions, with H-Division built in 1900 and Jika Jika built in 1980. H-Division is thought to have heritage value by heritage advocates for four key reasons: that it is an early building, built of bluestone, it was the location of the practice of rock breaking as punishment from 1958 to 1976, and because it was the location of Mark 'Chopper' Read's most notorious stories of Pentridge.[46] The practice of rock breaking and the poor conditions in the division were used as arguments for the preservation of the site by heritage advocates who believe that these events are significant in Melbourne history. Poor conditions within H-Division have been chronicled in several prisoner memoirs, popular media, scholarly discourse and by prison activists.[47]

The pointless activity of rock breaking was performed in solitude by new inmates of H-Division before they earned their way into the industry yards.[48] The solitude of this work and the free rein given to guards in H-Division meant that prisoners were noticeably 'broken' when they came out of H-Division.[49] Complaints about these conditions resulted in the 1974 Jenkinson Inquiry, which vindicated those who had complained of ill-treatment within

[43] Allom Lovell & Associates, *Pentridge Conservation Management Plan*, Melbourne, 1996, xiii.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Jacqueline Z. Wilson, 'Representing Pentridge', *Australian Historical Studies* 36, no. 125. (2005): 125.
[46] Allom Lovell & Associates, *Pentridge Conservation Management Plan*, 137., Don Osborne, *Pentridge: Behind the Bluestone Walls* (South Melbourne: Echo, 2015), 63.
[47] See *Chopper,* Directed by Andrew Dominik, Produced by Michele Bennett (Melbourne: Australian Film Finance Corporation, 2000); Ray Mooney, *Everynight Everynight*, Directed and Produced by Alkinos Tsilimidos (Melbourne: Siren Visual Entertainment, 1994); Bree Carlton, *Imprisoning Resistance: Life and Death in Australia's Supermax* (Sydney: Sydney Institute of Criminology Series, 2007); Barry Ellem, *Doing Time: The Prison Experience* (Sydney: Fontana/Collins, 1984); Osborne, *Pentridge.,* Roberts, David Gregory, *Shantaram* (New York: St Martin's Press, 2004); Douglas Robinson, *H: The Division from Hell* (Melbourne, Dougbooks, 2005); Pentridge Workshop Collective, *Blood from Stone* (Melbourne: Abalone, 1982).
[48] Broome, *Coburg*, 289.
[49] Ibid.

H-Division.[50] Prisoners were then allowed access to the Victorian Ombudsman, John Dillion, who stopped the practice of placing new prisoners, naked, into observation cells and recommended the end to rock breaking in H-Division, which was enacted in 1976.[51] By the late 1970s H-Division was seen as outdated and its problems irreconcilable, which inspired the construction of Jika Jika. However, after the 1987 Jika Jika fire, H-Division was reopened as the high security division.

Heritage advocates also often cite criminal and popular culture figure Mark "Chopper" Read as part of their argument for preservation, as the connection with an Australian cultural figure and celebrity is likely to appeal to the public. The infamous story of Read having another prisoner cut off his ear to escape to the hospital division occurred in H Division.[52] It is from Read's books, especially Road to Nowhere, that the public were able to gain an understanding of the Pentridge experience.[53]

The defence of H-Division truly began in May 2014, when Heritage Victoria approved a permit to demolish some of the labour yards of H-Division and some internal dividing walls.[54] The permit approved the 'partial demolition of the "H" Division Labour Yards wing'. However, it stated that:

> Total demolition of the Labour Yards adjunct known as "H" Division is not required for the construction of Road "A" and therefore total demolition of the Labour Yards is not approved by this permit.[55]

Due to developer interest in the heritage of Pentridge being mostly motivated by profit, Heritage Victoria had to include clauses in their permits that counterbalanced the destruction of heritage buildings and walls with provisions that conservation work be completed at the expense of developers, Shayher Group.[56] In a Heritage Interpretation Masterplan commissioned by the Shayher Group however, they stated that 'Pentridge will be a commercial and residential hub and that, museums, as a rule, are not commercially viable' , and a museum is already a provision of the Pentridge Village development

[50] Kenneth Jenkinson, *Report of the Board of Inquiry into Several Matters Concerning H.M. Prison Pentridge and the Maintenance of Discipline in Prisons* (Melbourne: C.H. Rixon, Government Printer, 1974).
[51] Broome, *Coburg*, 297.
[52] James Morton and Susanna Lobez, *Gangland Melbourne* (Carlton: Victory Books, 2011), 157.
[53] Mark 'Chopper' Read, *Road to Nowhere: 23 Years and 9 Months in the Australian Prison System* (Sydney: McPherson's Printing Group, 2011).
[54] Timothy Smith, Permit No. P20564 'HM Prison Pentridge', H1551, 30 May 2014.
[55] Ibid, 1.
[56] Ibid., 2.

permit.[57] Note that by 2014, the site was split into three sections owned by different development companies: Shayher Group, Valad and Aberdeen Property Groups and Stock Constructions and Abbott & Dean Real Estate.

In contrast, Jika Jika's short, tumultuous but significant past was no longer preserved in its physical form in 2000 when it was demolished to make way for development. As soon as Jika Jika opened, it quickly became apparent that the prisoner separation and dehumanising security technology made for constant crisis as prisoners resisted the harsh conditions for its entire operational life.[58] The end for Jika Jika came on the 29th of October 1987, when five prisoners died after barricading themselves in their unit and lighting a fire. They were asphyxiated as the construction of the division prevented fresh air getting in.[59] The fire came after a year of protests from prisoners in the division, including 'bronzing up' protests, inspired by the H-Block prisoners in Northern Ireland.[60] Jika Jika closed as a high security facility on the 30th of October 1987. The 1989 Board of Inquiry Report on the Behaviour of the Office of Corrections (henceforth the Murray Inquiry) retrospectively justified the creation of Jika Jika due to the 'undesirable features' of the operation of H-Division.[61] Murray argued that the design was consistent with thinking at the time and 'enabled a good deal of separation between prisoners and prison staff'.[62] Murray's defence of the division's construction was necessary to counter the criticism that the 1987 fire was the fault of the design of Jika Jika. He argues that it was instead the fault of the Office of Corrections.[63]

The Conservation Management Plan (henceforth CMP, commissioned by the state government in 1996) recommended that Jika Jika should be preserved, inspiring much public criticism. It recommends Jika Jika be 'retained and conserved, at least in part' and that its future use be decided promptly, due to its cultural significance as a more recent example of penal design.[64] This recommendation of the CMP shows how the heritage of controversial places

[57] Sue Hodges Productions for Shayher Group, *Former HM Prison Pentridge Interpretation Masterplan*, (Port Melbourne, 2013), http://pentridgecoburg.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Heritage_Interpretation_Masterplan.pdf Accessed 7 October 2017. 12.
[58] Bree Carlton, *Imprisoning Resistance,* 63, 125.
[59] Murray, *Report on the Behaviour of the Office of Corrections,* 1-3.
[60] Carlton, *Imprisoning Resistance,* 137-138; 'Bronzing up' refers to the smearing of excrement on cell walls as a form of protest.
[61] Basil Lanthrop Murray, *Report on the Behaviour of the Office of Corrections* (Melbourne: Academic Bookbinders, 1989), 3.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Peter Norden, 'Questions Linger in the "Electronic Zoo"', *The Age*, 10 October 1993, 14.
[64] Allom Lovell & Associates, *Pentridge Conservation Management Plan*, xiii.

that remain in living memory can be contentious. Heritage advocates argued that preserving the division acknowledges the suffering that occurred there, while prison reform advocates were concerned that its preservation would glorify the harsh conditions of Jika Jika.

In an article in the *Moreland Courier* on the 14th of October 1996, Peter Norden, said it was 'upsetting for the individuals involved' to preserve the division.[65] He also questioned the prioritising of Jika Jika over the burial sites at the prison.[66] Norden and Coburg lawyer Shelley Burchfield were concerned that preservation might result in glorification and would encourage new prisons to be built in a similar style.[67] Moreland Mayor Mike Hill responded to this criticism by arguing that preserving Jika Jika 'might serve as a reminder of penal theory that caused us to build something like that'.[68] Bree Carlton notes in the preface to her book *Imprisoning Resistance* that she was motivated to write the book to recognise past experiences of prisoners in Jika Jika as she was concerned that the demolition of the division would work to eradicate the public memories of the division.[69] Opponents of Jika Jika's preservation ultimately won the debate in 1997 when Moreland councillor Glenyys Romanes conceded that the future of the division was uncertain despite the CMP recommendation that the division be preserved.[70]

The decision to demolish Jika Jika reflects the hierarchy between heritage values, where aesthetic age is prioritised over all other values. It also shows how very strong and recent negative emotions about a site can impact heritage decisions. Despite the recommendation of the 1996 CMP that Jika Jika should be preserved as an example of modern prison design, Stock Constructions decided to demolish the Jika Jika division in early 2000.[71] Jika Jika was demolished to make way for the first major project on the Pentridge site, the residential estate.[72] The public were permitted one last chance to see inside Jika Jika, with the support of developer Foti, who argued, 'I felt it would be irresponsible of us to demolish Jika Jika without offering a final chance for people to see what it was like inside'.[73]

[65] Nerida Hodgkins, 'Anger over Jika Jika Plan', *Moreland Courier*, 14 October 1996, 5.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Lisa Bigelow, 'No Glory for Jika Jika', *Moreland Courier*, 21 October 1996, 1.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Carlton, *Imprisoning Resistance*, 7-8.
[70] Nerida Hodgkins, 'Pentridge Plans Under Way', *Moreland Courier,* 15 December 1997, 6.
[71] Lunn, 'Heritage Watch', 17.
[72] 'Residents can Choose to Stay for Life',8.
[73] Hamish Carter, 'Prison set for Major Changes', *Moreland Courier,* 4 October 1999, 3.

The CMP reflected a common problem in quantifying heritage through an architectural lens, where aspects of a site are given value based on architectural significance and age. As Graeme Davison argues, these conservation plans often lead to more conventional forms of local history that is 'a history grounded less in a sense of community pride than an appreciation of the picturesque'.[74] Furthermore, the report advised that non-original alterations be removed:

> Generally it is recommended that the exteriors of the significant early bluestone and brick buildings… be restored and/or reconstructed, and that later additions and accretions be removed.[75]

Davison describes this conservation approach as 'treating the intervening layers of occupation as distortions of the historical significance', which in turn, diminishes the historical value of the building by taking away both the changing architectural additions and the impact of prisoners, which tell its story across time.[76] Even a comparably recent building as Jika Jika was said to be significant only 'to the extent of the original 1979-80 structures'.[77]

The state government appeared to welcome the demolition of Jika Jika. Victorian Assistant Planning Minister Justin Madden argued that 'most of the Victorian community would be happy to see (Jika Jika) go and I think it will be a significant moment in Victoria's history'.[78] His comments reflects the government's reluctance to see Jika Jika remembered, perhaps because who was at fault for the poor conditions that led to the fire in Jika Jika was still under contention. Madden posed for a photo swinging a sledgehammer into one of the walls surrounding Jika Jika, symbolising the end of Pentridge as a prison and the beginning of Pentridge as a housing estate and a commercial concern.[79]

Several newspaper articles noted that the developers intended to preserve a segment of Jika Jika as a museum or to keep some part of the building to become a part of a larger museum that was to be built on the Pentridge site.[80] The former location of Jika Jika is now made up entirely of new streets full of houses, with some acknowledgement of Jika Jika through street names. But as

[74] Davison, *The Use and Abuse of Australian History*, 213.
[75] Allom Lovell & Associates, *Pentridge Conservation Management Plan*, xi.
[76] Graeme Davison, 'What Makes a Building Historic?', in *The Heritage Reader*, eds. Graham Fairclough et al. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), 75.
[77] Allom Lovell & Associates, *Pentridge Conservation Management Plan*, xiii.
[78] Gabrielle Costa, 'Death Sentence for Pentridge's Jika Jika', *The Age*, 29 January 2000, 12.
[79] Hamish Carter, 'Pentridge- a Prison no Longer', *Moreland Courier,* 19 June 2000, 6.
[80] Hamish Carter, 'Jika Jika goes under in name of development', *Moreland Courier,* 3 March 2000, 7., 'Residents can Choose to Stay for Life', 8-9.

yet, no museum has been constructed nor are there any substantive plans to create one for any part of Pentridge, let alone Jika Jika.

Burial Sites: Ned Kelly, Ronald Ryan and Celebrity Prisoners

The burial site debate shows how celebrity prisoners and their potential for profit were valued over the social history of the site, in the same way as older structures within the site have been prioritised over newer structures that hold recent and difficult memories. The burial sites at Pentridge became a concern for heritage advocates once they seemed under threat from developers. Burial sites are somewhat outside the normal heritage discourse around buildings, but I argue that they are significant in terms of which criminals' bodies are considered worth protection, and which have not entered the discourse. Burial sites create complicated issues for heritage as it is seen to be disrespectful to disturb a burial site or dead body. At Pentridge, the issue was further complicated by the reason people were buried there, at the time of burial, those hanged at Pentridge and Old Melbourne Gaol, including Ned Kelly, were not meant to have respect in their burial, as they were hanged criminals. The burial site behind D-Division included the bodies of the ninety-nine prisoners exhumed from Old Melbourne Gaol in 1924, the twenty prisoners who were hanged at Old Melbourne Gaol and the nine prisoners hanged at Pentridge.[81] For a short period residents and heritage advocates believed that the sale of the site was not possible due to an 1855 law that stated 'executed prisoners must be buried in unmarked graves, on unconsecrated Crown land, and the body was to remain the property of the Crown'.[82]

Local media coverage sparked renewed interest in Ronald Ryan who was buried at Pentridge after he became the last man hanged in Victoria in February 1967 following conviction for the murder of a warden during an escape in December 1965. Local media articles considered his potential innocence, his execution, the abolition of capital punishment, and included an interview with his former wife who had requested a memorial be created for Ryan and the others executed at Pentridge.[83] The 'celebrity prisoner' is a consistent theme in prison tourism and an often cited socio-cultural heritage value, with famous or historical figures always mentioned at tourist sites, regardless of how tenuous

[81] Shane Jenkins, 'Pentridge Plans Hit Snag', *Coburg Courier*, 6 March 1995, 1.
[82] Shane Jenkins, 'Legal Hitch to Prison Move', *Coburg Courier*, 27 March 1995, 5.
[83] Shane Jenkins, 'Innocent' Another Warder 'Involved' in the Shooting', *Coburg Courier,* 15 May 1995, 1-2. Shane Jenkins, 'Ryan: The Final Hanging', *Coburg Courier*, 24 April 1995, 8., Shane Jenkins, 'Ryan's Grave Needs a Garden: Former Wife', *Coburg Courier*, 24 April 1995, 1-2.

the link to their life is.[84] The celebrity prisoner narrative gives a human face to the prisoners who used to inhabit the site, while simultaneously creating a division between celebrity prisoners and regular criminals.[85] In the burial site debate, Ned Kelly and Ronald Ryan were the key 'celebrity prisoners'.

The debate over who owned Ned Kelly's remains highlighted the profit interest of developers and difficulty of the heritage of burial sites. The site was able to be sold and subsequently dug up as the 1855 law was rescinded with the death penalty in 1975, and therefore there was no legal obligation to keep the bodies on crown land in unmarked graves.[86] Interest in finding the prisoners' remains picked up in 2008 and 2009 as a sense of urgency was caused by the increasing development on the Pentridge site.[87]

In what became international news, the remains found at Pentridge in the 'Mann Edge Tool Co.' box were confirmed to belong to Ned Kelly by the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine (VIFM) in 2009.[88] Controversy ensued as developer Leigh Chiavaroli attempted to lay claim to the remains.[89] He argued that because he owned the site he was entitled to keep the remains to put in the museum planned for the site. Developers had already begun to use Kelly's fame to profit from Pentridge, with one of the initial developments being modelled on the shape of Kelly's iconic helmet.[90] As Laura Basu argues, the finding of Kelly's bones in 2009 came during a peak in interest in Kelly and contributed to the commodification of his memory.[91]

The bodies of Ned Kelly and Ronald Ryan were returned to their families for cemetery burial in 2012 and 2007 respectively.[92] The State Government foiled Chiavaroli's plan to keep Kelly's bones by granting a new exhumation

[84] Wilson, *Prison,* 132; Randall Mason, 'Assessing Values in Conservation Planning', in *The Heritage Reader,* eds. Graham Fairclough et al., (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), 104.
[85] Ibid., 148.
[86] John Dubois and Nerida Hodgkins, 'Experts to Rule on Ned's Remains', *Moreland Courier,* 22 July 1996, 3.
[87] Jeremy Smith, 'Bringing up the Bodies: The Search for the Lost Pentridge Burial Ground', in *Ned Kelly Under the Microscope,* ed. Craig Cormick (Collingwood: CSIRO Publishing, 2014), 45.
[88] Deb Withers, 'Forensic Experts Identify Ned Kelly's Remains', Media Release. September 1, 2011, http://www.vifm.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/VIFM-Media-Release-Ned-Kelly.pdf Accessed 7 October 2017.
[89] Grand McArthur, 'Secret Burial for Ned- Family Win Fight with Developer over Bushranger's Remains', *Herald Sun,* 2 August 2012, 3.
[90] Julian Kennedy, 'Plaza: Ned has Risen', *Community News- Moreland,* 5 November 2002, 3.
[91] Laura Basu, *Ned Kelly as Memory Dispositif: Media, Time, Power, and the Development of Australian Identities* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2012), 155-159.
[92] Nino Bucci, 'Peace at Last: Burial Planned for Ned Kelly', *The Age,* 30 October 2012., Hoare, 'Ronald Ryan's Body to be Exhumed',

license to the Kelly family, putting the remains in their possession.[93] This was quite a turn for the state government, as previously they had been reluctant to intervene between developers and heritage advocates. But for someone as iconic as Ned Kelly, they stepped in. The historic burial ground was built over and archaeologists returned to the Pentridge site to rebury the remaining bodies with new coffins in December 2012, in the area where previously only Ryan was buried.[94] The reburial of these former prisoners in unmarked graves reflects the division between celebrity prisoners and everyday prisoners, who do not gain the notoriety and respect of their celebrity counterparts. The burial sites debate shows how a shallow narrative of a site (in this case, the celebrity prisoner) is favoured over a comprehensive and difficult portrayal of the Pentridge site in its entirety.

Painted on Bluestone and Concrete: Prisoner Murals at Pentridge:

Art is the exception to the rule that all alterations should be removed to bring a building back to its 'original state' to then be preserved. This section considers two case studies of the preservation of prisoner murals at Pentridge. I draw a comparison between the Ronald Bull mural in F-Division and the two murals from Jika Jika. I consider the intersecting issues of art heritage, Aboriginal heritage and the carceral context of the creation of these works. Primarily, I ask why the Jika Jika murals are on public display while Bull's mural remains hidden and unmaintained.

Art is valued highly within heritage discourse as it satisfies the criteria of aesthetic and socio-cultural values. Ronald Bull's mural in F-Division of Pentridge is the most notable piece of prisoner art in Pentridge. The mural was commissioned by Senior Warden Jack Elliott in 1962 during renovations of F-Division after he had noticed Bull's painting talent.[95] The mural depicts three Aboriginal men hunting and making a fire in a desert scene using bold orange and red tones.[96] The painting's location in a corridor where all F-Division prisoners and wardens would see it was also important as it acted as 'a symbol of hope'.[97] Prisoner murals are important in terms of prison culture as they allow prisoners to disrupt the oppressive surrounding of the prison and regain

[93] Grand McArthur, 'Secret Burial for Ned- Family Win Fight with Developer over Bushranger's Remains', *Herald Sun*, 2 August 2012, 3.
[94] Smith, 'Bringing up the Bodies', 50.
[95] Sylvia Kleinert, 'Hidden Heritage: Ronald Bull's 1962 Pentridge Mural', *Art Monthly* 245 (2011): 9.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Nerida Hodgkins, 'Plea for Prison Painting', *Moreland Courier*, 8 December 1997, 1.

their identity after being made anonymous through regimented prison life.[98] For Aboriginal prisoners within F-Division, Bull's mural perhaps held special meaning and value.

In response to the December 1997 article appealing for the continued protection of Bull's mural, friends and family of Bull advocated for the painting to be moved from Pentridge to the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV).[99] A debate began between Bull's family and friends who were advocating for the painting to be moved, and the CMP arguing that the painting should be preserved in its current position because of the spatial context of the work and the historical significance of its location.[100] Friend of the Bull family Peter Sparnaay argued that moving the painting would be possible without damaging the painting or the rest of the bluestone wall at a cost of about fifty thousand dollars, which he said would be easily raised through Aboriginal Affairs Victoria and private donations.[101] Ultimately, the bluestone wall that Bull painted on was considered more important than the socio-cultural value of Bull's mural, as it remains hidden in F-Division with no committed preservation attempts.

The CMP argues that F-Division is significant because it was the earliest substantial building at Pentridge, built in the late 1850s, of local bluestone.[102] Due to this recommendation, fear of harming the bluestone wall and the expense of moving the painting, developers have left it as it is for now.

The only parts of Jika Jika that have been preserved by developers are two murals. Originally located in Jika Jika exercise yards, the murals consist of two pieces of art. One mural depicts a rainforest scene entitled 'From the River to the Sea', which was painted on the outer wall of unit 3 by a group of women prisoners at an unknown date, in association with Melbourne artist Megan Evans.[103] Given that this mural was painted by women and Jika Jika was for the most part, a maximum security division for men, there are only a few instances in which it could have been painted: throughout 1982 when some of the 'most disruptive' women prisoners were transferred to Jika Jika or in 1983 when some women prisoners were sent to Jika Jika after a fire at Fairlea.[104]

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[98] Leonidas Cheliotis, 'The Arts of Imprisonment: An Introduction', in *The Arts of Imprisonment: Control, Resistance and Empowerment*, ed. Leonidas K. Cheliotis (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 3.
[99] Nerida Hodgkins, 'Move Bull Mural from Prison', *Moreland Courier,* 23 February 1998, 7.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Allom Lovell & Associates, *Pentridge Conservation Management Plan,* 203.
[103] Allom Lovell & Associates, *Pentridge Conservation Management Plan*, 236.
[104] 'Women in Prison Victoria 1970-2010: A Statistical and Policy Account 1970-2010', University of New South Wales Website, http://cypp.unsw.edu.au/women-prison-

The other mural was painted at an unknown location within Jika Jika at an unknown time, presumably by artists named C. Linton and W. Clancy (as signed on the painting). It depicts an Australian desert scene with a town in the background, a car, an Aboriginal flag and two naked people, a white man and an Aboriginal woman.[105] The Aboriginal motifs, the high proportion of Aboriginal people in prison in the 1980s and 1990s and the encouraging of Aboriginal prisoners to create art in prison by prison officers tends to indicate that this work was completed by Aboriginal prisoners.[106] It therefore probably served a similar role to Bull's painting in reclaiming identity in the oppressive prison environment for the painters and other prisoners who would view the painting on a daily basis. It is most likely that this mural was painted after 1988 when Jika Jika reopened for HIV-positive and drug or alcohol dependent prisoners when security was relaxed and art therapy had become common practice within prisons.[107]

In early 2000, developer Peter Chiavaroli reportedly put Jika Jika demolition on hold until the two large murals could be preserved in some way. At the time he claimed that he intended to have them put in the promised museum.[108] The murals can today be found attached to the side of an apartment building within the Pentridge Prison area, on what is now Whatmore Drive.[109] The apartment building was built to include the retention of the 1870s built part of the original Stores Building.[110] However, the side the mural is on is entirely new, which indicates that it was moved in its entirety from the Jika Jika division to this new building. I have not been able to find any further explanation for the motivation behind moving the mural, and how it was done during the demolition of Jika Jika. There is no explanation of what the murals are, who painted them or where they came from. You would be forgiven for assuming they are simply a piece of street art painted after the apartment building was built. Wilson justifies the developer retention of the murals as a display of 'the 'respectable' face of inmate creative self-expression, and are as such are of rather less interest than the illicit.'[111] Wilson's argument that there are respectable and undesirable forms of prisoner art has some credence in that

victoria-1970-2010, Accessed 11 October 2017.

[105] Own visit to Pentridge Prison Site, 22 August 2017.

[106] Wilson, *Prison,* 125., Broome, *Coburg,* 300.

[107] Peter Lynn and George Armstrong, *From Pentonville to Pentridge: A History of Prisons in Victoria* (Melbourne: State Library of Victoria, 1996), 179.

[108] 'A Calm End to Jika Jika's Violent Past', *Moreland Courier,* 24 January 2000, 5.

[109] Own visit to Pentridge Prison Site, 22 August 2017, Whatmore Drive is named after Alexander Whatmore, Inspector General of the Office of Corrections from 1947-1970.

[110] Allom Lovell & Associates, *Pentridge Conservation Management Plan*, 92-94.

[111] Ibid, 66.

illicit graffiti is not given heritage value or preservation in any official sense at former prison museums in Australia.[112]

Despite the recognition of its artistic and cultural importance, Bull's mural has been untouched since the closure of the prison and has never been made available for public viewing. Even though the artists who created the Jika Jika murals were not known, nor was there any academic or artist recognition for the artistic talent or significance of the murals, these murals are on full public display (but unexplained), as the division they existed in was not prioritised for architectural value or oldness. While it is unclear why developers put the demolition of Jika Jika on hold to preserve the Jika Jika murals, I tend to assume that they were motivated by a need to appease heritage advocates with the loss of the Jika Jika building or perhaps they simply believed it was aesthetically pleasing and thought it would add profit value to their apartment building.

Conclusion

Due to the contestable and secretive nature of memories about Pentridge, it's heritage and preservation was always going to be a debate that would be controversial, emotional and widely felt. Despite a strong interest in prison museums, dark tourism and criminality, a museum at the former Pentridge Prison site has not eventuated and I doubt it ever will. Residential development and commercial ventures were far more profitable for developers, and because of this and a lack of artefacts, it will become near impossible to recalibrate the site into a museum.

In the context of redevelopment heritage values are forced into a hierarchy, due to the property value of the site, it seemed unfeasible to save the whole heritage site. Aesthetic value is the most compelling and achievable argument for preservation as the most aesthetically valued buildings are the oldest. The old aesthetic is highly valued within modern society due to the need for a physical anchor to the past and a connection to the wider national foundation story. Bluestone is central in this as it connects to the wider story of Melbourne, however, in my research I found that scholarship on the significance of bluestone for Melbourne's cultural memory was limited.

The current form of the Pentridge site does tell us what Australian society believes is important from our past and what we consider to be the aesthetics of

[112] Jacqueline Z. Wilson, 'Prison Inmate Graffiti', in *Routledge Handbook of Graffiti and Street Art* ed. Jeffrey Ian Ross (Oxon: Taylor and Francis, 2015), 62.

the Australian identity. The key issue for preservation is that about the length of the average lifetime must pass before a place or building is considered worth preserving. So, what happens a lifetime after Jika Jika was built and we do consider it worthy of preservation, but it has already been demolished? It is worth considering that the preference for the aesthetically old may change in the future and other heritage values may be considered more important. This is why heritage tell us more about the present than it does about the past. There should be a wider and critical portrayal of the Pentridge prison story. But as the visual landscape is transformed in private hands and the promised museum still shows no sign of being created, one wonders how future histories of Pentridge will be constructed and in whose interests.