

# Works and Alterations to Registered Heritage Places and Objects



The successful renovation of Melbourne's GPO

This Information Leaflet introduces the process of managing change for heritage places and objects. It should be read alongside the information sheet 'Instructions for completing an Application for Permit to Carry Out Works or Activities to a Heritage Place or Object', which contains more detailed information.

The Victorian Heritage Register contains places and objects which have been assessed as having state-wide heritage significance to Victoria. To adapt to the demands of modern life and its commercial realities these places may need to be altered. Heritage Victoria's (HV) aim is to help owners to manage this change by allowing appropriate alterations while ensuring that places' important features and heritage significance are respected and protected. Over 95% of applications result in a permit being granted for works.

### Who manages this change?

Under the *Heritage Act 1995*, one of the Executive Director's roles is to manage the Victorian Heritage Register. This includes granting permits for appropriate changes to registered places. Heritage Victoria administers the Act, and is the contact and information point for applications and permits. The Heritage Council of Victoria, an independent statutory authority, is the appeal body.

### What changes require a permit?

Anything which alters the place or object including:

- building repairs, extensions, constructions, interior works, demolition or relocation of buildings and structures, changes of colour schemes and signage
- subdivision and construction of new buildings and garden structures such as fences or decks, pathways and driveways, and changes of materials
- works to registered trees and gardens which are not regular maintenance works
- excavations at registered archaeological sites or damage or alteration to an archaeological artefact
- relocation, repair and conservation treatment of objects.

### Do you need a permit for minor repairs?

If the repairs are minor in nature and the materials you are removing are being replaced with materials of the same composition and profile you may not require a permit and can seek an exemption from the Executive Director. The basic aim of repair work should be to retain as much as possible of

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Left:  
A number of changes  
have been successfully  
completed at Alton.

Right:  
Repairing a heritage wall  
at Barker's Creek.



the historic material. In specific cases, such as the treatment of original and important paintwork inside a building, early advice must be sought from Heritage Victoria as the works may alter or diminish the significance of the place.

### **Are there any exemptions from the need to obtain a permit?**

In some instances where the change proposed is minor in nature and will not impact on the heritage significance of the place or object a permit exemption may be possible. To ascertain whether your proposed works could be considered permit exempt, contact HV providing details of the work proposed.

Permit exemptions often cover all the normal maintenance and upkeep issues faced by owners. Common exemptions include interior painting, carpeting, and refurbishment of kitchens and bathrooms. In some cases, particularly where a conservation or master plan exists, developments that might include extensive changes to heritage places can be exempted. It is important to check with HV first to see if the work can be declared permit exempt.

There may be established permit exemptions already in place for your registered property or object. These may have been issued at, or after

the time of registration. Contact HV to see if a permit exemption already exists for your property or object. Where a permit exemption already exists there is no need to check with HV before proceeding with the works.

### **Who can apply?**

The applicant must be the owner or legal occupant of the registered place and the owner's consent is always required on the application. A professional advisor or tenant may be listed as the contact person on the application. In cases where alterations or changes are proposed, it is recommended that applicants employ a professional advisor with experience in heritage conservation. For major changes, pre-application discussions with HV officers are encouraged.

### **Is local government involved?**

Yes. All applications for permits to registered places are referred to the local government authority for comments and consultation.

### **How much will a permit cost?**

A published schedule of fees for permits is available from Heritage Victoria. For conservation works such as repair, restoration and reconstruction, the fee is waived; and for pensioners who carry out works to their own home, there is no payment of fees.



Through a process of negotiation and permits, the History of Transport Mural has been restored and relocated within the new Southern Cross Station redevelopment.

*Image by Peter Glenane*

*Photography courtesy of SCSA.*

### **What needs to be submitted?**

The documentation required is similar to that required for a planning permit. Contact Heritage Victoria for more detailed information to assist you in making an application. In broad terms you should include:

- a completed permit application form signed by the applicant and owner
- three copies of drawings (plans, elevations and sections) setting out the proposed alterations
- a drawing and/or photographs showing existing conditions
- the schedule of the proposed works
- details of proposed colours and finishes or conservation treatment
- a heritage impact statement.

You may also need to include:

- a statement of the anticipated condition at the site following any excavation
- reasons for carrying out any excavation or damage to an archaeological object or artefact.

A permit application form and associated brochures to assist in the preparation of a permit application can be downloaded from [www.heritage.vic.gov.au](http://www.heritage.vic.gov.au).

### **How long will the process take?**

Permits must be processed by the Executive Director within 60 days unless an extension

is granted by the Heritage Council. Previous experience has shown that most minor matters are dealt with in less than 30 days.

### **Are permit applications advertised?**

If the Executive Director believes the proposed application may have a detrimental effect on the place, the owner is required to advertise the proposal in a local newspaper, as specified by Heritage Victoria. Unless the property is in an isolated location, a sign, or signs at the site are also usually required. The Executive Director will make the application available at the office of Heritage Victoria and/or a regional location. Interested parties are invited to comment and make representations for 14 days from the date of advertising.

### **What happens next?**

If the Executive Director can determine the matter on the information supplied in the application, a permit is likely to be issued. If the application is contentious and submissions have been received from other parties, the applicant and the other parties will usually be invited to discuss aspects of the application before a determination is made. The process of discussion is kept as informal as possible. Written material supplied must be accurate, factually correct and unambiguous.

### What criteria does the Executive Director use when considering a permit application?

The Executive Director must consider:

- how the proposal would affect the significance of the place or object
- whether rejection of the proposal would affect the reasonable and economic use of the registered place or object, or cause undue financial hardship to the owner
- the extent to which the proposal would affect the cultural heritage significance of any adjacent or neighbouring property that is protected under a Heritage Overlay in a planning scheme, or is in the Victorian Heritage Register
- any submissions received as a result of advertising
- any matter relevant to the conservation of the registered place or object.

### Is there any avenue for appeal?

Yes. Applicants or owners, who are dissatisfied with a permit refusal or the conditions applied to a permit, may appeal to the Heritage Council within 60 days of the Executive Director's determination. The requirements and procedures for appeals are available from the Heritage Council as a separate document.

### More Information

Heritage Victoria and the Heritage Council have published a number of other Information Leaflets about the care of Victoria's heritage places and objects.

**For further information and assistance, visit our website: [www.heritage.vic.gov.au](http://www.heritage.vic.gov.au)**

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