HERITAGE IMPACT STATEMENT

32 St Vincent Place North, Albert Park

VHR: H1291

Prepared for
Rosenthal Munckton & Shields

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1.0 Introduction

This Heritage Impact Statement (HIS) has been prepared on behalf of Rosenthal Munckton & Shields to accompany a heritage permit application to Heritage Victoria for works at 32 St Vincent Place North, Albert Park (Figure 1). The proposed works include demolition of an existing rear addition, and the construction of new additions.

This HIS makes reference to drawings prepared by Rosenthal Munckton and Shield dated variously October 2016 and February 2017 and numbered TP01 to TP08.

![Figure 1](image.png)

Location of subject site, indicated by star

2.0 Statutory controls and listings

2.1 Victorian Heritage Register

The subject property is included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) as part of the St Vincent Place Precinct identified as place number H1291. The extent of registration for the St Vincent Place Precinct is shown at Figure 2. The statement of significance for the precinct is as follows:

What is significant?

The St Vincent Place precinct was first designed in 1854 or 1855, probably by Andrew Clarke, the Surveyor-General of Victoria. The current layout is the work of Clement Hodgkinson, the noted surveyor, engineer and topographer, who adapted the design in 1857 to allow for its intersection by the St Kilda railway. The precinct, which in its original configuration extended from Park Street in the north to Bridport Street in the south, and from Howe Crescent in the east to Nelson Road and Cardigan Street in the west, was designed to emulate similar 'square' developments in London, although on a grander scale. The main streets were named after British naval heroes. The development of the special character of St Vincent Place has been characterised, since the first land sales in the 1860s, by a variety of housing stock which has included quality row and detached houses dominated by Rochester Terrace (Heritage Register Number 813), and by the gardens which, although they have been continuously developed, remain faithful to the initial landscape concept.
How is it significant?

The St Vincent Place Precinct is of aesthetic, historical, architectural and social significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The St Vincent Place Precinct is aesthetically important for the outstanding quality of its urban landscape. The major elements that reflect this importance are the gardens with their gardenesque style layout and fine collections of mature specimen trees, and the harmonious relationship of the gardens with the residential buildings facing them around St Vincent Place.

The St Vincent Place Precinct is historically important as the premier 'square' development in Victoria based on similar models in London. It is significant as the largest development of its type in Victoria and for its unusual development as gardens rather than the more usual small park as at, for example Macarthur, Murchison, Lincoln and Argyle Squares in Carlton. The precinct is also historically significant for its associations with Surveyor General Andrew Clarke, and more particularly with Clement Hodgkinson, a prolific and influential surveyor engineer in early Melbourne.

The St Vincent Place Precinct is architecturally important for the consistent quality of its built form and its high degree of intactness from its earliest phase of development, characterised by a mixture of one and two storey terraces and detached houses.

The St Vincent Place Precinct is socially important as a reflection of the aspirations of middle class residents in South Melbourne. Because of the shared outlook on and use of the gardens, the precinct has developed a sense of community cohesion unusual in the Melbourne context. The gardens are also socially important as a focus of community life for the surrounding district with the maintenance of their amenity a priority of municipal government since their inception. The existence of the tennis and bowls clubs in the gardens for over a century is a further manifestation of this social importance.

Figure 2  Extent of registration of the St Vincent Place Precinct with subject site indicated
Source: Victorian Heritage Database
2.2 Port Phillip Planning Scheme

The subject site is also included within the St Vincent Place Precinct identified as HO258 in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Port Phillip Planning Scheme. The extent of the Heritage Overlay is consistent with the extent of the VHR registration. Under Clause 43.01 no planning permit is required to develop a heritage place which is included on the Victorian Heritage Register.

![Figure 3](image)

Figure 3 Detail of the Heritage Overlay map, with subject site indicated
Source: Port Phillip Planning Scheme

3.0 History and description

The subject property is located to the north side of St Vincent Place North between Ferrars Street and Montague Street, in Albert Park; the property extends through to Draper Street (Figure 4). The existing building is a double-storey rendered interwar villa, with a tiled intersecting gable roof form (Figure 5). Despite alterations and re-rendering, the original two-storey, rendered form of the building survives with ornate fretwork to its two-storey portico and hung shingles elsewhere on the façade, which provides an informal Arts and Crafts expression. A rendered fence is located along the St Vincent Place street boundary, and a modern studio/garage is located to the rear of the property, facing Draper Street. This structure is likely to date from c.1990s (Figure 6).

St Vincent Place was laid out in the mid-1850s, with land sales occurring from the 1860s. The subject building dates from c.1923, following the subdivision of the property formerly known as 37 St Vincent Place North which created two new building allotments to the east and west of the villa (Figure 7). It is one of a few interwar villas located within the precinct which was predominantly developed during the mid to late nineteenth century with large villas and terraces. An early aerial photograph and the property service plan of the building at 32 St Vincent Place North following its construction show the original form of the building with a substantial two-storey gable ended element to the street and a more-modest, single-storey wing to its rear, with a large structure to Draper Street (Figure 8 to Figure 10). Early images suggest that the building was originally finished in roughcast or similar coarse render (Figure 9). A finish of this kind survives on the eastern elevation (Figure 5). The remainder of the building has been refinished in a cement-rich smooth render which has, to some extent, undermined the early appearance of the building.
The building was extended to the rear in c.1970 when the rear wing was totally or very substantially demolished to allow a two-storey element to be constructed (Figure 11). It is also likely at this time that the upper level window to the western elevation (which is evident in the 1925 image) was removed, and the strapping to this gable end added (Figure 12). A further attic storey level at the rear appears to date from c.1990s as does a single storey laundry addition to the western elevation. These changes are evident in the recent aerial photograph at Figure 4.

Internally the building has been significantly altered, however the front rooms retain what is likely to be the original plan form. The joinery in the front living room and study, including ceiling detailing is not original (Figure 13 and Figure 14). The living room and kitchen to the rear form part of the later addition (Figure 15).

Figure 4  Recent aerial photograph of the subject site
Source: Nearmap

Figure 5  View of east and south elevation of the subject site
Figure 6  View of the garage/studio to the rear of the property

Figure 7  1895 MMBW plan showing the property at 37 St Vincent Place (now 32A) which was subdivided to allow for the construction of the subject building
Source: MMBW detail plan no. 545, State Library of Victoria
Figure 8  Property service plan for 32 St Vincent Place North, dated 1923
Source: South East Water
Figure 9  Detail of a photograph of St Vincent Place, c.1925-c.1940  
Source: State Library of Victoria, accession no.H91.160/1590

Figure 10  1945 aerial photograph, note the addition to the rear which has been subsequently demolished  
Source: Land Victoria
Figure 11  View of the rear addition at 32 St Vincent Place

Figure 12  View of the western elevation of the subject site, note the non-original render treatment, strapping to the gable and uneven wall treatment
Figure 13  Non-original joinery and ceiling and wall detailing in the study

Figure 14  View of existing living and dining rooms, although both likely original rooms, the widening has been opened and the ceiling detailing replaced
4.0 Proposed works

It is proposed to undertake demolition works, and to extend and modify the existing building at 32 St Vincent Place North, together with minor alterations to the existing garage at the rear of the site.

The existing non-original extension to the dwelling will be partially demolished and extended to create an outdoor room, a store room, light court adjacent to the kitchen, and enlarged basement. The internal layout of the rear portion of the dwelling will also be altered. The existing landscaping and pool in the backyard will be removed to allow the building footprint to be extended to the north including a basement link between the garage and dwelling, and new landscaping and a pool are to be installed. Minor alterations to the modern studio/garage, facing Draper Street to the north, are also proposed.

The existing laundry addition located on the western, side elevation is to be demolished to allow the building footprint at ground floor level to be extended out to the western boundary. The western addition will extend the existing laundry and study. The new addition will be setback in the order of 10 metres from St Vincent Place North, 3.1 metres from the principal façade of the subject building at 32 St Vincent Place North and half a metre from the principal facade of the adjacent building. The interface between the existing dwelling and the addition will be managed by way of a slightly recessed glazed link, including a solid rendered strip above. The addition will adopt a height of 3.7 metres, will be constructed of rendered brick and will have a flat roof form. The existing rendered fence in this location will be demolished.

5.0 Permit policy and exemptions

The VHR documentation includes the following permit policy for the St Vincent Place Precinct:

Since 1983 the St Vincent Place Precinct has been the subject of Urban Conservation controls imposed under the planning scheme. It is the intention of the Executive Director that the controls currently applying to the precinct under the Planning and Environment Act be continued in so far as they are compatible
with the Heritage Act save that the responsible authority will be the Executive Director and the appeal body will be the Heritage Council.

The VHR registration also includes the following suite of permit exemptions:

Except for places which are already individually included in the Heritage Register (such as Rochester Terrace 33-51 St Vincent Place South) or may be individually included in the future, the following works or activities are exempted from the requirement to obtain permits from the Heritage Council:

- All internal works to buildings.
- Emergency and safety works to roads, footpaths, tramway equipment, and gardens.
- Repairs, conservation and maintenance to the hard landscape elements, structures and ornaments, drainage and irrigation systems.
- The process of gardening and maintenance to care for trees and planting themes.
- Management of trees in accordance with Australian Standard; Pruning of amenity trees AS 4373.

6.0 Assessment of heritage impact

Demolition

The proposed extent of demolition involves the removal of fabric to the rear of the building, and some demolition to the western elevation. It is noted that internal demolition and alteration is permit exempt and is not commented on further below.

The proposed demolition to the rear of the building involves the removal of fabric associated with the c.1970s rear addition, the landscaping and swimming pool. This extent of demolition will not change the principal presentation of the building to St Vincent Place and will have no impact on the contribution of the building to the significance of the St Vincent Place Precinct. The removal of fabric associated with later additions to the building and landscaping elements will have no adverse heritage impact.

The proposed extent of demolition to the western elevation of the building involves the removal of a rendered brick fence, and external walls and existing windows at ground level adjacent to the study and laundry. This western elevation has previously been modified, with the introduction of a smooth cement render, addition of strapping to the gable end, removal of windows and the existing laundry addition. The removal of some original wall fabric in the vicinity of the study will be set back 3.1 metres from the principal façade of the building. This ensures that the front portion of the building is retained, together with its three dimensional form when viewed from the street. The removal of fabric is located in the vicinity of an existing ground floor window, thereby reducing the amount of fabric to be removed. The proposed extent of demolition will have limited overall impact on the presentation of the building (refer Figure 16 and Figure 17 for current view of western elevation). The demolition of the wall fabric associated with the laundry and the brick fence results in the removal of non-original fabric and will have no heritage impact.

While the proposed extent of demolition to the western elevation does involve the removal of some original fabric, there will be no adverse impact on the overall principal presentation of the subject building or its contribution to the significance of the St Vincent Place Precinct.
Figure 16  Oblique view toward western elevation from the footpath outside 32A St Vincent Place North; arrow indicates the approximate area of wall which will be demolished

Figure 17  Detail view toward the western elevation from the footpath outside the subject property; arrow indicates the approximate area of wall which will be demolished
**New works**

The majority of the new works are confined to the rear of the property and will replace non-original fabric. The extension to the rear, the alteration of the existing garage, the extended basement and the new landscaping, including the swimming pool, will have no visibility from St Vincent Place North and will have no heritage impact on the significance of the subject site or the broader heritage precinct.

The alteration which will be visible from St Vincent Place North is the single-storey addition to the western elevation. The proposed extent of the addition has been modified following Heritage Victoria’s initial feedback (email dated 24 November 2016), which noted:

The study is too high and sits too far forward into the frontage, dominating the existing dwelling. The study will therefore need to be setback slightly further than the main façade of the neighbouring dwelling (no. 32A), and potentially reduced in height.

The proposed addition to the western elevation has been setback in line with the existing gate/fence (to be demolished), 3.1 metres from the principal façade of the subject building and half a metre from the building line of the adjacent property, which is a greater setback (by 2.1m) than the original scheme commented on by Heritage Victoria. The proposed setback reduces the prominence of the addition in the context of the subject dwelling and the neighbouring double-storey villa, and ensures it will not present as an intrusive or jarring element in views from the streetscape. There will also be limited visibility of the addition in more distant oblique views from both the east and the west, as the addition is set back behind the verandah and principal façade of the building at 32A St Vincent Place North and the subject building. This setback also allows for the continued visibility to the corner of 32A St Vincent Place North, and the decorative quoining to the corner of this building which is a positive outcome (Figure 18).

The height of the addition has not been reduced, however the increased setback, the treatment of the interface with the existing building, and the flat roof form ensures that it will be understood as a secondary and contemporary infill element to the side elevation of the building. The simple form of the addition will not detract from the prominence of the double-storey Arts and Crafts style building, and the rendered finish will respond to the existing presentation of the building without competing with the decorative finishes. The overall height of the addition also responds to the height of the front porch to the principal façade of the building, and is considered acceptable given the setback from the principal façade of the existing building.

The proposed ground level addition to the west of the existing building is a simple contemporary form which will not detract from the presentation of the existing building from St Vincent Place North, nor from the building's contribution to the St Vincent Place Precinct. The ground level of the western elevation, which has previously been modified, does not have a high level of prominence in views from St Vincent Place North. The upper level of the building, which has also previously been modified with non-original strapping to the gable end, is more visible in oblique views from the west and will remain unchanged and visible from St Vincent Place North.

**7.0 Conclusion**

The proposed works to 32 St Vincent Place North, Albert Park, are predominantly confined to non-original fabric at the rear of the property. These works will have no impact on the significance of the subject site or the broader heritage precinct. The western addition, however, to the study and laundry will be visible from St Vincent Place North, but will not result in an intrusive or dominating structure. The setback of the addition was increased to respond to Heritage Victoria’s initial concerns, and the simple contemporary form will sit comfortably to the west of the subject dwelling. The existing building at 32 St Vincent Place North will retain its prominence in the streetscape and will continue to contribute to the assessed aesthetic, historical, architectural and social significance of the St Vincent Place Precinct,
albeit as a 1920s insertion within the predominantly mid to late nineteenth century character of the area.

Figure 18  Quoining to the corner of 32A St Vincent Place North, which will remain visible with the proposed setback to the western addition (photograph taken within front setback of 32 St Vincent Place North)