

The Heritage Conservancy

built heritage conservation + building design

Miharo, 145 Noble Street, Newtown (H1137)

Project: Removal of non-significant corridor with a small single storey infill extension at the rear of the dwelling

Heritage Impact Statement

27 February 2024



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Front cover image: View of the subject site from the front garden (Source: Mim Butcher, 2024)

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1. Project overview

1.1. Introduction

This Heritage Impact Statement (HIS) has been prepared for Mr Peter Semianiw, the owner of 145 Noble Street, Newtown. This building, known as Miharo is included on the Victorian Heritage Register as VHR H1137. This HIS outlines the heritage impacts of the proposed works necessary to provide a small single storey extension to the rear of the building.

1.2. The site

Miharo at 145 Noble Street, Newtown is a single storey Victorian era dwelling in a residential area less than 3km from the centre of Geelong. The site is bounded by Noble Street to the north and Mont Street to the south. There is a large garage spanning the width of the property on Mont Street providing vehicle access for the dwelling.

Its location is shown below, outlined in red.



Figure 1: Site location (Nearmap, Nov 2023)

1.3. Description

Newtown is one of Geelong’s earliest suburbs having largely developed from the 1850s onwards following various subdivisions from 1853. Originally known as New Town and Chilwell, by 1887 it was regarded as “The principal suburb of Geelong” and was also described as “The Toorak of Geelong”.¹

Mahiro is a family home that developed from a 2-room brick building in c.1855 to a 10-room dwelling in the 1890s. More recently, in the mid-1990s two further bedrooms and an ensuite bathroom were added and further internal remodelling carried out, resulting in 15 rooms. The earlier part of the house is of single storey stuccoed brick construction with a slate roof. Later elements at the rear have contemporary corrugated iron roofs.

The front of the dwelling is elaborately ornate with a variety of decorative ironwork features, and a lead-light domed-roof conservatory at the north-east corner. This was added in 1890 by Melbourne architects Beswicke and Coote and is believed to be their only building in Geelong.

The most recent major works were carried out c1997 when the property was extensively restored, and alterations were made to the rear to provide added living accommodation. A 2-storey extension was added to the south-east providing a bedroom on each floor and a corridor created to access it from the main house. It is in this area that the proposed works are located, entirely at the rear of the house.

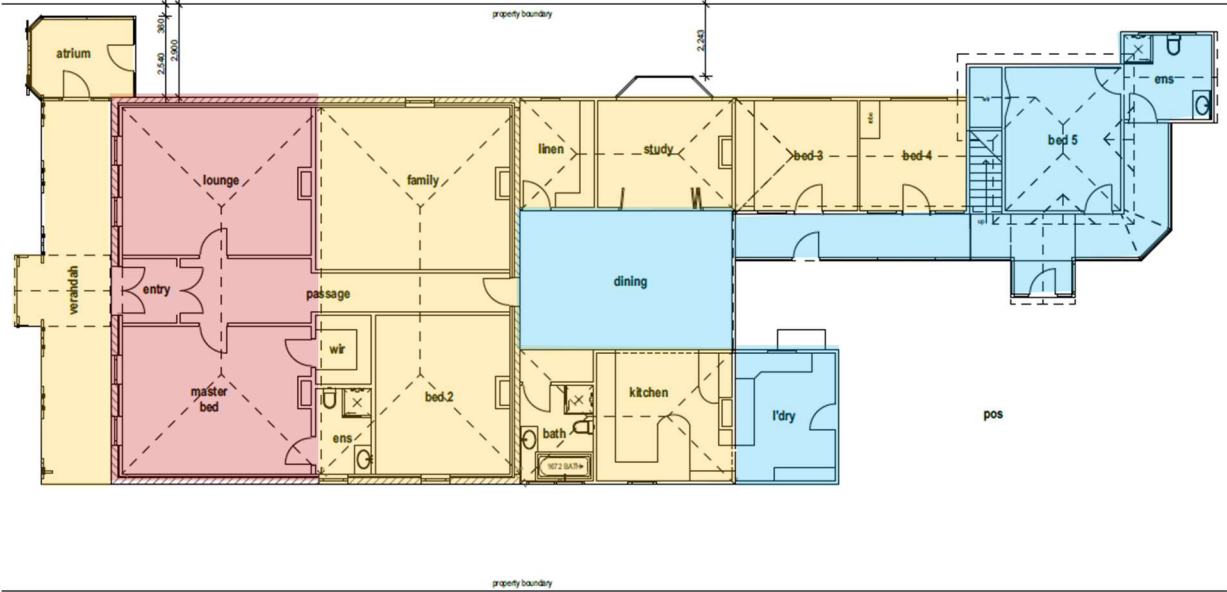
In addition to the dwelling there is also a workshop/office next to the garage on Mont Street, a swimming pool, and shedding in the rear garden.

The property is in an excellent state of repair as can be seen from the current photographs used throughout this document.



Figure 2: Front elevation (The Heritage Conservancy, 2024)

¹ About Corayo: A Thematic History of Greater Geelong (Theme 6: Building the Shire); Rowe, Jennings, Jacobs; 2021



Phases of development: c.1855 1890s 1990s

Figure 3: Existing floor plan with phases of development highlighted. North is to the left of page (plan by J3 Design, 2024)



Phases of development: c.1855 1890s 1990s

Figure 4: Existing aerial view of building corresponding to floor plan above, showing phases of development highlighted. North is to the left of page (aerial photo by Nearmap, Nov 2023)

1.4. Project background

The property has been extended during 3 main periods, the last being c.1997. The current owner has not made any changes but now wishes to rationalise the existing accommodation, making it more usable and providing a better connection to the rear garden. This would involve the removal of the c1990s 'corridor' that was constructed along the western elevation of the eastern (bedroom) wing, connecting the main house to the 4 bedrooms at the back of the building. In its place a small, glazed extension is proposed, enclosing a small outdoor space between two existing wings.



Figure 5 (left): existing view looking north to dining room (The Heritage Conservancy, 2024)



Figure 6 (right): corridor to be demolished is facing the camera (The Heritage Conservancy, 2024)



Figure 7 (left): looking south down corridor proposed for demolition. Existing bedrooms 3 and 4 to the left of the photo (The Heritage Conservancy, 2024)



Figure 8 (right): Originally an external wall, bedrooms 3 and 4 open on to the corridor proposed for demolition (The Heritage Conservancy, 2024)



Figure 9 (left): West elevation of c1997 extension. Gabled doorway proposed to be replaced by a window (The Heritage Conservancy, 2024)



Figure 10 (right): c.1997 extension showing ground floor corner window facing south-west (The Heritage Conservancy, 2024)



Figure 11: Existing kitchen/dining area looking south-east out to corridor proposed for demolition (The Heritage Conservancy, 2024)



Figure 12 (left): Laundry (The Heritage Conservancy, 2024)



Figure 13 (right): Looking west from the laundry (The Heritage Conservancy, 2024)

2. Heritage considerations

2.1. Victorian Heritage Register (VHR)

Miharo at 145 Noble Street was included on the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) on December 14, 1995.



Figure 14 (above): Miharo, (John T Collins, 1964)

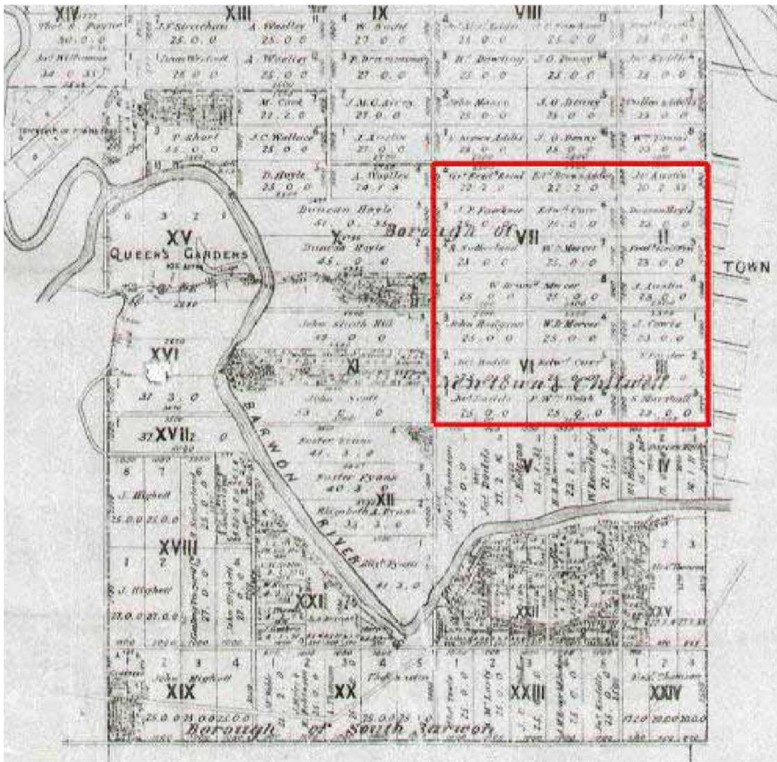


Figure 15: Parish of Moorpanyal Plan, 1850s. The site of Miharo is within the red square (Geelong Heritage Centre)



Figure 16 (above): Ornate glass conservatory roof at the front (north-east) of the building (realestate.com.au)

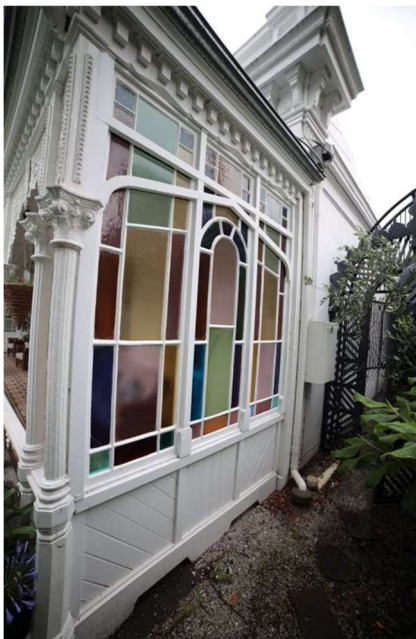
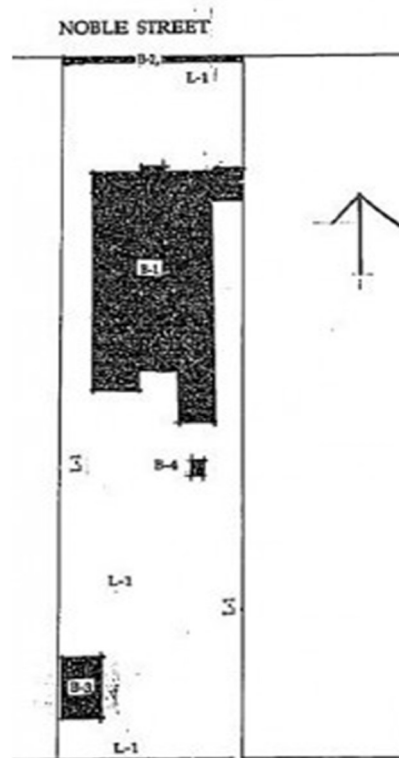


Figure 17 (left): Exterior of conservatory (The Heritage Conservancy, 2024)



Figure 18 (right): Interior of conservatory looking north (The Heritage Conservancy, 2024)

The **extent of registration** for the place is shown on Figure 19 with the text accompanying the entry below that.



h01137 plan h1137

Figure 19: Extent of registration (VHD)

The AMENDMENT OF REGISTER OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS Historic Building No. 1137. Miharo, 145 Noble Street, Newtown, City of Greater Geelong.

Extent: To the extent of:

- 1. All the buildings known as Miharo comprising the main house marked B-1, the fence and gate to Noble Street marked B-2, the former stables marked B-3, and the garden shed marked B-4 on Plan 601129 endorsed by the Chair, Historic Buildings Council and held by the Director, Historic Buildings Council.*
- 2. All of the land described in Certificate of Title Volume 2338 Folio 555, marked L-1 on Plan 601129 endorsed by the Chair, Historic Buildings Council and held by the Director, Historic Buildings Council. [Victoria Government Gazette No. G49 14 December 1995 p.3548]*

The **Statement of Significance** for the place reads as follows:

“Miharo is a single storey elaborately decorated stuccoed brick villa of Victorian filigree style. It was constructed in stages, growing from being a brick house of two rooms in 1855-56 to its current form of

ten rooms which dates from 1890-91. The decorative verandah, facade and conservatory which give the Miharo its present appearance, date from additions of 1890 for soap manufacturer John MacLeod designed by Melbourne architects Beswicke and Coote.

Miharo is of aesthetic, architectural and historical significance to the State of Victoria. It is of aesthetic importance for the outstanding jewel-like decoration of the leaded and coloured glass domed roof conservatory, for the filigree facade with its paired cast iron columns, lace brackets, valance and handrail brackets, and the central decorative timber gable to the verandah, and for the fine display of pressed metal ceilings.

Miharo is important as an extraordinary example of the work of Melbourne architects, Beswicke and Coote, and is the only known Geelong example of their work. Miharo is important for its association with the Australian industrialist John MacLeod, who established a soap factory on the Barwon River at Marnock Vale in 1886. The factory was well known for its "Magic Soap" brand, and also produced "Heart and Arrow", "Pink Borax" and "Blanketta" soaps. The head office and warehouse were located in Market Street, Melbourne and there was a branch factory at Glebe Point in Sydney. The soap was also exported to China and Ceylon. Miharo was transformed to its present form during John MacLeod's period of occupancy."

2.2. City of Greater Geelong Planning Scheme

Miharo sits within leafy environs surrounded by other largely Victorian dwellings. The Heritage Overlay (HO) that corresponds to its Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) listing is HO201. There are various other HOs in the vicinity of Miharo, and the Victorian brick dwelling known as 'Claremont' at 143 Noble Street is also on the VHR (H1127). Nearby HOs are shown below in Figure 11.

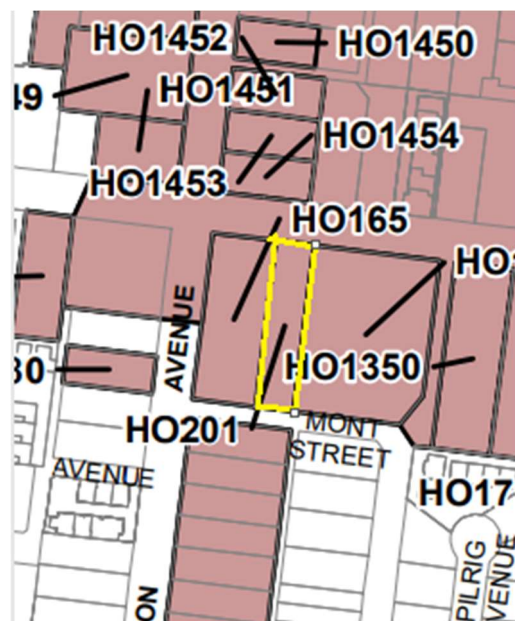


Figure 20: Heritage Overlays (VicPlan Maps)



Figure 21: Claremont, 143 Noble Street, HO124/H1127 (VHD)



Figure 22 147 Noble Street HO165 (Google maps, 2024)

A permit is not required from the City of Greater Geelong for the proposed works due to the place being in the Victorian Heritage Register. However, Council has published Heritage and Design Guidelines (1997) and these are addressed at section 4.1.

2.3. National Trust Victoria

Miharo is classified by the National Trust of Victoria and is known as property number B5095. National Trust classification carries no statutory obligations so is not discussed further in this HIS.

3. Proposed works

3.1. Summary of proposed works

A small self-supporting structure is proposed to be added to the rear of the dwelling that will require the demolition of an existing (non-significant) 'corridor' currently running north-south at the rear of the building. This will enclose an outdoor space between the two original rear wings. All works are shown on the plans by J3 Design Architecture and Town Planning submitted with the application, detail of which are shown below.

In summary the works will comprise the following:

Proposed demolition

- Demolition of contemporary, non-contributory enclosed weatherboard corridor.
- Remove contemporary, non-contributory window from contemporary laundry.
- Remove contemporary, non-contributory windows from dining room.

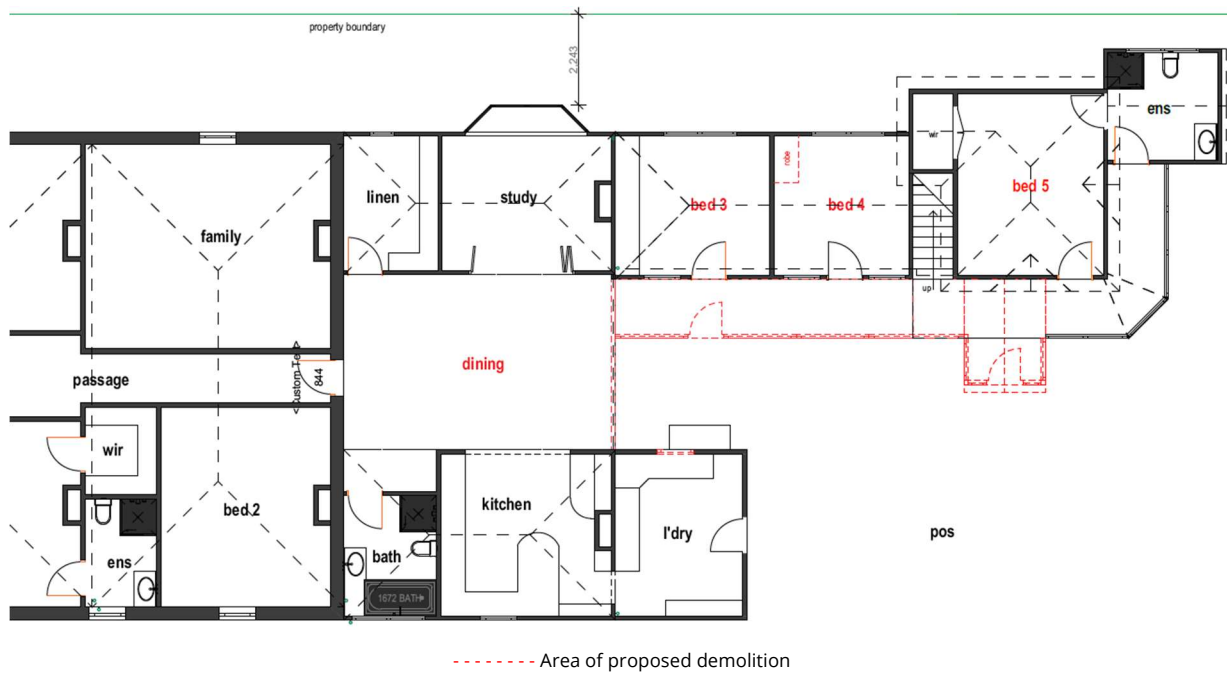


Figure 23: Demolition plan (plan by J3 Design, 2024)

Proposed works

- Construction of a glazed infill section of living space extending out from the current dining room. This will be of contemporary steel construction with a 25-degree pitched gable roof clad in Colorbond, with 4 small roof lights. There will be modifications to roof plumbing to accommodate this, also using Colorbond to match the existing Colorbond part of the roof on the dwelling.
- Bifold doors are proposed to the west of the extension, with a small, cantilevered steel 'blade' canopy above. The south of the extension will contain a single door opening to the garden.
- Internally a gas log fire is proposed on the west wall (weatherboards retained).
- Bedrooms 3 and 4 will become a sewing room and playroom with a 50mm step up to each from the new extension.
- The new living area will also provide access to the bedrooms in the existing 2 storey extension to the SE corner of the building.
- An existing external door in the wall of what is currently bedroom 5 will be replaced with a timber-framed window, detailed to match existing as appropriate.
- Existing weatherboard cladding, doors and windows on the current bedroom 3, bedroom 4 and the laundry will be retained and left exposed.

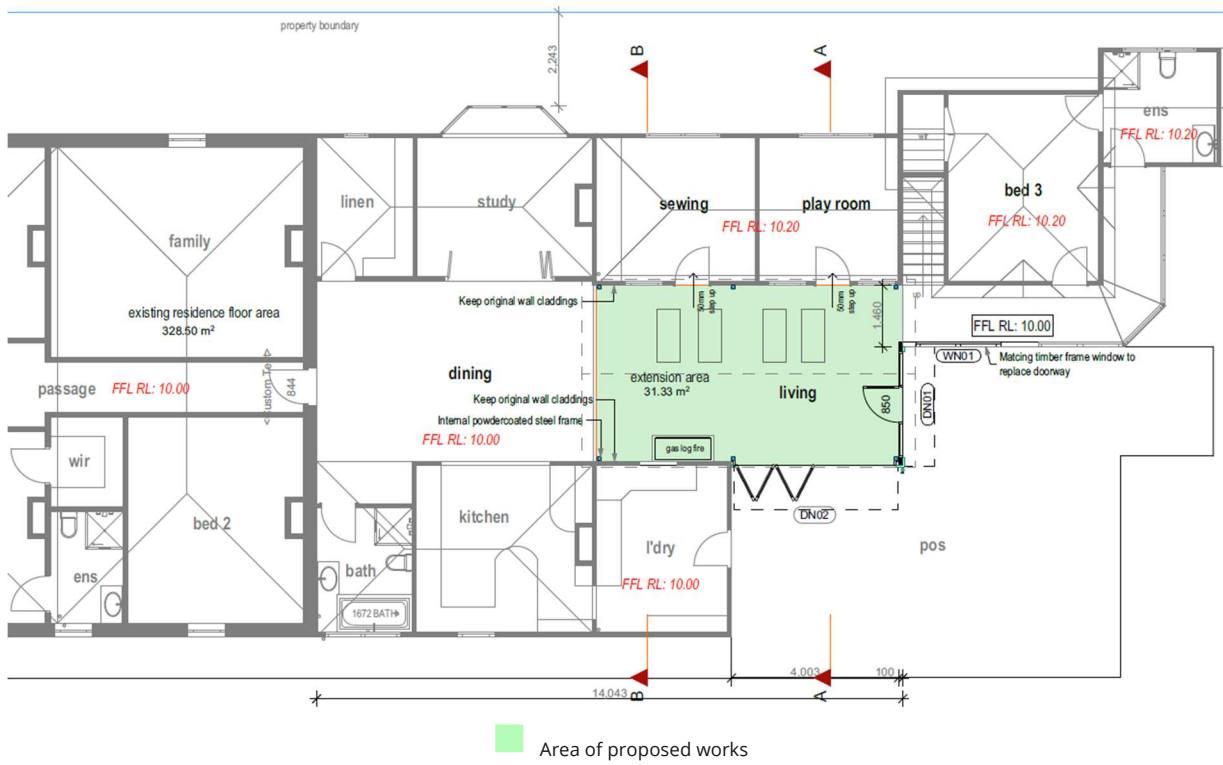


Figure 24: proposed floor plan (plan by J3 Design, 2024)

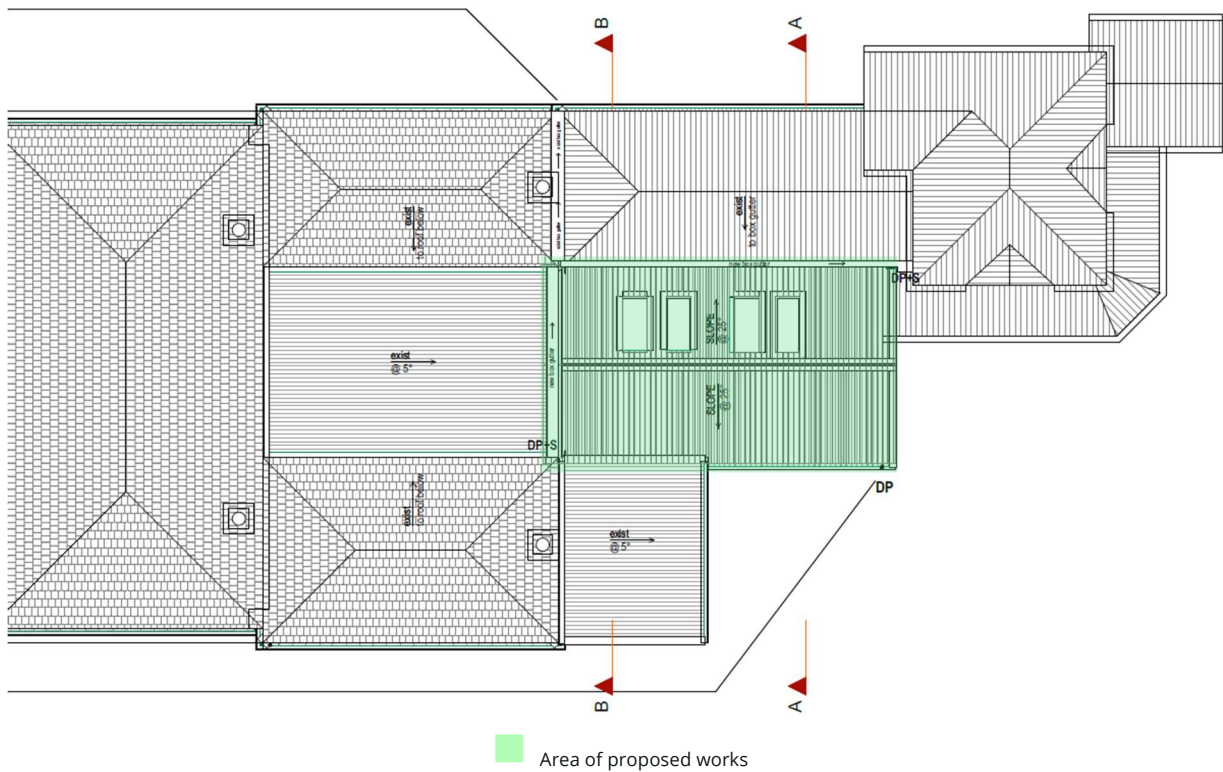


Figure 25: proposed roof plan (plan by J3 Design, 2024)

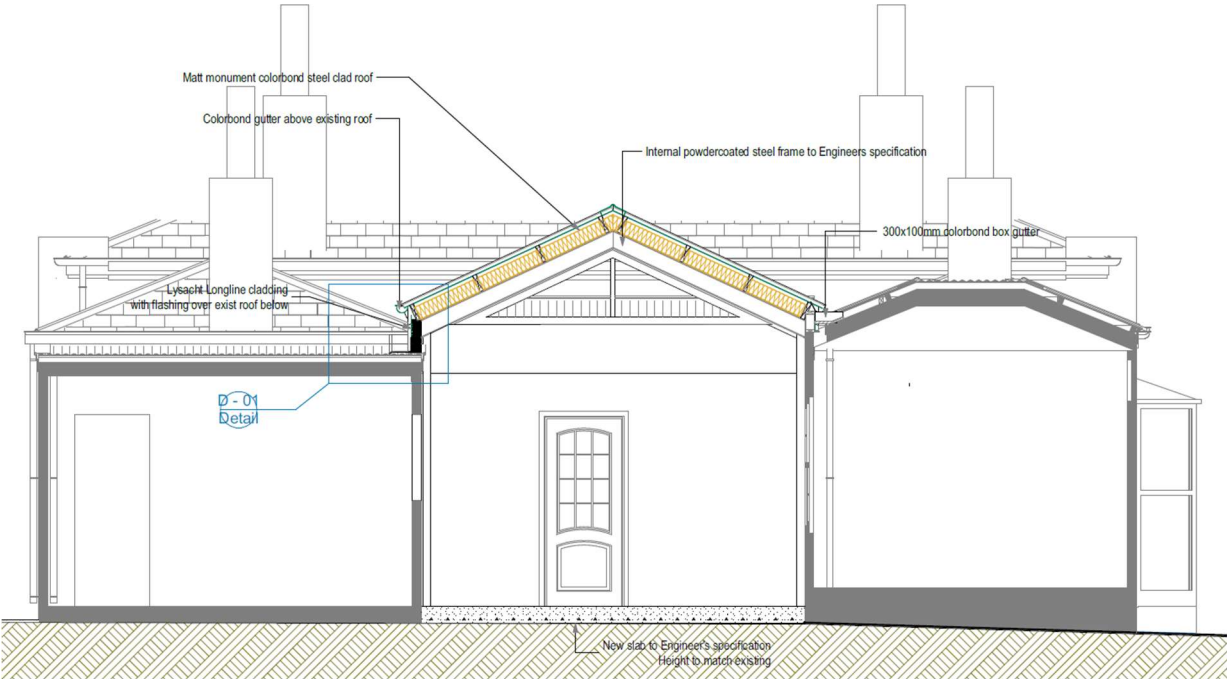


Figure 26: Section showing proposed extension (J3 Design, 2024)

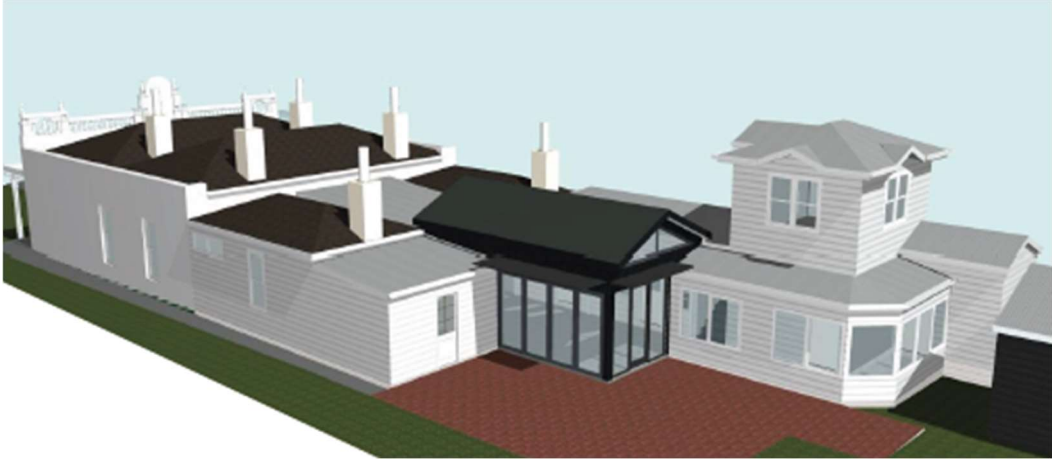


Figure 27: Perspective view of proposed extension (J3 Design, 2024)

3.2. Constraints and opportunities

The most significant elements of the place are at the front of the dwelling, none of which are affected by this proposal. There are various contemporary interior modifications in rooms adjoining the proposed extension and all of the proposed changes are confined to the rear and focus on ancillary and modern elements that have

already undergone change over time. This provides an opportunity to consider making minimal changes that will improve the overall presentation and interpretation of the building and meet the owners needs.

The existence of the two 'wings' extending south from the building provides an opportunity to make this a usable space which is still able to be interpreted as a lightweight later alteration.

3.3. Conservation approach

Miharo is already in a good state of repair and the owner is proposing to retain weatherboard clad walls that will be situated within the new living space following completion of the works. These will be painted and 'made good' as necessary, allowing the origin of these elements as former external walls to be understood.

4. Supporting information

Information to support an assessment against sections 101(2) and 101(3) of the *Heritage Act 2017*.

4.1. Assessment against relevant guidelines

The Executive Director has published *Guiding principles for changes proposed to places on the Victorian Heritage Register* to inform statutory decision-making under s.101 of the act. The proposed works are addressed under each principle.

Principle 1. Understand why the place is significant

Miharo is of aesthetic, architectural and historical significance to the State of Victoria. The architectural significance as referred to in the Statement of Significance relates solely to the elaborate 1890 decorative elements at the front of the building. The proposed works will not impact these elements at all.

The proposed removal of the corridor and its replacement with a lightweight extension will enhance the place aesthetically and will add a further layer to the story of the historical development of Miharo. It will provide an informal living space at the rear of one of Newtown's early 'high end' dwellings, following the tradition of retaining large formal reception spaces at the front of buildings and providing new and more informal spaces at the back.

Principle 2. A Cautious approach

The proposed works will result in minimal addition to the building footprint. The nature of the design will impart light and open qualities that could be compared to those of the conservatory. As advocated by the *Burra Charter (2013)* the proposal endeavours to do as much as is necessary to provide the living space required, but as little as possible to affect the heritage place in any way.

Principle 3. Protect significant settings and views

The significant settings and views relating to Miharo are almost entirely confined to the front of the property and the general streetscape. These are not affected by the development at all and the relationship between Miharo and the neighbouring dwellings remains unchanged.

The views and settings from within the site are considered to contribute little or no significance to the place, especially as the approach to the site from Mont Street has been greatly changed. The proposed development retains the garden setting and will result in little change to the views towards the house from the rear garden.

The proposed works do not impact or diminish the values or the overall setting of the Miharo or the wider precinct.

Principle 4. Respectful change and new built form

The design of the new extension results in a very small-scale element that defers to the more solid massing of the rear of the existing dwelling. Its setting is respectful to the heritage building and its design is simple, modern, honest and functional. No heritage elements are being removed, and the result will be wholly proportionate both the dwelling, and to its component parts at the rear. The visual emphasis on the existing dwelling will continue to dominate.

Principle 5: Provide for upkeep

Miharo was designed and built as a family home in the 1850s and has been extended and used as such since then. It is in a good state of repair and there are no known repairs required.

No argument is being made in this application in relation to Section 101(2)b of the *Heritage Act (2017)* for reasonable or economic use. The proposed works are seen as providing a net benefit to the heritage place as they are simplifying the current arrangement of rear add-ons into a small and simple lightweight extension.

Significance of adjacent or neighbouring property

The proposed works have been assessed against Section **101(3)(a)** of the *Heritage Act (2017)* and the following commentary is provided.

Miharo sits in an area containing various heritage overlays due to its nature as an early and important suburb of Geelong. It is situated between numbers 143 and 147 Noble Street, both of which have heritage protection. Claremont at 143 Noble Street is a single storey brick dwelling with a slate roof that is also on the VHR (H1127), and 147 Noble Street is a 2 storey brick and slate roofed corner dwelling covered by HO165. The nature of setbacks, landscaping and fences means that the properties are generally secluded from each other, and the fact that the proposed extension at Miharo is small and within the building envelope means that it will not affect the cultural heritage significance of the adjoining properties.

City of Greater Geelong Heritage Design Guidelines, 1997

Although no planning permit is required from Council for the works, it is relevant to state that the proposal complies with Council's Heritage and Design Guidelines (1997) and the objectives and policy of the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme. As required in the Guidelines, the extension is confined to the rear, is not visible from the street, and is small in scale and of light appearance in form/design. It has no impact on the setting of HO201 and no impact on significant fabric.

4.2. Assessment against significance

Miharo is of aesthetic, architectural and historical significance to the State of Victoria. The architectural significance as referred to in the Statement of Significance relates solely to the elaborate 1890 decorative elements at the front of the building. The proposed works will not impact these elements at all.

The historical significance of the place is not affected by the proposed works, except perhaps to add to the story of change over time. The weatherboard-clad walls of internal rooms that either are or were once external will be retained in this project, enabling the history and development of the building to be readily seen.

Aesthetically, the front of the building, the visual appreciation of the precinct, and the heritage significance of the neighbouring buildings remains unchanged. The only aesthetic change will be in the removal of the rear corridor and the construction of the extension. Aesthetically these works will of course result in a visible change, but a small one in the overall appearance of the place. The works have the benefit of replacing some fairly recent piece-meal changes with a single, considered and lightweight alternative, with negligible increase in building footprint. The aesthetic significance of the place will not be adversely impacted by the proposed extension, which will in any case be completely reversible.

4.3. Reason for supporting the proposal

The assessment of the proposed development against relevant guidance, legislation and the statement of significance provide no reason to object to the works as put forward. The proposal is minor, appropriately designed and placed, and does not impact on the heritage place. The nature of the proposed works provides an example of the common approach of sensitively siting additional accommodation to the rear of heritage dwellings where they will not impact on significant facades or fabric. The solution of infilling a space between rear 'wings' is exactly what has been undertaken at 143 Noble Street, as shown in Figure 28, below.

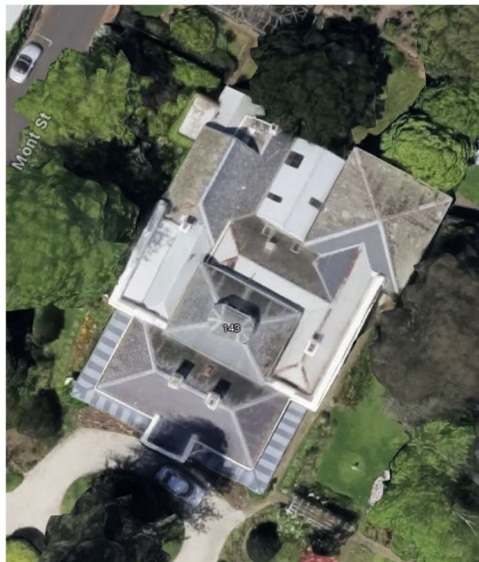


Figure 28: Claremont, 143 Noble Street, H1127 showing infill at centre rear (top) of photo (Google Maps, 2024)

5. Conclusion

5.1. Conclusion

The proposed works are of overall benefit to the heritage place, do not adversely affect its cultural heritage significance, and the extension is small and lightweight but also entirely reversible. Features such as weatherboards and traditional doors and windows will be retained as appropriate and the works will ensure that the property meets the needs of its current owners in a way that defers to the aesthetic, architectural and historical significance of the registered place.

Consideration may be given to adding conditions to any permit granted to ensure that colours, finishes, joinery details and the dimensions of steel framing members are appropriate.

6. References

Australia ICOMOS, *The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance (The Burra Charter)*, 2013, <https://australia.icomos.org/wp-content/uploads/The-Burra-Charter-2013-Adopted-31.10.2013.pdf>

Heritage Victoria, *Guidelines for preparing heritage impact statements*, 2021, https://www.heritage.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0023/507047/Guidelines-for-preparing-heritage-impact-statements-June-2021.pdf

Heritage Victoria, *Principles for considering change to places in the Victorian Heritage Register*, 2022 https://www.heritage.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0030/628581/Principles-for-considering-changes-to-places-in-the-Victorian-Heritage-Register-3.pdf

City of Greater Geelong Heritage and Design Guidelines; 1997; HLCD; <https://www.geelongaustralia.com.au/common/public/documents/8cc1f8d76ed2c65-CoGG%20Heritage%20and%20Design%20Guidelines%201997%20UPDATED%20Footer.doc>