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Senior Heritage Officer (Permits),
Heritage Victoria
State Planning Services and Heritage,
Department of Transport and Planning,
1 Spring Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

21st October 2026

Re: Permit Application P42180 - Gringegalgona Homestead, 182 Gringe Dip Rd, Gringegalgona, Southern Grampians Shire (H1925)

Dear Jessica,

Thank you for your recent letter dated 15th October, following the site visit by Kristianna from your office. We are pleased to provide the following response to your guidance and request for further information.

General

1. Landscape Works

   As you have acknowledged, the owners intend to undertake landscape works in the future and as such, a landscape architect has not yet been engaged. We appreciate the in-principle support expressed for the high-level landscape works proposed and would be happy to incorporate these within the current permit, understanding that the detailed landscape design will be resolved at a later date.

2. Staged Permit

   We would prefer to adopt a staged permit approach as recommended, to provide time for further investigations and design development, while allowing the high priority work to the Main House to proceed. Proposed staging has been identified on the revised plans submitted with this letter.

   The preferred staging of works is as follows:

   i. Refurbishment of Main House, including rebuilding of Kitchen and upgrade of associated service spaces, re-wiring and replumbing throughout, installation of new first floor Bathrooms, general maintenance and conservation works. This stage would also include dismantling of Courtyard walls, covered link and verandah. Removal and replacement of Courtyard landscape, reconstruction of Courtyard walls and installation of new verandah.

   ii. Restoration of original gardens surrounding the Main House, including the circular garden beds and construction of a new driveway.

   iii. Refurbishment and upgrade of Cottage to become a guest house.

iv. Restoration of Stables.

3. Conservation Works

   Your recommendation to seek advice where there is uncertainty regarding exemptions for future conservation works is duly noted. Consideration will also be given to additional conservation works in later stages, such as restoration of the Stables.

4. Demolition Drawings

   A set of demolition drawings have been prepared and are attached to this response. Please refer to drawings A02a, A03a, A04a and A06a, Revision F.

5. Subfloor Structural Investigations

   Please refer to the attached preliminary investigations undertaken by the contractor, illustrating the existing condition and construction of floors in the proposed Creative Space and Butler's Kitchen.

   Initial verbal advice provided by the structural engineer is that the subfloor structure does not meet current standards and cannot be used to support a raised floor level. In order to raise the floor, new subfloor structure (joists, bearers and stumps on pad footings) will therefore be required, however the original floor boards and skirtings could be re-used. If necessary, the existing subfloor frame could also be retained, with new stumps carefully located between the existing framing and new floor framing installed above.

Proposed Works

6. Kitchen Infill – New Roof Form

   An alternative roof form has been considered, to address concerns regarding the visual impact of the roof. Please refer to drawing A13a Rev F attached, which shows a lower hip roof alternative pitched at 5 degrees, the minimum pitch allowed for a galvanised custom orb profile. This would be 380mm lower than the ridgeline of the existing Kitchen roof, as indicated on the proposed drawing. Importantly, this alterative still allows for the improvement of drainage around the new roof and new highlight windows to provide daylight to primary living spaces.

7. Kitchen Infill – Replacement of Floor Structure

   As discussed, investigation of the subfloor under the Kitchen has revealed that the foundations are inadequate, with bearers laid directly onto an old paving slab. This does not meet current building standards and in order to construct the new roof, it is necessary to replace the floor structure. The proposal is to carefully demolish the entire floor, including removal of floor boards, joists, bearers and the paving slab below. The ground level will be excavated to ensure a minimum of 150mm clearance below new bearers. New pad footings and concrete stumps will be installed, with new bearers, joists and timber floor boards over. The finished floor level will be the same as the current Kitchen floor. Works will be undertaken carefully to avoid damage to the exposed stone walls that enclose the Kitchen.

8. Alteration of Floor Levels – Extent & Options Considered

   As described above, it is not possible to raise the floor in the service rooms without installing new subfloor structure. However, it is possible to re-use floor boards and skirtings and to retain the existing structure, if that is considered to be appropriate.

   The Creative Space fireplace and mantlepiece would be retained in the current form (ie. bricked in). The tiled hearth, which dates from the 1980s, would be removed. In openings between rooms, the existing door frames, architraves and door leaves would be removed and reinstalled at the higher level. The dado rail will be retained in the existing position and windows will all remain unaltered in these spaces. All joinery will be removed (none of which is original) and new joinery will be designed to suit the existing window opening heights.

   The alternative solution considered for eliminating a step between the service spaces and Kitchen was to lower the Kitchen floor. This is not a preferred solution because it will result in a split level across the main ground floor living spaces, with the Kitchen being lower than the adjacent Bedroom, Bathroom, Dining Room and Living spaces. For this reason, the owners' strong preference is to raise the floor level in the two service spaces south of the Kitchen.

9. Alteration of Floor Levels – Reasonable Use

   We request that 'reasonable use' under s101(2)(b) of the Heritage Act be considered in relation to this change in floor level. The owners intend to make a very significant investment in the restoration and upgrade of Gringegalona, improving many aspects of the property as outlined in our original Heritage Impact Statement. After undertaking this work, they intend to live in the property for as long as possible, hence provisions for ageing-in-place are an important consideration. A key aspect of this is providing level access throughout the primary living spaces. By raising the floor level in the Pantry and Creative Space, the owners will have step-free access to a Bedroom, Bathroom, Kitchen, Dining and Lounge, all on the ground floor of the house. Provision has also been made for a future ramp to be installed to provide accessible entry via the Courtyard.

   We note that the NCC 2025 incorporates the 'Liveable Housing Design Standard' which details many provisions for making new homes accessible to the elderly and people with mobility limitations. While it is not mandatory or possible to make all aspects of Gringegalona comply with these provisions, the proposed change to these floor levels goes some way towards achieving compliance with the current standard.

   It is also important to consider the social changes that have occurred since Gringegalgona was built. At that time, the original owners had servants who occupied the service spaces and were expected to navigate steps in the course of their daily domestic work. Contemporary society has changed greatly since then. Domestic servants are no-longer employed and hence the modification of the house to allow the current day owners to live independently into old age is an important consideration. Without this change, it is difficult to justify the investment necessary to upgrade the property as a whole.

10. Courtyard Walls and Verandah Infill

    We appreciate the support expressed for the proposed dismantling and reconstruction of the courtyard walls and agree that a two-step approach is best. An initial step of the dismantling, assessing and documenting the walls will inform the second step, to develop a detailed design for their reconstruction. We understand that the methodology and final design will need to be reviewed by Heritage Victoria as a condition of any permit.

    The intent of the design will be to clearly distinguish any new work, whilst remaining sympathetic in character and architectural qualities of the place. The relationship between the proposed new verandah and reconstructed courtyard walls will also be considered, to create a more coherent and considered architectural response than the current structures.

11. South Elevation Chimney and Proposed Door

    In response the concerns raised regarding the proposed replication of the WT Core design, we have prepared a more contemporary response. Please refer to the attached drawing, A34 Rev F which shows a new steel framed glazed door in this opening. This approach provides consistency with the proposed new Courtyard Verandah structure, which would allow a future reading of these elements as all being constructed at the same time.

    The existing window adjacent to the door will be restored, including replacing concrete lintel and quoining with stone and installation of a new stone sill. Rather than matching the original stone finish, we propose that new stone have a sawcut finish, to subtlety distinguish this new fabric from the original.

We trust that this information addresses the points raised in your letter. We would welcome the opportunity to further discuss the application with you if any further information is required.

Sincerely,



Daniel Cooper
Cooper Scaife Architects