

PROJECT DETAILS

Heritage Impact Statement for:

Broughton Hall (Formerly 'Tara')

Victorian Heritage Register Number:

This Heritage Impact Statement forms part of a permit application for H1176

Pre-application meeting number:

Booroondara Council #PRE25/0058

Address and location description:

2 Berwick Street, Camberwell VIC 3124

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SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PLACE OR OBJECT

THE CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PLACE OR OBJECT

The subject property is of State-level architectural and historical significance. Architecturally, it is an uncommon and refined example of early Italian Renaissance Revival style, distinguished by its open terrace to three sides and sophisticated detailing. Historically, it holds significance as the long-term residence of a prominent Victorian politician and leading figure in the Catholic Church.

The property is located within the Prospect Hill Road Precinct (HO159), which is of heritage significance for its intact and cohesive collection of late Victorian and Federation-era residences. The precinct is recognised as one of the most distinguished of its kind in Melbourne, with a high level of integrity in built form, garden settings, and original streetscape features.

The area demonstrates consistent architectural character, scale, materials, and detailing, with many custom-designed dwellings contributing to the overall heritage value. Sub-precincts such as the Tara Estate and Hollies Estate reinforce the historical and architectural significance through high-quality Federation and interwar housing, including landmark buildings such as the 1938 Victorian Architecture Medal-winning Christian Science Church.

The subject property contributes to the historic, aesthetic, and architectural values of the precinct and should be considered within this broader context in any planning assessment.

EXISTING CONDITION OF THE PLACE OR OBJECT

In conjunction with the current restoration works being undertaken on the original Broughton Hall building, the site's landscaping also requires redesign due to the progressive deterioration of the driveway and gardens.

The historical forecourt of the property has previously been compromised with brick paved surfacing. As shown in the images provided with this application, the paved surface has become uneven due to subsidence and invasive tree roots, causing pavers to lift and creating potential trip hazards. There is also visible damage to the concrete edging surrounding both the driveway and garden beds.

Planting across the site, particularly along the building façade, is currently sparse and in poor condition. This is due to a combination of factors including the selection of unsuitable plant species, poor soil quality, and limited sunlight caused by building shade and large tree canopies.

Mature plantings at the site include a Norfolk Island Pine and Moreton Bay Fig, both reflecting the 19th Century context of the building, and Mediterranean Cypress specimens, relating to prominence of the early Federation era within the garden.

Additionally, existing rock and bluestone edging has become unstable in several areas, making it unsuitable in its current form and necessitating replacement or realignment as part of the broader landscape restoration strategy.

CURRENT USE OF THE PLACE OR OBJECT

The Broughton Hall building currently operates as an Aged Care Facility managed by Benetas and provides accommodation and care for 65 residents. The existing landscaping adopts a formal style, incorporating structured garden beds, paved pathways, and seating areas that offer spaces for quiet reflection and passive recreation, elements that are particularly important in supporting the wellbeing of aged care residents.

The area identified for the proposed landscaping works encompasses the primary entrance to the facility, which serves as the main point of access for residents, visitors, and staff. This entrance not only functions as a transitional space between the external environment and the building interior but also plays a critical role in shaping first impressions of the facility, with the garden serving as a connection between the building and the community. Given its high visibility and functional importance, ensuring that this space is both safe and visually welcoming is essential. The proposed works aim to enhance accessibility, safety, and the overall aesthetic appeal of the entry experience to the building to enhance current purpose, while remaining sensitive to the needs of the resident community and the historical relevance of the property.

CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES RESULTING FROM THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PLACE OR OBJECT

The heritage significance of Broughton Hall imposes important design constraints that has directly controlled the selection of materials, colours, and overall landscape treatment. Proposed finishes, including surface treatments and built elements, have been chosen to provide sympathy to the character of the heritage place and complement both the architectural features of the building and the broader streetscape. All colour and material selections have been made in alignment with heritage guidelines to ensure visual cohesion and minimal intrusion on the historic fabric.

The project has presented an opportunity to draw inspiration from the late Victorian and Federation periods, which are reflected in the building's architectural style. These eras have guided both stylistic considerations and the selection of plant species to reinforce the historic character of the site.

Resurfacing of the driveway, a key component of the proposed works, has been carefully considered to ensure that any new materials used do not detract from the heritage values of the property. Durable and appropriate surface treatments will be selected to address safety and functional concerns while maintaining visual harmony with the heritage setting.

In addition, several mature trees on site have been assessed by an arborist and recommended for removal due to health and structural concerns. The potential impact of this removal on the site's heritage value will be carefully evaluated, and any replacement planting will be guided by heritage considerations to preserve the integrity of the landscape setting.

PROPOSAL

THE PROPOSED WORKS

The proposed landscape works have been designed to enhance the presentation and functionality of the Broughton Hall site while remaining sensitive to its heritage significance.

Key elements of the proposal include:

- Demolition of current interlocking pavement driveway and tree removal.
- Resurfacing driveway with asphalt to improve safety, accessibility, and visual cohesion with the heritage setting.
- Installation of raised entry wall, which will be constructed at the driveway entrance to provide a formal statement entry, reinforcing the prominence of the building façade.
- Installation of a new ornamental fountain in the centre of the driveway, to restore a sense of grandeur and provide a visual focal point that complements the historic character of the site.
- Installation of shaded seating areas including a timber arbour, to encourage quiet reflection and social interaction.
- New feature trees will be strategically placed to replace removed specimens, provide scale, seasonal interest, and structure, without overwhelming the site or detracting from key sightlines to the heritage building.
- Upgrading existing street lighting to driveway and pathways.

Overall, the proposed works aim to revitalise the landscape in a way that supports the ongoing use of the site as an aged care facility, enhances its formal presentation, and aligns with the heritage values of Broughton Hall and its surrounds.

Please refer to Landscape Plans attached for further design detail.

Methodology:

Barefoot Projects have developed a comprehensive construction plan that prioritizes public safety and community wellbeing. With extensive experience in municipal environments, we understand the importance of minimizing disruption while upholding the highest safety standards throughout the construction process.

Barefoot Projects is committed to maintaining a safe and accessible environment for the community. Our plan includes:

- Installation of temporary fencing to clearly demarcate construction zones.
- Scheduling site deliveries during off-peak hours to reduce traffic impact.
- Implementing traffic management measures as required.
- Ensuring, wherever possible, continued public access to unaffected areas to minimize community disruption.

Our experience managing complex and live environments ensures that we consistently meet safety, quality, and timeline expectations. We recognize that this project involves significant demolition works and are committed to environmentally responsible waste management. Our team will take a sustainable approach to the disposal and recycling of materials, carefully dismantling components to preserve items slated for retention.

We understand the necessity to limit noise disturbance for this facility and surrounding neighbours. We are also mindful of the site's access limitations, parking constraints, and stockpiling requirements. It will be a priority to precisely schedule all loading, collecting and delivery of principle provided material, to achieve seamless delivery of the project. Drawing on our experience with similar projects, we will manage these challenges to ensure smooth and efficient execution.

Site asset protection is another key priority for Barefoot Projects. We will implement rigorous procedures to minimize risk throughout construction. A critical aspect of this project is compliance with Tree Protection Zone (TPZ) guidelines. This will be addressed in the pre-construction phase through a detailed Construction Management Plan, and on-site by clearly marking TPZ areas with appropriate fencing, conducting comprehensive site inductions for all personnel and visitors, and closely monitoring all works near TPZ boundaries to avoid disturbance.

Timely delivery is essential. To ensure all milestones in the construction program are met, the project will be led by Bryce Johnson, our dedicated and experienced Operations Manager. It is anticipated that these works will take approximately 8 weeks to complete in full.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

A key design consideration was the selection of a suitable material for the resurfacing of the existing driveway. Whilst recognizing the historical relevance in selecting a lighter colour material to retain similar characteristics to the original gravel surfacing, asphalt has been deeply considered and selected for this design to widely account for public safety and the safety of the residents. We believe asphalt to be the most suitable choice for the facility due to its durability for vehicle traffic, low maintenance, its flexibility from environmental expansion and resistance to tree root damage which for this particular site is a concern. Asphalt will provide more grip for both foot traffic and vehicle traffic stability.

Whilst further understanding the concern that the dark charcoal colour asphalt is not historically appropriate, the Designer's intent is that the dark driveway would provide a positive visual impact for the site itself, in that the recently refurbished façade of the heritage building would be highlighted against a darker colour surface, drawing the viewer's attention to the building immediately. It further provides a professional visual appeal for the current purpose of the facility. The Client has chosen asphalt as the preferred material for this project opposed to a light coloured surface, as lighter surfacing would significantly detract the attention of the building itself.

To retain a connection to the site's heritage character and to create cohesion with adjoining buildings on the site, the heritage red brickwork been referenced through the inclusion of red brick edging along the driveway and surrounding garden beds, reintroducing the historic colour palette in a contemporary and functional way.

In addition, off-white pebble mulch has been selected for garden beds adjacent to the building façade. This material choice was made to complement and highlight the tones of the recently refurbished building, creating a clean and refined appearance while also supporting a low-maintenance planting strategy. White pebble is a more expensive option that opting for standard garden mulch, however this lighter colour pebble have been prominently selected throughout the site design to restore the balance of the charcoal asphalt.

The raised brick wall entrance proposed for the site was inspired by previous masonry pillars located on this site on either side of the driveway, originally with cast iron gates which have since been relocated to the Hawthorn Catholic Church . By re-introducing pillars to the entrance, the Designer intends to restore the sense of historical formality

to the entrance. Whilst the addition of the brickwork was not previously known for this site, raised brick walls are evident within the Prospect Hill Precinct, in era-comparable properties, retaining heritage cohesion within the community.

The proposal of the central water fountain has too been deeply considered, as this item would cause significant visual impact to the property's entrance. There is currently a smaller water feature located in the gardens on this site which has been a positive visual feature and appreciated by residents. A larger ornamental fountain in the centre of the driveway has been chosen to reflect late Victorian era garden design. This fountain and pond surround would be made from concrete in a white finish, reflecting on the masonry materials and colours used in the building façade. The fountain installation intends to both draw further focal point toward the building from the street view and draw the community into the site to appreciate the heritage building. There has historically been a feature tree in this position with smaller supporting plantings at the foot, however research has provided that trees have not established well in this area of site, hence the decision not replace with another tree.

IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL ON THE CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PLACE OR OBJECT

The proposed landscape works at Broughton Hall will have a positive overall impact on the cultural heritage significance of the place. The project has been designed with a strong emphasis on conserving and enhancing the heritage values of the site while addressing functional and safety needs associated with its current use as an aged care facility.

POSITIVE IMPACTS:

- Enhanced Presentation of the Heritage Place

The new landscape design strengthens the formal character of the grounds and restores a sense of grandeur appropriate to the significance of Broughton Hall. This building has been stated to be unusually grand with design elements ahead of their time and we intend for this design to enhance those attributes.

- Improved Accessibility and Safety

Resurfacing the driveway in asphalt provides a stable, level surface, minimising trip hazards and supporting vehicle and pedestrian access, critical for the safety of the community and its aged care residents. These works address deterioration issues (such

as undulating pavers and tree root damage) and are able to retain original layout of the site.

- Respectful Integration of New Materials

The use of asphalt does create a strong contrast however this is intended to highlight the building's heritage façade, while red brick edging reinstates the historic colour palette in a sympathetic and contemporary way. The use of off-white pebbles in large garden beds further enhances the recently refurbished building façade and restores the balance of light surfaces in conjunction with the asphalt colour.

- Improved Amenity and Heritage Interpretation

New shaded seating areas and the reintroduction of symmetrical layout principles provide opportunities for quiet reflection and social interaction, aligned with the historical and therapeutic use of formal gardens. Feature trees and soft landscaping are used to frame views without obscuring key architectural elements, maintaining the building's visual prominence.

POTENTIAL NEGATIVE IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES:

- Change in Original Driveway Surface Material

The forecourt to this site has previously been compromised with the use of interlocking brick pavers, when originally surfaced with gravel. Whilst proposing asphalt replacement, this further compromise of the forecourt still represents a change from the historic surface treatment.

Justification: Retaining the interlocking pavers was deemed unsuitable due to safety risks (lifted pavers, root damage) and uneven surfaces that pose hazards for aged care residents and staff. Restoring the driveway to its original gravel surfacing is not practical for the current use of the building which needs to remain low maintenance, durable and non-slip. Exposed aggregate was considered a good option but was not a cost-effective option for this facility. It poses further requirement to upgrade other concrete paths on site due to obvious appearance differences. Permeable paving was also considered but would lack stability and require additional maintenance, also causing this to not be a viable option for this site.

Mitigation: The historic character has been referenced through the inclusion of red brick edging along the driveway and garden beds, providing visual cohesion to the

material palette of adjoining buildings and reinforcing early Federation characteristics. The darker colour will allow for additional visual impact of the building itself.

- Removal of Mature Trees

Arborist advice recommends removal of several large trees due to health or safety concerns. In reference to the Arborist report dated 4th June 2025, Trees #1 and #2 noted on the document are not located in the site scope for these proposed works and are not required to be included on the Planning Permit. Furthermore in this report, the Norfolk Island Pine was suggested to be removed. This has since been reconsidered and will now remain on site as historically relevant. An updated Arboricultural Assessment has been completed and will be provided with this document.

Justification: Tree removal is necessary to prevent further damage to paving and infrastructure and to maintain a safe environment for residents.

Mitigation: The design proposes strategically placed replacement feature trees with suitable species that maintain the scale, canopy cover, and visual interest of the garden without overwhelming the heritage setting. The Norfolk Island Pine and Moreton Bay Fig will remain on site as historically appropriate, and will be managed as part of this proposal.

- New Water Fountain

The installation of an additional ornamental fountain, with the consideration that there may be no evidence of water fountains at this location on site.

Justification: Water features provide multi-sensory engagement; visual (movement, reflection), auditory (gentle sounds), and tactile (cool mist or texture), which can be particularly beneficial for residents with sensory impairments. They enhance the beauty and tranquility of the landscape, creating a welcoming, restorative atmosphere for residents, visitors, and staff alike, whilst in this instance also providing historical reference to the late Victorian era. This will create further visitor interaction to the site and invite the community to further explore the grounds.

Mitigation: The water feature selected for use will be purposefully chosen to reflect similar fountains of the late Victorian era, ensuring to remain historically appropriate to the properties of the region. Colours and materials of the fountain will be of relevance to the building to not distract the viewer from the building itself, but to provide a cohesive feel.

- Raised Brick Wall Entry

The installation of a raised brick wall entrance may create a more formal entrance than that shown on historical images of this site. The raised wall poses concern that it may block vision of the building or misguide the viewer's understanding of the original site.

Justification: A raised curved wall helps delineate the entrance area, guiding pedestrian and vehicular flow safely while providing visual clarity between public and private zones. By incorporating heritage red brickwork, it provides a distinctive and elegant entrance, establishing a strong first impression that conveys warmth and stability, and creates a familiar residential environment for residents. The well-designed entrance wall would act as a landmark, assisting residents and visitors—especially those with memory impairments—in recognizing and navigating the facility easily.

Mitigation: This building itself already sits high from street level, ensuring that a brick entrance at street level would not encumber vision of the building, more-so create a multi- tiered aspect of the property. By incorporating masonry pillars between the brickwork, this will ensure reference has been made to the previous pillar entries of the property. Whilst not restoring historical fencing, this is a contemporary form of reflection to the separation between public and private spaces.

The proposal has been carefully developed to balance heritage sensitivity with the functional needs of a contemporary aged care facility. Whilst potential these significant visual impacts have been acknowledged, they are justified by safety, accessibility, and maintenance considerations, and have been mitigated through sympathetic design choices and material selection.

In order to increase mitigation measures for these works, Barefoot Projects intends to prepare and implement a Construction Management Plan for this project, ensuring to prevent and control heritage impacts associated with this proposal.

The proposal supports the continued use and appreciation of Broughton Hall while enhancing its presentation, functionality, and contribution to the streetscape. The design proposal has been put together to remain consistent with the ongoing conservation of the site's cultural heritage significance.

s101(2)(b) – EFFECT ON REASONABLE OR ECONOMIC USE IF PROPOSAL WERE REFUSED

If the proposed works were refused, it would significantly limit the capacity to reasonably and safely use the site in its current function as an aged care facility, thereby

impacting both operational efficiency and resident wellbeing. The landscaping works are not aesthetic enhancements alone; they are critical to:

- Ensuring safe and accessible movement for residents, many of whom rely on mobility aids. The existing driveway presents serious trip hazards due to uneven pavers and invasive tree roots.
- Maintaining a practical and welcoming environment suitable for ongoing public use, particularly by elderly residents, families, and healthcare professionals.
- Complying with modern aged care standards, which include outdoor access to therapeutic and passive recreation spaces. The lack of safe, shaded, and accessible seating or gathering areas hinders the provision of essential social and emotional support for residents.

Refusing the proposal would risk deterioration of the landscape's condition, reduce operational safety, and ultimately threaten the viability of the place's current and reasonable use.

s101(2)(d) – EFFECT ON A PUBLIC AUTHORITY'S ABILITY TO PERFORM A STATUTORY DUTY

Benetas, the operator of Broughton Hall, is a not-for-profit aged care provider with obligations under the Aged Care Act 1997 (Cth) to provide safe, high-quality care and accommodation to elderly residents. These obligations include maintaining physical infrastructure that supports:

- Safe access and egress;
- Outdoor spaces conducive to mental and physical wellbeing;
- Compliance with health and safety standards.

If the proposal were refused, Benetas would be restricted in fulfilling its duty of care, especially regarding environmental safety, accessibility, and quality of life for its 65 residents. This would have broader implications for public health responsibilities and aged care compliance.

s101(2)(f) – OTHER RELEVANT MATTERS FOR PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION

The proposed works have been specifically designed to respect and enhance the cultural heritage significance of Broughton Hall:

- The landscaping approach draws from Victorian and Federation design traditions, reinstating formal symmetry, traditional materials, and a central feature fountain aligned with the historical character of the era.

- Heritage colours and materials, such as red brick edging, have been used to maintain visual cohesion with the existing built form.
- Tree removal, where proposed, is based on arborist assessments and is mitigated through thoughtfully chosen replacement plantings that align with the heritage character and scale of the site.

These works not only protect the visual prominence and significance of the registered building but also ensure the landscape continues to function in a way that supports the place's ongoing community value.

s101(2)(e) – WORLD HERITAGE ENVIRONS AREA

Broughton Hall is not located within a World Heritage Environs Area, and the proposed works do not affect any World Heritage-listed place or Approved World Heritage Strategy Plan.

SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND CONCLUSION

The proposed landscaping works at Broughton Hall will have a positive overall impact on the site's cultural heritage significance, improving safety, accessibility, and amenity while respecting the historic character of the place.

KEY IMPACTS AND CUMULATIVE EFFECTS:

- Driveway resurfacing (asphalt) improves safety and function; mitigated by red brick edging to retain heritage character.
- Raised entry wall and central fountain enhance formal layout and visual prominence; designed to reflect historical style of the era and scale.
- Tree removal (based on arborist advice) addresses safety risks; mitigated by heritage-appropriate replacement planting.
- New shaded seating and pergola structures improve resident amenity; designed to be low-impact and sympathetic to the landscape.
- Off-white pebble mulch complements the refurbished building façade and supports a clean, low-maintenance appearance.

SAFEGUARDS:

- Use of heritage-compatible materials and colours.
- Retention and reinterpretation of the Victorian and Federation era design elements.
- All works are reversible where feasible and avoid disturbance to original building fabric.

RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS AND STAGING

During the ongoing refurbishment of the Broughton Hall building, site operations have successfully made use of a secondary access point via the Victoria Road car park. This entrance has provided uninterrupted access for residents, staff, and visitors, while allowing construction activities to proceed safely and efficiently.

It is proposed that this alternative access arrangement remain in place for the duration of the landscaping works. This will enable the project team to safely carry out the proposed works within the primary entry and garden areas, while ensuring continued access to unaffected parts of the site. This approach will help to minimise disruption to residents and the local community, maintain continuity of operations at the aged care facility, and preserve public engagement with the site.

To support this, we will draw on our experience managing projects in restricted access environments, with a strong focus on safety, clear communication, and staged works. Where necessary, temporary traffic management measures will be implemented to ensure safe movement of vehicles and pedestrians, maintain emergency access, and manage parking constraints.

These operational strategies will ensure that the landscaping works are delivered efficiently, with minimal impact on residents, staff, visitors, and the broader community.

To support the design choices of concern, we have drawn on historical evidence of comparable properties within the Booroondara Council region from the era, registered on the Victorian Heritage Register. These properties have provided design inspiration for this concept, reflecting upgrades from gravel surfacing to asphalt, introduction of water features drawing on the Italian Renaissance style, and raised brick wall/pillar entries.



VHR H0510 – ROTHAM : 29 Harcourt Street,
Hawthorn East

*Driveway upgrade to asphalt / multi-tier
fountain central in driveway*



VHR H2037- SHRUBLANDS - 16 Balwyn
Road, Canterbury

*Driveway upgrade to asphalt * was later
converted back to gravel*/ multi-tier
fountain central in driveway*



VHR H2382- TALANA - 1 Harcourt Street
Hawthorn

*Driveway upgrade to asphalt with brick
edging*



**VHR H0861- FORMER WILLSMERE
HOSPITAL**- 1-258 WILTSHIRE DRIVE
AND 21 VAUGHAN CRESCENT KEW

*Driveway upgrade to asphalt/ raised
brick wall entrance / multi-tier fountain
on site*



B3774- YARROMA HOUSE & GARDEN -
12 Copping Grove Hawthorn

*Pillar entrance/ multi-tier fountain
central in driveway*



16 Harcourt Street Hawthorn East

Whilst not on the VHR, this property is located within the Harcourt Street Precinct area of significance as is reflective of the ideals in our proposal.

*Raised brick wall entrance / upgrade to
asphalt driveway with red brick edging/
multi-tier fountain on site*

Reference list

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