

HV McKay Memorial Gardens and Church, 119-122 Anderson Road, Sunshine (VHR H1953)

P37011 Heritage permit for Melbourne Airport Rail (SLR Airport) issued 21 June 2023

Q&A

Why is the HV McKay Memorial Gardens and Church of cultural heritage significance?

The HV McKay Memorial Gardens and Church are of historical significance as an integral part of an industrial complex of national importance in the history of Australian manufacturing. The HV McKay Memorial Gardens (laid out in 1909) are a key component of the wider industrial complex envisaged by Hugh Victor McKay, which also included the Massey Fergusson Complex factory and offices (also known as 'Sunshine Harvester Works'), a housing estate and a place of worship.

The HV McKay Memorial Gardens are also of historical significance as an early and intact privately funded garden attached to an industrial site, catering primarily for the recreation needs of workers, their families and local residents. As one of only a few public gardens in the western suburbs in the early 1900s, these attractive Gardens achieved a high profile and provided a pleasant environment for community use. The HV McKay Memorial Gardens are a rare and early example of a public garden established and maintained by an industrial firm.

The HV McKay Gardens are also significant for their association with Hugh Victor McKay (1865-1926), an inventor and pioneer industrialist of national importance. McKay founded the Sunshine Harvester Works in 1889 which produced the Sunshine Harvester, a machine that revolutionised the wheat industry in Australia. McKay personally commissioned the establishment of the Gardens and donated a section of the land for the foundation of a Presbyterian Church. McKay also requested the construction of a footbridge over the railway line, allowing his employees to easily travel between the factory complex, the Gardens and the 'Sunshine Estate' company housing development to the west.

What has happened?

Works approved by this permit are part of a wider scope of works proposed for the Melbourne Airport Rail (SRL Airport) Project, to enable construction of a heavy rail link between Melbourne Airport and Melbourne CBD within the Albion-Jacana rail corridor. Heritage Victoria has issued a permit for the works that fall within the VHR extent of registration for HV McKay Memorial Gardens and Church. This includes works on the eastern edge of the HV McKay Memorial Gardens and in the adjacent rail corridor.

The heritage permit was advertised from 8 March and 21 March 2023. Eleven public submissions were received during the advertising period, and all were considered in the decision-making process.

The heritage permit approves construction of a batter wall along the eastern boundary of the Gardens, and a section of a shared user path in the north-east corner of the Gardens and associated landscaping works. The permit also approves works within the rail corridor adjacent to the Gardens including construction of a deflection wall and works to rail infrastructure.

Conditions of the permit require the applicant to retain as many existing trees as possible and to implement tree protection measures for all retained trees. Permit conditions also require the applicant to complete landscaping works to the eastern garden bed and the area around the new section of shared user path, once construction works are complete.

Why has the permit been approved?

The *Heritage Act 2017* requires the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria to consider various matters in determining a permit application, including the impact of the proposal on the heritage significance of the place, the impact refusal would have on the ability of a public authority to perform their statutory duty, and any submissions received in response to public notice of the application.

While the approved works will result in some change to the HV McKay Memorial Gardens, various measures to mitigate the identified impacts have been proposed, and robust conditions have been specified on the permit to ensure the best possible outcome in terms of reinstatement of landscaping and retention of the overall character and significance of the Gardens. It was determined by the Executive Director that refusal of the application would unreasonably detrimentally affect the ability of Rail Projects Victoria to deliver improved and additional rail capacity required for the Melbourne Airport Rail (SRL Airport) Project which will have ongoing benefits for the public.