

Gate A Justification – Heritage Victoria

Gate A

As noted in previous feedback provided on the Draft Master Plan, Heritage Victoria generally supports the improvement of the Gate A entrance and the return of this area to garden and public space. The reinstatement of view lines across the gardens from this area would be encouraged. It is noted however that hard surfacing in this area should be limited, and new interventions should avoid impact to the root and canopy systems of the significant oak at the corner of Anderson Street. As noted above, rationale relating to reasonable use under s101(2)(b) of the Act would need to be provided in the permit application as to why the setback of Gate A is required.

Issue	Resolution
Safety	
Pedestrian Conflict - currently pedestrians exit directly onto the Tan with the risk of collisions with joggers.	By setting back A Gate from the corner it will improve visibility of the Tan interface and minimise the risk of collision.
Pedestrian Conflict - When A Gate is used as a meeting/congregation point patrons block the Tan and create conflict with runners and other users.	By setting back A Gate from the corner, a clear space will be created to allow meeting/congregation of patrons outside the Gardens before entry without blocking the Tan
Vehicle exit/entry – parking on the Tan while gates are open/closed, forcing public either between the vehicle and gate or pushing them near or onto the road when vehicles are on the Tan	By setting A Gate back from the corner, a clear carparking space will be created allowing vehicles to be able to park and wait safely while the gates open and close without blocking the Tan.
Locked in Patrons – patrons on occasions are still onsite after gardens closing. This can be unintentional or intentional. When this occurs the mechanism to gain exit is to call the after-hours security number and wait for someone to arrive to open a gate to allow exiting. Some patrons at times are impatient and take the undesired act of scaling the fence.	Installation of an automated after-hours gate opening (and closing) mechanism will allow patrons to leave safely after hours.
Poor landscape amenity	There will be improved landscape amenity, by realigning the pavement away from the base of the oak tree and providing a new concrete and basalt rock edging strip as per plan. Garden beds created outside of the gates on either side of the main path will provide a more appealing and botanically rich entrance.
Maintenance/Tree Health	
Tree Health – the Quercus petraea is currently listed on the National Trust Significant Tree register. The current path and fence alignments negatively impact the health of the tree.	Realignment of the gates, fence and path will provide greater space for the tree and decrease compaction within the root zone.

Original Heritage Fabric	
A Gate Condition – The current condition of A gate is poor. The gates have been struck by vehicles many times, have details missing and require repainting.	Restoration works will be undertaken to straighten, replace missing details and repaint the gates and posts.
Historic Alignment – by relocating A Gate the historic alignment may be lost.	The Royal Botanic Gardens are committed to working with Heritage Victoria to appropriately acknowledge the historic alignment of the gates and fence.
Economic Use	
The Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, like most organisations, are under increasing pressure to increase revenue streams to ensure long term viability. One the ways to that has been identified to do this is through functions and events, while limiting impacts of overall site amenity.	The realignment of A Gate is consistent with the Terrace Gardens redevelopment as per Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne Master Plan 2020 – 2040. The Master Plan identifies this area as a place that could function as an information hub and kiosk with the potential to hold programs and small events. It has also been identified as the main entryway to the proposed glasshouse by the Ornamental Lake, providing an all-abilities access route which currently does not exist between A Gate and the Tea Rooms. There is also a long-term view to remove vehicles from this space altogether. Support of the relocation of A Gate is not seen as an endorsement of the Terrace Garden project.