

# Heritage Impact Statement

Blanche Terrace  
169 & 171 Victoria Parade, 14 George Street, Fitzroy

Permit Application

December 2024



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## 1.0 Introduction

The following assessment of heritage impacts has been prepared on behalf of the owner of the subject land at 169 and 171 Victoria Parade and 14 George Street, Fitzroy. Part of the site is registered, comprising the front gardens and remaining portions of the Victorian dwellings on the south side of 169 Victoria Parade [H177] and 171 Victoria Parade [H178]. 169 and 171 Victoria Parade are also subject to individual Heritage Overlays in the *Yarra Planning Scheme*, HO191 and HO192. 14 George Street is not registered, but is located in the South Fitzroy Heritage Overlay precinct (HO334).

This report has been prepared for the consideration of both Heritage Victoria and the City of Yarra. It addresses a proposed suite of works to the site, which will include minor demolition, alterations and new works on the combined site. As described below, the structure of the report follows Heritage Victoria's guidelines for Heritage Impact Statements for registered places, in recognition that the site is partly registered. Commentary on the impact of the works located outside the extent of registration is provided in Section 9.0, with the proposal specifically assessed against Council policy. (The registered and unregistered parts of the site are described separately in Section 5.0, with the works described separately in Section 8.0).

This report by Guy Murphy of Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd, comments on whether the proposed works are appropriate in character and detail, and acceptable in terms of their impact upon the significance of the registered place. It is intended that this report be read in conjunction with the drawings by Kerstin Thompson Architects and other documentation submitted with respect to this application.

## 2.0 Methodology

This heritage impact statement has been prepared with regard for the *Burra Charter* and its guidelines, as amended in 2013, and in general accordance with Heritage Victoria's guidelines for preparing heritage impact statements (June 2021). It seeks to respond to several key matters that are set out on page 3 of that document:

- *Why a place or object is of cultural heritage significance to the State of Victoria*
- *What options were considered in developing the proposal*
- *What impact (positive and/or negative) the proposed works will have on that significance,*
- *If a negative impact is proposed, why the proposed option was chosen and why other more sympathetic options were not feasible, and*
- *What measures are proposed to minimise and mitigate negative impacts.*

### 3.0 Sources of Information

The analysis below draws upon site visits and a review of the *Victorian Heritage Register* documentation for the registered components of the subject site. It also draws upon the following additional sources.

- *The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance* (2013), Australia ICOMOS Incorporated Internal Council on Monuments and Sites.
- *Victorian Heritage Database*, <https://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au>
- *Australian Architectural Index*, <https://www.mileslewis.net/australian-building-1>
- *South Fitzroy Conservation Study*, Jacobs Lewis Vines Architects, report commissioned by the Fitzroy City Council and the Historic Buildings Preservation Council, March 1979.
- *City of Yarra Database of Heritage Significance Areas March 2024*.
- *Sands & McDougall Directories*, State Library of Victoria, <https://www.slv.vic.gov.au/>
- Historic MMBW plans (various), State Library of Victoria, <https://www.slv.vic.gov.au/>
- Historic newspapers (various), accessed via Trove Online, <https://trove.nla.gov.au>
- Historic photographs (various), accessed via Trove Online, <https://trove.nla.gov.au>

In preparing this report, reference has also been made to the Heritage Overlay provisions and local heritage policy, as set out under *Clause 43.01* Heritage Overlay and *Clause 15.03* Heritage of the *Yarra Planning Scheme*.

## 4.0 History

Reflecting its role as major thoroughfare and close proximity to central Melbourne, the north side of Victoria Parade along its Fitzroy extent has received considerable development by 1860. While largely residential in nature, it included a small number of shops, offices and hotels. *Sands & McDougall* directories indicate the block frontage between George and Gore Streets contained only a single resident in that year and otherwise comprised vacant land. By 1865 three residents were listed, along with 2 sections of vacant allotments, one of which was on the corner with George Street and the other located more centrally along the block.

In 1866-67 a row of five double-storey terraces identified in directories as *Blanche Terrace* was constructed for Henry Mills on the centrally located vacant allotments. A subsequent marriage notice for Blanche Adelaide Mills, 'only daughter of Henry Mills' suggests the terrace row was named after his daughter.<sup>1</sup> Blanche Terrace was initially numbered 129-139 Victoria Parade, receiving its current street numbering between 1885 and 1890. Mills is believed to have rented out the dwellings and is not known to have occupied any of them. Notable author Henry Handel Richardson was born in number 179 in 1870. Mills sold the properties to boat importer James Callaghan in 1871, who resided in number 179 from 1878 to 1900.<sup>2</sup>



Figure 1 Extract from an 1889 engraved panoramic view of Fitzroy showing Blanche Terrace at centre (indicated by the red arrow). Source: <http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/93451>

<sup>1</sup> Age, 15 April 1884, p.1.

<sup>2</sup> Jacobs Lewis Vines Architects, *South Fitzroy Conservation Study*, p.60.



Figure 2 1899 MMBW plan extract showing the early layout of the front gardens and rear wings and yards of Blanche Terrace at this time. The land now known as 169-171 Victoria Parade and 14 George Street is shaded red. Source: <http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/120523>

The 1899 MMBW plan (see *Figure 2*) shows built form on the subject site and surrounding area by this time and is presumed to reflect the configuration of Blanche Terrace as first constructed. Each dwelling was located on a narrow deep rectangular site. They were set back behind a front garden enclosed by an iron picket fence on bluestone plinths, with masonry wing walls extending along the boundaries with 167 Victoria Parade and 181 Victoria Parade, and between number 173 and 175. The front porches were accessed by straight flagstone paths. Each dwelling included a rear wing, with the adjacent space also surfaced with flagstones. The rear yards were enclosed by timber fences, with stables in the north-east corners of numbers 171-179.

The site now known as 14 George Street was then occupied by four terraces houses (then known as 8-14 George Street). The urban context was closely developed, largely with residential terraces and a few larger dwellings. The adjacent sites to the east and west also contained terraces, albeit at lesser setbacks than Blanche Terrace.

Fire damaged the interior of 171 Victoria Parade in the early 1970s. By 1974, directories indicate numbers 169 and 171 had been combined into a single tenancy known as Harley Medical Chambers. The rear wings of these terraces were demolished and multi-storey office building erected on the north side of the properties, with a small courtyard space in between. The dwellings at 8-14 George Street have since been demolished, with this area now occupied by a car park. Blanche Terrace otherwise retains a high degree of intactness to its original form and presentation in views from Victoria Parade.



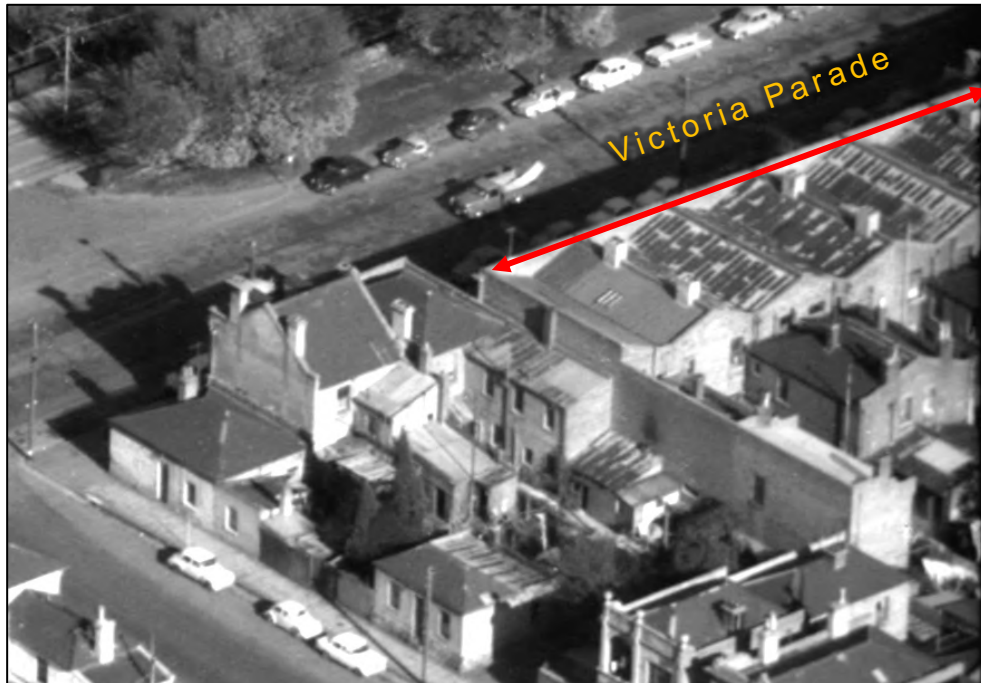


Figure 3 1962 aerial view showing some of the rear wings of Blanche Terrace (indicated by the red arrow). Source: <http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/261429>



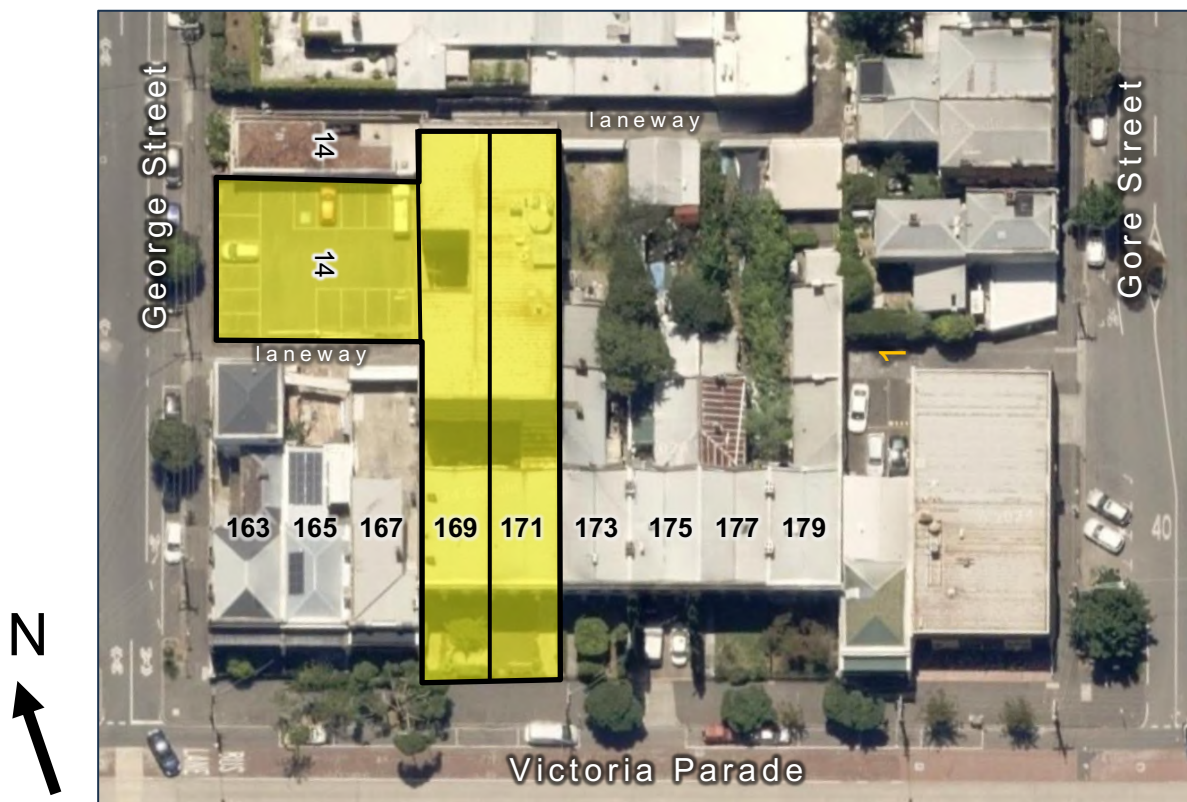
Figure 4 1974 view of Blanche Terrace from the south-west, with 169 and 171 Victoria Parade at left and centre. Source: <http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/230703>

## 5.0 Description

### *Site & Context*

The subject site comprises three portions of land on separate titles known as 169 Victoria Parade, 171 Victoria Parade and 14 George Street. 169 and 171 Victoria Parade are both deep, narrow rectangular portions of land with primary street frontages to Victoria Parade to the south and secondary frontages to a minor laneway to the north. (These presumably correspond to the original terrace allotment sizes.) 14 George Street is a single portion of land abutting the rear of 169 Victoria Parade, with a primary frontage to George Street to the east, and a secondary frontage to a laneway between it and 163-167 Victoria Parade to the south. (The land includes single-storey rendered masonry building along its northern boundary which is outside the development area.)

Structures on each of the subject sites are described as follows.



**Figure 5** *Annotated aerial image showing the location of the subject development site (shaded yellow) in relation to the full terrace row encompassing 169-179 Victoria Parade and the adjacent context. (The northern section of 14 George Street containing a single-storey building is outside the development site. Source: Google Maps.*



*169 & 171 Victoria Parade – Registered terraces*

These properties each contain a double-storey Victorian terrace on their south side addressing Victoria Parade. The two terraces are part of the larger row of six terraces known as ‘Blanche Terrace’ which extends further eastward to include 173, 175, 177 and 179 Victoria Parade.



Figure 6 View of the full extent of the street frontage of Blanche Terrace (169-179 Victoria Parade) as seen from the south.



Figure 7 The subject site includes the two dwellings at the west end of the terrace row (indicated by the red arrow), comprising 169 Victoria Parade (above left) and 171 Victoria Parade (above right).

Each terrace presents a restrained, triple bay, double-storey rendered façade to Victoria Parade. At ground floor each includes a recessed, arcaded porch surfaced with non-original tiling, with the main entry and two windows. The porch arches include vermiculated keystones. The locations of the entries alternate between the east and west sides of each adjoining terrace along the row, with the entry to 169 on the west side and the entry to 171 on the east side. With respect to fittings, the doors appear to retain early joinery, with the glazing across the facades generally original. The first floor contains three regularly spaced double-hung sash windows with moulded aedicules. The parapet is surmounted by a continuous cornice line, which conceals the corrugated iron clad, pitches roof from street view, with no chimneys visible.



Figure 8      *The existing front gate, entry path and garden to 171 Victoria Parade.*

Each dwelling was originally set back behind an individual, front garden enclosed by cast iron picket fences set on bluestone plinths. The street and side boundary fences to the pair of terraces generally remain intact, though the dividing fence between the two gardens has been removed, with modern mixed landscaping elements installed. Direct entry paths to the front door of each terrace have modern pebble-mix surfaces.

The interiors to the terraces generally retain a low degree of intactness, having been largely refurbished after a fire in the c.1970s. As part of this remodelling, the two dwellings were combined internally into a single tenancy.





Figure 9 *The entry and porch to 169 Victoria Parade, with the modern porch tiling visible.*



Figure 10 *The entry and front porch to 171 Victoria Parade.*





Figure 11 View south across the courtyard towards the rear (northern) elevations of 171 Victoria Parade (left) and 169 Victoria Parade (right).



Figure 12 The interiors of the dwellings were damaged by fire in the c.1970s as described in this undated newspaper article displayed onsite.



Figure 13 View south along the existing ground floor corridor along the western side of 171 Victoria Parade.



Figure 14 Ground floor interior on the north side of 171 Victoria Street.





Figure 15      *169 Victoria Parade retains its original main stair.*



Figure 16      *Typical first floor office space showing the modern character of the interior.*

*Central Courtyard, Offices – (Unregistered, subject to HO334)*

Behind the pair of terraces, the site has a more unified spatial character, containing a modern c.1970s office building on the north side of the site, with it a small courtyard space in between. The terraces and offices are connected by a single-storey glazed link at the rear of 171 Victoria Parade, extending along the eastern boundary. The north elevations of the terraces are of overpainted face brick. They have been modified by the demolition of the original rear wings shown in the MMBW plans, with the existing pattern of non-original openings. Various elements of pipework, rainwater goods and other service items have been attached.

The courtyard is a small, utilitarian space that is surfaced with asphalt and containing no landscaping elements. It is currently used for bin storage. It is enclosed along its west side by a timber paling fence.

The office building on the north side of 169 and 171 Victoria Parade comprises a five-storey, c.1970s brick and concrete structure. In plan, it addresses the east, west and north property boundaries, with a recessed lightwell along the west elevation. At ground floor it contains garage areas, which open on to the courtyard to the south. It presents a largely blank brick side elevation to the west, where it is visible from George Street.



Figure 17      The existing glazed link (centre) between the rear office building (left) and 171 Victoria Parade (right).





Figure 18      *The office building contains ground level car parking.*



Figure 19      *View of the car park at 14 George Street, with the west elevation of the office visible behind.*

14 George Street – (Unregistered, subject to HO334)



Figure 20 View across the car park at 14 George Street from the west, with the office building behind 169-171 Victoria Parade visible at centre. A modern single storey building along the north side of 14 George Street is visible far left. (This is not included in the development area.)

#### Urban Context

Victoria Parade is one of Melbourne's grand boulevards, with a very broad grassed median strip featuring a central tramline and mature trees, flanked by broad roadways containing 3-4 lanes of traffic with on street parking to each side. Along this frontage, Blanche Terrace is located in a context of intact double-storey Victorian terraces to the east at 181 Victoria Parade and to the west at 163, 165 and 167 Victoria Parade. Further west at 151-159 Victoria Parade on the opposite corner of George Street is a large vacant development site that previous contained a service station. The opposite south side of Victoria Parade is dominated by large scale contemporary development, but the extremely wide proportions of the street result in there being effectively no architectural relationship between building stock on each side.

George Street is a much narrower two-way street flanked by parking and board footpaths to each side. It is mixed environment. Adjacent 14 George Street to the south, the Victorian terrace at 163 Victoria Parade presents an extensive side elevation to the street, which includes a three-storey modern addition built to the northern boundary. The single-storey building on the north side of 14 George Street presents a rendered façade to the street and is set back behind a front garden enclosed by a front fence. Further north at 16-26 George Street is the former Drill Hall complex of 29/22 Battalion. This is a substantial interwar clinker brick building presenting a double-storey gabled façade to George Street set behind a front garden. (This is understood to have been converted to residential use). Diagonally opposite 14 George Street to the north-west is a five-storey, c.1960s-70s block of overpainted brick flats known as Victoria Gardens.





Figure 21 *Three double-storey Victorian terrace are located adjacent to the west to the corner with George Street at 163, 165 and 167 Victoria Parade.*



Figure 22 *View east along Victoria Parade from the north side of the median strip opposite the subject site showing the broad, open character of this streetscape.*





Figure 23      The side elevation of 163 Victoria Parade to George Street includes a three-storey infill building at its northern end (visible above left).



Figure 24      Further north at 16-26 George Street is the 1936 former 29/22 Battalion drill hall, a double-storey brick building.



Figure 25      View south along the eastern side of George Street towards the intersection with Victoria Parade (far right).

## 6.0 Heritage Listings

### *Victorian Heritage Register*

Of the three portions of land that comprise the subject site, 169 and 171 Victoria Parade are partially registered (H177 and H178 respectively) and 14 George Street is not registered. The extent of registration relates to Blanche Terrace and was clarified as follows by Heritage Victoria in a recent letter dated 3 November 2024 as follows.

*Blanche Terrace is a terrace of six houses, each with their own registration. These are early registrations in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) and consequently do not include land. Some places included in the VHR were originally registered in the Register of Historic Buildings or the Register of Government Buildings. Under the Historic Buildings Act 1974 no land was able to be part of a registration until 1 June 1982. In the case of the Register of Government Buildings, no land was able to be added until 1989. In the case of 169 and 171 Victoria Parade, it is considered that the registered buildings constitute everything forward of the terrace's rear building line to the front fence line, including the fence.*

It is noted the extent of registration of 169 and 171 Victoria Parade excludes the rear courtyard space, the office building on the north side of the site.

### *City of Yarra*

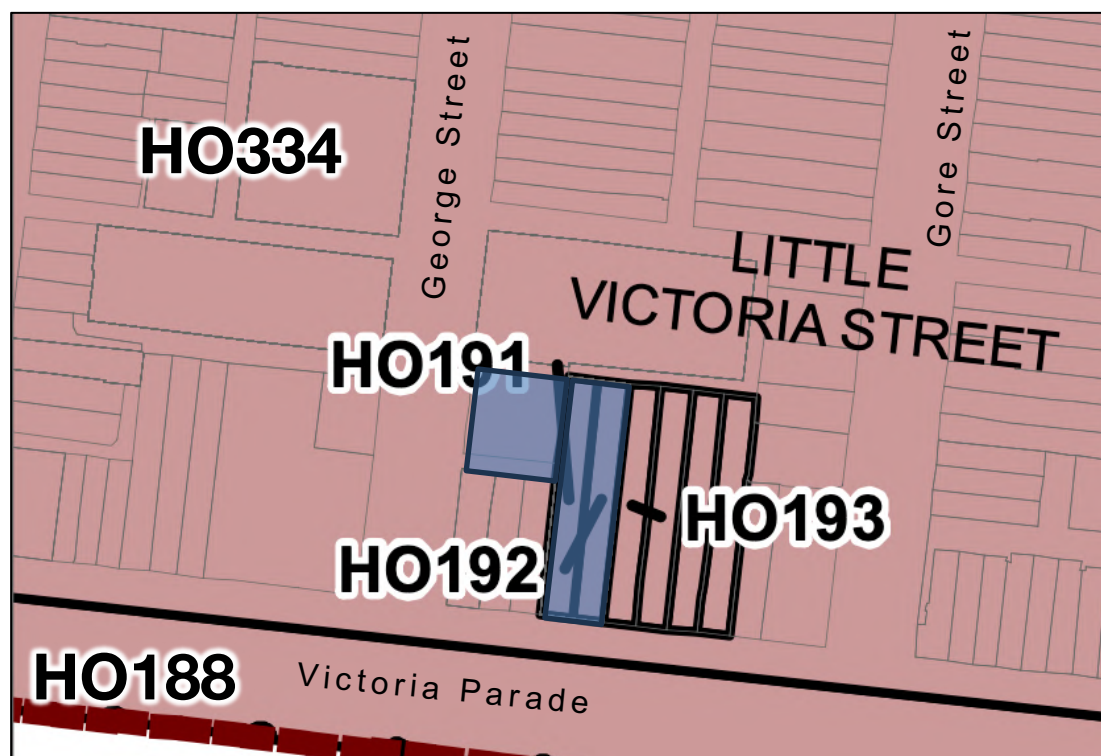


Figure 26 Heritage Overlay Map extract, showing the location of the subject site shaded blue. HO191 and HO192 relate to 169 and 171 Victoria Parade respectively, both of which are partially registered. 16 George Street is located in the South Fitzroy Precinct HO334.

169 Victoria Parade and 171 Victoria Parade are subject to individual Heritage Overlays (HO191 and HO192) shown in *Figure 26*, which corresponds to the respective property boundaries and acknowledge Heritage Victoria's registration of the parts of Blanche Terrace located on these sites. 14 George Street is located in the South Fitzroy Precinct identified as HO344 in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the *Yarra Planning Scheme*. Heritage Victoria is recognised in the schedule as the relevant permit authority for works to the former dwellings. Council may be asked to comment on any application for works, with Heritage Victoria being the relevant authority with respect to heritage permits.

## 7.0 Significance

The *Victorian Heritage Register* provides the following Statement of Significance for Blanche Terrace.

*What is significant?*

*Blanche Terrace, Fitzroy, is a terrace of six houses built between 1866 and 1867 for Henry Mills. This fine two storey brick terrace in the conservative classical style is notable for the length of its facade and epitomizes a typical terrace composition of the time. The deep setback from the street and the fine mouldings, particularly on the flat arch arcade on the ground floor and first floor windows, are distinctive features of the building. It is the centrepiece of the Blanche Terrace precinct and an outstanding example of this distinctive building type.*

*How is it significant?*

*Blanche Terrace is of architectural, historical and cultural significance to the State of Victoria.*

*Why is it Significant?*

*Blanche Terrace, Fitzroy, is of architectural significance as an outstanding example of a distinctive 19th century form of Melbourne housing. The facade is largely intact, although the words "Blanche Terrace" have been removed from the frieze, and parts of the cast iron palisade fence remain.*

*Blanche Terrace, Fitzroy, is of historical and cultural significance for its associations with the important Australian novelist, Henry Handel Richardson (aka Florence Lindesay Richardson), who was born in No. 179. Richardson is perhaps best known for her novels "The Fortunes of Richard Mahoney" (also known as "Australia Felix"), and "The Getting of Wisdom".*

The significant elements of 169 and 171 Victoria Parade are considered to comprise the remaining double-storey envelopes of the original 1866-67 terraces and the open curtilage of their front gardens including remaining Victorian cast iron fences. The interiors are not of a high degree of significance because they retain little early or original fabric, having been refurbished in the c.1970s after fire.

The subject site is also located within and is surrounded by the South Fitzroy Precinct, HO334. The Statement of Significance for the precinct in the City of Yarra Heritage Review (2007) is reproduced in part as follows.

*The South Fitzroy Heritage Overlay Area is significant:*

- *As the earliest urban area outside the Melbourne City grid to be settled in the Melbourne municipality, with several buildings from the mid nineteenth century surviving as testimony to its early establishment;*
- *For the unusually high number of early Victorian-era and some Regency period buildings, being generally simply detailed and a clear reflection of the early date of Fitzroy's settlement.*



- *As evidence of early government planning controls or Acts of Parliament, from the 1850s, that aimed to solve street alignment problems in this privately planned suburb, arising from a hitherto lack of co-ordination between neighbouring allotment owners;*
- *As a good example of the successful application of the Act for Regulating Buildings and Party Walls, and for Preventing Mischiefs by Fire in the City of Melbourne (Melbourne Building Act 1849), which forced the use of fireproof construction and gave South Fitzroy a character distinct from other inner suburbs such as Richmond and Collingwood, that have a greater proportion of Victorian-era timber buildings.*
- *As a substantially intact collection of predominantly mid to late nineteenth and early twentieth century building stock, interspersed with well-preserved inter-war residential, commercial, retail and industrial buildings that contribute to the historical character of the area.*
- *For the relatively large number of individually significant buildings, being predominantly solid masonry rather than clad with timber, largely as a result of the Melbourne Building Act, 1849*
- *For the ornate and exuberant detail of many late nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings in the suburb, reflecting the affluence of many of the inhabitants of this area, particularly in the late 19th century.*
- *For the early street, lane and allotment layouts, some original bluestone kerbs, paving and guttering, and some mature exotic street trees, providing an appropriate setting for this collection of residential, retail, commercial and industrial buildings.*
- *For the landmark qualities of some large factory and warehouse buildings from the late 19th and earlier 20th century, such as the MacRobertson confectionary complex which are significant features in the skyline of this predominantly low rise suburb; and*
- *For the major early institutions that developed on its fringes, in particular, St Vincent's Hospital and The Convent of Mercy, as closely linked with the area's history, education and welfare within the metropolitan area.*

*The South Fitzroy Precinct (HO334) is within close proximity to the Royal Exhibition Building and is adjacent to the World Heritage Environs Area precinct. The nineteenth century development and character of the South Fitzroy Precinct contributes to the broader setting and context of the Royal Exhibition Building. Views and vistas of the Royal Exhibition Building from within the South Fitzroy Precinct, including views to the dome from Gertrude Street, are also an important feature of the precinct.*

Buildings located within Heritage Overlays in the City of Yarra are graded using a three-tier grading system defined in the *City of Yarra Database of Heritage Significance Areas* as follows.

*Individually Significant: A heritage place in its own right. Where an individually significant place is part of a broader heritage precinct, the individually significant place may also be contributory to the broader precinct.*

*Contributory: Contributory to the identified cultural values of the heritage overlay area as stated in the Statement of Significance.*

*Not Contributory: Not contributory to the identified cultural values of the heritage overlay area as stated in the Statement of Significance.*

This document identifies 167 Victoria Parade as contributory, 163 and 165 Victoria Parade as individually significant and 151-159 Victoria Parade as not contributory. 14 George Street and 21-23 George Street are not contributory. The former drill hall complex at 16-16 George Street is individually significant.

## 8.0 Proposal

The proposed scheme has been developed with extensive dialogue with Heritage Victoria, include an onsite preapplication meeting held on 3 September 2024. It involves some demolition works, minor alterations and new works.

### Proposed Works – Registered Area

#### *169 Victoria Parade*

It is proposed to remove the following existing elements

- Non-original front verandah tessellation.
- The existing hard and soft landscaping elements in the front garden including the asphalted surfaces and paths.
- A 2950mm long section of the bluestone iron and iron picket fence will be removed from the western side of the southern property boundary to Victoria Parade and stored on site. (The existing entry point at the west end of this boundary will be retained).
- Non-original internal portioning to the ground and first floors as part of a general internal refurbishment program. The original front entry hallway and main stair will be retained.

New works comprise

- In the front curtilage, an enclosed fire booster will be installed adjacent the west corner of the boundary. The pedestrian entry will be relocated to the east side of this, then turn west to continue along the traditional entry path route along the western boundary to the front door. A tessellated surface will be installed to this entry path and the verandah floor.
- A reproduction bluestone and cast iron fence will be installed along the front garden boundary between 169 and 171 Victoria Parade to interpret the original fence in this location.
- A new soft landscaping (garden) scheme will be installed.
- The refurbished interior will retained a unified tenancy with 171 Victoria Parade and continue to be bused as offices. At ground floor it will include part of single front room extending behind both facades, with a new end of trip area including a WC and showers on the north side. The reworked first floor will share an open plan with 171 Victoria Parade, with two toilets areas installed adjacent the western internal wall.
- Restoration/conservation works will be undertaken to the external north elevation to the courtyard.

#### *171 Victoria Parade*

It is proposed to demolish the following existing elements

- Non-original front verandah tessellation.
- Existing fire services located at the west end of the verandah.



- The existing hard and soft landscaping elements in the front garden including the asphalted surfaces and paths.
- The existing front door opening will be enlarged to allow for disabled access, with the existing early door joinery stored on site.
- Non-original internal partitioning to the ground and first floors as part of a general internal refurbishment program. The floor to the main corridor extending along the east side of the ground floor will be removed, and also a section of floor in a rear room to accommodate a lift pit.

New works comprise

- A reproduction bluestone and cast iron fence will be installed along the front garden boundary between 169 and 171 Victoria Parade to interpret the original fence in this location.
- A new soft landscaping (garden) scheme will be installed.
- A sliding glazed entry door will be installed in the enlarged front entry opening.
- The refurbished interior will retain a unified tenancy with 169 Victoria Parade and continue to be used as offices. At ground floor it will include part of single front room extending behind both facades, with a lift, lift lobby and WC on the north side. The reworked first floor will share an open place with 169 Victoria Parade, with the new lift and a kitchen area located on the north wall.
- In the front curtilage, a tessellated surface will be installed to the entry path and the verandah floor. Handrails will also be installed to each side of the entry path.
- The entry path will be regraded to eliminate the existing front step to allow for disabled access.
- Restoration/conservation works will be undertaken to the external north elevation to the courtyard.

### **Proposed Works – Area Subject to Heritage Overlay**

#### *Courtyard Space & Link*

The existing link between Blanche Terrace and the rear office building will be demolished and the hard landscaping elements in the rear courtyard removed. A decorative soft and hard landscaping scheme will then be installed in the rear courtyard. A new lightweight glazed link will be installed in the location of existing, which will maximise views out on to the new garden.

#### *Office Building*

Extensive works will be undertaken to the retained office building, with the existing south, north and parts of the west elevation remodelled and a double-storey, flat-roofed top level addition added.

The new external treatment will introduce a higher proportion of glazing between Levels 1 and 4. The north elevation will be articulated in to three bays, with garage entry and fire pump doors at ground level, narrow, vertically orientated panels of glazing at the upper levels, with 1.55 metre high privacy screens in front at Levels 2 and 3. The west elevation will be rendered and inset with new full-height, narrow, vertically orientated windows. The lightwell on the west side of the building will be largely infilled, retaining a narrow recessed bay with external planter boxes, enclosed by an expanded metal mesh screen. The north elevation overlooking

the courtyard and Blanche Terrace will include a grid-like articulation into three bays, containing vertically orientated glazing panels to match those to the north elevation (without privacy screens).

The two additional levels will raise the height of the building from 16.02 metres to 24 metres. The addition will have a differentiated external treatment, with openable pale grey perforated metals screen panels to the south elevation, a combination of fixed and openable screens to the west elevation, fixed metal perforated screens to the north elevation and pale grey solid metal panel cladding to the east elevation.

Internal refurbishment of the offices will also occur.

#### 14 George Street

The vacant portion of 14 George Street will receive a two-storey residential infill building reaching a maximum height of 9 metres. It will contain two three-bedroom apartments. The ground floor will include garage areas and flexible spaces for each apartment. The first floor comprises the main level of each apartment and each has a partial rooftop terrace area including pergolas.

It will present a single-storey symmetrical brick façade to George Street, with a central arched main entry flanked by a single window to each side. The first floor elevation will be glazed and set back 3.765 metres behind a balcony, with planter boxes forming a balustrade. An external solar screen will project up from the edge of the planter boxes to the first floor eaves. The side elevations will feature a curved corner return between the sides of the balcony and first floor parapet. The rooftop terrace areas will be at setbacks and enclosed behind a balustrade wall supporting more planter boxes. The south elevation to the laneway will include metal mesh screens and gates to the car park at ground floor, with the predominantly brick upper level contain a row of four narrow vertically orientated windows. The north and rear elevations are largely brick, with similar fenestration at the rear.

## 9.0 Assessment Against Council Policy

As the site is included in the Heritage Overlay, it is subject to the provisions of *Clause 43.01*, the Heritage Overlay. The purposes of the Heritage Overlay are as follows:

*To implement the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.*

*To conserve and enhance heritage places of natural or cultural significance.*

*To conserve and enhance those elements which contribute to the significance of heritage places.*

*To ensure that development does not adversely affect the significance of heritage places.*

*To conserve specified heritage places by allowing a use that would otherwise be prohibited if this will demonstrably assist with the conservation of the significance of the heritage place.*

Before deciding on an application, in addition to the decision guidelines in *Clause 65*, the responsible authority must consider, as appropriate:

- *The Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.*
- *The significance of the heritage place and whether the proposal will adversely affect the natural or cultural significance of the place.*
- *Any applicable statement of significance (whether or not specified in the schedule to this overlay), heritage study and any applicable conservation policy.*
- *Any applicable heritage design guideline specified in the schedule to this overlay.*
- *Whether the location, bulk, form or appearance of the proposed building will adversely affect the significance of the heritage place.*
- *Whether the location, bulk, form and appearance of the proposed building is in keeping with the character and appearance of adjacent buildings and the heritage place.*
- *Whether the demolition, removal or external alteration will adversely affect the significance of the heritage place.*
- *Whether the proposed works will adversely affect the significance, character or appearance of the heritage place. [...]*

As the site is subject to the provisions of a Heritage Overlay, Clause 15.03 Heritage applies and is reproduced, in part, below:

*15.03-1L Heritage  
[...]*

*Objectives*

*To conserve and enhance Yarra's natural and cultural heritage.*

*To preserve the scale and pattern of streetscapes in heritage places.*

*To ensure the adaptation of heritage places is consistent with the principles of good conservation practices. [...]*

*Demolition*

*[...]*

*Prevent the demolition of any part of an individually significant or contributory building unless all of the following can be demonstrated:*

- *The demolition will not adversely affect the significance of the heritage place.*
- *The partial demolition will contribute to the long-term conservation of the heritage place.*
- *The fabric does not contribute to the significance of the place or the area of demolition is not visible from:*
  - *The street frontage (other than a laneway), unless:*
    - *The principal façade addresses the laneway; or*
    - *The fabric visible from the laneway is identified in the Statement of Significance.*
  - *A park or public open space immediately adjoining the site.*

*The demolition of part of the building allows its three-dimensional form to be retained and does not result in the retention of only the visible façade of the building and demolishing the remainder.*

*The replacement building is a high quality design. [...]*

### Strategies

#### *New development, alterations or additions*

*Retain, conserve and enhance individually significant and contributory buildings as identified in the incorporated document in schedule to clause 72.04 'City of Yarra Database of Heritage Significant Areas.'*

*Promote development that is high quality and respectful in its design response by:*

- *Maintaining the heritage character of the existing building or streetscape.*
- *Respecting the scale and massing of the existing heritage building or streetscape.*
- *Retaining the pattern and grain of streetscapes in heritage places.*
- *Not visually dominating the existing heritage building or streetscape.*
- *Not detracting from or competing with the significant elements of the existing heritage building or streetscape.*
- *Maintaining the prominence of significant and contributory elements of the heritage place.*
- *Respecting the following elements of the heritage place:*
  - *Pattern, proportion and spacing of elements on an elevation.*
  - *Orientation to the street.*
  - *Setbacks.*
  - *Street wall.*
  - *Relationship between solid and void.*
  - *Roof form.*
  - *Chimneys.*
  - *Verandahs and canopies.*
  - *Materials.*
- *Being visually recessive against the heritage fabric through:*
  - *Siting.*
  - *Mass.*
  - *Scale.*
  - *Materials.*
  - *Architectural detailing.*
  - *Texture, colours and finishes.*

*Protecting and conserving the view of heritage places from the public realm (except from laneways, unless fabric visible from laneways is identified as being significant in the Statement of Significance for the place).*

*Maintain views to the front of an individually significant or contributory building or views to a secondary façade where the building has two street frontages by not:*

- *Building over the front of it.*
- *Extending into the air space above the front of it.*
- *Obscuring views of its principal façade/s.*

*[...]*

169 and 171 Victoria Parade are subject to two Design Development Overlays (DDOs), DDO2 and DDO39. The schedule to DDO2 includes the following design objectives and guidelines.

#### 1.0 Design objectives

- *To recognise the importance of main roads to the image of the City.*
- *To retain existing streetscapes and places of cultural heritage significance and encourage retention of historic buildings and features which contribute to their identity.*
- *To reinforce and enhance the distinctive heritage qualities of main roads and boulevards.*
- *To recognise and reinforce the pattern of development and the character of the street, including traditional lot width, in building design.*
- *To encourage high quality contemporary architecture.*
- *To encourage urban design that provides for a high level of community safety and comfort.*
- *To limit visual clutter.*
- *To maintain and where needed, create, a high level of amenity to adjacent residential uses through the design, height and form of proposed development.*

#### 2.0 Decision guidelines

*Before deciding on an application to construct a building or construct or carry out works, the responsible authority must consider as appropriate:*

- *The contribution of the proposal to the streetscape.*
- *The design, height and visual bulk of the development in relation to surrounding land uses and developments.*
- *The design, height and form of the development in relation to the built form character of the street.*

DDO39 relates primarily to development directly addressing Victorian Parade, and includes the following objectives.

#### 1.0 Objectives

*To ensure development responds to the varied character and open streetscape of Victoria Parade by supporting:*

- *a new lower- to mid-rise character (ranging from 3 to 7 storeys) behind a varied heritage street wall west of Wellington Street, excluding the Smith Street junction;*
- *a new mid-rise character (ranging from 3 to 10 storeys) behind a consistent street wall at the Smith Street junction; and*
- *a new mid- to higher-rise character (ranging from 3 to 12 storeys) behind a new, consistent street wall east of Wellington Street.*

*To ensure development to the west of Wellington Street respects the low-scale, fine grain heritage street wall and buildings, through recessive upper levels and façade composition, and articulation that complements the heritage character.*

*To ensure new development responds to the grand, tree lined, boulevard character of Victoria Parade.*

*To encourage development designs that promote pedestrian activity and passive surveillance, contributes to a high quality public realm, and avoid overshadowing of footpaths on the opposite side of streets, central median of Victoria Parade and public spaces.*

*To ensure development responds to sensitive interfaces by ensuring the overall scale and*



*form of new development provides a suitable transition to low scale residential areas and protects these properties from an unreasonable loss of amenity through visual bulk, overlooking and overshadowing.*  
[...]

#### *Demolition*

There are no negative heritage impacts associated with the proposed extent of demolition, which is consistent with Council policy. The existing external link and courtyard fabric are essentially concealed from public view. They and the car park at 14 George Street comprise modern fabric that is of no significance. The office building is a non-contributory modern structure that makes no contribution to the significance of the precinct.

#### *New Link & Courtyard*

In their current configuration, these elements provide a poor quality setting to the rear elevations of 169 and 171 Victoria Parade. The courtyard is entirely utilitarian in character. While minimalist in character, the existing link provides no visual connection of the rear of the site or views of the north elevation of Blanche Terrace.

The proposal introduces a much more attractive and compatible garden-like setting to the rear of Blanche terrace. It will provide improved amenity to future occupants of the terraces and the adjacent office building on the site. It will encourage greater appreciation of the north elevations of the terraces by the building's occupants. The new link replicates the location and scale of the existing link, and will be lightweight and finely detailed. It will incorporate glazing along its west side to allow for views into the courtyard garden and to the rear elevations of the terraces.

#### *Office Building Alterations*

The proposed external works to the office building will substantially improve the internal amenity and result in a more refined, contemporary and lightweight external presentation. It will provide a more attractive setting to Blanche Terrace.

The key heritage interface of the existing five-storey office building is with Blanche Terrace to the south at its lower levels. The two additional storeys will not result in any appreciable change to this interface. The offices forms a relatively distant neutral backdrop of varying degrees of visibility in views from the west along George Street and to a lesser degree from the south side of Victoria Parade. While the two additional upper levels will result in the top part of the building envelope having a greater degree of visibility than at present, they will read as a lightweight secondary backdrop. They are an incremental change relative to existing conditions.

#### *New Infill to 14 George Street*

The existing open carpark provides a poor quality interface to George Street, and results in the west elevation of the office at 169-171 George Street being fully visible. The proposed new infill will result in a much more consistent and sympathetic street wall and screen the lower levels of the office in views from the west. It will return this address to its previous residential use.

The design of the new infill development is highly responsive to Council policy and its heritage context. It achieves this through its modest scale, setbacks, materiality and architectural character. The adjacent built form along the west side of the street between one and three storeys, with a long series of two storey terraces

north of the former Drill Hall. At two storeys, with the upper level at a setback, the scale of the new building will sit comfortably within this context. The corner terrace at 163 Victoria Parade largely abuts the street boundary, with the retained single-storey building on the north side of 14 George Street at a modest setback. The street boundary abutment of the new building is not incongruous in this context.

The architectural treatment of the new building is a contemporary interpretation of traditional domestic typologies. It references the historic building stock of George Street and the wider precinct through its symmetrical façade treatment, arched entry and simple window treatment and face brick materiality. The south end of George Street is of a mixed character and the new building can be accommodated comfortably within this context.

## 10.0 Key Considerations

As noted, this heritage impact statement has been prepared in general accordance with Heritage Victoria's guidelines for such assessments. With respect to the permit application works to the registered parts of the site, it seeks to respond to several key questions, as previously set out in Section 2.0.

### The cultural heritage significance of the place

The cultural heritage significance of the place is outlined in detail above, and in particular is identified in the Statement of Significance for the place. Blanche Terrace is of architectural, historical and cultural significance to the State of Victoria.

The architectural significance of Blanche Terrace as a whole derives from it being an unusual early and intact example of a Victorian brick terrace row of six dwellings, enclosed by partially intact cast iron picket fences behind generously proportioned front gardens. The works minimise external change to the terraces and will not compromise their integrity as an intact row. While involving some change, the alteration and reinstatement works to the original fencing is seen to result in a net heritage benefit.

The historical and cultural significance of Blanche Terrace derives from its association with notable Australian author Henry Handel Richardson, who was born in 179 Victoria Parade. This aspect of its significance is not affected by works.

### What options were considered in developing the proposal?

The current proposal has been developed with consultation with Heritage Victoria in order to minimise the potential heritage impacts of the development.

Several different configurations for providing disabled access to the main entry of 171 Victoria Parade were explored. The proposed arrangement was selected at the recommendation of Heritage Victoria as the more lower impact option.

The originally proposed landscaping scheme continued the existing unified configuration to the front gardens of 169 and 171 Victoria Parade. This has been revised with a design that reinstates the original dividing fence, so that each terrace has a separate front garden that more closely reflects their original delineation.

The proposed firebox was originally to be located in the front boundary of 171 Victoria Parade. This has been relocated to far western side of terrace row frontage where it will be less prominent.

*What impact (positive and/or negative) will the proposed works have on the significance of the place?*

The scheme will have the following positive impacts on the significance of the place.

- The original fence separating the front gardens of 169 and 171 Victoria Parade will be reinstated.
- A new compatible soft landscaping scheme will be installed to the front curtilages of both addresses.
- New rear courtyard will result in an improved setting.
- Conservation/restoration works will be undertaken to the rear elevations of both terraces.

The scheme will have the following potentially negative impacts on the significance of the place.

- A section of the existing original front fence on the west side of 169 Victoria Parade will be removed and stored on site to allow for the installation of a fire booster at the west end of the street boundary in accordance with building code requirements. This change will also include reconfiguration of the existing pedestrian entry point. It does however also allow for the removal of an existing non-original fire booster on the front verandah of 171 Victoria Parade.
- The existing front door joinery to 171 Victorian Parade will be removed and stored on site, with the opening enlarged to allow for disabled access that is building code complaint.

*What measures are proposed to minimise and mitigate negative impacts?*

The key measures taken to mitigate the potential for negative impacts upon the cultural significance of the place are as follows:

- The scope of works seek to minimise the extent of external change to the exterior of the original terraces and significant components of their front curtilage, which change only proposed to the extent that is required to achieve building code compliance.
- While the scheme will involve the removal and storage of an original section of front fence, it will also reinstate the original dividing fence between the front gardens of 169 and 171 Victoria terrace and provide a more attractive front landscaping scheme more generally. When these works are considered together, they may be seen as providing an improved net outcome.
- The raked entry ramp to 171 Victoria Parade will allow for direct wheelchair access to the primary entry along the existing original entry path, rather than require the construction of angled access ramps within the front garden.
- The overall scheme will retain the original entry configuration to one of the two terraces (169), with the removed early door joinery to 171 to be stored onsite. Widening the existing entry may be seen as a less obtrusive approach than creating a new entry in an existing window bay.

- The scheme will retain separate entry points to both dwellings from Victoria Parade.
- Conservation/restoration works to north elevation of the terraces represent a beneficial heritage outcome

#### Reasonable or Economic Use

Applications for works to places on the *Victorian Heritage Register* are considered within the broad ambit of considerations under the *Heritage Act 2017*, which seek to conserve the significance of place, whilst also support their sustainability and taking into account economic impacts. Inter alia, the *Heritage Act* provides the following directions regarding the matters to be considered in the determination of permit applications:

##### *101 Determination of permit applications*

- (1) *After considering an application the Executive Director may—*
  - (a) *approve the application and—*
    - (i) *issue the permit for the proposed works or activities; or*
    - (ii) *issue the permit for some of the proposed works or activities specified in the application; or*
  - (b) *refuse the application.*
- (2) *In determining whether to approve an application for a permit, the Executive Director must consider the following—*
  - (a) *the extent to which the application, if approved, would affect the cultural heritage significance of the registered place or registered object;*
  - (b) *the extent to which the application, if refused, would affect the reasonable or economic use of the registered place or registered object;*
  - (c) *any submissions made under section 95 or 100; [...]*
  - (f) *any matters relating to the protection and conservation of the registered place or registered object that the Executive Director considers relevant.*
- (3) *In determining whether to approve an application for a permit, the Executive Director may consider—*
  - (a) *the extent to which the application, if approved, would affect the cultural heritage significance of any adjacent or neighbouring property that is—*
    - (i) *included in the Heritage Register; or*
    - (ii) *subject to a heritage requirement or control in the relevant planning scheme; or*
  - (b) *any other relevant matter.*

The above considerations include the extent to which the application, if approved, would affect the cultural significance of the registered place, 169 and 171 Victoria Parade (Blanche Terrace), and the extent to which the application, if refused, would affect the reasonable or economic use of the registered place.

The works to the front entry, installation of the front firebox and internal refurbishment are required to address building code compliance. This relates to disabled access, necessary for the combined site to function as quality office spaces and to meet contemporary community expectations. This is regarded as a standard rental marketplace requirement. The works associated with the fire box booster support fire safety and also the protection of the heritage fabric of the terraces. These works will enable the long term commercial occupancy of the site and as such, are in support of the ongoing viable economic use of the place.



## 11.0 Conclusion

The proposed works to the registered parts of 169 and 171 Victoria Parade seek to minimise external change to the retained portion of Blanche Terrace. Minor changes to achieve disabled access and code compliant fire safety provision have been developed in dialogue with Heritage Victoria. The internal works will have no heritage impacts on the significance of the place. Overall, the proposed changes will support the long term ongoing occupancy of the two terraces.

The proposed works to the unregistered parts of 169 and 171 Victoria Parade and 14 George Street subject to the Heritage Overlay respond appropriately to their heritage context. The new rear courtyard and link will provide much improved setting to the rear of Blanche Terrace. The new residential infill building at 14 George Street will sit comfortably within the southern part of George Street. The reworked exterior to the existing office building will provide a more lightweight and elegantly detailed backdrop relative to existing conditions.

The integrated proposal has been prepared in accordance with general heritage principles and the *Burra Charter*. Having regard for the above, the scheme has been developed with due consideration for the significance of the registered place and the provisions of the *Heritage Act* and it is appropriate that relevant permits be issued.