



# HERITAGE IMPACT STATEMENT

## ST KILDA BOTANICAL GARDENS AMENITIES

### H1804

andrea proctor landscapes for Wood Marsh and City of Port Phillip



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## Issue Register

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Wood Marsh	30.03.26	.pdf	pre-finalisation draft
Heritage Victoris	14.05.26	.pdf	FINAL

## 1. Introduction

This Heritage Impact Statement has been prepared on behalf of the City of Port Phillip to support the Heritage Victoria permit application the St Kilda Botanical Gardens Public Toilets block to be installed within the southeastern corner of the St Kilda Botanical Gardens, H1804. The building will be in close proximity to the children's playground with the aim of increasing the number and accessibility of toilet facilities within the gardens in order to meet visitor needs into the future.

This HIS has been prepared following a pre-application meeting with Fiona Stevens of Heritage Victoria on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2026 and is guided by the outcomes of this meeting. This was followed by the submission of updated drawings on January 27<sup>th</sup> 2026 and confirmation from Heritage Victoria that these were consistent with those first presented and no further site meeting was required. The application number for these works is P40610.

We understand Heritage Victoria had some preliminary concerns with modifications to the bluestone path edging, so have undertaken a thorough investigation of the edging and its history. This has found that this particular style dates from the 1970s, and is not consistent with the more rustic 19<sup>th</sup> century bluestone edging or early 20<sup>th</sup> century brick edging. On this basis we have no concerns in supporting minor modifications to this edging, especially as such modification support all abilities access. This is discussed in greater detail through the report.

Proposals for new toilet locations were shared with the public between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of March 2025, with the results attached to this application.

## 2. Legislation

<b>Address:</b>	St Kilda Botanical Gardens, 55 Blessington Street, St Kilda
<b>Supporting the Permit application for:</b>	St Kilda Botanical Gardens Public Toilets (new eastern toilet block)
<b>Date:</b>	April 2026
<b>VHR Number:</b>	H1804
<b>Prepared by:</b>	Andrea Proctor (PGDipLArch 2008, BHort 2004, <i>University of Melbourne</i> ) and Coco Kirkcaldie Bowell (MUH 2026, BSc+Hons 2020, <i>University of Melbourne</i> ) On behalf of <b>andrea proctor landscapes</b> admin@andreaproctor.com.au m: 0411 037 886
<b>On behalf of:</b>	City of Port Phillip Golpooneh Rahimlabaf Zadeh Senior Project Manager   Project Delivery St Kilda Town Hall   99a Carlisle Street, St Kilda, Victoria 3182 Golpooneh.rahimlabafzadeh@portphillip.vic.gov.au m:0466 744 305
<b>National Heritage:</b>	No, the site is not on the National Heritage List
<b>World Heritage:</b>	No, the site is not in a World Heritage Environs area
<b>Adjacent Sites of Significance:</b>	No. The site is not within the immediate environs of any property on the Victorian Heritage Register
<b>Cultural Heritage Sensitivity:</b>	No. The site of the proposed works is outside the designated area of Cultural Heritage Sensitivity as per ACHRIS and the <i>Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006</i> . Enquiry to Council has not yielded any further sites of significance in the area.
<b>Registered Aboriginal Party:</b>	Bunurong Land Council

### Additional legislation:

- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Federal)
- Works will need to comply with the National Construction Code (NCC) 2022 and any local City of Port Phillip requirements where applicable

## 3. Existing Conditions and Use of the St Kilda Botanical Gardens

### History

In August 1860, 6.4 hectares of land in St Kilda were permanently reserved for the development of one of Victoria's earliest botanical gardens. St Kilda Botanical Gardens were officially established in 1861 and continues to survive today as a continuing reflection of the cultural fabric of St Kilda. These gardens are one of the only two suburban Botanic Gardens in Victoria alongside Williamstown Botanic Gardens. A competition for the design of the gardens was won by Mr Tilman Gloystein, whose central axis provides striking axial vistas which are retained today and are considered to contribute to the aesthetic value of the place (noting that, typical of the era, significant views were not identified in the 1999 CMP). The Royal Botanical Gardens Melbourne provided plants under the stewardship of Ferdinand von Mueller. His contribution along with the nurseryman George Bruning lends historical significance to the gardens. The gardens have a long-held relationship with the people of St Kilda, who have used this as a place of recreation throughout its history.

The gardens are a large rectangle bordered by Blessington Street, Tennyson Street, Dickens Street and Herbert Street. They have contained many different structures over time. These include the development of the Alistair Clark Memorial Rose Garden (1950, redeveloped 1985), the Conservatory (1992), the lily pond with Raining Man sculpture, a steel flowered archway, a bandstand, sundial, a birdbath, statuary and a large stone fountain, large stone fountain (possibly c. 1900). An aviary was added during the post-war period and a lily pond south of the central feature was built c.1914 and removed post WWII. The Hexagonal Timber pavilion or gazebo was constructed in the north-west corner of the Gardens in 1928-29 and Wood Marsh designed toilets in 1993.

The pathway layout was altered from an original 3 sided diamond shape to the current curved pathways which span from the centre to the outside corners. The pathway detailing and construction has also changed over time. A 1915 photo shows gravel paths with varying edging of grass, rocks or nothing (Allom Lovell & Associates Pty Ltd in association with John Patrick Pty Ltd, 1996, pg 17 and 21). Brick drains were constructed in 1918 along the main drive and paths affected by heavy rain (ibid pg 21). Some asphaltting of pathway surfaces are visible from 1930 (ibid pg 21). The bluestone edging of the pathways were introduced in the 1970s (ibid pg 26), as was a straight gravel pathway from the corner of Herbert and Dickens streets to the centre, which featured concrete dish drains.

Many structures have been constructed and demolished in the gardens over the years including an aviary, a lily pond directly south of the central axis, several glasshouses and shade-houses and two additional toilet blocks. The combination of remnant original structures and design elements with more contemporary developments reflects the gardens' flexibility with meeting the desires and needs of its visitors.

Proposals for new toilets were shared with the public between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of March 2025, "of the 61 participant comments, sentiment was largely balanced. In total, 44% (27) comments were supportive of the proposed toilet block. Comments in opposition made up 41% (25) of the comments, leaving 15% (9) that were neutral." All comments relating design were either supportive or neutral.

The above deals with the history and development of the St Kilda Botanical Gardens in light overview. For a full history of the development of the Botanical Gardens, refer to the *St Kilda Botanical Gardens Conservation Management Plan (1999)* or the Heritage Victoria Statement of Significance.

### Existing conditions

The St Kilda Botanical Gardens continues to be popular with residents and visitors to St Kilda today, providing open air and greenspace for relaxation and enjoyment. There is surround-street parking and pedestrian access through gates placed at each corner and side midpoint of the Gardens' rectangular perimeter.

The northern half of the gardens is activated with numerous structures and contains a conservatory, a Friend's of the gardens nursery, the Port Phillip EcoCentre, a Gazebo, numerous garden beds, the Alister Clark Memorial Rose Garden, a lily pond and a toilet block. The southern section is more informal, predominantly lawn and mixed-age trees, and is dominated by a playground. Curved pathways are gravel with varied edging including recent bluestone (1970s), brick (1918 onwards) and basalt rocks (19th century, undated). The current sole toilet block in the gardens (Figure 2) in the central west section next to the conservatory which is approximately 200m from the playground. It was built in 1993 and designed by Wood Marsh. This firm have been commissioned for the design of the proposed public toilets, which is the subject of this application.

The public toilets site sits within the southeastern bloc of the gardens near the playground and is bordered by Tennyson Street and a curved pathway leading from the centre to the south-eastern corner. The proposed site sits directly off a gravel path which was built in 1945 and edged with bluestone in the 1970s. It will be approximately 25 metres north of the playground, with a nearby drinking fountain, seating and bins. This end of the gardens was originally a pit which was filled in by 1900 and there are lawn mounds behind the proposed site which are remnants of this in-fill. Gates at the south-eastern corner, central-eastern corner, and central northern side provide pedestrian access, while carparking surrounds the perimeter of the gardens. The site has been chosen to sit outside the Tree Protection Zone of the recently planted, mixed *Brachychiton* Avenue and is outside the key view line through the Alistair Clark Memorial Rose Garden.

The St Kilda Botanical Gardens were visited on the 29<sup>th</sup> of January 2026 to assess the impact, if any, of the proposed works on the heritage values of the place. At the time of visiting the area was neat, the lawn was recently mown and there were people in the area. There were several visitors in the playground, picnicking, and relaxing on the lawns. As part of this visit trees were identified, measured for location and trunk diameter (to calculate Tree Protection Zones). As a result of these finer measurements the location of the proposed toilet block was slightly modified to accommodate the trees. View lines from the pathways, Alistair Clark Memorial Rose Garden and the surrounding streets were also considered with the results discussed below.

**Photo Essay**



Figure 1 St Kilda Botanical Gardens. Blue line shows perimeter and the red polygon outlines subject site. Red arrows show key views through the Rose Garden and screening of the proposed site by existing large trees. Source: Nearmaps, 2026



Figure 2 1993 Toilets by Wood Marsh

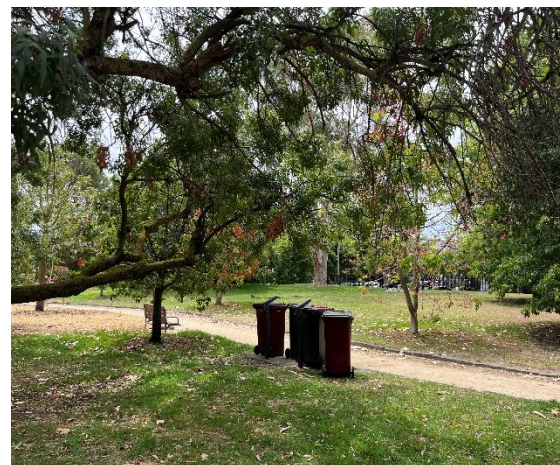


Figure 3 Photo Essay. Clockwise from top left: View of the subject site (amenity block to sit directly on far side of gravel path between trees as marked in red). View of subject site from south, view of the subject site from outside fence (block will integrate with lawn mounds), view of subject site from southern corner of Alistair Clark Memorial Rose Garden (large tree screens toilet block)



Figure 4 Variety of edging styles in St Kilda Botanical Gardens. Clockwise from top Left: 1970s bluestone edging along the subject site; example of jagged, original basalt rock edging visible in a number of locations through the Gardens; bluestone edging and brick spoon drain meeting at close proximity; Early style jagged upstand basalt edging

## 4. Cultural Heritage Values

For completeness, a copy of the Heritage Victoria Statement of Significance is reproduced here. This document was last updated on August 5, 1999, post dating the 1996 Conservation Management Plan.

### **What is significant?**

The St Kilda Botanical Gardens of 6.4 hectares were permanently reserved in August 1860. The original formal or geometric design for the Gardens was prepared by Tilman Gloystein c1860 and despite many alterations, particularly between 1940-45, it retains elements of the original layout and early features. The principal source of plants for the establishment of the gardens was the Royal Botanic Gardens under the directorship of Ferdinand von Mueller. Mueller appears to have assisted in the supervision of planting and attended the opening ceremony. The Garden's first curator was well known nurseryman, George Brunning. The Gardens contain striking landscape features which remain intact from the Victorian, Edwardian and Inter-war periods, in particular the Blessington Street gates (1918) and St Kilda City Gardens gates (c1950), the Levi Pavilion, a hexagonal timber pavilion built as a gift from the Levi family (1928), the central north-south axial avenues between Blessington and Dickens Streets (c1860), including the unusual alternating palm avenue, and the central crescent shrubberies and bedding displays. Striking axial vistas are achieved through the central axis which survives unaltered from the period of the Garden's original layout (1860). The Gardens also contain the Alister Clark Memorial Rose Garden (1950, redeveloped 1985).

### **How is it significant?**

St Kilda Botanical Gardens are of historical, aesthetic, scientific (horticultural) and social significance to the State of Victoria.

### **Why is it significant?**

The St Kilda Botanical Gardens have historical significance as one of Victoria's earliest botanical gardens and along with Williamstown, as one of only two suburban botanic gardens established in the 19th century in Victoria. They also have historical significance as one of the few surviving formally designed botanical gardens in Victoria. The Gardens are also significant for their strong early associations with Ferdinand von Mueller and early nurseryman George Brunning. The Alister Clark Memorial Rose Garden has historical significance as the state's largest memorial to noted Australian Rosarian Alister Clark.

The St Kilda Botanical Gardens have aesthetic significance for their fine design featuring an axial plan with avenues leading to a circular centrepiece. The brick gutters and bluestone rock edges reinforce the intricate design. This central area is a fine example of formal Victorian garden layout with its circular lawn and surrounding beds of floral displays and is a rare feature in Victoria. The palm avenue, an unusual combination of *Phoenix canariensis* and *Washingtonia robusta*, and the ornamental cast iron gates provide a striking and dramatic entry to the Gardens from Blessington Street. The Gardens are also significant for the built and vegetation features which survive from the Victorian, Edwardian and Inter-war periods.

The Gardens have scientific (horticultural) significance for their unusually large collection of rare and unusual mature trees and for their role in perpetuating the tradition of Edwardian municipal gardening displays. The Gardens have an outstanding collection of mature trees, some of which are rare in cultivation and some the finest of their species in Victoria. Such trees include *Ulmus pumila* which is extremely rare in cultivation in Victoria, a pair of *Cassine crocea*, *Phillyrea latifolia*, *Olea europaea* subsp. *africana*, *Celtis occidentalis* and an important collection of palms, including the rare *Jubaea chilensis* and *Phoenix sylvestris*.

The St Kilda Botanical Gardens have social significance for their long and continuous association with the people of St Kilda. It is valued as a place of recreation by the citizens of St Kilda and the wider community, who since the 1860s have flocked to this and the many other attractions of St Kilda, Melbourne's most famous seaside resort.

## Bluestone Edging

In response to concerns raised by Heritage Victoria further research was undertaken into the bluestone edging located along the path near the proposed public toilets. Edging across the site is piecemeal (see Figure 3) but in most locations it is either brick spoon drains (from 1918 onwards) or rustic bluestone edging (earliest information available 1915, but would pre-date this time).

In observing the site the rustic bluestone edging set in upright pieces is typical of that used in Victoria's 19<sup>th</sup> century gardens (e.g. Ballarat Botanical Gardens, Williamstown Botanic Gardens), while the brick gutter is more uncommon, especially at this early era. The 1970s bluestone pitcher edges is more typical of mid-late 20<sup>th</sup> century modifications as occurred in Kyneton Botanic Gardens. As such, this edging, while not inappropriate is also not considered to be of any heritage importance, especially as it is not one of the dominant two edging types.

To minimise confusion between the historic pathway and the new addition bluestone edging is not proposed around the new toilet forecourt.

## 5. The Proposed Works

The permit application is for the installation of an public toilets in the south-eastern end of the St Kilda Botanical Gardens near the playground. In producing this Heritage Impact Statement the following documents were reviewed, with recommendations made accordingly:

### General

- Victorian Heritage Database Report, 1999 St Kilda Botanical Gardens, H1804, Last updated August 1999.
- Allom Lovell & Associates Pty Ltd in association with John Patrick Pty Ltd, 1996, St Kilda Botanical Gardens Conservation Management Plan (Note, as was typical of the era this CMP doubled as a Master Plan of types. It has only been used in relation to its heritage and historic findings, not its design recommendations)
- Trethowan Architecture, 2022, Heritage Impact Statement Proposed Eco Centre St Kilda Botanical Gardens
- Golder Associates Pty Ltd, 2023, Site Contamination Management Plan for Parks and Reserves
- City of Port Phillip, April 2025, St Kilda Botanical Gardens Public Toilets Engagement Summary Report

### Project Documentation

- Arborsafe, 2026, Arboricultural Impact Assessment St Kilda Botanical Gardens
- Wood Marsh, 2026 St Kilda Botanical Gardens Developed Deigns (job number 398 drawings as attached)
- Measure, consulting engineers Stormwater and Drainage Details (job number MSC25232 drawings as attached)

### Description of works

A full description of the proposed works can be found in the above listed documentation and are summarised as follows:

- Designation of site with temporary fencing and community information signs, including establishment of Tree Protection Zones in line with AS4970
- Levelling of current site (while respecting TPZ's).

- Installation of plumbing / drainage infrastructure
- Construction of two new freestanding toilet buildings under a single roof, comprising of 2 unisex toilet blocks, 2 accessible cubicles and 1 ambulant accessible cubicle
- Pathway upgrades around the toilet blocks and connection to the main walkway, including modification of the non-heritage bluestone edging
- New concrete entrance paving to the toilets. Use of sensitively colour exposed aggregate concrete provides an even, safe surface for accessibility reasons and maintains a clear line of demarcation between the heritage pathway (gravel) and the new paving
- The planting of two new botanically interesting trees

## 6. Reasons for the Activity

St Kilda Botanical Gardens currently have only one toilet block (designed by Wood Marsh in 1993) which does not service all visitors to the Gardens. The existing toilet block is a considerable distance - approximately 200m away - from the playground and does not meet current accessibility standards. To address seasonal peaks, temporary toilets are currently hired each year; however, these are visually intrusive and not a sustainable long-term solution. To improve amenity provision and better serve high-use areas—particularly the playground—a new permanent toilet block is proposed in closer proximity to this key visitor zone.

An additional set of public toilets would service the needs of visitors on the eastern side of the park, reduce pressures on the existing toilet infrastructure and shorten travel distances to the toilets, especially for parents and children. Further, it will provide additional accessible toilets specifically designed to cater to a wide visitor demographic, such as accessible and ambulant toilets and a parent's room.

Wood Marsh, the architects for the original aesthetically striking toilets have been engaged to design the new public toilet block at the St Kilda Botanical Garden, providing continuity in approach and style. The design provides accessible, inclusive, and permanent toilets that meet current and future demand, aligned with DDA standards.

The construction of an additional toilet block is consistent with the 1996 St Kilda Botanical Gardens' Conservation Management Plan (the most recent conservation document for the site) as follows:

### 6.7.12 Kiosk and New Structures

*"Other new structures should be kept to a minimum and only constructed if essential. Such structures might include a bandstand, **additional toilet block**, gazebo, picnic shelter or similar structure. The design intent of such structures should be that they **should respond to or blend in with their immediate surroundings depending upon the relevant circumstances. Their siting, mass, scale and colour will be of critical importance.**"* Allom Lovell & Associates Pty Ltd in association with John Patrick Pty Ltd, 1996pg. 121

## 7. Impacts of the Proposal

### Historical Significance

Installation of new public toilets is considered to have a neutral impact on the historical significance of the St Kilda Botanical Gardens for the following reasons:

- The key areas listed for their historical significance are the axial pathways, original layout, centrepiece, avenues which combine two species; *Phoenix canariensis* and *Washingtonia robusta* species, the Rose Garden and *built...features which survive from the Victorian, Edwardian and Inter-war periods*”, none of which are impacted by the proposed works, including key view lines

- The new toilet will have a very minor impact on the existing bluestone edging along this pathway (with the creation of two cut ins). However, while the use of bluestone is generally considered a significant element of heritage fabric in Melbourne, the edging along this gravel pathway was installed in the 1970s and therefore outside the period of significance “from the Victorian, Edwardian and Inter-war periods”. New addition bluestone edging is not proposed around the new toilet forecourt to minimise confusion between it and the historic pathway it joins
- The new toilet block is not within any identified significant view lines
- The Conservation Management Plan identifies the overall pathway design, the main avenues and the Alister Clark Rose Memorial Garden as having heritage value, not this lawn area
- The Conservation Management Plan identifies the importance of ensuring new built structures “respond to or blend in with their immediate surroundings depending upon the relevant circumstances” (CMP pg. 121). This design responds to the location, acting as an architecturally striking focal point (also assisting with passive wayfinding), while using a visually neutral and sensitive materials palette
- The design of the toilet block will use recognisably different infrastructure and textures to historical material to ensure the new addition can be clearly differentiated from historically significant features
- There are no impacts on the view towards the playground from the Alistair Clark Rose Garden due to the healthy dense crown of the mature *Celtis australis* (European Nettle Tree) specimen
- The scale of the new toilet block is suitably small to proportionally fit into the landscape so as to minimise the visual and spatial impact of the building
- The design of the toilet block draws on precedents set by the architecturally striking 1993 Wood Marsh designed toilet block near the Conservatory, ensuring consistency of approach across the site
- At the time of submission the most suitable path of new sewer, storm water and underground power (if required) is still being determined (see Section 10). All such proposals are being developed to minimise the impact on heritage and other gardens fabric. While route needs to be finalised this can be done as part of conditions monitoring

### **Aesthetic**

Installation of a new toilet block is considered to have a positive impact on the aesthetic and architectural significance of St Kilda Botanical Gardens for the following reasons:

- The toilets have been designed with high architectural merit (as opposed to using a standard proprietary product). The northern end of the garden has many such striking design features (including a similar toilet block), but fewer exist in this portion of the garden, bringing a level of care and design detailing to what is otherwise a more recreational focused space
- St Kilda Botanical Gardens has a gentle but perceptible level of design detailing that eschews standard products. This is evident in choices in materials (especially around the lake), sculpture, the conservatory design, the Tennyson Street gates and the original toilets. The new toilet design continues this tradition.
- The addition of new, high quality permanent amenities will reduce the need for unsightly temporary facilities (may be required on occasion, but reduced in frequency and extent)
- The new toilet block is not within any significant views
- Views of the new toilets from the Alister Clark Memorial Rose Garden are screened by a large mature tree
- The proposal as submitted requires further detail design in regard to landscape (see Section 10) but has been developed with both arborist and landscape architect input into the layout of the toilets, paths and indicative garden bed. A limited landscape treatment is considered appropriate given the successful design of former toilets with any planting to be simple and appropriate in scale (not large) and the presence of two existing semi-mature trees near the block.

- The use of muted sandstone colours and texture in the design contributes to the aesthetic value of the gardens by providing visual unity with the existing toilet block while meeting the conservation management plan's recommendation to 6.7.13 "the design intent of such structures should be that they respond to or blend in with their immediate surroundings ... their siting, mass, scale and colour will be of critical importance" (CMP, pg. 121)
- The use of curves in the design of the toilet building and the landscaping reflects the use of organic shapes within the gardens and the original 1993 toilets
- The floating roof structure design intends to provide a lightness to the structure, encourage airflow and to match with the existing toilet block, which contributes aesthetic value to the space

### Scientific (horticultural)

Installation of a new toilet block is considered to have a neutral impact on the scientific significance of the St Kilda Botanical Gardens for the following reasons:

- The new public toilets is not located near any significant trees.
- The design of the toilets deliberately eschews the nearby trees and has been developed with arborist input
- The opportunity for installation of new botanically interesting trees to the east of the toilet block provides interest in an area of the gardens that is only loosely adorned
- At the time of submission the most suitable path of new sewer, storm water and underground power (if required) is still being determined (see Section 10). All such proposals are being developed with arborist input and to minimise the impact on heritage and other gardens fabric. While route needs to be finalised this can be done as part of conditions monitoring

### Social

Installation of a new toilet block is considered to have a positive impact on the social impact significance of the St Kilda Botanical Gardens for the following reasons:

- "The St Kilda Botanical Gardens have social significance for their long and continuous association with the people of St Kilda" and "as a place of recreation... since the 1860s." the proposed amenity block is designed specifically to support this and address a need for toilets near the playground
- The addition of a new toilet block positively contributes to meeting the needs of the community by provisioning for increased demand and meeting current accessibility requirements. Without access to good toilet facilities use of the site will be reduced, especially for families, older people and those with disabilities
- The new toilet block will include a parents' change table which provides for the diverse needs of a dynamic population of visitors.

## 8. Reasonable and Economic Use

If this application were to be refused then the reasonable use of the St Kilda Botanical Gardens *would be negatively* affected. The existing toilet facilities do not meet current standards and are too great a distance from the playground to be suitable for use. It is reasonable to expect that a high-profile public landscape is suitably serviced with toilet facilities, especially near a playground. Furthermore, item 16. Of the *Heritage Victoria Policy* 'Reasonable or economic use' specifically states:

"16. Refusal to issue a permit for upgrading facilities to bring them to contemporary or safe standards may affect the reasonable use of a place. For example, updating kitchens, **bathrooms**, access provisions or other **necessary infrastructure or services required to meet current regulations or legislation.**"

If this application were to be refused then the economic use of the St Kilda Botanical Gardens *would not negatively* affected.

## 9. Means of Limiting Impact

In developing the proposed project the following measures have been put in place as a means of limiting any adverse impact on the heritage values of the place:

### Long-term

- Selection of a site in an inconspicuous location and in consultation with Heritage Victoria. Numerous sites were considered with the intent of finding the most practical and heritage appropriate location
- The decision to have architecturally designed toilets which support the heritage values of the place and are in keeping with the rest of the gardens, rather than the cheaper option of a standardised proprietary product
- The design and footprint has been developed to be as small as possible, low profile, of appropriate materials and colours and to limit the size of the forecourt and associated connections
- Minor modification of the original location when it was discovered that existing trees would be impacted by the proposal. This has resulted in the toilets being set further back from the path to reduce impact on the existing *Brachychiton*s
- Locations for services lines are being carefully explored with respect to tree protection zones and protecting heritage fabric but could not be finalised in time to lodge the permit
- An appropriate landscape design treatment in line with that of the previous toilets (simple, low profile, botanically interesting tree planting) but could not be finalised in time to lodge the permit
- Consultation with an arborist early in the design process to avoid impact on existing trees
- Selection of materials that support the character and heritage values of the site
- Developing a design that is considerate of long term needs to reduce the need for future changes
- New addition bluestone edging is not proposed around the new toilet forecourt to minimise confusion between it and the historic pathway it joins

### Construction

- Implementation of a construction Tree Management Plan as per AS4970
- Implementation of a Heritage Management Plan including fixed locations for access and egress, contractor parking, construction laydown areas, drainage controls and post work remediation

## 10. Recommendations

This report makes the following recommendations:

- That a permit be granted for the works as described
- That a condition of permit be that the location and installation of service lines in accordance with AS4970 and to minimise damage to any historic fabric. Such a permit condition should require that construction ready plans showing the location of these lines be submitted to Heritage Victoria for approval prior to works commencing, together with a report on their potential impact and any mitigating construction methods by a qualified arborist (e.g. Arborsafe).
- That a condition of permit include updating of the Arborsafe, 2026, "Arboricultural Impact Assessment St Kilda Botanical Gardens" to reflect final works and adherence to the protection measures outlined in this document and AS4970 *Protection of Trees on Development Sites*. Such a report should be submitted to Heritage Victoria for approval prior to works commencing
- That a condition of permit be the development of a simple landscape treatment plan similar to the current toilets (botanically interesting tree planting, no or highly limited new planting adjacent to the toilets) within 12 months of construction

- That final documentation, materials selection, service line locations and planting design be dealt with through conditions monitoring. This is to allow the permit application to progress and City of Yarra to meet project deadlines.

## 11. Conclusion

After thorough consideration and assessment against heritage significance of the St Kilda Botanical Gardens, this report recommends that the proposed public toilets should be supported as it has no negative impact on heritage fabric and will allow the social values of the place to continue unimpeded. Concerns were raised about any impact on the bluestone edging, but in this location the edging is of recent origin (1970s) and is substantially different in style to the 19<sup>th</sup> century bluestone found elsewhere. Therefore, any changes to provide access to the new toilets are considered appropriate.

Timing of this project has meant documentation has focused on the design and location of the toilets as per the attached drawings. Final service line locations and landscape design are yet to be completed, but such work has commenced with due sensitivity to the heritage location. As this detail is only supportive documentation it is recommended that this be managed through conditions monitoring to allow the permit application process to commence and prevent delays to project. If conditions are carefully worded then we are confident these items can be managed this way.

The toilets include a sensitive choice of design and material selection and limits the visual impact on the Gardens. The use of curved features nestles the building appropriately into the curves featured within the garden, and coordinates with the existing toilet block to provide a sense of unity across the Gardens. The addition of toilets in this underutilised space will support visitors to the southern and eastern sides of the gardens including playground, directly supporting young families and those with additional needs. A failure to grant a permit would impact on the Reasonable Use of the place. As such it is recommended that a heritage permit be granted.

A photograph of two tall palm trees against a clear blue sky. The tree on the left is taller and has a more slender trunk, while the tree on the right is shorter and has a thicker trunk. Both trees have dense, green fronds. The background shows some other trees and foliage, but they are out of focus.

## **CONTACT DETAILS**

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