

Heritage Impact Statement

Cathedral Hall
20–22 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy

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Project Code	P0067685
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1 Introduction

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Urbis has been engaged by Australian Catholic University (ACU) to prepare the following Heritage Impact Statement (HIS) to accompany a heritage permit application for proposed internal works to Cathedral Hall, 20–22 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy (subject site).

Internal refurbishment is proposed to two rooms on the ground floor of the building to create new studio spaces for audio recording. Further details of the proposed works are included in Section 7.2.

On 22 June 2026, a pre-application was held with Heritage Victoria to discuss the proposed works. Comments were received 26 June 2026 (Ref. No. P42499). We thank Heritage Victoria for the time and feedback provided during this process and confirm the items raised have been considered and incorporated into this proposal.

The following items were identified in the pre-application meeting comments, with Heritage Victoria:

- Noting the preferred option of number tabled was approach was 'Option A' which involved the least invasive soundproofing methods. (This direction has been pursued in the current scheme).
- Supporting the use of floating floors to the studios to minimise the impact on original flooring.
- Recognising the need for compliant access ramps to self-contained studio spaces.
- Requesting detailed service plans be provided for assessment.
- Raising concerns that the proposed studios may impact the perception of internal volumes while recognising this could be mitigated through appropriate design devices.
- Requesting information regarding proposed double glazing to original windows and infilling of redundant doorways to address acoustic concerns. (Further investigations have resulting in double glazing being removed from the proposal).
- Confirming the proposed works will require assessment through a permit application process.

This HIS has been prepared to determine the potential heritage impacts of the proposed works on the heritage significance of Cathedral Hall, a place included on the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) (VHR H1967) as a place of significance to the State of Victoria. A detailed impact assessment of the proposed works has been undertaken in Section 7.3 of this report.

1.2 Site Location

The subject site is located at 20–22 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy (Figure 1). The site is in the ACU Melbourne campus on the eastern side of Brunswick Street, north of the Brunswick Street and Victoria Parade intersection.

The subject building extends across multiple properties which themselves have a complex parcel arrangement. Most of the Cathedral Hall building is on the 20–22 Brunswick Street property which comprises two parcels: Lot 2 TP947010 and Lot 3 TP947010. The eastern and northern parts of Cathedral Hall are within the boundaries of the property at 17–29 Young Street, Fitzroy, which includes five parcels: Lots 5–9 TP947010. Additionally, part of the building is built over an area listed as a laneway off Duke Street.

The subject site is within the Local Government Area (LGA) of Yarra, on Wurundjeri land.

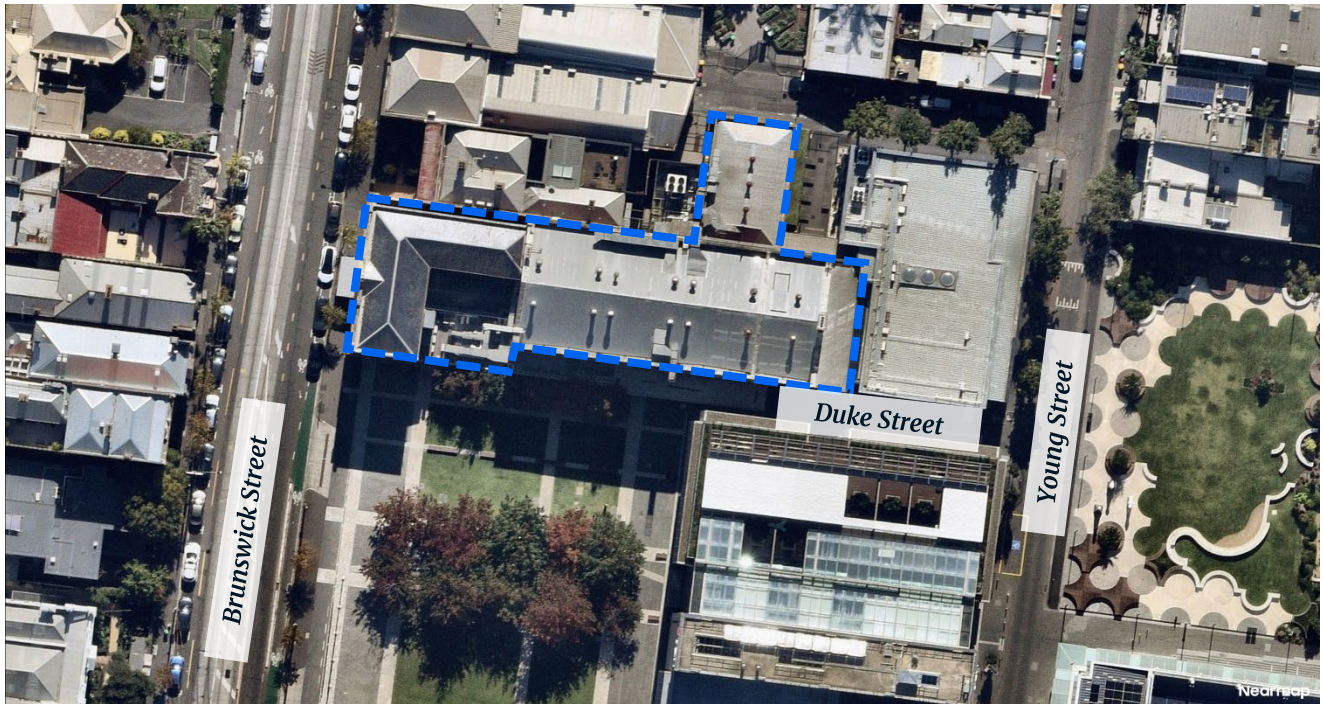


Figure 1 – Location map showing the Cathedral Hall site as registered on the VHR (outlined in blue).

Source: Nearmap, 25 April 2026.

1.3 Proposal

It is proposed to undertake internal alterations and additions to create new acoustic treated audio recording pods for teaching and education. These works are restricted to ground floor rooms G.08 and G.10.

Further details of the proposed works are included in Section 7.2.

1.4 Methodology

This Heritage Impact Statement has been prepared with regard to the principles established in the *Australian ICOMOS Burra Charter 1999* (revised 2013). It is in general accordance with *Heritage Victoria's Guidelines for Preparing Heritage Impact Statements in Victoria* (June 2021) prepared and published under Section 19(1)(f) of the Heritage Act 2017.

The Heritage Impact Statement seeks to respond to the following key questions:

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

1.5 Sources of Information

This Heritage Impact Statement is intended to be read in conjunction with the architectural documentation prepared by Kyriacou Architects (dated 28/07/2026), service documentation by Compass Intelle (dated

17/07/2026) and other documents submitted as part of this permit application, as well as the citations for Cathedral Hall held in the Victorian Heritage Register.

The following analysis draws upon a site inspection conducted on 21/04/2026 and 04/06/2026, and a review of the relevant documents, including the heritage citation for the place.

The heritage impact assessment at Section 7 is based on the following plans. Extracts of the proposed plans are also provided throughout this report. Full size plans should be referred to for detail.

Table 1 – Provided Plans

Author	Drawing No.	Drawing Title	Rev.	Date
Kyriacou Architects	AR-0510	Existing Ground Floor Plan	-	28/07/2026
Kyriacou Architects	AR-0600	Existing Elevations – 408 G.08	-	28/07/2026
Kyriacou Architects	AR-0601	Existing Elevations – 408 G.10	-	28/07/2026
Kyriacou Architects	AR-1200	Proposed Ground Floor Plan	-	28/07/2026
Kyriacou Architects	AR-3200	Proposed Section – 408 G.08	-	28/07/2026
Kyriacou Architects	AR-3201	Proposed Section – 408 G.10	-	28/07/2026
Kyriacou Architects	AR-7000	Proposed 3D Views	-	28/07/2026
Kyriacou Architects	AR-7001	Proposed 3D Section Renders	-	28/07/2026
Compass Intelle	01	Services Ground Floor	-	17/07/2026
Compass Intelle	02	Services – Studio A & B	-	17/07/2026
Compass Intelle	03	Services – Studio C	-	17/07/2026

1.6 Authorship

The following report has been prepared by Alexander Dunmill (Heritage Consultant). Dr Kim Roberts (Associate Director) has reviewed and endorsed its content.

Unless otherwise stated, Urbis have prepared all drawings, illustrations and photographs.

2 Description

2 Description

2.1 Site Description

Cathedral Hall comprises two main building forms: a former boot factory to Brunswick Street converted into clubrooms and classrooms, and a hall to the rear.

The former boot factory/clubrooms and classrooms are built to the Brunswick Street boundary in an L shaped plan with a wing extending to the north. The building is a triple storey brick structure with rendered primary façade and face brick side and rear walls. The primary façade is symmetrically arranged with classical revival detailing including pediment and balustraded parapet.

The hall is built to the rear of the former boot factory/clubrooms and classrooms. The building is a similar triple storey scale to the front building. The building is rectangular with a gabled roof. External walls are red face brick with rendered banding and capping. A rendered crucifix ornaments the western gable of the hall. Brick buttresses are to the side walls.

No works are proposed which will change the external appearance of the subject building. All works are constrained to the interior of the building with the works area restricted to the two rooms described below and outlined at Figure 2.

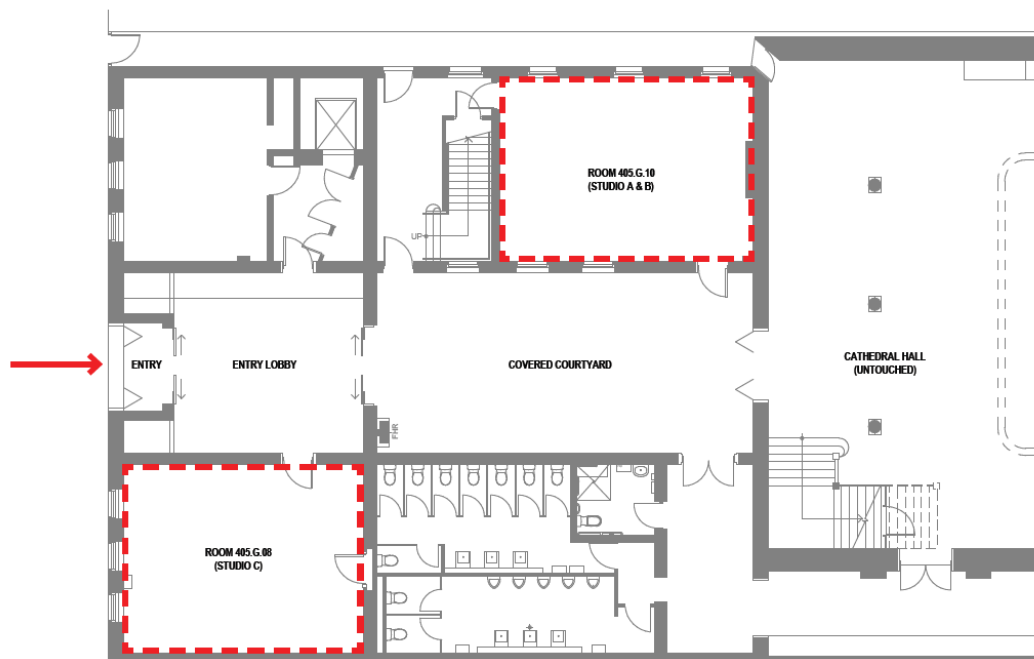


Figure 2 – Ground floor plan showing Room G.08 and Room G.10.

Source: Kyriacou Architects.

2.1.1 Room G.08

Room G.08 is located to the southwest corner of the building at ground level. Currently the room is not actively used and is storing equipment and furniture.

The room is rectangular with three windows to its western side facing Brunswick Street. The room configuration is original.

Floors are stained timber, with original skirting boards which are painted.

Walls are brick and finished with painted plaster. The paint scheme is off-white. To the north wall is a single original painted four panelled entrance door with painted architraves which accesses the building foyer. There is a single internal door to the eastern side of the room. A picture rail runs from the north entrance door and along the eastern wall.

The windows are identical timber framed sash windows with painted architraves. The bottom sash of each is filled with opaque glazing. Blinds are non-original.

The ceiling is painted timber panelling with painted cornices. A painted timber framed beam runs north-south across the room generally dividing the room equally.

Modern services present in the room including air conditioning to the east wall, ceiling mounted lighting and surface mounted electrical services in conduit.



Figure 3 – Room G.08 looking east.



Figure 4 – Room G.08 looking south.

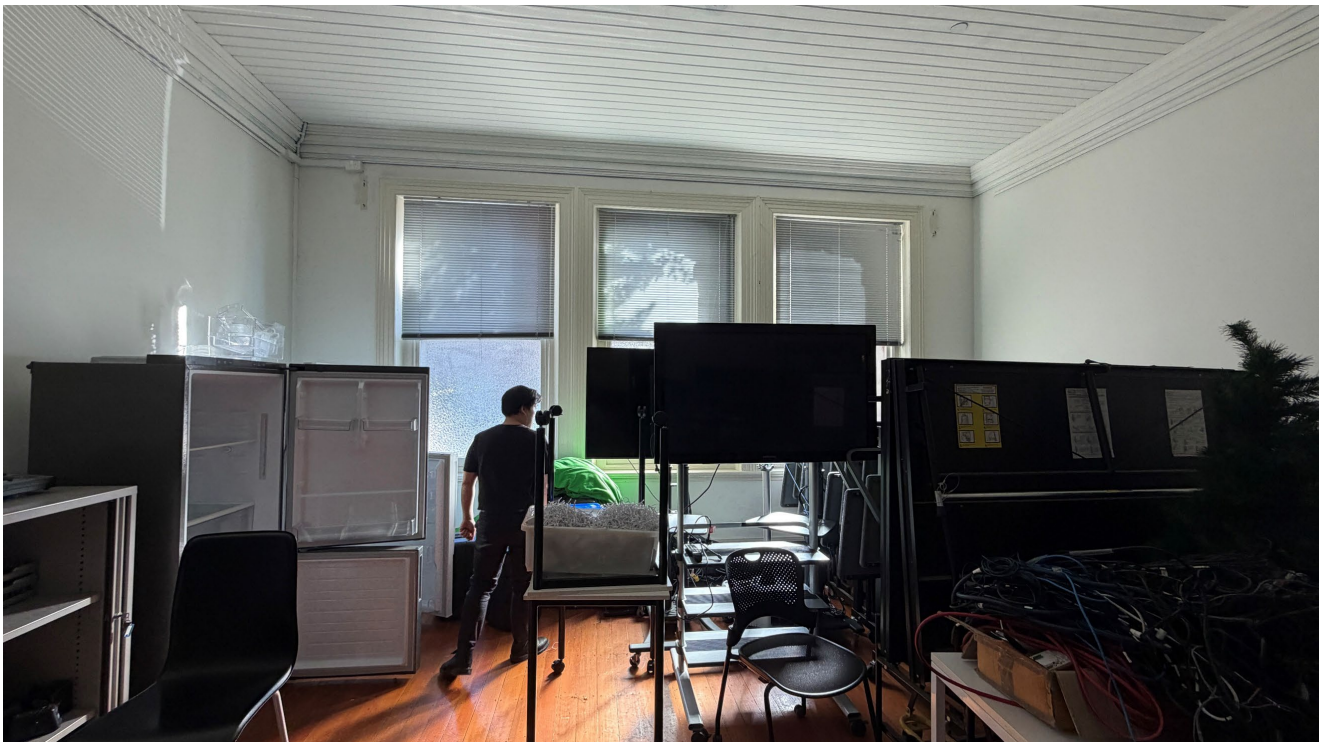


Figure 5 – Room G.08 looking west.



Figure 6 – Room G.08 looking north.

2.1.2 Room G.10

Room G.10 is located to the north side of the building at ground level. Currently the room is not actively utilised and is primarily storing equipment and furniture.

The room is rectangular with three windows to its north side. The room configuration is original.

Floor coverings are non-original carpet tiles. Skirting boards are original and painted.

Walls are brick and finished with painted plaster. The paint scheme is white. To the south is a single original painted four panelled entrance door with painted architraves and highlight window which accesses the central hallway. There is single internal door to the western side of the room. To the east wall is a fireplace with metal and tiled firebox and stone surround.

The windows are identical timber framed sash windows with painted architraves.

The ceiling is painted pressed metal with painted cornices. Two painted timber framed beam runs north-south across the room generally dividing the room equally.

Services are modern additions into the room including ceiling mounted lighting and surface mounted electrical services in conduit.



Figure 7 – Room G.10 looking east.

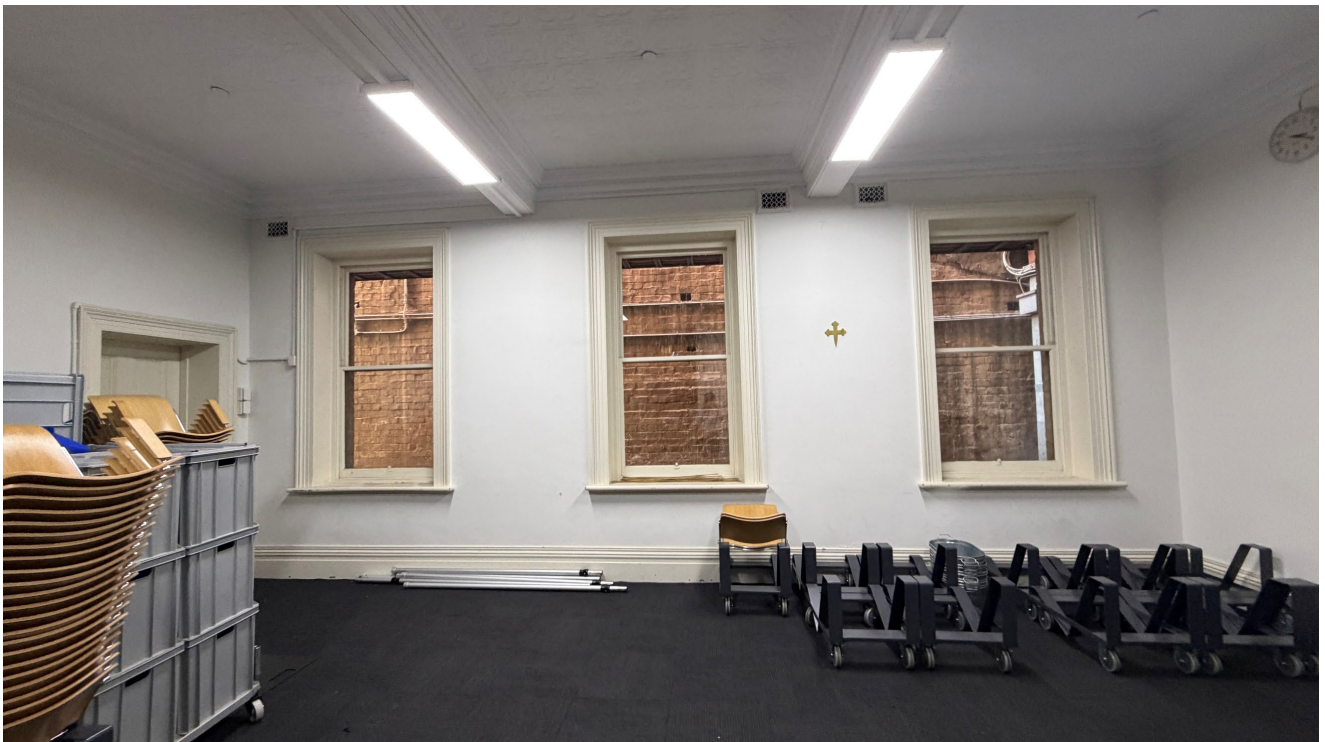


Figure 8 – Room G.10 looking south.



Figure 9 – Fireplace to the east wall of Room G.10.



Figure 10 – Room G.10 looking north.

3 History

3 History

3.1 Area History

Cathedral Hall is located on what has for millennia been the Country of the Wurundjeri people. Wurundjeri Country covers a vast tract of land that stretches from the Werribee River in the west to the upper reaches of the Yarra (Birrarung) and Thompson Rivers in the east.¹

After initial land sales took place in 1839, Fitzroy was developed with substantial Victorian terraces along key streets with more modest dwellings, commercial precincts and light industries creating a suburb of diverse class and land use.²

As a result of the economic downturn towards the end of the nineteenth century and the establishment of wealthy suburbs elsewhere in the colony, many of the area's early buildings fell into disrepair and the area was viewed as a slum from the interwar period.³

A slum clearance program in the mid-20th century saw some areas of early built form razed and redeveloped, although community action saw resistance to many of these projects.⁴

Today Fitzroy retains a substantial collection of significant Victorian development alongside more modern development.

3.2 Subject Site History

The following history draws on research into the history of the subject site included in the place's Victorian Heritage Register citation and the Conservation Management Plan report for Cathedral Hall (Nigel Lewis Richard Aitken Pty Ltd, 2000). Additional research has been undertaken to supplement these histories as necessary.

In 1873, architectural firm Reed and Barnes called for tenders for 'the erection of a boot and shoe factory in Brunswick Street, Fitzroy, for Messrs Roelens and Burdett.'⁵ The boot factory was the original form of the building now known as Cathedral Hall.

Throughout the 1890s the boot factory operated on Brunswick Street and was photographed in 1896 showing its original façade (Figure 11). Compared to the existing Cathedral Hall building, the original boot factory was a much more austere structure without a pediment and with a single, asymmetrically arranged entrance door to the southern bay.

An 1897 Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) plan of this part of Fitzroy shows the early footprint of the former boot factory building and dwellings to the rear of the subject site (Figure 12). The centre of the site was developed with freestanding structures, and the rear of the site was developed with separate dwellings fronting Duke Street.

¹ Wurundjeri Wo Wurrung Cultural Aboriginal Heritage Corporation, 'Ancestors and Past', <https://www.wurundjeri.com.au/our-story/ancestors-past/>.

² Tony Birch, 'Fitzroy', eMelbourne: the city past & present, School of Historical and Philosophical Studies, The University of Melbourne, July 2008, <https://www.emelbourne.net.au/biogs/EM00574b.htm>.

³ Fitzroy History Society, *History of Fitzroy*, <https://fitzroyhistorysociety.org.au/about/history-of-fitzroy/>.

⁴ Renate Howe, 'Housing Commission of Victoria', eMelbourne: the city past & present, School of Historical and Philosophical Studies, The University of Melbourne, July 2008, <https://www.emelbourne.net.au/biogs/EM00733b.htm>.

⁵ Argus, 'Advertising', 10 March 1873, p.3.

In 1902, the Catholic Church purchased the former boot factory.⁶ The architectural firm Reed, Smart and Tappin were engaged to develop plans for the conversion of the existing building into church clubrooms and classrooms (Figure 13). Changes included internal alterations to allow for new uses, and alterations to the Brunswick Street façade. The Catholic Church also purchased the land to the rear of the former boot factory in 1902.

In 1903 the Church clubrooms and classrooms within the converted former factory on Brunswick Street were officially opened (Figure 14). At the same time, Reed, Smart and Tappin developed plans for the construction of a hall to the rear of the new clubrooms and classrooms.⁷

In 1904, the new hall to the rear of the clubrooms and classrooms, named Cathedral Hall, officially opened (Figure 15).⁸ A canopy to the front entrance spanning the footpath was constructed by this time.

In 1908, the supper room to the north of the hall was constructed.⁹

An aerial photograph of Fitzroy in 1942 shows the building footprint and roof form (Figure 16). The visible building extent appears generally similar to existing conditions aside from changes to the rear of the site to Young Street.

Throughout the 20th century the Catholic Church continued to use Cathedral Hall including as a venue for the Australasian Catholic Congress and National Eucharistic Congress.¹⁰ The building was also used as a venue for balls and dances, social nights and fundraisers. Photographs of the building in 1970 show the façade during this period. By this time the canopy over the entrance had been removed (Figure 17).

In 1998, Cathedral Hall became part of the new ACU campus and new works were undertaken to convert the building for tertiary education requirements. At this time the Conservation Management Plan for the place was prepared by Nigel Lewis Richard Aitken Pty Ltd.

⁶ Nigel Lewis Richard Aitken Pty Ltd, *Central Hall Conservation Management Plan*, October 2000, p.14.

⁷ Nigel Lewis Richard Aitken Pty Ltd, *Central Hall Conservation Management Plan*, October 2000, p.18-19.

⁸ Nigel Lewis Richard Aitken Pty Ltd, *Central Hall Conservation Management Plan*, October 2000, p.23-25.

⁹ Nigel Lewis Richard Aitken Pty Ltd, *Central Hall Conservation Management Plan*, October 2000, p.28.

¹⁰ Nigel Lewis Richard Aitken Pty Ltd, *Central Hall Conservation Management Plan*, October 2000, p.29-30.

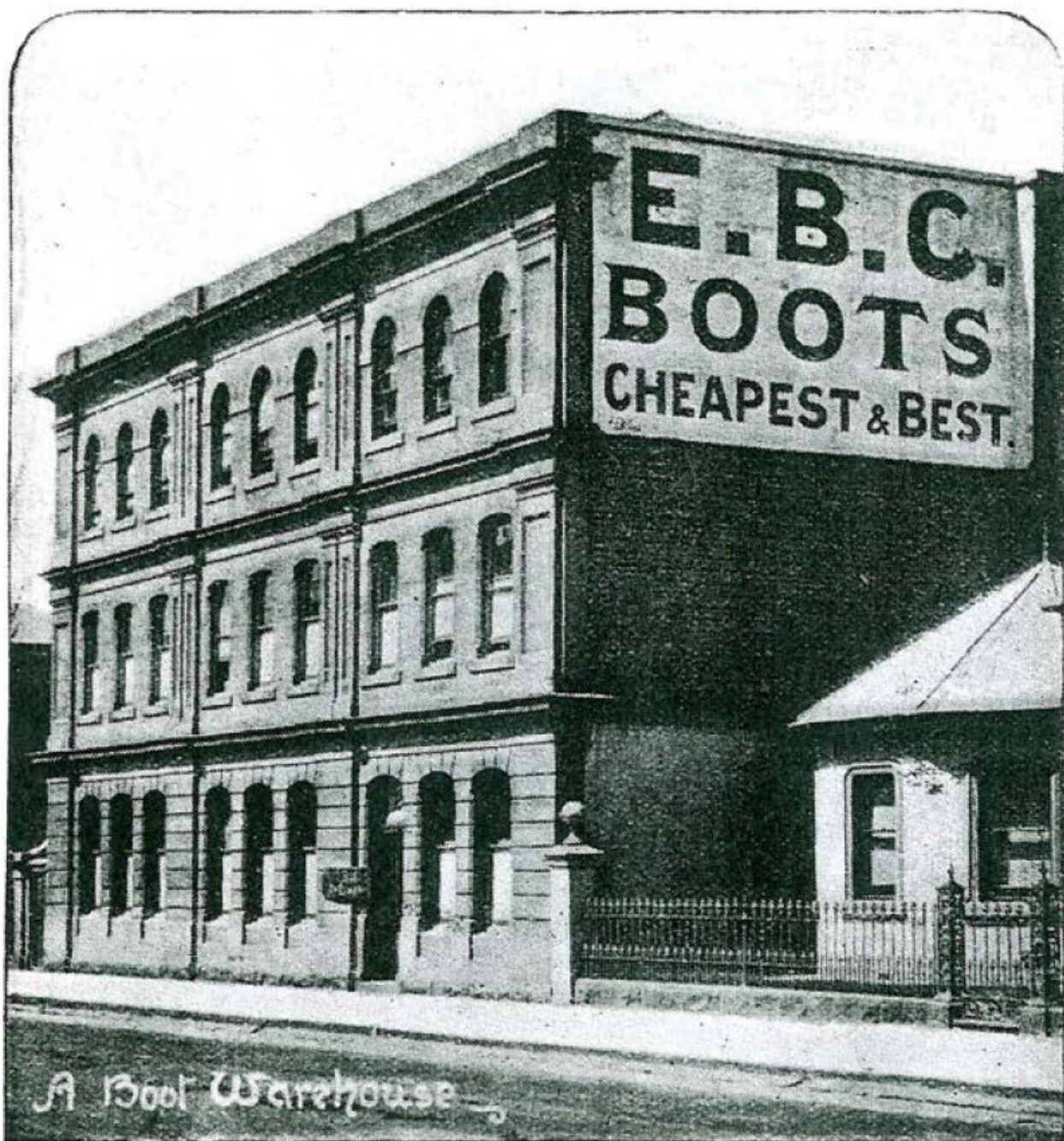


Figure 11 – The original boot factory building prior to Church works, 1896.

Source: *Leader*, 8 February 1896, supp. p.2, as cited in Nigel Lewis Richard Aitken Pty Ltd, 'Central Hall Conservation Management Plan', 2000.

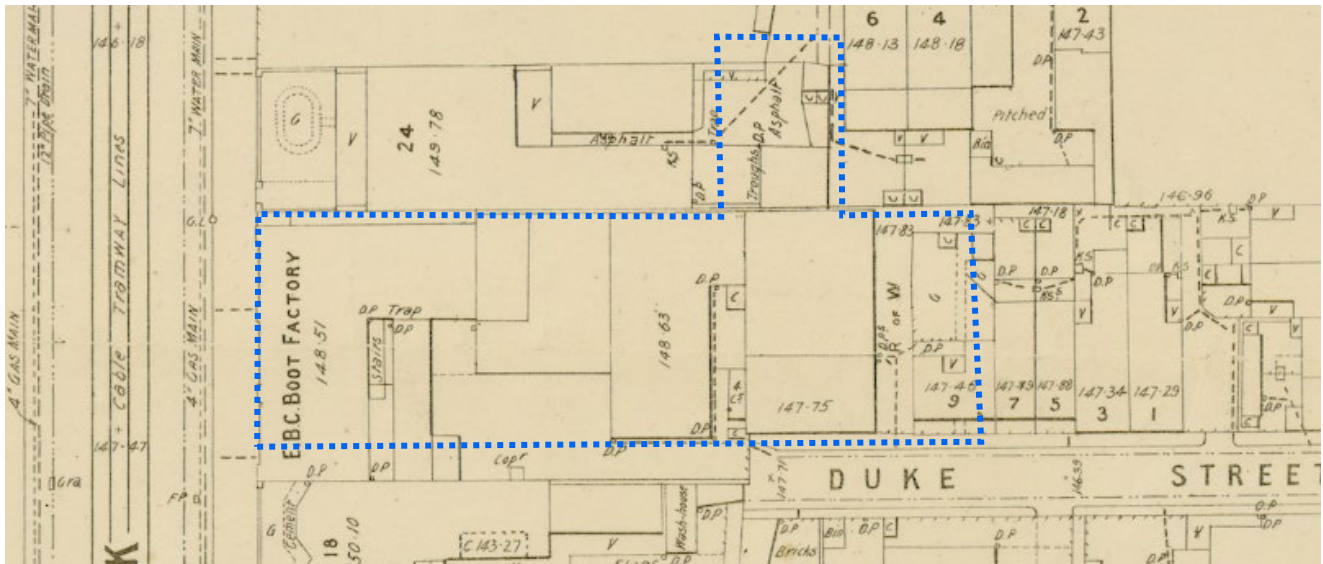


Figure 12 – Excerpt of MMBW Plan No. 1206, drawn 1898, showing the original boot factory building prior to works by the Church.

Source: State Library of Victoria, MAPS 821.09 E 1895- (1206).

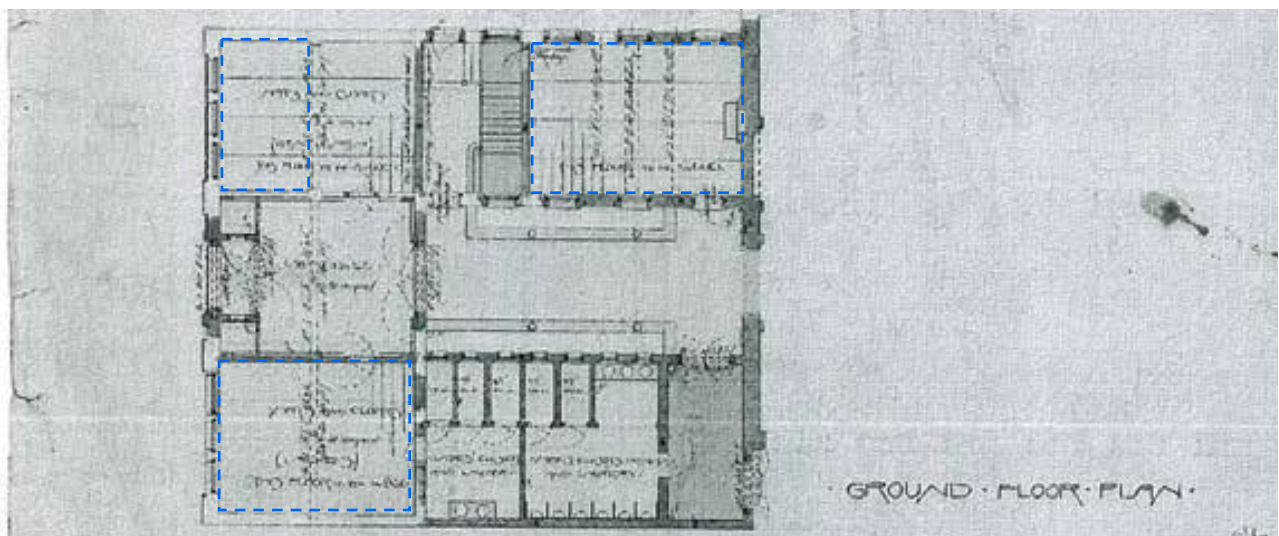


Figure 13 – First Floor and Ground Floor plans for the 'Proposed New Catholic Hall / Brunswick St' prepared by Reed, Smart and Tappin, 1903. Rooms where works are proposed are outlined blue.

Source: Bates Smart & McCutcheon Pty Ltd collection, University of Melbourne Archives, as cited in Nigel Lewis Richard Aitken Pty Ltd, 'Central Hall Conservation Management Plan', 2000.



Figure 14 – The opening of the refurbished boot factory building, April 1903.

Source: Advocate, 16 April 1904, p.12, as cited in Nigel Lewis Richard Aitken Pty Ltd, 'Central Hall Conservation Management Plan', 2000.

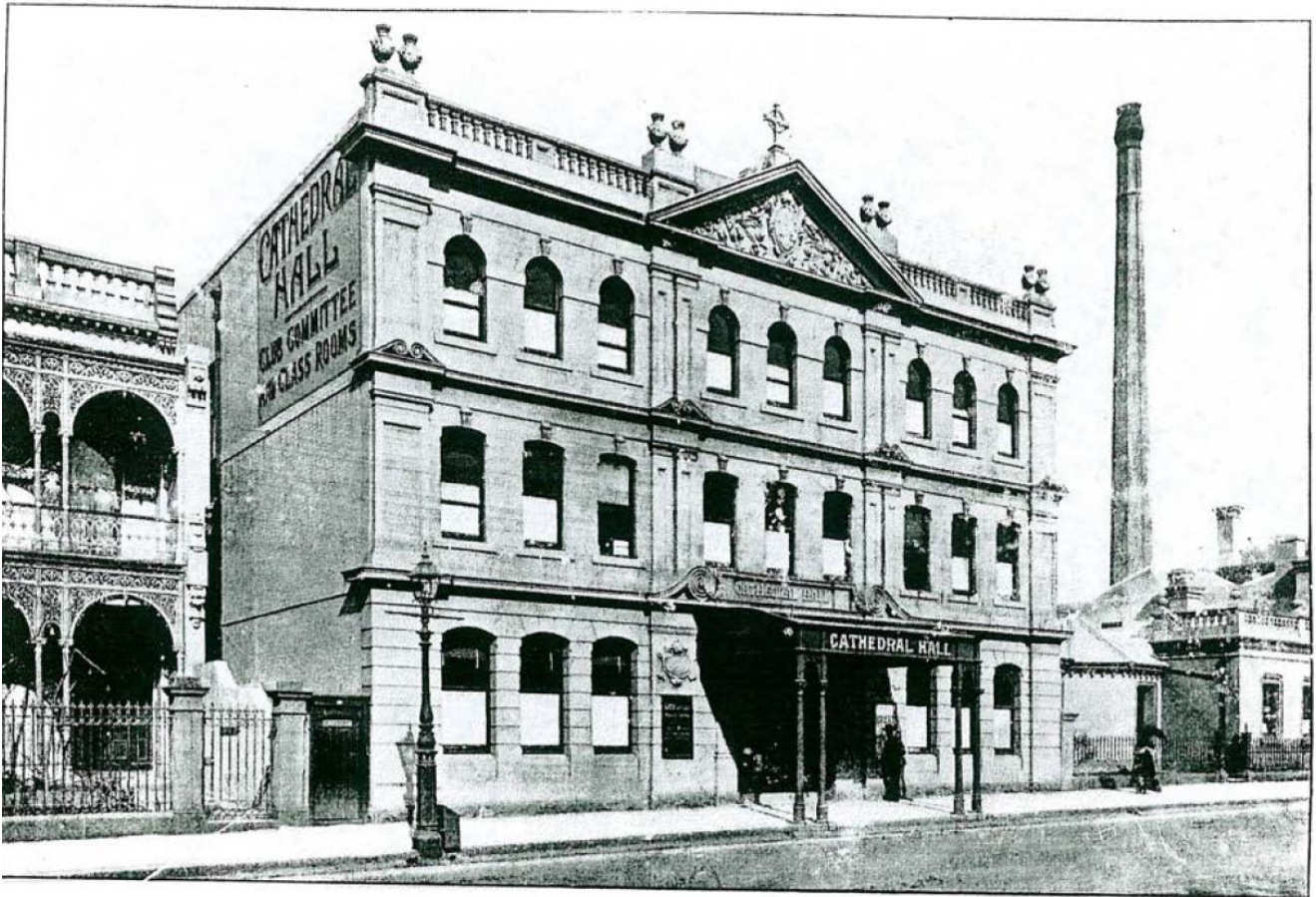


Figure 15 – Cathedral Hall in c.1904.

Source: *Proceedings of the Second Australasian Catholic Congress, 1905*, facing p.16, as cited in Nigel Lewis Richard Aitken Pty Ltd, 'Central Hall Conservation Management Plan', 2000.

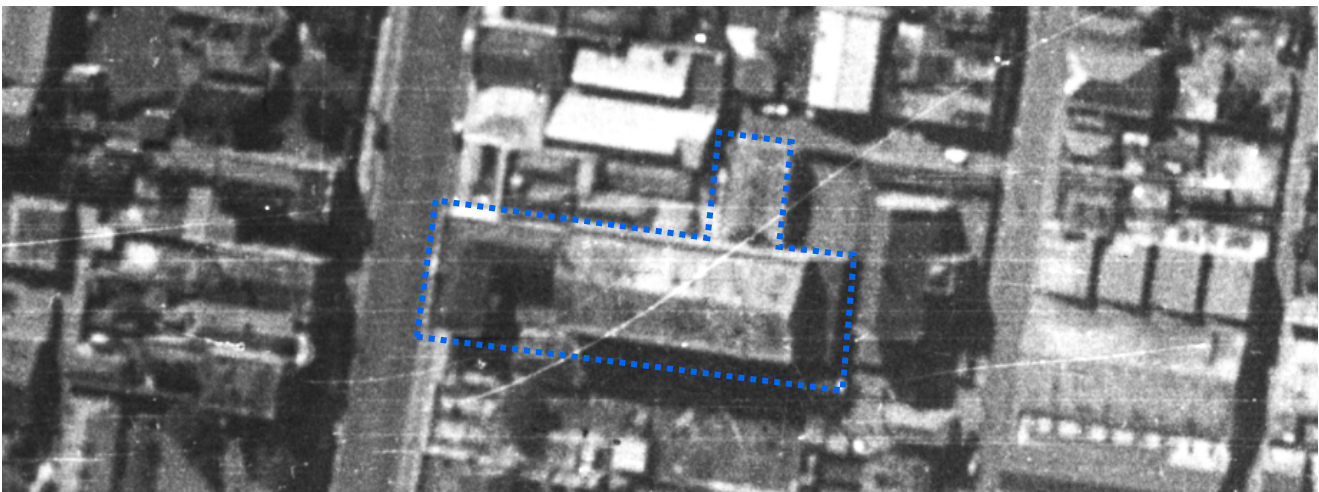


Figure 16 – 1942 aerial photograph of Fitzroy with the subject site indicatively outlined blue.

Source: Geoscience Australia, *Historical Aerial Photography Collection*, MAP1820, Run 15, Frame 72334, 1942.



Figure 17 – Cathedral Hall in c.1970.

Source: State Library of Victoria, H2010.105/475d.

4 **Heritage Listings and Controls**

4 Heritage Listings and Controls

The following listings and controls apply to the subject site at 20–22 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy.

4.1 National Heritage List

The subject site is not included on Australia's National Heritage List.

4.2 Victorian Heritage Register

Cathedral Hall is included on the Victorian Heritage Register as a place of historical and architectural significance to the State of Victoria (VHR H1967).

The listing incorporates the full extent of the building and land, as shown at Figure 11 and defined in the extent of registration as:

1. All the building marked B1 on diagram 1967 held by the Executive Director.
2. All the land shown on diagram 1967 held by the Executive Director.

As heritage places included in the Victorian Heritage Register are subject to the requirements of the Heritage Act 2017. A planning permit is generally not required for buildings and works under Planning Scheme Clause 43.01-3. However, a planning permit may still be required where other, unrelated planning controls are triggered, or in the case of subdivision.

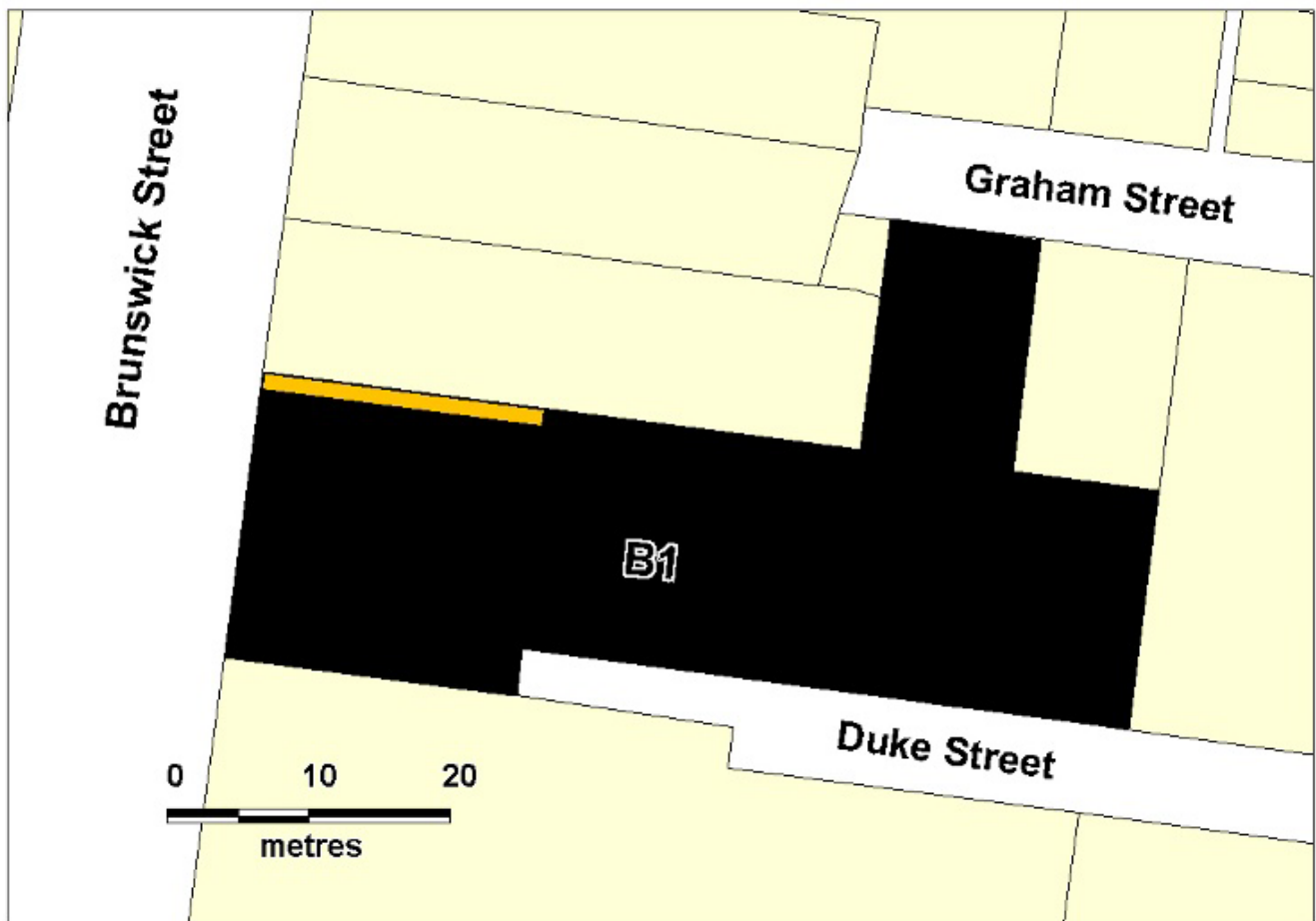


Figure 18 – Cathedral Hall, VHR H1967, Extent of Registration Plan.

Source: Victorian Heritage Database, <https://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/places/4583>, accessed July 2026.

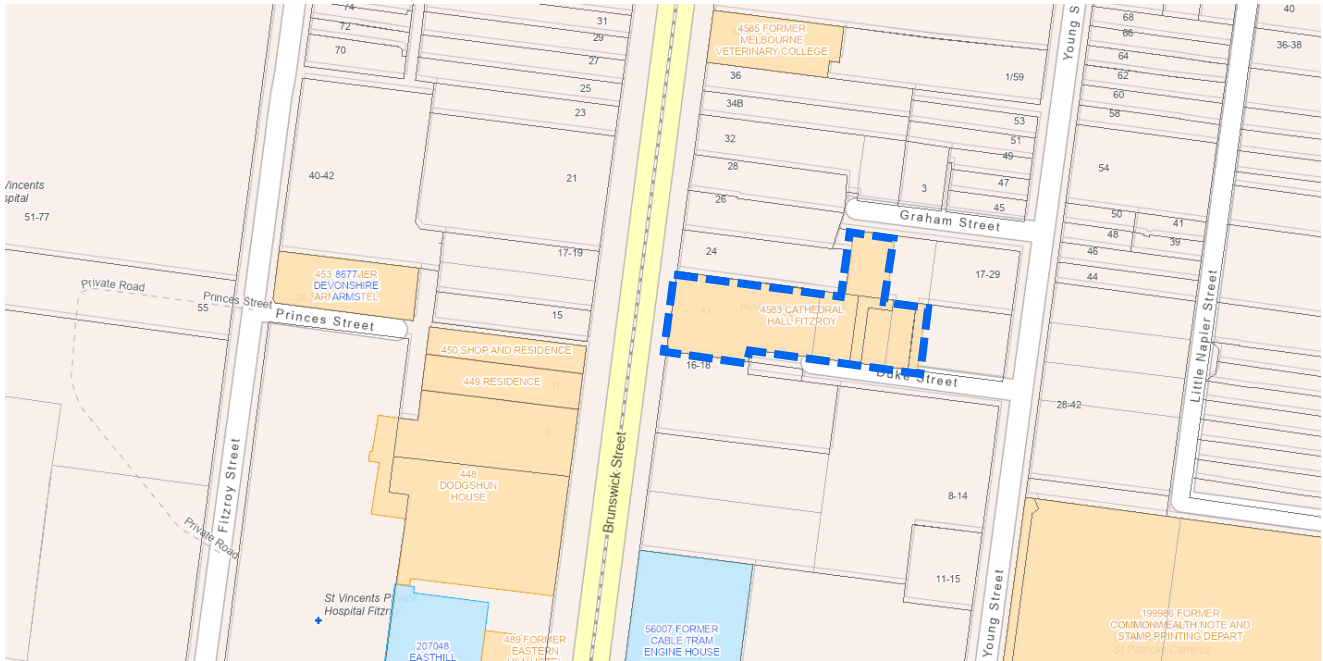


Figure 19 – Extent of VHR registration to Cathedral Hall (outlined in blue) and nearby VHR heritage listings (all shaded orange).

Source: VicPlan, <https://mapshare.vic.gov.au/vicplan/>.

4.3 Melbourne Planning Scheme

The subject site at 20–22 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy, is located within the Melbourne Planning Scheme heritage overlay identified as HO347, Cathedral Hall in the Schedule to Clause 43.01 Heritage Overlay.

This Heritage Overlay corresponds to the extent of registration for VHR H1967 and does not constitute a separate heritage listing.

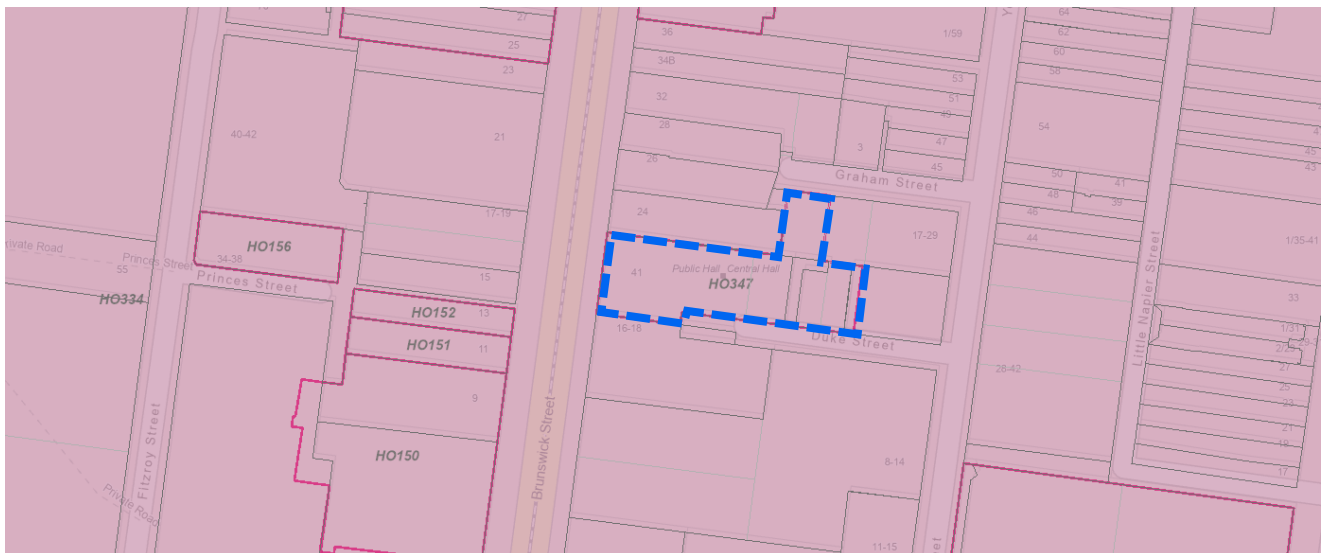


Figure 20 – Extract of the Heritage Overlay map showing the subject site outlined in blue.

Source: VicPlan at <https://mapshare.vic.gov.au/vicplan/>.

4.4 Victorian Heritage Inventory

The site at 20–22 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy, is not included on the Victorian Heritage Inventory as a place of known significant historical archaeological potential.

4.5 Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Sensitivity

The site at 20–22 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy, is not included within an area of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Sensitivity.

4.6 Non-Statutory Listings

4.6.1 National Trust of Australia

The site at 20–22 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy, is not individually classified by the National Trust of Australia (Vic).

The National Trust of Australia does classify the Brunswick Street Fitzroy – Historic Area (File number: B7089) although no defined extent of classification is provided and it is not clear if the subject site is included within the area.

The National Trust is an advisory body with no statutory powers although it can play an advisory role and provide input into proposals for classified sites. No statutory requirements arise as a consequence of classification.

4.6.2 Register of the National Estate

The site at 20–22 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy, is included on the Australian Heritage Commission's Register of the National Estate as Cathedral (Central) Hall (Place ID 103748, Place File No. 2/11/020/0099). Additionally, the Register of the National Estate also includes the Brunswick / Gertrude Streets Conservation Area (Place ID4945, Place File No. 2/11/020/0070).

The Register of the National Estate was frozen in 2007 and now serves only as a publicly available archive of information and educational resource rather than as a statutory register.

5 Significance

5 Significance

5.1 Victorian Heritage Register

The Statement of Significance for Cathedral Hall – as provided by the Victorian Heritage Register – reads as follows:

What is significant?

Cathedral Hall consists of meeting rooms and offices at the front of the site and a large hall to the rear with a supper room opening off it. The building was used as a meeting place for the Catholic Church in Melbourne from 1903. The building fronting Brunswick Street was constructed in 1873 as the Exhibition Boot Factory and refurbished as clubrooms and classrooms in 1902–03 by the Church. The main hall behind the factory was erected in 1903–04 and the whole became the main venue for activities associated with St Patrick's Cathedral and the Church generally, commencing with the hosting of the Second Australasian Catholic Congress in 1904 and later the National Eucharistic Congress in 1934. The supper room fronting Graham Street was added in 1908 and the whole building was decorated in 1912–13 and refurbished for the National Eucharistic Congress in 1934 when the light fittings were designed and installed. In the 1960s the hall became known as Central Hall.

How is it significant?

Cathedral Hall is architecturally and historically significant to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

Cathedral Hall is architecturally significant to the State of Victoria for its skilful incorporation of the 1873 boot factory into a larger design to provide an institutional hall, clubrooms and classrooms and for the elegance of the design and decoration of the main hall. The relatively austere composition of the factory front to Brunswick Street was transformed into a more elaborate yet restrained and dignified facade for the new facilities. The large single volume of the hall and the balcony supported by a cantilevered structure which obviated the need for columns make the hall well suited to its purpose. The elaborate plasterwork of the hall ceiling, proscenium and balcony decoration completed in 1913 was seen by contemporaries as an aesthetic triumph. The hall is an important example of the work of Reed, Smart and Tappin, architects of some of the most notable Victorian church buildings.

Cathedral Hall is historically significant for its major place in the history of the Catholic Church in the State, for its role in education and social and cultural activities connected with the church and for its close links with St Patrick's Cathedral, the centre of the Church in Victoria. Its reuse of the Exhibition Boot Factory recalls the industrial history of Fitzroy, preceding the institutional development at the top of Brunswick Street, which has been continued by the recently expanded religious and educational precinct to accommodate the Australian Catholic University. Cathedral Hall, within the St Patricks Cathedral precinct, is of historic importance as part of the centre of Roman Catholic activity in Victoria.

5.2 National Trust of Australia (VIC)

The Statement of Significance for the Brunswick Street Fitzroy – Historic Area – as provided in the National Trust – reads as follows:

The shopping strip of Brunswick Street, Fitzroy, developed from the 1840s, and predominantly dating from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, is of State historical, architectural and social significance.

Historically, Brunswick Street was the first significant shopping area outside the city, described as rivalling Bourke Street in the 1850s. It developed as a major general shopping precinct by the 1900s, when it was overtaken in pre-eminence by Smith Street, Chapel Street, and the ever growing city stores. The following decline was not reversed until its establishment as an 'alternative' shopping strip from the 1980s, reinvigorating the now well preserved building stock.

Architecturally, Brunswick Street is notable as a particularly cohesive and intact 19th and early 20th century shopping strip, which includes a number of individually significant shop/house and shop/warehouse developments, such as the Beswicke Building, the post office and early hotels. In some instances the buildings' size is testimony to the success and aspirations of the people who traded and shopped in the street. There is also an unusually high proportion of original nineteenth century shopfronts for the metropolitan context. The urban picture created by the building stock is further enhanced by the intactness of most upper-floor facades, and the tram route which still runs along the street. The view of St Patrick's Cathedral is one of the major urban vistas in the whole of Melbourne, and is comparable with the view to the Shrine along St Kilda Road.

Socially, Brunswick Street has played an important role in serving the diverse population of Fitzroy, including the artisans and working classes of the nineteenth century, the low income residents particularly of the numerous boarding houses of the twentieth century, and the large number of migrants after the Second World War. From the 1980s Brunswick Street has been considered Melbourne's most "Bohemian" and varied shopping strip, quite distinct from other shopping strips in the inner city. It is home to a range of shops, bars and cafes catering to a clientele looking for a creative, challenging, or socially aware experience.

Visitors value the interesting ambience, the egalitarian feel of the place, and the artistic expression in the signs and street furniture.

Classified: 04/12/2000

5.3 Register of the National Estate

The Register of the National Estate Statement of Significance for Cathedral (Central) Hall – as provided in the Australian Heritage Database – reads as follows:

Cathedral Hall is architecturally and historically significant to the State of Victoria.

Cathedral Hall is architecturally significant to the State of Victoria for its skilful incorporation of the 1873 boot factory into a larger design to provide an institutional hall, clubrooms and classrooms and for the elegance of the design and decoration of the main hall. The relatively austere composition of the factory front to Brunswick Street was transformed into a more elaborate yet restrained and dignified facade for the new facilities.

The large single volume of the hall and the balcony supported by a cantilevered structure which obviated the need for columns make the hall well suited to its purpose. The elaborate plasterwork of the hall ceiling, proscenium and balcony decoration completed in 1913 was seen by contemporaries as an aesthetic triumph. The hall is an important example of the work of Reed, Smart and Tappin, architects of some of the most notable Victorian church buildings.

Cathedral Hall is historically significant for its major place in the history of the Catholic Church in the State, for its role in education and social and cultural activities connected with the church and for its close links with St Patrick's Cathedral, the centre of the Church in Victoria. Its reuse of the Exhibition Boot Factory recalls the industrial history of Fitzroy, preceding the institutional development at the top of Brunswick Street, which has been continued by the recently expanded religious and educational precinct to accommodate the Australian Catholic University.

Cathedral Hall, within the St Patricks Cathedral precinct, is of historic importance as part of the centre of Roman Catholic activity in Victoria. (Australian Historic Themes: 3.13 Developing an Australian manufacturing capacity; 4.6 Remembering significant phases in the development of settlements, towns and cities; 8.5 Forming associations; 8.6.3 Founding Australian religious institutions; 8.10.4 Designing and building fine buildings)

This place is entered in the Victorian Heritage Register (20/2/2002). The Australian Heritage Commission recognises the standards of historic assessment of Heritage Victoria and therefore acknowledges that this place has National Estate historic values. Enquiries concerning the assessment or conservation of this place should be directed in the first instance to Heritage Victoria. Commonwealth authorities and bodies should contact the Australian Heritage Commission directly if any Commonwealth action is proposed in relation to this place.

The Register of the National Estate Statement of Significance for the Brunswick / Gertrude Streets Conservation Area – as provided in the Australian Heritage Database – reads as follows:

This area contains one of the most interesting and intact selections of mid-nineteenth century architecture in Melbourne. It contains a substantial number of consistent and continuous streetscapes and a substantial number of buildings of historical and architectural significance.

5.4 Conservation Management Plan (Nigel Lewis Richard Aitken Pty Ltd, October 2000)

The Statement of Significance for Cathedral Hall – as provided in the Conservation Management Plan for Central Hall [now Cathedral Hall] (Nigel Lewis Richard Aitken Pty Ltd, October 2000) – reads as follows:

Central Hall has considerable aesthetic value on account of its design and also its streetscape context, particularly demonstrated by:

- *The reworking of facade in 1902–04 which transformed the relatively austere composition into a more elaborate yet restrained and dignified focus for the hall and its rooms, befitting its new use;*
- *The overall design, which is clearly articulated and expressed in the architectural composition, well suited to its purpose, and well demonstrated 'by the structural design;*
- *As an exemplar of an institutional hall, a building type common in Victoria, but well demonstrated in this building;*
- *The design and high quality craftwork of the hall ceiling, proscenium and balcony, which carried the Renaissance overtones of the facade into the interior in a richer Baroque expression;*
- *The general high standard, consistency and intactness of the building fabric, especially from the original construction in 1873, the reworking of the front buildings in 1902–03, and the construction of the hall in 1903–04, and to a lesser extent, the addition of the supper room in 1908 and evidence of the 1912–13 decoration; and*
- *The context of the building in the streetscape of Brunswick Street, where it forms a complement to a fine collection of mid to late Victorian and Edwardian buildings, having a consistent scale, minimal setbacks, and unifying architectural treatments, and the, outstanding vista south to the spire of St Patrick's Cathedral.*

Central Hall has great historical value, especially for the following themes:

- *For the remaining fabric of the former boot factory, for the manner in which the building recalls a major industrial and mercantile activity which was formerly prominent in this locality; and for documentary material that allows this former use to be appreciated;*
- *For its major place in the history of the Catholic faith in Victoria, for its role in education and social and cultural activities connected with the church; as an integral part of a major Catholic institutional precinct;*
- *As a bulwark against sectarianism, well demonstrated by documentary material associated with the building and its usage;*
- *For its close association with the episcopacy of Thomas Joseph Carr (1839–1917), Archbishop of Melbourne (1886–1917), including the holding of the Second Australasian Catholic Congress in Cathedral Hall in 1904*
- *For its association with Daniel Mannix (1864–1963), Archbishop of Melbourne (1917–63), especially his promotion of the 1934 Eucharistic Congress and the role of Cathedral Hall as a principal venue;*

- *As part of the distinguished oeuvre of Reed, Smart and Tappin, architects of some of the most notable Victorian church buildings on the decades either side of the turn of the twentieth century;*
- *For its integral part in the history of Fitzroy, exemplifying two major phases/themes of local history (mercantile/industrial activity and consolidation of institutional development);*
- *For its place in the history of Australian popular music and culture as the T.F. Much (and Much More) Ballroom venue; and*
- *For the survival of documentary evidence which considerably aids in an understanding of this building and its interpretation.*

Central Hall has modest scientific values, largely through:

- *Technical sophistication and elegance of the cantilever structure of the balconies; and*
- *High quality of construction, especially apparent in detailing of the walls and roof of the hall.*

Central Hall has considerable social value, particularly for:

- *Its continuous link with the Catholic faith since 1902; and*
- *Social value also extends to the memory of public use of Central Hall for a wide variety of social and cultural purposes.*

6 Policy

6 Policy

6.1 General Exemptions

General exemptions apply to all places included on the VHR and allow certain works without a permit from Heritage Victoria.

General exemptions are designed to maintain and preserve the heritage significance of a place and cover common works across a range of categories including but not limited to: maintenance and cleaning, minor repairs, internal fit outs, testing, services, safety and security, vegetation and landscape management, temporary events and structures, and signage.

General exemptions are set out in Heritage Victoria's *General Permit Exemptions* (August 2024).

6.2 VHR H1967 Permit Exemptions

In addition to the general exemptions which apply to all places on the VHR, specific exemptions may also apply to individual places. These allow for specific works to be undertaken at a heritage place without a permit from Heritage Victoria.

While there are no specific permit exemptions listed within the place listing within the Victorian Heritage Database, the following Permit Exemption Policy is included:

Cathedral Hall is significant for the remaining fabric from the following phases of development:

- *the 1873 boot factory, the reworking of the front section in 1902-03, the construction of the hall in 1903-04, the supper room (1908), the decoration (1912-13) and further decoration, including light fittings (1934).*

Permit applications will generally follow the conservation strategies and guidelines laid out in the Central Hall Conservation Management Plan prepared for the Australian Catholic University by Nigel Lewis Richard Aitken Pty Ltd. (October 2000)

6.3 Conservation Management Policy

The following conservation policy has been reproduced for reference where relevant to the proposed scheme.

4.2 Owner/manager's needs and resources

4.2.3 Aspirations

It is the intention of Australian Catholic University to use Central Hall for the following purposes.

- *Teaching (see below)*
- *Offices, for eight academics and one facilities management staff member (see below)*
- *Graduations*
- *Conferences*
- *Commercial use, including concerts, theatre, recordings, filming, dinners and banquets, and other commercial functions*
- *Community use*

This would require works, including the following .

- *Refurbishment of spaces for flexible teaching purposes*
- *Refurbishment of some spaces for office use*

- [...]

4.7 Conservation Policy

4.7.1 Fabric and setting

Values represented by Central Hall: That Central Hall be recognised as a place of cultural significance, of importance to Victoria and Australia, with attributes embracing aesthetic, historic, social and scientific, especially as summarised in the statement of cultural significance (s.3.5)

Cultural significance: That Central Hall be recognised as primarily significant for its development and use from the initial construction in 1873 to its refurbishment and enlargement in 1902-04, with contributory significance attached to its subsequent development and use, especially to 1934.

4.7.2 Use

Primary use: That the primary uses of Central Hall be for educational purposes and as a publicly accessible venue for concerts, dramatic performances, and other functions related to the mission of the Australian Catholic University.

Compatible uses: That other compatible uses, such as commercial functions, be pursued where these do not conflict with the primary uses of the place.

4.7.3 Interpretation

Interpretation of cultural significance: That the cultural significance of Central Hall be interpreted to all users, including visitors, as an integral part of management, in a manner that catering for different levels of expertise and expectation, and with due reference to all periods of development.

4.7.4 Management

Conservation management: That the Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance (the Burra Charter) and its associated guidelines provide the basis for conservation management of Central Hall (see Appendix One).

Maintenance: That adequate maintenance of the buildings form a vital part of ongoing management of the place.

4.7.5 Future Developments

New works: That new works be limited in extent and not dominate significant aspects of the place.

5.2 Conservation guidelines

5.2.1 Components of high significance

Doors

Retain original or early doors unless modifications are required for disabled or other forms of enhanced access, or for fire safety; label and store all original doors which have been removed.

Any self-opening doors should be created within existing openings, retaining as much of the original joinery as possible.

Where original doors are single openings (without side lights), replacement self-opening doors could either:

- *use concertina doors within existing opening, or*
- *retain and extend the existing doorjamb and jamb lining to create a new doorjamb for a sliding door on the inside face of the wall (using a simple detail)*

If doors are required to be removed for any purpose they should be carefully labelled and securely stored.

Retain architraves, door furniture, such as door handles, push plates, locks, escutcheons, etc. as far as permitted under relevant regulations. Any door handles or similar items removed to be tagged with location and securely stored.

Ceilings and light fittings

In general retain all original or early ceilings, ceiling vents, and cornices; repair where necessary

Remove redundant services (including light fittings) and make good penetrations

Remove false ceilings and re-expose original or early ceilings

New light fittings to be discreet modern fixtures, especially avoiding 'reproduction styles'

Walls

Retain all original and early walls and associated detailing (including dadoes, wall vents), repair where necessary

Remove any painted finishes from external masonry by an approved method (i.e steam cleaning using approved solvents)

Remove intrusive partitions and make good

New partitions should be constructed in a manner which permits their later removal without damage to original building fabric; in large spaces the placement of new partitions should, where possible, be generated from the prevailing architectural grid or pattern of original or early ceilings

For large new partitions, the top should be glazed (in a sympathetic design) to allow the decorative ceiling features to be visible beyond the new partition.

Where new wall openings are required, the adjacent walls should retain nibs on the sides and above the opening to ensure that adjacent architectural details are not compromised and to facilitate any future reconstruction of the opening; this method also helps demonstrate the original room configuration.

Floors

Retain all original or early floors and associated detailing (including floor tiles, basalt thresholds and skirtings), repair where necessary

Timber floors should be retained and not replaced with reinforced concrete

New flooring coverings should be of an unostentatious design, whether carpets, tiles or vinyl

Fittings

Retain all original or early fittings such as doors, windows, decorative glazing, door and window furniture (even if not in use), cupboards, mantelpieces, stair balusters and handrails, seating

Remove intrusive fixtures and fittings and make good

Simple modern design will be adopted for new work, such as kitchen and tearoom fittings and new built in fixtures, such as counters and shelving

Early seating on balcony to be retained, with a flexible approach adopted for seating on ground level

Services

Strip out all and rationalise services unless being kept in use

Retain significant early basins and toilets where consistent with relevant regulations. Simple modern design will be adopted for new work.

Internal painting and finishes

1912-13 to 1934 colour schemes or finishes to be reconstructed, unless special requirements of new uses preclude reconstruction

Retain sections of original finishes for later reference and interpretation purposes; such retained sections provide important evidence of original or early finishes and colour schemes which are no longer generally visible or have not survived

Intrusive items

Demolish intrusive items or alter them in such a manner that the intrusive impact is minimised.

Contents

Samples of any remain contents should be collected, carefully tagged and securely stored for future interpretation purposes.

New works

New works should respect adjoining buildings or components in particular, and the site generally, especially in bulk/building envelope. Innovative modern design idioms should be used, and imitation avoided.

5.2.2 Components of moderate significance

General

Areas of moderate significance may be altered, especially if other priorities are paramount. If such areas are retained, in general their integrity should be respected, especially the retention of wall surfaces and detailing, original or early doors and fenestration (scheduled above). The main distinction between rankings of high and moderate significance has been made to identify areas where a greater degree of flexibility might be exercised in the modification of original or early fabric.

If new work is undertaken, the general approach should be to adopt a recessive design, sympathetic to the original structure.

Decoration

If not based on the 1912-13 scheme (which appears to have been largely retained in the 1934 refurbishment), new colour schemes or finishes should be of an unostentatious colour and design.

5.2.3 Components of low significance

These spaces could be altered without restriction, unless fabric of higher ranked components was compromised (see Sections 5:2 .1 and 5.2.2).

5.3 Application of conservation strategies

Ground floor

G.08: Former ladies cloakroom

Significance: High

Proposed use: Circulation space and possible catering facility

Conservation guidelines: See conservation guidelines in Section 5.2.1

Special recommendations

- *Retain coat hooks around perimeter*
- *Retain shelving and bench unless new use dictates their removal*

G.10: Former club/committee/class room

Significance: High

Proposed use: Teaching

Conservation guidelines: See conservation guidelines in Section 5.2. I

Special recommendations

- *Retain early fireplace and mantel*

7

Heritage Impact Assessment

7 Heritage Impact Assessment

7.1 Introduction

The following section assesses whether the proposed scheme for the site is appropriate in character and detail, and whether it is acceptable in terms of its impact on the heritage significance of the place.

In doing so, it seeks to address a number of key questions:

- What options were considered in development of the proposal?
- What impacts, positive or negative, will the proposed works have on the significance of the place?
- What measures are proposed to minimise and mitigate potential negative impacts?
- If a negative impact is proposed, why was the proposed option chosen and why were the other more sympathetic options not feasible?

7.2 Proposed Scheme

Alterations and additions are proposed to two rooms within the ground floor of Cathedral Hall to allow for new recording studios for ACU.

Works are proposed to rooms G.08 (southwest front room), and G.10 (north of the central hall).

It is proposed to construct two freestanding 'boxes' within the existing rooms to accommodate a total of three acoustic treated recording studios (one studio in G.08 and two connected studios in G.10).

The studio boxes would be constructed on rubber isolator pads above the existing floor. The studios would be accessed via shallow ramps constructed within the rooms. The external walls and roof of the studios would be clad in painted FC sheet and Durra Panel acoustic panels.

Although detailed structural investigations are yet to be undertaken, it is anticipated that some additional structure may be required to support the new studios which will require temporary removal of existing flooring, installation of new structure, and replacement of flooring.

Room G.08

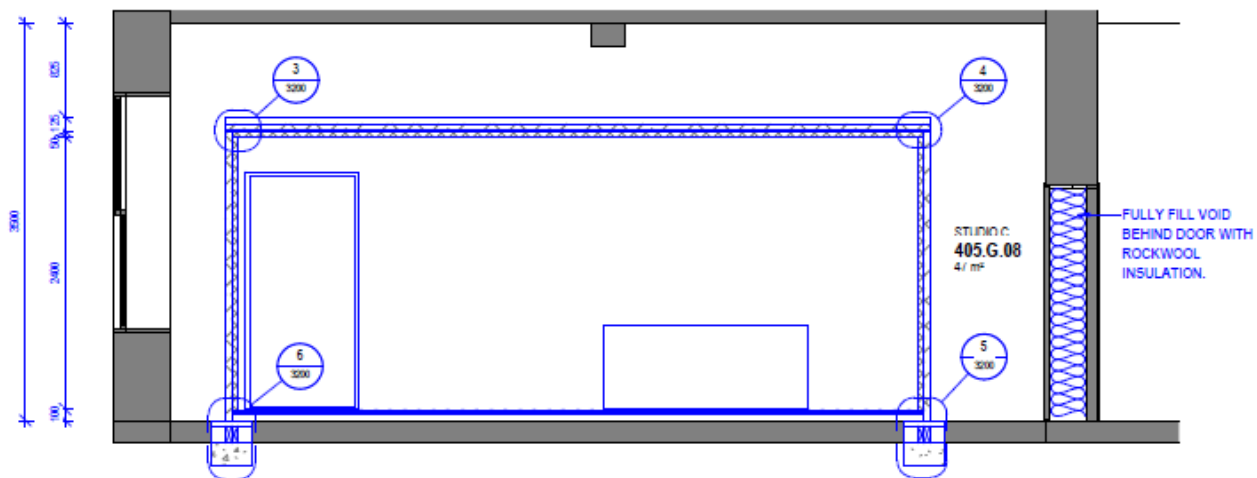
The studio proposed within room G.08 would measure approximately 6.2 metres by 4.2 metres with an overall height of 2.675 metres. The studio would be offset from the existing walls by approximately 1.67 metres to the north, 1 metre to the east, 200mm to the south, and 480mm to the west. There would be 825mm separation from the roof of the studio to the ceiling of the room.

An access ramp is proposed to the north side of the studio. It is proposed to backfill the void behind the existing fixed door to the eastern side of the room with Rockwool insulation to minimise sound transfer from the bathrooms to the east.

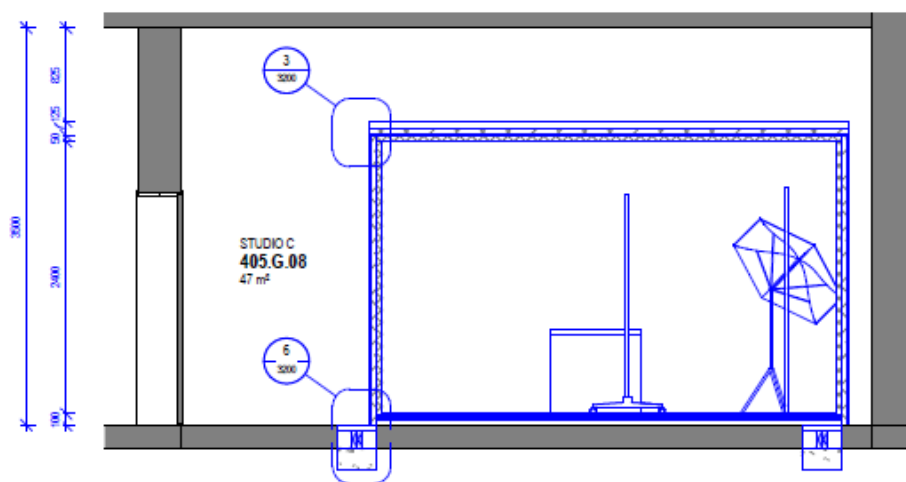
Room G.10

The studio proposed within room G.10 would measure 6.85m metres by 3.95 metres with an overall height of 2.675 metres. The studio would be offset from the existing walls by approximately 285mm metres to the north, 700mm to the east, 1.67 metres to the south, and 165mm to the west. There would be 825mm separation from the roof of the studio to the ceiling of the room.

An access ramp is proposed to the south side of the studio.



1 PROPOSED SECTION A-A
1200 1 : 50



2 PROPOSED SECTION B-B
1200 1 : 50

Figure 22 – Proposed Section – 408.G.08.

Source: Kyriacou, AR-3200, 28/07/2026.

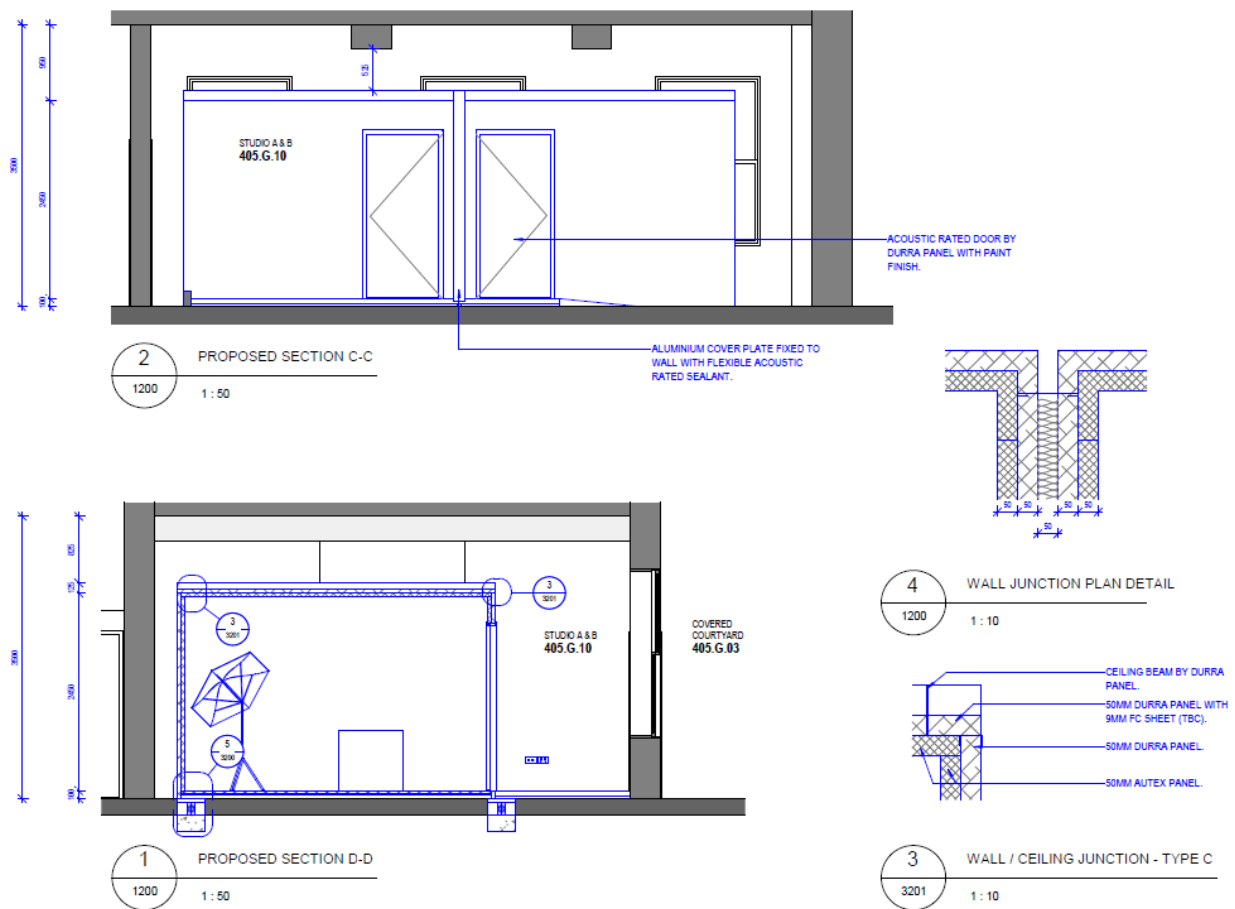
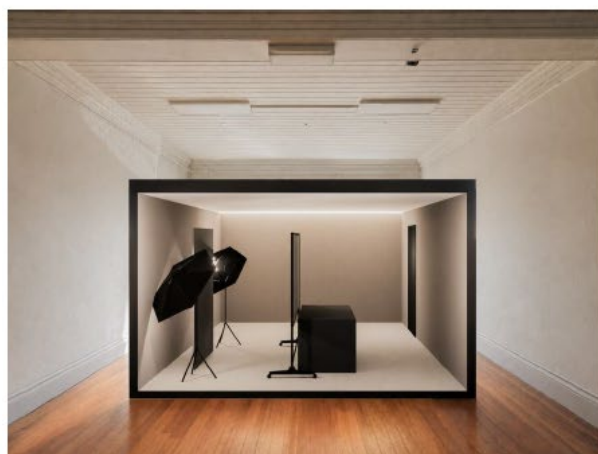


Figure 23 – Proposed Section – 408.G.10.

Source: Kyriacou, AR-3201, 28/07/2026.



1 ROOM 405.G.08 3D SECTION
1 : 35



2 ROOM 405.G.10 3D SECTION
1 : 35

Figure 24 – Proposed 3D section.

Source: Kyriacou, AR-7000, 28/07/2026.

7.3 Impact Assessment

The proposed scheme has been designed to minimise impact upon existing original and early fabric while also allowing for the insertion of new education spaces that are fit for purpose.

Proposed physical interventions are anticipated to be required to areas of the floor to allow for new structural connections, infilling of an existing fixed door cavity, and upgrades and alterations to existing non-original services to the ceiling. These works as shown in the proposed plans are provisional and will be confirmed following structural investigations. Detail of this work is recommended to form a permit condition.

Subject to structural investigations, there is anticipated to be some impact associated with the flooring structure which would require sections of existing floorboards to be cut to allow for new bearers and footings. While this would involve the removal of original/early fabric, it is limited in scope and most of the existing flooring throughout the rooms would remain undisturbed. We recommend that following cutting of the existing flooring and installation of the new bearers and footings, that the removed timber floorboards be reinstated to match existing. This process would result in minimal impact upon the visual presentation of these elements.

It is proposed to infill the door cavity of the existing fixed door to the eastern wall of room G.08 with rockwool insulation. This is required to improve the acoustic performance of the room that abuts the bathrooms. This process would not impact original fabric and would be fully reversible at a later date if required. The existing door would be refixed following infilling.

Alterations and upgrades to services would be minor and have a negligible impact to significant fabric. Existing services would be relied upon for connections to the new pods. This would include making use of existing electrical outlets, other electrical services, fire services and mechanical services which already exist to the rooms' ceilings.

The proposed studio pods would be appropriate new additions that limit impact upon heritage fabric. The studios have been sized to be physically separate from the internal walls, joinery and ceiling of the rooms. This will allow the original spatial quality of the rooms to remain intact.

The provision of compliant access ramps would ensure the new studios can be used by people of all abilities. These ramps are to be appropriately scaled, low profile additions to the room which still allow visibility of the existing flooring.

The proposed pods are fully reversible and could be dismantled at a future date allowing the existing rooms to be returned to their existing condition.

The proposed pods are a simple design which would not compete with the existing internal fabric of the rooms. The pods would be finished in painted FC sheets and Durra Panel acoustic panels. These finishes are simple and do not detract from the space.

The proposed scheme does not propose any work to the exterior of Cathedral Hall or other spaces within the building including the foyer or main hall to the rear.

The proposed works are consistent with the policies and intentions of the existing CMP for Cathedral Hall including those relating to new works, services, future development, and the guidelines relating to components of high significance.

Throughout the design development process, multiple options were considered to protect heritage fabric and achieve the required acoustic performance for the studio spaces. These options were presented to Heritage Victoria as part of the pre-application process. Alternative options such as the fixing of acoustic treatments directly to original fabric or work being spread across multiple rooms would have posed greater heritage impact than the proposed scheme.

The proposed studio boxes within rooms G.08 and G.10 have been designed to minimise the need for interference with and impact on heritage fabric.

7.4 Reasonable and Economic Use

Under s101(2)(b) of the Heritage Act 2017, the Executive Director must consider the following in determining whether to approve an application for a heritage permit:

(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;

The Executive Director must weigh these matters in addition to other mandatory and discretionary considerations.

When taking into account the circumstances of the permit application and the registered place or object, the Executive Director may consider: (1) the historic, recent and current uses of the registered place or object, (2) other compatible uses of the registered place or object, (3) the context and setting within which the place or object is located, and (4) other relevant matters.

The historical, recent and current use of Cathedral Hall has been for education with other uses also supplementing this (alongside the original use as a factory). The CMP for Cathedral Hall establishes education as the place's primary use. The proposed scheme is reasonable to allow for the continued use of these spaces for education and address the need for periodical refurbishment and upgrades as educational needs evolve.

8 Conclusion

8 Conclusion

The proposed internal works to Cathedral Hall at 20–22 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy, have been assessed as acceptable and do not pose an undue impact upon the significance of the heritage place.

The works are limited to the interiors of two ground floor rooms and would not alter the external presentation of Cathedral Hall or its broader setting. The proposed studio pods have been designed as simple, contemporary, freestanding and reversible insertions, physically separated from the existing walls, ceilings and significant joinery. This approach minimises physical intervention into significant fabric while allowing the existing rooms to continue to be understood as original internal spaces.

Some localised physical intervention will be required, principally associated with floor penetrations to install for new structural bearers and footings. These works are limited in extent and can be managed through the recommendations below.

The proposed use of rooms G.08 and G.10 for education and teaching-related recording facilities is consistent with the established and ongoing educational use of Cathedral Hall by ACU and is compatible with the place. The proposed works will support the continued use of the building while adopting a design approach that is recessive, contemporary and distinguishable from the significant heritage fabric.

On this basis, the proposed works are considered to result in an acceptable heritage outcome. The impacts to rooms G.08 and G.10 are minor and manageable, and the proposal is supportable from a heritage perspective, subject to the recommendations below.

Recommendations

- Any required structural interventions are to be confirmed as a condition of permit and informed by detailed structural investigations. Intention should be that if any structural intervention is required to support the proposed pods this should be undertaken in a manner that poses minimal intervention to heritage fabric.
- Subject to structural investigations, where any existing timber floorboards may be required to be cut to allow installation of new bearers and footings, removed boards should be carefully salvaged, labelled and reinstated to match the surrounding floor finish wherever feasible.
- All works should be undertaken with care and with due regard to the significance of the heritage fabric, including original and early floors, skirtings, doors, architraves, windows, ceilings, cornices, fireplaces and other significant internal elements.
- Any new fixings and service penetrations should be minimised and, where required, located to avoid significant fabric wherever practicable.
- Any redundant services made apparent during the works should be rationalised or removed where this can be achieved without damage to significant fabric.
- Following completion of the works, any disturbed surfaces should be made good to match adjacent existing finishes.

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9 Bibliography

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Nearmap: <https://www.nearmap.com/au>

Trove: <https://trove.nla.gov.au/>

VicPlan Map: <https://mapshare.vic.gov.au/vicplan/>

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Wurundjeri: <https://www.wurundjeri.com.au/our-story/ancestors-past/>

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This report has been prepared with due care and diligence by Urbis and the statements and opinions given by Urbis in this report are given in good faith and in the reasonable belief that they are correct and not misleading, subject to the limitations above.

Appendix A – Citations

CATHEDRAL HALL



CATHEDRAL HALL SOHE
2008



H01967 1cathedral hall
facade



H01967 cathedral hall interior



H01967 cathedral hall
interior2



H01967 cathedral hall south
elevation



H01967 cathedral hall stage



H01967 cathedral hall supper
room



H01967 cathedral hall plan

Location

20-22 BRUNSWICK STREET FITZROY, YARRA CITY

Municipality

YARRA CITY

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1967

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO347

VHR Registration

February 14, 2002

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

Statement of Significance

What is significant?

Cathedral Hall consists of meeting rooms and offices at the front of the site and a large hall to the rear with a supper room opening off it. The building was used as a meeting place for the Catholic Church in Melbourne from 1903. The building fronting Brunswick Street was constructed in 1873 as the Exhibition Boot Factory and refurbished as clubrooms and classrooms in 1902-03 by the Church. The main hall behind the factory was erected in 1903-04 and the whole became the main venue for activities associated with St Patrick's Cathedral and the Church generally, commencing with the hosting of the Second Australasian Catholic Congress in 1904 and later the National Eucharistic Congress in 1934. The supper room fronting Graham Street was added in 1908 and the whole building was decorated in 1912-13 and refurbished for the National Eucharistic Congress in 1934 when the light fittings were designed and installed. In the 1960s the hall became known as Central Hall.

How is it significant?

Cathedral Hall is architecturally and historically significant to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

Cathedral Hall is architecturally significant to the State of Victoria for its skilful incorporation of the 1873 boot factory into a larger design to provide an institutional hall, clubrooms and classrooms and for the elegance of the design and decoration of the main hall. The relatively austere composition of the factory front to Brunswick Street was transformed into a more elaborate yet restrained and dignified facade for the new facilities. The large single volume of the hall and the balcony supported by a cantilevered structure which obviated the need for columns make the hall well suited to its purpose. The elaborate plasterwork of the hall ceiling, proscenium and balcony decoration completed in 1913 was seen by contemporaries as an aesthetic triumph. The hall is an important example of the work of Reed, Smart and Tappin, architects of some of the most notable Victorian church buildings.

Cathedral Hall is historically significant for its major place in the history of the Catholic Church in the State, for its role in education and social and cultural activities connected with the church and for its close links with St Patrick's Cathedral, the centre of the Church in Victoria. Its reuse of the Exhibition Boot Factory recalls the industrial history of Fitzroy, preceding the institutional development at the top of Brunswick Street, which has been continued by the recently expanded religious and educational precinct to accommodate the Australian Catholic University. Cathedral Hall, within the St Patricks Cathedral precinct, is of historic importance as part of the centre of Roman Catholic activity in Victoria.

Permit Exemptions

General Exemptions:

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

Places of worship: In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must **notify** the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

Subdivision/consolidation: Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below.

Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).

Specific Exemptions:

General Conditions: 1. All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object. General Conditions: 2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of alterations that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such alteration shall cease and the Executive Director shall be notified as soon as possible. General Conditions: 3. If there is a conservation policy and plan approved by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it. General Conditions: 4. Nothing in this declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions. Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authority where applicable.

Construction dates	1873, 1902, 1908, 1912, 1934,
Architect/Designer	Reed, Smart & Tappin,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	CENTRAL HALL,
Hermes Number	4583
Property Number	

History

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY:

On 15 May 1839 Patrick Geoghegan arrived in Melbourne to take up the position of priest of the newly formed parish of Port Phillip. The land on which St Francis Church stands was granted in July 1839 and shortly after the land grant was confirmed, the first mass at the site was held in a temporary chapel which had been moved to the site in June that year. St Francis Church was designed by Samuel Jackson and built between 1841 and 1845. It became the first Catholic Cathedral in the district in 1848 following the installation of Bishop Goold, and remained the cathedral until the opening of St Patrick's Cathedral in 1869.

The site on which St Patrick's Cathedral now stands was part of a five-acre government grant to the Catholic Church given over the years 1848-53. The western section of the site was set aside for a church, the central portion for clergy accommodation and the eastern part was designated for educational purposes. The present St Patrick's Cathedral designed by William Wardell in 1858. By March 1859, work at the Cathedral was progressing rapidly. The nave and aisles were opened in 1869. The remainder of the church itself and the sacristy were completed in 1897. The spires and confessional were added and the west door rebuilt in 1936-40.

The bluestone tower in the south east corner of the site is all that remains of St Patrick's College. The construction of the college, the first Diocesan Grammar school in Victoria, commenced in 1854. The college closed in December 1968, and the majority of St Patrick's College was demolished in January 1971 after a lengthy but unsuccessful campaign by the National Trust.

Cathedral Hall represented a new phase in the history of the Catholic Church in Melbourne. The Catholic community's first priority was the construction of a place of worship, and the prosperity brought by gold allowed the building of St Patrick's Cathedral. Cathedral Hall allowed for the expansion of activities by the Church, linking the spiritual, social and political life of its adherents by the encouragement of church societies and associations. Large-scale church occasions such as the National Eucharistic Congress of 1934 were held in the Hall. Cathedral Hall provided space for meetings large and small, dances, and concerts. Church associations promoting spirituality such as sodalities used Cathedral Hall facilities for their meetings, bringing together church members from parishes across Melbourne. The Church also encouraged the cohesion of church members by facilitating social activities. Cathedral Hall provided a suitable venue for such activities and was seen as particularly important in a period when sectarian feeling created divisions between Protestants and Catholics in Melbourne in the early years of this century. Other venues owned or operated by Protestants were not always made available for Catholic functions.

HISTORY OF PLACE:

The Exhibition Boot Factory was constructed in 1873 to a design by architects Reed and Barnes for Messrs. Roelens and Burdett. The site was purchased by the Catholic Church for conversion into clubrooms and classrooms. The rooms were intended for use as "club, conference, sodality and society rooms.". Land behind the factory (occupied by houses) was purchased as a site for the proposed hall in 1902. The factory was refurbished in 1902-03 to provide clubrooms and classrooms and was opened in April 1903. Part of the factory was altered to provide an entrance foyer for the new hall. The hall to a design by Reed, Smart and Tappin was constructed in 1903-04. The official opening took place on 10 April 1904.

The supper room was added in 1908. Decoration of the hall took place in 1912-13 with minor refurbishment including new light fittings undertaken in 1934 in preparation for the National Eucharistic Congress. Cinema projection facilities were installed in the hall in the 1940s.

Particularly since the Education Act of 1872, which established a free, secular and compulsory State school system, while the Catholic Church maintained a separate school system without government subsidy, Catholics felt discriminated against and divided from the rest of the community. In a society divided on sectarian lines, the Catholic Church aimed to help its adherents by encouraging Catholics to stick together. Catholics were encouraged not only to send their children to Catholic school rather than government schools, but also to patronise Catholic doctors, dentists, lawyers and accountants as well as Catholic tradesmen and Catholic-owned shops and businesses of all kinds. Special services for Catholics became necessary where discrimination on the basis of religion was a commonplace. Organisations such as the Hibernian-Australian Catholic Benefit Society, a friendly society with branches in parishes round the State formed to provide health and funeral benefits for Catholics filled a need.

Entertainment was also seen as an important part of Catholic life. Tennis clubs, theatre groups, debating societies and dances were run in Catholic parishes to encourage young people to meet under church auspices and thus to promote intermarriage.

The hall was used for many activities connected with the church including meetings, annual Communion breakfasts, reunions, lectures, educational or social gatherings. The hall was also used for meetings associated with the Irish in Victoria, whose interests were closely allied to the Church at that time. For instance, the Hall was used in November 1906 to accommodate the Indignation Meeting at which fifteen hundred sympathisers with Ireland in her struggle for independence welcomed "Delegates of the Irish Party."

Cathedral Hall was renamed Central Hall in the 1960s. The portico in Brunswick Street was demolished in the 1960s.

In 1970-72 the hall was used as a venue for the T.F. Much (and later Much More) Ballroom, including concerts by Daddy Cool, Spectrum and captain Matchbox.

In 1998 Central Hall became part of the St Patrick's Campus of the Australian Catholic University. Two new lecture theatres were constructed to the rear (east) of the hall with an entrance from Young Street.

Extent of Registration

1. All the building marked B1 on diagram 1967 held by the Executive Director.
2. All the land shown on diagram 1967 held by the Executive Director.

This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.

For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>



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