

HERITAGE IMPACT STATEMENT



For the redevelopment of

Former Little Sisters of the Poor Home for the Elderly (H1950)

March 2026 RFI Amendment

ANDRONAS
CONSERVATION
ARCHITECTURE

Version Control

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Version 2

Please note that new text is blue and new images do not have figure numbers. A small amount of text has been removed where it is no longer accurate. Some new images have been added but original renders and images have not been replaced. Only the ELC has changed in appearance. New renders are provided separately.

New text and images appear in the following sections:

- 2.3.4 New internal elements and change of Use /Access (p 53)
- 2.5.3 Summary of the interpretation and reuse of historic elements in the landscaping (p104-106)
- 2.5.4 Interpretation Strategy (p113)
- 2.6.2.4 ELC (p128, 129)
- 3.2 Economic Use (p133-136)

Heritage Impact Statement for:

Former Little Sisters of the Poor home for the Aged.

Victorian Heritage Register number H1950

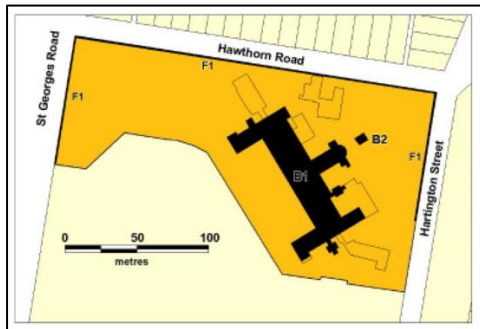


Figure 1 Registration plan

This Heritage Impact Statement forms part of a permit application for:

Conservation works and the adaptive reuse of the monastery.

Development of the Chora site with the addition of seven new buildings and a comprehensive landscape plan.

Address and location description:

104-112 St Georges Rd, Northcote. The site is bounded by St Georges Rd to the west, Hawthorn Road to the north and Hartington St to the East. The site was subdivided in the 1980s. The Little Sisters built a new aged care home on the southern half of the site and sold the north half to the Greek Orthodox Church.

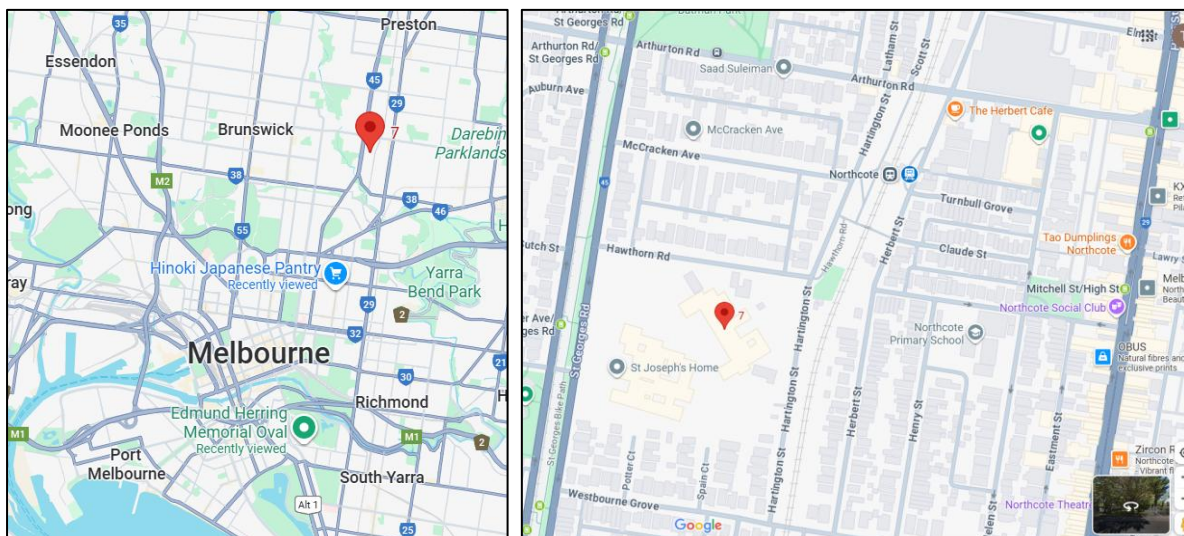


Figure 2 Location plans

The site falls steeply from Hartington Street to St Georges Road and more gently from Hawthorn Road toward the southern boundary.

St Georges Road is a major divided road with two lanes in each direction, separated by a wide green median containing tram tracks, bike paths, and a pedestrian route.

Hawthorn Road is a narrow residential street lined with modest single storey houses dating from the late nineteenth to mid twentieth century. The street is included in Heritage Overlay HO90.

Hartington Street borders the Mernda railway corridor, with small houses backing onto the line along the eastern side.

The site of the current St Joseph's aged care home to the south, is made up of the original Little Sister's cemetery, some early timber buildings which were relocated from the Chora site and the single-storey St Joseph's aged care complex. Beyond this is housing fronting Westbourne Grove dating from the 1960s subdivision of the original Little Sister's farmland.

Prepared by:

Andronas Conservation Architecture
1 Green Place, East Melbourne

Prepared for:

The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia,
His Grace Bishop Evmenios of Chora
The Cathedral of Our Lady Axion Estin
7 Hartington St Northcote, VIC
Northcote@greekorthodox.org.au
0474 343 776



Figure 3 aerial photo of the site

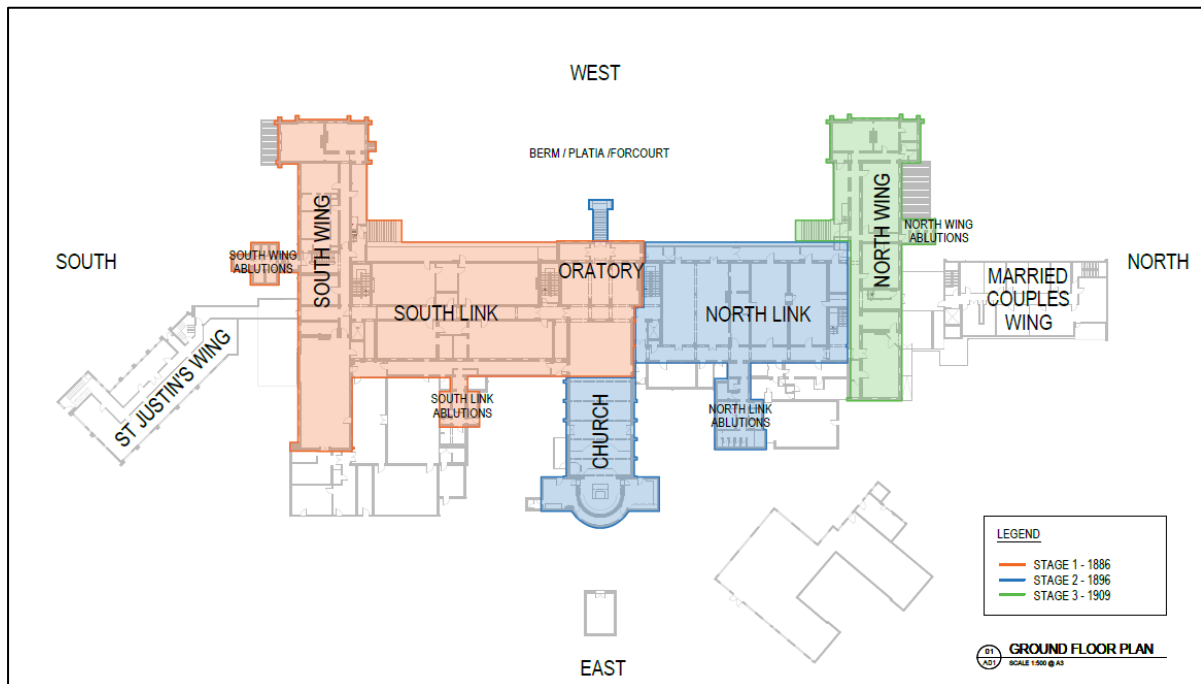
Orientation

The orientation of the site is straightforward. Hawthorn Rd is to the north, Hartington St to the east and St Georges Rd to the west. The building sits on a diagonal. To avoid confusion, an adopted north point is used to describe the various sections of the building in the Conservation Management Plan (CMP). To ensure continuity between the Heritage Impact Statement (HIS) and the CMP, the adopted orientation has been retained in the HIS.

Nomenclature

The site is now owned by the Greek Orthodox Church who, until recently, referred to the building as the Monastery of Axion Estin. At the beginning of October 2025, the Church was designated the Cathedral of Our Lady of Axion Estin and is now formally the Seat of the Bishop of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Chora. The Masterplan for the entire site is called Chora. For the purposes

of the HIS the original building will be referred to as the Monastery and the site generally will be referred to as Chora.



Format and content

The content of this document is based on the Heritage Victoria Guidelines for preparing Heritage Impact Statements 2021. Some adjustments have been made to the suggested ordering for clarity. The Statement contains as much information as is available at the time of submission. It is assumed that much of the detailed design can be provided as a condition of the permit.

A separate planning application was submitted to the minister at the end of August. It contained the same set of architectural and landscape drawings as the heritage permit submission. However, there have been some very minor changes made to the plans of the monastery where pertinent elements were omitted or incorrect. All changes have been ‘clouded.’

Please note that the KUD renders reproduced in the Heritage Impact Statement do not include the most up to date landscape design by Acre Landscape Architects. Due to a late change in Landscape architects and the differences in drawing software, the two sets of drawings have not yet been amalgamated

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Executive Summary

The proposed development is the outcome of three years of design work and consultation with State planning agencies, including Heritage Victoria (HV) and the Office of the Victorian Government Architect (OVGA). It presents a holistic vision that unites the conservation and adaptive reuse of the heritage-listed Monastery with the construction of seven new buildings and a comprehensive landscape plan. Together, these elements will secure the long-term conservation of the Monastery while activating the broader site as a vibrant and accessible cultural precinct.

The proposal seeks to re-establish the Monastery as the focal point of the site, supported by a network of new residential, cultural, and community buildings that will bring sustained activity and public engagement. Apartments and townhouses along Hartington Street and Hawthorn Road will contribute to the financial viability of the conservation and adaptive reuse works. At the same time, an early learning centre and theatre along St Georges Road will generate activity from morning to night and foster ongoing community involvement. A restaurant within the west forecourt will animate the space and contribute to its transformation into a civic *placita* or town square. The landscape design will link these new elements through a sequence of interconnected gardens and accessible pathways, establishing a cohesive and legible setting that celebrates the heritage building at its centre.

The Monastery will undergo extensive conservation and restoration works to return it to its known early form and prepare it for adaptive reuse as a Greek Orthodox Church and diocesan offices, as well as private residences, a boutique hotel, ballroom, bookshop, makers' spaces, and a gallery. The works include the demolition of intrusive later additions and the reconstruction of the original *façades* and *verandahs*. The exterior will be restored to its original appearance, with limited contemporary interventions including a new stair on the west *façade*, minor adjustments to two openings in the *loggia*, and a discreet glass revolving door to the hotel.

Internally, later twentieth-century fabric will be removed and original materials and finishes repaired and conserved. Some alterations to internal walls will allow for new functional requirements while maintaining the building's original planning structure, corridor rhythm, and spatial proportions. Only the proposed ballroom will involve significant internal modification. The inclusion of new services and minor adjustments will ensure the building is safe, compliant, and amenable for contemporary use, with all interventions designed to be reversible and sympathetic to the heritage fabric.

The landscape strategy will reinforce the relationship between the Monastery and its new setting. Existing pathways and significant axes will be retained or reinterpreted, with new accessible routes introduced to improve circulation and frame key views to the Monastery. Gardens, terraces, and open spaces have been designed to complement both the heritage fabric and the new built form, creating a unified landscape that integrates old and new with clarity and respect.

The seven new buildings have been designed to complement the Monastery through their scale, form, and material expression. Their placement preserves key view corridors and defines an active curtilage that enhances the prominence of the heritage structure. The architecture of the new elements draws inspiration from the Monastery while maintaining a contemporary distinction. Materials and finishes have been selected for their quality, texture, and sympathetic relationship with the existing building. The overall massing ensures the Monastery remains the dominant visual and cultural focus of the site.

The forms and materials of the new buildings are inspired by the Monastery or have been selected to sit sympathetically beside it. Their scale and detailing are appropriate to their respective locations and contribute to a unified yet layered composition. Subtle Greek architectural references introduce a new layer of meaning and identity, reflecting the stewardship of the Greek Orthodox Church while maintaining the established heritage values of the place. The proposal delivers a carefully balanced outcome that respects the Monastery's significance, ensures its long-term conservation, and repositions the site as a living cultural and community landmark.

1.0 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PLACE

1.1 Statement of significance

The statement of significance was updated as part of the Conservation Management Plan (CMP) completed by Andronas Conservation Architecture in 2023.

What is significant?

Members of the French Catholic order, the Little Sisters of the Poor (founded 1839), arrived in Melbourne in 1884 at the invitation of Archbishop Goold. After setting up temporary premises in Fitzroy the Little Sisters soon established a permanent home in timber buildings in Northcote. In 1888 an appeal was launched to construct a substantial brick building on a conspicuous and elevated site, in response to the increasing demand for accommodation for the aged. Architect Leonard Flannagan designed the new building in a stripped classical monastic style. The first stage (the southern wing), built by Robert Gamlin opened in 1890.

The building was extended northward in 1896 by day labour under the direction of designer-builder James Curtin, who also oversaw the construction of the new chapel façade and probably the mortuary chapel. While the extension followed Flannagan's original concept, the internal layout and the front verandah detailing differed. In 1909 the last stage of the building was constructed to a design by architects Kempson and Connolly. An earlier iron perimeter fence was replaced with a high brick fence in 1912, which was demolished in 2001.

The building, with later extensions to the east and west, remained in use as a home for the aged until the 1980s when the Little Sisters of the Poor subdivided the site and built a new Home for the Aged (St Joseph's Home Northcote) on the southern section of the site. The remaining land containing the original buildings was sold to the Holy Patriarchal and Stavropegial Monastery of St John the Baptist and Prodromos in 1986 and then to The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia in 1997.

How is it significant?

The former Little Sisters of the Poor Home for the Aged is of historic, architectural, and aesthetic significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Former Little Sisters of the Poor Home for the Aged is historically significant as the first religious institution established in Victoria for the care of the aged poor and the first permanent home established by the Little Sisters of the Poor in Australia. It was one of the most visible and influential institutions of Catholic charity in Victoria in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. (*Criteria H - Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history.*)

Its construction at that time reflects the fact that most social security in the 19th Century was provided by religious and other private charitable organisations, and it corresponds with the ageing of the colonial gold-rush population. It has a strong association with the history of welfare provision in Victoria and demonstrates the extent of poverty amongst Melbourne's population in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. (*Criteria A - Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history*)

The Former Little Sisters of the Poor Home for the Aged is architecturally significant as one of the state's largest intact 19th century charitable buildings. The ablutions blocks constitute a rare example

of a Nineteenth Century design integrating semi-detached, multi storey bathrooms into the overall composition of the building.

The design fits within a stripped classical monastic typology with French medieval characteristics linking it to the French villages of the Sisters, other large welfare institutions in the state, and more broadly to Catholic institutions across the world. The relatively-austere detailing of the building reflects the mendicant values of the order and the Little Sisters' simple integrity and lack of ostentation. Its monumental scale and prominent siting reflect the scope of their work, their contribution to the community and the aspirations of the Roman Catholic Church. *(Criterion D-Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects)*

It is a large and plain example of the work of architect Leonard Flannagan who conceived the original design and was involved in construction of the first stage. It is also associated with the works architects Kempton and Conolly who produced many fine buildings for the Catholic Church. The landmark qualities of the massive 'E' shaped building, its prominent siting and wide visibility above the surrounding paddocks and houses, its high perimeter walls, processional drive and self-supporting estate, demonstrates the aesthetic characteristics of large State and Church built welfare institutions of the time. *(Criterion E - Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.)*

Summary of significant elements

A conservation management plan (CMP) was prepared by Andronas Conservation Architecture in 2023 and was submitted to Heritage Victoria during the pre-application process. Volume 1 contains the history of the place and policies to guide its future use and maintenance. Volume 2 comprises a detailed conditions survey. The information collected in the CMP is referenced throughout the HIS and forms part of the assessment and application.

The CMP identified the following elements as significant:

All of the original elements of the main building and landscaping are significant (up to 1909). They include but are not limited to:

- *The siting of the building and its landmark qualities*
- *The forecourt layout*
- *The circular garden near the Mortuary Chapel and the courtyard gardens on the east side of the building*
- *The peppercorn trees on Hartington Street.*
- *The laundry and drying yard (the remaining fabric is not significant but the use is)*
- *The Mortuary Chapel*
- *The driveways from Hartington Street and St Georges Rd.*
- *All the elements which make up the original elevations of the main building and the roofscape*
- *Changes to elevations and materials between stages (denoting changes in budget, technology, care techniques, builders and designers)*
- *The verandahs with iron lace enrichments.*
- *The planning/layout of corridors and rooms*
- *The movement system along corridors and across verandahs to the ablutions blocks*
- *The shape, functional of the Chapel and sacristies*
- *The proportions and height of the original rooms*
- *All internal and external staircases and balustrades*
- *Original timber floors, encaustic tiling, stone flags*
- *All original internal and external window and door openings, corridor archways, stone window and door sills*

- *All original window and door joinery, door leafs, glazing, skirtings and picture rails*
- *Original wall surfaces indicating the hierarchy of spaces: painted brickwork to internal service areas, hard plastering to habitable rooms and corridors, cementitious render with ashlar scoring (the surface of the render is scored to look like more expensive stone work) to external walls which make up the landmark views, face brickwork to back of house elevations.*
- *Lathe and Plaster and pressed metal ceilings*
- *Slate roofs, chimneys, ventilators and small louvered dormers*
- *Crosses, bell towers and decorative elements on the roof ridges*
- *Cast iron gutters and downpipes, lead plumbing, bluestone drainage pits and cast iron pit covers*
- *Cast iron wall vents*

St Joseph's Home for the Aged Poor is significant for the following reasons:

It is one of the first and largest institutional buildings established to serve the underprivileged in Victoria.

It is associated with the Little Sisters of the Poor and their contribution to caring for the elderly poor of Victoria at a time when little help was available.

Flannagan and the Catholic Church of Victoria created a powerful symbol of the churches independent authority, history and charitable largesse through the selection of the elevated site, and the creation of a landmark building which drew on historical models of large institutional buildings from medieval times.

The design of the main building including the layout of rooms, openings in external and internal walls, the verandahs and the ablutions blocks all provide an understanding of the use of the building and the technology of the time.

The staged construction of the building demonstrates the success of the Little Sisters efforts to raise funds and care for the poor. It also indicates the strength of the original architectural concept.

The Mortuary Chapel, the laundry and the drying yards are closely associated with the spiritual and profane functions of St Josephs.

Landscape elements such as the perimeter brick wall (now demolished), several trees, the early driveways, the forecourt/berm, east courtyards and memorial garden are significant to the way in which St Josephs was viewed externally and functioned internally.

1.2 Existing condition of the place of object

Volume 2 of the CMP provides a detailed assessment of the condition of the historic buildings and grounds. The following synopsis summarises the principal findings for each area.

The condition of the Monastery varies depending on whether an area remains in active use. In general, both exterior and interior conditions range from good to very poor. The surrounding grounds are well maintained but of limited heritage significance.

1.2.1 Monastery facades

Since 1909, numerous external additions have been made to the Monastery; however, most original external walls remain intact. Structural movement and cracking have been recorded only in the pavilions at the west ends of the north and south wings, where wall heights are greatest. The verandahs and basement loggia have been enclosed, and later additions to the north side obscure portions of the original elevations. While paintwork is generally in poor condition, the underlying rendered masonry is sound. The roof coverings, verandahs, and all associated drainage systems are in poor condition and require substantial renewal.

1.2.2 Monastery interior

Internally, the Monastery's original structure and spatial planning remain largely intact. Timber windows, floorboards, and hard-plastered walls are generally in fair to good condition, although most original doors have been replaced. Lathe-and-plaster ceilings are in poor condition, and the pressed-metal ceilings within the north wing are in fair condition. Over time, internal partition systems, suspended ceilings, and modern plumbing and heating infrastructure have been installed and repeatedly upgraded to meet changing standards. Many of these installations, and their subsequent removals, have caused damage to early fabric and finishes. Most applied finishes, fixtures, and fittings date from the second half of the twentieth century and are now in poor condition due to repeated hygienic re-coatings and modifications.

Despite these changes, the Monastery retains a high degree of integrity, with its original design, materials, and form still clearly legible.

1.2.3 Associated buildings

The mortuary chapel remains in good condition, though its interior has been modified to accommodate a grave. The original laundry is no longer discernible, and the late-twentieth-century additions to the building are in fair to poor condition.

1.2.4 Grounds and setting

The site has been subdivided three times, and the remaining grounds have been progressively altered. Although maintained, little of the original landscape significance survives. There are no discernible remnants of the former farm complex. Only the peppercorn trees along Hartington Street and two mature trees within the forecourt are identified as historically significant. Their conditions are detailed in the arborist's report.

Ground levels at the east and west ends of the building appear to have been modified substantially, altering the original landform. Terraces with low bluestone or concrete-block retaining walls are in fair condition, as are the existing paths. The bluestone grotto is also in fair condition. The forecourt lawn is regularly mown, and limited planting has occurred around the base of the south wing. The area north of the building functions as an informal carpark surfaced with uneven bitumen and gravel. Various built objects in the north-east corner, including an incinerator and low retaining walls around the former circular garden, are in reasonable condition but of no identified heritage significance.

1.3 Current use of the space

The Chapel is currently used as an active Greek Orthodox parish church. The south wing accommodates a mixture of uses, including residential accommodation, a bookshop, and a small museum at ground level. The south link houses a foodbank on the ground floor, while the adjoining south ablutions block also provides accommodation. The north link contains parish offices and a function room, and the north wing accommodates diocesan offices together with additional residential spaces. The remaining areas of the building are unused and in a state that renders them largely uninhabitable. The attic spaces are occupied by pigeons, contain accumulated debris, and are generally unsafe for access.

1.4 Constraints and opportunities resulting from the significance of the place

1.4.1 Constraints

The subdivision of the site during the 1980s has created a significant constraint to maintaining the landmark qualities of the Monastery. Views of the building are now limited, and the setting,

particularly to the south, is compromised by a lack of spatial depth. While long views from within the Monastery remain possible, views toward the site from the surrounding area are largely obscured. The reinstatement of an appropriate setting, including the re-establishment of sightlines from St Georges Road, is therefore essential to reinforcing the Monastery's historic and visual prominence. These considerations inherently limit the extent and form of any future development on the site.

The usual constraints associated with heritage buildings apply in this case. The degree of adaptive reuse proposed will necessitate compliance with the National Construction Code (NCC), requiring upgrades to achieve standards for fire separation, egress, accessibility, and energy efficiency. These compliance measures will inevitably involve interventions into the building fabric. In addition, the introduction of contemporary services and amenities, including electrical, mechanical, and hydraulic systems, will require new ducting, plant, and concealed service routes which must be sensitively integrated to avoid visual or physical impacts on significant fabric.

Historically, the Monastery's original walled enclosure reflected its isolation and contemplative function. This characteristic could be seen as a constraint to opening the site to public use. However, the partial loss of the perimeter wall and the evolution of the Church's role, both Catholic and Orthodox, now support a more inclusive and outward-facing approach. The proposal embraces this change by promoting accessibility, openness, and community engagement, reflecting the inclusive ethos originally espoused by the Little Sisters.

1.4.2 Opportunities

The building's structure is robust, and its simple plan form allows for excellent natural light and cross-ventilation throughout most areas. This provides a strong foundation for adaptive reuse, with minimal need for structural alteration to achieve a reasonable level of modern amenity.

The Monastery's landmark quality will naturally attract people to the site. The arrangement of the buildings around the west forecourt establishes a clear focal point for activity and gathering. The basement rooms, which open directly onto the forecourt, are well suited for use as studios or creative spaces, reinforcing the relationship between the building and the public realm.

The size of the site provides the Church with the opportunity to fund the conservation and ongoing maintenance of the Monastery through the careful development of a range of residential building types within and around the historic complex. This approach ensures that new development directly supports the long-term preservation and continued vitality of the place.

2.0 PROPOSAL

In 2023, the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia engaged KUD Architects to develop plans for an arts and culture precinct on the Chora site. The project is intended to be funded through the construction and sale of new townhouses and apartments along Hawthorn Road and Hartington Street. The architects elected to pursue approval through the Development Facilitation Program under Clause 53.23 – Significant Residential Development, rather than through the standard council planning process.

As part of this pathway, a series of design and consultation workshops were undertaken with the Office of the Victorian Government Architect (OVGA), the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP), the City of Darebin, the Department of Planning Facilitation (DPF), and Heritage Victoria. Two pre-application meetings were also held exclusively with Heritage Victoria officers Nicola Stairmand and Jess Antolino. A summary of the workshop process and pre-application discussions is provided below.

2.1 Impact on surrounding heritage places

The former Little Sister's site is surrounded by Heritage precincts in the Darebin Heritage overlay. It is directly adjacent to four precincts: the Whittlesea Railway, Rucker's Hill, Northcote Sumner Estate and Yan Yean Water Supply System Precincts.

Clause 43.01 'Purpose' of the Darebin heritage overlay lists five standard outcomes sought for works within a heritage area. The fourth highlighted point is the most pertinent to this HIS;

- To implement the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.
- To conserve and enhance heritage places of natural or cultural significance.
- To conserve and enhance those elements which contribute to the significance of heritage places.
- **To ensure that development does not adversely affect the significance of heritage places.**
- To conserve specified heritage places by allowing a use that would otherwise be prohibited if this will demonstrably assist with the conservation of the significance of the heritage place.

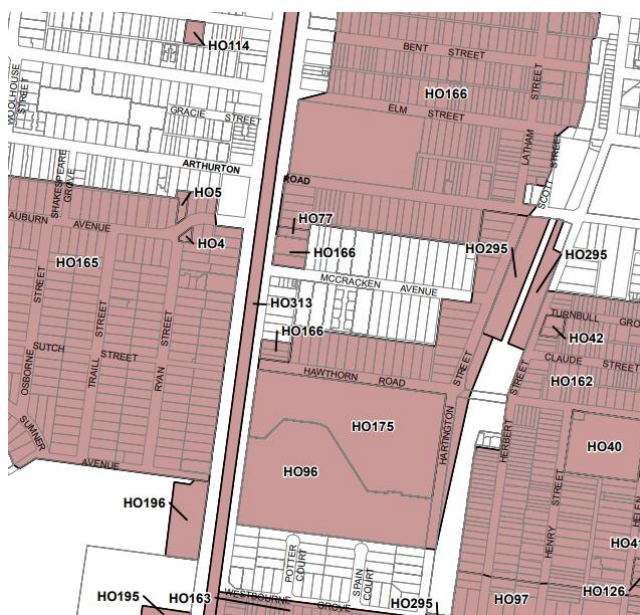


Figure 4 Darebin Planning Scheme map grid 13

2.1.1 HO295 - The Whittlesea Railway Precinct

Located on the north side of Hawthorn St will be the most directly impacted by the proposed development. The precinct is described under the heading of Northcote-Croxton (2.7) in the Darebin Heritage Review 2000 Vol 1; A Ward.

This is a residential area having Batman Park at the centre, facing St. Georges Road. Whilst the Post-Federation period dominates and is largely responsible for its cultural significance, there is (sic) a number of late Victorian cottages and short terraces which add stylistic diversity. The larger allotments in Hawthorn Road, facing the wall of the former Little Sisters of the Poor and Hartington Street alongside Northcote railway station have resulted in the construction of entire streets of middle class Federation period villas with picturesque corrugated iron clad roofs, timber weatherboards, bullnosed verandahs and extensive use of pressed metal linings.

Hawthorn Road is a typical residential suburban street comprising two traffic lanes with parking on both sides, a grassy verge, mature paperbark street trees, and a footpath along the northern side. The road falls approximately twenty metres from Hartington Street down to St Georges Road. The northern side of the street contains a mix of Victorian, Edwardian, and interwar houses, each set back behind small front gardens with low fences. Until 2012, the Little Sisters site was enclosed by a high brick wall that separated it from the adjoining residential area and limited visual connection to the Monastery grounds.

Impact

Two three-storey blocks of residential townhouses are proposed along the Hawthorn Road frontage. While the new buildings will not have any physical impact on the houses opposite, they will alter the visual character of the streetscape. For more than a decade, this edge of the site has been open to view through temporary wire fencing; prior to that, it was enclosed for over a century by a continuous brick wall more than three metres high. The proposed buildings will partially re-establish a sense of enclosure while introducing framed views into the Monastery grounds, reinterpreting the historic boundary condition in a contemporary form.

Each townhouse has been designed with an individual identity and its own small terrace garden, maintaining a rhythm and scale compatible with the established residential pattern along the street. The overall composition, height, and material palette have been carefully developed to ensure that the new buildings sit sympathetically within the streetscape and do not adversely affect the significance of the surrounding heritage context.



Figure 5 Looking up Hawthorn Road from St Georges Road, showing the former Little Sisters wall on the right. Image: Google Street View, 2019 (consistent with current conditions). Note the temporary fencing visible along the site boundary.



Figure 6 Looking up Hawthorn Road from St Georges Road, showing the Little Sisters wall on the right. Source: Darebin Heritage Study, 2000.

2.1.2 HO162 – The Rucker’s Hill Precinct

The residential area located on the east side of Hartington Street, opposite the Former Little Sisters site and across the railway line, forms part of the Rucker’s Hill precinct identified in the *Darebin Heritage Study* (2000).

The study describes the residential areas of Rucker’s Hill as being both historically and aesthetically significant. They are historically important (Criterion A4) for their capacity to demonstrate the attraction of the sloping land of Rucker’s Hill to Northcote’s middle classes at various points in the municipality’s history, particularly during the late Victorian boom period and the post-Federation recovery. The precinct is also valued for illustrating the confirmation of Northcote as a working-class suburb of Melbourne, closely connected to the city’s industrial areas through the tramway and railway services that facilitated its growth.

The area is aesthetically important (Criterion E1) for its imposing early villa residences and the characteristic streetscapes formed by small cottages on narrow allotments without nature strips, creating a close relationship between buildings and the street. The stylistic diversity of the precinct, resulting from successive phases of development, is significant as it demonstrates the historical processes of growth and consolidation that shaped the suburb.

The houses on the east side of the railway line sit higher than Hartington Street. They are predominantly single-storey dwellings fronting the street, with some two-storey additions at the rear, and a small number of double-storey houses along Herbert Street.

The proposed masterplan includes two four-storey apartment buildings along the Hartington Street frontage. The development will not be visible from any of the streets within the Rucker’s Hill precinct and will therefore have no impact on its streetscapes or broader heritage character. The new apartments will only be partially visible from the rear of the houses fronting Herbert Street and will not diminish the significance or integrity of the precinct as identified in the *Darebin Heritage Study*.

Impact

The distance separating the housing within the Rucker's Hill precinct from the proposed apartment buildings is substantial and sufficient to ensure that the change in scale, massing, building typology, and character will not result in any detrimental impact on the heritage values of the precinct.



Figure 5 looking north along Hartington St, railway on right, Chora fence on left, google maps



Figure 6 Herbert St houses which back onto the railway line opposite the site

2.1.3 HO165 – The Northcote Sumner Estate

Located on the opposite side of St George Rd, the Statement of Significance for the Sumner Estate is drawn from the *Darebin Heritage Review* (2000, Vol. 1, A. Ward).

This Area, whilst having its origins in the Sumner's ownership of the site from the 1860s, was developed as the Sumner Estate during a period of rapid growth sustained by the City of Northcote. Land sales were held between 1921 and 1924 and by the Depression of the late 1920s, the estate had been fully developed. The former Sumner Estate has historic and aesthetic importance.

It is historically important (Criterion A4) as a discrete area demonstrating an aspect of Northcote's residential expansion during the Inter-War period when large tracts of open land west of St. Georges Road and north of the railway between Dennis and Alphington were subdivided and developed. It is historically important also for its capacity to City of Darebin Heritage Review: 2000Andrew Ward Architectural Historian106demonstrate suburban estate planning practices at a time when the Garden Suburb Movement was gaining acceptance but had not yet been successfully exploited in Victoria.

Elements that anticipate the arrival of the Garden Suburb estates of the late 1920s and which impart aesthetic importance (Criterion E1) to this Estate include:

- *the planned relationship between the houses in Winifred Street and the Merri Creek reserve.*

- *The aspect enjoyed by the St. Georges Road residents over the plantations of that thoroughfare, complemented as they were by a modern public transport route and ample accommodation for increasingly popular motor vehicles.*
- *The curve in Sumner Avenue, whilst necessitated by the alignment of the Merri Creek, also embraced it by introducing the notion of a changing vista in the manner of later subdivisions.*
- *The manner in which the Estate forms a discrete locale with only two points of entry to St. Georges Road and one to Arthurlon Road.*

It is, however, also the consistent design of the housing stock, predating the more picturesque designs of the late Inter-War years, that impart aesthetic significance to the Area. The Californian Bungalows, whilst being individually unremarkable, collectively demonstrate the Area's cultural values determined by the Estate's position in time during the first decade of the Inter-War period.

Finally, the small number of Federation period houses that pre-date the development of the Estate but which form a part of it, impart stylistic diversity.

The proposed development along St Georges Road will comprise commercial uses and is of a larger scale than the single-storey, freestanding houses within the Sumner Estate on the opposite side of the road. St Georges Road is a substantial urban thoroughfare approximately 45 metres wide, containing four traffic lanes, dual tram tracks, and a central median accommodating tram stops, bicycle lanes, and pedestrian paths.

Between Merri Parade and Gladstone Avenue, much of the eastern side of St Georges Road and part of the southern side fall within heritage precincts (HO166, HO195, HO163 and HO100; refer Darebin Planning Scheme Maps 13 and 16). These areas exhibit a range of building types and scales reflecting different periods of development. One to two blocks south of the site, multi-storey apartments and the large buildings of Northcote High School contribute to a transition in scale, while at the Atherton Street junction to the north, further multi-storey residential and commercial buildings reinforce the evolving character of the corridor.

Impact

The Sumner Estate was originally developed opposite a large landmark building set within a farm-like landscape and enclosed by a high perimeter wall. There has never been a continuous or uniform pattern of residential building types along this section of St Georges Road. The substantial width of the road provides a strong visual and physical separation between the residential precinct and the site. In addition, the diversity of building types and scales along this five-kilometre stretch of St Georges Road ensures that the proposed development will not detract from, or adversely affect, the heritage significance or valued character of the Sumner Estate precinct.



Figure 7 Looking north along St Georges Road toward Hawthorn Road, with the project site on the right and the Sumner Estate on the left. Source: Google Maps, 2022.



Figure 8 Sumner Estate housing – looking south along St Georges Road from the centre of the site. Source: Google Maps, 2022.



Figure 9 Sumner Estate housing – looking north along St Georges Road from the centre of the site. Source: Google Maps, 2022.



Figure 10 opposite the gates of the current St Joseph's Aged Care Home. Source: Google Maps, 2022.

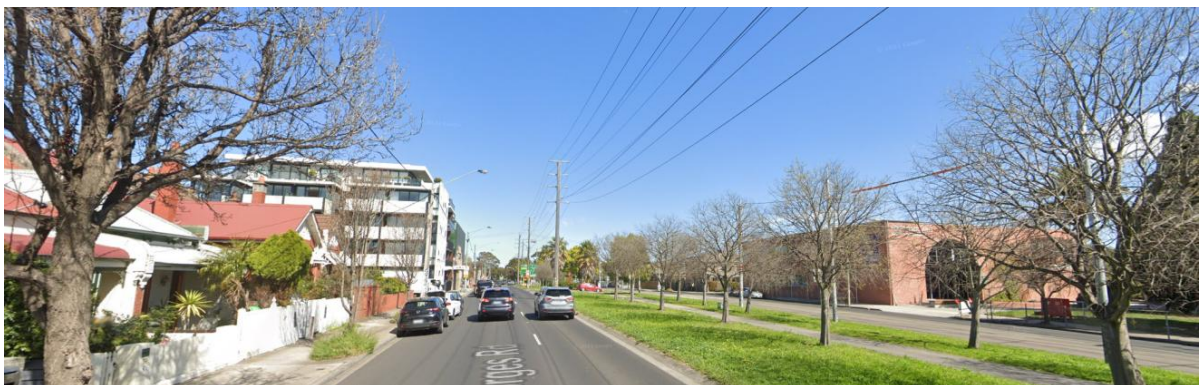


Figure 11 South end of St Georges Road at the corner of Gordon Grove, two blocks south of Westbourne. Source: Google Maps, 2022.



Figure 12 housing and shopping strip at Arthurton St, one block north Source: Google Maps, 2022.

2.1.4 HO165 – The Yan Yean Water Supply System

The heritage listing for the Yan Yean Water Supply System extends across several municipalities and was assessed by Context Pty Ltd in a *Conservation Management Plan* prepared in May 2007. Section 2.8 of that CMP states:

Yan Yean Pipe Reserve – Preston Reservoir to Merri Creek

To the south of Preston Reservoir, the Yan Yean pipe reserve appears as linear open space, which is marked by a line of mature and semi-mature Canary Island Palms as far as Regent Street, which may be remnants of the landscaping carried out by Melbourne Water and Preston Council in the 1930s. For part of this length, it is partly underneath Robinson Road, and then follows and crosses the Epping (formerly Whittlesea) railway line before entering St Georges Road at Murray Road where it is contained within (and is the reason for) the wide reserve in the middle. The pipe reserve then follows St Georges Road all the way to Merri Creek. As noted in chapter 5 of Volume 2, St Georges Road was landscaped in the 1930s, however, no remnants of this survives today – the present landscaping is relatively recent and possibly replaced the earlier scheme.

It is worth noting that the selection of palm trees along the St Georges Road site boundary references the historic planting of Canary Island Palms near the Regent Street section of the Yan Yean pipe reserve, a feature that has since been replicated at several crossing points along St Georges Road.

Impact

The proposal will have no direct impact on the heritage place.

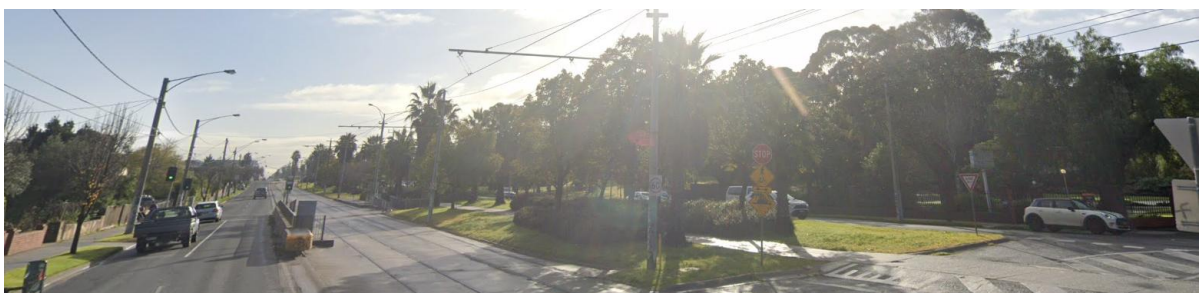


Figure 13 Water supply corridor in the centre of St Georges Road, looking north. Source: Google Maps, 2022.. Source: Google Maps, 2022.

2.2 Options considered / pre-application advice

Six pieces of written advice were received from the agencies involved in the OVGA workshops, as well as from independent pre-application meetings with Heritage Victoria.

Overall, feedback from all agencies has been positive. The concept of conserving and adaptively reusing the Monastery for a range of complementary functions, introducing multi-storey housing along Hartington Street and Hawthorn Road, and developing a theatre and early learning centre (ELC) on the site has been broadly supported. The proposal to open the site as a community and arts hub has also been well received.

Where the proposed works intersect with heritage values, agencies requested further refinement in the following areas:

- The provision of a comprehensive, contextual landscape design package. Improvement of view lines into and within the site.
- Maintenance of the Monastery's landmark qualities and surrounding "breathing space". Retention of the original building's form, features, and planning clarity.
- Preservation of the berm and interpretation of the site's original agricultural use through landscape design.
- Ensuring the scale and massing of new housing are appropriate to both the site and its context.
- Selecting materials which are sympathetic to, and reference, both the Monastery and the former perimeter wall.
- A clear rationale for the architectural language and materials palette of new buildings and landscape elements in relation to the CMP and existing infrastructure.

In response, Kavellaris Urban Design (KUD) have refined their design to address these matters and more clearly articulate the conceptual narrative behind their approach. Acre Landscape Architects were subsequently engaged to strengthen the landscape design and deepen its historical and symbolic connections.

Prior to the first formal pre-application meeting, KUD spent several months testing design options with the owners and Andronas Conservation Architecture (ACA). Early schemes explored locating the theatre and ELC on Hartington Street and new housing along St Georges Road, with the adaptive reuse of the mid-century accommodation blocks into larger flats. Another option proposed converting the Monastery solely into a hotel.

The first written feedback and initial OVGA workshop questioned the location of the new buildings but ultimately acknowledged that the proposed siting was logical in relation to both operational needs and the surrounding context. It was also recognised that reuse of the existing accommodation blocks would be financially unviable and deliver a less satisfactory heritage outcome. The mixed-use model for the Monastery, which retains its religious function while introducing a diverse mix of visitors and residents, was considered to offer a stronger and more sustainable heritage outcome.

Key concerns raised following the first design presentation in June 2024 included:

- Narrow view corridors and pathways that did not relate well to the Monastery
- The berm being flattened and entirely paved, creating a harsh setting
- The theatre's proximity to the corner of the site
- Poorly positioned restaurant and substation
- Overly visible basement entries
- Lack of resolution in the south-east corner
- Inconsistent forms and materials in the new buildings with limited reference to the Monastery

Each of these matters was addressed in subsequent presentations. The restaurant pavilion was deleted, with the function relocated to a smaller building in the platía. A grassy berm has been reinstated and reshaped for usability, while the substation and carpark entries have been screened. The theatre was repositioned to allow for a more generous forecourt, and a coherent architectural language has been developed across all new buildings. The south-east corner has been progressively resolved by removing the return of the south apartment block, reconfiguring the bin storage entry, and adopting a landscape-based solution for this area.

Perhaps the most significant design refinement was the reorientation of site pathways to align with the diagonal axis of the Monastery. This change has markedly improved view lines, spatial relationships between buildings, and the dialogue between the Monastery and the new residential blocks.

Similarly, the design of the platía evolved significantly through the introduction of a curved cut into the face of the berm. This gesture references historic landscape elements and establishes more appropriate proportions for the town square while preserving the berm's defining character.

The landscape concept has matured considerably over the course of the design process. Early iterations provided limited contextual or historical response. For the final presentation, Acre Landscape Architects developed a concept that responds directly to both the Catholic and Greek Orthodox histories of the site, establishing a sequence of green spaces that create continuity across the site and meaningfully connect the Monastery with the new buildings and their shared public realm.

2.2.1 Evolution of the plan and architectural language

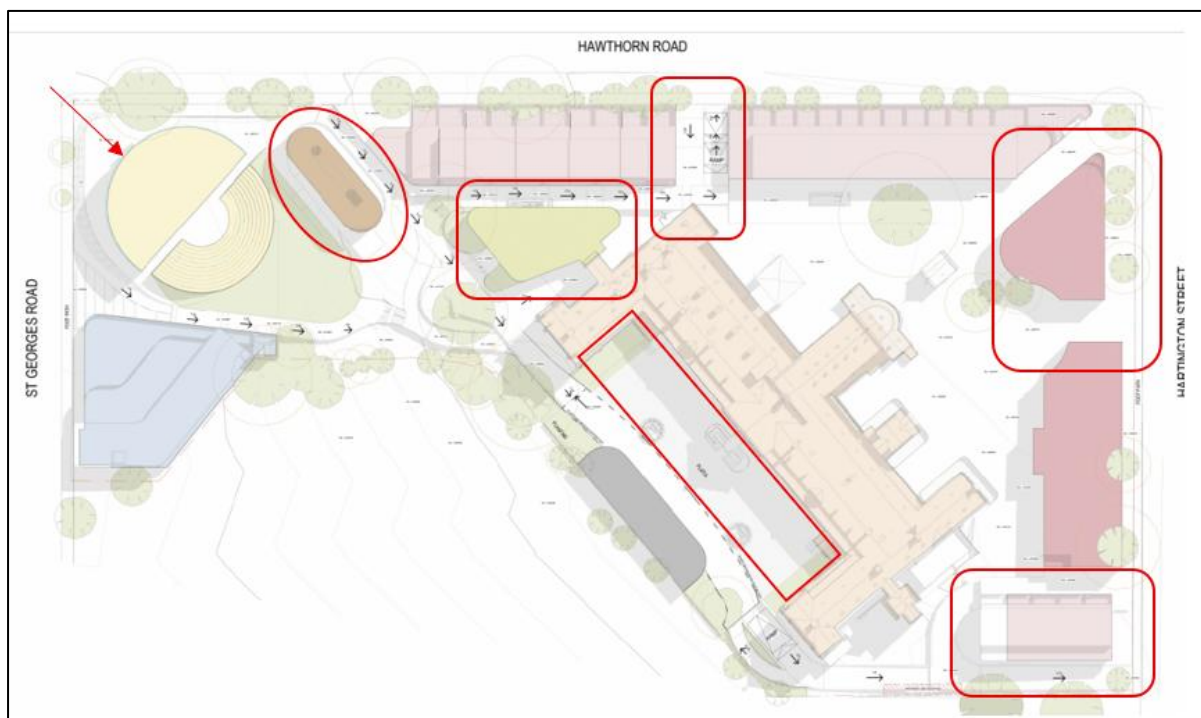


Figure 14 Oct 2023 presentation –main areas identified as problematic are shown in red.

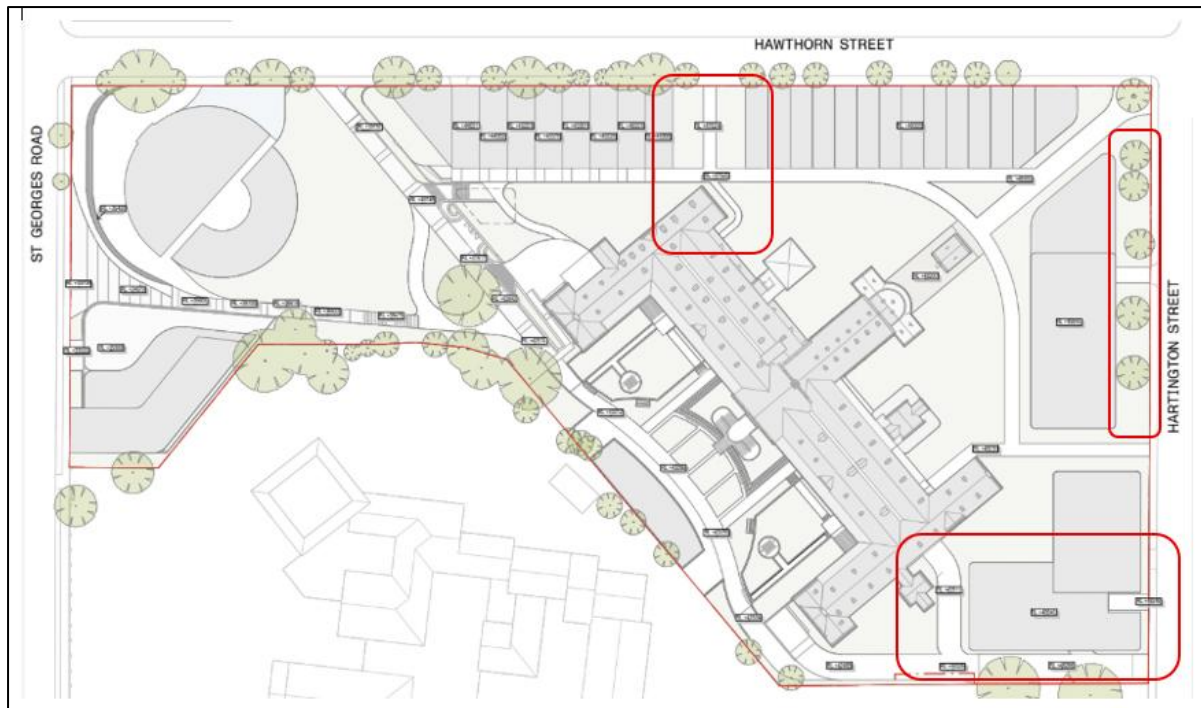


Figure 15 August 2024 presentation – areas of the design still to be resolved, including all landscaping and zones shown in red.

2.2.3 Evolution of the platía



Figure 16 Platía without building and flattened



Figure 17 October 2023 presentation – hard-paved flat platía with glass pavilion illustrating loss of significant heritage features.



Figure 21 September 2024 presentation – resolution of landscape forms achieved, though limited architectural connection between the Monastery and the glass pavilion

2.2.4 Evolution of entrances and view corridors



Figure 18 September 2025 – images showing changes following the first workshop. The carpark entry has been relocated and views to the Monastery have been opened up. The main path orientation still relates to the street rather than the Monastery.



Figure 19 September 2025 – experimentation with building forms at the Hartington Street entry.



Figure 20 September 2025 – experimentation with plinth forms at the corner entry



Figure 21 August 2024 – restaurant and substation removed, improving sightlines to the Monastery

2.2.5 Evolution of the architectural language



Figure 22 April 2024 apartments – minimal vertical definition, no discernible references to the architectural language of the monastery, the relationship of buildings at the corner unresolved.



Figure 23 April 2024 townhouses – architectural language to be refined



Figure 24 August 2024 – lack of architectural and spatial connection between old and new



Figure 25 August 2024 – the architectural and spatial relationship between buildings is unresolved, and the south-east corner presents a back-of-house character.

2.2.6 Heritage concerns at final pre-application meeting with Heritage Victoria

A pre-application meeting with Heritage Victoria in February 2025 (P39005) raised the following questions and matters for consideration in relation to the concept design presented.

- **Consider whether there are materials or approaches other than glass to achieve code requirements for the external verandah balustrade. As a reflective material, it is likely that glass will be quite obvious from ground level even if it is located behind the balustrade.**

Glass has been retained as it remains the only solution that achieves compliance without physically impacting the existing structure. It will also provide protection from prevailing south-westerly winds while allowing the original cast-iron detailing to be appreciated from the verandah. A glass type with a low reflectivity value will be specified to minimise visual impact when viewed externally.

- **Resolution of internal balustrades including determining whether they currently meet code and if not, what is required to ensure they do.**

The balustrades comply with current regulations, or are within tolerances that would allow for minor dispensations on the stair flights. However, the balustrades on landings are below the required height. A simple, reversible clip-on handrail will be installed above and slightly inside the existing handrail to achieve compliance without damaging original fabric.

- **Retention of sections of walls which are proposed to be demolished. There should be sufficient retention to allow for an understanding of the original plan form and volumes of the rooms.**

Wall nibs of adequate size have been retained in all areas where walls are being removed. In spatially constrained areas, such as the former ablutions blocks, a raised section of render will be introduced at floor level to indicate the original wall locations.

- **Retention of the chimney (external elements) on the northern section of the roof which is noted 'to be demolished' on the drawings.**

Three internal chimney breasts are proposed for removal. There will be no change to the external appearance of the chimneys. The attic brickwork will be retained and propped from below to ensure stability.

- **An understanding of whether there are any decorative ceilings which may be obscured by suspended ceilings. While the approach of concealing services above suspended ceilings is generally supported, it may not be appropriate in all areas. It is acknowledged that compliance constraints may alter this.**

All ceilings are required to be replaced to meet current fire-rating standards. Where timber lining boards survive in verandahs and corridors, they will be reinstated below the new suspended ceiling. The plaster ceilings are in very poor condition and lack decorative features; these will be replaced with smooth plaster finishes. Consideration was given to reinstating the pressed-metal ceilings in the north wing; however, most are severely rusted and damaged by prior suspended ceiling systems. The former dormitories will be subdivided into smaller rooms, and reinstating individual pressed-metal ceilings would create misleading spatial interpretations. Instead, the corridor ceilings will be reinstated in pressed metal to demonstrate the original finish and pattern while maintaining interpretive integrity.

- It is positive that applied finishes analysis is underway. The results of this will inform the colour scheme for the heritage building as well as materials and colour palette for the proposed new development.

The proposed building colour has been selected from an early colour palette.

- It is also positive that interventions for seismic strengthening will not have a substantial impact. This will have to be fully documented in the application.

Details of the seismic strengthening methodology will be provided as part of the forthcoming geotechnical report and basement engineering documentation.

2.2.7 Previous development applications

In 2001, a planning application was lodged for the construction of 28 townhouses fronting St Georges Road and Hawthorn Road. The application was refused on the grounds that it failed to acknowledge or respond to the architectural and landmark values of the Monastery, and did not recognise the historic significance of the site.

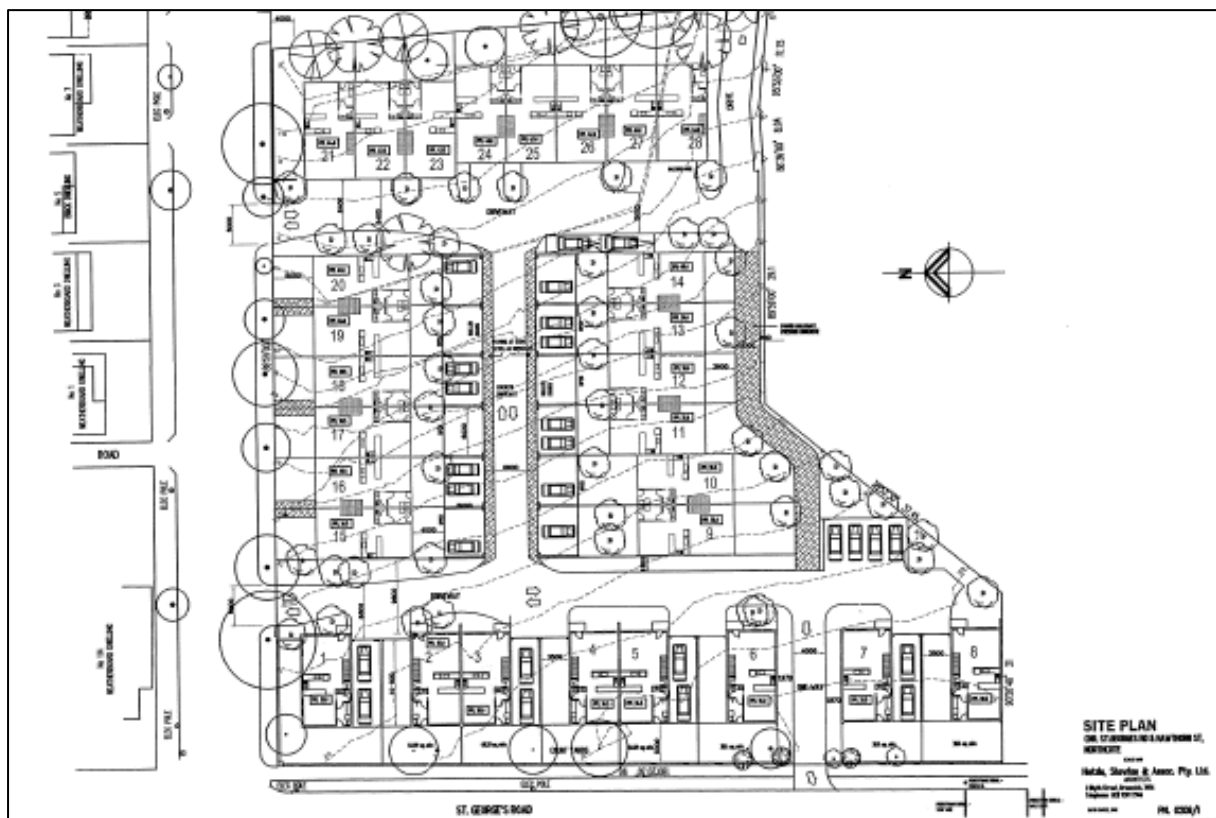


Figure 26 2001 Application – plan

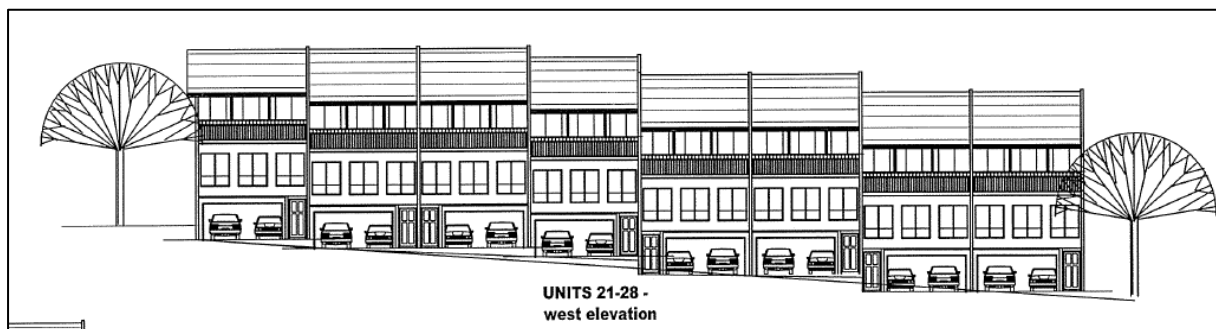


Figure 27 Typical elevation 2001 Plan

2.3 Impact of the proposal on the cultural heritage significance of the place

The proposed works are divided into a number of sub-sections as outlined below.

- 2.3.1 Demolition of later additions**
 - 2.3.1.1** Laundry
 - 2.3.1.2** St Justin's wing
 - 2.3.1.3** Married couples wing
 - 2.3.1.4** Additions to south wing and courtyard on the south side of the chapel
 - 2.3.1.5** Addition to south end of south wing
 - 2.3.1.6** Addition to north side of north wing
 - 2.3.1.7** Addition to north link ablutions block and north courtyard
 - 2.3.1.8** Stair to Chapel
 - 2.3.1.8** Verandah infill
 - 2.3.1.9** Chapel - Kiosk below east verandah
- 2.3.2** Dismantling of internal fit out of later date
- 2.3.3** Internal alterations to accommodate adaptive reuse
 - 2.3.3.1** Removal or modification of internal walls – generally
 - 2.3.3.2** Lower ground floor
 - 2.3.3.3** Ground floor
 - 2.3.3.4** First floor
 - 2.3.3.5** Attic
- 2.3.4** New internal elements and change of use
 - 2.3.4.1** Lower ground floor
 - 2.3.4.2** South wing ablutions block
 - 2.3.4.3** Ground floor
 - 2.3.4.4** South wing and south link
 - 2.3.4.5** South link ablutions block – all floors
 - 2.3.4.6** Chapel/oratory/vestries and connecting corridor
 - 2.3.4.7** Ground floor north link
 - 2.3.4.8** North link ablutions block – all floors
 - 2.3.4.9** Ground floor – north wing
 - 2.3.4.10** North wing ablutions block – all floors
 - 2.3.4.11** First floor – south wing and link
 - 2.3.4.12** First floor – over church and oratory
 - 2.3.4.13** First floor – north link
 - 2.3.4.14** First floor – north wing
 - 2.3.4.15** Attic
 - 2.3.4.16** Area over the oratory
 - 2.3.4.17** Attic – north of oratory
 - 2.3.4.18** Mortuary Chapel

2.3.1 Demolition of later additions

The *Conservation Management Plan (CMP)* identifies several elements as intrusive or detrimental to the heritage values of the place and recommends their removal. These include:

- Verandah infill walls and glazing
- Basement loggia glazing
- The accommodation wings and laundry building
- Lift motor rooms above the roof

- Late twentieth-century additions to the east side of the main building within the courtyard areas (see plan below)

The diagram below identifies the areas recommended for demolition or adaptation. All areas shown in green and yellow are proposed for removal. The *Specific Exemptions* attached to the heritage listing include the demolition of the former laundry building and the two modern accommodation wings, known respectively as the St Justin's Wing and the Married Couples Wing.

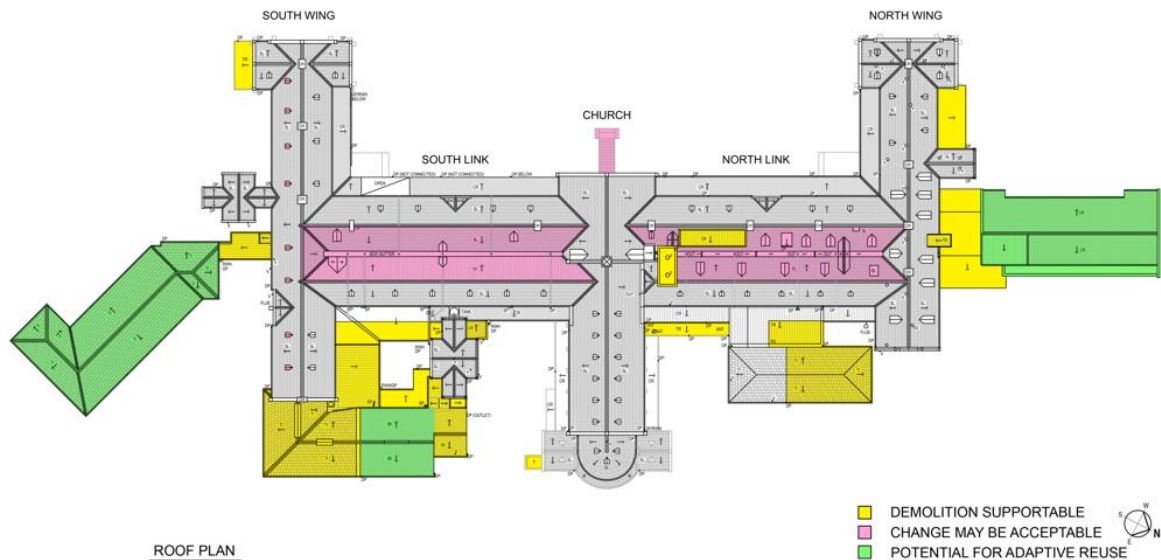


Figure 28 plan taken from CMP Volume 1

Risk mitigation

It is acknowledged that some risk to the heritage fabric exists where later additions are attached to the original Monastery building. Risks cannot be fully mitigated without the participation of the contractor undertaking the works. A removal methodology is recommended to be prepared and incorporated into a Heritage Protection Plan as a condition of the heritage permit.

2.3.1.1 Laundry



Figure 29 West elevation is currently used as a workshop and contains an early iron beam – no original roof forms



Figure 30 East Elevation of former child care building – a later addition to the laundry

Significance

The single-storey, free-standing brick laundry is not significant. This is the site of an early laundry, but the original form of the building has been lost. The CMP identifies one iron beam to be salvaged and used elsewhere on site. Location to be advised.

Existing Use

A small area is used as a maintenance workshop but the building is otherwise abandoned and fenced off.

Impact – positive/negative

Nil.

Risk

The demolition process will be reasonably straightforward with little threat of damage to the original building. At its closest point, the laundry is located over 20m from the original building.

2.3.1.2 St Justin's wing (1972)



Figure 35 South side of new wing basement and link from south north side of new wing and link

Significance/history

The wing is not considered to be significant to the heritage values of the place.

The cream-brick wing at the south end of the main building, was opened in 1973.

Existing use

The building is currently used for low budget accommodation.

CMP recommendations and proposed changes

The condition of the wing was not assessed as part of the CMP Vol 2.

Volume 1 of the CMP notes that the wing has the potential for adaptive re-use but rates the link section between the convent and the St Justin's wing as deleterious and recommends demolition

A small portion of the basement will be retained but the remainder of the building will be removed and the east elevation will be reinstated.

Impact – positive

The demolition of the building will once again reveal the east elevation and allow for its reconstruction. This is a positive outcome for the place.

Impact – negative / mitigation

Demolition poses some risk to the surrounding fabric.

Due to a level change of over 5 m in this area of the site, the section of basement to be retained will not be visible in long public views of the building or diminish its 'landmark' values.

2.3.1.3 Married couples wing



Figure 36 north elevation



south elevation



Figure 37 west side of connecting link



east side of connecting link

Significance / history

The wing is not considered to be significant to the heritage values of the place.

The 1960s marked a period of substantial change at the Home. Between 1961 and 1963, ownership of the site transferred from a group of individual Sisters to the Trustees of the Little Sisters of the Poor of Mount St Joseph, Market Street, Randwick, New South Wales — the location of the order's Sydney Home established in 1886. Following this transfer, all remaining farm buildings were demolished and the southern portion of the site was sold in February 1963 to Edna Britt (law clerk, Ascot Vale) and Margot O'Donohue (solicitor, Camberwell). Proceeds from this land sale financed the construction of the four-storey cream-brick Married Couples Wing, connected to the north wing of the main building.

The new wing was designed by architect Joseph McCarthy and constructed by A.J. Richardson & Son at a cost of £100,000. It was officially opened by Archbishop Tweedy in September 1963. Upon completion, it accommodated thirteen married couples and eight single women. Amenities were provided on the ground floor, with apartments above, each described as featuring "a modern sitting room ... with huge picture windows" (Northcote Leader, 25 September 1963). This represented a marked improvement on the open dormitory arrangements of the original Monastery building.

Existing use

Some rooms in the wing are currently used for low-budget accommodation

CMP recommendations and proposed changes

The condition of the wing was not assessed as part of the CMP Vol 2.

Volume 1 of the CMP notes that the wing has the potential for adaptive re-use but rates the link section between the convent and the Married couples wing as deleterious and recommends demolition.

The entire wing will be removed, and the original west elevation will be reinstated.

Impact – positive

The demolition of the building will reveal the west elevation and allow for its reconstruction and the reinstatement of original openings.

Impact – negative / mitigation

Demolition poses some risk to the surrounding fabric.

2.3.1.4 Additions to south wing and courtyard on the south side of the chapel (1907 & 1960s)



Figure 31 Additions at the north end of the south wing
approximate location of 1907 bldg outlined in yellow



courtyard on the south side of the church



Figure 39 1960s addition at the end of the south wing

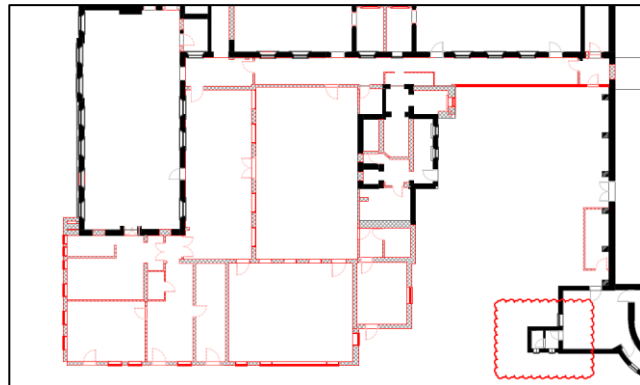


Figure 40 demolition plan - KUD TP2002

Significance / history

The additions are not considered to be significant to the heritage values of the place.

A small single-storey structure is believed to have existed in the northeast courtyard since the earliest phase of the Monastery's construction (location indicated by the yellow square above). An upper storey was added during the 1960s. The original function of this early structure is unknown, and it does not appear to have held any architectural or functional relationship of significance to the Monastery. The building has since been altered extensively and is no longer considered to possess heritage value.

Between 1958 and 1960, the courtyard adjacent to the south link ablutions block was completely enclosed by two-storey additions that surrounded the earlier single-storey gabled structure to its rear (PROV PSP 5922).

Existing use

The rooms around the ablutions block are not in use and are in very poor condition internally.

CMP recommendations and proposed changes

The CMP recommends that elements which detract from, distort, or diminish the cultural significance of the place be removed. All additions surrounding the ablutions block are considered deleterious to understanding the original structure, and their removal is therefore recommended. The additions will be demolished, and the original elevation reinstated.

Impact - positive

The demolition of the additions will reveal the northwest elevation of the south wing, the ablutions block and the courtyard.

Impact – negative / mitigation

Demolition poses some risk to the surrounding fabric.

Parts of the ablutions block will need to be rebuilt. To ensure that this work will meet the principals of the Burra Charter the documentation will be reviewed by a heritage consultant and submitted to Heritage Victoria for approval.

The original elevations of the monastery and the form of the ablutions block cannot be revealed without removal of the additions.

2.3.1.5 Addition to south end of south wing

Figure 32 Ramp and brick addition to be demolished

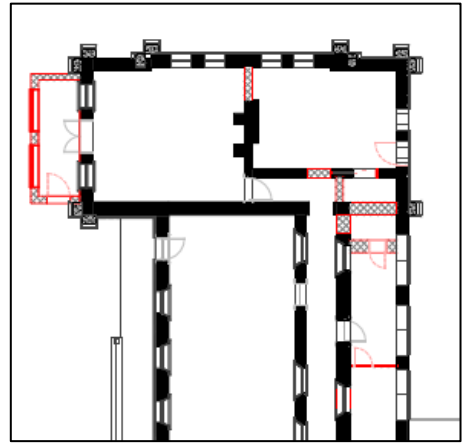


Figure 33 KUD demolition plan

Significance / history

The addition is not considered significant and detracts from the original elevations. The date of construction is unknown, but it is presumed to date from the late twentieth century. The original window openings remain intact within the east wall of the original building.

Existing use

This is an unused locker room.

CMP recommendations

The CMP recommends that elements which detract, distort or diminish the cultural significance of the place are removed. The addition will be removed and the elevation restored.

Impact - positive

The demolition of the addition will reveal the original elevation.

Impact – negative / mitigation

Demolition poses some risk to the surrounding fabric.

The original elevations of the monastery cannot be revealed without removal of the addition.

2.3.1.6 Addition to north side of north wing



Figure 34 Demolish single-storey addition beside ablutions block and awning

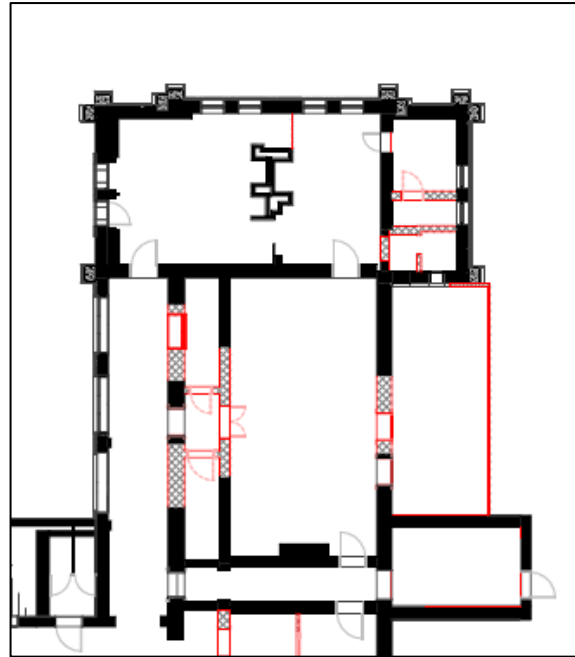


Figure 35 KUD demo plan

Significance / History

The addition is not considered significant and detracts from the original elevations. The date of construction is unknown but is assumed to be from the late twentieth century.

Existing use

The room is currently unused. A small toilet has been installed at the south end of the space.

CMP recommendations

The CMP recommends the removal of all elements that detract from, distort, or diminish the cultural significance of the place. The additions will therefore be demolished, and the original elevations reinstated.

Impact – positive

The demolition of the addition, the awning, and the non-original doors will reveal the original elevations, enhancing the building's architectural integrity and visual coherence.

Impact – negative / mitigation

Demolition poses some risk to the surrounding heritage fabric. Works should be carefully managed under the supervision of a heritage consultant to ensure no inadvertent damage occurs during removal.

2.3.1.7 Addition to north link ablutions block and north courtyard



Figure 36 Original structure on the left, later addition on the right

West end of addition

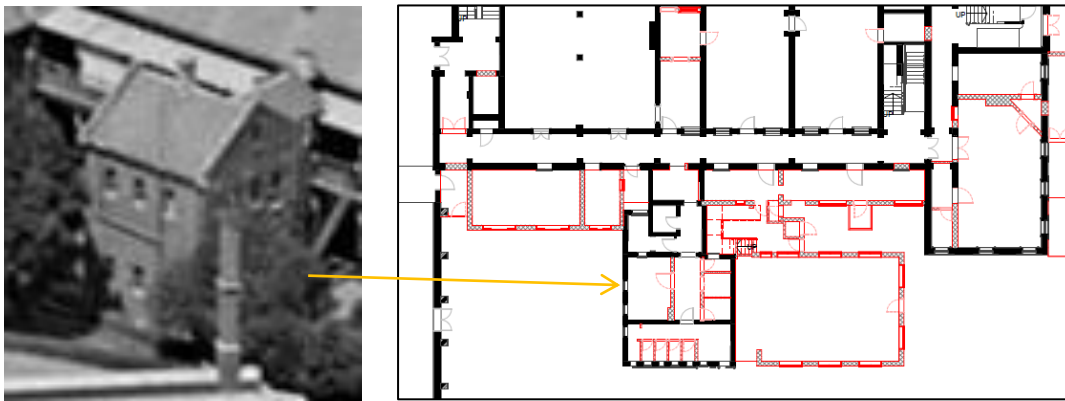


Figure 37 1928 photo of ablutions block

Figure 38 KUD demolition plan

Significance / history

The addition is not significant; it conceals the original elevations and distorts the form of the monastery.

The addition was constructed circa 1968.

Existing use

The rooms on both floors are unused.

CMP recommendations

The CMP recommends that elements which detract, distort or diminish the cultural significance of the place are removed. The additions will be removed. The roofline and elevations will be reinstated.

Impact - positive

The demolition of the addition will reveal the verandah behind and the form of the building. The original roof form will be reconstructed.

Impact – negative and mitigation

Demolition poses some risk to the surrounding fabric. Works should be carried out under the supervision of a heritage consultant to ensure the protection of adjacent significant elements.

2.3.1.8 Stair to chapel



Figure 39 Forecourt stair side elevation



Figure 40 front elevation



Figure 41 Façade of chapel in 1890



Façade of chapel in 1895-6

Existing use

When the second stage of the building was constructed, a major change was made to the front façade of the oratory. Architect William Flannagan had originally designed this area as a formal centrepiece to the completed landmark building. When first constructed in 1890, the gable-fronted oratory featured a bellcote at the apex, two levels of arcading, and a grand return staircase leading to the principal entry.

During the later phase, under architect James Curtin, the design was considerably simplified to provide additional accommodation. The revised façade introduced a more substantial belltower set back from the front plane, replaced the niches flanking the statue of St Joseph with round-headed windows, and infilled the arcades with rendered walls and rows of round-headed and segmental-

arched windows. The original grand staircase was removed and replaced with a modest straight flight of steps.

The rationale for these changes, which removed some of the building's finest original detailing, was reported at the time as:

"The old central front has been altered to agree with the style of the new building, and to provide additional rooms." (*Advocate*, 13 June 1896:16)

As the second stage closely replicated the first, the principal motivation appears to have been to enclose the arcades to gain additional rooms. The existing staircase is considered contributory as evidence of the Little Sisters' modest means and perhaps reflective of their vow of poverty; however, architecturally, its mean proportions and design detract from Flannagan's original composition and diminish the façade's visual impact.

Existing use

The stair has no landing, is unsafe for use, and provides no direct entry to the church. It is currently disused.

CMP recommendations and proposed changes

The existing narrow stair, which replaced the earlier ornate double staircase around 1896, is paradoxically both significant and deleterious. While historically illustrative of the Sisters' circumstances, it is functionally and aesthetically inadequate, unsafe, and inaccessible for elderly or mobility-impaired users.

A new stair should be designed in a contemporary idiom that is visually subservient yet proportionally sympathetic to the main building.

Policy 7.35 of the CMP states:

"Replace the existing central stair to provide safe, compliant and dignified access to the Church. Reuse the bluestone elsewhere on the site, preferably on the new stair."

Impact – positive

The proposed new stair will provide direct access to the church from the *platía*. A well-proportioned central staircase will strengthen the visual and physical connection between the church and forecourt, reinforce the west façade as the principal elevation, and complement the Monastery's landmark qualities.

Impact – negative / mitigation

The loss of early fabric is not recommended lightly; however, the existing staircase is clearly anomalous. Its mean proportions and austere form are inconsistent with the scale and character of the Monastery, diminishing both its architectural composition and its landmark presence.

Retaining the current stair would perpetuate these negative impacts and undermine the integrity of the new forecourt and *platía*, which are central to the project's broader heritage and design objectives.

2.3.1.8 Verandah infill



Figure 42 North link south side/berm



Figure 43 South link south side to berm



Figure 44 North wing verandah to berm



Figure 45 South wing verandah to berm



Figure 46 North link north side



Figure 47 South link north side

Significance / history

All verandah infills are considered deleterious to understanding the architectural and aesthetic values of the Monastery.

Even after completion of the original concept in 1909, the Little Sisters continued to experience shortages of space and modern amenities, as well as periodic funding constraints. These pressures led to a series of ad hoc alterations and post-war additions to the building. By the 1920s, sections of the front and rear verandahs of the south wing had been enclosed, a change visible in both a 1923 photograph and the 1928 aerial imagery.

Between 1950 and 1958, the entire front verandah of the south link was infilled, though fortunately the original cast-iron enrichments were retained. By 1973, much of the main building's front verandahs had also been enclosed to provide additional accommodation.

By 1977, the front verandah of the north link had also been infilled, most likely as part of broader efforts by the Little Sisters to provide residents with private rooms, some converted from former verandahs and others created within subdivided dormitories (Advocate, 18 August 1977).

While these infills hold some historical association with the Sisters' evolving use of the building, they detract from its architectural and aesthetic composition and compromise the functionality and legibility of the original design.

Existing condition and use

All walls enclosing the verandahs are in poor to very poor condition. The verandahs themselves are unused. The loggia windows are in good condition, but the loggia space is also currently unused.

CMP recommendations and proposed changes

The CMP recommends that elements which detract from, distort, or diminish the cultural significance of the place be removed. Accordingly, all non-original verandah infill elements will be demolished. The original balustrade system and verandah posts will be conserved and reinstated.

Impact – positive

The removal of the infill materials will enable the reconstruction of the cast-iron lace balustrades, restoring the building's original form and cross-ventilation system. All verandah balustrade panels and filigree have been temporarily removed for safety reasons, as many were at risk of collapse. The cast-iron work will be repaired at ground level and reinstated. Verandah posts, which feature fewer interstices, will be conserved in situ. Where elements have been lost or structurally compromised, replacements will be fabricated in accordance with the conservation methodology outlined in Appendix O.

A General Exemption Notification for the temporary removal of the balustrade panels and filigree was submitted to Heritage Victoria on 23 September 2025, together with a methodology for tagging, removal, and secure storage of all components.

Impact – negative and mitigation

Nil.

2.3.1.9 Chapel - Kiosk below east verandah



Figure 48 built-in section of verandah on east side of the church

Significance / history

The addition is believed to date from the last quarter of the twentieth century. It is not significant or contributory and detracts from the original design of the Monastery.

Existing use

The kiosk is currently unused.

CMP recommendations and proposed changes

The CMP recommends that elements which detract from, distort, or diminish the cultural significance of the place be removed. Accordingly, the kiosk will be demolished.

Impact - positive

The removal of the infill structure will reveal the original elevation, restoring the architectural integrity of the façade.

Impact - negative / mitigation

Demolition poses some risk to the surrounding heritage fabric. Works should be carried out under the supervision of a heritage consultant to ensure the protection of adjacent significant elements.

2.3.2 Dismantling of internal fit-out of later date



Figure 49 Basement



Figure 50 Ground Floor



Figure 51 Floor



Figure 52 Attic

Significance / history

The interior of the building has been modified on multiple occasions to upgrade amenities and meet evolving health standards. These modifications can be readily identified for removal.

Significant interior elements are listed in Volume 2 of the CMP. Alterations and fitouts dating after 1909 are generally not considered significant, although some areas of terrazzo flooring are regarded as contributory.

The date of the dormer windows in the north wing is uncertain, but they may be original or relatively early features introduced to provide light and ventilation for the nuns who occupied the attic. The aluminium louvres date from the last quarter of the twentieth century.

Existing condition and use

The mid to late twentieth-century bedroom and bathroom fitouts are now in very poor condition. Many of the modifications, including suspended ceilings, partition systems, and bathroom fittings, have been partially or roughly removed, causing damage to original fabric. Areas that remain in use have been stripped back to the original materials and made good.

CMP recommendations and proposed changes

The CMP recommends that elements which detract from, distort, or diminish the cultural significance of the place be removed.

All fitout elements dating from after 1909 will be removed, and original fabric will be revealed and conserved. Some recent upgrades undertaken by the Greek Orthodox Church may be retained where they are functional, appropriate for ongoing use, and do not adversely affect heritage values.

Impact - positive

The removal of non-original modifications will reveal the original materials and spatial planning of the building and allow for the restoration of original finishes.

Impact - negative

Nil. If these works are not undertaken, the building will remain in a state unsuitable for occupation or adaptive reuse.

2.3.3 Internal alterations to accommodate adaptive reuse

2.3.3.1 Removal or modification of internal walls – generally

Significance / history

The planning and use of the original aged care facility remain legible in the layout of the corridors and dormitories. The internal wall configuration is largely intact, with the exception of the service rooms located between dormitories and ablutions blocks, which have been progressively modified to accommodate improved health standards and plumbing systems.

All principal internal walls and their original openings are considered significant. The ablutions blocks have been altered to such an extent that their internal walls are generally contributory but not of primary significance. The removal of later contributory walls is therefore unlikely to diminish the heritage value of the place.

The bathrooms on the ground and first floors of the north wing retain some early finishes, and one of these will be conserved in its entirety.

Existing condition and use

All original internal walls are of sound masonry construction with solid plaster finishes. Most openings remain original, except within the service areas between dormitories, which have undergone extensive alteration.

Openings in the corridor walls of the north link and north wing have been more heavily modified than those in the southern sections; however, most remain intact or are readily identifiable. All modifications are documented in the CMP.

The toilet compartments within the ablutions blocks are divided by masonry partitions that render the spaces unsuitable for alternative uses. Where communal toilet facilities are no longer required, these areas are proposed for adaptive reuse. Once the partitions are removed, the spaces can accommodate small, functional rooms, ensuring their continued occupation and maintenance.

CMP recommendations and proposed changes

The CMP recognises that the service areas have been compromised by past alterations and that changes within these zones are acceptable. It recommends the retention of representative features in the north wing ablutions blocks, best achieved by preserving one intact bathroom. The ground-floor bathroom in this area will be retained and repurposed as a luggage store.

The adaptive reuse of the Monastery has been planned to minimise intervention in the original interior structure. The accompanying demolition plans demonstrate that only limited modifications are proposed to internal walls.

Impact - positive

The selective removal and modification of internal walls will enable the building to function for a range of new uses while meeting current building standards and accessibility requirements.

Impact - Negative / mitigation

The removal of significant fabric is generally undesirable but may be necessary to achieve functional outcomes. Where walls are removed, nibs will be retained to indicate their former location. In areas where space is constrained, a raised section of render will provide a subtle imprint of the wall's alignment.

Where new door openings are introduced, they will be clearly expressed through a distinct architrave detail, allowing the intervention to remain legible as a contemporary alteration.

2.3.3.2 Lower ground floor

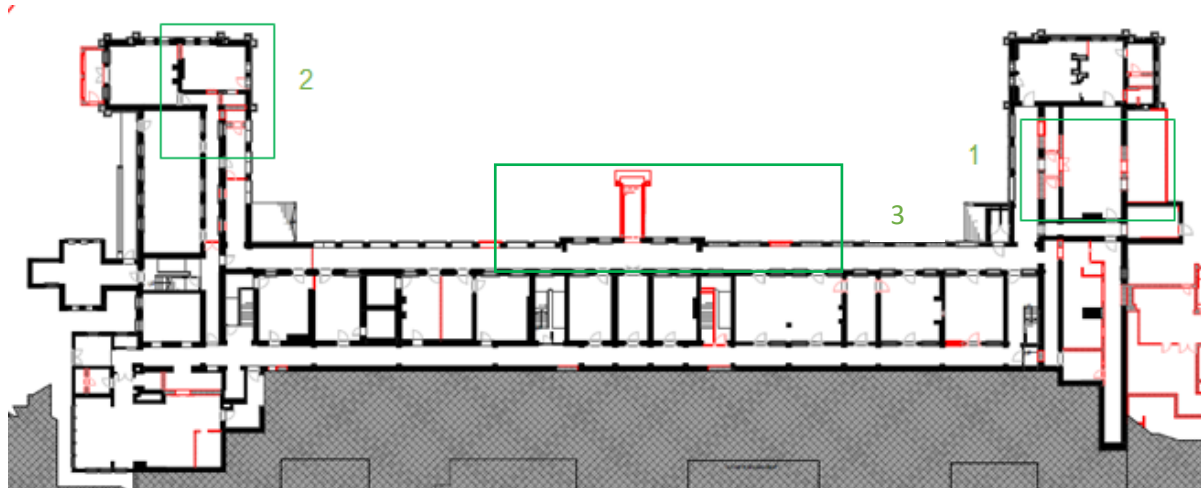


Figure 53 Lower Ground floor demolition plan

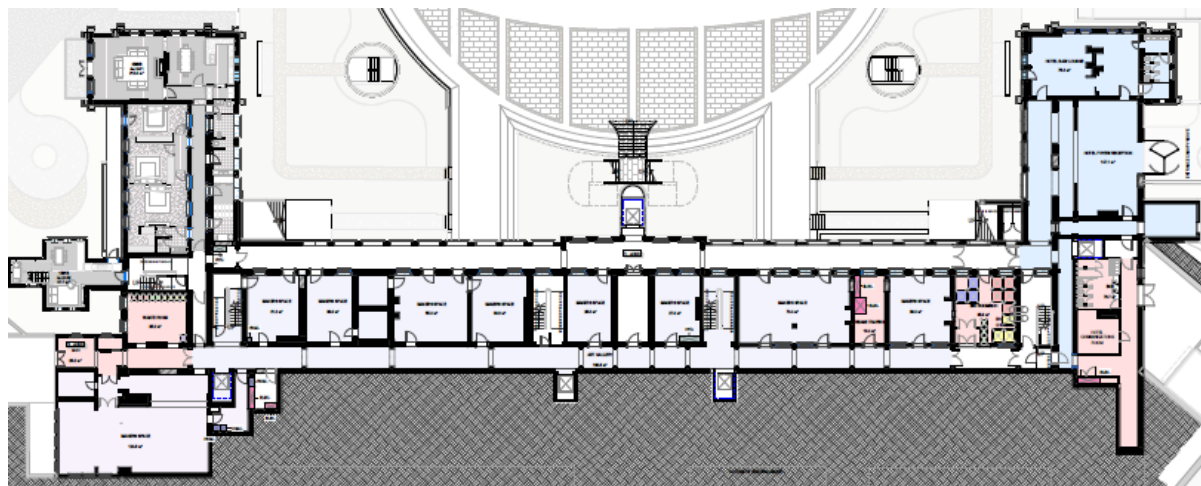


Figure 54 Proposed ground floor plan

Proposed changes (Numbers correspond to the green outlines on the plan above)

1. A sufficient length of both internal walls will be retained to demonstrate the original planning of this area. The enlarged openings will allow visual connection between the hotel lobby and the *platia*, enhancing spatial flow without compromising heritage character.

An existing window opening in the external wall will be extended to create a generous entry into the hotel lobby. The proposed revolving airlock door will be fully glazed to minimise visual impact on the building façade and ensure the intervention remains recessive within the overall composition.

2. The removal of a small section of wall at the end of the loggia will have minimal impact on the proportions, character, or function of this semi-enclosed space. The construction of a thinner replacement wall will allow the creation of two separate rooms while avoiding any change to the existing window configuration.

3. The wall beneath two window openings in the loggia will be removed to floor level to form new door openings. The central stair, which is a significant element, will also be removed. The established rhythm of the loggia openings will be maintained, and the proposed change is not expected to diminish the architectural integrity of the building. The modification to the stair is discussed in the following section.

2.3.3.3 Ground floor

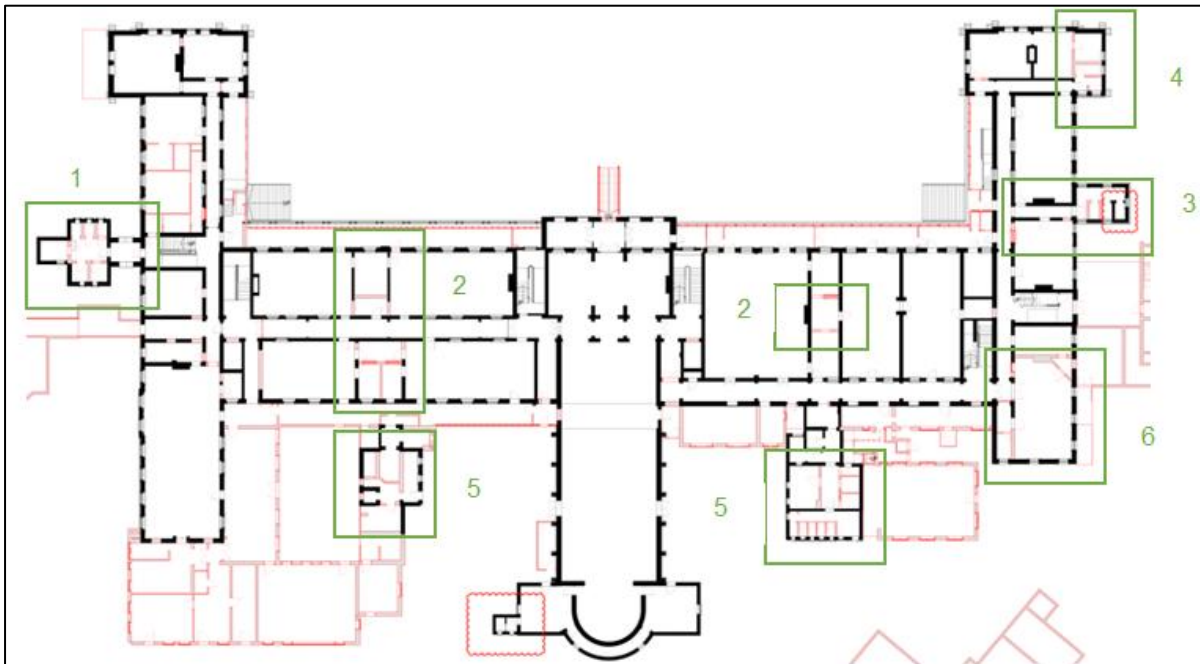


Figure 55 ground floor demolition plan

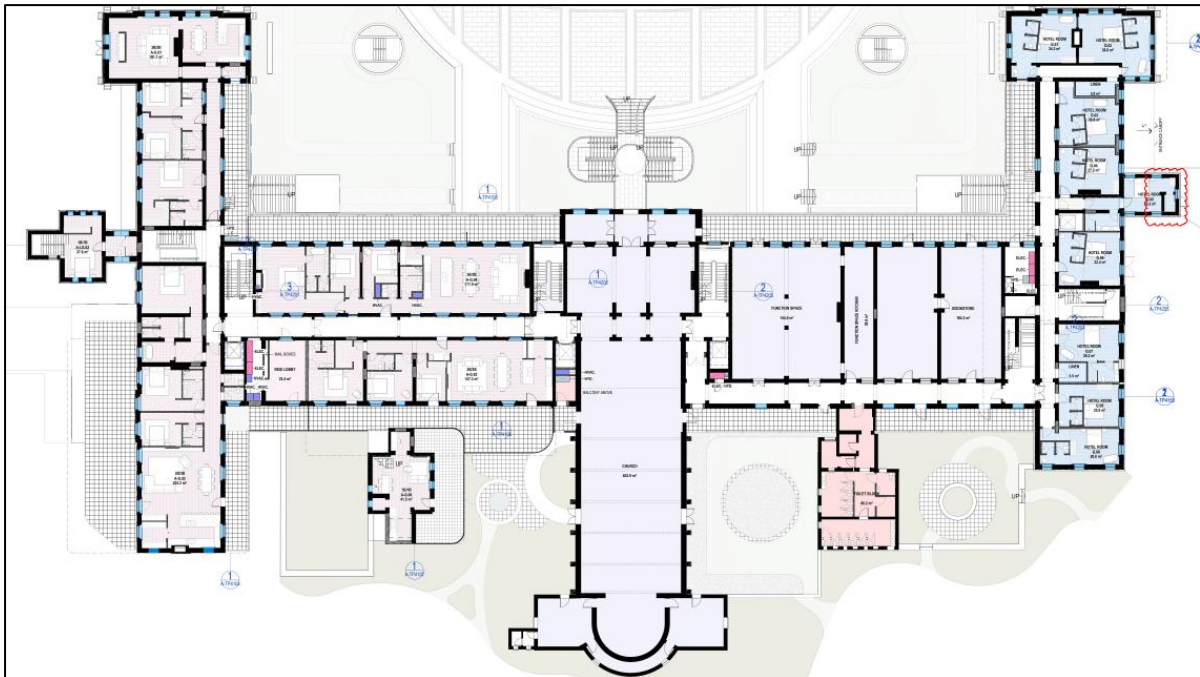


Figure 56 Proposed Plan – ground floor

Proposed changes – ground floor

1. South link ablutions

The floor in the southern arm will be removed to accommodate a new stair. The toilet stall walls will also be removed to make the space habitable. Due to spatial constraints, nibs will not be retained, however, the render finish will be built out to indicate the former wall profile. A small interpretive plaque will be installed within the room to explain the original spatial arrangement and former use.

2. Internal walls in service areas

The service areas have undergone multiple alterations over time, making it difficult in some locations to confirm which dividing walls are original. According to the CMP, further change within these areas is acceptable and unlikely to adversely affect the heritage values of the place.

3. North Wing Tiles and Toilet cubicle walls

Both floors of the west wing ablutions block contain early fabric. The CMP recommends that at least one of these bathrooms be largely retained. The ground-floor bathroom will therefore retain significant fabric, while the first-floor bathroom will be adapted for new use. The precise extent and method of retention will be confirmed on site.

A lift is required to ensure the hotel meets current accessibility and compliance standards. Several potential locations were tested, and the proposed position was selected as it results in the least impact on significant fabric.

4. Rooms G.111 and G.112 – Early Sanitary Spaces

The CMP identifies these rooms as early sanitary areas. Their original features are not known, but both have undergone multiple modifications. Room G.111 has been entirely gutted, and the window in G.112 has been covered by a stud wall. The removal of these walls will not disrupt an understanding of the building's planning or diminish its heritage significance.



Figure 67 Current condition of G.112 and G.111



Figure 68 South link ablutions G.11A

5. North and South Link Ablutions Blocks

The ablutions blocks attached to the north and south links have been substantially altered

over the years. The current fitouts are not representative of the original configuration, and their removal will not diminish the heritage values of the building.

6. Removal of Wall, Fireplace, and Corridor Section

The dotted line on the plan indicates the location of the wall and fireplace to be removed. This is one of three fireplaces proposed for removal. It is not possible to subdivide this space into three rooms without removing the wall. The fireplace above will be retained and supported by a new steel beam from below.

The corridor in this area has already been modified (refer to Figure 57), and the proposed opening is unlikely to cause further adverse impact. Due to limited space, a shallow nib will be formed in render to mark the position of the original wall.

A shallow nib in render will also be created on the external wall to record the wall's former alignment while maximising usable space.



Figure 57 Corridor with bathroom infill



3&4 = arrow, 4 = dotted line

2.3.3.4 First floor

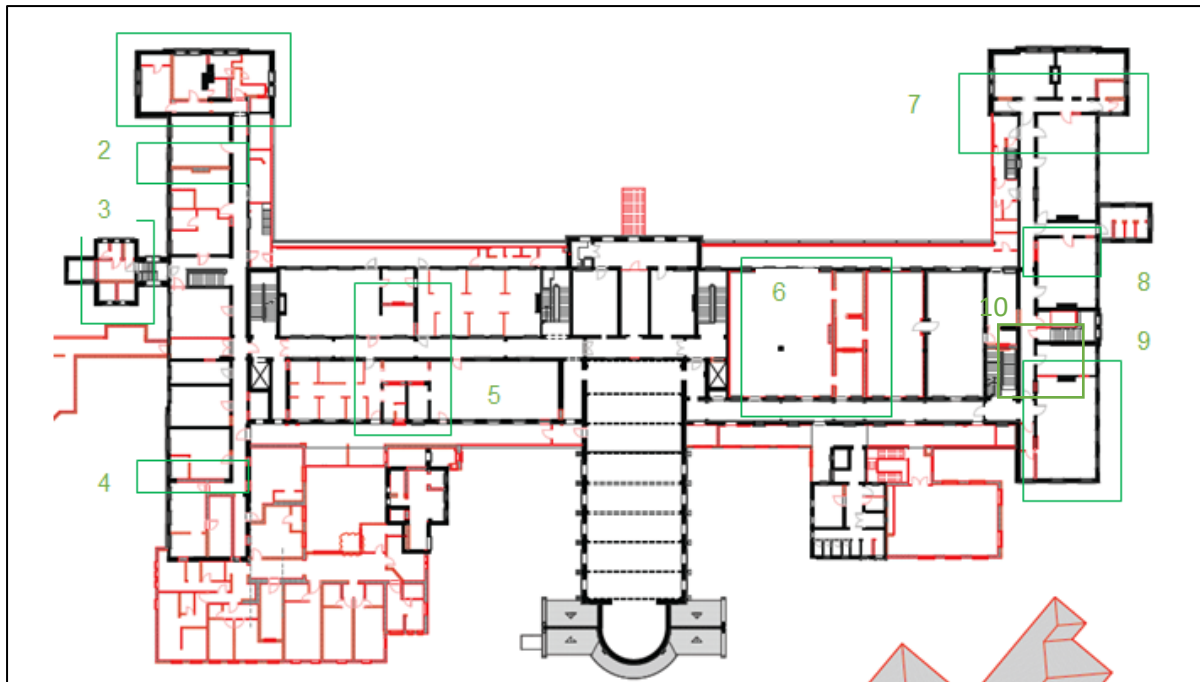


Figure 58 First floor demolition plan

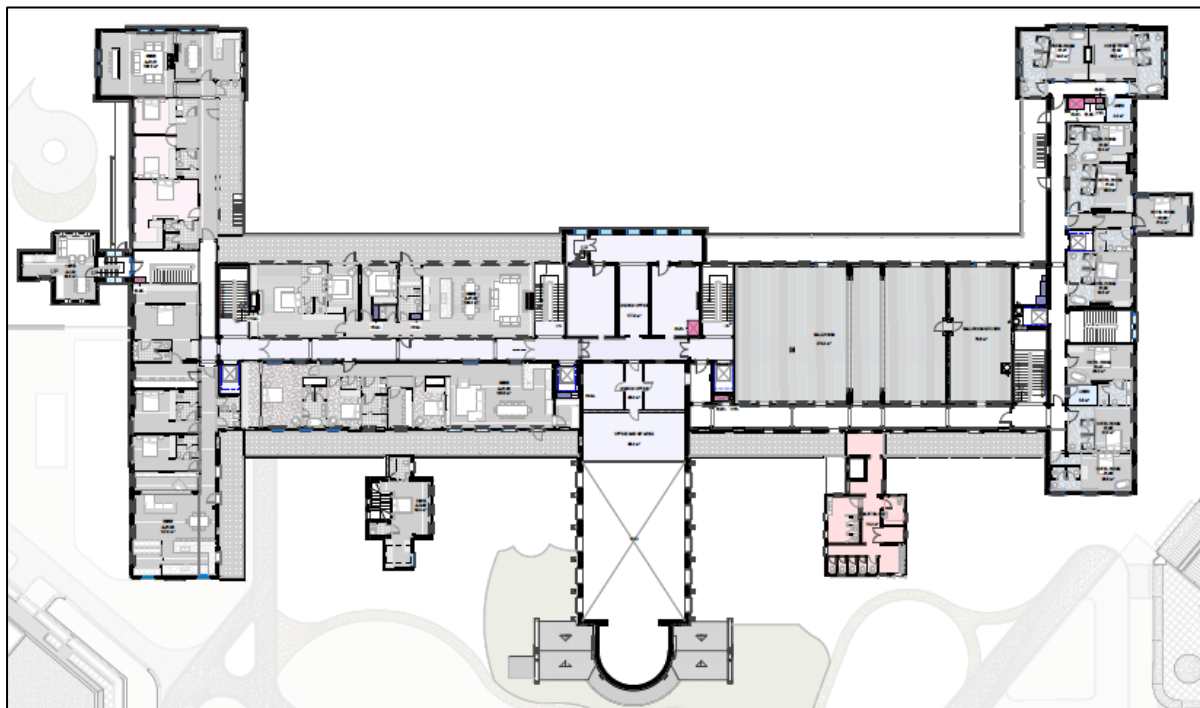


Figure 59 Proposed Plan – first floor

Proposed changes – first floor

1. South wing pavilion

This area has been modified over time to form small apartments. Based on a comparison with the ground-floor plan, no original walls will be removed as part of the proposed works.

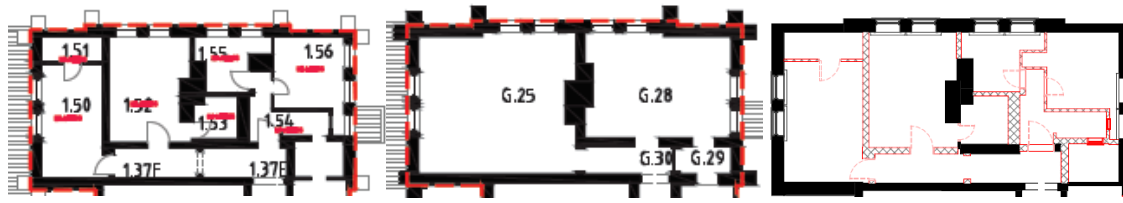


Figure 72 South wing pavilion – first floor, ground floor, and demolition plan

2. Removal of dividing wall and fireplace

A dividing wall and fireplace will be removed to create a three-bedroom apartment. The fireplace in the room below has already been removed, and the brickwork above is believed to be supported on a concealed iron or steel structure. The brickwork in the attic will be supported on a new steel beam to ensure stability.

3. South link ablutions – Toilet stall walls

The removal of toilet stall walls is required to make the space functional. Due to spatial limitations, nibs will not be retained or expressed. A small interpretive plaque will be installed in the room to illustrate the original spatial configuration.

4. New opening in wall

A large new opening will be created. Substantial nibs will be retained, and a new structural beam will be expressed to indicate the original wall alignment.

5. Service areas

The internal walls within the service areas have been altered repeatedly over time, making it difficult to confirm which dividing walls are original. According to the CMP, further change within these areas is acceptable and unlikely to adversely affect heritage values.

6. Proposed ballroom (Rooms 1.103–1.108)

The removal of two walls, a fireplace, and an internal service area represents the most substantial intervention within the building. The space already contains a large opening in the west wall, which will be infilled to replicate the original wall configuration. These works will facilitate the creation of a ballroom. The floor and ceiling structure will be supported by new steel portal framing.

The existing floorboards in this area have been damaged by previous electrical works, where channels were cut into the boards. As the floor will be covered to comply with fire regulations, patching will not be required.

7. Corridor wall modifications (Room 1.132)

Three minor changes are proposed to the corridor walls. These are not expected to impact the rhythm, proportion, or character of the space. The arched openings will continue to define and dominate the corridor's architectural expression.



Figure 73 North pavilion corridor

8. Lift installation

A lift is required to ensure compliance with accessibility and building code requirements. Several potential locations were tested, and the proposed position was selected as it results in the least impact on significant heritage fabric.

9. Corridor opening adjustment

This section of the corridor has been modified previously. The new opening is unlikely to have any further adverse impact. Due to limited space, a shallow nib in render will be formed to record the position of the original wall.



Figure 74. Bathroom installed in the corridor space

Figure 75 Room 1.115 – images from CMP

10. Removal of room over stair landing (Room 1.115)

The small room located above the stair landing is of uncertain date. Based on structural evidence, it is likely to be an early addition. However, it disrupts the form of the stair, creating a low bulkhead over the landing that results in non-compliance with egress regulations. The room is irregular in plan and inconsistent with the building's original layout.

Its removal will not affect an understanding of the building's history or diminish its heritage values. On the contrary, it will reinstate the spatial quality and character of the stair hall, improving both safety and legibility.

2.3.3.5 Attic

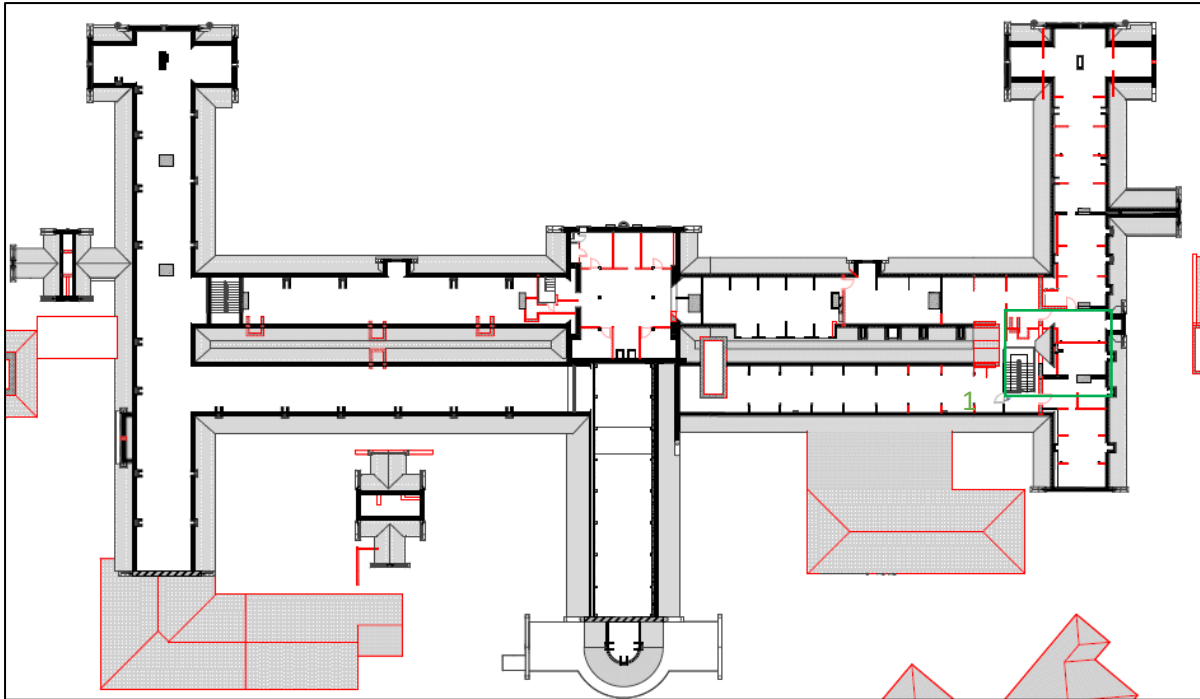


Figure 60 Attic demolition plan

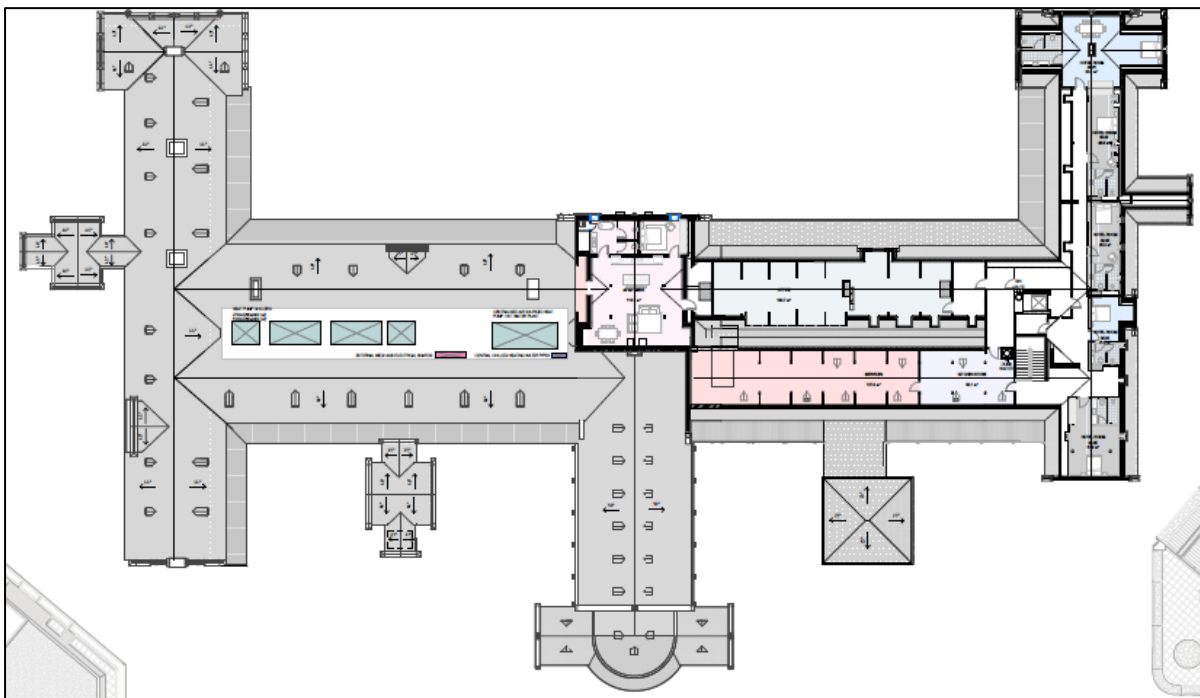


Figure 61 Proposed attic plan

No changes are proposed to the roof trusses or brickwork.

1. The wall facing into the roof valley has been heavily modified over time, with alterations to window openings and internal linings. The proposed works will not detract from the

character or heritage values of the attic, as the wall no longer retains significant original fabric.

The existing timber stair connecting the first floor to the attic (to be shown in red on the demolition plan) will be replaced to comply with current fire egress requirements. The stair is a typical late-Victorian timber construction with no distinctive or exceptional features. Although the replacement represents a minor loss of original fabric, it will not distort the building's spatial hierarchy or diminish its heritage character. The new stairs will be of lightweight construction, clearly distinguishable from the significant stone staircases elsewhere in the building.

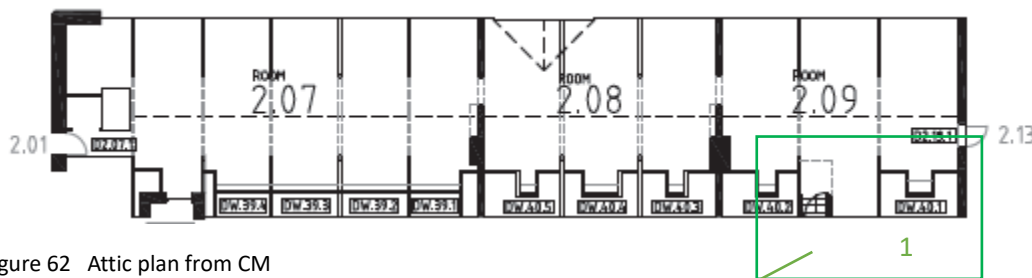


Figure 62 Attic plan from CM



Figure 63 Section of modified wall on right to be partially removed.

2.3.4 New internal elements and change of use

2.3.4.0 Access Requirements

The monastery has not yet been fully assessed for compliance with NCC access requirements. However, the building was built to be robust and allow for hospital guernseys and the like. Original door openings and corridor widths are generous and door leafs generally exceed 950mm. It is possible that some dispensations may be required to provide manoeuvrability around tight corners but generally it is likely that original doors openings and access pathways will remain largely unchanged. Lift shaft which meet current regulations and standards can be installed without substantial changes to existing walls. Internally stair balustrades are typically compliant or very close but requirements regarding, handrail size, nosings, and wear levels are not yet known. Level entry will be required at many doors but all bluestone sills be retained and floors built-up or ramped as necessary to meet requirements.

2.3.4.1 Lower ground floor

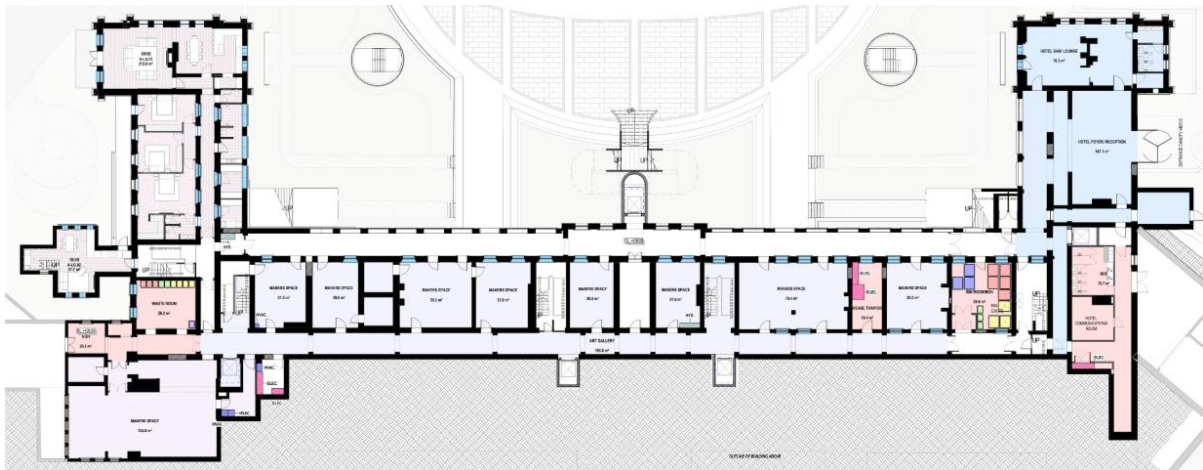


Figure 64 Basement plan

Elements of Significance

The original fabric, spatial divisions, openings, and vertical connections between floors are all considered significant to the heritage values of the building.

Existing Use and Condition

The basement level is currently unused. The entire floor is in very poor condition, with substantial deterioration evident in finishes and fittings.

Proposed Use

- **South Wing and Ablutions Block:** Accommodation
- **North and South Link Spaces:** Workshops within rooms, a gallery space within the rear corridor, and lift access to the upper levels
- **North Wing:** Hotel entry lobby and toilets
- **1970s Addition (south-west corner):** Distillery

The proposed new uses will not adversely affect the heritage values of the building.

Proposed Changes

Changes Affecting Significant Fabric

Two primary changes are proposed.

1. Two existing loggia window openings (one on each side of the central stair) will be altered to form door openings. A small section of the sill will be retained at each side of the new openings to maintain legibility of the original window proportions.
2. The area beneath the central external stair will be modified to accommodate a new lift providing access from the carpark. The bluestone steps will be carefully removed and reused elsewhere on site.

Changes Not Affecting Significant Fabric

- The floor levels in the east end of the north wing will be adjusted to align with adjacent areas. The original function of this space and its level change are not clearly understood and

do not contribute to the heritage values of the place. The existing ramp and internal walls are believed to be later additions.

- A fully glazed revolving airlock door will be inserted at the entrance to the hotel. Its modern, transparent design will ensure minimal visual impact on the façade.
- New partitions for the apartments and toilets will be constructed from lightweight stud framing with plasterboard linings, plain skirtings, and cornices. All new fitouts will be designed to be fully reversible.
- Existing floor finishes will be retained where possible, with the option for carpeted finishes introduced in the hotel and apartment areas.
- The small toilet beneath the external stair to the north wing will be removed, and the area will be made good for use as storage.
- The basement level of the 1970s wing will be retained and repurposed as a distillery.

Impact – Positive

The proposed uses will reactivate the building, prevent further deterioration, and support the conservation of significant fabric through continued occupation and maintenance. The new openings to the loggia will enhance connectivity between the interior spaces and the new *platia*, encouraging public engagement with the workshops, gallery, and maker spaces.

Impact – Negative and Mitigation

The modification of two loggia openings will result in a minor loss of original fabric and a subtle alteration to the elevation. However, the rhythm and proportion of the loggia will remain legible. The new door openings will be recessed slightly below the retained sill fragments to preserve the perception of the original arched form.

Overall, the changes will improve the usability and permeability of the space, creating a more inviting and active interface with the *platia* while maintaining the building's heritage integrity.

2.3.4.2 South wing ablutions block

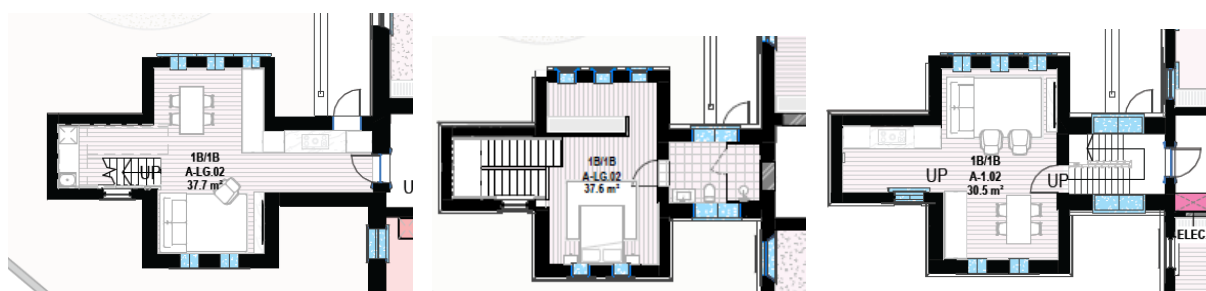


Figure 65 Lower ground - Apartment A

Ground - Apartment A

First floor - Apartment B

Significance

All exterior elements, original openings, and any surviving original internal finishes are considered significant.

CMP Conservation Recommendations

The CMP notes that *“adaptive reuse of this area is acceptable. The use of the ablutions block is known; the original fittings and fixtures have long been removed. The windows indicate the layout of*

the original rooms. Removal of some or all of the internal walls, with advice from an engineer, would provide a more usable space.”

Existing Use and Condition

The former bathrooms have been converted into small bedsits on each level. While the rooms remain in sound condition, the internal wall configuration restricts their functionality and potential for adaptive reuse.

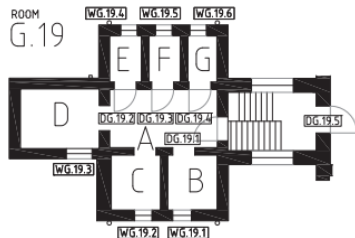


Figure 82 Existing plan

Proposed Use

The ablutions block will accommodate:

- A one-bedroom apartment on the lower ground and ground floors
- A studio apartment on the first floor

Proposed Changes

The early toilet partition walls will be removed. There are no known surviving original fittings, fixtures, or finishes associated with the original bathroom use.

Impact – Positive

The conversion will enable these distinctive spaces to be fully reactivated without external alteration and with minimal loss of original fabric. The proposed residential use represents a sustainable adaptive reuse outcome to an area whose original purpose is no longer required.

Impact – Negative and mitigation

The removal of the original toilet walls will result in the loss of the only remaining spatial evidence of the original configuration. However, these rooms have already been substantially altered, and the remaining fabric offers limited interpretive value.

The proposed adaptive reuse provides the best means of securing the building’s conservation through occupation. Without a viable use, the spaces are likely to deteriorate further. The original layout and function of the ablutions block will be interpreted through a plaque installed in each apartment.

2.3.4.3 Ground floor

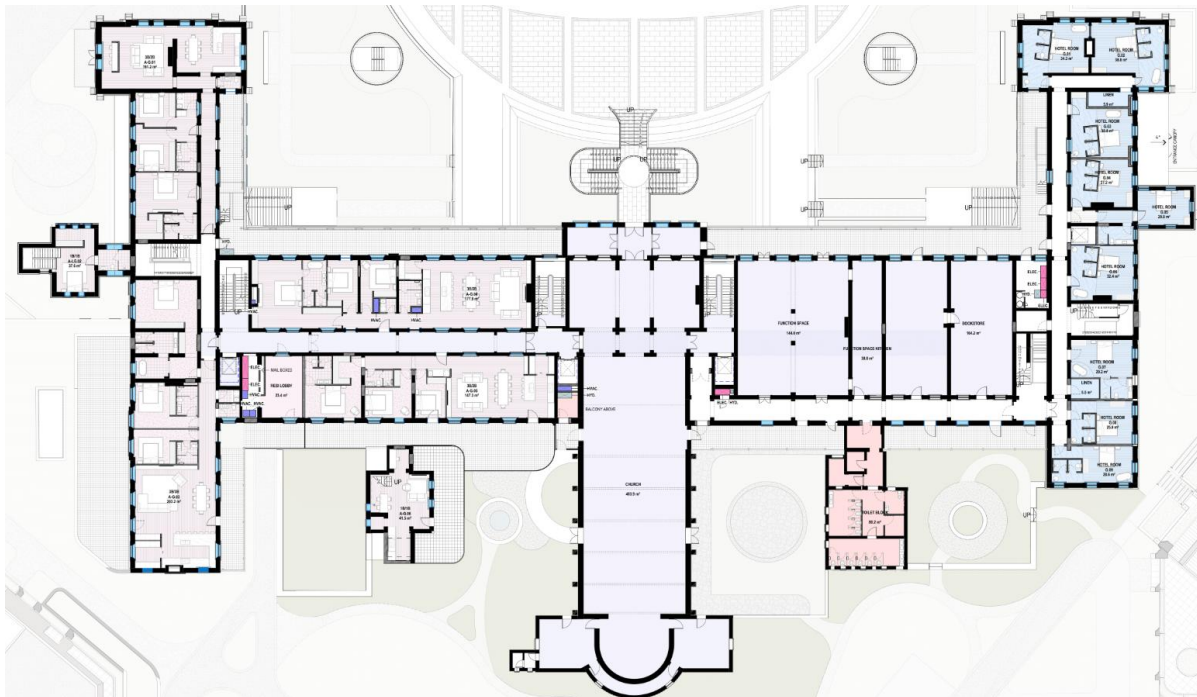


Figure 66 Proposed first floor plan

Elements of significance

All original fabric, spatial divisions, openings, and inter-floor connections are significant. The Chapel itself is of particular heritage significance.

Existing use and condition

The south wing currently accommodates a mix of small residential rooms and a bookshop, while one room of the south link is used as a food store. The south link ablutions block contains toilets on the ground floor but is unused on the first floor. The chapel has been adapted for use as an Orthodox church, incorporating a narthex and offices at the west end. The north link contains a dining room and kitchen, and the north link ablutions block continues to function as toilets. Rooms at the east end of the north wing are used by the Church.

Spaces currently in use are in sound condition, while vacant areas are in poor repair.

Proposed uses

The south wing will contain two three-bedroom apartments separated by the central stair. The south link will accommodate a lobby, two lifts, and two three-bedroom apartments, one on each side of the corridor. The central corridor will provide access to both apartments, and the verandahs will serve as their private open spaces. The chapel will remain unchanged. The north link will contain a function room and bookstore. The north link ablutions block will continue as toilets. The north wing will contain nine hotel apartments and a new lift.

Proposed changes

Changes Impacting Significant Fabric

A new central stair will be constructed to re-establish a functional and dignified connection between the church and the new *platia*. The stair will form a highly visible and defining element of the west façade. Its form draws inspiration from the original double stair shown in historic photographs.

The central platform will be large enough to allow several people to stand and address a gathering in the *platia*. The return flights will sit within the edges of the central oratory wall. The off-form concrete finish will complement the rendered masonry of the Monastery. The design is contemporary but sympathetic in both scale and materiality.



Figure 84 New stair plan; 1892 photo of Little Sisters on front stair; proposed front stair

All verandah infill walls will be removed, and the verandahs reinstated to their original configuration on both sides of the building. Replacement components will be cast to match the existing west verandahs.

Walls in service areas will be modified to support new uses.

In some corridor locations, door and window openings will be covered from the apartment side, while the original joinery will remain visible from the corridor.

Three new lifts will be installed, one within an existing lift shaft. These installations will involve the removal of small sections of original flooring and minor portions of wall fabric for lift door openings.

Changes Not Impacting Significant Fabric

New internal partitions will be lightweight stud framing with plasterboard linings, plain skirtings, and cornices. Every effort has been made to avoid interference with significant features. For example, walls have been stepped or kinked to bypass original elements. All new fitouts will be reversible.



Figure 85 Example of wall stepped to avoid window

Where existing doors and windows are no longer required, they will be respectfully blocked from the interior side without any alteration to original joinery. All features will remain visible from the corridor or public spaces.

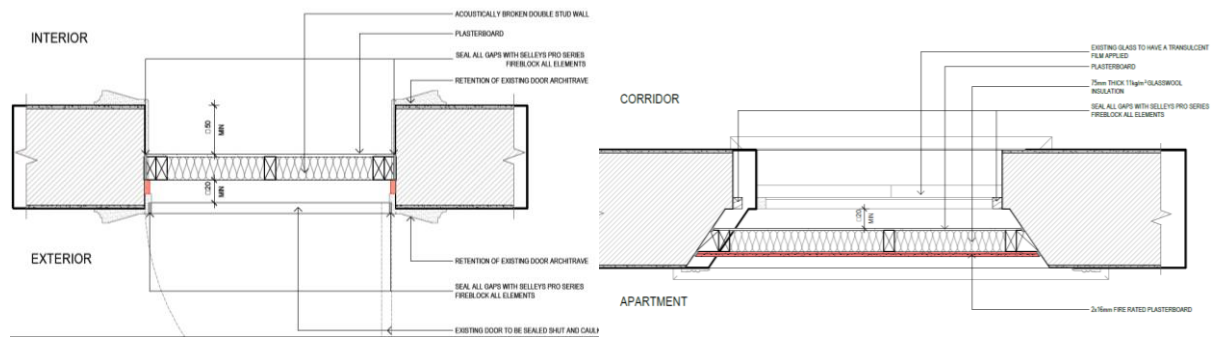


Figure 86 Door infill detail; window infill detail

Impact – Positive

The reinstatement of the main west stair will re-establish this as the principal and ceremonial entry to the building, as originally intended by the architect. It will encourage the use of the main church doors rather than the secondary side entry on the east elevation. The central landing will once again provide a platform for clergy to address gatherings in the *platia*, echoing the use depicted during the building's opening ceremony.

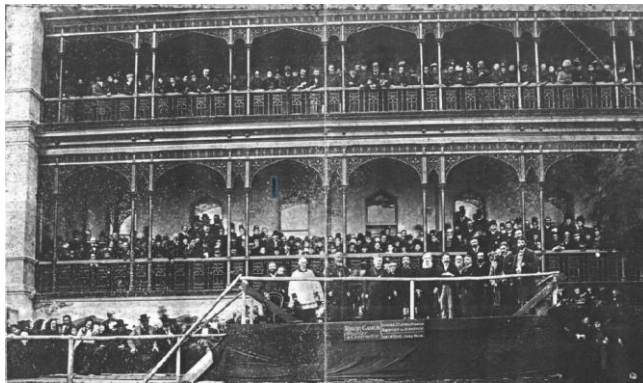


Figure 87 Opening of the first stage of the building, 1896

The removal of verandah infills and restoration of the original cast-iron details will significantly enhance the building's architectural integrity. The proposed adaptive reuse will also ensure the continued occupation and maintenance of the building.

Impact – Negative and mitigation

Where windows are covered from the apartment side, the intervention will be entirely reversible, and the joinery will remain visible from the corridor. Where walls are removed, their original positions will be made legible through the retention of nibs and subtle shadow lines in the ceiling and floor planes.

2.3.4.4 South wing and south link

Significance

All original fabric, spatial divisions, and openings are significant.

Existing use and condition

This area currently contains an apartment, a bookshop, and a museum space, all of which are in good condition. A foodbank storage area is also present and in fair condition. The remaining spaces, including the verandahs, are unused and in poor condition.

Proposed use

The proposal includes three new apartments and a communal lobby space.

Proposed changes

- The verandahs and verandah posts will be reinstated.
- Service area walls will be modified to accommodate a new pattern of use.
- Some corridor windows will be covered to support the new layouts.
- A new lift will be installed between existing walls adjacent to the church.

Impact – Positive

The proposed apartments make use of the building's original planning, minimising the need for alterations to significant fabric. The reinstatement of the verandahs will restore an important architectural element, reveal original finishes, and bring activity and habitation back to this part of the building.

Impact – Negative and mitigation

Where windows are covered, the intervention will be reversible and the outline of each window will remain visible from the corridor. Where sections of wall are removed, their original extent will be made legible through retained nibs or subtle shadow lines in the floor and ceiling. All new works will be designed to be fully reversible. None of the proposed changes will diminish or detract from the significant heritage values of the place.

2.3.4.5 South link ablutions block – all floors

Existing use and condition

The ground floor contains working bathrooms that remain in use. The upper level is currently unused and in poor condition.

Proposed use

It is proposed to convert the ablutions block into a two-storey apartment connected by a new internal stair.

Proposed changes

A portion of the first-floor structure will be removed to insert a stair linking the two levels. Original openings will be reinstated where possible, and replacement windows will be fabricated to match existing evidence and early photographic records.

Impact – Positive

The proposed works will reveal and reinstate the original free-standing form of the ablutions block, returning the building to a recognisable and coherent configuration. The adaptive reuse will ensure the long-term maintenance and occupation of the structure.

Impact – Negative and mitigation

The creation of a new stair opening represents a minor intervention relative to the extensive historical alterations already made to this part of the building. The small footprint of the block limits its functionality as a single-level dwelling, but the proposed two-level arrangement will allow it to operate effectively as a desirable and sustainable residence.

2.3.4.6 Chapel/oratory/vestries and connecting corridors

Elements of significance

All original fabric, spatial divisions, and openings are significant.

Existing use and condition

The chapel has been converted for use as an Orthodox Church and continues to function in that capacity. The oratory and narthex corridor serve as an entry space and an area for votive offerings. Rooms on either side of the south entry doors are currently used as offices.

The congregation occupies the nave during services, while the liturgy is conducted in the apse. The vestries continue to be used for preparation by clergy.

All spaces are in good condition and are well maintained.

Proposed use

The existing use of the church and associated offices will remain unchanged.

Proposed changes

No physical changes are proposed to the ground floor of the chapel as part of this application.

2.3.4.7 Ground floor north link

Elements of significance

All original fabric, spatial divisions, openings, and vertical connections between floors are significant.

Existing use and condition

The north link originally comprised four large dormitories separated by service areas. The wall dividing the rooms on the south side of the service area (G65) has been removed, and two iron columns now support a structural beam. This enlarged space currently functions as a large dining and event room, with the adjacent rooms serving as smaller dining spaces connected by an opening cut through the former chimney breast.

The original service area has been adapted for use as a kitchen. All rooms, including the corridor, have been redecorated.

Proposed use

The enlarged eastern room will continue to function as a large event and dining space, with the service area upgraded to support this use. The two rooms on the north side of the service area (G89 and G90) will be adapted for use as a bookshop.

Proposed changes

The iron columns will be encased in a fire-rated material to comply with current building standards. The ornate cornices and decorative plaster detailing added to the Function Room will be removed, and simple cornices consistent with the original design will be reinstated.

Non-original doors of inappropriate style will be replaced with new single four-panel doors matching the original design.

Windows that have been boarded over will be reopened and restored to their original appearance.

Impact – Positive

The rooms will be reactivated and made accessible to the public. Reinstating appropriate window and door forms will restore the corridor's original proportions and character. The removal of later decorative plasterwork and reinstatement of simple detailing will return the Function Room closer to its authentic early appearance.

Impact – Negative and mitigation

The encasement of the iron columns will result in their concealment; however, this is necessary for fire compliance and will not affect the understanding of the room's spatial configuration or heritage values.

2.3.4.8 North link ablutions block – all floors

Significance

The original fabric and form of the ablutions block are significant, although both have been compromised by later additions and alterations. The precise date of most internal elements is uncertain; however, the toilet stalls are likely to be early and are considered contributory to the understanding of the building's function.

Existing use

The north end of the original ablutions block is currently used as toilet facilities serving both the function room and the church on the ground floor.

Proposed use

The existing use will remain unchanged, with both floors continuing to operate as toilet facilities.

Proposed changes

Later additions and non-original internal fabric will be removed. The retained shell of the building will receive a contemporary fit out designed to meet modern standards while remaining visually compatible and reversible.

Impact – Positive

The proposed works will retain the historic use of the ablutions block and reinstate the original access point from the external verandah, reinforcing its functional and historical role within the monastery complex.

Impact – Negative and mitigation

No changes are proposed that would diminish or detract from the significant heritage values of the place. All new work will be clearly identifiable as modern intervention and reversible where practicable.

2.3.4.9 Ground floor – north wing

Elements of significance

All original fabric, spatial divisions, openings, and vertical connections between floors are significant.

Existing use and condition

Most of the rooms and corridors in the north wing have been redecorated and are currently used as offices or meeting rooms. Only the bathroom area in the west pavilion remains in poor condition.

A steel structure and small enclosed room have been inserted within the main stair. These are not in active use but are structurally sound.

Proposed use

The entire north wing will be adapted for use as a boutique hotel, accommodating eight rooms on the ground floor.

Proposed changes

Adaptation for hotel use will involve limited modifications to corridor walls and the sheeting over of two external windows.

New internal partitions will be introduced to form hotel suites. The ensuite walls will be set at a deliberate angle to clearly indicate their status as new insertions within the original plan.

Where it has not been possible to align new walls between existing windows, the windows will be concealed from the interior but will remain visible externally. An opaque film will be applied to the glazing to maintain the building's external appearance.



Figure 88 Typical bedroom plan showing windows retained but concealed by internal wall

Impact – Positive

The proposed works will reactivate the north wing and secure its long-term use and maintenance. The new partitions have been carefully positioned to respect the rhythm and proportions of the existing rooms, ensuring the heritage character of the wing remains legible.

Impact – Negative and mitigation

The internal concealment of two windows represents a minor change that will not affect the external appearance or spatial legibility of the building. All new partitions are designed to be reversible and clearly distinguishable from original fabric.

2.3.4.10 North wing ablutions block – all floors

Significance

The bathrooms on both floors are largely intact and retain some early, possibly original fabric, including tiling, stall walls, and window joinery. Both rooms are in poor condition, and many of the fittings, fixtures, and portions of the tiling have been replaced or removed.

CMP recommendations

The Conservation Management Plan provides the following guidance:

Ground Floor

- Retain areas of early cream tiling, particularly where tiles are curved.
- Retain slotted louvre frames.
- Retain louvres and shutters if the room is not used as a habitable space.
- Reinstall or repair original features where possible.

First Floor

- Some or all internal partitions may be removed to allow for a more functional space, but the location of walls should remain legible in the floor or ceiling plane.
- At least one section of early curved corner tiling should be retained.
- This is the only bathroom retaining the original window configuration.
- Room W1.117.1 should be retained intact.

Existing use

Neither bathroom is currently functional or in use.

Proposed use

It is proposed to adapt the first-floor bathroom for use as a hotel room and to retain the ground-floor bathroom for luggage storage, thereby preserving significant finishes and early fabric.

Impact – Positive

The ablutions blocks represent an important component of the building's original planning and function. Retaining one bathroom to demonstrate early finishes and spatial characteristics will conserve representative evidence of the original use while supporting the adaptive reuse of the building.

Impact – Negative and mitigation

Conversion of one bathroom to a new use will result in the loss of some early fabric; however, this is mitigated by the full retention and interpretation of the ground-floor bathroom.

The adaptation is necessary to ensure the ongoing viability and occupation of the building, providing a balanced outcome between conservation and sustainable use.

2.3.4.11 First floor – south wing and link

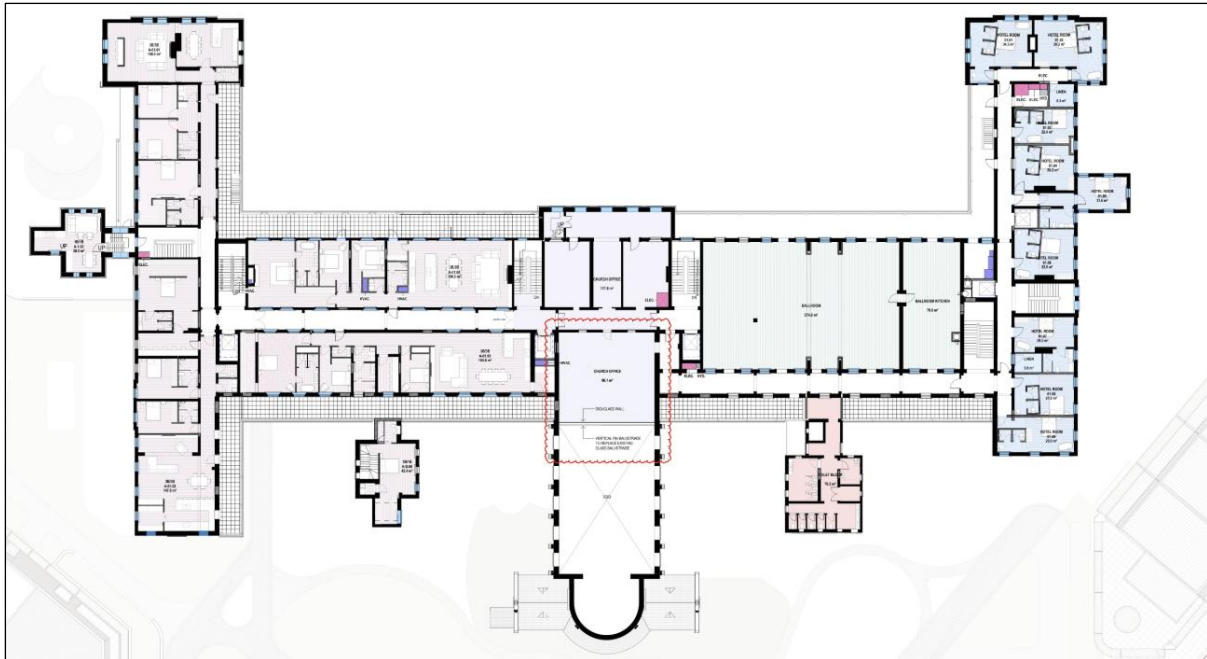


Figure 67 Proposed first floor plan

Elements of significance

All original fabric, spatial divisions, openings, verandahs, and vertical connections between floors are significant.

Existing use and condition

The wing currently contains small bed-sit rooms that are in good condition. The bed-sit partitions have been inserted between the original walls.

The link between the wings is unused and in poor condition.

Proposed use

It is proposed to create four three-bedroom apartments within this wing.

Each apartment will have exclusive use of the adjoining verandah as private open space.

Proposed changes

Reinstate verandahs and verandah posts.

Modify service area walls to facilitate the new apartment layouts.

Cover selected corridor windows where required for privacy and function.

Install a new lift between existing walls adjacent to the church.

Impact – Positive

The apartment layouts respond directly to the original planning of the building, requiring minimal alteration to significant fabric.

Reinstatement of the verandahs and original detailing will re-establish the building's architectural integrity, while returning the spaces to active use will ensure their long-term conservation.

Impact – Negative and mitigation

Where windows are covered, the work will be fully reversible, and the outline of each window will remain visible from the corridor.

Where sections of wall are removed, their original extent will be recorded through retained nibs or a shadow line in the floor and ceiling plane.

All new works will be reversible and clearly identifiable as contemporary insertions.

The proposed changes will not diminish or detract from the significant heritage values of the place.

2.3.4.12 First floor – over church and oratory

Significant elements

All masonry walls, the corridor, all original window and door openings, the original portion of the church balcony, and the barrel vault of the church are significant.

The later extension to the balcony, the new doors, and the existing glass handrail are not significant.



Figure 90 Looking east toward the apse from the balcony, showing the back wall of the balcony.

Existing use and condition

The balcony was constructed for use during church services and forms part of the nave. It is no longer used for this purpose but remains in good condition.

The adjoining rooms on the west side of the corridor are unused and in a derelict state.

Proposed use

It is proposed to relocate all Diocesan administration offices to the first floor, in the centre of the building adjacent to the church. To optimise available space, the balcony extension will be retained, and the rear section converted into offices. A new upper room will be created above, connected to the Bishop's apartment in the attic.

Proposed changes

New offices will be constructed at the rear of the balcony. A full-height glazed wall will define the

space while allowing a continued visual appreciation of the church interior and the barrel vault. The glazing will incorporate a Digiglass print with Byzantine iconography, aligning with Greek Orthodox liturgical tradition and visually integrating the new intervention within the church context.

A new balustrade of vertical fins will replace the existing glass handrail, providing a sense of enclosure and screening between the balcony and the nave. The design of the original balustrade is unknown, and the proposed form is intended as a respectful contemporary interpretation.

Impact – Positive

The proposed works will enable the Diocesan administration to be consolidated at the heart of the building, adjacent to the church, strengthening the functional relationship between administrative and liturgical spaces.

Impact – Negative

The existing balcony addition will be retained, and the new glazed wall will introduce a contemporary dividing element within the volume of the church.

Mitigation

The chapel has already undergone substantial adaptation to function as a Greek Orthodox Church. The apse has been enclosed with boarding and iconographic panels, the walls are richly painted with religious imagery, and a large chandelier dominates the nave. While the original architectural form remains discernible, the decorative language of the interior has evolved to reflect Orthodox tradition.

The proposed glazed wall and new balustrade will form a modern layer within this modified setting. The new glazed wall will sit adjacent to the rib directly behind the handrail. The glass will be covered with a digiglass print of byzantine iconography for dramatic effect. The depth of the balcony and the rows of ribs will still be visible through glass. The existing glass handrail will be replaced with balustrade made of fine metal fins which will give the impression of porosity while obscuring most of the activities above.

All new elements will be fully reversible and designed to allow a clear visual understanding of the original church volume.



Figure 91 Section through church nave showing new glass wall and balustrade.

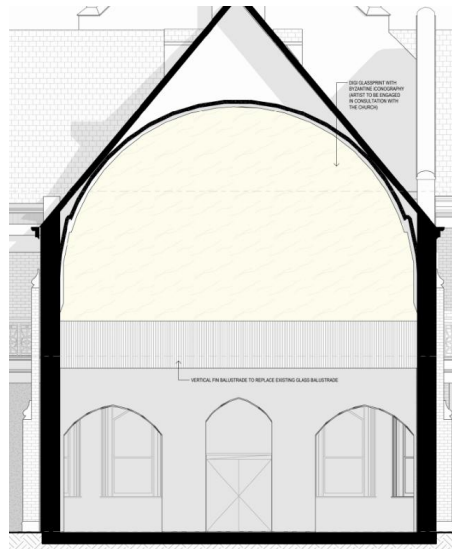


Figure 92 Looking west down the nave toward the balcony. (See KUD 22-004-A-TP3850(A))

2.3.4.13 First floor – north link

Significant elements

All original fabric, spatial divisions, openings, verandahs, and vertical connections between floors are significant.

Existing use and condition

All rooms within this area are in very poor condition and are currently unused. A large section of the west verandah wall has been removed, and the original fireplace has been opened up.

Proposed use

It is proposed to adapt the north wing for use as a large function room with an adjoining kitchen.

Proposed changes

This represents the most substantial proposed alteration to original fabric.

The internal service-room walls will be removed, combining rooms 1.103 to 1.108 into a single open space. Two connected steel portal frames will be installed to support the structure above. The detailed design of these structural elements is yet to be finalised.

Impact – positive

The new function room will open panoramic views of the city, allowing visitors to experience the elevated setting of the monastery from within the building.

The adaptive reuse will generate a sustainable source of revenue for the Diocese, directly supporting the long-term conservation and maintenance of the historic building.

The original configuration of windows and doors along the west elevation will be reinstated, restoring the architectural coherence of this façade.

Impact – Negative and mitigation

The removal of the internal service-room walls will result in the loss of some original fabric; however, nibs will be retained at each end of the former walls to ensure the original room configuration remains legible.

The original dormitory layout will continue to be expressed at the ground-floor level, maintaining an understanding of the building's former spatial hierarchy.

2.3.4.14 First floor – north wing

Significant elements

All original fabric, spatial divisions, openings, and verandahs are significant.

Existing use and condition

The rooms on this level are currently unused but remain in good condition.

Proposed use

This floor will also be adapted for hotel use, providing eight guest rooms following the same plan form as the level below.

Proposed changes

The adaptation will require limited changes to corridor walls and the covering of one external window.

New internal walls will be introduced to form hotel suites. The ensuite walls will be set at a slight angle to emphasise that they are new insertions within an existing structure.

Where it has not been possible to align new walls between existing window openings, the affected windows will be concealed internally but will remain visible externally, with opaque film applied to the glass to maintain the building's external appearance.

Impact – Positive

The new use will make this part of the building accessible to the public, enabling greater appreciation and enjoyment of the place while securing its ongoing maintenance through adaptive reuse.

Impact – Negative and mitigation

Changes to corridor openings have been kept to the minimum necessary to accommodate the new layout. The CMP records multiple historical alterations where windows were changed to doors or vice versa, demonstrating that minor adaptation has been a consistent and acceptable feature of the building's evolution.

All proposed works will be fully reversible. There are no changes that will diminish or detract from the significant heritage values of the place.

2.3.4.15 Attic

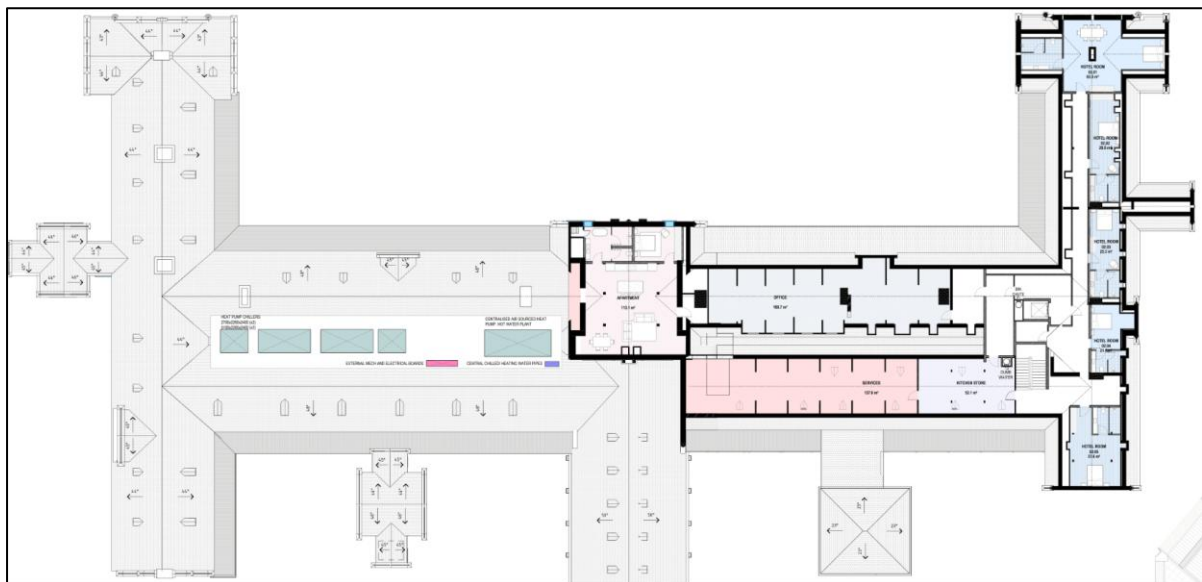


Figure 68 proposed attic plan

Significance

The roof trusses and associated brickwork are highly significant.

The early plaster finishes and surviving room structures are contributory.

The remnants of bathrooms, aluminium louvres to dormers, and the modified dormer windows to the roof valley are not significant.

Existing Use and condition

Only the northern half of the attic is currently safe to access. All rooms are in a severely dilapidated condition and are heavily affected by pigeon infestation.

Although sections of plaster and lathe lining survive, the original spatial layout is difficult to determine, and this remaining early fabric is therefore considered contributory rather than significant.

2.3.4.16 Area over the oratory

Significant elements

All original fabric, including the roof structure, brickwork, and dormer vents, is significant.

Existing use and condition

The room is currently unused and in a derelict condition.

Proposed use

It is proposed to adapt this space as a residence for the Bishop or Archbishop.

Proposed changes

New skylights will be introduced on the north (internal valley) side of the roof so that they are not visible from ground level. Existing stud walls will be removed and linings replaced to make the space habitable.

No changes will be made to the roof trusses.

The door to the emergency stair will be retained but sealed.

Impact – Positive

The works will allow the space to be properly sealed, lined, and made habitable, ensuring its ongoing use and maintenance. Additional natural light will be introduced without altering the external appearance of the building.

Impact – Negative and mitigation

The new skylights will be positioned discreetly between existing trusses and will not be visible from below. The proposed works will not diminish or detract from the significant heritage values of the place.

2.3.4.17 Attic – north of oratory

Significant elements

All original fabric, including the roof structure, brickwork, and dormer vents, is significant.

Existing use and condition

The rooms are currently unused and in a derelict condition. The attic areas to the south of the church have not been assessed due to safety concerns.

Proposed use

The spaces in the north wing will be adapted for use as hotel rooms. The spaces in the north link will be used by the hotel for office space, kitchen storage, and services.

The roof valley to the south of the church will accommodate new plant and equipment.

Proposed changes

No changes will be made to the roof trusses. Existing stud walls will be removed, and a small section of the floor will be taken out to install a new lift between the first floor and the attic.

A steel gantry will be installed within the south roof valley to support new plant. This structure will bear on existing brickwork and require minimal alteration to the existing fabric.

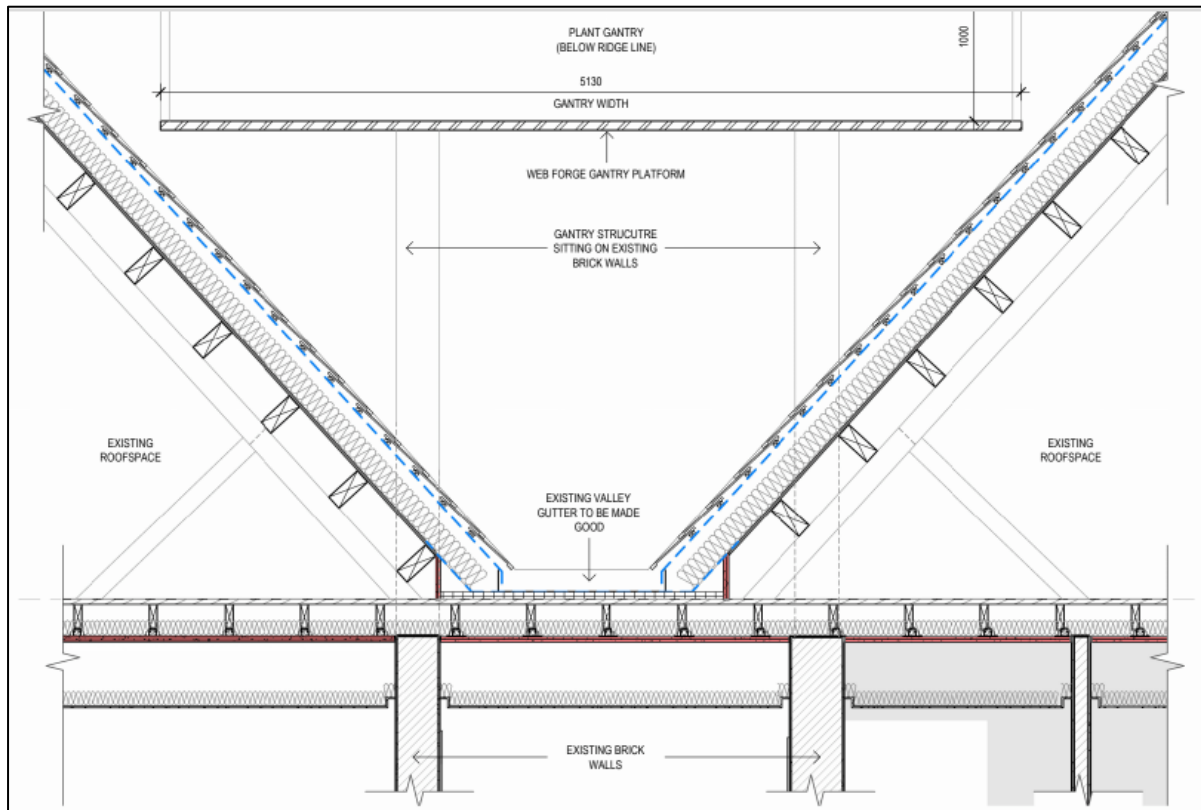


Figure 94 Section through steel services gantry fixed to existing load-bearing brick walls.

Impact – Positive

The attic will be made watertight, sealed, and properly lined to make it habitable and maintainable. The removal of accumulated debris and pigeon waste will significantly improve the condition of the space and the building overall.

Impact – Negative and mitigation

There are no changes proposed that will detract from the significant heritage values of the place.

2.3.4.18 Mortuary chapel

Existing use

This space was converted into a mausoleum for Father Kourtesis in the late twentieth century.

Proposed use

No change is proposed at this stage. In the future, it is anticipated that the former mortuary chapel may be reinstated as a place for quiet contemplation or adapted for use as a café.

2.4 Monastery conservation works

A separate permit application has been made for conservation works to the west roof and façade.

All conservation work will follow the Burra Charter principal to *‘do as much as necessary but as little as possible’* and the CMP recommendation that original features are to be reinstated or repaired. Detailed methodologies for conservation works will be included in the construction documentation and can be provided as a condition of the permit. The table below lists the significant fabric of the building and the changes / works required to adapt the separate elements for the new uses proposed.

2.4.1 Internal conservation works (including verandah walls)

2.4.1.1 Joinery

Significance

All original and early timber joinery, including windows, doors, skirtings, and lining boards, is significant and will be retained and repaired wherever possible.

Description and condition

All original joinery elements are painted timber, with detailing that varies between building stages and levels. All joinery types, profiles, and locations are documented in Appendix A to ensure accurate reinstatement in the correct locations.

There has been little alteration to joinery in external walls and corridors, although more extensive modification has occurred in the service areas between dormitories and in the basement, where room uses and fitouts have changed. Many door openings have been widened or altered, and few original doors survive. These are identified in the CMP.

Internal joinery is generally in good condition. External joinery will require more substantial repair or replacement of deteriorated timber. Appendix N contains a full schedule of joinery details, including elevations and profiles of architraves, sills, head profiles, door frames, window frames, sashes, highlights, skirtings, and door leaves. This will guide accurate repair and reproduction.

Repairs and reproductions

Where possible, original material will be retained and supplemented with new sections of timber where damage has occurred. If matching timber cannot be sourced, Accoya will be used for its stability, durability, and suitability for painted finishes.

Profiles will be matched like-for-like unless later, inappropriate profiles have been introduced, in which case the original profile will be reinstated.

Original window and door profiles will only be reinstated in original openings. Accurate reproductions, consistent with the stage of construction and room function, will be made where full replacement is required. Where possible, similar timber species will be used. Where this is not possible, Accoya will be used for external joinery and clear pine for internal elements. All new joinery will be painted. Reproductions will be discreetly date-stamped on a non-visible surface.

Modern adaptations

Windows will be upgraded to improve energy efficiency. Two options are being explored. The preferred option involves retrofitting new seals and installing 6.1mm vacuum double-glazed units that are visually identical to the original glass. If successful, a trial installation will be proposed.

<https://sealasash.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/sealasash-specification-Sheet-Glavenir-vacuum-insulated-glass-by-Panasonic-20240427.pdf>

An alternative option is to introduce an internal secondary casement sash that would not be visible externally and would be fully reversible, though it would have some internal visual impact.

Some wider door openings may be required to achieve emergency egress compliance. New door leaves will have a simple, modern finish rather than a historic reproduction. Modified or new openings will have minimal square-edged detailing and plain architraves.

All door handles will be replaced to comply with current DDA requirements. Original window hardware and locks will be retained where possible.

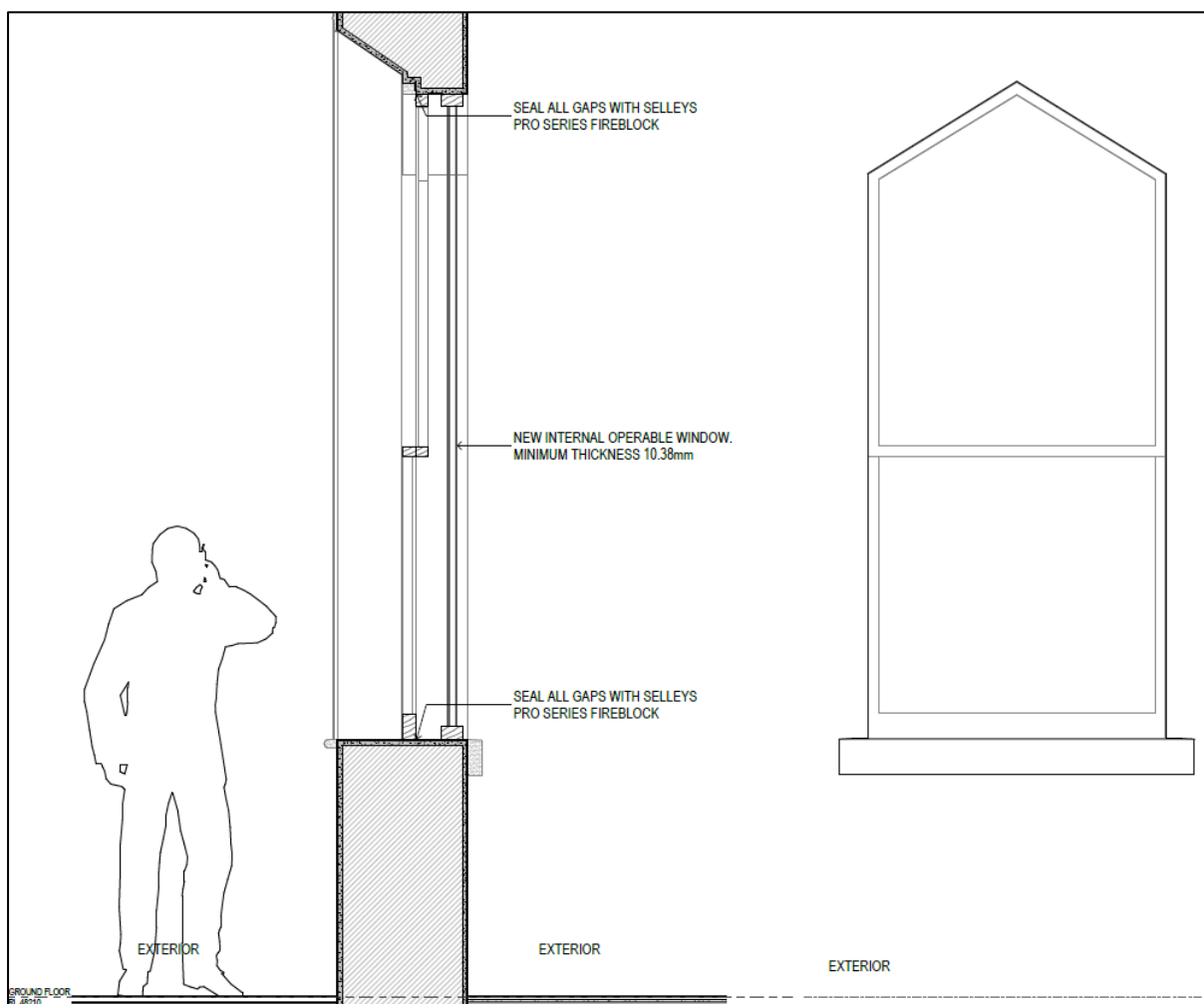


Figure 95 Secondary internal window option.

Impact – Positive

The original joinery will be faithfully conserved or reinstated, maintaining evidence of age and craftsmanship. The works will enhance the presentation of the interiors while ensuring their long-term stability and use.

Impacts – Negative and mitigation

The double-glazed retrofit option will result in the loss of some early glass but will have minimal visual impact. The alternative internal secondary window would alter the internal appearance but would retain early glazing intact.

The proposed adaptations are essential to ensure the building's ongoing use and conservation. Without these interventions, the monastery could not be made fully functional or compliant with contemporary standards.

2.4.1.2 Floors

Significance

All timber floors and encaustic tiling are significant and will be retained and repaired.

Any extant bluestone flooring, including door sills and stairs, is significant and will be retained.

Terrazzo flooring is contributory and will be retained unless otherwise approved for removal.



Figure 96 Various floor types.

Room B40.2 – Basement timber, tile, and bluestone sill; Room 1.83 – Timber floor and lino.



Room 1.114 – First floor, stage 2 and infill; Room G41.3 – Typical example.

Description and condition

Floor types vary according to the use of each space and the stage of construction. In many areas, linoleum or vinyl has been laid over earlier finishes or substrates. Where vinyl has been removed, adhesive residues often remain.

The basement floors have been modified over time and may originally have been timber, which subsequently failed (see Room B40). Corridors are now finished with terrazzo, laid over an early concrete slab—some poured in situ and some as tiles. The poured terrazzo is in good condition; the tiled sections are generally in good to fair condition.

Red encaustic tiles are believed to have been the standard finish in corridors and wet areas. These tiles remain extant in parts of the basement, along internal corridors on the ground and first floors, and in several bathrooms. The pattern is reasonably consistent between construction stages, with some areas of infill tiling.

The upper floors typically comprise 30mm-thick timber boards. The original finish in the dormitories is not known, but there is no level change between the tiled corridors and the uncovered timber floors in the dormitory areas. Some floorboards have been cut for service runs, but visible sections are generally in good condition.

The verandahs were originally finished with timber boards laid over a cindercrete fireproofing system. A small setback was provided for waterproofing, with bluestone door sills marking the transition. Some timber boards have been affected by water damage, and many areas were raised to the internal floor level during balcony enclosure works.

The floors in the ablutions blocks were mostly re-tiled in the late twentieth century. These tiles will be replaced with a modern surface laid over the original substrate.

Proposed works

- ***Basement floors***

Existing floor finishes will be repaired and retained unless otherwise specified. The basement substrate is likely to be an early mass concrete of relatively weak composition. Its strength and composition will be tested, and where patching or infill is required, a concrete mix of comparable strength will be used.

- The slab in the loggia is in poor condition, lacks structural integrity, and is prone to flooding. Subfloor investigation is required to determine its composition and to identify whether any stone flagging survives beneath. Any extant flags will be retained. The existing slab itself is not significant.

- ***Encaustic tile flooring***

All surviving encaustic tiles will be retained unless otherwise specified. Suitable replacement tiles are commercially available for repairs. Where tiling remains exposed and is unsightly or unsafe, replacement tiles will be installed to match the original pattern. In areas where tiling has been destroyed by flooding, new tiles will be laid to match existing.

- Where works require removal of tiles, they will be carefully cut out, safely stored, and reinstated in the same pattern using a compatible mortar mix. The composition of the original mortar will be tested during the works process.

- ***Terrazzo flooring***

Existing terrazzo will be retained either as the finished surface or as a stable substrate unless otherwise directed.

- ***Internal timber floors and balcony floors***

Internal timber floorboards will be retained in situ but concealed beneath fire-rated floor assemblies as part of the fire containment strategy.

Balcony floors will be retained but covered to remove the setback and achieve compliant access levels. No new work to the timber boards themselves is proposed.

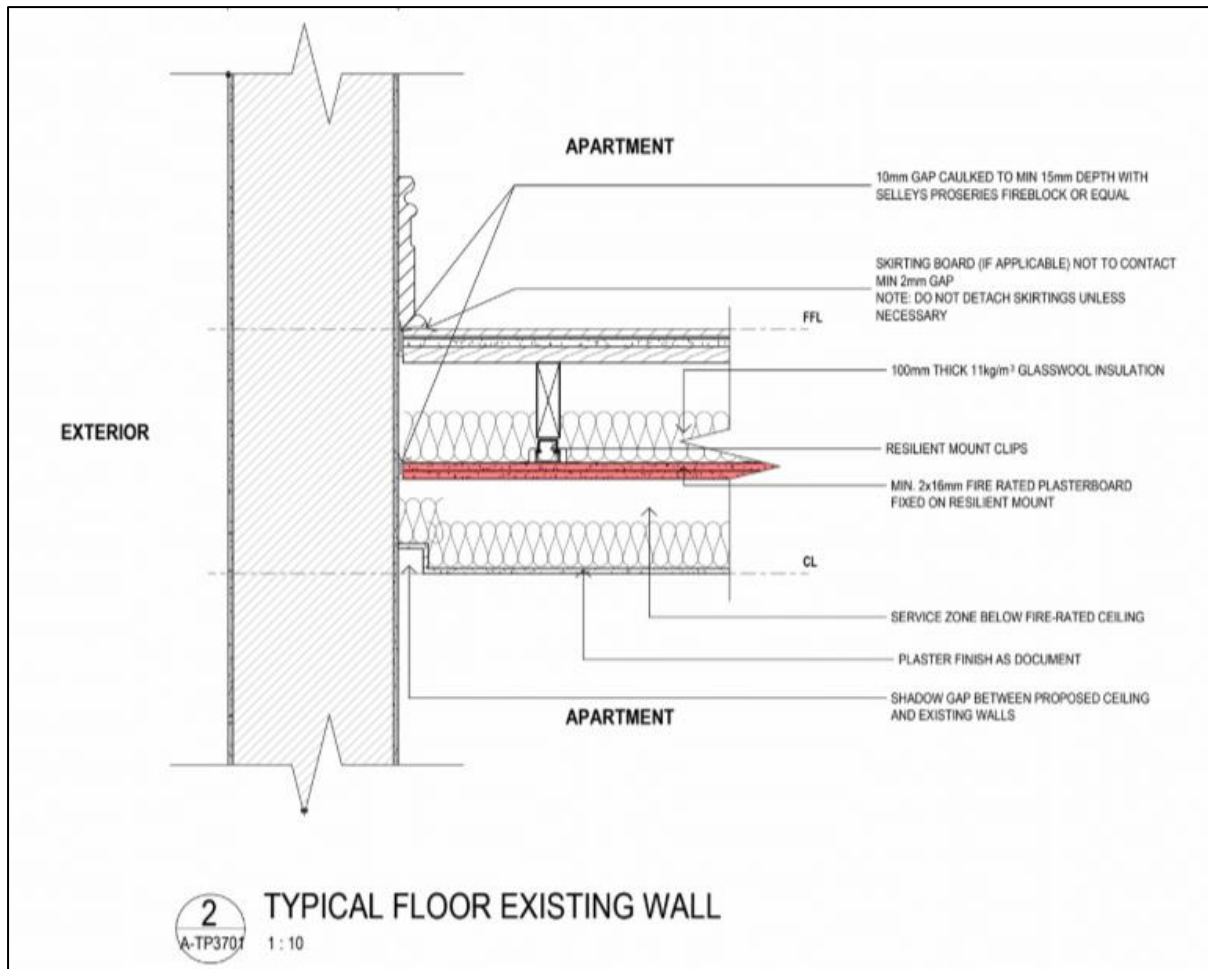


Figure 97 Modifications to floors and ceilings to achieve fire and acoustic separation – existing floorboards indicated by blue dotted line.

Impact – Positive

All original materials will be retained and conserved. The works will stabilise floor surfaces, improve usability, and ensure long-term preservation of significant finishes.

Impact – Negative and mitigation

Some early materials will be covered to meet current building regulations. All significant fabric will be retained in situ unless otherwise specified, ensuring reversibility and continued protection of original finishes.

2.4.1.3 Stairs

Significance

All bluestone staircases are highly significant and will be retained with as little change as possible. Metal access stairs are significant and will be retained but will not be used due to current safety standards.

The timber stairs to the attic are original and therefore significant, but they are standard Victorian timber staircases typical of many buildings of the period. They are contributory but not essential to the integrity, character, or heritage values of the place.



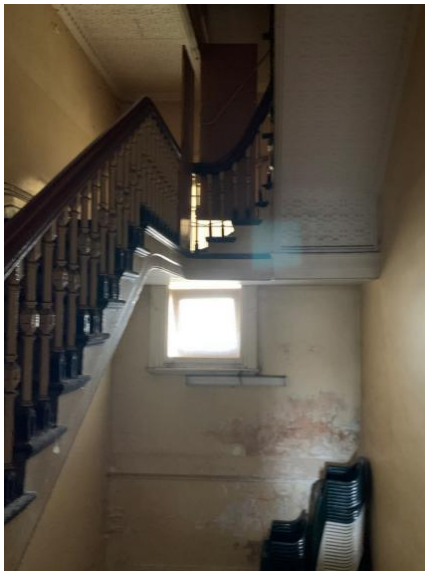
Figure 69 Various stair types
Steel access stair, south wing



Steel stair to attic



Stair 1, bluestone landing, vinyl and nosing over bluestone treads, ornate cast iron balusters



Stair 3 timber flight to attic
Figure 98: Various stair types



Square iron balustrades to lino-covered timber stair



Figure 99: Central stair with bluestone treads and square cast-iron balusters

Description and condition

All internal stairs are structurally sound and in good condition.

The main stair treads are typically constructed from single slabs of bluestone that cantilever from the brickwork and interlock with the treads above and below. Most flights have been covered in vinyl or linoleum, generally in fair to poor condition. Where the stone is exposed, the treads appear to be in

excellent condition with minimal wear. Riser heights comply with current standards, and no structural work is required. The following features do not meet current standards: the nosings lack slip resistance and colour differentiation, and the risers are slightly angled.

The bluestone staircases have cast-iron balusters and newel posts with moulded timber handrails. Balusters from the first construction stage are ornate, while those from stages two and three are square in section. The timber stairs from the later stages have turned timber balusters. The balusters generally comply with the NCC, but the timber handrails do not. The height above nosings is acceptable, though the handrails at landings are too low and will require modification.

Two timber staircases lead to the attic. The bullnosed treads overhang the risers, which do not meet current safety standards.

Two steep metal access stairs connect the ground and first floors, one in each wing. A steeper metal stair connects the attic and the first floor within the oratory.

External stairs

There are three external staircases, all leading from the ground floor to the west forecourt or *platia*. Each has bluestone treads supported on brick walls, with iron balusters and timber handrails.

The external stairs from the wings are in fair condition and will require conservation works, including resetting loose stones, repairing brickwork, and treating and repainting the balustrades. The central stair has no landings, is unsafe, and is not architecturally appropriate.

Conservation works

All vinyl and associated adhesives will be carefully removed.

Cast-iron balusters will be treated for corrosion and repainted in situ.

Proposed changes

The metal staircases will be retained but closed off to prevent use.

Dispensation will be sought for certain non-compliant elements such as the timber handrail profiles, the angle of risers, and the bullnosed tread overhangs.

Any required modifications to handrails will be achieved by adding a supplementary layer rather than altering the existing one.

Any necessary changes to treads and nosings will be designed to be reversible.

The steel structure and storage room inserted into Stair 6 will be removed, and the original windows in the north wall will be reinstated.

The timber stairs to the attic are combustible and cannot satisfy fire regulations. The stair in the north link will be replaced with a non-combustible stair of simple utilitarian design that is clearly contemporary in character. This will ensure it is visually distinct within the hierarchy of the building. Although its loss is regrettable, the impact on architectural integrity and character will be minimal.

The stairs in the south link will be retained if possible.

The existing straight central stair will be demolished as it cannot be adapted and detracts from the composition of the façade. The replacement stair will be a contemporary interpretation of the original double Flannagan stair, as described in Section 3.3.4 (Ground Floor Summary).

Impact – Positive

The internal stairs are among the most intact and distinguished elements of the building. They will be

carefully conserved with minimal intervention. Stair 5 will be restored through the removal of the intrusive storage room and the reinstatement of the north wall windows. The external stairs to the wings will be repaired and conserved.

Impact – Negative and mitigation

Some modifications will be required to meet current safety standards. Careful selection of materials and colours will ensure minimal visual impact.

The demolition of the central stair will be a notable change to the monastery, but the existing stair is rated in the CMP as contributory rather than significant because it distorts the architectural symmetry of the façade. Its replacement will re-establish the direct and historically intended connection between the church and the *platia*.

2.4.1.4 Internal wall finishes – plaster and paint

Significance

The finishes at each level are significant and should be retained, though the fabric itself is contributory and can be replaced like-for-like if necessary.

Paint colours are contributory. An external paint analysis has been completed by Grimwade to document original and subsequent paint schemes across the building.

A cross-section of wall types and conditions is shown below.



Basement corridor



Ground floor north verandah



First floor north corridor

Figure 70 Examples of paint finishes



Ground floor, south verandah

Figure 100: Examples of paint finishes

Passage to vestry

Attic plaster in poor condition

Description and condition

All original walls, except those in the attic, are of masonry construction. Typical finishes are as follows:

- Exterior north: face brickwork
- Verandah north: face brickwork
- Exterior south, west and east: render
- Verandahs and loggias south, west and east: render
- Interior basement: painted brickwork
- Interior ground and first floors: painted solid plaster
- Attic: plaster and lathe
- Lining to beams (Room G65): plaster and lathe

The east-facing brick verandah walls have been lined with plasterboard, though some areas, and possibly all, have been painted.

The condition of the solid plaster varies according to the extent of water damage and the impact of successive fit outs.

Paint finishes on solid plaster surfaces range from good to poor. In areas affected by water ingress or long-term disuse, paint has deteriorated, showing flaking and staining. In occupied or well-protected areas, finishes remain in sound condition.

The paint finish on the unplastered basement walls is generally poor, with broad areas of peeling acrylic paint. It is not known whether the basement walls were originally painted.

Proposed works

All paint will be removed from the basement walls, and deleterious salts will be extracted before repainting with an appropriate breathable paint system. This may require ongoing maintenance and monitoring.

The rear corridor will remain unpainted and used as an art gallery to reveal the character of the original masonry.

Impact – Positive

Conservation works will improve the long-term durability of the basement walls and reverse damage

caused by successive fit outs. The removal of impermeable coatings will allow the masonry to breathe and perform as originally intended.

Impact - Negative

Nil.

2.4.1.5 Ceilings

Significance

All original ceilings are significant.



Figure 101: Various ceiling types

Attic – plaster and lath; later suspended ceiling in Stage 1; pressed metal ceilings in Stage 3; timber ceiling in basement; corrugated iron barrel vaults below cindercrete lining.

Description and condition

The original ceiling types across the building are as follows:

- Verandahs – timber lining boards with cindercrete fireproofing over vaulted corrugated iron, possibly exposed in some locations
- Basement – timber lining boards
- Ground and first floors (Stages 1 and 2) – plaster and lathe
- Ground and first floors (Stage 3) – pressed metal
- Attic – plaster and lathe
- Chapel – plaster

The verandah lining boards have generally been overlaid with new linings. The vaulted corrugated iron of the cindercrete system remains visible in several locations and is presumed to be largely intact. The south verandah ceilings have been heavily affected by water ingress, while the north verandah ceilings have been modified to accommodate later additions, though original boards survive in some areas.

Most rooms on the ground and first floors have had suspended ceiling systems installed. In some areas these remain; in others, rough removal has caused significant damage to the original fabric.

The barrel-vaulted ceiling of the Chapel is in good condition and requires no works.

Proposed works

To achieve current fire and acoustic compliance, it will be necessary to introduce new fire and

acoustic separation between floors. This will affect the remaining original ceilings. A new layer of fireproofing will be installed below ceilings and above floors.

Given the poor condition of many existing ceilings due to the installation and removal of suspended systems, all ceiling linings will be removed. A new suspended ceiling system will be installed to achieve compliance and provide a narrow plenum for services. The new ceiling will sit well above door and window heads, maintaining appropriate room proportions. Although the original ceiling heights will not be fully reinstated, the proportions will be significantly improved compared to the existing suspended systems.

Room ceilings will receive a smooth plaster finish with cornices matching existing profiles where known. Corridors in the north wing will have pressed metal ceilings reinstated in patterns to match surviving examples. Pressed metal will not be used in the smaller hotel rooms, as the bold pattern borders would accentuate the change in scale.

Timber lining boards will be reinstated in public corridors and verandahs to match the original finish. The original cindercrete fire separation system will be retained.

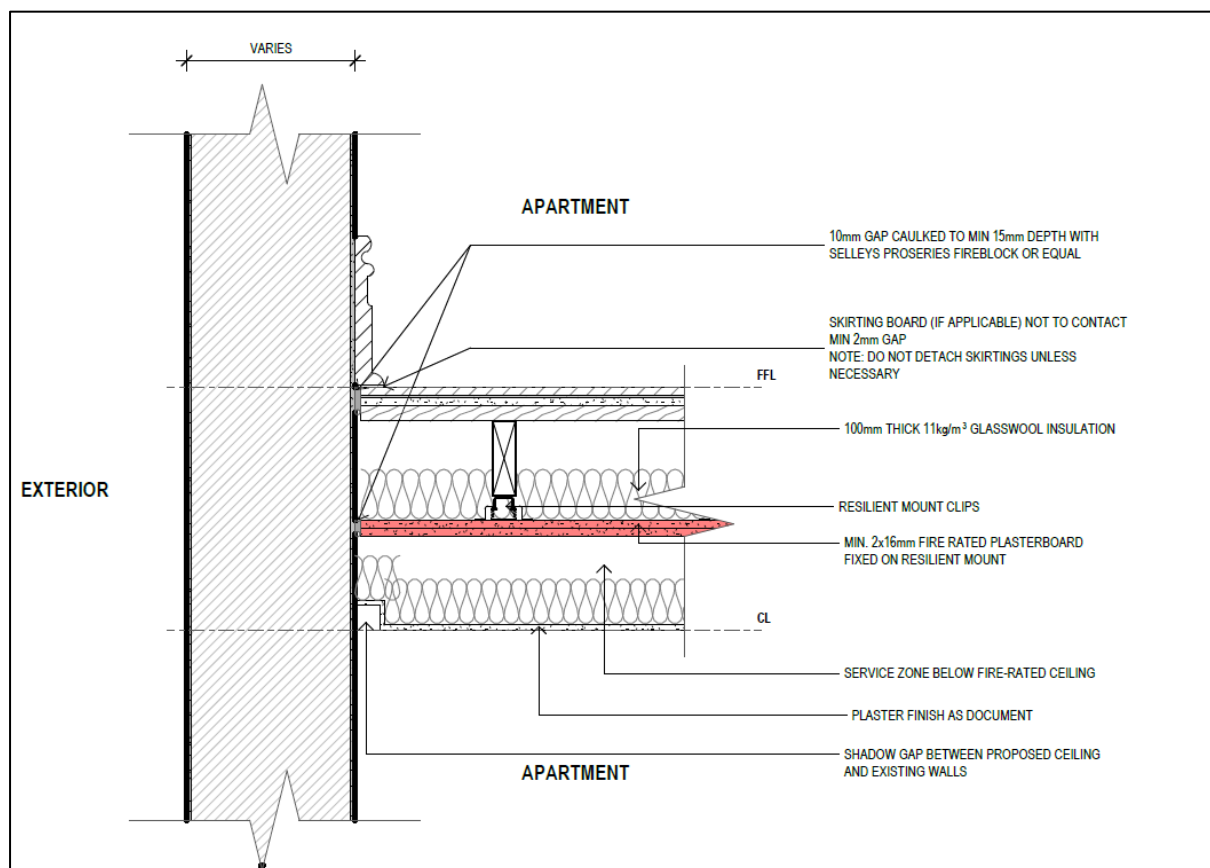


Figure 102: Proposed fire and acoustic separation system regulation

Impact – Positive

The proposed works will remove intrusive suspended ceiling systems that are generally in poor repair and sit as much as 600 millimetres below the original ceiling lines. The new ceilings will restore a simpler and more coherent ceiling plane, reinstating appropriate proportions and material finishes consistent with the building's historic character. Pressed metal ceilings will be reintroduced in public corridors in the north wing, where the original finish is best preserved.

Impact – Negative

The removal of original ceiling fabric and the slight lowering of ceiling levels are unavoidable consequences of achieving fire and acoustic compliance. These changes are necessary for the building to operate safely and accommodate its proposed new uses. Without these works, the building could not be reoccupied or maintained in the long term.

2.4.1.6 Verandah balustrades, posts and fascias**Significance**

All elements of the verandah balustrade are significant and will be retained and repaired. Where elements are missing, they will be replicated in the same material.

The balustrade panels have been temporarily removed under a General Exemption Notification to preserve original fabric and in the interest of public safety.

Refer to Appendix O for the detailed removal methodology.

Description and condition

The verandah balustrade panels installed during the first stage of construction were ornate, while those from subsequent stages were simpler geometric patterns. The first stage used ornate double posts, whereas the later stages adopted simpler single-post designs.

All cast-iron elements are generally in fair to poor condition, showing extensive surface rust and paint loss. However, the underlying iron remains sound. Some components have been lost but can be recast using surviving elements as moulds.

The moulded timber handrails, originally varnished or oiled, are in poor condition and show signs of weathering and decay.

The verandah floors drain into gutters along the edge of the timber flooring. In some areas, gutter overflow has caused water damage to the supporting timbers, undermining the fixing points for the iron elements. Some sections of structure, fascia, and moulding will require like-for-like replacement.

All verandahs have been enclosed. On the west-facing verandahs, the infill walls are typically lightweight stud walls and window assemblies fixed inside the balustrade, causing minimal impact to the original elements. Where steel cladding has been applied, the new structure sits outside the original posts. On the east elevation, much of the original ironwork has been entirely removed.

Proposed works

All extant verandah ironwork and the balustrades from the external stairs will be dismantled and carefully removed from site for treatment. Rust will be removed and a new protective coating applied. Where necessary, missing elements will be recast using the originals as moulds.

Timber handrails that are no longer structurally sound will be replaced like-for-like, using timber species and profiles consistent with the original.

Impact – Positive

The proposed works will reinstate the original verandah configuration, conserve significant fabric, and prevent further deterioration. The reintroduction of repaired and recast elements will enhance the architectural unity of the façades and restore the building's intended aesthetic.

Impact – Negative and mitigation

The new suspended ceiling system will conceal all new services pipes and conduits. The ceiling will sit well above the window and door heads. The shadow line in place of a cornice will clearly indicate that the ceilings are new.

2.4.2 External conservation works

2.4.2.1 Masonry and render

Significance

All original brickwork and render are significant.

Description and condition

The monastery is constructed of brick with a lime and weak cement render finish to the south, east, and west elevations. The render includes ashlar scoring, much of which has been obscured by successive layers of paint. The north walls are of face brickwork with decorative rendered sills and window surrounds. The church was originally tuck-pointed, though most of the ribbon pointing has now disappeared.

The bricks are low-fired red bricks of standard size and are generally in good condition, except around the south link ablutions block where localised repairs and repointing are required.

Micro-cracking is evident across the surface of the render, though there is little structural cracking. The only area of concern is at the corners of the wing pavilions where some movement has occurred.

Proposed works

A separate permit application has been submitted for roof and render repairs to the west elevation. This includes all works requiring scaffolding: slate and rainwater goods replacement, repair and repainting of all timber elements including dormer vents, windows, fascias, and trims, removal of paint from rendered surfaces, render repairs, and full repainting.

Minor reconstruction will be required where later additions are removed. In these areas, reinstatement will use a compatible brick and render composition that matches the original. Replacement bricks will match the colour, texture, and size of the existing. Small areas of repointing will be undertaken using a mortar mix consistent with the existing composition.

The render composition has been analysed to inform repairs. Samples from the west elevation were tested by Stone Analysis and found to be moderately soft with the following composition:

#	Stage	Location	comp	comment
1A 10	1	Sth wing ext	1 part portland cement * : 0 parts hydrated lime : 3.9 - 4.4 parts sand	Moderately soft
11a	2	Nrth link ext	1 part portland cement : 0 parts hydrated lime : 3.5 parts sand.	Moderately soft
12a 13	3	Nth wing ext	1 part portland cement : 0 parts hydrated lime : 3- 3.5 parts sand.	Moderately soft

*The Portland cement component is based on the current typical chemistry of GP Portland cement.

Figure 103: Surface of the south ablutions block

Methodology for render repairs

- Remove all redundant pipes and surface accretions except the original lead pipes, which are identified in the CMP as significant.
- Install temporary downpipes to manage stormwater during works.
- Conduct paint removal testing to determine the most effective peel-away system, then remove all paint from rendered surfaces.
- Test and apply an appropriate, low-toxicity biocide to remove biological growth
- Apply poultices to selected areas to extract soluble salts.
- Patch repair apertures and damaged areas with render to match existing texture and ashlar coursing; use a mix of 1 part cement, 2 parts hydrated lime, and 9 parts crushed silver sand for colour and finish compatibility.
- Inspect copings and re-render where required.
- Allow walls to dry thoroughly before repainting, ideally for one to two summers.
- Repaint with Keim Granital, Murobond, or similar silicate paint system; apply hydrophobic treatments to exposed surfaces as required.

The cause of cracking in the pavilions will be confirmed following completion of geotechnical investigations and basement excavation. Helibar stitching will be undertaken where cracks exceed 5 millimetres or as directed by the structural engineer.

Impact – Positive

The conservation works will stabilise the brickwork and render, ensuring long-term durability and preventing further deterioration. Reconstruction will reinstate the original form and aesthetic coherence of the façades.

Impact – Negative

Nil.

2.4.2.2 Roofs

This permit includes all roof works within the green line.

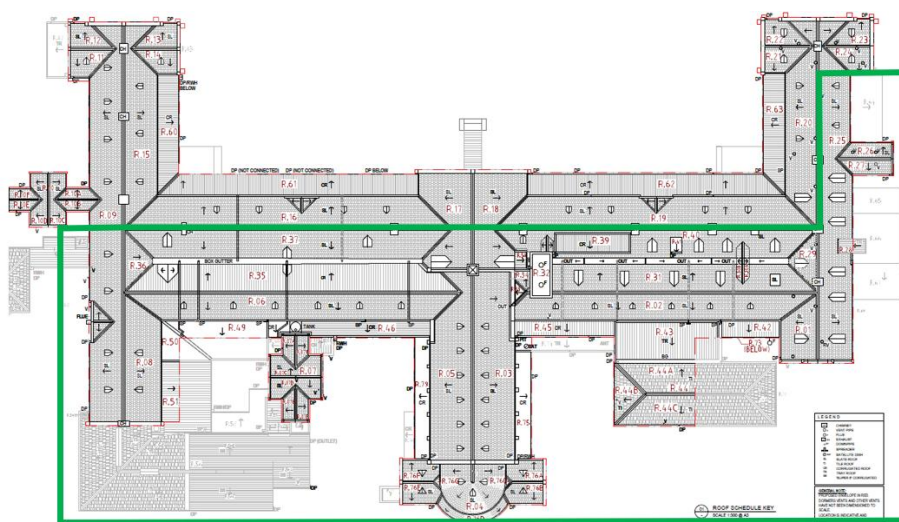
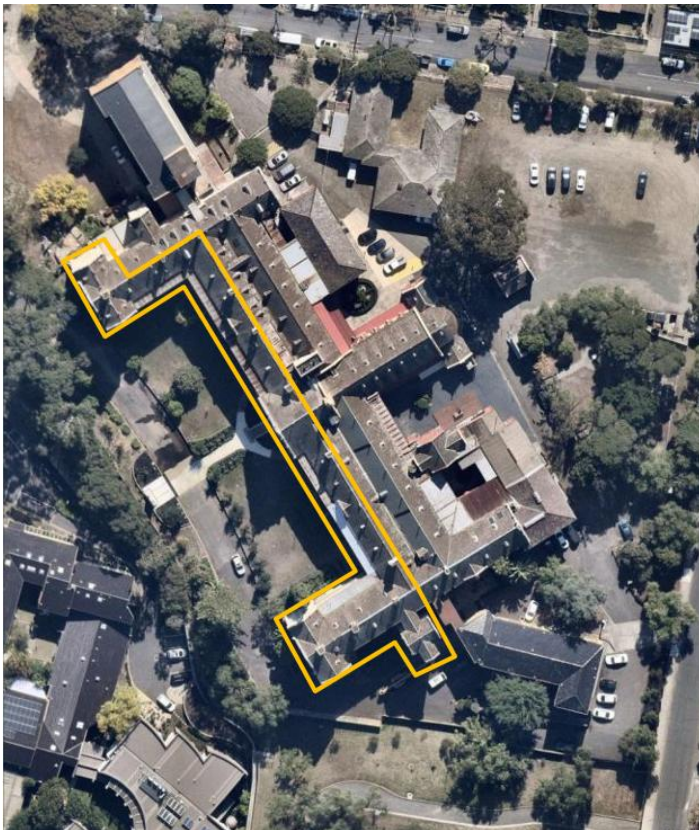


Figure 104 Extent of works included in this permit application

Generally

Andronas Conservation Architecture has prepared a complete set of roof plans identifying and numbering all chimneys, roofs, gutters, downpipes, ridge vents, dormers, skylights, and roof vents. A detailed Conditions Schedule documenting the existing condition of all elements of the roofscape has also been prepared (refer to Appendices I, J, and M).

A separate permit application has been submitted for roof repairs to the west side of the building. These works include all repairs requiring scaffolding, such as slate replacement and rainwater goods replacement. The remainder of the roof works are included in this permit application.



*Figure 105 Area outlined in yellow included in separate permit application
All other roofs are included in this permit application.*



Figure 106 Aerial photo of the north link demonstrating typical condition of roof elements

Significance

All original roof forms and materials are significant.

Description and condition

The principal roof areas are clad in 9 x 20-inch grey slates, probably Welsh in origin, laid in a plain pattern. The slates are approximately 120 years old and have reached the end of their serviceable life. Comparable Welsh slate is now rare and difficult to source.

The verandah roofs are clad in corrugated iron, much of which has rusted through. In one section of the west verandah, an emergency roof has been installed beneath the original.

At least one dormer vent retains a slate roof, but most are finished in lead or galvanised steel. Original flashings were lead; there is now a mixture of lead, galvanised, and zinc-alume materials. The condition of dormer vent roofs varies considerably and will require individual assessment and repair.

CMP Policy 7.1.3 – Roofs and roof plumbing

Policies

- Replace all slate as soon as possible and include repair and replacement details in the Maintenance Program
- New slates should match the existing in dimension and colour and be installed using traditional fixing and flashing techniques.
- Order and safely store an additional 5 percent of slates for future repairs.
- Where new timber battens are required, mark them as new in accordance with the Burra Charter.
- Install ply backing, breathable sisalation, and insulation beneath the slates unless proven deleterious.
- Retain brick stormwater pits, bluestone pit surrounds, and cast iron pit covers wherever possible.
- Replace guttering and downpipes with profiles matching the existing and ensure minimal visual impact.
- Avoid PVC pipework where possible; terminate downpipes above ground where appropriate.

Proposed works

All outward-facing roofs will be re-slatted. Canadian Glendyne slate is proposed as the most appropriate replacement, being similar in colour, texture, and quality to the original. Samples will be obtained for approval to ensure a suitable match.

The existing roof is uninsulated. It is proposed to introduce insulation, two layers of vapour-permeable sarking, and plywood substrate between the existing purlins and below the rafters, as illustrated in Figure 107. All battens will be replaced due to weathering and the destructive nature of slate removal. The vapour-permeable sarking will prevent condensation build-up.

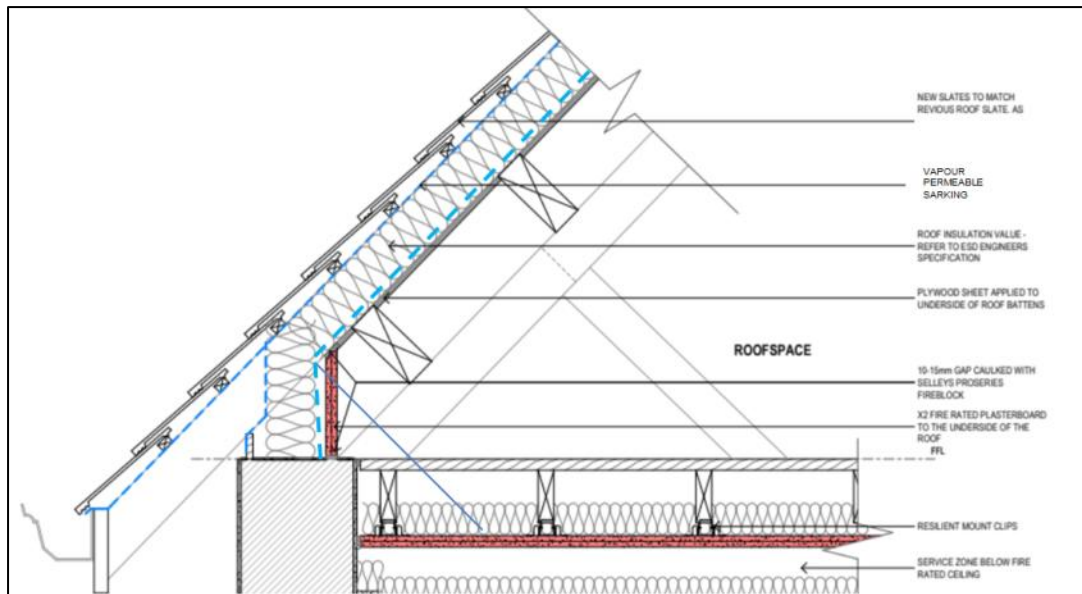


Figure 107 Section showing proposed slate replacement (KUD)

The inward-facing roof valleys will be reclad with corrugated steel roof sheeting in a burnished galvanised finish, such as Fielders Z600. The verandah roofs will also be reclad in Fielders Z600 corrugated sheeting to match.

Dormer roofs will be assessed individually. Steel sheeting will be replaced with lead. Existing lead roofs will be retained and repaired where possible or replaced in kind where necessary.

Roof flashings, ridge cappings, soakers, and valleys are currently a mixture of lead, galvanised steel, and zinc-alume. All galvanised elements showing advanced corrosion will be replaced with burnished stainless steel to ensure durability and reduce reflectivity. Where lead has been replaced with galvanised material, it will be reinstated. Intact lead flashings will be retained; those in poor condition will be replaced like-for-like.

The ridge vents are generally in fair condition and will be inspected individually. Where possible, they will remain in place for rust removal and repainting. If removal is required, each vent will be tagged and numbered according to its location. There are at least three distinct vent types corresponding to different construction stages. Where vents cannot be repaired, they will be replicated like-for-like.

Impact – Positive

The proposed works will restore the roof to a sound and weatherproof condition. The new slate cladding will have a service life of approximately 100 years. The introduction of insulation will significantly improve energy efficiency and occupant comfort.

Impact – Negative and mitigation

Replacing slate with steel on internal roof valleys will marginally reduce the integrity of the original material palette but will not be visible from the ground or detract from the cultural significance of the building. The steel roofing will be more durable, easier to maintain, and provide a suitable base for potential future solar installations.

Although identical Welsh slate can no longer be sourced, the selected replacement will be visually and materially compatible once weathered. The reduced area of slate roofing will allow resources to be reallocated to other high-priority conservation works.

2.4.2.3 Rainwater goods and drainage systems

Significance

All cast-iron gutters and downpipes are significant. The remnant lead pipes on the south ablutions block are significant.

Replacement steel rainwater goods are not significant.

Description and condition

All existing gutters have been inspected, numbered, and recorded in the attached Gutter Schedule (Appendix K). The original cast-iron guttering appears to have been consistent across all three construction stages, measuring 113 millimetres wide and 100 millimetres high in an ogee profile. Much of this has since been replaced with steel quad guttering of similar dimensions. The remaining sections of original cast iron are in very poor condition with extensive rusting, perforations, and failed joints.

Hydraulic calculations indicate that the original gutter dimensions are inadequate to meet current standards in several locations. They are also insufficient to cope with the heavier rainfall events associated with recent climatic changes.

The original cast-iron downpipes have been replaced with steel on the east side of the building and around the St Justin's Wing and Married Couples additions.

The current stormwater and sewerage drainage systems are damaged and undersized. The basement floods frequently, suggesting that most of the early pipework—likely terracotta—is no longer serviceable.

Proposed works

- **Guttering**

All gutters will be replaced. Several material options were investigated. Australian foundries no longer produce cast-iron guttering of adequate length, quality, or dimensional accuracy. While British foundries can supply superior castings, importing several hundred metres of guttering would be prohibitively expensive and installation accuracy could not be guaranteed. Bronze-silicon guttering is comparable in quality to cast iron but is no longer readily available.

It is therefore proposed that the original ogee profile be fabricated in 316 marine-grade stainless steel, with a slightly wider throat to achieve current hydraulic capacity and a raised back to direct overflow across the front face. The new gutters will be identical in appearance but 12 millimetres wider. There will be no impact on fascias or gutter moulds. Gutters will be painted to match the wall finish (refer to Colour Schedule).

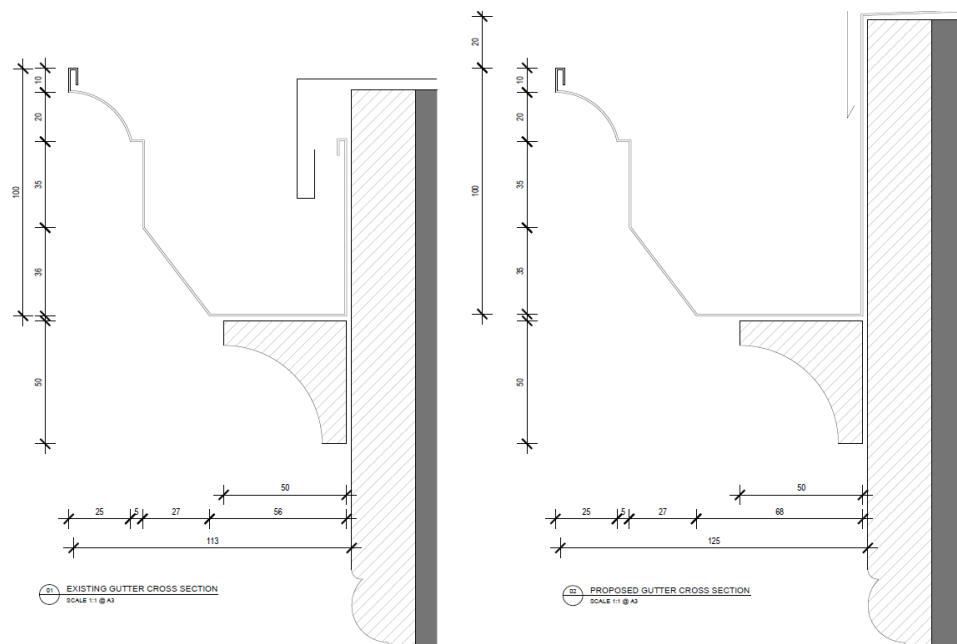


Figure 108 Gutter profile – existing and proposed comparison

- **Downpipes**

All downpipes will be replaced with matching stainless-steel pipes. Brackets will be shaped to replicate the spigots of the original cast-iron design (refer to Figure 9a). Additional downpipes required under the hydraulic design will match the originals in diameter and be fixed with plain brackets of a similar spacing and dimension to the spigots. In this way, the new work will be visually consistent yet clearly distinguishable as new.

- **Rainwater heads**

No original rainwater heads survive. Later steel heads are scattered around the building. New rainwater heads will be fabricated in stainless steel to meet current capacity requirements. The design will be neutral and sympathetic, incorporating a bullnosed fold at the top edge.

- The box gutter in the central roof valley will be increased in size and replaced in marine-grade stainless steel. This will not affect the existing roof structure. The current system drains through the building to the verandahs, which has caused internal flooding and non-compliance. A new syphonic or equivalent gravity-balanced system will be installed to prevent future internal water ingress.

Impact – positive

The replacement rainwater goods will replicate the original profiles and detailing, restoring the intended appearance of the building. The new system will significantly improve hydraulic performance, safeguard the structure, and prevent further water damage. Upgraded stormwater and sewerage systems will meet current standards and greatly reduce the risk of flooding around and within the building.

Impact – negative and mitigation

The works will involve loss of some original fabric, substitution of modern materials, and the addition of extra downpipes and rainwater heads. However, the new stainless-steel components will replicate the original forms, maintain visual continuity, and remain distinguishable on close inspection.

The proposed rainwater heads will introduce a discreet yet traditional element that complements the architectural character of the monastery. The new materials will ensure durability, reduce maintenance, and manage extreme rainfall events effectively. Collectively, the works will protect the building from water damage and support its ongoing conservation.

2.4.2.4 Miscellaneous roof elements: dormer vents, dormers, belfries and chimneys



Figure 109 Various dormer vents showing failing lead cladding and rusting galvanised iron, ridge vent visible

Significance

The dormer vents, chimneys, and bellcotes are significant. The date of the dormer windows on the north wing is not known; they may be original or early but could also be later insertions. The aluminium louvres to the dormers are deleterious. The dormers facing into the roof valleys vary in age and significance.

Description and condition

Roof ventilation is provided by small timber-framed dormer vents with metal flashings, sheeted roofs, and timber louvres. The roof vents are generally in poor condition with extensive weathering and corrosion. The roof also incorporates metal ridge vents which differ slightly between building stages.

The rendered chimneys feature corbelled caps and copings with small gablets at their bases. One chimney has been extended, but all others remain in their original configuration.



Figure 110 Typical chimney

Works to the bellcotes are included in the separate permit application for the west side of the building.

Proposed works

When the slate are removed, each roof vent will be individually assessed, repaired, or rebuilt as required. Original material will be retained wherever possible, and unsound fabric will be replaced like-for-like. Vents may be closed internally to comply with current energy regulations. This will not be visible externally.

The dormers facing into the internal roof valleys are from a range of construction periods. Early or original dormers will be retained and conserved. Later dormers may be removed or adapted as appropriate.

The aluminium louvres will be removed from all dormers in accordance with CMP recommendations.

Impact – Positive

All roof protrusions will be stabilised, conserved, and made watertight. The removal of intrusive louvres and the conservation of original materials will enhance the presentation and performance of the roofscape.

Impact – Negative

Nil.

2.4.2.5 Painting

Colour scheme and finishes

Appendices H and P contain a colour analysis of the walls and windows along the west elevation. Based on these findings, it is proposed to paint the walls, gutters, downpipes, fascias, and joinery in a creamy tone equivalent to *Haymes Magnolia*. The vents and dormer vents will be painted a dark grey consistent with the existing colour scheme.

The render will be finished with *Keim Granital*, *Murobond*, or a comparable silicate paint system applied over a suitable primer as specified by the manufacturer.

Timber joinery will be finished with an exterior alkyd-based paint system in a semi-gloss finish, including appropriate primers.

All metalwork will be prepared with a rust-retardant treatment, primed, and finished with a two-pack epoxy paint system to ensure long-term protection and durability.



Figure 111 West façade 1950s – the building appears to be painted one light colour (Haymes Magnolia for reference)

The paint analysis identified a range of colours used historically on the building. The *Paint Colour Summary* in Appendix I provides three proposed colour schemes, together with a recommendation and rationale for the selected palette.

2.4.3 Services and compliance

Summary of changes for services and compliance

All building services will be upgraded to ensure the monastery is safe, compliant, and fit for continued use. The design and installation of new services will be undertaken with minimal impact on heritage fabric, and wherever possible, interventions will be reversible.

The conservation works present an important opportunity to remove over a century of redundant pipework, conduit, and surface-mounted services that currently obscure the façades and interiors.

New electrical, hydraulic, and mechanical systems will be integrated discreetly within the building fabric. Most new wiring and pipework will be concealed within the proposed suspended ceiling system, which is also required to achieve fire and acoustic separation between floors. Preliminary engineering advice indicates that the required plenum depth can be limited to approximately 100 millimetres, a dimension that will not materially alter the proportions or character of the rooms.

2.4.3.1 Hydraulics

Description and condition

Reticulated water was available at the time the monastery was constructed, although the extent of its installation within the building is uncertain. As plumbing technology improved, services were progressively upgraded. A small number of early lead pipes remain visible on internal walls; these will be retained for interpretation but made redundant. Cast iron plumbing, including vent stacks to the exterior of the north-east ablutions block, will also be retained but decommissioned.

There is hot and cold running water in several parts of the building, alongside many areas where plumbing has been disconnected or rendered redundant. The remaining plumbing does not contribute to the heritage significance of the place and is unlikely to yield further information.

Proposal

The existing hot and cold-water systems will be upgraded or replaced to support the proposed range of new building uses.

New plumbing will follow existing concealed routes wherever possible. The suspended ceiling plenum will provide space to accommodate new pipework with minimal impact on original fabric.

Impact – Positive

The proposed works will enable full and sustainable use of the building through the introduction of efficient plumbing systems and water-saving fittings and fixtures.

Impact – Negative and mitigation

Some loss of early but non-significant fabric will occur during installation. Early lead pipes and cast-iron sewer stacks will be retained and, where feasible, incorporated into the new system. The works will be fully reversible and designed to minimise disturbance to significant fabric. .

2.4.3.2 Electrical

Description and condition

The existing electrical wiring and switchboards are obsolete and require complete replacement. In some areas, wiring has been chased into the walls, but surface-mounted conduits remain visible throughout much of the building, often installed without consideration for aesthetics or heritage values.

Proposed

New wiring will utilise existing concealed routes wherever possible. The precedent for chasing wiring to wall switches will continue, as this approach maintains clean wall planes and eliminates visual clutter. Major electrical runs will be concealed within the new ceiling plenum to minimise disturbance to plasterwork and significant fabric.

A new main switchboard and a series of sub-boards will be installed in discreet cupboard enclosures along the verandah walls, in accordance with the WRAP services report (Appendix E).

Impact – Positive

The upgraded system will make the building safe, compliant, and functional. The removal of exposed conduits will enhance the aesthetic presentation of the interiors and create a well-structured, orderly electrical layout.

Impact – Negative and mitigation

While some intervention in fabric is unavoidable, the works will be executed in a controlled and consistent manner to avoid visual intrusion. New conduits and fittings will be concealed, and all alterations will be reversible where practicable, ensuring no lasting disruption to the proportions or character of the rooms.

2.4.3.3 Mechanical

Description and condition

Heating was provided by a hydronic system installed in the mid-twentieth century. The wall and floor registers from this system remain visible in some rooms, although the boiler has long been removed. There is currently no functioning heating or hot water system within the building. The existing hydronic registers are not considered significant.

Air movement is presently achieved through the operable window system. The engineering approach proposes to retain this natural ventilation strategy across most areas of the building, with limited mechanical ventilation provided only where required, such as in the new function room.

Proposal

A series of discreet split-system units are proposed for heating and cooling throughout the building. Ceiling registers will be installed within the proposed suspended ceiling plane, and condenser units will be located on a new gantry in the roof valley where they will not be visible from the ground. The gantry structure supporting the condensers and heat-pump hot water tanks within the attic space will be fully reversible and designed to avoid permanent alteration of existing structure.

Impact – Positive

The proposed reverse-cycle heating and cooling system offers an efficient, low-impact solution that ensures the comfort and usability of the building while preserving significant heritage fabric. Ceiling-mounted registers can be integrated within the suspended ceiling design without visual intrusion or wall penetrations.

Impact – Negative and mitigation

No adverse impacts are anticipated. The installation has been designed to be reversible and to avoid disturbance to significant fabric or alteration to the external presentation of the building.

2.4.3.4 Lifts

Description and condition

There are two existing lifts within the building, both of which are obsolete and have not been operational or serviced for many years. The lift over-run extends above the roofline and is visible from ground level, detracting from the overall roof form and silhouette of the building.

Proposed

Both existing lifts will be removed and replaced with new, compliant lift systems. In addition, two new lifts are proposed within the north wing to improve accessibility and circulation. One lift will connect the basement to the first floor, and the second will connect the first floor to the attic, thereby avoiding complex fire separation issues.

The new lifts will not extend above the roofline, and the existing lift over-run will be removed. While some flooring will need to be removed to accommodate the new lift shafts, there will be no impact on original masonry or structural walls.

Impact – positive

The removal of the unsightly lift over-run will improve the appearance of the roofline and restore the

integrity of the building's profile. The installation of new lifts will allow the building to meet NCC and DDA compliance standards, enhance accessibility for residents and visitors, and ensure that the building is suitable for contemporary use.

Impact – negative and mitigation

The existing lifts do not contribute to the heritage significance of the place, and their removal will not have a detrimental impact. The new lifts have been carefully located to minimise any disturbance to significant fabric.

The proposed works are essential to achieving regulatory compliance and continued functional use of the building. Without them, the building could not be safely or lawfully occupied.

2.4.3.5 Structural

Engineering details are not yet available.

Description and condition

The building is generally in good structural condition, with only minor cracking observed at the corners of the pavilion ends in each wing. The cause of this cracking will be investigated further during the works phase, once the underlying structure and ground conditions can be examined in more detail.

The existing timber floor structure throughout the building is sound and adequate for its intended use, with the exception of the first-floor ballroom area, which will require localised strengthening. The timber roof structure is also in good condition and does not require reinforcement or alteration.

Proposed

To create a new ballroom on the first floor, two internal structural walls and one chimney breast will be removed. This will necessitate the introduction of a substantial new steel support structure, spanning the centre of the room and bracing back to the surrounding load-bearing walls. The new steelwork will also support the chimney structure above in the attic.

Additional structure will be installed to support mechanical plant and services within the roof valley and attic. These new works will be designed to be fully reversible but will require localised connections to existing elements.

The potential effects of the proposed carpark excavation on the existing footings will be assessed as part of the forthcoming geotechnical investigations and construction documentation. New structural works will also be required for the lift shafts, though these will be fully concealed and have no visible impact.

Impact – positive

The proposed works will allow the building to accommodate contemporary functions and uses while ensuring that all structural interventions are reversible and sympathetic to the existing fabric. The new framing in the roof valley will improve the building's long-term serviceability without compromising its historic integrity.

Impact – negative and mitigation

The amalgamation of three rooms into one large ballroom and the insertion of steel portal frames will alter the spatial character of this part of the building. However, the rooms in question have

already been modified, and the integrity of the original configuration is partially lost. The remaining nibs will clearly express the former divisions, maintaining legibility of the earlier layout.



Figure 71 Existing condition of function room (1.103), wall to be removed on the right.

This is the only area within the monastery where significant structural change to original fabric is proposed. The overall form, volume, and hierarchy of the space will remain intact, and the intervention will be clearly readable as a modern adaptation that enables the continued viable use of the building.

2.4.3.6 Fire and acoustics

Existing conditions

There is currently no effective fire separation between floors, corridors, or stairwells. The existing fire-fighting provisions, including fire hose reels and extinguishers, are inadequate for the proposed mixed-use occupancy. The building also lacks deliberate acoustic separation between rooms and floors.

Proposed works

To enable the adaptive reuse of the building under multiple NCC building classes, fire-rated separation will be required between different uses and floor levels.

Fire separation between floors will be achieved primarily by removing the existing ceilings and applying multiple layers of fire-resistant material to the underside of the floor structure. This approach will preserve the existing timber floorboards while also providing the required acoustic separation between levels.

Fire compartments will be established at key locations through the installation of new fire doors and compliant partition walls within stairwells and corridors. Windows within stairwells and along the south wing verandah will be upgraded with fire-resistant glazing to achieve the necessary fire rating.

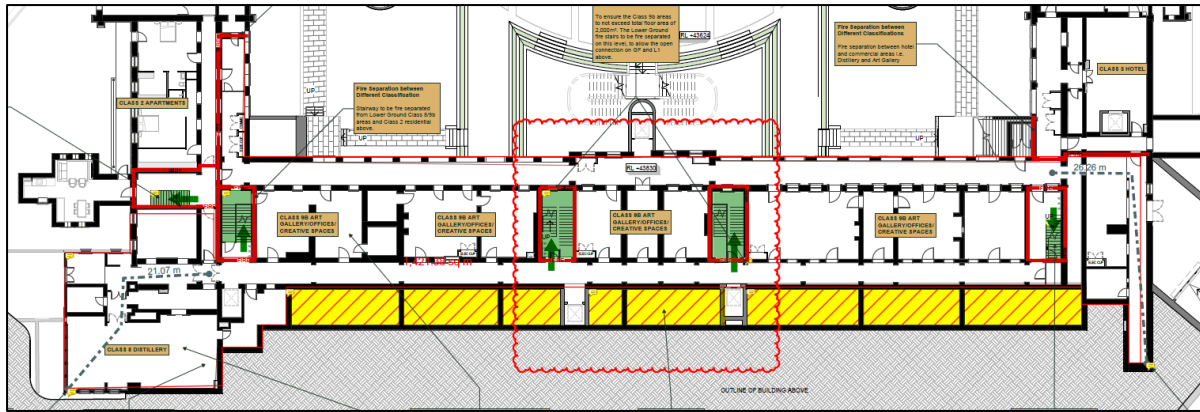


Figure 72 Plan showing fire compartments/location of new fire doors and walls linings

Automatic sprinklers will be installed throughout the building, with pipework concealed within the proposed ceiling plenum. Sprinkler heads will be recessed and discreet, and no external sprinkler coverage will be required over windows. A new smoke detection and alarm system will also be installed throughout the building.

All exposed structural iron posts and beams, particularly in the large rooms of the north link (rooms G.65 and 1.03), will be encased in a fire-resistant cementitious material. Newly introduced steelwork will also be encased for compliance.

Impact – positive

The proposed works will allow the building to be lawfully occupied for a range of uses while ensuring the safety of occupants and improving acoustic performance. The interventions will be largely concealed within the new ceiling system and will not alter the overall character of the interiors.

Impact – negative and mitigation

Encasing early iron columns and beams will obscure original material and these changes will not be reversible. Some glazing will need to be replaced with fire-rated glass, which will result in the loss of early glass where present.

2.5 Landscaping, setting and views

2.5.1 Original, current, and proposed uses

While under the care of the Little Sisters of the Poor, the site operated as a self-sustaining working property. Early photographs show limited ornamental gardens immediately surrounding the monastery, with most of the land dedicated to productive and domestic functions such as food cultivation, laundry, and utility work. The lower, southern portion of the site functioned as a small farm that provided produce for the nuns and elderly residents. This area was retained by the Little Sisters when the property was later subdivided, preserving its agricultural use beyond the monastery's occupation.

The northern half of the site, which contains the landmark monastery building, was similarly utilitarian in character. Several outbuildings stood to the east of the monastery, supporting domestic operations. The earliest photographs show laundry drying yards along Hartington Street, which were later relocated further east towards Hawthorn Road.

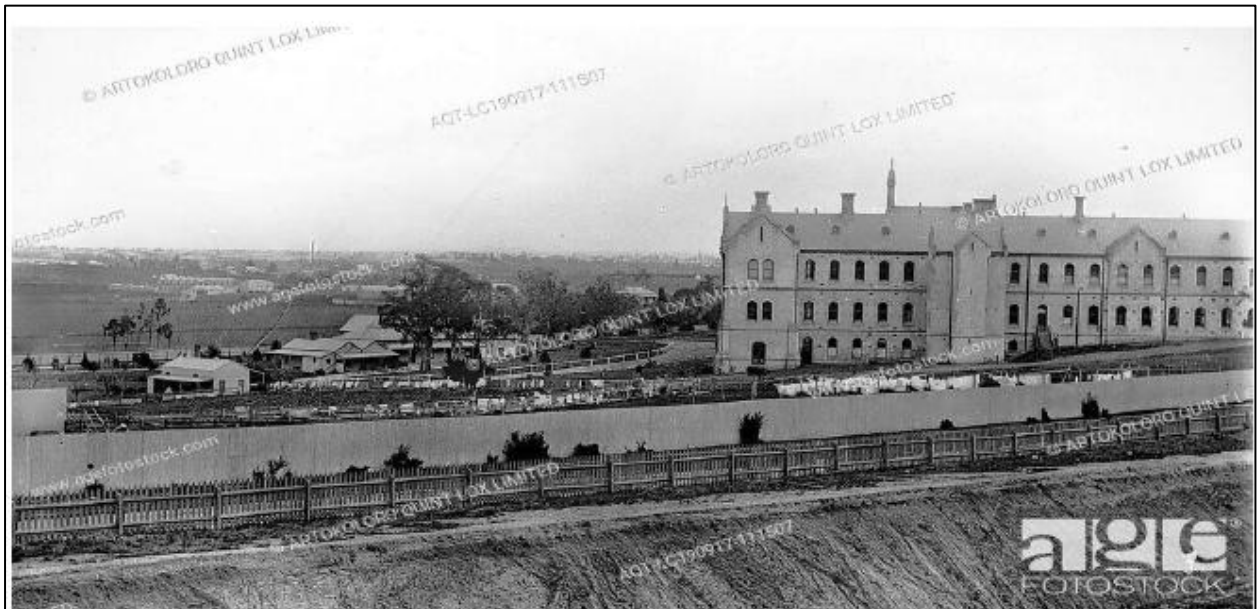


Figure 73 photo early 1890s, prior to the second stage of building

The 1928 Pratt aerial photograph reveals three distinct areas of formal landscaping that punctuate an otherwise functional setting. The most prominent garden occupied the central axis of the monastery, now the site of the Greek Australian War Memorial. A circular lawn surrounded by cypress trees and a perimeter path was located to the south of the mortuary chapel, and a triangular garden with a statue was positioned near the current site of St Justin's Wing. These gardens suggest a modest but intentional approach to landscape design, reflecting both monastic formality and the domestic routines of the institution.

The raised lawn, or berm, on the west side of the building once formed a formal entry terrace, occupying the space between the two projecting wings. It was originally bisected by a grand double stair that led to the chapel entrance, reinforcing the building's axial symmetry and ceremonial character. In the second stage of construction, the stair was replaced with a simpler structure, diminishing the formality of the western façade. Early photographs from 1892 suggest that the berm

may have originally been level with the loggia, with a hedge and possibly a low retaining wall at its base (figure 116).



Figure 115 1928 Pratt aerial photograph of the site.

A – formal garden with a statue on the central axis of the church

B – triangular garden with a statue beside the south wing

C – circular garden in front of the south link

D – laundry yard

E – ceremonial drive

F – farmland

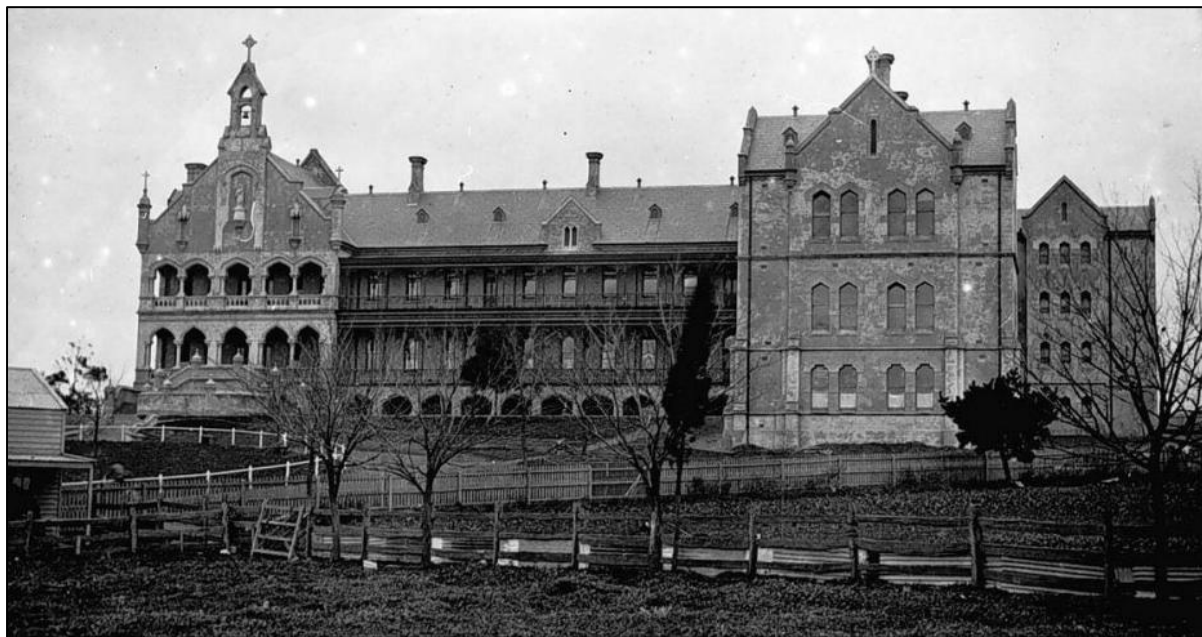


Figure 74 1892 - Stage 1 showing hedges and original double stair with single stair down the face of the berm, suggesting it may have been flat.

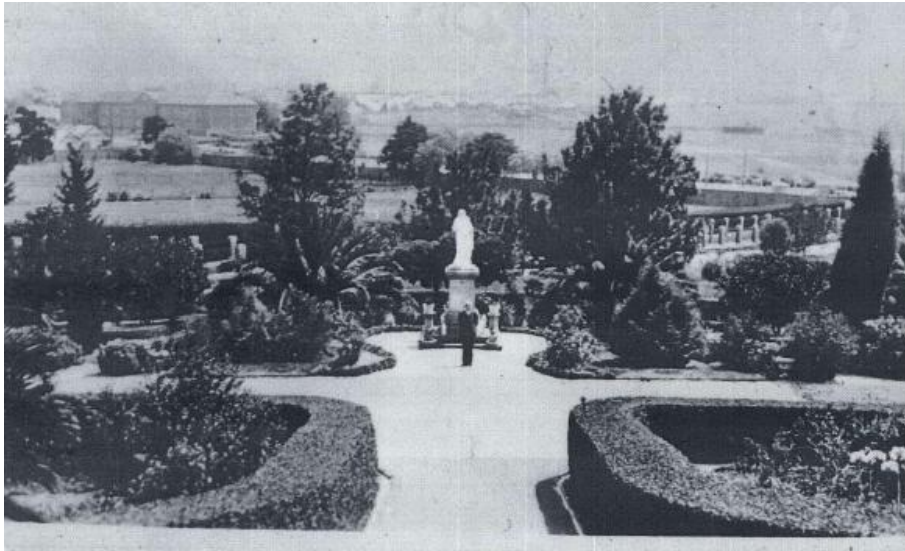
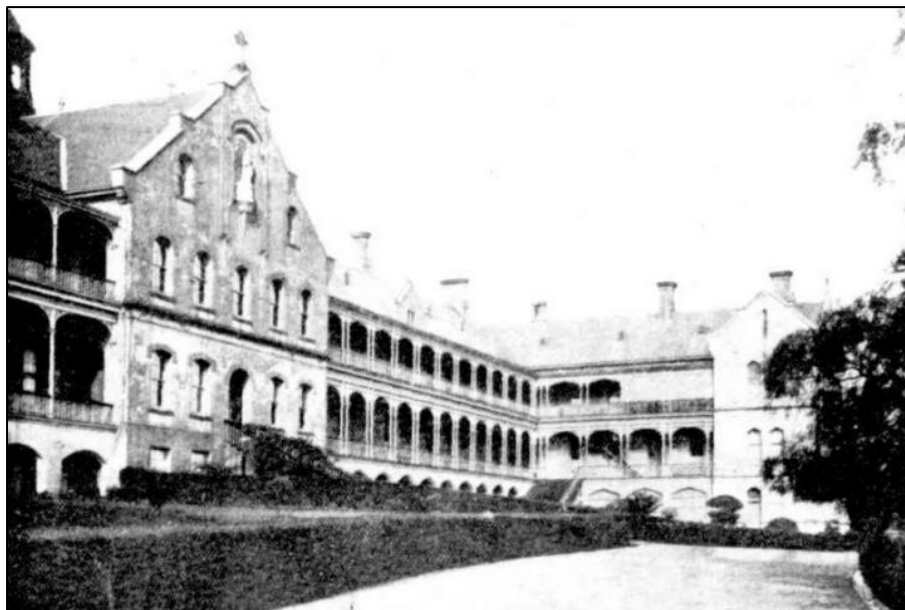


Figure 75 Various berm conditions - early photo of area A



Slightly later photos of area A with a reduced garden



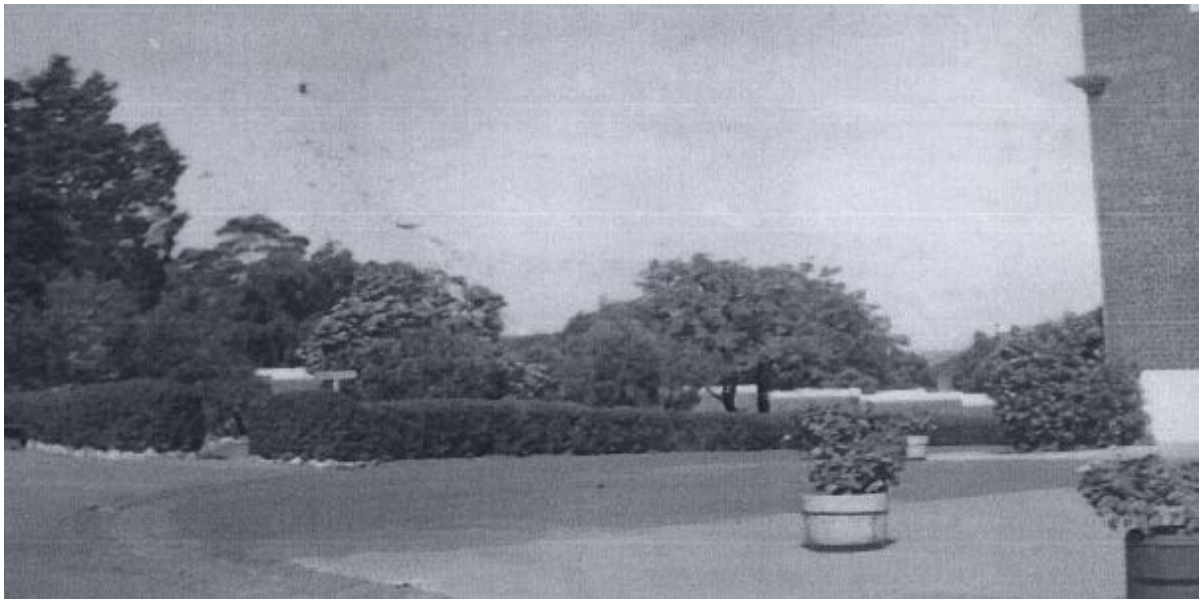
Early hedging to the berm



After completion of the third stage, loggia still open



Mid 20thc loggia closed in



Garden C – triangular garden with statue and hedging, date of photo unknown



Garden B – current state of circular garden.

Aside from the monastery itself, the most visually dominant historic feature was the tall brick perimeter wall that enclosed the site, effectively isolating it from the growing suburban surroundings. This wall, now demolished, once defined the property's sense of seclusion and self-containment. The straight drive that divided the monastery from the agricultural land was removed

following subdivision, while the curved ceremonial drive from St Georges Road remains and is considered a significant remnant of the early landscape. Traces of early brick spoon drains are still visible around the building, but most of the other landscape features, including the rough stone grotto, retaining walls, and garden beds on the western slopes, date from the later 20th century and are not of heritage significance.

Today, the gardens are accessible to residents and parishioners but are rarely used outside of large liturgical gatherings such as Easter¹. Weekly church services and funerals continue to draw attendees, who typically congregate on church's east, as the slope of the berm makes access difficult.

In keeping with the charitable and inclusive ethos of the Little Sisters of the Poor, the proposed landscape design aims to make the garden spaces equally welcoming and open to all. The new masterplan reimagines the site as an ecumenical and communal landscape, encouraging interaction between visitors, residents, and the local community.

The *Platia* is conceived as the central focus of both secular and religious life within Chora. The triangular garden area outside the north wing will form a generous, welcoming entry to the proposed hotel, providing a green outlook and open space for the adjacent townhouses. The lawn and playground beside the amphitheatre will offer a family-friendly area for the early learning centre, theatre visitors, and local neighbours. The gardens between the new housing and the monastery will include food-oriented communal spaces designed for quiet reflection, recreation, congregation, and barbecuing.

2.5.2 Significance / history and CMP recommendations

The CMP grades the historic and remnant landscape elements from highly significant (A) to deleterious (E). All of the elements considered to be significant have been acknowledged in the proposed landscape masterplan.

Highly significant

- Landmark quality accentuated by the steep grade of the site
- Distribution of site elements (space around monastery and formal gardens)
- The berm
- The location of a circular garden to the south of the mortuary chapel
- The Peppercorn trees along Hartington St.

Significant

- The boundary alignment – unchanged since the 1980s subdivision
- The memory of the high perimeter wall (corrugated iron then brick in 1912)
- The drying yard
- The alignment of the curved drive and pathways
- The general location of the entry to the property from Hartington St
- Remnant spoon drains
- A lawn on the Berm

¹ Gatherings before and after religious services, weddings, funerals, religious processions –. The grounds at Easter week are used not only as a gathering place for up to 1000 congregants but is also where the most significant part of the Easter is proclaimed 'Christ is Risen'. Other gatherings include Parish and Diocesan fairs, picnics, dances (at least four per year) There are at least six memorial services held around the Greek/ Australian memorial per year. The grounds area also used formally and informally by visitors – passers-by, to sit under a tree, read a book etc. There are a couple of raised veggie patches on the north of the North link presumably prepared by previous residents – now gone.

2.5.3 Heritage impacts

Summary of the interpretation and reuse of historic elements in the landscaping – See Acre Drawing set TP9.04

There has been considerable conversation around the interpretation of the historic red brick perimeter wall. The new brick fences of the townhouses and apartments will sit over the footings of the historic boundary wall and interpret rather than replicate the original material. The new masonry fences will have a concrete base with a light toned brick above and bronze aluminium flats at the top level. Recycled red bricks will be used sparingly as ghost lines where footpaths cross the boundary and then continue as paving into the ground floor apartments.



KUD render of Apartment Buildings – March 2026

Bluestone was used throughout the historic building and around its edges where a strong, hard, water resistant material was required. It can be found in sills, flags, cobbles, steps, stairs and sumps. A few of the original bluestone drainage elements may need to be removed. Where this is necessary, they will be carefully placed as interpretive elements within the grounds. Bluestone cobbles found near the south wing pavilion and elsewhere on the site will be used to create rumble strips across the driveway entrances. Bluestone elements will be incorporated into the paving in the Platia.

The Little Sisters laundry drying lines will be interpreted in the pergola which covers the footpath along the south face of the townhouses, parallel to Hawthorn Rd.

The early brick spoon drain which currently follows the west side of the drive will be reassembled and interpreted along the edge of the new driveway.

The many non-significant stone and brick retaining walls across the site are a direct response to its topography and evidence of the way in which the use of the place changed when food production was no longer viable or necessary. The existing assortment of retaining walls will be replaced by new masonry retaining walls with a consistent language of brickwork that celebrates the importance of

this material to the place. Later elements such as the extended laundry building and circular garden beds beside the church are also acknowledged in the paving and bbq wall.

The landscape architects have selected plants which acknowledge the broad history of the place from pre-settlement native landscapes to the early years of primary production, early 20th century decorative planting and the plants associated with the Mediterranean cultures of the Little Sisters and the Greek Church.

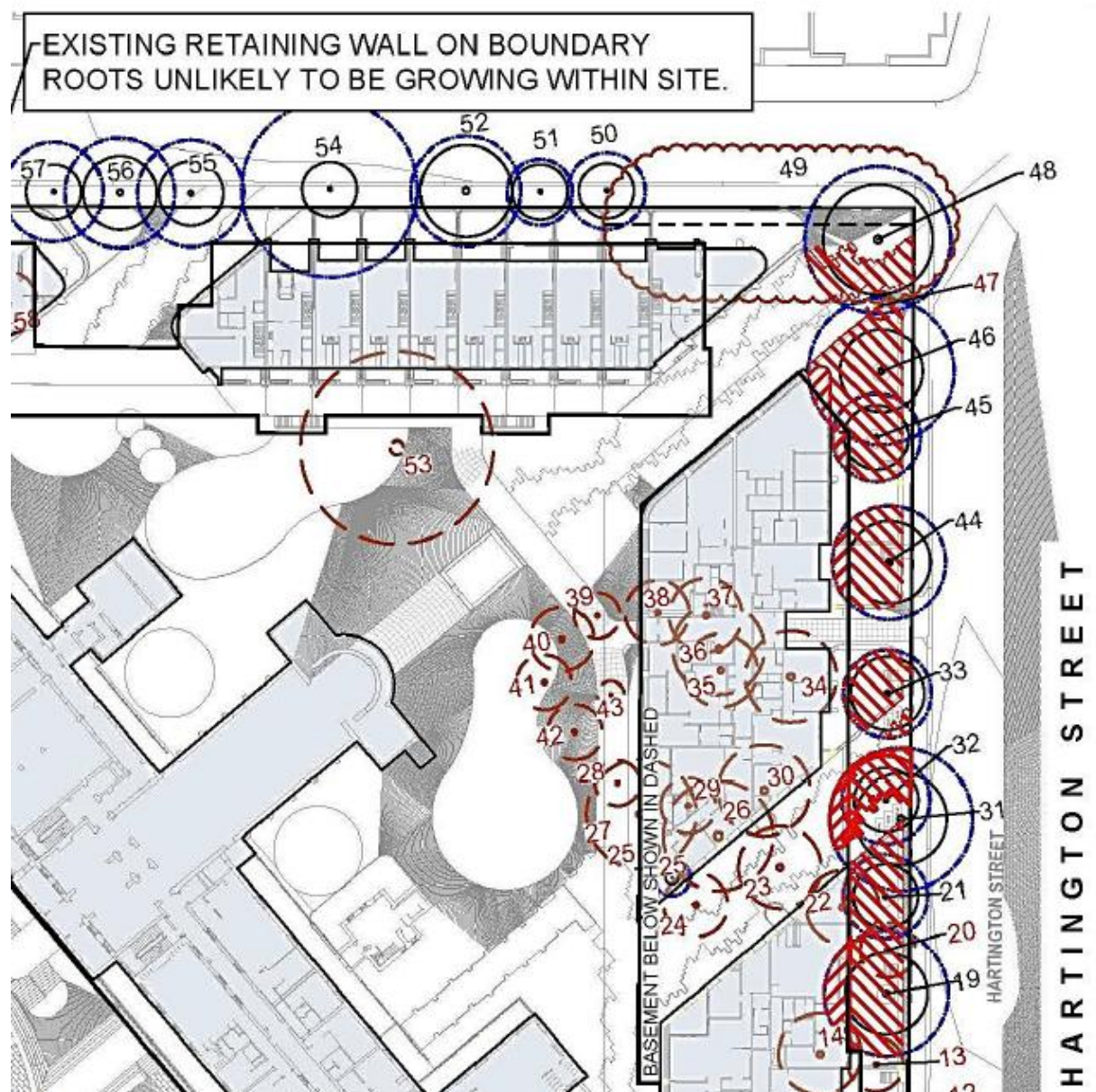
Conservation of the Peppercorn trees

The front yards of the north Hartington St apartments have been redesigned to ensure the survival and longevity of eight trees along Hartington St, four of which were nominated as significant peppercorn trees in the CMP (numbered 44,45,46,48 in the arborists reports). The courtyards of four ground floor apartments have been modified from the original application so that the natural ground level around the trees can be retained with only minimal footings for decking proposed within the tree root zones. A hydro contractor was employed to expose tree roots for observation by arborist John Patrick. The Root Excavation Report 25/2/26 makes the following conclusions with reference to the revised plans.

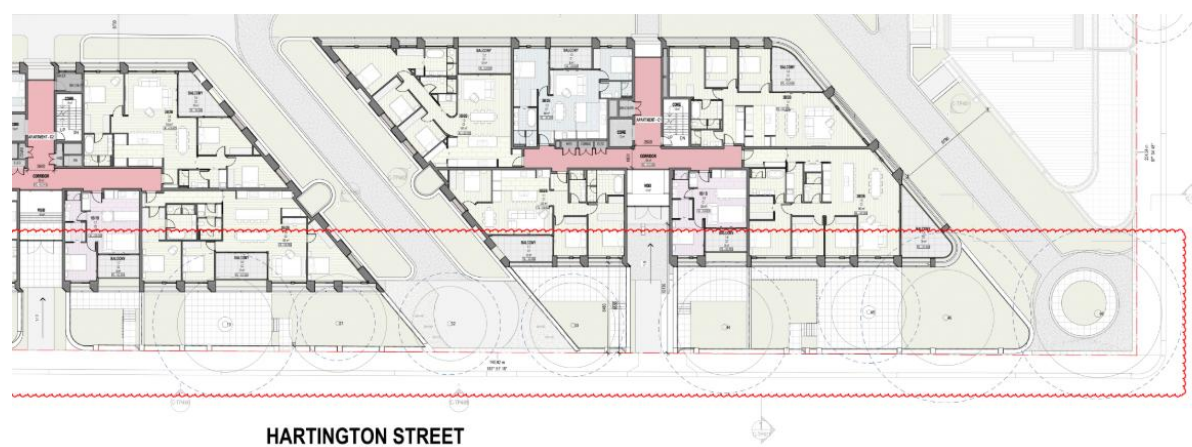
5.5 Tree 48 [on the corner] has two insignificant roots located. These can be cut without impacting on the tree, which will allow for an all-accessible path to be installed south of the tree from Hartington St footpath. A path cannot be installed around the tree. North of the tree should remain a garden bed.

5.5 In my professional opinion based on the findings of the NDRI all Trees 19, 21, 32, 33, 44 45, 46, 54 and 69 can be retained successfully within the proposed development.

Please find the Root Excavation Report 25/2/26 by John Patrick attached.



From John Patrick Arborist report 2025



KUD drawing A-TP0502

The landscape masterplan has been carefully designed to retain or interpret historically significant landscape elements, including the peppercorn trees, areas of food production, the berm, circular garden spaces, brick walls, spoon drains, and the drying yards. The pre-colonial landscape and the fifty-year history of the Greek Church on the site are also acknowledged and celebrated in the cultural dialogue woven throughout the masterplan.

The Acre mood boards contain the following prompts, all of which pertain to the history of the place:

- *Heritage brick wall reimagined to provide a diverse program of seating and wayfinding.*
- *Materiality reflective of deep, interwoven histories, both local and distant.*
- *Diverse cultural narratives expressed as material relationships in dialogue.*
- *Portals, procession and pause—moments of direction and rest reflective of a spiritual setting.*
- *Reflection both inward and outward—moments of intimacy and connection to environment.*
- *Restorative direction drawn from the nearby Merri Creek.*
- *Architectural gestures that pay homage to the surrounding residential and historical context.*

Impact – Positive

The landscape masterplan will create a positive and cohesive setting around the building, combining both the active and contemplative uses once undertaken by the elderly residents and the nuns. The landscaping invites movement and exploration around the monastery through a series of foraging paths, establishing a setting that is functional, beautiful, and more than a buffer between old and new.

Individual food gardens to the east will form small courtyards that complement the articulation of the building, while the theme of the original circular garden is interpreted through a series of circular paved and planted areas throughout the site. Food production will again be celebrated, and the Mediterranean origins of both the Little Sisters and the Greek Church will be reflected in the selection of fruiting trees and edible plants.

The original line of the curved drive has been retained as closely as possible and remains a defining feature of the forecourt, or *Platia*, on the west side of the building. It is identified by the colour and pattern of the paving rather than by a bitumen surface.

Paths into the site are designed to highlight views and guide people toward the landmark building before leading them to other areas of the site via a series of formal and informal paths. Planting creates a sequence of varied outdoor spaces, each framing views toward the monastery and reinforcing it as the focal point of the composition. The redesign of the *Platia* reactivates the forecourt, turning the focus back to the building as the heart of the site.

Impact – Negative and mitigation measures

The masterplan will inevitably bring considerable change to the site and its heritage values, but significant effort has been made to mitigate these impacts and reinstate elements that have been lost over time.

The main topics of discussion during workshops and reviews have included the setting of the historic building and the concept of “breathing space” around it, the design of the *Platia*, views into and within the site, entry points to the basement carpark, the interpretation of early features, the steep level change at the south wing, vegetation retention (limited to trees of identified significance), and the proposed pedestrian path along the south side of Hawthorn Road.

There are two pinch points at the eastern ends of the north and south wings, where less than eight metres separates the old and new structures. Whether this allows adequate curtilage has been the

subject of considerable discussion. The solution draws on the monastery's orientation, aligning the new entry sequences from Hartington Street and Hawthorn Road to celebrate the building's diagonal geometry. The new paths are generous, exclusively pedestrian, and lead directly to the eastern ends of the wings, transforming what were once constricted passages into gateway moments that open onto landscaped spaces.

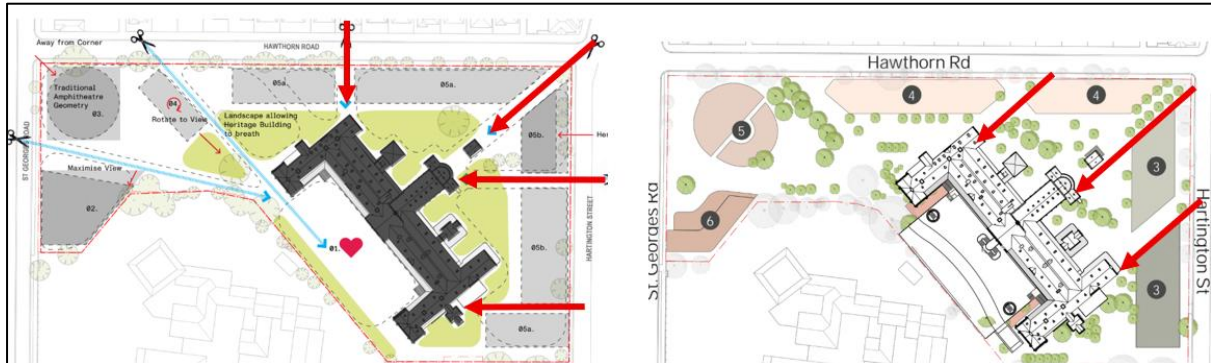


Figure 118 June 2024 OVGA presentation and permit presentation.

The *Platia* has also been substantially refined during the design process. The original concept proposed flattening the berm, which was opposed by both Heritage Victoria and the OVGA. The berm's lawn and level change are recognised in the CMP as significant features. These have been retained but adapted for more active use.

Historic photographs show that while the berm has always contained lawn and a change in level, it was historically awkward to use due to its long, narrow form. The new design steps the berm to create a series of usable flat spaces for standing, sitting, and play. Its straight edge has been softened into a semi-circular form that echoes the curved drive and visually merges the narrow zone between the wings with the broader paved area in front, forming one cohesive space. The berm remains predominantly lawned but includes low hedging reminiscent of historic planting and small shade trees to improve comfort in summer.

The curved drive will be treated as a shared surface defined by grey paving rather than a level change. The paving pattern between the drive and the berm takes inspiration from the rhythm and proportions of the loggia.

These changes also allow direct access to the makers' spaces from the *Platia*, opening the basement to the public and creating a level connection between interior and exterior through two new openings.

The restaurant and café have been relocated to the *Platia*, encouraging both formal and casual gatherings. Positioned opposite the berm, they form an active edge to the forecourt and help extend the sense of public space outward from between the wings.



Figure 119 Proposed design of Platia viewed from the west end of the restaurant.



Figure 120 Proposed design of Platia viewed from the first-floor verandah of the south wing.

The landmark qualities of the building are central to its state-level significance. The progressive subdivision of the site and urban development of Northcote have made restoring its original prominence challenging. Historically, the high boundary wall limited local views, as the monastery was intended to be seen from a distance, particularly from the low ground near Merri Creek.

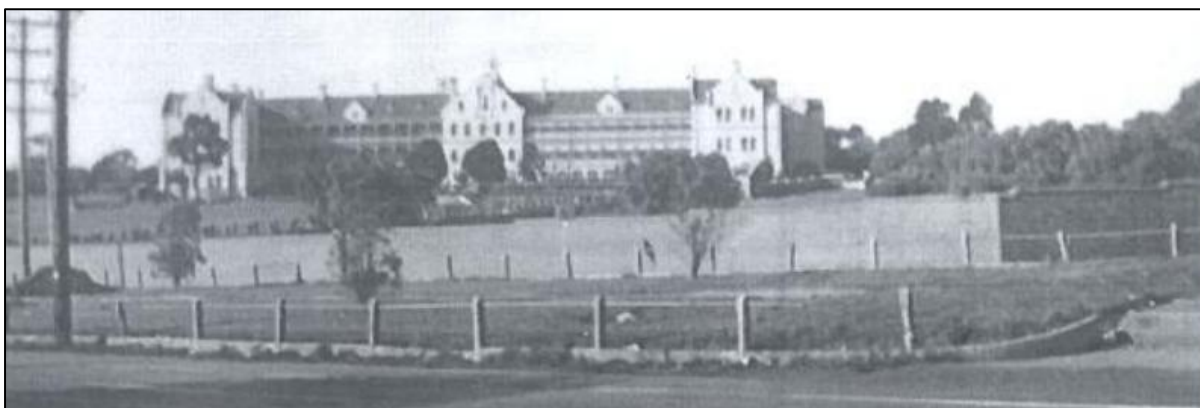


Figure 121 Early 20th-century view of the monastery from St Georges Road.



Figure 122 Google Street View from a similar location.

The masterplan re-establishes this axial relationship by creating a rising, elongated view from St Georges Road toward the monastery, emphasising its verticality and monumental presence. The curved walls of the Theatre and ELC frame a processional ascent toward the *Platia*, reinterpreting the theatrical intent embedded in the monastery's original design.

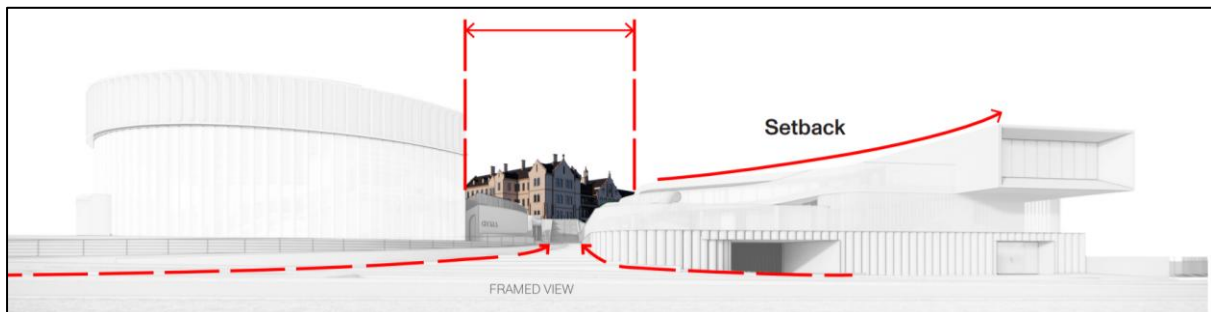


Figure 123 Framing diagram of new view from St Georges Road (KUD).

Views from lower Hawthorn Road have also been greatly improved. The relocation of the carpark and substation entries has allowed for a wide pedestrian way aligned to the monastery's geometry. This approach reveals the building gradually, restoring a sense of procession and reinforcing its dominance within the new development.



Figure 124 Internal view from in front of the church looking toward the east end of the south wing.



Figure 125 Views into the site from between the townhouses and apartments are discussed in the first dot point above.

The entrance from Hartington Street, identified as significant in the CMP, remains a key connection. Although the exact location of the earliest entry is uncertain, the existing driveway corner likely corresponds to the historical drive from St Georges Road. The entrance to the southernmost apartment block now occupies this position, maintaining a clear visual link through to the monastery. The principal pedestrian entrance has been moved slightly north to improve legibility and access.

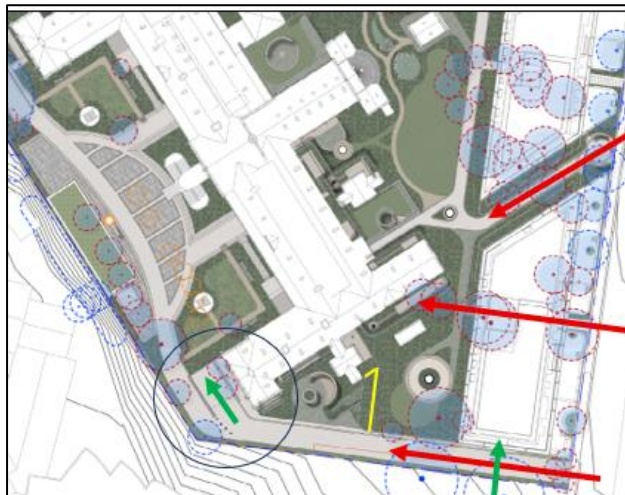


Figure 126 Views into the site from Hartington Street.



Figure 127 Historic view up the straight drive from St Georges Road.

The current entry does not need to be replicated to maintain heritage values. The existing gates and associated landscaping date from the mid-20th century, and the area has been substantially altered, first by the construction of the St Justin's Wing and later by subdivision, which reduced the curtilage around the south wing.

The shared vehicular and pedestrian driveway at the southeast corner of the site remains challenging due to its steep gradient and narrowness. Although it cannot meet DDA gradient requirements, it functions as a practical entry for pedestrians, waste collection, and parking. It also provides striking views of the south wing and glimpses of the *Platia*.

The mixed use and perpendicular alignment of this drive are difficult to resolve aesthetically and functionally. However, the carpark and bin store have been discreetly integrated into the base of the adjacent apartment building, and the entry to the *Platia* carpark, though more visible due to limited space, has been designed to minimise visual impact.



Figure 128 South wing pavilion and basement carpark entry viewed from the Platia.



Figure 129 South wing pavilion viewed from the road descending from Hartington Street

The small garden at the west end of the south wing has undergone multiple redesigns. With the carpark and bin store relocated, this area can now be incorporated into the continuous landscaped curtilage of the monastery. Despite a level difference of more than five metres, the new stair and terracing maintain the ability to circumnavigate the building. The render above is not indicative of the final landscape design.



Figure 130 high view from the Hartington Street drive showing the relationship between the monastery and apartments

2.5.4 Interpretation of original features and use of the site

Interpretation Strategy

The Greek Orthodox Church will develop an Interpretation Strategy for the site as a whole. The strategy will ensure that story telling goes beyond QR codes and signage and is creatively incorporated in art works, way finding, signage and place-making generally in both public and private domains.

Subjects for interpretation are likely to include:

- The traditional owners of the site – Wurundjuri Woi Wurrung
- Conditions for the poor in late 19thC Melbourne
- The history of the Little Sisters of the Poor order
- The everyday life of the nuns and the elderly residents
- Similar Catholic and institutional landmarks across the state
- The development of Northcote / subdivision of the site
- Greek immigration to Victoria
- Greek Culture today.

The Little Sisters of the Poor home for the elderly was originally designed as a residence, and the housing component of the proposed development sits comfortably within that context.

The use of the site for farming purposes cannot be replicated, but the principle of cultivating food for residents has been clearly interpreted through the establishment of individual edible gardens within the residential precinct. The landscape plan includes a fig garden, a stone fruit garden, a citrus garden, an olive grove, kitchen garden beds, and a foraging path. The adjoining barbecue area continues the theme of food production and reinforces the domestic character of the residential setting. In the ecumenical spirit of the Little Sisters, these gardens are shared spaces, accessible to all visitors as well as residents. The design also draws on mythological and biblical associations with

gardens as places of reflection and nourishment. A life-sized statue of the Greek Patriarch seated in quiet contemplation will be installed in the fig garden outside the church, reinforcing this symbolism.

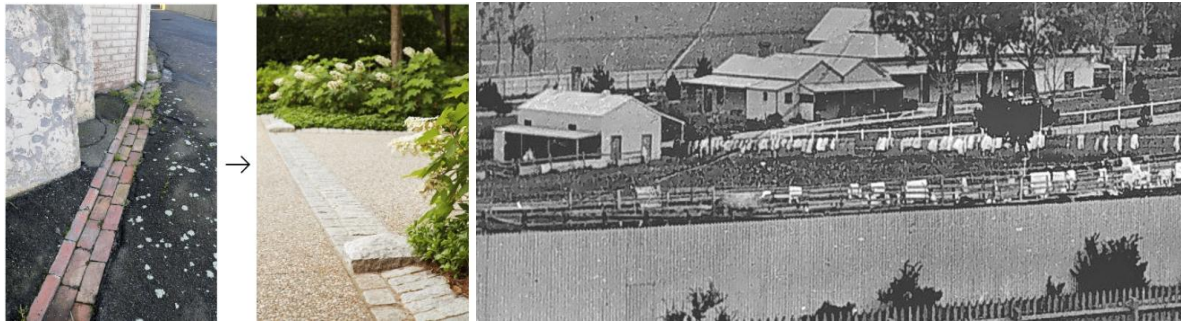


Figure 131 Brick drain interpreted.

Figure 132 Clothes lines and galvanised iron fence on Hartington Street.

The new use of the site metaphorically dismantles the perimeter wall, but the memory of this powerful threshold will be expressed throughout the site and along its edges. The line of the original wall will be indicated by brickwork in the paving at the edge of the site, the garden walls of the apartments and townhouses will recreate a masonry edge along the boundary. Low walls will be a feature of the landscaping. Several of the garden spaces will be contained by low wall. The site's steep topography requires terracing to achieve DDA compliance and to create usable outdoor spaces. The early brick drains will likewise be referenced in the paving pattern, as indicated on the masterplan.

The site is presently sparsely vegetated, though the CMP identifies only the peppercorn trees as being of historical significance. These trees, located along Hartington Street, have been retained and remain a defining feature of the street frontage. In the new design, they have been incorporated into the private front gardens of the ground-floor apartments rather than standing isolated along the boundary as in earlier schemes. A rich variety of new plantings will be introduced across the site to provide habitat, colour, scent, texture, and movement throughout the outdoor spaces. The hedging visible in the early photos of the berm will be interpreted around the south entrance to the *platia*. Hedging will be used to soften and separate the entrance to the carpark. When standing on the west facing verandahs, the original paddocks below the monastery will be evoked by the meadow planting planned for the green roof of the restaurant.

The history of the east side of the building is most vividly recalled through historic images of laundry lines and domestic work. In Australian tradition, clothes lines are typically located in backyards and seldom presented in public view. This characteristic has been interpreted in the design through a series of pergolas forming an arcade along the public footpath, symbolising the former drying yards while defining the entrances to the townhouses.

A footpath currently exists on the north side of Hawthorn Road; however, the need for a corresponding path along the south side has been raised at each OVGA workshop. A single footpath on one side of the street is a characteristic feature of the heritage precinct and contributes to its historic streetscape character. The existing footpath is within Council ownership.

Given the steep topography, the architects have consistently maintained that directing pedestrian movement through the site via DDA-compliant paths is the preferable approach. This strategy not only provides safe and accessible circulation but also encourages activity within the site itself. The design of the access points intentionally removes any sense of boundary or trespass, inviting pedestrians to use the site as a natural thoroughfare, creating a welcoming, permeable environment.

2.5.5 Removal of existing elements

2.5.5.1 Hard landscaping

Key: S – significant, C – contributory, N – not significant, D – deleterious



Figure 76 existing hard landscape features

Berm retaining wall (NS)

All other bluestone retaining walls (NS)



Brick drains (S)



Grotto (C)



Block walls and paving (NS)



Block and brick retaining walls and concrete paving (NS)



Courtyard west of chapel (NS)



St Justin's retaining walls (D)



East side of berm (D)



Incinerator in front of mortuary chapel (D)



Remains of perimeter wall on Hawthorn St (S)



Gates and fence to Hartington St (NS)



Greek war memorial (NS)

Significance / history

The land below the monastery has been progressively modified into a series of terraces with retaining walls and connecting paths dating from various periods. Most of these were created or altered as part of landscaping works undertaken in conjunction with the construction of the 1963 and 1973 wings or by 1979.

The walling associated with the 1958 grotto is notable for its rustic character, consistent with the design of the grotto itself. The majority of the garden beds surrounding the monastery are defined by low brick edging, likely constructed during the same later building phases, either in the 1960s or by 1979.

The CMP graded the significance of the hard landscaping elements as follows:

Significant

- Remains of the perimeter wall
- Line of the early driveways and entrances
- Brick spoon drains
- Entrance from Hartington Street (but not its fabric)

Contributory

- 1979 brick fencing and gates
- Fabric of the chapel garden including the cross
- Gates and fences at the Hartington Street entry
- Grotto

Not significant

- Metal fencing
- Berm walls and planter beds

- Road surfaces, later pathways, drives and paving
- Greek War Memorial on the south fence

Deleterious

- Metal fencing
- Over paving of spoon drains
- Fabric of retaining walls to the west of the Married Couples Wing and the mixed material retaining walls on the southwest edge of the berm

Existing use and condition

The grounds are used occasionally by residents but are not formally open to the public. The north forecourt currently functions as an informal carpark.

The Greek–Australian War Memorial serves as the focal point for small annual services of around twenty to thirty participants and is maintained in good condition.

Other landscape elements perform their functional roles but are otherwise unused. The incinerator is no longer operational. Overall, the walls and terraces remain structurally sound, although some areas of brickwork are in a state of decay.

CMP recommendations and proposed changes

The CMP recommends that elements which detract from, distort, or diminish the cultural significance of the place be removed.

Accordingly:

- All hard landscaping including the remnant section of the perimeter wall will be removed.
- The line of the historic driveway from Hartington Street across the front of the berm will be retained.
- The Greek–Australian War Memorial will be relocated.

Impact – positive

As none of the original plantings or early garden beds remain, and as most of the hard landscaping relates to later twentieth century residential additions, their removal will not result in a loss of heritage significance. Instead, it will allow the introduction of a cohesive and legible landscape design across the site, unifying the setting of the monastery and the new development.

Impact – negative and mitigation

The existing walls, terraces, and grottoes provide evidence of the way the grounds were adapted during the second half of the twentieth century, when the property functioned as an aged care home. While this represents a local historical layer, it is not significant to the architectural, aesthetic, or historic values of the place.

The proposed landscape plan will create a consistent, accessible environment that honours the heritage character of the site while providing a functional and inclusive setting for contemporary use. It will bind the old and the new within a single, integrated complex and ensure that the grounds remain both usable and meaningful to future generations

2.5.5.2 Soft landscaping

Key: S – significant, C – contributory, N – not significant, D – deleterious



Figure 77 existing soft landscape features
Highly significant peppercorns



Significant peppercorns



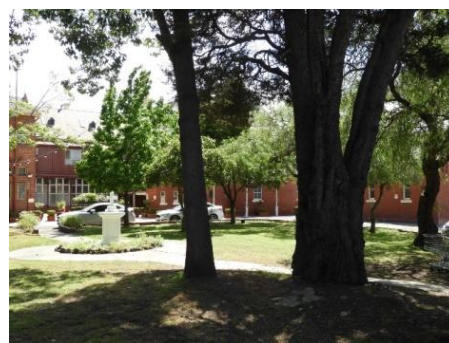
General planting from St Georges Rd (C)



Date palm (D)



Berm lawn (S), Olives and citrus (NS)



Chapel garden -peppercorns (S)
and cypresses around the cross



Bluegum (C)



Cypress (C)



Privet (S)

Significance / history (extract from CMP)

Aerial imagery from 1928 and 1931 show that the site boundaries to St Georges Road and Hawthorn Street had linear plantings dispersed along the site boundaries of mixed tree species and tree forms. Most extant planting along the St George Road and Hawthorn Street boundaries appear to be more recent in age, with the exception of some specimens of Norfolk Island Hibiscus (*Lagunaria*

pattersonia) which are mature specimens and were readily available in Melbourne from the mid-nineteenth century.

Prominent in an 1892 photograph of the site from outside the site looking west are the conical forms of young conifers, some possibly Italian Cypress trees. These coniferous trees are visible in the area southwest of the main building in 1928 along the sweeping drive and defining the circular garden at the rear of the complex. A different type of conifer was also planted at the front of the 1890 side wing by 1892 (no longer extant). A pair of conifers placed symmetrically on the southwest side of the drive aligned to the centre of the building. Planted between 1928 and 1945, these were a longstanding, designed feature of the site until c1988 when the marble monument was installed in that location.

By 1923 and 1928, paths and drives around the building were lined with clipped hedges, including at the front of the building (the forecourt paths and southwest edge of the berm and both sides of the drive), rear of the building, and to a (lost) formal garden in southeast corner of the site.

By 1928, there were well established trees immediately at the rear of the 1896 wing (no longer extant). Four of the mature peppercorns at the north end of the Hartington Street boundary were well established trees by 1928 (Trees 48, 46, 45, 44). A row of trees (likely the mature Peppercorns that remain extant) has defined the length of the Hartington Street boundary since before 1945 (planted after 1928, established trees by 1945), including Tree 10 on the north side of the early entry off Hartington.

By 1922, boundaries and drives at the front of the building had ornamental plantings, mostly following the edges of the drives. Trees appear to have been mixed species, alternating evergreen conifers, deciduous and some Australian native trees.

Other than along the drives and perimeters, the large area of sloping land between the building and St Georges Road remained relatively open and free of trees, until 1979 (see figure 50). By 1979, this area had been re-landscaped with a series of terraces with concrete and brick retaining walls with built in seats, paths, and plantings of mixed species, including a mature Mulberry tree, mixed eucalypts and conifers. The dense canopy cover created by these trees limits views (and the ability to appreciate the landmark qualities of the building) from St Georges Road. The new St Joseph's Home has some large trees and dense planting on their side of the boundary which also limit views.

By 1928, the circular garden at the rear of the Chapel was planted with Italian Cypress trees and had a circular planting arrangement with some peppercorn trees on the north side (Trees 37, 38 and 40). The Italian Cypress trees have since been replaced by mixed coniferous species. The broader canopies of these trees provide a shaded aspect to the circular garden, but a less formal appearance.

There are a number of self-sown trees in the grounds, including Canary Island Date Palms and Pittosporum. This species is not apparent in the historic photographs of the site, but were until recently a longstanding feature of St Georges Road, planted in association with the Yan Yean pipe track that runs along that road. The Canary Island Date Palms within the site may have originated from these or other specimens in the local area. They do not contribute to significance/are deleterious.

The CMP grades the significance of soft landscaping elements as follows:

Highly significant

- Four peppercorns at the corner of Hartington Street
- Privet hedge on the berm

Significant

- Mature peppercorns along the Hartington Street boundary and around the chapel garden
- Berm lawn

Contributory

- Italian Cypress in the south forecourt
- Conifers around the chapel garden
- Blue gum in the north forecourt
- Mulberry tree

Not significant

- Olive and citrus trees at the lower edge of the south forecourt
- Plantings in the garden beds on either side of the chapel
- Australian native species and other vegetation on the slope to St Georges Road
- Cedar and all other miscellaneous trees and shrubs

Deleterious

- Canary Island Palm on the berm

CMP recommendations and proposed changes

The CMP recommends the removal of trees that obstruct views of the monastery and the general removal of all deleterious or intrusive elements.

All vegetation, with the exception of the significant peppercorns at the corner of Hawthorn and Hartington Streets, will be removed.

Impact – positive

The significant peppercorns along Hartington Street will be retained and protected. The removal of trees currently blocking key sightlines will re-establish important heritage views of the monastery, restoring its landmark quality. The berm will be reshaped into a more usable and open space.

The proposed works will remove non-significant and visually discordant hard and soft landscaping, allowing for a cohesive and legible design language across the site that complements the heritage setting.

Impact – negative and mitigation

Several significant or contributory elements will be removed, including some early plantings and hedging. These will be reinterpreted within the new landscape through references to the privet hedging and the brick spoon drains, ensuring that their historic function and character remain legible within the redesigned setting.

The resulting landscape will provide a unified and accessible environment that honours the site's layered history while reasserting the prominence of the monastery within its grounds.

2.6 New buildings

The new development will have a significant impact on the site, with varying degrees of influence on its historic, architectural and aesthetic significance. However, the heritage values of the place are presently difficult to perceive or appreciate. The monastery is partly concealed by later external

additions, and although the perimeter wall has been removed, its landmark qualities remain muted. Views of the building are obstructed by the development to the south and by a collection of non-significant trees, meaning that its presence within the landscape is revealed only intermittently (see Figures 121 and 122). The subdivision of the 1980s has further diminished the curtilage to the west, while the eastern side is dominated by bitumen used for carparking, an incinerator and an abandoned structure that detracts from the setting.

In an ideal scenario, the later additions would be removed, the building conserved and reactivated, and the grounds landscaped to restore the historic setting without introducing new buildings. However, such an approach, while aesthetically satisfying, would not necessarily enliven the place or celebrate its layered history. Many heritage sites have been carefully restored but remain isolated and exclusive, their cultural relevance diminished through inactivity.

The proposed development takes a different approach. By integrating new buildings into the landscape, the project seeks to restore life and purpose to the property. The new built form will reframe and reveal the monastery from a variety of new perspectives, re-establishing its landmark quality within the evolving urban context.

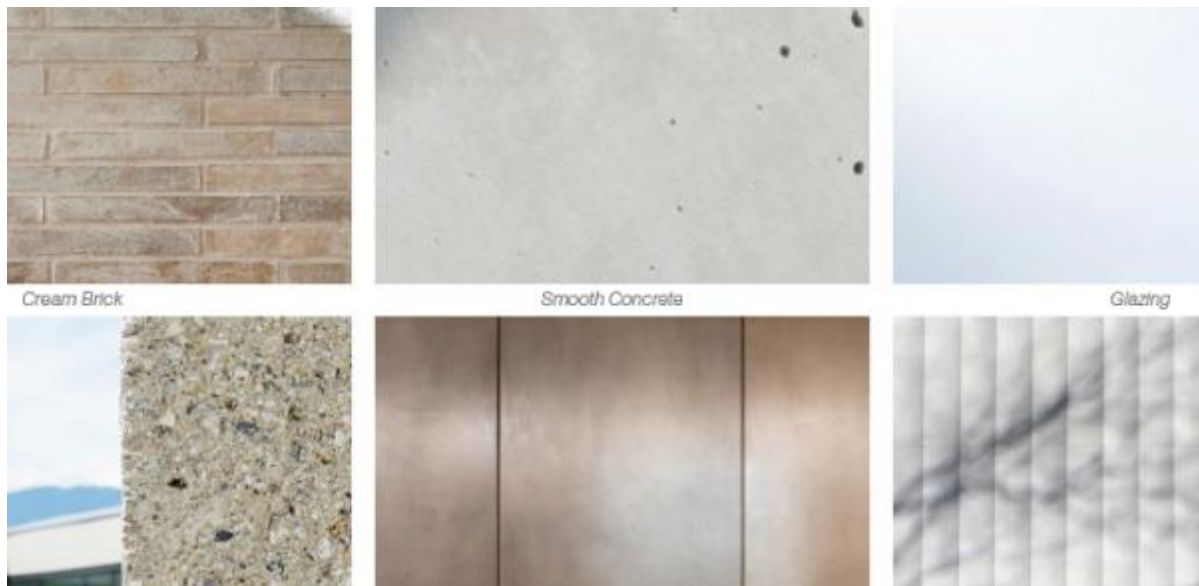
Retention and interpretation of heritage values have been central to the design process and to the placement of each of the seven new buildings. Their design evolution has been shaped through ongoing discussion with Heritage Victoria and the Office of the Victorian Government Architect, and the refinement of each scheme demonstrates a careful and considered response to the significance of the place.

The following section outlines how the proposed new buildings respond to, and interact with, the historical, aesthetic and spatial values of the site.

2.6.1 Architectural language

The architects have developed a distinctive and cohesive architectural language that is consistently applied across the site. Drawing inspiration from classical Greek architecture, the design also incorporates subtle references to the Gothic and Romanesque vocabulary of the monastery. Traditional forms and motifs are reinterpreted through a contemporary lens, allowing the new buildings to maintain a respectful dialogue with the historic structure without resorting to imitation. The resulting architecture is refined and restrained, ensuring that the monastery remains the visual and cultural focus of the site.

The selected materials reflect the durability and craftsmanship of the original masonry buildings. They have been chosen for their integrity, texture, and ability to harmonise with the existing palette of brick, render, slate and cast iron. The contemporary finishes are robust, allowing the new and old fabric to coexist comfortably while maintaining a clear distinction between periods of construction.



Figures 135 Proposed architectural materials palette



Figures 136 Proposed landscape palette



*Cast Iron**Figures 137 Existing materials palette*

2.6.2 Site placement

The new development has been planned to retain as much open space around the monastery as possible. Building along the perimeter allows the land immediately surrounding the historic structure to remain open and landscaped for public use. This approach reinforces the prominence of the monastery within the site and restores a sense of spatial hierarchy.

Each new building has been located to respond to its context and to minimise visual and physical impact on the heritage fabric. The design ensures functional integration between the new and existing buildings while maintaining clear definition between them. The public buildings, including the theatre and early learning centre, occupy the most visible frontage along St Georges Road. The townhouse groups align with the finer residential grain of Hartington Street, while the larger apartment buildings are positioned along the railway corridor where greater height is appropriate.

The new residential buildings form a defined edge to the site that recalls the presence of the historic boundary wall. Openings between the buildings are positioned to frame views of the monastery and direct movement through the site towards it. The monastery remains the focal point of the masterplan and the organising element for wayfinding as well as the architectural and landscape composition.

2.6.2.1 The Hartington Street apartments

The masterplan incorporates two apartment buildings positioned along the Hartington Street boundary. The four-storey contemporary structures draw on the monastery for inspiration without resorting to imitation or direct historic detail. Like the monastery, the apartments are monolithic in form and monumental in presence but are articulated by rhythmic bays that create depth and shadow through recessed verandahs. The rhythm, however, is intentionally irregular, establishing a contemporary distinction from the repetitive cadence of the monastery façades.

The dark grey bush-hammered base of the apartments references the weight and visual solidity of the monastery plinth and the articulation of the loggia facing the berm. The base also reinterprets the shift in arch form between the north and south ends of the monastery. Both apartment buildings use shallow curved arches to the left of the central pathway and pointed Gothic arches to the right, acknowledging the historic transition within a contemporary expression.

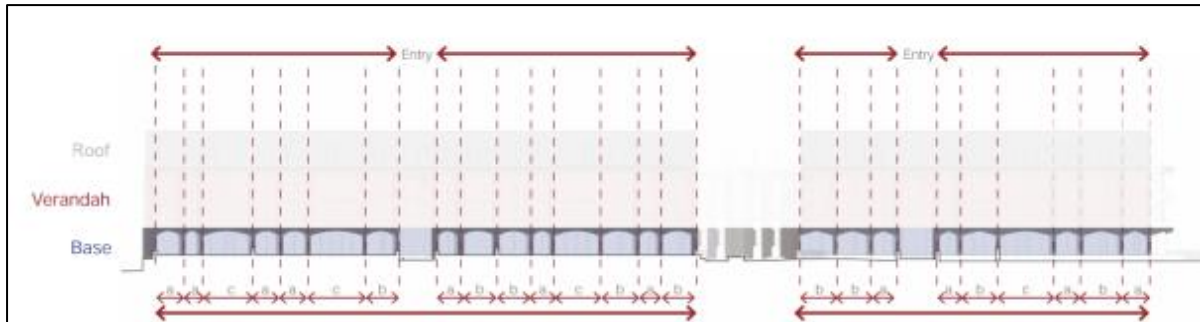


Figure 138 KUD report P95 – showing the change in arch shape and the similarity in the horizontal division of old and new buildings

Above the plinth, the façades are divided by lighter, smooth concrete columns. These are proportionally comparable to the slender cast iron verandah posts of the monastery but employ the stepped articulation developed by the architects as a unifying motif across the site. This stepped detailing continues at the building corners where it subtly echoes the buttresses of the monastery wings.

The upper level is expressed as a modern interpretation of a mansard roof. The walls are set back and raked, clad in black slate to reduce their visual prominence while referencing the pitched slate roofs of the monastery.



Figure 139 Render of mansard and monastery forms

The architectural dialogue between the new and historic buildings achieves a measured balance of similarity and contrast. The fine masonry structure and contemporary openness of the apartments differ from the monastery's load-bearing brick walls yet align more closely with the lighter verandah elevations. The shared order of scale, proportion, materiality, and horizontal composition ensures visual continuity and coherence across the site.

Consistent with the principles of the Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter, the design adopts a sympathetic contemporary architectural language within a historic context. The careful balance between distinction and alignment reinforces the integrity of the monastery while allowing the new buildings to contribute confidently to the evolving site.

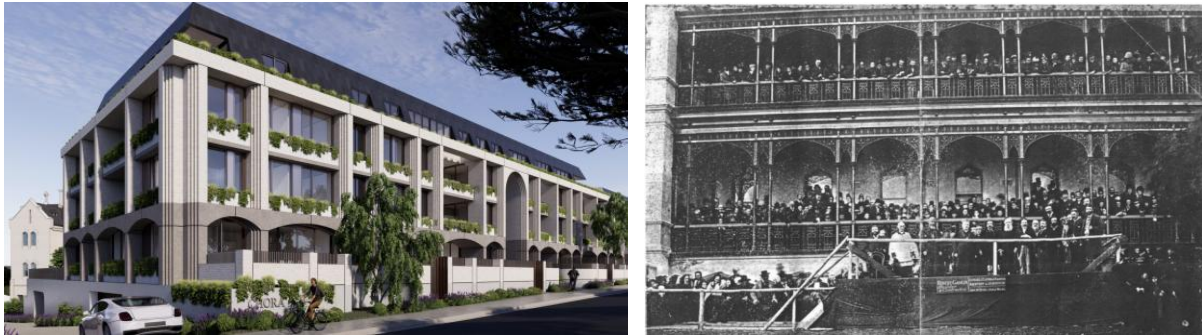


Figure 140 Rhythmic similarities between old and new

The apartments are set back from Hartington Street to retain the significant peppercorn trees, which are incorporated into the private courtyards of the ground-floor dwellings. The courtyards are enclosed by a solid masonry fence articulated by piers and lightened by a row of steel pickets along the top. This form intentionally recalls the original brick boundary wall that enclosed the site until 2012. The plain steel pickets pay homage to the role of front yards as a transition space between the public and private realms as seen throughout the surrounding heritage precincts.

The apartments are not visible from the *Platia*, ensuring that the heritage building remains the dominant visual focus of the site.

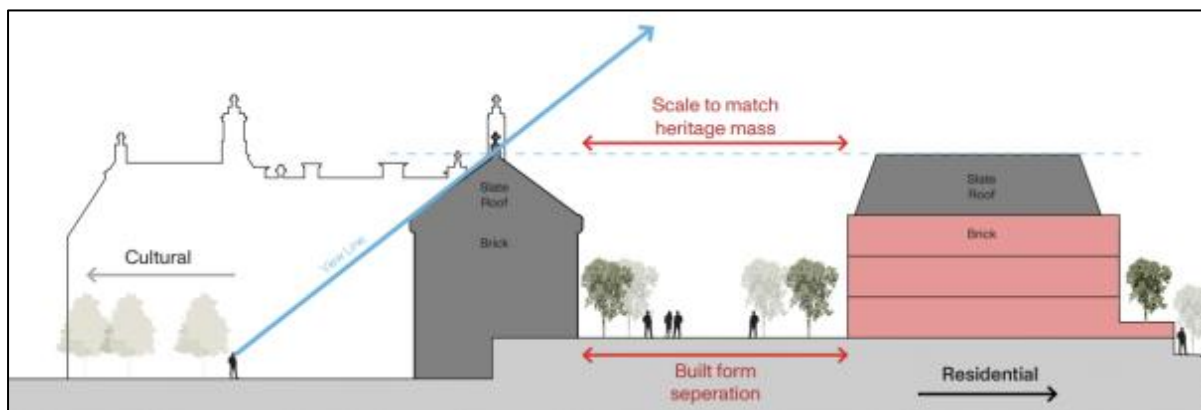


Figure 141 Diagram illustrating appropriate scale, massing, and sightlines (KUD)

2.6.2.2 Townhouse blocks

Two three-storey townhouse blocks are proposed along Hawthorn Road. Although grouped as continuous forms, each townhouse is individually expressed with small separations in the façade and fence line. The western block steps down the slope, increasing articulation between the units and responding to the natural fall of the land.

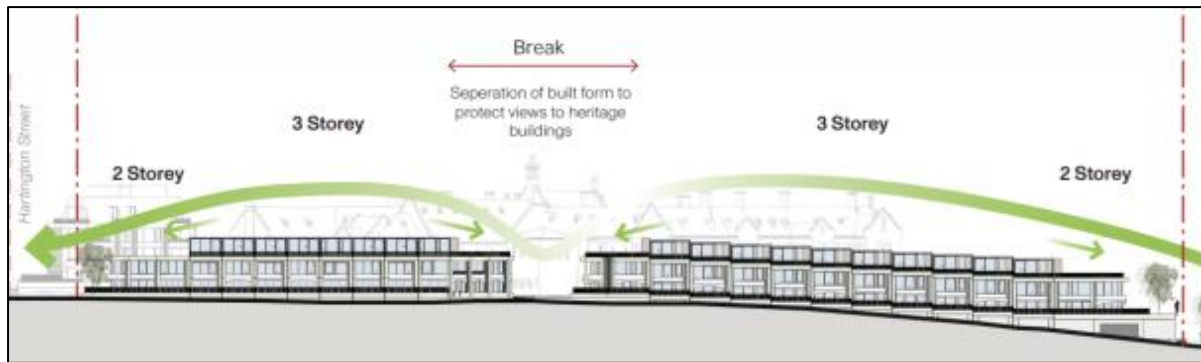


Figure 142 Diagram illustrating the scale, massing, and stepped articulation of townhouses in relation to the monastery (KUD)

The architectural language of the townhouses aligns with that of the apartments. The upper level is lightweight in appearance and set back to minimise visual impact on the streetscape, while the ground and first floors are framed by a heavier smooth concrete portal structure that encloses both levels. The raised garden bed and low fence act as a visual plinth, anchoring the buildings to the street.



Figure 143 Renders of the townhouses showing individual units with front gardens and walls to the street

Each townhouse includes a small front garden facing Hawthorn Road. The ground floor sits slightly above street level behind a brick and steel picket fence, similar in construction to that of the apartments. The brickwork provides continuity with the earlier perimeter wall, while the reduced height and greater openness of the fencing allow views into the gardens. Although no gates are proposed, the design maintains a traditional threshold between public and private space, encouraging passive surveillance and reinforcing the residential character of the street.

Unlike typical suburban layouts, the front doors of each townhouse face inward toward the monastery. This orientation draws residents into the site, strengthening their relationship with the historic building and the surrounding communal gardens.

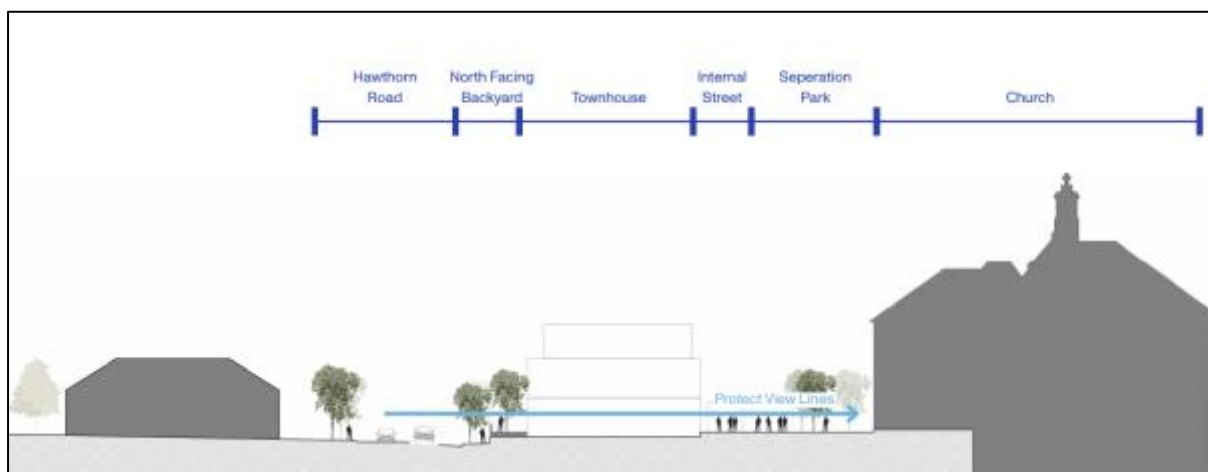


Figure 144 Diagram illustrating that the scale of a townhouse unit aligns with the houses on the north side of Hawthorn Road, with the upper level stepping up toward the monastery beyond (KUD)

The houses opposite are freestanding single-storey dwellings on narrow lots with small front gardens. The new townhouses share similar proportions and garden relationships, contributing to the rhythm and scale of the street. Although the townhouses are taller, their horizontal organisation ensures compatibility within the streetscape. The height of the first two storeys aligns approximately with the ridgeline of the houses opposite, creating a balanced transition to the greater scale of the monastery behind.

The townhouses at the ends of each block are reduced to two storeys to preserve open views of the monastery and create a sense of openness along the pedestrian pathways leading into the site. This treatment reinforces the visual hierarchy of the development and maintains the prominence of the heritage building within its setting.

2.6.2.3 Amphitheatre

The circular theatre building does not replicate the architectural language of the monastery. Its form establishes a new identity within the site and acts as a visual venturi that directs the gaze up the hill toward the landmark building. Positioned on the corner of St Georges Road, the glazed wall of the auditorium will frame a long, panoramic view of the monastery within a landscaped setting, reinforcing its landmark qualities.

The theatre will serve as a visual anchor and a point of activity at the most prominent corner of the site. While the monastery is solid and angular, the theatre will appear as a column of light, illuminated from within at night and transparent during the day. It will act as a visual marker that draws visitors toward the monastery. The building is intentionally singular in form and distinct from the surrounding architecture, designed as a companion structure that supports the prominence of the historic building without competing with it.



Figure 145 Landmark view from the auditorium

The column-like form of the theatre makes a clear reference to Greek culture and is an appropriate symbol for the new cultural use of the site. Like the monastery, it carries an element of performance, acknowledging the theatrical quality of the original design.

The theatre establishes the design language for the new buildings. The fluted cladding introduces a curved motif that is reinterpreted throughout the development. It appears in the ribbed façades of the Early Learning Centre, the stepped articulation of the restaurant, townhouses and apartments, the fluted planter boxes, and the vertical steel pickets of the fencing. The curved corners of the townhouses, which draw people into the site, are derived from this same formal idea. The circular motif also continues through the landscape design, referencing the historic circular garden near the mortuary chapel while providing a unifying visual theme for the new works.



Figure 146 View from St Georges Road. The decks of the Early Learning Centre are oriented up St Georges Road, while the cylindrical form of the theatre captures attention before directing views back toward the monastery.

2.6.2.4 Early Learning Centre (ELC)



Revised St Georges Rd Elevation – The ELC plan remains the same, but the St Georges Rd elevations of the building now share a language with the monastery building, while the balustrades and the curvilinear forms continue to share a language with the theatre. The colours have been removed and the solid cream masonry walls, horizontal banding and articulated arched window openings now clearly reference the monastery. The articulated window openings use a similar rationale to the restaurant cloister and the combination of cream brickwork and concrete replicates the use of materials in the apartment and townhouse fencing, helping to create a cohesive architectural language across the site.

The Early Learning Centre (ELC) occupies the south-west corner of the site opposite the theatre and assists in directing views toward the monastery along the central pedestrian path. It forms part of the St Georges Road sub-precinct and, together with the theatre, defines the public edge of the development. Positioned within the irregular portion of land created by earlier subdivision, the ELC addresses both the street and the site interior, forming a visual and functional transition between the public domain and the quieter internal spaces.

The building is arranged to engage with the movement of pedestrians and traffic along St Georges Road. Curved decks and classrooms orient north and west, providing a sense of openness and visibility while maintaining privacy and acoustic protection from the street. The massive quality of the building base echoes the solidity of the heritage building and the perforated fluting of the balustrades carries echoes of the cast iron balustrades while more overtly articulating a complementary dialogue with the theatre.

The uppermost level is expressed as a rectilinear box projecting toward the street. This element provides balance to the cylindrical form of the theatre and reinforces the legibility of the ELC as a contemporary civic building.

The architectural and landscape integration of the ELC allows it to sit comfortably within the overall masterplan. The building contributes to the activation of the St Georges Road frontage and creates a strong but permeable edge to the site, signalling entry and movement toward the monastery beyond. Its scale, articulation, and materiality align with the broader design strategy of reinforcing the hierarchy of new and existing structures while providing a clear contemporary layer within the evolving narrative of the place.

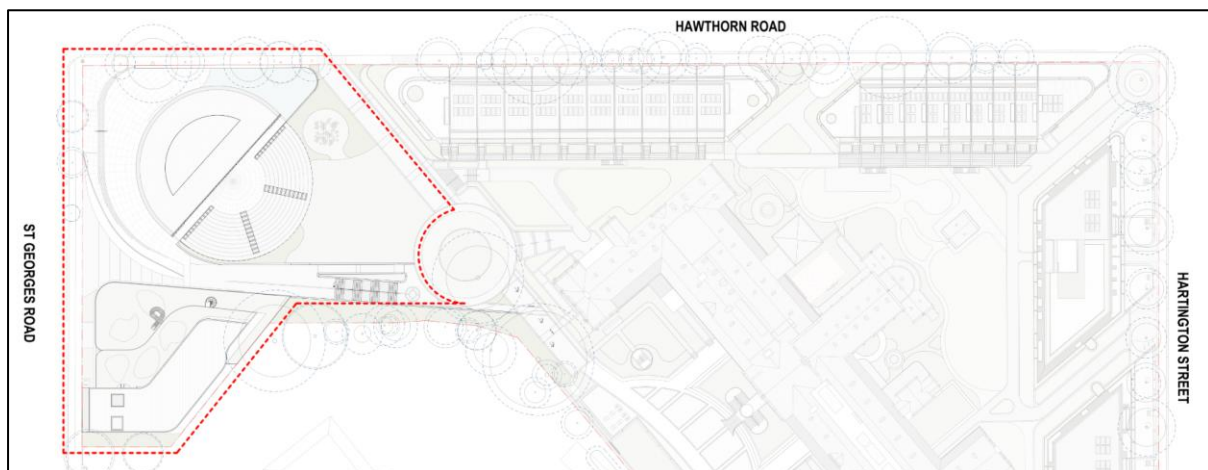


Figure 147 Sub-precinct on St Georges Road within the red dotted line

2.6.2.5 The restaurant

A low, single-storey restaurant and café is proposed along the western edge of the *Platia*. The design adopts the form of a cloister or *stoa*, functioning as an open arcade that echoes the rhythm and proportions of the monastery's loggia opposite. The layered façade allows the paved forecourt to flow seamlessly into the building, extending the public plaza while maintaining a light, transparent edge. Patrons will experience a strong sense of connection with the *Platia* whether seated inside behind the glass wall, within the covered verandah, or in the outdoor seating area. From above, the green roof will visually merge the building into the surrounding landscape of the berm and reinstate a green space in the location of the former garden in front of the chapel. The meadow species specified for the green roof will also evoke the original farm paddocks. From below, the repeating bays of the loggia and the restaurant will form a consistent architectural frontage that defines and activates the edge of the *Platia*.



Figure 148 The aerial view illustrates the complementary bay structure at ground level and the strong open edge to the *Platia*

In its original condition, the berm provided uninterrupted views from the monastery across open farmland towards the You Yangs. Since the 1980s subdivision, these views have been lost, and the western side of the monastery has become visually constrained and spatially awkward. The masterplan sought to reinterpret this area as an inviting, human-scaled meeting place that recalls the character of a village square. While historic views were directed out of the site, the new *Platia* is designed to orient inward, focusing attention on the monastery while providing a sheltered public space protected from prevailing winds.

The design process considered multiple landscape-based options to achieve enclosure and comfort but found that an architectural structure would best provide both spatial definition and weather protection. The new building is carefully positioned along the west side of the existing drive, retaining the general form of the berm and the curvature of the roadway. The roofline is kept deliberately low and horizontal to preserve the visual dominance of the monastery and ensure the new building reads as a subordinate element. The length of the structure was determined to achieve a comfortable sense of enclosure without visually crowding the monastery or diminishing the curtilage of its wings.

Initially conceived as an open colonnade, the building evolved into a restaurant and café to ensure regular occupation and activity within the *Platia*. This adaptive approach strengthens the site's social role by inviting residents, visitors, and the local community to engage with the historic setting in a relaxed and accessible way.

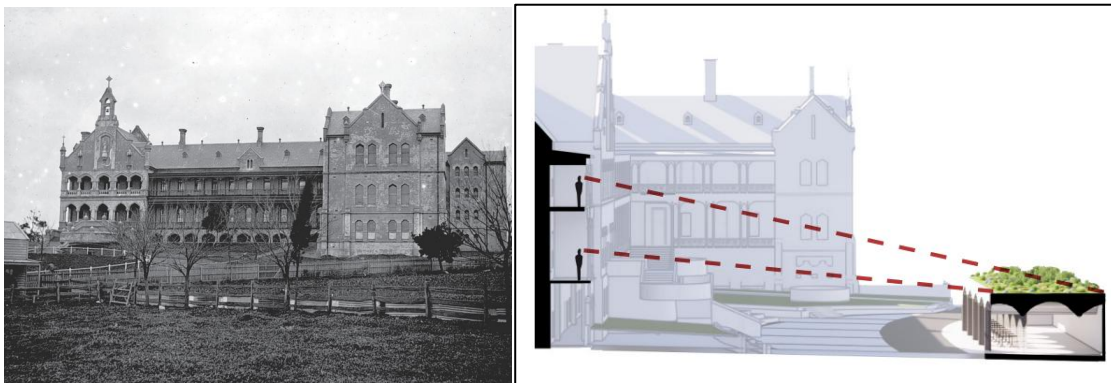


Figure 149 The open landscape circa 1896, and the new green edge to the site provided by the roof of the restaurant

The proposed restaurant will have a positive impact on the public realm surrounding the monastery. It reinstates the formality and purpose of the western forecourt while introducing a new layer of everyday use. The restrained architectural expression and tightly controlled massing ensure that the building supports rather than competes with the historic structure, framing the monastery as the focal point of the composition while reactivating the *Platia* as a vibrant civic space.

2.7 Archaeology

The site has been delisted from the Victorian Heritage Inventory. Heritage Victoria has advised that any archaeological impacts will be managed under the permit process. Extent have provided a desktop assessment which suggests that the area around the monastery has high archaeological potential, the north east corner has moderate potential, and the rest of the site has low potential. They have provided an archaeological statement of significance which reads as follows:

What is significant?

Historical archaeological remains and deposits associated with late-nineteenth to early twentieth-century occupation and use of the study area as a convent and care home, including extant buildings.

How is it significant?

Potential late nineteenth and early twentieth century archaeological deposits and remains associated with the study area are of historical, archaeological, architectural and social significance, both locally and to the State of Victoria

Why is it significant?

Historically

The study area encompasses the first religious institution established in Victoria for the care of the aged poor and the first permanent home established by the Little Sisters of the Poor in Australia.

Extent recommend the following actions now that the archaeology is recognised under the VHR.

- Preparation of an Archaeological Assessment and Research Design (AARD) drawing.
- Archaeological monitoring during ground stripping works, or as per conditions outlined in the Permit conditions.

No excavation works are proposed under the monastery building except potentially behind the east wall of the basement corridor to alleviate moisture problems. Where new buildings and basement carparking is proposed, excavation to a depth of several meters will be required. The removal of the multi-storey accommodation blocks will also result in substantial ground disturbance. Further archaeological will be commissioned to meet the requirements of the permit.



Figure 78 Extent mapping of zones of archaeological potential

3.0 REASONS THE PROPOSED WORKS SHOULD BE SUPPORTED

Rational and Economic use argument under section S. 101 (2)(b) of the Heritage Act 2017

3.1 Reasonable Use

What was the original use?

The place was constructed as a home for the elderly under the care of the Little Sisters of the Poor and was used for this purpose continuously from its completion in the late nineteenth century until the 1980s.

Is the place still being used in this way? If not, why not?

The monastery is no longer used as an aged care facility. In the 1980s the Little Sisters subdivided the property and constructed a new aged care facility on the lower, southern section of the site. The original building became increasingly difficult and costly to maintain and was no longer fit for purpose under late twentieth-century standards for aged care accommodation. The configuration of large dormitories and shared bathrooms reflected a nineteenth-century institutional model that could not meet modern expectations for single-room accommodation with individual amenities and contemporary safety standards.

What is the current use?

The building and its grounds are now used for a range of church-related and community purposes, including the parish church, diocesan offices, accommodation, a bookshop, a small museum, and a foodbank. Despite these activities, more than half of the building remains unused or derelict. The surrounding grounds are used primarily for car parking and are seldom utilised for recreation or public amenity.

Is this use still valid? - If not, why not?

The current uses are broadly appropriate and align with the heritage values of the place. Continued use of the church as a place of worship maintains an essential link to the site's historic and spiritual origins. The retention of accommodation also remains consistent with the original function of providing shelter and care. However, the disuse of significant portions of the building compromises its long-term conservation. Persistent issues with water ingress, pigeon infestation, and poor drainage are accelerating fabric decay, particularly in the attic and roof structures.

What physical changes are required to accommodate the proposed new use?

The adaptation of the building for new mixed-use purposes will require removal of intrusive later fit-outs and the repair and conservation of original fabric. Limited modification of early fabric will be necessary to facilitate access, services integration, and compliance with current building codes.

Ground levels across the site will also be adjusted to allow new circulation paths and accessible gradients, resulting in the removal of some remnant infrastructure and post-war landscape features.

Are the changes necessary to meet code and compliance requirements?

The extent of proposed works will trigger full compliance with the National Construction Code. This includes achieving DDA accessibility across the site, and meeting fire safety, acoustic, and energy efficiency standards.

***If the permit application was refused, could the place still be reasonably used?
If not, why not?***

If the permit application were refused, the building could continue to function at a limited level, but it would likely decline further over time. Piecemeal repair works may occur, but larger systemic issues such as roof drainage, structural stability, and building envelope integrity, would likely remain unaddressed due to cost. Without comprehensive intervention, continued use of the building would become increasingly unviable.

3.2 Economic use

Is the current use financially viable?

The current use is not financially sustainable in the long term. While existing activities generate sufficient income for basic maintenance, they do not produce the funds necessary to undertake major conservation or compliance works.

If not, why not?

Heritage conservation and building works are generally extremely costly. Although the church has attempted to maintain the building, they have not been able to fund the major works necessary to make the building safe, compliant, and amenable throughout.

To establish a base level for understanding the need for development:

What are the current and projected incomings and outgoings?

The property is owned by the Archdiocese but managed locally by the parish. Income from the accommodation blocks is directed to the Archdiocese, and does not contribute to the maintenance or operation of the monastery complex. This structural arrangement further limits the financial resources available for conservation or adaptive reuse.

1. Current Incomings/Outgoing

Average Income: (approx.)	\$ 400,000 p/a
Average Expenses: (approx.)	\$ 350,000 p/a
<i>(Not including: Repairs, Maintenance, Insurance)</i>	
Balance for repairs, maintenance, insurance: is not sufficient.	\$ 50,000 p/a which

2. Revenues:

Projected revenue from the sales of residential assets:	\$ 197m
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Total Costs of works to Historic Building, and residential assets including Professional fees:	\$ 187m
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(The cost of the construction of the [Early Learning Centre and Theatre](#) will be funded primarily by the proceeds from the sale of Residential lots (apartments and townhouses. A portion of funding will be provided by private philanthropic donations.)

3. Ongoing Income (Whole Development):

Projected income from all commercial assets: <i>(Not including Body Corporate Fees, not including any revenue generated from the function of the Church itself – only events, function spaces).</i>	\$ 2.1m p/a
Interest Costs assuming commercial assets are financed: <i>(Worst-case, assets unlikely to be financed)</i>	\$ 600,000 p/a
Balance:	\$1,530,000

4. Estimated maintenance costs (excl insurance, etc) –**\$ 53,237 p/a**

WT Quantity Surveyors also provided the following recommendation:

In terms of estimating the cost of future reactive and lifecycle works for buildings of this nature we would recommend this is based on a proposed anticipated scope of works defined by engineers who have completed inspections of the components in scope.

Based on our benchmarking to cover these costs at a very high level would be to make an additional allowance of ~0.5% of the capital expenditure on the upgrade works as a baseline cost per annum for the 15-year term modelled and for the output of this should be closely reviewed against the findings of inspection reports on an ongoing basis moving forwards.

We note the guidance above excludes us being aware of the findings of any building condition reports of any anticipated works required as capital upgrades in the indicative period modelled.

Regards,

Joshua Knaggs

Associate Director

The current replacement value of the building is approximately \$40 - \$50 million dollars in its current state. The calculation above suggests a significantly higher estimate of annual maintenance costs
0.5% of \$40,000,000 =

Based on ACA and WT Partnership's experience, it is expected that ongoing maintenance costs will be in the order of \$200,000 p/a.

WT Partnership have prepared indicative costing for the ongoing routine inspections required as recommended in the Heritage Victoria Maintenance Plan guidelines. WT Partnership has estimated the average annual cost of these routine inspections to be \$53,000 per annum. (See Maintenance cost estimates PR-030786 spreadsheet attached)

What are the projected costs for conservation works other than maintenance?

See WT report Appendix B

Lump sum costs of demolition works and conservation works

Demolition of all later monastery additions and the laundry	\$1,448,000
Conservation of existing fabric	\$5,829,000
Upgrade works to make all the rooms habitable	\$25,000,000
Site infrastructure and minimal landscape works to provide an appropriate setting for the building	\$2,000,000
TOTAL	\$34,277,000

The following works are included in the demolition and conservation budget. The condition of the building is generally beyond straightforward maintenance.

Demolition / dismantling - exterior

- Removal of all external additions to the building including both accommodation blocks.

- Removal of all external conduits, plumbing, pipes, aerial, tv dishes, and other accretions of a later date

Dismantling – interior

- Removal of all aged-care fitout of a later date including all suspended ceilings, partition walls, plumbing and tilework
- Removal of all internal stud walls, plasterboard, vinyl, laminate and tiled wall linings to original walls, aluminium windows and doors of a later date.
- Removal of all acrylic paint to face brickwork
- Removal of render to east and basement walls of a later date.

Conservation works - Exterior

- Re-roof the entire building
- New rainwater goods for the entire building
- Replacement of lighting protection system
- Removal of acrylic paint from the entire external rendered surface, patch and repaint with Keim silicate paint
- Stitch cracking in the west pavilions
- Rebuild and reclad all the dormer roof vents
- Cast iron balustrades and posts - removal of balustrade, repair, remove rust, repaint, and reinstate. Allow replacement as necessary (recasting), in situ repair to posts
- Allow for necessary repairs to all timber windows
- Scaffolding to entire building
- Reconstruct the ablutions blocks on north and south links
- Reconstruct the verandahs on the east side.
- Reinstate windows to north wing stair when the accommodation wing is removed.
- Repairs to facade and reinstatement of walls and windows when other additions are removed.

Conservation works - Interior

- Strip out all later fit out, including all redundant wiring and plumbing, and steel structure in north wing stair
- Remove dado render from the basement walls in the loggia and back corridor
- Strip acrylic paint from basement walls
- Replacement of slab and tiling in one basement room and timber floor in another.
- Solid plaster repairs to masonry walls
- Repair and reconstruction of original windows, doors, skirtings
- Repairs to encaustic tiling
- Conservation of small amount of tiling in north wing ablutions block.

Upgrade works

- Rewiring to entire building
- Cold water reticulation to entire building

Site infrastructure and Landscaping

- Protection of significant peppercorn trees
- Replacement of the original terracotta and cast iron drainage system around the building and any works necessary to ensure that stormwater and sewage are removed away from the building to the legal point of discharge.

- Remediation of subfloor drainage along the east basement wall
- Removal of all masonry retaining walls and landscaping elements of a later date and bitumen /concrete paving to current carparking area.

Why are the proposed works necessary to facilitate the economic use of the heritage place?

The works necessary to facilitate the economic use for the building include:

- Upgrade works to make the building safe and compliant with all codes and regulations.
- The landscape works to make the site attractive, safe, accessible and compliant for future
- The construction and sale of the apartments and townhouses to fund the conservation works.
- The construction of the ELC to establish a key stakeholder to provide an independent source of income for ongoing maintenance of the place.
- Parking is regulatory required for all building types. The basements are a necessary component of retaining a complimentary setting to the building and providing the number of required parking spaces.

How will the proposed works maintain or improve the economic use of the heritage place?

The works will provide the funds to carry out the works to make the monastery viable in the long term and a revenue stream to carryout on going maintenance on the building and the grounds.

How will the development generate income to fund ongoing and future conservation and maintenance? (e.g.: sinking fund, maintenance program etc)

Funds will be generated by the following leases:

hotel, café/restaurant, early learning centre, makers spaces, venue hire. The owners of the apartments and townhouses will pay the equivalent of body corporate fees to maintain the grounds and the building.

If the permit application were refused, could the heritage place still be put to economic use?

The use of the place could continue on the current basis for some years but this would lead to further deterioration of historic fabric.

4.0 SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND CONCLUSION

The Little Sisters site is of historic, architectural and aesthetic significance. All of these values are maintained by the proposed development.

Aesthetic

Why is it significant .

The landmark qualities of the massive 'E' shaped building, its prominent siting and wide visibility above the surrounding paddocks and houses, its high perimeter walls, processional drive and self-supporting estate, demonstrates the aesthetic characteristics of large State and Church built welfare institutions of the time.

At present, much of this visibility is lost. The principal façade is concealed from St Georges Road and the south-west approach, with views fragmented or obscured by late twentieth-century accommodation blocks on either side. The original visual dominance has been further diminished by the removal of the perimeter wall and the installation of temporary security fencing.

The proposed masterplan re-establishes the building's visual primacy by framing new views and reintroducing processional approaches. The landscape and circulation design direct movement and sightlines toward the monastery, reinstating the sense of arrival once achieved by the grand drive from St Georges Road. Entry paths from Hawthorn and Hartington Streets are oriented along the building's diagonal geometry, which dictates the division of new building blocks and ensures the monastery remains the visual and compositional focus of the site.

The cut-away building shapes and path directions also help to shape the landscape around the building axes, maintaining a sense of 'breathing space' around the building and a creating a landscape setting which interprets both the open and intimate characteristics of the site.



Figure 151 Diagram illustrating new sightlines into and through the site

The reimagined landscape also reinterprets the original concept of a self-supporting estate. The design incorporates a sequence of edible gardens, Mediterranean planting, and indigenous species that recall both French and Greek heritage as well as the pre-colonial landscape. Historical elements such as brick spoon drains and perimeter wall alignments are subtly expressed through paving and retaining wall treatments, integrating the past with a contemporary language.

Overall, the proposed works re-establish the aesthetic values of the site that have been eroded by subdivision and neglect, transforming it once more into a visually coherent and legible landmark.

Architectural

Why is it significant?

The Former Little Sisters of the Poor Home for the Aged is architecturally significant as one of the state's largest intact 19th-century charitable buildings. The ablutions blocks constitute a rare example of a Nineteenth Century design integrating semi-detached, multi-storey bathrooms into the overall composition of the building.

The proposed development reinstates the integrity of the original architectural design by removing intrusive later additions and reconstructing key missing elements. The reinstatement of the original verandahs and ablutions wings on the east façade will restore the building's symmetry, rhythm, and compositional clarity. The internal planning will be retained and remain legible, preserving the corridor-based layout and the pattern of window and door openings that define the building's spatial character. Minor internal alterations will occur only where necessary for compliance or access, and these will be guided by the Burra Charter principle of doing as much as necessary but as little as possible.

A key intervention is the reconstruction of the central stair from the west forecourt to the church. The existing 19th-century stair is non-compliant, visually weak, and detracts from the architectural balance of the forecourt. The new stair will reinterpret the original grand double staircase, reinstating the ceremonial processional route and reinforcing the monumental formality of the west façade. The upper landing will serve as a podium for religious ceremonies and community gatherings within the platia, re-establishing the west side of the building as its principal public-facing elevation and reinstating its intended civic and architectural prominence.

Historical

Why is it significant?

The Former Little Sisters of the Poor Home for the Aged is historically significant as the first religious institution established in Victoria for the care of the aged poor and the first permanent home established by the Little Sisters of the Poor in Australia. It was one of the most visible and influential institutions of Catholic charity in Victoria in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. (Criteria H - Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history.)

The Former Little Sisters Home for the Elderly was created by a major religious institution, and the site remains in the hands of a major religious institution. The use of the building as a place of worship and the seat of community welfare work will remain at the heart of the Chora development. The welfare work of the Parish will be associated with the place but the church is also seeking to introduce a new layer of community service with the addition of the arts and culture focus of the project. Markets, makers spaces and theatre will bring new life to the site and the neighbourhood,

generating a sense of interactivity and creativity and supporting the arts sector. The *platia* will establish a new place for community to gather in large or small groups and the gardens will once again provide places for quiet refuge and recreation. The Little Sisters site will continue to be associated with religion, community outreach and the sense of 'home'.

4.1 Recommendations and Staging.

Changes to the Monastery: Many of the changes required to make the building compliant will be addressed in the construction drawings, including all of the structural engineering. Some works, such as the modifications to the windows, may require a degree of testing to find the best approach with the least impact to heritage fabric or visual disruption. The impact of construction on the footings and the reasons for cracking in the south pavilions will be addressed in future geotechnical engineering work and in collaboration with the building contractors. Similarly, a methodology for dismantling the many additions to the monastery will need to be determined in collaboration with the building contractors.

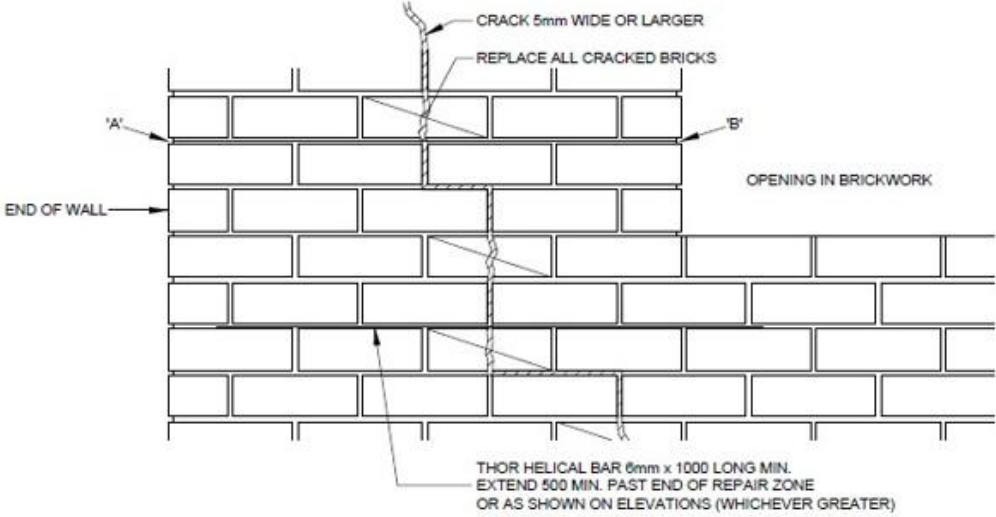
Depending on the timing of the permits, the conservation of the west façade and roof may take place before the full project commences. Otherwise, the Church hope to carry out in the works in a single stage.

5.0 APPENDICES

A	Brick stitching methodology
B	QS report for conservation works by WT
C	QS report for entire masterplan by WT
D	Extent Archaeology report
E	WRAP services report
F	Wrap Consulting Engineers drainage calculations
G	Stone Initiatives render analysis
H	Grimwade mortar and paint colour analysis
I	ACA Roof conditions survey – general overview
J	ACA Roof Schedule
K	ACA Gutter Schedule
L	ACA Downpipe Schedule
M	ACA Roof plan and numbering key
N	ACA joinery drawings
O	ACA balustrade removal methodology
P	ACA Paint colour summary and recommendations 230625
Q	ACA Gutter detail
R	Extent Archaeology report
S	Existing Conditions Survey , Conservation Management Plan Volume 2 . The file size exceeds 250MB please download from link - https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/q8h1186wyz32xgxzhoxi7/230615_CMP_Vol.2.pdf?rlkey=uqbh2fkuw8q3kmi7q0661ept0&dl=0

All appendices except A have been uploaded to Heritage Desk separately

Appendix A – Brick stitching Methodology



CRACK 5mm WIDE OR LARGER

REPLACE ALL CRACKED BRICKS

'A'

'B'

OPENING IN BRICKWORK

END OF WALL

THOR HELICAL BAR 6mm x 1000 LONG MIN.
EXTEND 500 MIN. PAST END OF REPAIR ZONE
OR AS SHOWN ON ELEVATIONS (WHICHEVER GREATER)

FOR CRACKS 5.0mm OR GREATER IN WIDTH OR AS INDICATED ON THE DRAWINGS AND/OR SPECIFICATION

INSTALLATION PROCEDURE

1. REPLACE ALL CRACKED BRICKS
2. RAKE OUT OR CUT SLOTS INTO HORIZONTAL MORTAR JOINT TO SPECIFIED DEPTH & AT REQUIRED VERTICAL SPACING
3. VACUUM OUT THE SLOTS & THOROUGHLY FLUSH WITH WATER.
4. USING A FLATTENED GROUT NOZZLE INSERT A BEAD OF 'D4' CEMENTITIOUS GROUT INTO THE BACK OF THE SLOT.
5. PUSH THE THOR HELICAL (GRADE 304 STAINLESS STEEL) ROD INTO THE GROUT TO OBTAIN GOOD COVERAGE.
6. INSERT ANOTHER BEAD OF CEMENTITIOUS GROUT OVER THE EXPOSED ROD & IRON INTO THE SLOT USING THE FINGER TROWEL TO PROVIDE A REBATED FINISH.
7. IMMEDIATELY POINT UP OR FILL THE JOINT WITH 1:2:9 MORTAR MIX OR AS SPECIFIED.
8. REFER ALSO TO THOR HELICAL SPECIFICATION FOR CRACK STITCHING REPAIRS.

NOTES

UNLESS SPECIFIED OTHERWISE, THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE TO BE USED.

- (A) DEPTH OF SLOT TO BE 30mm FOR SINGLE SKIN BRICKWORK & 45mm DEEP FOR 230mm BRICKWORK.
- (B) INSTALL TIES UNDER HEADER COURSES IF POSSIBLE.
- (C) HELICAL ROD IS TO EXTEND A MINIMUM 500mm TO EITHER SIDE OF CRACK.
- (D) NORMAL VERTICAL SPACING IS 345mm (3 BRICK COURSES) UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE.
- (E) WHERE A CRACK IS WITHIN 500mm OF THE END OF A WALL (AS PER 'A' ABOVE) THE HELICAL ROD IS TO CONTINUE FOR AT LEAST 100mm AROUND THE CORNER & FIXED INTO THE ADJOINING WALL.
- (F) WHERE A CRACK IS WITHIN 500mm OF AN OPENING (AS PER 'B' ABOVE) THE HELICAL ROD IS TO BE BENT BACK AND FIXED INTO THE REVEAL.

TYPE 3 REPAIR - CRACK STITCHING REPAIR
TYPICALLY FOR CRACKING 5.0mm OR GREATER IN WIDTH

01
SCALE 1:10 @ A3

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