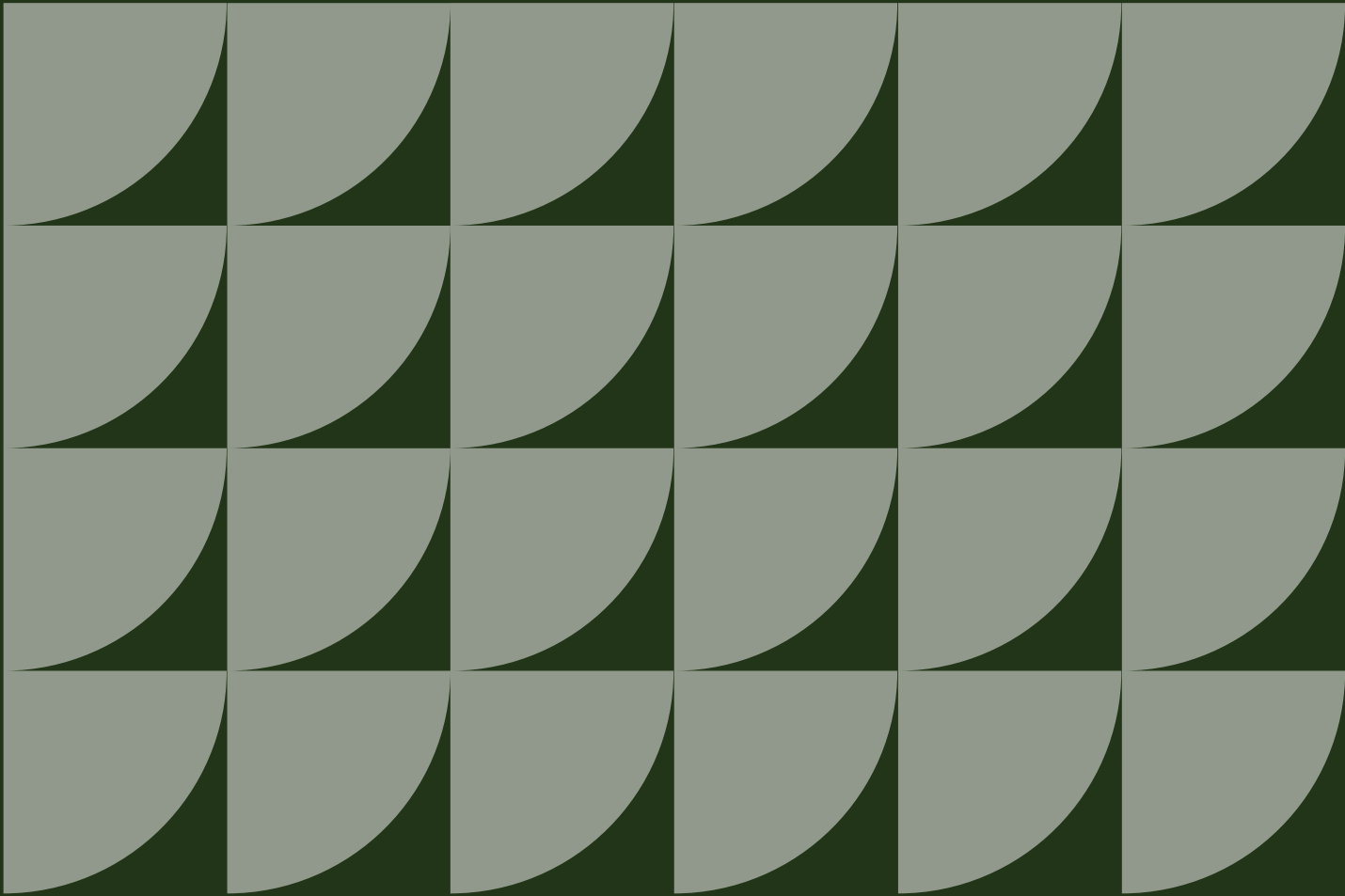




**conservation
studio**

Heritage Impact Statement

State Government Offices, Geelong (H2451) – Exterior landscaping works
30-38 Little Malop Street, Geelong

Prepared for



Government
Services

Date: 21/07/2026

Revision: B

Document Information

Revision	Date	Comments
A	08/07/2026	Draft for client
B	21/07/2026	Final – HV issue

Document Control

Internal Project Number	Approval
25 063	DB

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1. Project overview

1.1 Introduction

This Heritage Impact Statement (HIS) has been prepared for on behalf of the Department of Government Services and forms part of a permit application for proposed landscaping works at the State Government Offices in Geelong.

The State Government Offices in Geelong is included on the Victorian Heritage Register as H2451.

1.1.1 Background

The proposed landscaping works are operational requirements for the safe and continued use of the building by government staff and clients. The proposed lighting is designed to improve safety and night-time visual permeability around the exterior of the building, while the remainder of the works will improve the overall appearance of the exterior spaces and enhance their functionality. The landscaping works also include the introduction of a waterproof membrane to the interior of the existing planter boxes in an attempt to resolve the water leakage issues in the basement.

1.1.2 Heritage Victoria pre-application meeting

An onsite pre-application meeting was held with Heritage Victoria during which the proposed works were discussed. Heritage Victoria is generally supportive of the proposed upgrades to improve safety and night-time visual permeability, however raised the following concerns:

- The visual impact and siting of the pole light located forward of the building on the Fenwick Street corner, which does not align with the site grid. In-ground luminaires at each end of Fenwick Street are suggested as an alternative.
- Colour choice: black is not considered a recessive colour in this context; a grey or similar finish is preferred to minimise visual impact.

The following response to these clarifications was submitted to Heritage Victoria.

Considerations in relation to the use of light poles over the installation of surface mounted fittings include the following:

- In-ground luminaires do not achieve the required lighting result and would involve extensive civil works to the garden bed at the corner of Fenwick and Aitchenson Streets.
- Pole lights provide directional lighting in contrast to in-ground luminaires which provide uplighting, which is insufficient in this instance to provide the required lux for increased security of the site.

- Additionally, the locations of pole lighting can be easily adjusted as and when required to suit operational requirements and avoid added clutter and fixings being added to the building exterior, which is generally free of adornments.
- The light poles can come in any colour paint or powder coat system so these can be coloured in grey so that they do not detract from the surrounding building fabric or setting.

These concerns have been addressed in the final proposed design and are discussed accordingly in Section 3 of this report.

1.1.3 Supporting documents

The following documents are submitted together with this HIS for review and endorsement.

Architectural drawings – Conservation Studio:

25063b.0.01 – Site plan, aerial plan & work notes

25063b.1.01 – Existing & demolition ground floor plan

25063b.1.02 – Existing & demolition elevations

25063b.2.01 – Proposed ground floor plan

25063b.2.02 – Proposed elevations

25063b.2.03 – Proposed details

25063b.2.04 – Proposed details

25063b.2.05 – Proposed details

Lighting design – Webb

T111B E-100 – Cover sheet

T111B E-110 – External lighting layout



Figure 1

Aerial image indicating location of subject site at 30-38 Little Malop Street, Geelong. | Source: Nearmap, edited by Conservation Studio.

1.2 Subject site

1.2.1 Description and history

The subject site is the State Government Offices building, located at 30-38 Little Malop Street, Geelong.

For the purposes of this HIS, the subject site is limited to the external façades and public forecourt to the front and sides of the building.

The following history is adapted from the history included within the Victorian Heritage Register citation for the place:

Calls for a major new State Government office building in Geelong are evident from the late 1960s. The local council pressed for the transfer of government departments from Melbourne to Geelong and for the construction of a new office to be expedited. A commitment to commence the project was made during the 1973 election campaign. The design for the State Government Offices appears to have been completed by the Public Works Department by mid-1975. Premier Rupert Hamer announced that construction would

begin on the Geelong State Government Offices in February 1976. Documentation for the building was carried out by the architectural firm Buchan, Laird & Buchan in association with engineers W. L. Meinhardt and Partners. Buchan, Laird & Buchan, which was rebadged as Buchan, Laird & Bawden shortly after the building's completion, was a prolific architectural practice established in Geelong in 1890. After World War II, the firm expanded to take on an array of major commercial, industrial and government projects in Victoria and beyond, including several shopping centres, major buildings for Shell, the Ford administration building in Broadmeadows (1964), and the AMP building in Geelong (1970).

The builders, J. C Taylor, were awarded the contract for the building's construction amid controversy about the lack of a tendering process. Construction began on the State Government Offices in May 1976. Economic inflation had a significant impact on the cost of the project. The Geelong News reported that at the ceremony marking the commencement of construction in August 1976, it

PROJECT OVERVIEW

was stated the cost of the building would be \$8.5 million. Two months later, the director of building contractors was unable to estimate the final cost of the project due to the rate of inflation.

The steel framework for the building was well advanced by early 1977, and construction appears to have been completed by late 1978 when the first government tenants moved into the building. The building was officially opened by Premier Rupert Hamer on 20 March 1979. The building was designed to accommodate up to 700 public servants across 22 government departments and agencies, including VicRail, the Public Trustee and the Workers Compensation Board. The building originally contained a staff cafeteria and caretaker's flat on the fifth floor. In reviewing the building, architect and critic Norman Day was somewhat amused by the building but concluded that '[t]he building is a good one. It's gutsy and almost unavoidable...[t]he powerful structure is not loosened by ornament or a mixture of materials. It is formal, clean and simple.' It was nominated in the new building category of the Victorian chapter

of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects awards in 1979.

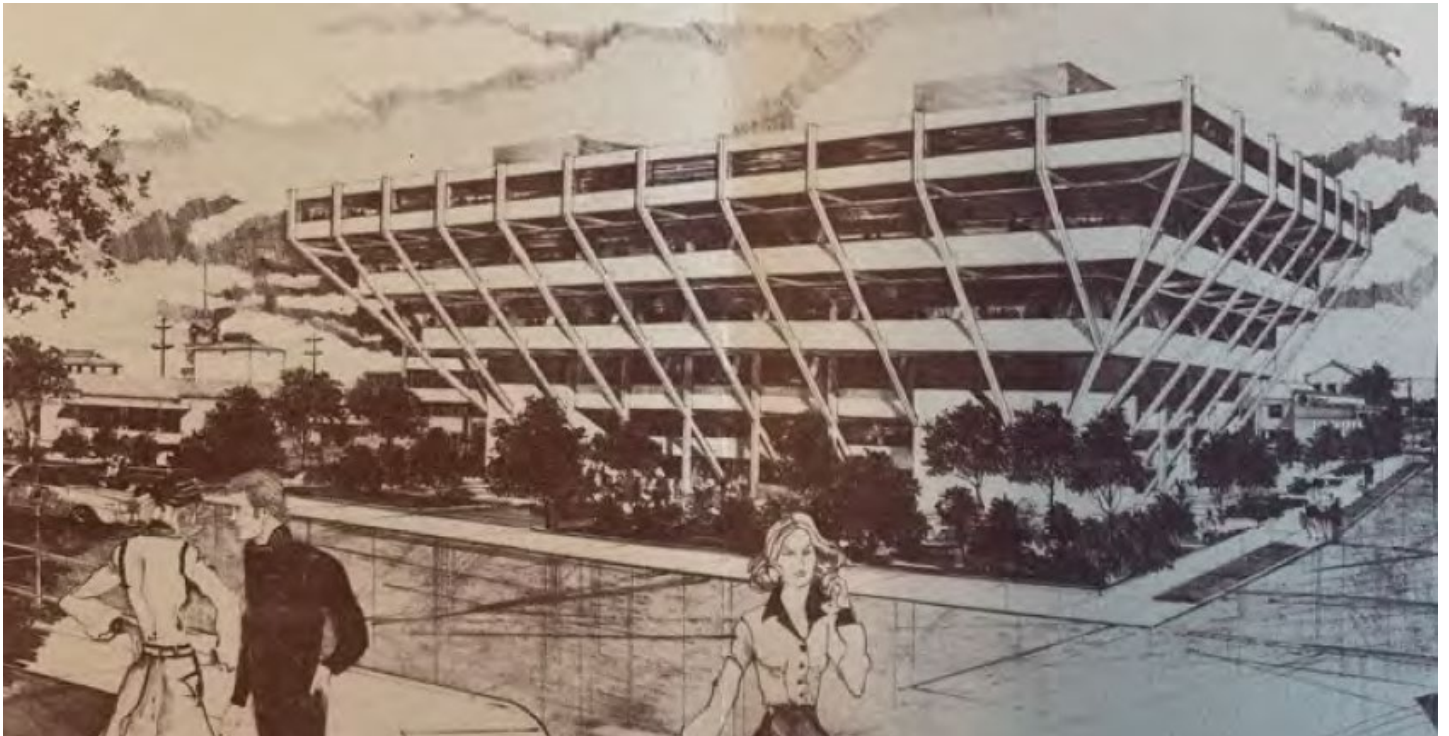


Figure 2

Early design perspective indicating the proposed garden treatments along the front of the building showing a highly established garden with gum trees and other large formal canopy trees.

1.2.2 Existing landscaping arrangements

The landscaping surrounds three sides of the building (north, east and west) and comprises a series of shallow garden beds and pebbledash concrete paving.

The northern side of the building is a large public forecourt that is terraced and falls towards Little Malop Street. It includes two large garden beds, seating and bike racks.

The western side of the site descends creating a significant level change with the streetscape aligning to Fenwick Street. The upper garden beds along Fenwick Street retain plantings. A small, redundant, barbeque area is located at its southern end.

The eastern side of the building includes the entrance ramp to the underground carpark from Little Malop Street and loading zones beyond this and is not a public space.

Historical images confirm that the paving treatment appears to have changed since the original construction of the building. They also indicate that early plantings included a more exotic variety of trees are no longer present, although existed up until after 1996. An image from 2010 (Figure 6) shows a change in the planting form at the Fenwick and Little Malop Street frontages. It is believed that the current Ficus along Fenwick Street were planted in the early 2000s. This species is fast growing and has been maintained to form a topiarised formal garden.



Figure 3
State Government Office, Geelong, 1979, showing original paving and early planting to northern facade. |Source: NAA.



Figure 4
1979 image of the building showing early planning along Little Malop and Fenwick Streets. | Source: Buchan.



Figure 5
1980 image of the front of the building showing original (brick) paving in the forecourt along with the shallow garden beds.



Figure 6
c.1985 view of the northern edge of the State Government Offices showing conifer shaped planting no longer present

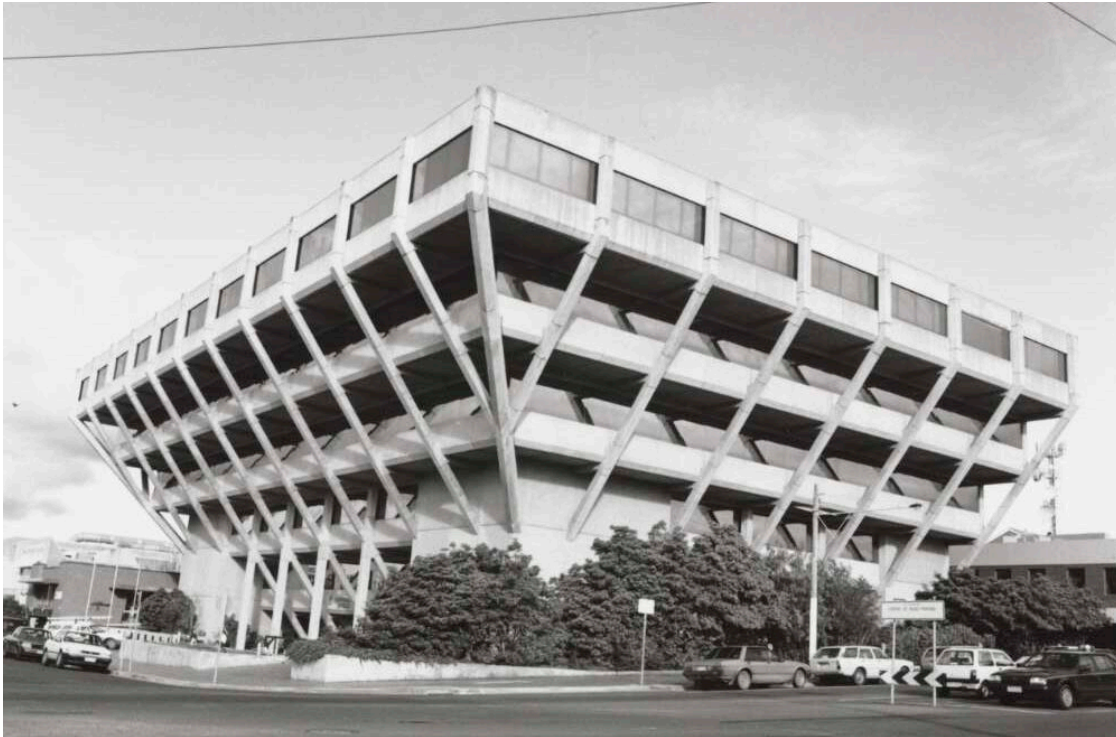


Figure 7
c.1996 image of the State Government Offices Geelong showing earlier planting no longer present when compared to images from 2010 (Figure 8), 2018 (Figure 9) and 2020 (Figure 10).



Figure 8
c.2010 view of the State Government Offices Geelong showing established trees along the western boundary of the site.



Figure 9
c.2018 Image of the State Government Offices Geelong showing current planting.

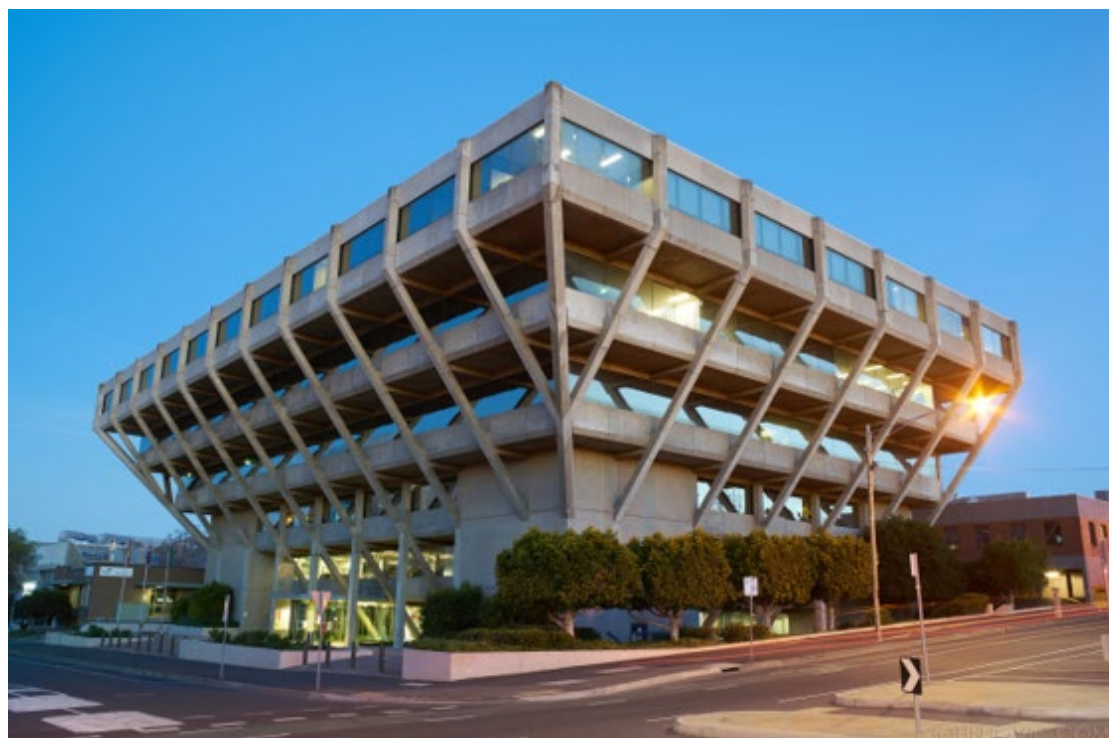


Figure 10
c.2020 view of the State Government Offices showing the current planting along the western boundary of the site and the low-level plantings no longer present across the front of the site.

1.2.3 Condition

The landscape components are in moderate to poor condition. Generally, finishes have worn due to regular wear and tear. The fabric is aged and looking tired and is no longer contributing to creating a distinctive and visually appealing setting for the building.

The planters in particular are contributing to an appearance of decay, as they are mostly empty. The eye is therefore drawn to the aged fabric itself, which are prominent features of the landscape. Beige is the predominant colour of the landscaping, with some limited metal tones present, providing limited visual interest.

Planters

The planters bound the clear forecourt areas of the north and west of the building, being located along the periphery of the plot and abutting the building. There is also some soft landscaping to the east site boundary, however these plants are in natural ground within a median.

The planters are constructed of concrete, painted beige. Bronze colour powder-coated flat, cylindrical metal studs have been fixed to the top bounding lip of each planter as deterrence for anti-social behaviour. The overall condition of the planters is moderate to poor, as finishes have been stained, cracked, and damaged. There are large marks and dents are present the concrete. The planters lack an adequate waterproofing system. There are currently no plants contained in them.

The planters abutting the building appear as kerbings and are sheltered under the roof of the inverted pyramid. They appear shallow, with little soil depth. In the centre of each large planter are large ventilation openings covered by grates and grilles which serve the underground carpark.

The planters at the corners of the building and along the north periphery of the site protrude around 500mm above the ground surface level, with the slope of the nearby ground creating a shallower appearance as the ground level rises. These have previously contained various plants, however they have not survived well given the lack of soil and irrigation.

Terraced planters are found to the west of the site, also at the periphery, which are on natural ground. These planters host hedges, shrubs, and multiple species of trees. The lower southwest planter holds a large pittosporum tree which has overgrown the planter. Its root system is pressing against the concrete wall of the planter and causing structural damage.

A simple barbecue consisting of brick piers and slate tops is located directly to the front of the pittosporum tree planter. This appears to be out of use and is in poor condition, with one of the cooking surfaces missing.

Street furniture

There are four timber contour benches to the north of the building, between the planters and flanking the main entrance. They are bolted into the ground. Near the benches closest to the street are sets of two stainless steel bike hoops, also fixed into the ground. These are placed quite close to the benches and may be obtrusive to seated persons or otherwise difficult to use, and may only be suitable for one bike to be locked to each hoop at a time. To the other side of the bench are cylindrical stainless steel ash bins for smokers' use, mounted on armatures fixed into the ground. These street furniture items appear to be in moderate condition with some wear and tear.

The existing bronze colour powder-coated metal bollards appear to have been installed sometime between c.1996-2010. They are found to the periphery of the plot along the north side. The condition of the bollards is moderate to poor, as the coating has worn away in places and corrosion is visible to the substrate beneath. They have a simple pole form with a channelled, rounded top. A few of the bollards have disability signage affixed to them.

Hard landscaping

All soft landscaping has been contained to the planters, which are surrounded by hard landscaping. The existing trafficable landscaping of the forecourt areas are surfaced in beige-toned exposed aggregate concrete with expansion joints. Concrete borders create a subtle rectangular grid.

Due to the age of the materials, coupled with exposure to elements, the appearance of the exposed aggregate is poor, with uneven surface discolouration including bleaching and darkening in patches throughout. This is likely due to collected grime or the presence of organic growth. It is unclear whether regular maintenance cleaning is helping to mitigate the stained appearance.

The landscape is slightly sloped from street level to a main, flat ground level, with some sets of steps between terraced levels or more substantial level changes to the west. To the north, there is a long strip drain at the junction between surface slope gradients, and some tactile ground surface indicators applied over the concrete borders leading from the Little Malop Street footpath to the front entrance. At the stairs, tactile ground surface indicator pavers have been embedded into the exposed aggregate at the top and

bottom of flights and yellow nosing strips provided to the treads. The terrace steps are without handrails, but these feature to the utility stair and west stair. Circular grated point drains are also present throughout.

It is understood that the existing hard landscaping does not incorporate a waterproofing membrane layer between the surface and the substrate between the ground level plaza and the carpark below. This has been the source of prolonged and serious water ingress to the carpark (refer **Figure 23** to **Figure 26**).

Lighting

There is currently no exterior lighting to the building aside from a few inground luminaires in the two garden beds along Little Malop Street. These lights neither sufficiently light the building or the forecourt.

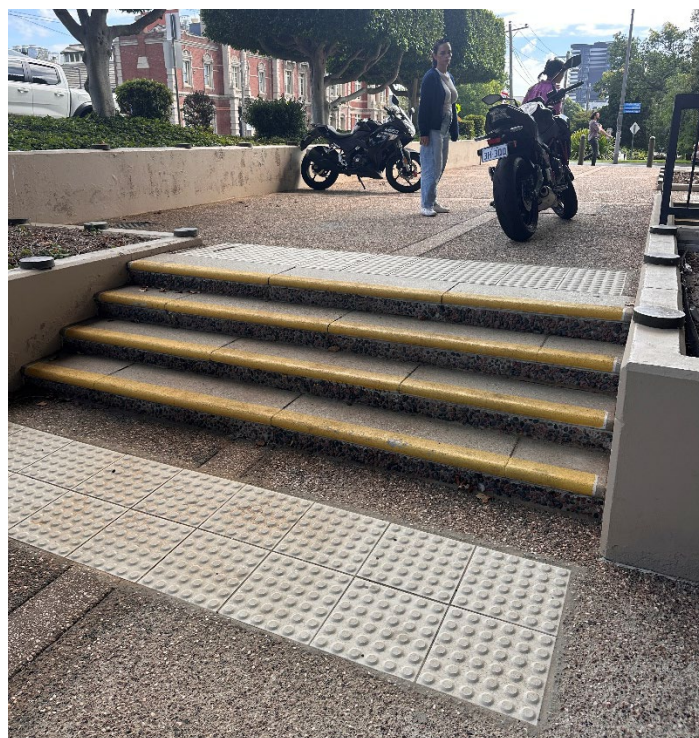


Figure 11
Planters on natural ground to the west periphery host trees. A typical terraced level has four shallow steps, with tactile hazard indicators.



Figure 12
Planter on Little Malop Street showing existing lighting within planter and point drain embedded into exposed aggregate paving beside.



Figure 13
View of the Little Malop Street (north façade) plaza area noting large concrete planter and existing bollrds.

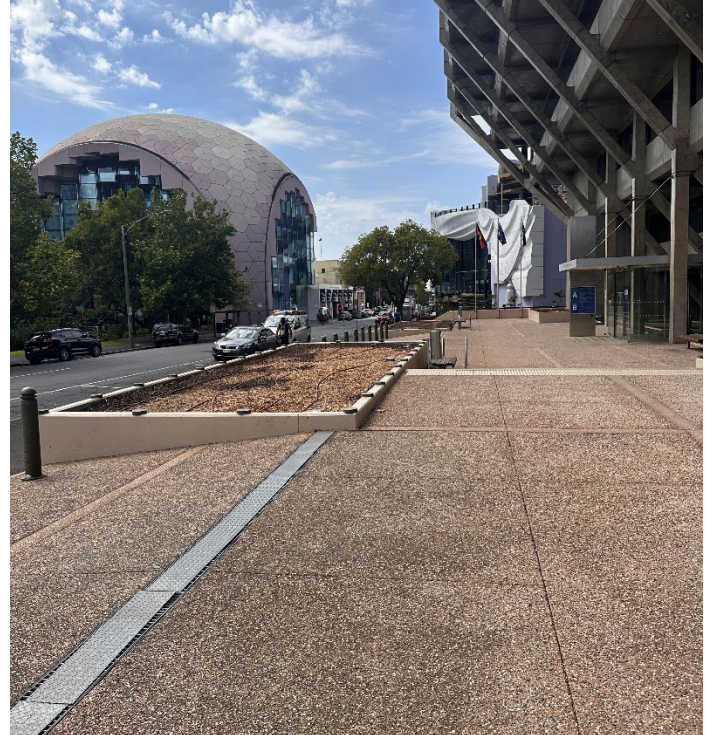


Figure 14
View west along the Little Malop Street plaza area.



Figure 15
Detail of existing planter in Little Malop Street plaza area showing defensive protrusions to tops of planter walls.



Figure 16
View east across Little Malop Street plaza area to Fenwick Street, noting existing bollards, seating and bike racks.

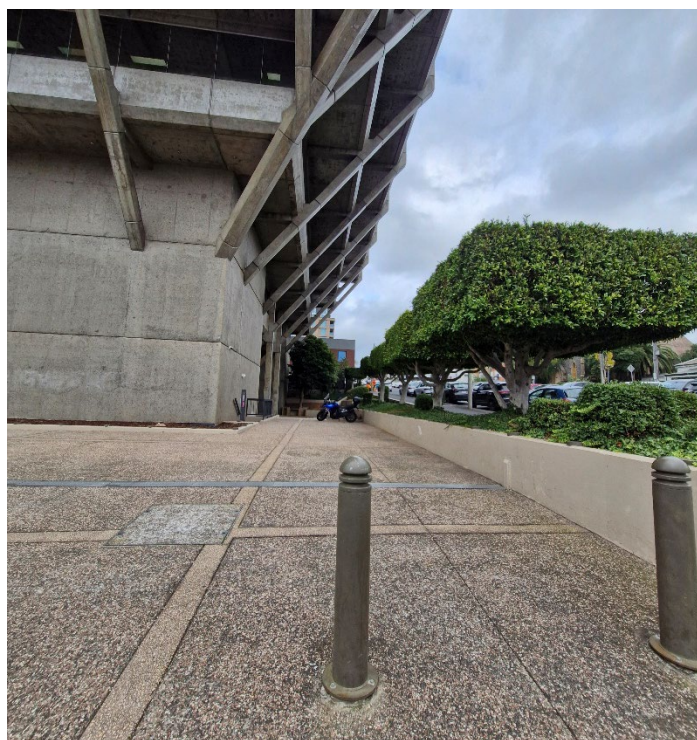


Figure 17
View south along Fenwick Street plaza area from corner of Little Malop Street. Note plantings to ground level platens (right).

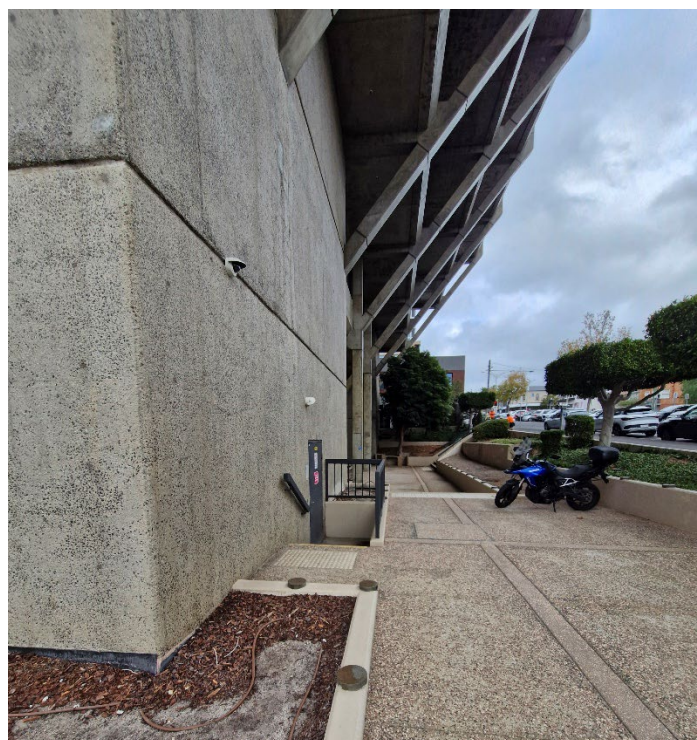


Figure 18
View south of Fenwick Street plaza area showing terracing and detail of planter at corner of the building.



Figure 19
Fenwick Street lower plaza area. The pittosporum tree roots are damaging the planter walls and the barbecue is redundant.

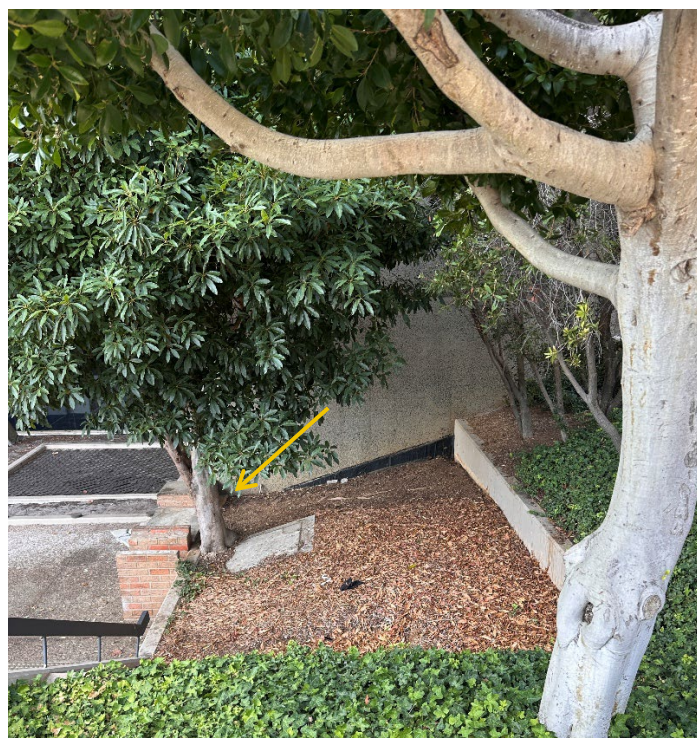


Figure 20
Detail of garden bed at corner of Fenwick Street and Aitchison Place, indicating existing tree and barbecue proposed for removal.



Figure 21
Existing patterned embedded surface treatment adjacent to eastern side of building at Geelong Arts Centre.

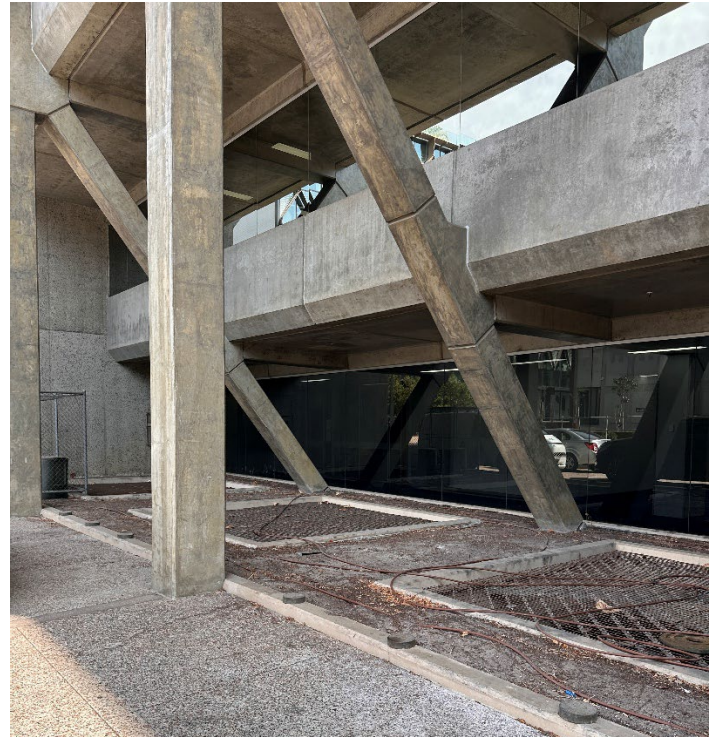


Figure 22
Existing ventilation grilles to planters along eastern side of building.



Figure 23
Detail of existing bike rack, seating and anti-skate elements to planters.

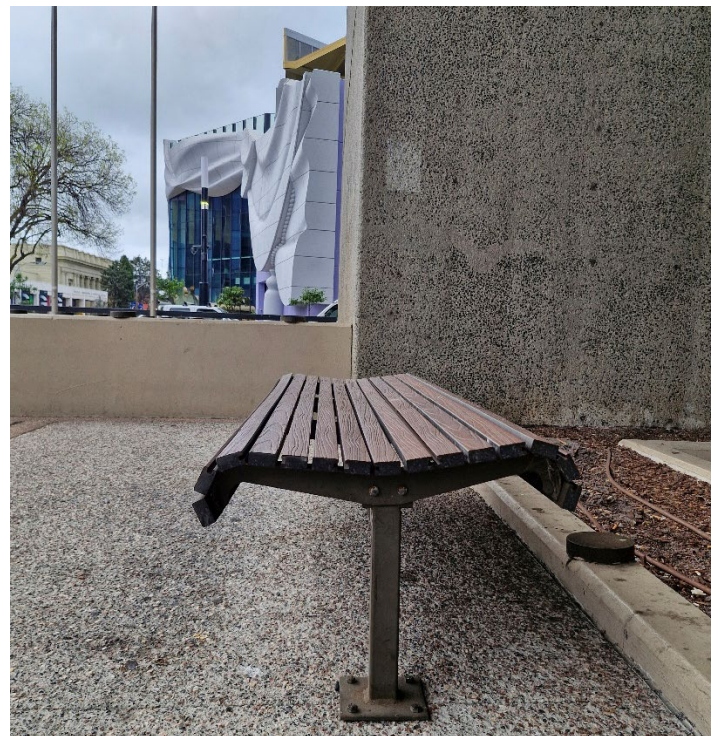


Figure 24
Existing seating to be retained.

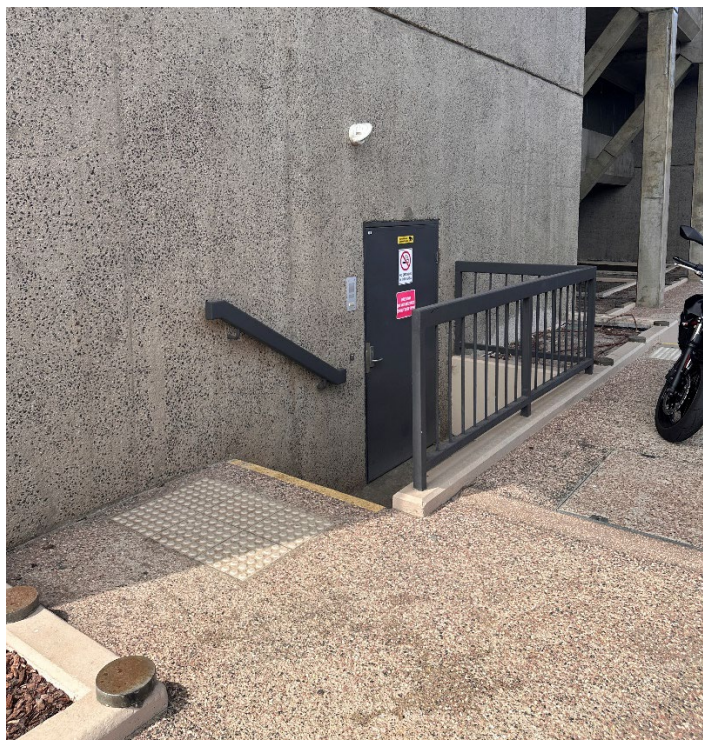


Figure 25
The utility stair leads into the building and abuts a planter.



Figure 26
Efflorescence and staining to carpark walls may be attributed to presence of garden beds nearby and lack of waterproofing.



Figure 27
Leaking and efflorescence to carpark ceiling present in multiple areas, indicating continual presence of damp. These areas may be beneath garden beds.



Figure 28
Concrete staining to carpark evinces water ingress through seams between concrete slabs.

2. Heritage considerations

2.1 Statutory controls

The following statutory controls apply to the subject site.

2.1.1 Victorian Heritage Register

State Government Office, Geelong is included on the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) as H2451, and includes the following description of the extent of registration:

Heritage Act 2017

NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the Heritage Act 2017, I give notice under section 53 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by including a place in the Heritage

Register: Number: H2451

Category: Registered Place

Place: State Government Offices, Geelong

Location: 30 Little Malop Street, Geelong

Municipality: Greater Geelong City

All of the place shown hatched on Diagram 2451 encompassing all of Crown Allotment 23A Section 55A Township of Geelong.

Dated 18 April 2024

STEVEN AVERY

Executive Director

This registration is subject to the provisions of the Heritage Act 2017, and a permit is required to undertake works on the site – including the interior and exterior of the buildings and all the land that forms the extent of registration for the place.

2.1.2 Greater Geelong Planning Scheme Heritage Overlay

State Government Offices, Geelong is included on the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme as HO2023.

The registration mirrors that of the VHR.

The provisions of Clause 43.01 – Heritage Overlay in the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme is superseded by the inclusion of the Heritage Place on the Victorian Heritage Register under the Heritage Act 2017 in accordance with Clause 43.01-2 of the Planning Scheme. The Executive Director, Heritage Victoria may refer the application to the responsible municipality.

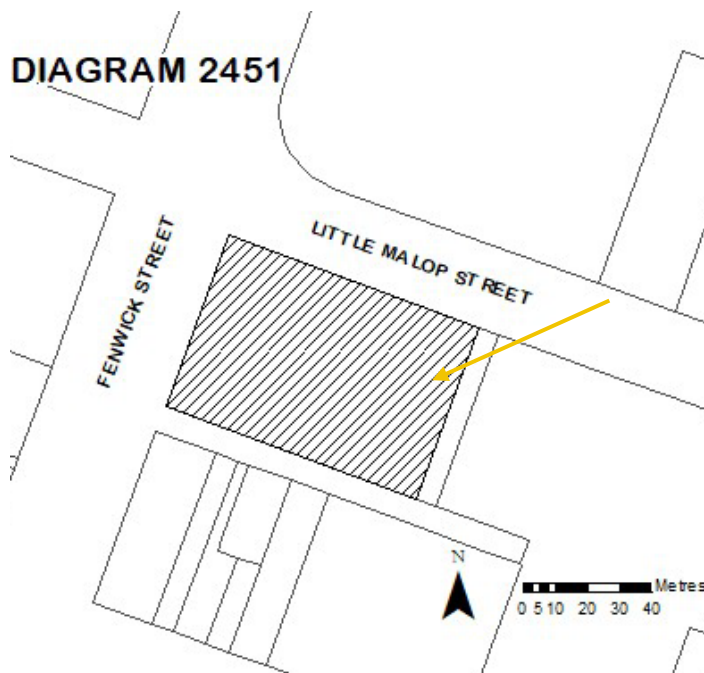


Figure 29
VHR extent of registration for H2451. | Source: Victorian Heritage Database.

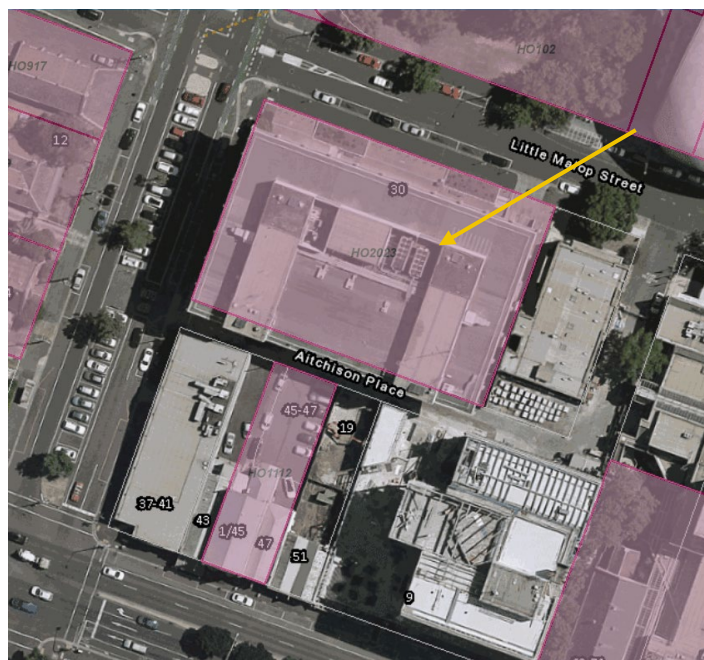


Figure 30
HO extent of registration for HO2023. | Source: Department of Planning and Transport.

2.2 Permit exemptions

2.2.1 General permit exemptions

General exemptions apply to all places included on the VHR. These allow everyday activities, such as maintenance and changes to the place which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

Several of the proposed landscaping works (i.e. replacement of existing defensive protrusions, tactile ground surface indicators and stair nosing strips) comfortably fit within general exemption 7 – Safety and Security, which allows for maintenance, repair, replacement, or upgrade of existing surface mounted equipment as long as no new safety fittings are introduced.

General exemption 9 – Vegetation and Landscape Management, allows for general vegetation management and the maintenance, repair and resurfacing of existing hard landscaping so long as these match existing materials, form, design and method of fixing, and must not exceed existing in scale and footprint. This exemption also allows for the maintenance, repair, upgrade and replacement of existing landscape elements such as bollards and lighting, so long as replacement and upgraded elements match existing in location, number, material, appearance, alignment design and depth of footings, and must not exceed existing elements in size and footprint.

As such, the remainder of the proposed landscaping works do not comfortably fit within the general exemptions as the works introduce new elements and intend to modify existing landscape elements. This means approval from Heritage Victoria is required prior to proceeding.

2.2.2 Specific permit exemptions.

Some heritage places have specific exemptions that only apply to that place. These works can also be performed without approval under the Heritage Act 2017. Specific exemptions apply if they conflict with general exemptions.

The VHR registration for the place includes the following specific exemptions relevant to proposed exterior and ground floor works:

Exterior

1. *Removal of modern canopy over main entrance.*

2. *Replacement of damaged glazing with a product that matches the appearance of the existing glazing.*

3. *All works to the roof that do not alter the visual appearance of the building from street level.*

The proposed landscaping works do not fit within the specific permit exemptions and a permit from Heritage Victoria is required prior to proposed works proceeding.

2.3 Statements of significance

The Statement of Significance included in the VHR citation for the place is presented below.

The Statement of Significance identifies architectural values in the brutalist building and its externalised column structure. The Statement is silent on the values associated with the landscape and setting. However, the landscape and setting directly related to the inverted form of the building which allowed for plazas on three sides. With much of the hard landscaping in its current form appearing to be original and contributing to the original design intent, noting that some finishes and soft landscaping have been altered over time, it can be extrapolated that the landscape and setting contribute to the architectural values of the place and are of significance.

2.3.1 Victorian Heritage Register

The following Statement of Significance is taken from the VHR citation for the place:

What is significant?

The State Government Offices, Geelong, a six-storey Brutalist concrete building designed by the Public Works Department in conjunction with Buchan, Laird & Buchan in c.1974/75 and completed in 1978. It is popularly known as the 'Upside-down building' and has a highly distinctive form that resembles an upturned pyramid or ziggurat. This effect is produced by the progressively broader cantilevering of the upper floors and is emphasised by regularly repeating concrete spans. The setback allows for surrounding plazas on three sides. Vast areas of glazing contribute to its distinctive appearance and the provision of natural light and expansive views internally. The building was created to provide office accommodation for multiple government departments and agencies, and this use continues. The foyer contains a large mosaic mural by the then

State Government artist Harold Freedman which is a finely produced work on an enormous scale. The mural's content is characteristic of a mainstream 1970s view of Australian history and both its depiction of Aboriginal people and the nature of European colonisation are disrespectful by contemporary standards.

How is it significant?

The State Government Offices, Geelong, is of architectural significance to the State of Victoria. It satisfies the following criterion for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register:

Criterion D

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects.

Why is it significant?

The State Government Offices, Geelong, is architecturally significant as an important example of Brutalist architecture in Victoria. Its form, created by the cantilevering of upper levels, is highly dramatic and distinctive in Victoria. The building prominently displays several important aspects of the Brutalist approach – including an expressed structure and prominent use of concrete. Its fine design is complemented by the expansive mosaic mural by Harold Freedman in the building's public foyer. Along with buildings such as the Moe Court House and the Footscray Psychiatric Centre, it is a defining work of the Public Works Department in the Brutalist style.

The building is also significant as a notable example of a twentieth-century State Government office. It is an unusually large and distinctive building of the type. Its scale, prominence and architectural boldness demonstrate the State Government's enthusiasm for decentralising government services and jobs to regional centres in the 1970s.

(Criterion D)

3. Assessment of impact

3.1 Proposed works

The proposed works comprise a suite of landscaping upgrade works, including:

General landscaping works

- Removal of pittosporum tree to southwest lower terraced planter. Damaged planter to be repaired to match existing.
- Removal of redundant brick and slate barbecue.
- Replacement of existing bollards with new stainless steel surface-mounted bollards.
- Replacement of existing defensive protrusions with new stainless steel protrusions.
- Provision of new armrest/defensive bar to existing bench seating.
- Replacement of existing tactile ground surface indicators.
- Replacement of existing stair nosing strips.
- Replacement of existing stair tread and riser tiles.
- Removal of redundant lighting to planter boxes.

Planter box works

- Installation of patterned embedded paving system to planter boxes. This would include:
 - application of liquid waterproof membrane to interior of planter boxes.
 - installation of a polystyrene block substrate fill layer to deeper planters, allowing embedded paving to be lifted closer to the top edges of the planters.
 - installation of a geotextile protection layer.
 - Embedded paving surface to have a slight camber and be flush with the planter lip height at edges to allow drainage to existing in-ground drainage system.
 - integration of stainless steel anti-loitering bars within embedded paving joints.

Lighting

- Installation of inground asymmetric luminaire's around the base of the building to light the building's façade.
- Installation of grey 4m high light poles along Fenwick and Little Malop streets and the western services access laneway to provide night-time visual permeability and passive security. These light poles would be placed within the existing garden areas along Fenwick Street and the western laneway, with one in each of the planter boxes on Little Malop Street.

3.2 Reason for the works

The proposed landscaping works are necessary improvement works designed to visually improve the setting of the place whilst increasing passive night-time security. Together, these will ensure the safe and continued use of the building as government offices.

3.3 Impact assessment

3.3.1 Impacts on cultural heritage significance

This Section assesses the proposed works against Section 101(2)(a) of the Heritage Act 2017 – the extent to which the application affects the cultural heritage significance of the place or object.

Firstly, it is important to note that the Statement of Significance identifies the architectural values of the place in the brutalist building and its external column structure. It is silent on any potential values associated with the building's landscape or setting. That said, the existing hard landscaping appears largely intact in original form and design intent and directly contributes to the values of the place, noting that some finishes have been altered and that the remnant plantings are not original to the place in form or species.

General landscaping works

The general landscaping works comprise minor upgrades or alterations to existing landscaping elements to improve the condition, usability and presentation of the place. These works will have a negligible impact on cultural heritage significance. Many of these elements were only introduced in recent decades and are in need of a refresh. It is also noted that the aggregate concrete finish is non-original and has replaced the original paving to the plaza areas.

As discussed previously (refer Section 2.2.1) several of these general works (i.e. replacement of defensive protrusions, tactile ground surface indicators and stair nosing strips) comfortably fit within the general permit exemptions and will have no impact on cultural heritage significance. Similarly, the replacement of the existing bollards with new stainless steel bollards to match the new defensive protrusions, replacement of existing stair treads and risers with more sympathetic and complaint ones, and introduction of armrest/defensive bars to existing bench seats will have no impact on heritage significance. These elements were introduced for public amenity or for safety and security reasons and replacing them will have a negligible visual and physical impact as they will not change how the building is viewed and interpreted, nor will they

impact significant fabric as the existing surface treatment is not original.

The barbecue at the southern end of the Fenwick Street plaza area and the adjacent pittosporum are both later additions to the site. The tree roots are causing damage to the planter wall and the barbecue is redundant. The existing plantings are not original to the place, and while their presence upholds the setting of the place, the trees themselves are of no heritage value. Removal of this tree and barbecue will have a positive impact on heritage significance through repair and remediation of the damaged planter.

Planter boxes

The proposed planter box works involve the installation of a patterned embedded paving system to the existing planter boxes. This would have positive impact on the building and its setting as it would enhance the appearance of the plaza area and deter anti-social behaviour whilst requiring little maintenance.

The embedded paving system would sit flush to or within the planters, without encroachment upon the building's visibility, and would not impact any of the existing intended uses for the space. The proposed method of installation is reversible and will not have a detrimental physical impact on the planter boxes. In an effort to remediate the water leaks into the underground carpark, the planter boxes would first be lined with a liquid waterproof membrane. Atop this would be a polystyrene block substrate fill that would be capped with a geotextile protective layer to separate the embedded concrete paving system above from heritage fabric and ensure the works are reversible and will not require remediation of heritage fabric in future. Anti-loitering bars would be incorporated into the paving system design to avoid anti-social behaviour.

The embedded paving design itself would be created by a local artist and would integrate into the surrounding public realm landscaping, which has used decorative paving widely (**Figure 19**), particularly in the adjoining arts and heritage precinct. Radial patterns in neutral and warm tones are scattered along pedestrian thoroughfares, providing a sense of identity to the periphery of the neighbouring Geelong Arts Centre. More simple geometries of ornamental paving, both historic and contemporary, are also found across the road, surrounding Geelong City Hall.

Lighting

The introduction of the proposed lighting scheme will have a minor physical and visual impact on cultural heritage

significance through the introduction of light poles and inground luminaires. This impact is mitigated to some degree through the choice of colour and placement, as well as the increased passive security the lighting will bring to the building.

Three 4m high light poles will be discretely placed within the existing pittosporum of the ground level planters along Fenwick Street and along the non-public eastern side of the building. Two 4m high light poles will be placed along Little Malop Street, with one placed centrally inside each of the large planter boxes. A grey colour has been selected for the poles so as to not detract from the surrounding building fabric or setting. Using light poles, provides directional lighting that can be altered as operations requirements demand, and it avoids attaching luminaires to the building's fabric, which is of primary significance. The light poles can also be removed in future without harming significant fabric.

The inground luminaires will also be placed in discrete locations between the planters and the building façade, with one mounted luminaire fixed to the wall of the northern planter on Little Malop Street to ensure the stairs are adequately illuminated. The inground luminaires will not only increase passive security they will provide architectural feature lighting that will accentuate the heritage values of the place.

All works for the lighting scheme will be contained to the plaza areas and will not interfere with significant fabric of the building.

3.3.2 Alternative proposals

This Section assesses the proposed works against Section 101(2)(a),(b),(d) and (f) and Section 101(3) of the Heritage Act 2017 – alternative proposals that were considered and reasons why these were dismissed.

Two alternative options were considered for the existing garden beds. Both options were dismissed due to concerns over the levels of maintenance required.

1. Sedum planting, placing areas of low-maintenance succulent plants within a mostly impermeable surface to allow some greenery to remain.
2. Sand garden, creating a distinctive desert-like native landscape within the planters to create a visually impactful feature of the building's setting.

Two alternative lighting options were considered. Both options were dismissed because inground luminaires do not achieve the required lighting result to provide passive night-time security. Option 1 would also require extensive civil

works to the garden beds at the corner of Fenwick and Aitchison Place.

1. Inground luminaires to light the façades of the building and garden beds, with additional wall or handrail mounted lighting to steps.
2. Inground luminaires to light the façades of the building, with additional architectural lighting mounded to window glazing.

3.3.3 Management of detrimental impacts

This section assesses the proposed works against Section 101(2)(f) of the Heritage Act 2017 – measures proposed to avoid, limit, or manage the detrimental impacts.

The proposed works are contained to the exterior plaza and avoid impact to significant building fabric.

The proposed general landscaping works are minor in nature and intend to improve the overall condition, presentation and use of the plaza area. There are no foreseen detrimental impacts from these works.

Physical impact associated with the embedded paving to the planters has been avoided through use of a protective geotextile layer that will separate the embedded paving from heritage fabric, ensure these works are reversible without significant remediation.

Impacts associated with the proposed lighting scheme have been limited through the discrete placement of lighting, where possible, and the use of a grey colour for the light poles so as to not detract from the building's fabric or setting.

3.3.4 Reasonable or economic use

This section considers reasonable or economic use as required under Section 101(2)(b) of the Heritage Act 2017.

The proposed works are operational requirements for the ongoing use of the building as government offices. The building currently lacks any form of night-time visual permeability. Introducing lighting will not only increase night-time passive security but highlight the architectural features of the building.

The general landscape upgrades are functional requirements necessary for the general maintenance and upkeep of the building that will improve the condition, use and visual presentation of the plaza areas.

Similarly, the proposed planter box works intend to enhance the appearance of the plaza area and deter anti-social behaviour as part of building improvement works, whilst resolving the water issues plaguing the carpark underneath.

3.3.5 Conservation Management Plan

To the best knowledge of both the Department of Government Services and Conservation Studio, there is no Conservation Management Plan for the place.

3.3.6 Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter

Since 2010 the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria and the Heritage Council Victoria have recognised *The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance* (the Burra Charter) as the document guiding best practice heritage management in Victoria. The following articles are relevant to the works proposed in this HIS and are discussed accordingly.

Article	Comments
<i>Article 2 - Conservation and management</i> <i>2.1 Places of cultural significance should be conserved.</i> <i>2.2 The aim of conservation is to retain the cultural significance of a place.</i> <i>2.3 Conservation is an integral part of good management of places of cultural significance.</i> <i>2.4 Places of cultural significance should be safeguarded and not put at risk or left in a vulnerable state.</i>	The proposed works aim to conserve the cultural heritage values of the place by supporting the safe and continued use of the building by government staff and clients. The proposed lighting is designed to improve safety and night-time visual permeability around the exterior of the building, while the remainder of the works will improve the overall appearance of the exterior spaces and enhance their functionality whilst preserving cultural heritage values. The introduction of a waterproof membrane to the interior of the existing planter boxes is an attempt to reduce the water leakage issues in the basement and improve the overall condition of the place for its safe keeping and long-term preservation.
<i>Article 3 - Cautious approach</i> <i>3.1 Conservation is based on a respect for the existing fabric, use, associations and meanings. It requires a cautious approach of changing as much as necessary but as little as possible.</i> <i>3.2 Changes to a place should not distort the physical or other evidence it provides, nor be based on conjecture.</i>	The proposed works will not distort the physical evidence, or visual presence, of the place. While the introduction of several light poles around the building will have a minor visual impact, these lights will improve the night-time passive security of the building whilst simultaneously highlighting its architectural features. The general landscape upgrade works are designed to improve the overall condition, presentation and functionality of the plaza areas and only address issues of concern, or those that require replacement. The proposed embedded paving system for the planters is cautious in its approach in that it has been designed to be revisable without causing harm to heritage fabric. It also requires a low level of maintenance to ensure the place remains in good upkeep.
<i>Article 8 - Setting</i> <i>Conservation requires the retention of an appropriate setting. This includes retention of the visual and sensory setting, as well as the retention of spiritual and other cultural relationships that contribute to the cultural significance of the place.</i> <i>New construction, demolition, intrusions or other changes which would adversely affect the setting or relationships are not appropriate.</i>	While the Statement of Significance is silent on the values which the setting and landscape may contribute to the place, the current plaza areas are largely in keeping with their original design and support the visual aesthetics of the building. As such, the setting is considered to contribute to the architectural values of the place. With this in mind, the proposed works have adopted a cautious approach to ensure the setting is retained whilst enhancing visual appearance and deterring anti-social behaviour. The minor visual impact of the proposed light poles is mitigated through discrete placement and use of a visually recessive colour so as not to detract from the building's fabric or features and be unobtrusive within the landscape and setting of the place.

Article	Comments
<i>Article 15 - Change</i> <i>15.1 Change may be necessary to retain cultural significance, but is undesirable where it reduces cultural significance. The amount of change to a place and its use should be guided by the cultural significance of the place and its appropriate interpretation.</i> <i>When change is being considered, including for a temporary use, a range of options should be explored to seek the option which minimises any reduction to its cultural significance.</i> <i>It may be appropriate to change a place where this reflects a change in cultural meanings or practices at the place, but the significance of the place should always be respected.</i> <i>15.2 Changes which reduce cultural significance should be reversible, and be reversed when circumstances permit.</i> <i>Reversible changes should be considered temporary. Non--reversible change should only be used as a last resort and should not prevent future conservation action.</i> <i>15.3 Demolition of significant fabric of a place is generally not acceptable. However, in some cases minor demolition may be appropriate as part of conservation. Removed significant fabric should be reinstated when circumstances permit.</i> <i>15.4 The contributions of all aspects of cultural significance of a place should be respected. If a place includes fabric, uses, associations or meanings of different periods, or different aspects of cultural significance, emphasising or interpreting one period or aspect at the expense of another can only be justified when what is left out, removed or diminished is of slight cultural significance and that which is emphasised or interpreted is of much greater cultural significance.</i>	The proposed works introduce minor changes that are largely functional requirements of the ongoing use of the place as government offices. These changes do not alter the way in which the place is interpreted or understood as the works aim to enhance the setting and functionality of the place whilst improving night-time security and resolving long-term water leaks in the basement. The proposed works are limited to the plaza and do not interfere with significant fabric associated with the building itself. Both the planter box works and the lighting scheme are reversible and would require little remediation if removed.

3.3.7 Principles for considering change to places on the Victorian Heritage Register

The Executive Director made and published a set of guiding principles under Section 19(1)(f) of the Heritage Act 2017 in December 2022 to inform statutory decision-making under Part 5 of the Act. The proposed works are consistent with these guidelines and discussed under each principle below.

Principle 1. Understand why the place is significant

As discussed in Section 2.3 of this HIS, the place is of architectural significance as important example of Brutalist architecture in Victoria. These values are identified in the fabric of the building and its externalised column structure.

While the Statement of Significance is silent on the values associated with the landscape and setting, the landscape and setting of the place directly relate to the inverted form of the building which allowed for plazas on three sides. With much of the hard landscaping in its current form appearing to be original and contributing to the original design intent, noting that some finishes and soft landscaping have been altered over time, it can be extrapolated that the landscape and setting contribute to the architectural values of the place and are of significance.

Principle 2. A cautious approach

In accordance with the Burra Charter, the proposed works are cautious in their approach and only address elements that require replacing or are of concern.

The planter boxes are currently bare of vegetation and seem to be the cause of the water leaks in the underground carpark beneath. The proposed embedded paving system to the planters creates a visually appealing solution that is both sympathetic to the place and ties in with the surrounding landscape elements in the adjacent arts and heritage precinct. The proposed waterproofing and impermeable surface treatment would resolve this issue in an aesthetically appealing manner that will not impact significant fabric and is reversible.

While the introduction of several light poles around the building will have a minor visual impact, these lights will improve the night-time passive security of the building crucial to its ongoing care.

Principle 3. Protect significant settings and views

As previously discussed, while not specifically identified in the Statement of Significance to contribute to the heritage values of the place, the current plaza setting is largely in keeping with the original design intent and is considered to contribute to the architectural values of the place.

The proposed works ensure the setting is retained whilst enhancing visual appearance and deterring anti-social behaviour. The minor visual impact of the proposed light poles is mitigated through discrete placement and use of a visually recessive colour so as not to detract from the building's fabric or features and be unobtrusive within the landscape and setting of the place.

Similarly, the embedded paving system would sit flush to or within the planters, without encroachment upon the building's visibility or setting.

Principle 4. Respectful change and new built form

The proposed works respect the heritage values of the place. They do not include the introduction of any new built forms, nor do they interfere with significant fabric of the building. The works have been thoughtfully designed so as to minimise visual impact and enhance the setting of the place.

Principle 5. Provide for upkeep

The proposed works are operational requirements for the ongoing use of the building as government offices. The building currently lacks any form of night-time visual permeability. Introducing lighting will not only increase night-time passive security but highlight the architectural features of the building.

The general landscape upgrades are functional requirements necessary for the general maintenance and upkeep of the building that will improve the condition, use and visual presentation of the plaza areas.

Similarly, the proposed planter box works intend to enhance the appearance of the plaza area and deter anti-social behaviour as part of building improvement works, whilst resolving the water issues plaguing the carpark underneath.

4. Conclusion

The proposed landscaping works are operational requirements for the safe and continued use of the building by government staff and clients. The proposed lighting is designed to improve safety and night-time visual permeability around the exterior of the building, while the remainder of the works will improve the overall appearance of the exterior spaces and enhance their functionality. The landscaping works also include the introduction of a waterproof membrane to the interior of the existing planter boxes in an attempt to resolve the water leakage issues in the basement.

The proposed works align with the principles of the Burra Charter and while there will be a minor visual impact through the introduction of lighting and the infilling of planter boxes with an embedded paving system instead of new plantings, this impact is mitigated by the positive enhancement these improvements will have on the setting and functionality of the space.

Physical impact is negligible. The embedded paving system is reversible and physical impacts for the installation of the lighting system will largely be contained to non-original plaza surfaces.

In summary, it is the finding of this HIS that the proposed landscaping works will not have a detrimental impact on the cultural heritage significance of the place. On this basis, it is recommended that the works be allowed to proceed.

