

Heritage Impact Statement

All Saints Church, St Kilda

Permit Application for proposed fence

April 2026



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1.0 Introduction

This assessment of heritage impacts has been prepared at the request of All Saints Church, 2 Chapel Street, St Kilda. It concerns the proposal to install a boundary fence to the Chapel Street frontage.

The following discussion reviews the significance of the church, being the registered place. It comments on the proposed insertion of a fence and whether the fence is appropriate in character and detail in terms of its impact upon the character and significance of the registered place.

2.0 Methodology

This heritage impact statement has been prepared with regard to *the Burra Charter* and its guidelines, as amended in 2013, and in general accordance with *Heritage Victoria Guidelines for Preparing Heritage Impact Statements* (June 2021). As per the guidelines, this report addresses the following questions:

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

3.0 Sources of Information

The analysis below draws upon a site visit along with a review of the relevant Victorian Heritage Register documentation for All Saints Church and Heritage Victoria Policy guidelines for *Reasonable or economic use* (June 2021). Reference has also been made to the *Port Phillip Heritage Review* (Version 36, December 2021).

This report has been prepared by Sally Beaton and is intended to be read in conjunction with the drawings and other documentation prepared by Dean Durrant and submitted with respect to this application.

4.0 History & Description

The subject site is a rectangular shaped parcel of land on the south eastern corner of Chapel Street and Dandenong Road/Princes Highway. The site was located on the block, between what is now Dandenong Road to the north and Alma Road to the south. All the land along this block was reserved for public use, including schools and churches. To the east was a large public reserve now known Alma Park East. The opposite western side of Chapel Street comprised a series of large blocks sold to private landowners.

The All Saints Church complex comprises three main buildings, the Church, located in the approximate centre of the site, a double storey polychrome vicarage on the south side and a face brick former hall on the north side of the church, the former hall having a secondary frontage to Dandenong Road on its northern elevation. The following history summarises information available in the citation available on the Victorian Heritage Database and the citation in the *Port Phillip Heritage Review*.

The first section of All Saints Church was constructed 1858-1861 to the Early English design of Nathaniel Billing, an English born architect whose work in Victoria was largely ecclesiastical – for many years Billing worked under Bishop Perry as the Anglican Church architect. Bishop Perry laid the foundation stone for the church on 8 November 1858. Constructed of basalt with Tasmania freestone dressings, the church was originally designed as a long nave with side aisles but only the three bays at the west end were completed by 1861. Two additional bays were added in 1866, and the second phase of the church was opened in October 1868 with seating for 1000 people.

In 1873 the church was extended to a design by architect Frederick Wyatt. The design included an apsidal sanctuary and chancel. In 1882, the chancel aisles and vestry were added under the supervision of architects Terry and Oakden. Various ornate fixtures and fittings have been added to the church, notably the High Victorian styled decoration in the sanctuary and chancel, the baptismal font, the war shrine, the rare west window, and the richly decorated Gothic blackwood screen of 1918 designed by architect Louis Williams.

The polychromed vicarage, on the south side of the church, at a substantial setback from Chapel Street, was constructed c.1860, with the design also accredited to Billing. Gregory Hall, located north of the church, was constructed in 1908 to a design by architect P. G. Fick.

The landscaping includes a semi-circular driveway to the front of the church, and two Magnolia grandiflora on either side of the church. Elms and a fig tree are planted in front of the vicarage. While the church, at present, is not enclosed from Chapel Street by a fence, the vicarage is enclosed from both the Chapel Street frontage and from within the property by a tall timber picket fence. It is also noted a short metal picket fence is located to the rear of the church, connected as its base to a concrete kerb. Various early photographs indicate that the front boundary of the site was originally fenced with a timber picket fence (Figures 1 & 2). It is not known when this was removed. The front boundary has been unfenced for a considerable period.



Figure 1 *All Saints Church c. 1885, with timber picket fence to the boundary evident.*
Image Source: SLV



Figure 2 *Undated image of All Saints Church, with timber picket fence evident.*
Image Source: SLV.



Figure 3 View of the Chapel Street frontage, which is demarcated with a concrete curb and non-original bluestone piers to the driveway entrances.



Figure 4 Bluestone piers to the north driveway entrance.



Figure 5 View of All Saints Church, including the bluestone piers at the southern end of the boundary.



Figure 6 Non-original timber picket fence enclosing the Vicarage to the Chapel Street boundary.



Figure 7 *Internal timber picket fence separating the church from the Vicarage.*



Figure 8 *Metal picket fence at the rear of the church.*

The church complex is located within a somewhat varied streetscape. The former St Georges Chapel (purchased by St Michaels Grammar School in 2014) is located on the south side of All

Saints Church complex. This property is enclosed behind an early (albeit not original) cast-iron fence on a bluestone plinth.

On the opposite, west side of Chapel Street is a series of single storey dwellings. The historic Astor Theatre is located at the corner with Dandenong Road, to the north west (opposite the church hall).



Figure 9 Single storey dwellings on the west side of Chapel Street opposite the church complex.



Figure 10 Single storey dwellings on the west side of Chapel Street, set back behind tall fences.



Figure 11 View looking north west along Chapel Street with the Astor Theatre in the distance.

5.0 Heritage Listings and significance

Heritage Victoria

The All Saints Church complex, which includes the church, former vicarage, Gregory Hall and a timber building on the south side of the former vicarage, is included in the Victorian Heritage Register. The statement of significance for this place is as follows:

Work on All Saints' Church which is constructed of bluestone with freestone dressing, commenced in 1858 to the Early English design of Nathaniel Billing, the English-born architect and articulated student to the famous Gothic revivalist, George Gilbert Scott. The nave and triple-gabled Chapel Street facade were erected during this period, as well as a polychromed vicarage presumably also designed by Billings. In 1873 the church was extended by architect Frederick Wyatt. The design departed from Billings' model by the inclusion of an apsidal sanctuary and chancel. In 1882, some time after Wyatt's death the chancel aisles and vestry were added under the supervision of architects Terry and Oakden. Since then many ornate fixtures and fittings have been added to the church, notably the High Victorian style decoration in the sanctuary and chancel, the baptismal font, the war shrine, the rare west window, and the richly decorated Gothic blackwood screen of 1918 designed by architect Louis Williams. Work on the Gregory Memorial Hall commenced in 1908 to the design of architect, P. G. Fick. Constructed of red brick, the abstracted Gothic hall is influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement and was named after the founder of All Saint's Church, John Herbert Gregory (1827-1897).

All Saints' Church, former Vicarage, and Hall are of architectural, historic and aesthetic importance to the State of Victoria.

All Saints' Church, former Vicarage and Hall are architecturally important as an example of the complimentary work of several architects, notably Nathaniel Billing whose original model of the church remains in the north transept, Frederick Wyatt, Terry Oakden, and Louis Williams, all renowned for their ecclesiastical designs. The church model is significant for its rarity. The church is an outstanding example of the evolutionary use of the Gothic Revival, the progenitor and the predominant style of all religious architecture in Australia, and its unusual plan and form incorporates French influences. The church is aesthetically significant for the quality of its interior decoration, and objects, notably the stencilled designs of the chancel, the pair of candelabra, which were obtained from King George II's chapel, Windsor, the chapel and sanctuary screens of wrought iron, the elaborately carved narthex screen and stone monuments, the fixed cedar pews dating from the 1860s, as well as the many fine stained glass windows designed by Ferguson & Urie, and Clayton & Bell of London. The All Saints' Church forecourt is historically and aesthetically important for its symmetrical design which compliments the formal qualities of the triple-gabled building. Landscaping features include the curved paving and the two Magnolia grandiflora trees which flank the central doorway of the church.

The former Vicarage is of architectural and historic importance as one of the first examples of the use of polychrome brickwork, which became popular in the later nineteenth century. It is also significant as a model example of what was considered to be the ideal English vicarage. The Gothic detailing of the interior is a notable decorative feature.

Gregory Hall is important for its abstracted Gothic Arts and Crafts design which compliments the architectural forms within the All Saints' precinct, and for its interior which survives largely intact with its hammerbeam roof, gallery, and copper detailing.

All Saints' Church, former Vicarage and Hall are together important for their associations with Rev JH Gregory, founder of All Saints' Parish and Church. Pioneer bush Minister, and the first Anglican Minister to the Victorian goldfields, Gregory was Vicar of All Saints' from 1858 to 1893. As a Jubilee Thanksgiving, All Saints' Parish erected the Gregory Memorial Hall in their founder's honour. The collection of surviving buildings illustrates the wide range of cultural activities centred on this important parish complex.

The extent of registration is noted as:

1. All the specified buildings forming part of All Saints Anglican Church, East St Kilda and marked as follows on Diagram 606798 held by the Executive Director:

B1 Church building; B2 former Vicarage; B3 timber building on south side of the former Vicarage; B4 Gregory Hall.

2. All the specified movable objects: the Church Bell, presently located in the elm tree in the garden of the current

Vicarage; the Billings' model of All Saints Church; the two 1882 candelabra; four oak Sanctuary chairs.

3. T1 being the two Southern Magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*) trees flanking the entrance to the church.

4. P1 being the formal semi-circular driveway in front of the church.

5. All the land marked L1 on Diagram 606798 held by the Executive Director, being land described in Certificate of Title Vol. 672 Fol. 379.

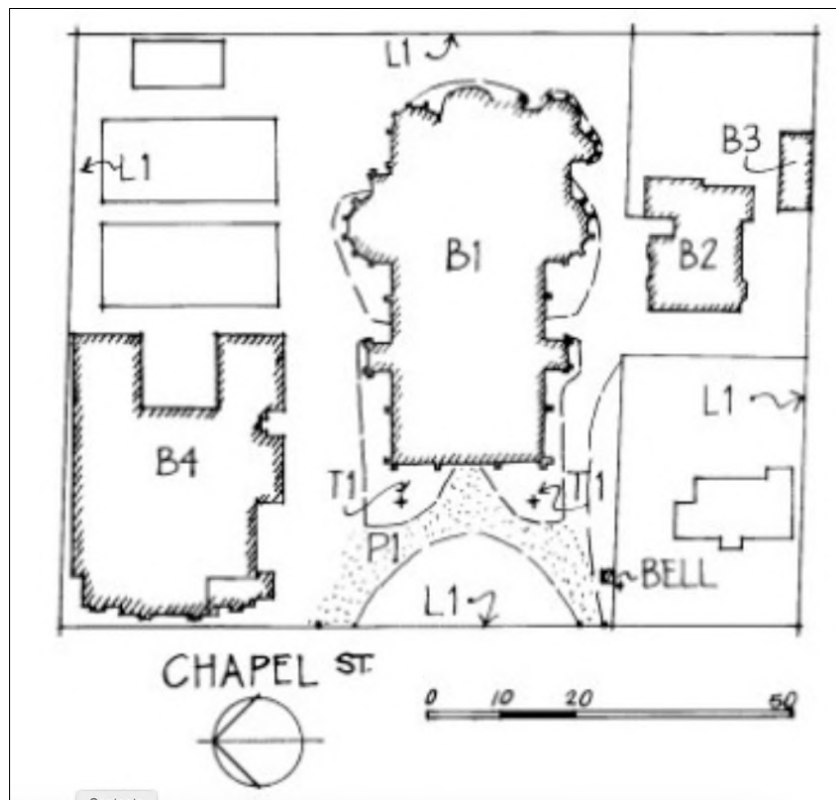


Figure 12 Extent of registration

National Trust of Australia (Victoria)

All Saints Church is classified by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) as a place of state significance (File No. B3084).

City of Port Phillip

The Church complex is identified as a significant graded place within the Port Phillip Heritage Overlay, identified as HO81. It is also located within the broader St Kilda East Heritage Precinct, identified as HO6. It is nonetheless recognised that the Responsible Authority with regard to heritage matters within the extent of registration is Heritage Victoria, and the City of Port Phillip will have a role as a referral body.

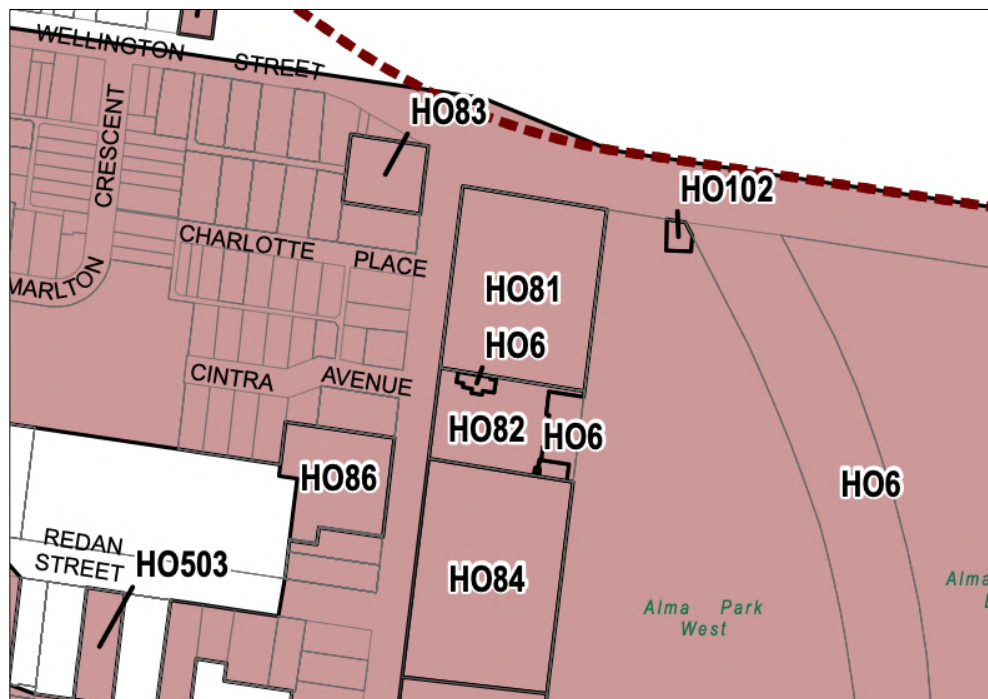


Figure 13 Extract of Heritage Overlay Map with the subject site highlighted blue.

6.0 Proposed Works

It is proposed to construct a 1.4 metre high 'cast-iron' (or iron palisade) type metal fence on a bluestone plinth across the front boundary. The fence will include two vehicular gates at the existing crossovers.

As per the application drawings, the fence is to have a traditional Victorian character. The metal pickets will be all steel, painted black gloss Dulux metal shield with cast aluminium spear heads. 50x10mm solid steel rails will connect the metal pickets.

7.0 Heritage Act 2017

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

101 Determination of permit applications

(1) After considering an application the Executive Director may—

(a) approve the application and—

(i) issue the permit for the proposed works or activities; or

(ii) issue the permit for some of the proposed works or activities specified in the application; or

(b) refuse the application.

(2) In determining whether to approve an application for a permit, the Executive Director must consider the following—

(a) the extent to which the application, if approved, would affect the cultural heritage significance of the registered place or registered object;

(b) the extent to which the application, if refused, would affect the reasonable or economic use of the registered place or registered object;

(c) any submissions made under section 95 or 100;

[...]

(f) any matters relating to the protection and conservation of the registered place or registered object that the Executive Director considers relevant.

(3) In determining whether to approve an application for a permit, the Executive Director may consider—

(a) the extent to which the application, if approved, would affect the cultural heritage significance of any adjacent or neighbouring property that is—

(i) included in the Heritage Register; or

(ii) subject to a heritage requirement or control in the relevant planning scheme; or

(b) any other relevant matter.

A key consideration within the above is the extent to which the application, if approved, would affect the cultural significance of the registered place, being the All Saints Church complex.

In respect to sections 101[2](a) of the *Heritage Act*, the proposed installation of a fence will do no harm to the fabric of the registered place per se, nor will it adversely affect the identified cultural heritage significance of the registered place. Indeed, there will be no changes to the fabric of the Church, the vicarage or the hall.

The All Saints congregation is aware the Church complex was enclosed by a timber fence in the late 19th and early 20th century, and has been unfenced for many decades. While a cast iron fence is not a fence type that has enclosed the church complex to this point in time, it is an entirely compatible fence with respect to materiality, height and period character.

It would typically be seen as an appropriate type of fence to construct if it was not known that the site previously had a timber picket fence – with the knowledge of the previous timber fence, a similar fence is clearly a more obvious option for the site.

That said, there are many instances around Melbourne where early timber picket fences were replaced with metal fences as time progressed. Such instances are found in a range of settings, including residential, institutional and ecclesiastical sites. One such example can be found at the registered St Georges Church to the south, where a timber picket fence was on the site c.1878, but had been upgraded by the early 20th century (Figure 14 below). The present proposal can be seen to continue that established pattern of change over time.

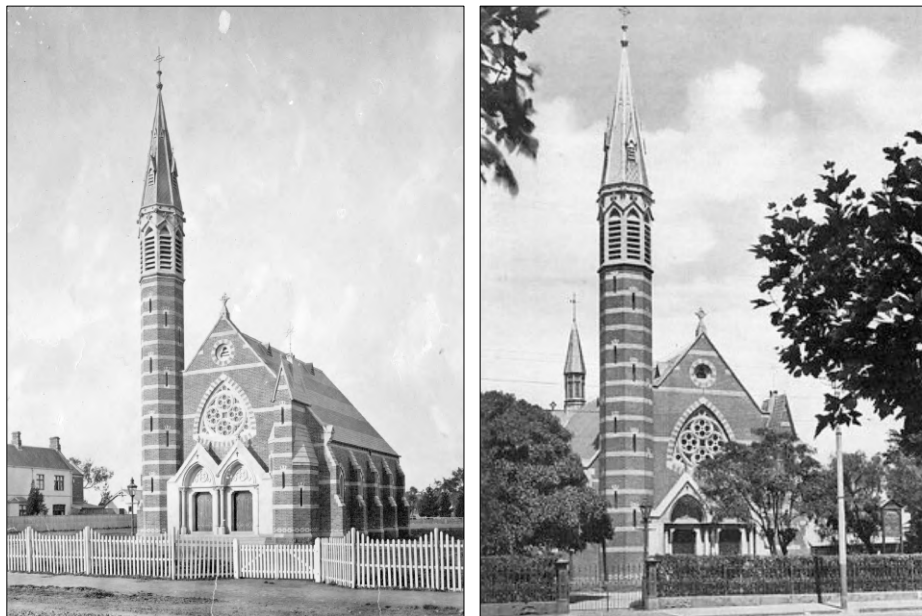


Figure 14 (left) c.1878 photograph showing the original extent of the newly completed St Georges Church prior to its enlargement. The church at the time was enclosed to Chapel Street by a timber picket fence. Source: SLV.
(right) Early twentieth century view of the Church site frontage to Chapel Street showing the existing bluestone and iron palisade front fence. Source: SLV.

The intent of the proposed fence and its detailing is to provide a simplified/interpretative version of a cast iron fence that can be readily identified as non-original fabric, whilst also remaining compatible and sympathetic with the Church's Victorian era construction. The simplified fence design, which avoids elaborate spear heads and decorated posts/piers, differentiates itself from the more elaborate Victoria-style cast iron palisade fences that are commonly associated with Victorian era-built form.

The decision to construct a cast iron fence to the boundary also relates to security concerns, the availability of funding as part of a bequest and for longevity/ease of long-term maintenance.

With respect for security, the Vicar and Wardens would like to limit public access to the Church grounds and car parking, particularly at night and constructing a fence to the Chapel Street boundary is the preferred option to prioritise this security issue, without a fence having an adverse impact upon the identified significance of the place. With the pattern of late night vandalism within the area, there is also an appreciable concern that a timber fence will be vulnerable to damage. A cast-iron fence will also require less long-term maintenance than a timber fence, which is at greater risk of deterioration through weathering.

As part of a 2018 bequest to the Church, funds were provided '*...to be used firstly for the purpose of erecting a plaque in my memory in the church porch alongside other deceased parishioners and secondly to be used for the re-erection of the old Vicarage Verandah and a new iron picket fence for the front of the church and any remainder or if the above is not feasible for church restoration*'.

It is the view of the Church and its advisors that the funds will not be made available for the purposes of construction of a timber fence, as this was not the expressed wish of the deceased. Only the construction of an 'iron picket fence' will be seen to fulfil the purpose of the bequest and thus receive the relevant funding. An opinion on this matter has been provided by a member of the congregation, Andrew Ham (partner, Danaher Moulton), and is attached to this assessment of heritage impacts.

Per section 101[2](f) of the *Heritage Act*, consideration must be given to the effect of a refusal of the permit application on the reasonable or economic use of the registered place. As set out in Heritage Victoria's policy document on this issue, when considering the matter of reasonable use, the Executive Director may take into account (1) the historic, recent and current uses of the registered place or object, (2) other compatible uses of the registered place or object, (3) the context and setting within which the place or object is located, and (4) other relevant matters. It must also consider if refusal to issue a permit for upgrading facilities to bring them to contemporary or safe standards may affect the reasonable use of the place.

In terms of item (1) the introduction of a new cast iron fence will not have any impact upon the historic and current use of the registered place. Item (2) is not relevant in that the property has always been occupied by All Saints Church, and a change of use is not proposed. With respect for item (3), the site is located in a mixed urban environment and there are an array of fence types

and heights in the immediate vicinity. Other relevant matters can be seen to include the matters set out in the paragraphs above in relation to protection of the site, long term security and maintenance, and the need to construct a certain type of fence in order to satisfy the terms of the bequest that is to fund the fence.

Issues of reasonable or economic use aside the *Heritage Act* also requires consideration of the impact of the proposal on adjacent or neighbouring places on the Victorian Heritage Register or Heritage Overlay Schedule. As noted in section 4 of this report, the neighbouring place to the south is included on the Victorian Heritage Register – i.e., Former St Georges Presbyterian Church. The subject site is also located within the St Kilda East Precinct HO6. The application will have no adverse impact on these heritage places in that the proposed fence will represent a minor and compatible insertion within the streetscape.

8.0 Summary of Key Considerations

As per Heritage Victoria's guidelines for heritage impact statements, this report seeks to address the following questions:

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

The cultural heritage significance of the place

The cultural heritage significance of the church complex is outlined in detail above, and in particular is identified in the Statement of Significance for the place. In considering the above, the church complex is identified in the Heritage Victoria statement of significance as being of architectural, historical and aesthetic significance.

The identified significance of the place will not in any way be diminished by the re-introduction of a fence, nor the introduction of a 1.4 metre tall cast-iron fence of compatible and sympathetic design.

Consideration of options in design

The proposed fence has been designed to have limited, if any, impact upon the church complex, with the fence placed along the Chapel Street boundary.

As outlined above, the intent of the proposed fence is to provide a simplified/interpretative version of a cast iron fence that can be readily identified as non-original fabric, whilst also remaining compatible and sympathetic with the Church's Victorian era construction. The simplified fence

design avoids elaborate spear heads and lions' heads on piers, to clearly differentiates it from the more elaborate Victoria-style cast iron palisade fences that are commonly associated with Victorian era-built form.

Impacts (positive or negative) on the significance of the place

As set out in detail in sections 6 and 7 above, the proposal has limited, if any, negative impacts upon the registered place. The proposed fence could be seen in the context of a change to landscaping, rather than a change to the church complex itself.

The rationale for any negative impacts

Per the above comment, the proposal will limited, if any, negative impacts.

Measures taken to minimise and mitigate negative impacts

The impacts of the proposal are mitigated by avoiding works to significant early fabric and providing a new fence design that will not detract from the setting of the place. The fence is 1.4 metres tall, visually permeable and at a substantial distance from the church, ensuring the fence will not obscure views to the church from the public realm. The simplified design of the fence detail will also ensure it is not mistaken for being original or early fabric. In addition, a dated-bearing plaque or maker's stamp could be located on the fence, near one of the gates, to ensure the general public are able to understand that it is non-original.

Relevant heritage requirement or control in the relevant planning scheme

The proposal has been prepared with regard for the retained heritage fabric, to protect its significant character and appearance in a manner that is in accordance not only with general heritage principles and Burra Charter principles, but also with the policies and guidelines of *Clause 43.01* of the Port Phillip Planning Scheme.

9.0 Conclusion

Having regard for all the above, the proposed reintroduction of a fence will not result in an unacceptable or inappropriate heritage outcome, with the fence proposal having been developed on the basis of an understanding and appreciation of the significance of the church complex. The proposed fence will not adversely impact the character, setting or significance of the registered place. While the proposed fence is not of a type or materiality that has previously been found upon the site, it is compatible with the character, appearance and significance of the place and is similar to the fences found on many similar church sites. The choice of a cast-iron fence type is appropriate on the basis set out above in this report.

The proposal should therefore be considered appropriate having regard for the identified significance of the registered place and the provisions of the *Heritage Act*.