



Bryce  
Raworth  
CONSERVATION | HERITAGE

# Heritage Impact Statement

South Melbourne Town Hall  
208-220 Bank Street, South Melbourne

Application for Permit  
September 2024

[bryceraworth.com.au](http://bryceraworth.com.au)

246 Albert Road  
South Melbourne VIC 3205  
+61 3 9525 4299  
[info@bryceraworth.com.au](mailto:info@bryceraworth.com.au)

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## 1.0 Introduction

This heritage impact statement was prepared for Peter Elliott Architects on behalf of the Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM). It concerns the Heritage Victoria permit application to refurbish the South Melbourne Town Hall so that it can be re-occupied by ANAM.

This report comments on whether the proposed works are appropriate, including in terms of their architectural character and detail, and acceptable in terms of their impact upon the significance of the South Melbourne Town Hall.

By way of background, Heritage Victoria have issued a permit for the City of Port Phillip to undertake a 'base build' involving, inter alia, minor demolition works, structural and services compliance upgrades, repairs and conservation works (P36700). A separate permit application is being made for the ANAM project because the base build will not fulfil ANAM's specific functional requirements, including in respect to significant acoustic upgrades. The scope of the City of Port Phillip base build works will need to be amended in consultation with the ANAM project team so as to minimise abortive works. This will involve the transfer of specific works from ANAM to the City of Port Phillip and vice-versa, via a variation process .

## 2.0 Sources of Information

The analysis below draws upon external and internal site inspections along with a review of the *Heritage Act 2017* and the registration documentation for the South Melbourne Town Hall (H0217). Regard has also been had for the following documents:

- Clauses 15.03 and 43.01 to the *Port Phillip Planning Scheme*.
- *Heritage Impact Statement South Melbourne Town Hall* (NBR, March 2023).
- *South Melbourne Town Hall Conservation Management Plan* (Lovell Chen, June 2021).
- *South Melbourne Town Hall: A Symbol of Architectural, Civic and Welfare Leadership* (Adair Bunnett, 30 September 2021).
- *Principles for considering changes to places in the Victorian Heritage Register* (made and published under s19(1)(f) of the *Heritage Act 2017*, December 2022).
- *Heritage Victoria Policy: Reasonable or Economic Use* (made and published under s19(1)(f) of the *Heritage Act 2017*, June 2021).
- *Conservation Analysis & Management Plan South Melbourne Town Hall* (Helen Lardner Conservation & Design, October 1995).
- Public Building Files, Public Records Office Victoria.
- Historic newspapers, accessed via the Trove website.

### 3.0 Methodology

This heritage impact statement was prepared with regard to the Burra Charter and its guidelines, as amended in 2013, and in general accordance with Heritage Victoria's *Guidelines for Preparing Heritage Impact Statements* (June 2021).

### 4.0 Heritage Listings

#### *Heritage Victoria*

The South Melbourne Town Hall is included on the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR H0217). The extent of registration is mapped per figure 1 below, and described as follows:

- 1. All of the buildings marked B1 (South Melbourne Town Hall) and B2 (Jubilee Memorial Drinking Fountain) on 600364 held by the Executive Director.*
- 2. All of the land marked L1 on Diagram Number 217, held by the Executive Director being part of the land described in Certificate of Title Volume 1488, Folio 585 and all of the land marked L2 described in Tree Reserve, Gazetted 26 July 1905, p2806.*
- 3. All of the following specified objects: 1930s curved seat and desk unit for councillors located in the former Council Chamber. 1930s Mayor seat located in the former Council Chamber.*

The extent of registration for the Emerald Hill Estate (VHR H1136) encompasses nineteenth century residential and commercial streetscapes within the environs of the Town Hall (refer figure 1 below).

#### *City of Port Phillip*

The South Melbourne Town Hall is listed on the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Port Phillip Planning Scheme as HO28. The curtilage to HO28 corresponds to Heritage Victoria's extent of registration. It is nonetheless recognised that the Responsible Authority regarding heritage matters within the extent of registration is Heritage Victoria, and that the City of Port Phillip will have a role as a referral body.

The South Melbourne Town Hall is also located within the Emerald Hill Residential Precinct (HO440).

#### *National Trust of Australia (Victoria)*

The South Melbourne Town Hall is classified by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) as a place of State significance (B578).

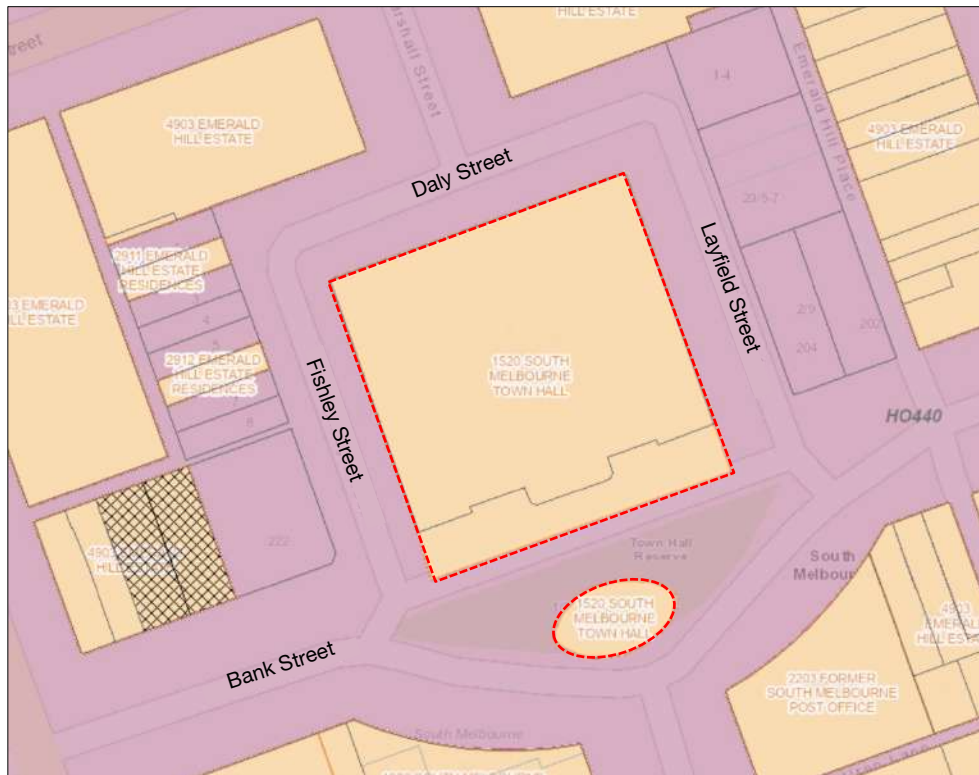


Figure 1 Map showing the extent of registration for the South Melbourne Town Hall (delineated by the red dashed line) and other registered places within its immediate environs (shaded yellow). Note also that this area forms part of the Emerald Hill Residential Precinct (HO440).

## 5.0 History

*Unless otherwise noted, the following historical information is extracted from the South Melbourne Town Hall Conservation Management Plan (Lovell Chen, 2021).*

In 1878, the Emerald Hill Council held a design competition for a new Town Hall, selecting the architect Charles Webb to undertake the project with a budget of £22,000. Construction of the Town Hall fulfilled the ambitions of the Emerald Hill (later South Melbourne) Council to erect a modern facility of a scale and grandeur matching the community's aspirations.

The project was conceived and executed to consolidate the community's public offices at a single site. Under the terms of the 1876 Emerald Hill Town Hall Act, the Council had been made responsible for the delivery of a police court, mechanic's Institute and post and telegraph offices at the new town hall site, as well as civic offices/chambers. Council also accepted responsibility for housing the local volunteer fire brigade, although this arrangement would soon be superseded.

The principal entrance of the new Town Hall was placed in the centre of the Bank Street frontage, through a portico with six giant order Corinthian columns. The municipal offices occupied the ground floor of the front wing. A spacious staircase provided access to the first floor committee rooms, mayor's rooms, a refreshment room and the Council chamber. The whole of the west wing was given over to the Mechanic's Institute with a lecture hall, library and committee room located on the ground floor. The first floor of the Mechanics Institute contained a reading room, member's room, ladies' reading room, chess room, smoking room and two class rooms.<sup>1</sup> The ground floor of the east wing housed a post and telegraph offices with adjoining single-storey five room post master's residence. A court house occupied the north-east corner of the site with five cells and police quarters to the rear. A fire brigade was housed in the north west corner.

Along with the Council offices, at the core of the complex was a large public hall, 130 ft (36.9m) in length, 60 ft (18.2 m) wide and 40 ft (12m) high. A stage was located at the northern end, with a deep, semi-circular apse, originally intended to house an organ.<sup>2</sup>

The hall hosted the community's expanding social programme, including annual balls and receptions, welcome events for Victorian Governors, concerts, and theatrical entertainments and competitions. Local orders and friendly societies, community associations, and organised labour met regularly at the Town Hall's suite of rooms, including the main hall and supper room, and in meeting rooms within the Mechanics Institute. The Town Hall also became the principal meeting place in the community for civic functions (including elections and services observing changes in the monarchy) and political events.

In 1887 a free reading room was opened to the public with a subsidy provided by the Council and in 1904, following the death of the last of the Mechanics Institute trustees, the Council took over the management of the institute.

The Town Hall fire station was vacated after the formation of the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board in 1891 and converted into a Council garage, workshop and store. The premises of the post office were purchased by the Council in 1911 and a new Post Office constructed on the south side of Banks Street. In 1918, space within the former Mechanics Institute was provided to the Port and South Melbourne Baby Health Centre. The Baby Health Centre moved into expanded offices on the east side of the Town Hall complex in 1930, occupying the former police station and court house.

<sup>1</sup> *Argus*, 25 June 1880, p.3.

<sup>2</sup> *Argus*, 25 June 1880, p.3.



Figure 2 Emerald Hill (later South Melbourne) Town Hall, c1883. Source: State Library of Victoria.

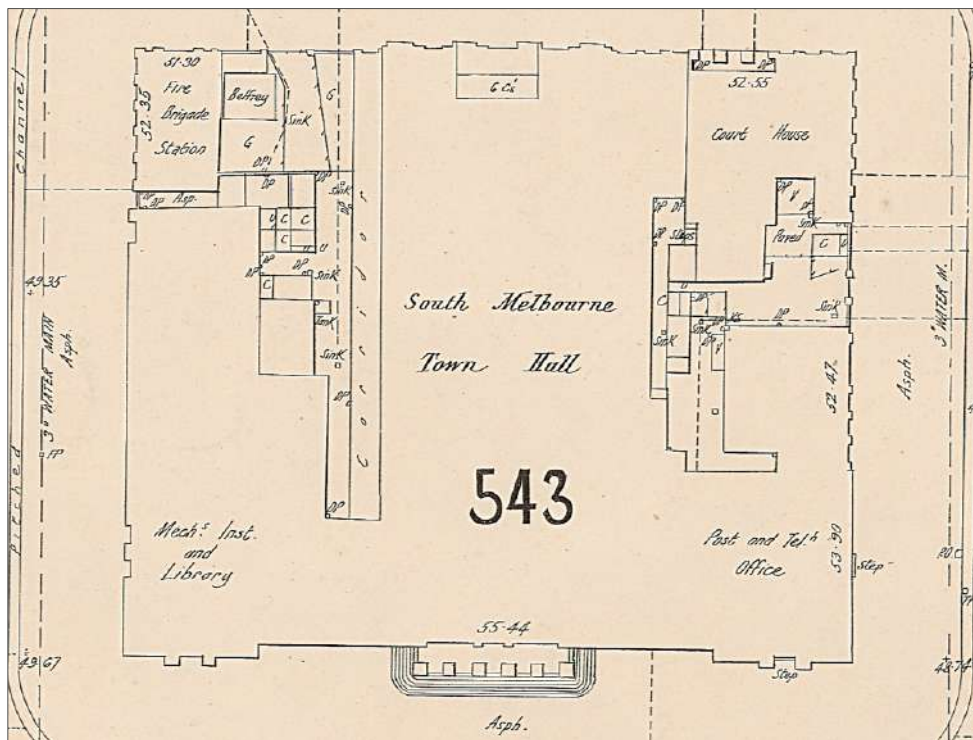


Figure 3 An 1895 MMBW plan showing the different uses originally accommodated within the Town Hall, including the fire brigade station, court house, post and telegraph office and mechanics institute and library. Source: State Library of Victoria.





A major upgrade of the Town Hall was undertaken in the 1930s to designs by architects Oakley & Parkes, commencing c1936 with the construction of residential quarters for the assistant librarian, refurbishment of the committee room and new offices for the rates department housed in a double-storey addition to the east elevation with first floor hall keeper's residence.<sup>3</sup> In 1938 work began on a refurbishment of the Council Chamber and Mayor and Mayoress offices and renovations of the library and former Mechanics Institute. The main hall was also refurbished with timber panelling applied to the walls. The stage was rebuilt to curved plan form and the semi-circular apse enclosed with a panelled timber screen surmounted by the City of South Melbourne coat of arms. Acoustic tiles were applied to the walls and ceiling and indirect lighting was provided by wall mounted plaster fittings designed to be in keeping with the hall's original classical ornament.<sup>4</sup> A large concrete fire stair was constructed in northern service yard to provide egress from new public facilities on the building's upper level.

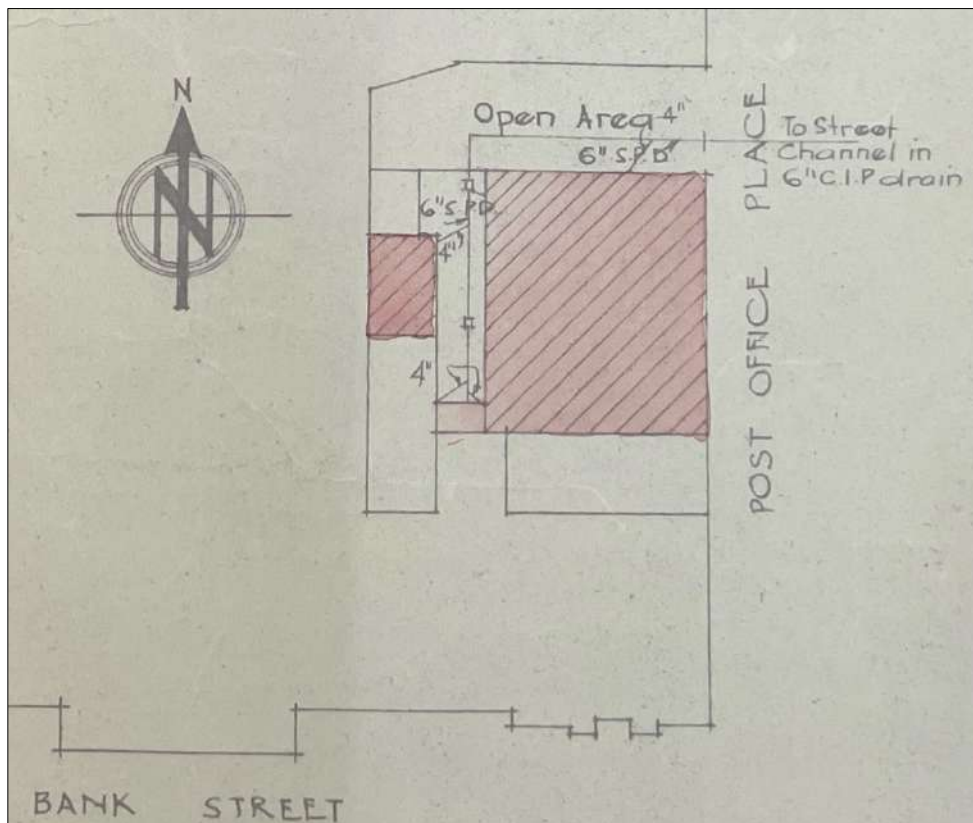


Figure 5 A c1936 block plan showing the location of the Council rates department addition, designed by Oakley & Parkes. Note: Post Office Place was later renamed Layfield Street. Source: Public Records Office Victoria.

<sup>3</sup> *Emeral Hill Record*, 19 February 1938, p.6.

<sup>4</sup> *Building: The Magazine for the Architect, Builder, Property Owner & Merchant*, 25 September 1939, p.44.

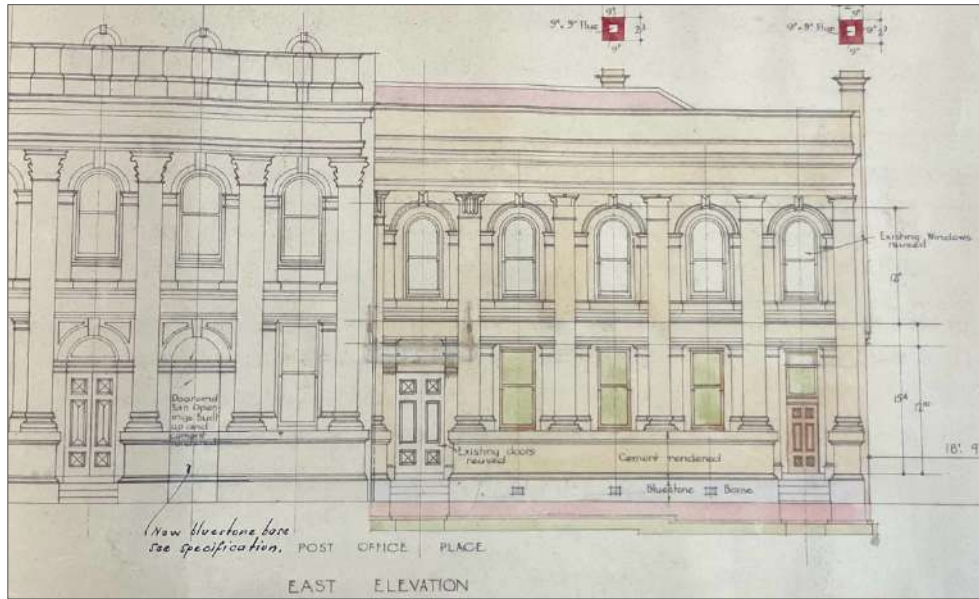


Figure 6 The east elevation of the new Council rates department, designed c1936 by Oakley & Parkes to match the existing town hall façade. Source: Public Records Office Victoria.

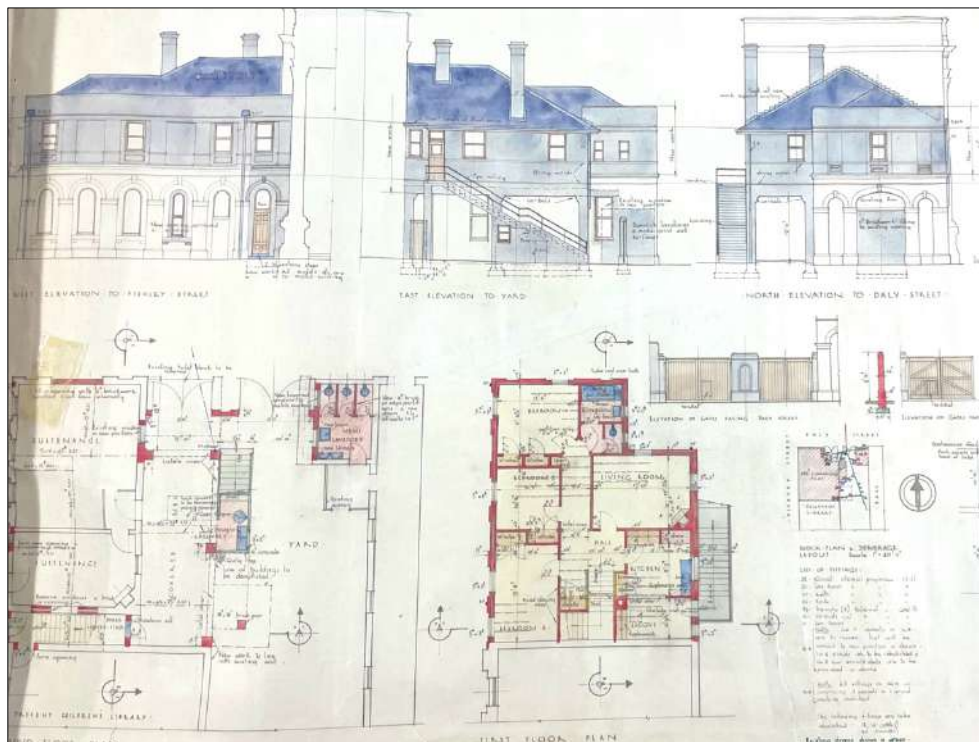


Figure 7 A c1936 drawing of the assistant librarian's flat, located at the north west corner of the Town Hall. Source: Public Records Office Victoria.

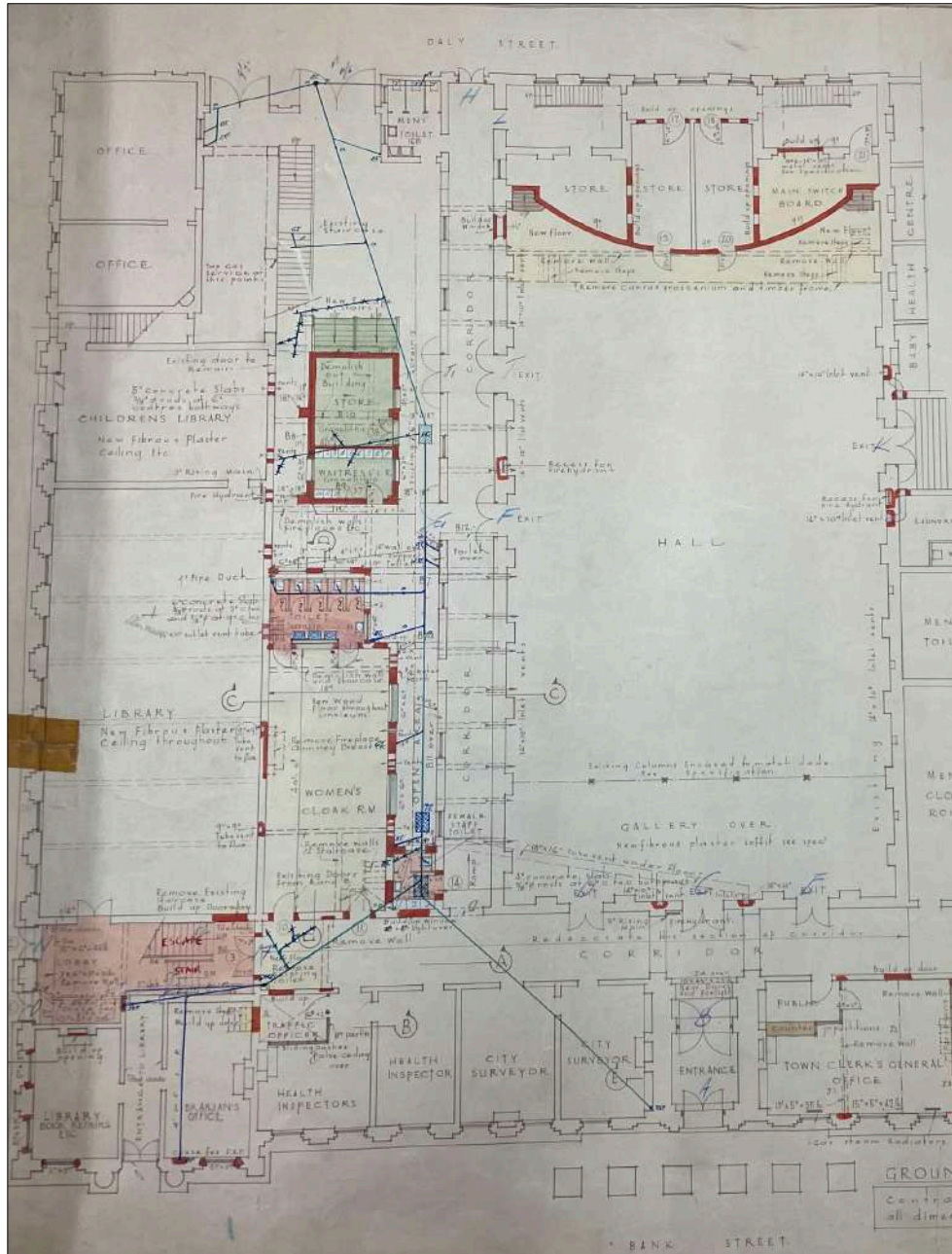


Figure 8 1937 ground floor plan by Oakley & Parkes showing various alterations to the town hall, including the introduction of the curved stage in the main hall and new stairwell at the western end of the main corridor. Source: Public Records Office Victoria.

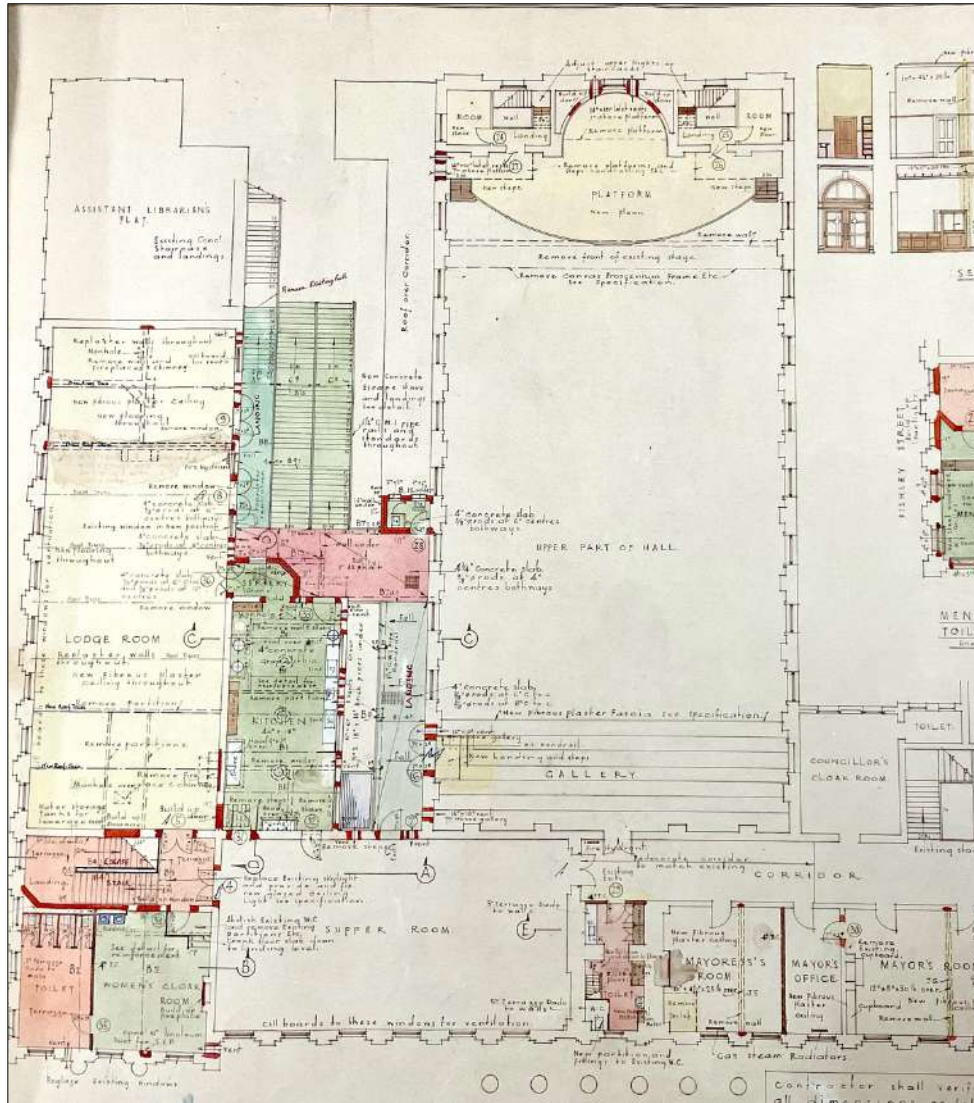


Figure 9 1937 first floor plan by Oakley & Parkes showing refurbishment of various interiors including the former Mechanic's Institute lodge room, toilets and cloak room at the south-west corner, and new kitchen to the north of the supper room. Note also the new external concrete stairs in the courtyard to the west of the main hall. Source: Public Records Office Victoria.

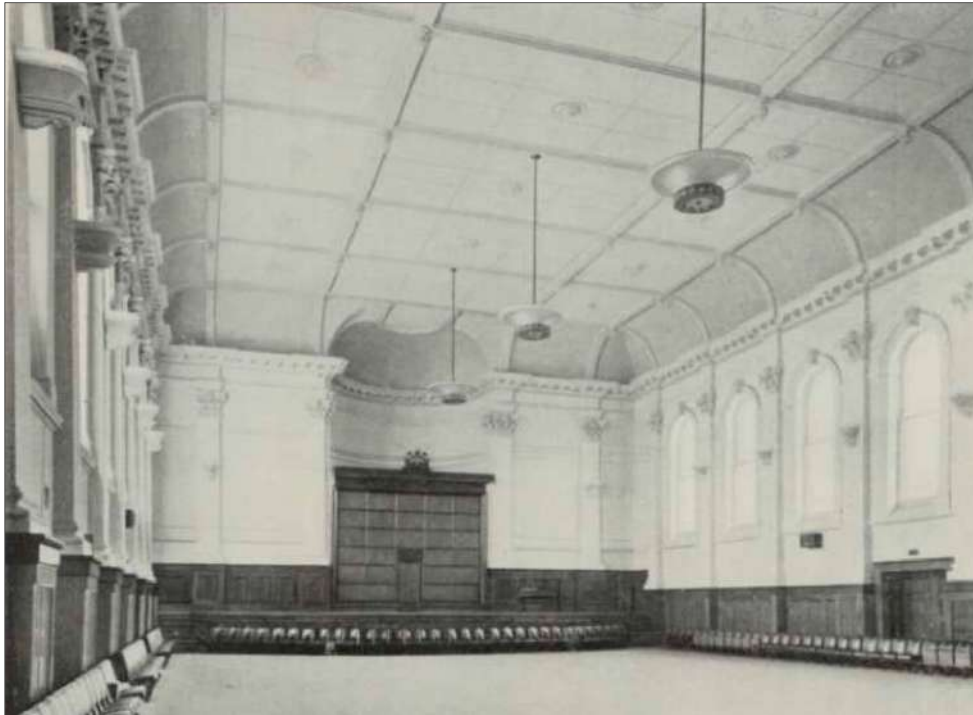


Figure 10 *The town hall interior as remodelled by Oakley & Parkes Architects, 1939. Source: Building: The Magazine for the Architect, Builder, Property Owner & Merchant.*



Figure 11 *The public library, occupying the ground floor of the former Mechanics Institute, 1944. Source: Port Phillip City Collection.*

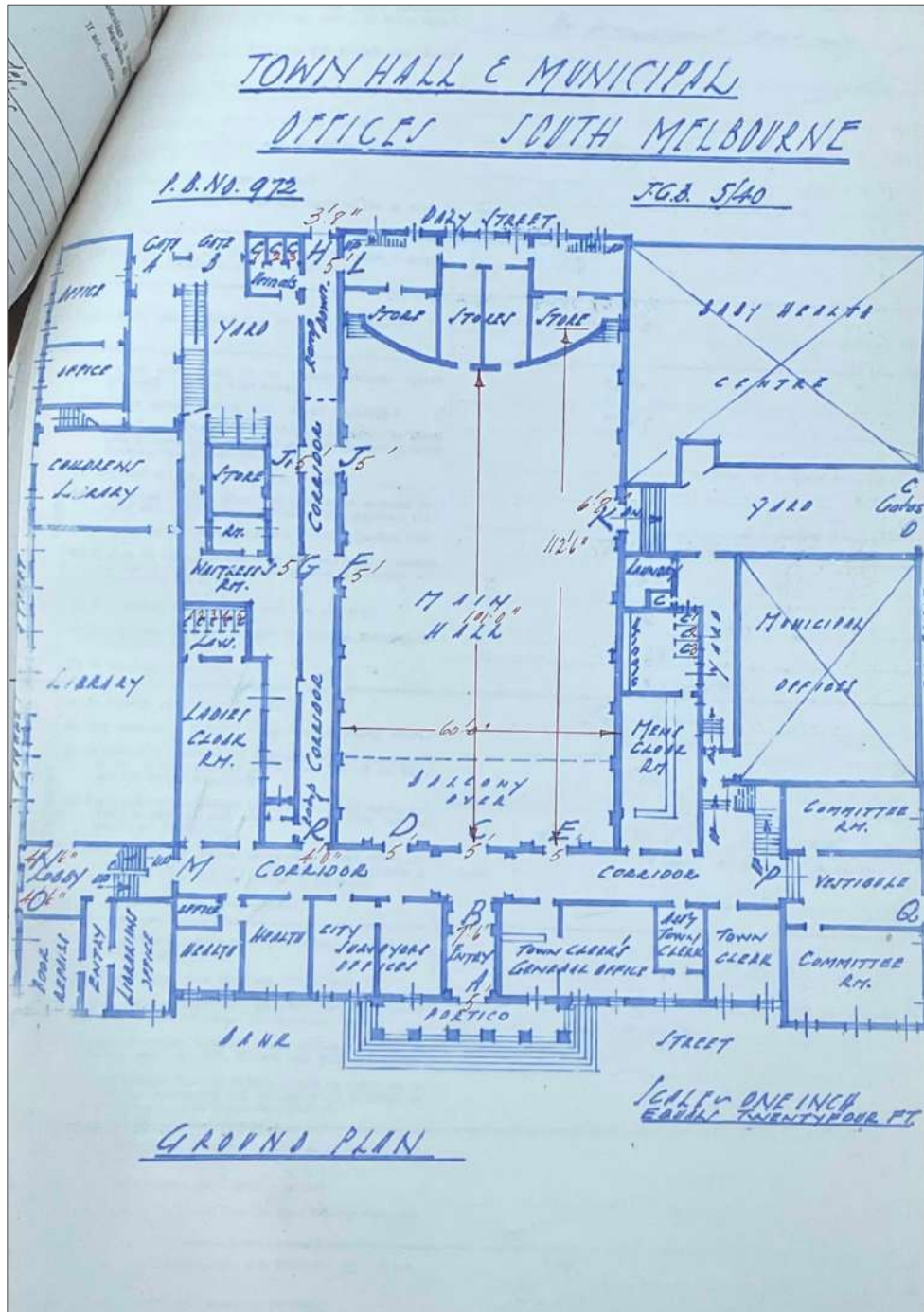


Figure 12 South Melbourne Town Hall ground floor plan, 1940. Source: Public Record Office Victoria.

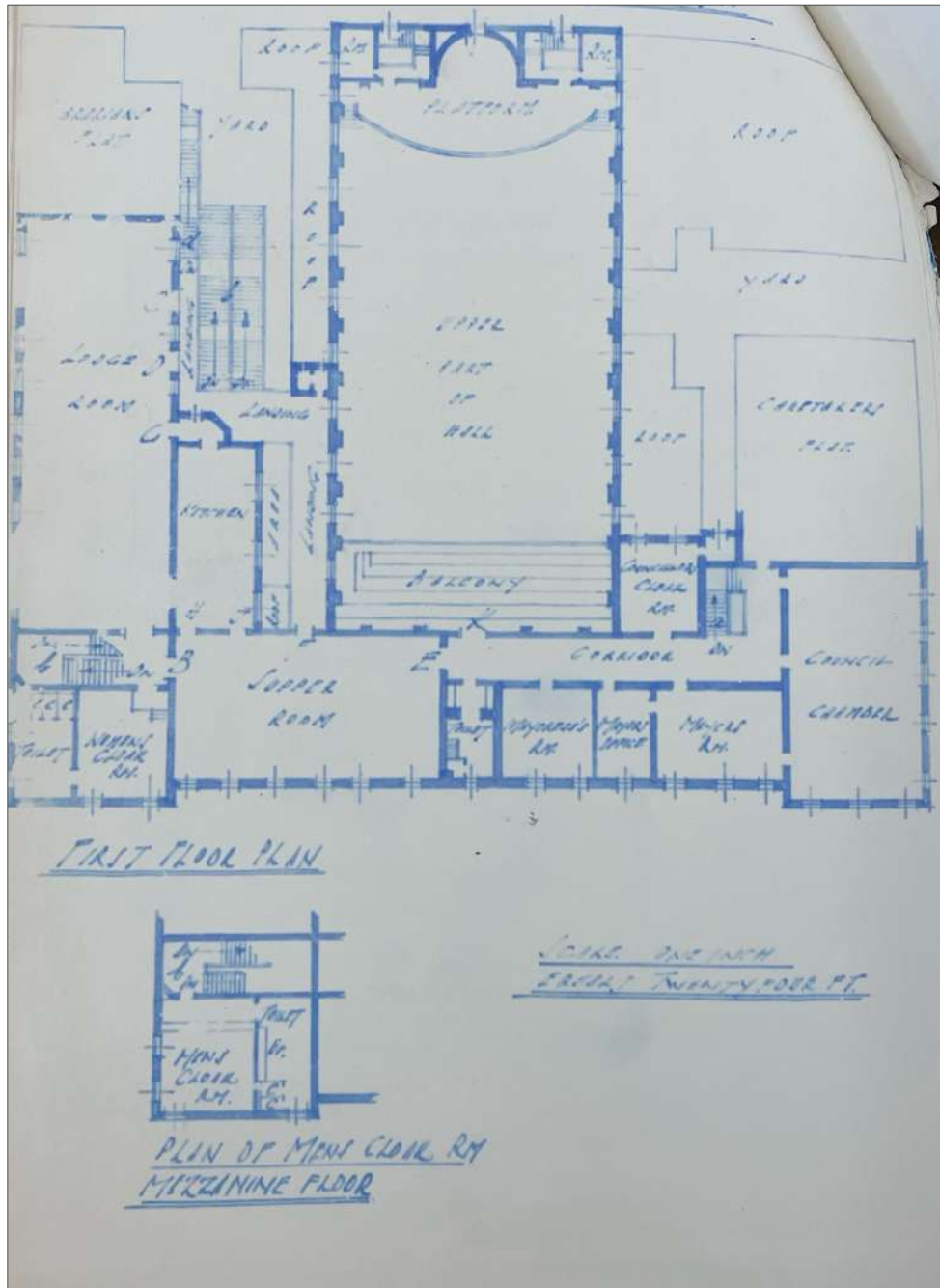


Figure 13 South Melbourne Town Hall first floor plan, 1940. Source: Public Record Office Victoria.



Figure 14 *A c1945 photograph showing the first floor assistant librarian's flat. Note the ground floor enclosed by a masonry wall – presumably because it housed an x-ray clinic at this time. Source: Port Phillip City Collection.*



Figure 15 *The town hall stage decorated for the 1956 Olympics. Source: State Library of Victoria.*



The social work department and maternal and child health facilities were relocated out of the Town Hall in the early 1960s, into a newly constructed annex at 222 Banks Street. The court room and adjacent room to the east was later renovated as a small function room, known as the Ballantyne Room after a chandelier from the Royale Ballroom at the Royal Exhibition Building that was gifted to the municipality by the Ballantyne family.

The main hall was redecorated in 1983, followed by a variety of works in 1991, including refurbishment of the Mayor's Room and further improvements and repairs within the main hall.

With the amalgamation of local Councils in 1994-1995 the former City of South Melbourne became part of the newly formed City of Port Phillip. The State government granted use of the eastern part of the South Melbourne Town Hall to the Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM). Extensive works were undertaken to accommodate ANAM. The council chamber and mayor's office became performance spaces, and much of the east wing was altered to create sound-proof rehearsal and practice rooms. Further, a new main entrance was provided from Layfield Street.

In the early 2000s, a restoration of the Town Hall exteriors was carried out under the direction of RBA Architects, restoring the façade's pressed cement details, partially reinstating the building's original ochre coloured skim coat, and reconstructing original mansard roofs, iron cresting and decorative parapet urns.

In 2010, a roof failure led to extensive water damage in the Council Chamber. Further roof failure and collapse of a portion of the first floor ceiling in 2018 damaged the fire sprinkler system, necessitating the temporary relocation of ANAM to the Abbotsford Convent.



Figure 16 ANAM students performing in the main hall, 2016.

## 6.0 Description

The South Melbourne Town Hall was built on an elevated site as the centrepiece to a formally planned block. Designed in the Victorian Academic Classical style with French Second Empire elements, the town hall as a wide facade dominated by a giant order Corinthian colonnade. The central projecting portico with a triangular pediment is embellished with the words 'Town of Emerald Hill' and the municipality's coat of arms. A tall, multi-tiered clock tower with a cupola, mansard and Baroque colonnettes clustered at its base is centred behind the pediment. French Second Empire-style mansards rise over the east and west return wings. The mansards are reconstructions built in the 2000s to replace the original structures removed in 1945.

The west wing of the building, originally constructed as a Mechanics' Institute, takes the form of a full-height, two-storey return wing matching the main southern façade. The Post Office and Telegraph Office were housed in a much shorter eastern wing, just five bays in length (with the Council Chamber in the second storey above).

The rear wings were executed in smaller scale and are less heavily ornamented. A single storey rear annex at the north-west corner of the block originally housed a fire brigade station. It was given a first floor addition in the 1930s (to house the assistant librarian's flat). The Police and Court House was built as a single-storey structure at the north-east corner of the complex. The rear service yard is wedged between the main hall and east wing. It is a generally utilitarian space occupied by broad concrete stairs dating from the 1930s.

The street-facing roofs retain slate tiles, while the rear elevations of each roof area have been reclad in corrugated sheet metal. A 2000s restoration programme overseen by Roger Beeston Architects included the reinstatement of an ochre coloured skim coat to the south façade and parts of the west and north elevation.

The interiors have undergone repeated renovation and reconfiguration, with departure of the original uses (ie post office, fire brigade and police courts) and expansion, than rationalisation, of Council services and offices. The most substantial internal works occurred in 1938 and included the installation of blackwood wall panelling to the principal rooms and circulation spaces, and erection of a semi-circular stage with a timber screen enclosing the apse at the north end of the hall. Further renovations were undertaken in the mid 1990s to accommodate ANAM. These works were mostly confined to the east wing of the building and typically involved the creation of practice rooms with acoustic tiles and modern drop ceilings.

The interiors vary in terms of their condition and level of intactness. The principal circulation spaces and the main hall remain broadly intact to their late 1930s state. Ancillary spaces to the east side of the main hall and the former courthouse and municipal offices to the east wing have been heavily altered and are poor condition. Ceilings have been removed from the former supper room and former offices/lounge due to damaged caused by failure of the roof structure in 2018.

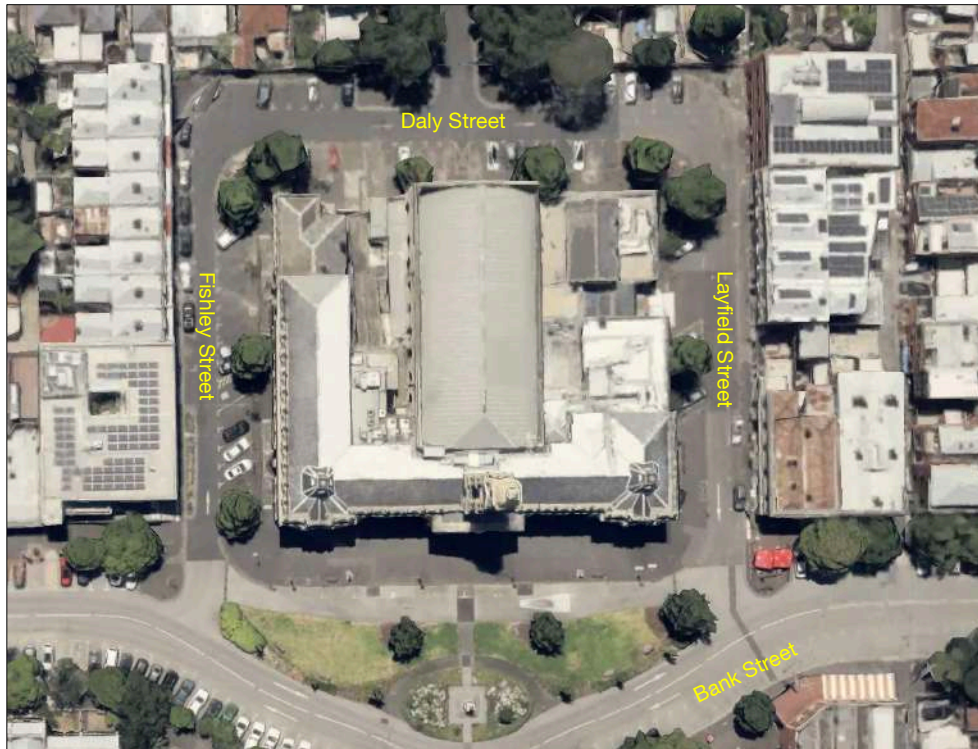


Figure 17 Aerial photograph of the South Melbourne Town Hall.



Figure 18 The main (south) facade of the South Melbourne Town Hall.



Figure 19      *The southern half of the east elevation.*



Figure 20      *The northern end of the east elevation showing the 1990s loading bay/infill (left) and former courthouse (right).*



Figure 21      *The north elevation of the former courthouse.*



Figure 22      *The north elevation of the main hall.*



Figure 23 The north elevation showing the service courtyard and c1936 first floor assistant librarian's flat (top right).



Figure 24 The rear service yard showing concrete stairs erected c1938.



Figure 25 *Partial view of the west elevation showing the c1936 first floor addition (former assistant librarian's flat).*



Figure 26 *Interior of the main hall, looking north towards the stage.*



Figure 27 Interior of the main hall looking south.



Figure 28 The stage in the main hall. It remains largely intact to its 1930s remodelling.





Figure 29 Former Council offices/lounge on the ground floor, looking east.



Figure 30 Former library reading room on the ground floor of the west wing.



Figure 31 *Altered foyer space on the east side of the main hall.*



Figure 32 *The Ballantyne Room, originally the courthouse.*



Figure 33      *The former supper room on the first floor of the front wing.*



Figure 34      *Former Mechanics' Institute lodge room, first floor of the west wing. The ceiling was removed in recent years to allow for the condition of the roof trusses to be investigated.*

## 7.0 Significance

Heritage Victoria has adopted the following statement of significance for the South Melbourne Town Hall:

*What is significant?*

*South Melbourne Town Hall, originally known as Emerald Hill Town Hall until the name of the municipality was changed in 1883, was designed by Charles Webb to house the Emerald Hill Town Council, Public Hall, Mechanics Institute and Library, Post and Telegraph Department, Police Department and Courthouse and Fire Brigade. It was built by Gillon and Treeby and officially opened on 30 June 1880.*

*A large turret clock was added to the clock tower in 1881. The interior was refurbished and additions made in the 1930s to designs by Oakley and Parkes, undertaken by builder G. Farnsworth and supervised by City Engineer A. E. Aughtie. The low mansard towers that originally flanked the central tower were removed in 1945. The Town Hall, built on an elevated site, in the Victorian Academic Classical style with French Second Empire features, is a rendered building featuring a wide facade with a central portico and projecting pavilions at each corner. The facade is dominated by a giant order Corinthian colonnade expressed as pilasters along the walls, fluted engaged columns on the pavilions and freestanding columns on the projecting portico with a triangular pediment embellished with the words 'Town of Emerald Hill' and the municipality's coat of arms. A tall tower with a cupola, mansard and Baroque colonnettes clustered at its base is centred behind the pediment. The side facades have detailing of comparable complexity to the front facade.*

*The Jubilee Fountain, situated in the forecourt, was designed by G H Henderson and built in 1905 to commemorate both the jubilee of the municipality and the 140 local residents who fought in the South African Boer War and the 8 who died. The tall, temple-like fountain is set on bluestone steps with granite columns and canopy, brass font and two bronze plaques. The fountain is surmounted by ironwork supporting three gas globes constructed in 1994 as a reproduction of the original design.*

*Why is it significant?*

*South Melbourne Town Hall is of architectural significance as an outstanding example of a Victorian Academic Classical style building with French Second Empire influences. While the Bank Street facade with its giant order Corinthian portico displays a monumental symmetry, the east and west facades are also well resolved and the northern elevation features an accomplished articulation of the various functional elements contained within the complex. It is an important and sophisticated example of the work of architect Charles Webb, one of the leading architects of the 19th century. The Town Hall is further distinguished by its outstanding landmark and townscape qualities. Set on the crest of a hill with a forecourt, fountain, four street frontages and a framed vista to the portico and tower provided by the planning of Perrins Street, the building enjoys a prominent position unparalleled in Victoria. The interior, remodelled by Oakley and Parkes with some of the work carried out by Brooks Robinson, is a fine example of 1930s design incorporating blackwood panelling and a redecorated auditorium with special acoustic treatment and ventilation.*

*South Melbourne Town Hall is of historical and social significance as the civic centre of South Melbourne over a long period. One of Victoria's grandest town halls, the monumental building*

*symbolises the prosperity and confidence of South Melbourne last century when it was one of the first municipalities to be changed from a town to a city after the 1874 Local Government Act. The Town Hall has a long history as the centre of community cultural life. It was the first Town Hall to achieve an integrated municipal facility with a range of functions.*

*The Jubilee Fountain is of historical significance for its associations with the jubilee of the first working council outside Melbourne and Geelong. It is also of historical and social significance as a memorial associated with the Boer War in Victoria and symbolises the deep sentiments of the community towards this important event in Australian history. The importance of the fountain lies in the combination of associations with the Town Hall, the jubilee of the municipality and Boer War commemoration.*

## 8.0 Proposal

The proposal is for partial demolition, alterations and additions to the South Melbourne Town Hall so that it can be re-occupied by ANAM. A range of new and upgraded facilities are to be accommodated within the town hall, including public performance venues, practice studios, new front-of-house and back-of-house areas, a lounge/bar, catering kitchen, as well as informal spaces for staff and students to interact, relax, study and practice in between formal classes.

Integral to the proposal is the aim of celebrating the First Nation's history of the site as a 'gathering place', and to that end, the design has been informed by close engagement with Traditional Owners, involving workshops with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and Bunurung Land Council Aboriginal Corporation.

The majority of the proposed works are confined to refurbishment of the town hall interiors, with a more limited degree of change to exteriors, as described below.

### **External Works**

The highly intact and highly significant south façade is to remain unaltered apart from the construction of a DDA access ramp, freestanding signage and a new threshold transition to eliminate the step at the main entrance. New handrails, tactile ground surface indicators and tread nosings are proposed for two locations on the bluestone steps. The DDA ramp adopts a visually lightweight, minimalist design, drawing on the precedent of the ramp to the Art Gallery of New South Wales (refer figure 35 below). Six windows to the first floor supper are to be reglazed with new laminated glass to achieve acoustic upgrades.



Figure 35 DDA access ramp to the front of the Art Gallery of NSW.

A new first floor addition accommodating a purpose built recording and practice studio is proposed at the north-west corner, replacing the 1930s assistant librarian's flat. At the southern end of the service courtyard, a ground floor infill will provide a new catering kitchen to serve the main hall and 150 seat performance studio. A new recessed external terrace will be created above the kitchen, replacing concrete stairs (which are approved for demolition under the City of Port Phillip permit). A new first floor student common room is to be built above the 1990s loading bay on the east elevation.

The proposed first floor additions adopt a common design language of simple cubic masonry forms with 'cut out' windows derived from an original decorative motif found on hall exterior (in the form of a rectangular panel with inverted scalloped corners). The additions are clad in thin clay masonry bricks in a light grey colour to harmonise with existing rendered surfaces.

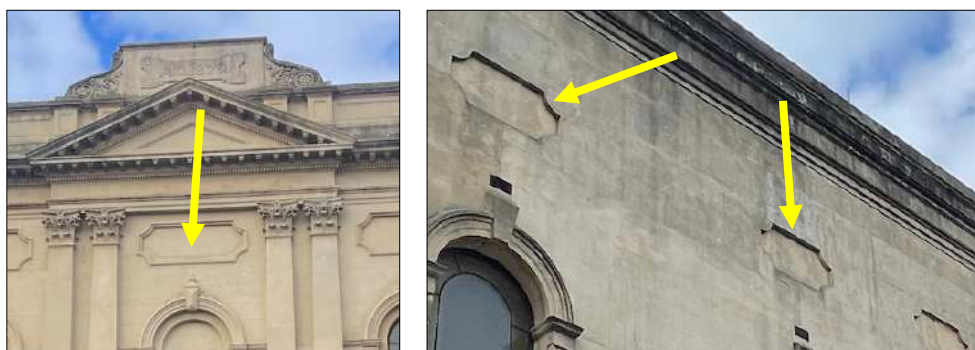


Figure 36 Detail of the south and west elevations of the main hall showing the decorative motif that is to be used as a key design feature of the proposed additions.



Figure 37 Existing west elevation.

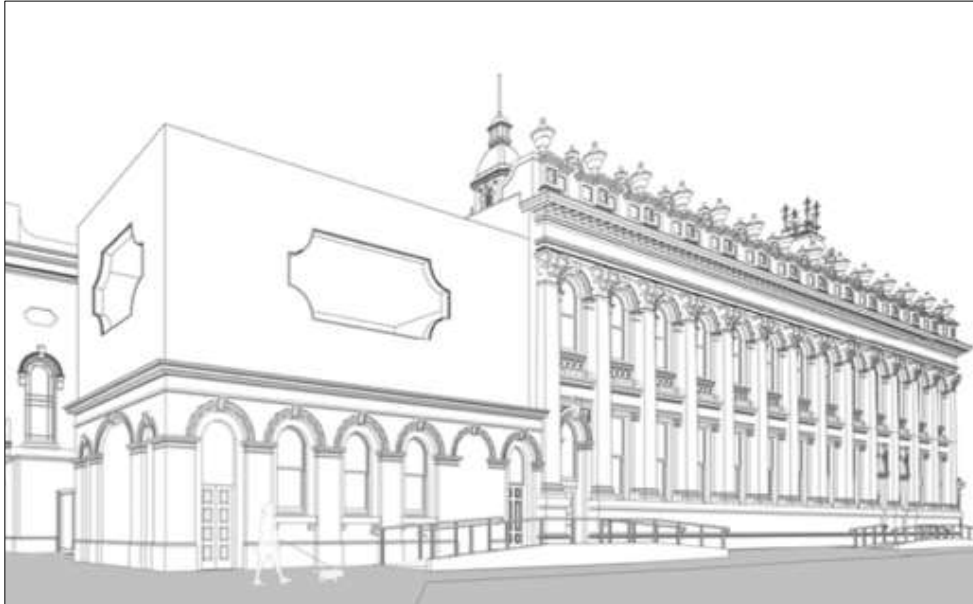


Figure 38 Architect's illustration of the proposed first floor addition, replacing the former assistant librarian's flat.



Figure 39 Existing east elevation.



Figure 40 Architect's illustration showing proposed first floor addition built over the existing 1990s loading bay.

The external works also include installation of solar panels on the main hall roof (noting that the hall roof is to be reclad as part of the City of Port Phillip base build works). A number of windows to the ground floor of the west elevation will need to be reglazed with laminated clear glass to satisfy acoustic requirements for the new performance studio (in the former library reading room) and practice studio (occupying the former fire brigade station). The windows to the Ballantyne room will also need to be glazed to satisfy acoustic requirements. External window pelmets to the west elevation will be retained and fitted with motorised blinds for daylight and sun control.



The windows to the east and west elevation of the main hall are to be retrofitted externally with acoustic laminate glass, with an air gap to the heritage windows. Minor incisions will need to be made in the rendered mouldings to the window reveals to accommodate the new external glazing.

### **Internal Works**

The overarching approach adopted for the refurbishment of the interiors is to accept and reveal past histories and occupations of the building whilst removing unsympathetic elements and adapting spaces to new uses. The intent of the design is to establish different characters for the different spaces within the building to reflect the diversity and richness of the interiors and their various uses. This will include colour and material selection along with fittings, fixtures and furniture. Back of house spaces are designed to be robust and practical, whereas front of house and performance spaces will seek to impart a sense of occasion, drama and warmth. The fit out to the student and faculty areas will be more lively and colourful. It is also intended to draw inspiration from the First Nation's co-design themes throughout the building.

Works to the individual internal spaces are described in further detail below.

#### *Main Hall*

The main hall will be upgraded to improve contemporary acoustic and theatre performance standards with minimal change to the significant plan form and fabric of the space. A new lobby and soundlock will be created under the balcony at the southern end of the hall by inserting a glazed screen (with curtains) behind the balcony columns. The semi-circular 1930s stage is retained with retractable platforms to the front that can be adjusted to provide for different performance modes and audience seating. Manually operated curtains will be installed to the arched windows between the pilasters to provide solar and daylight control.

Further works to the hall to meet contemporary standards for theatre performance include:

- Three circular theatre rigs placed symmetrically down the centre of the hall, incorporating suspended acoustic reflectors.
- Existing 1930s pendant light fittings will need to be removed to avoid clashing with new rigging and acoustic reflectors.
- Catwalks and work platforms installed in the roof space to provide safe access to rigging hoists and strong points (from which various theatre elements can be hung).

Existing acoustic panels to the walls are to be removed (noting that their performance has been compromised by numerous paint layers). The existing timber floor is to be retained and refinished. The blackwood wall panels are also retained. Plaster wall and ceiling surfaces are to be repainted in a monochromatic colour scheme.

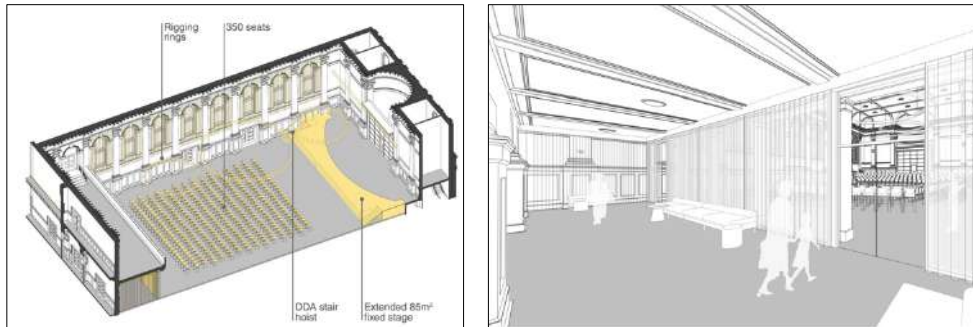


Figure 41 (left) Axonometric showing the proposed retractable platforms abutting the existing stage (which is retained with its semi-circular form remaining legible).

Figure 42 (right) Architect's illustration of the proposed lobby/soundlock under the hall balcony.

#### Ground Floor Offices (east side of main entrance)

Modern stud walls and suspended ceilings will be stripped out to create a box office and reception area.

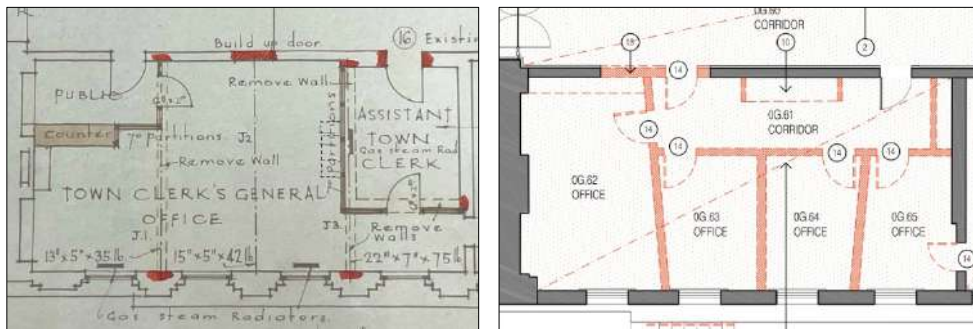


Figure 43 (left) 1938 plan of former Council offices on the ground floor, east of the main entry.

Figure 44 (right) Current floor plan showing proposed extent of demolition mostly confined to non-original stud walls.

#### Former Lounge

This room will be refurbished for use as a lounge with a bar at the western end. Existing timber wall panelling will be removed but it is likely to be a later replica of the 1930s joinery, given that the 1930s works retained the original configuration as a series of smaller rooms with no works shown on the Oakley and Parkes drawings apart from the creation of a small room for the traffic officer at the western end of the space with partition walls. The original internal walls were later demolished to create a single open plan space, identified as a 'lounge' on 1981 floor plans of the Town Hall.<sup>5</sup> The original ceiling has also been removed. A new ceiling will be installed with acoustic barriers to the first floor rehearsal studio directly above. The lounge will be access via the existing wide opening to the corridor, which is to be fitted with new sliding glass doors.

<sup>5</sup> Public Building File 972, PROV VPRS 7882/P0001.

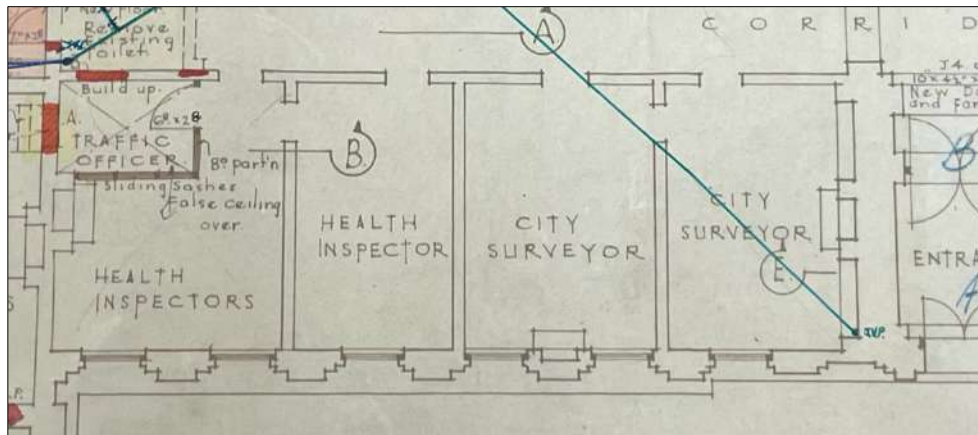


Figure 45 1938 floor plan showing the former lounge divided into a series of offices.

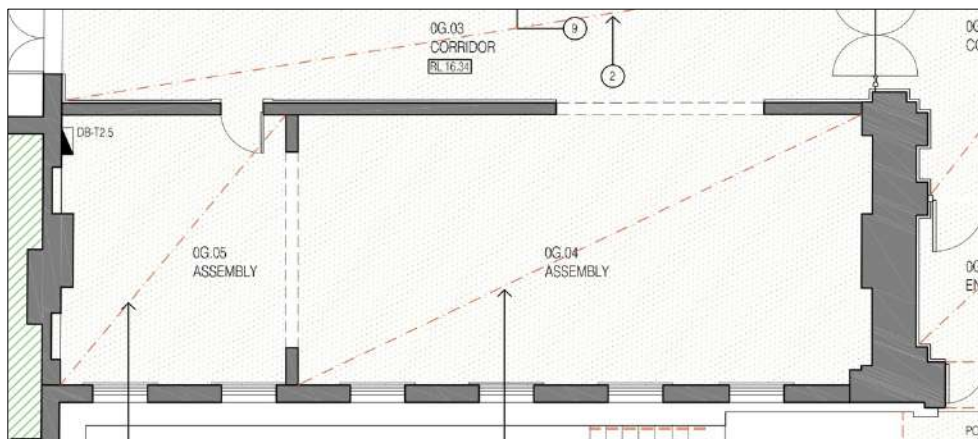


Figure 46 Current floor plan of the former lounge.



Figure 47 (left) Current photograph of former lounge looking west.



Figure 48 (right) Render of the proposed bar and lounge in the former lounge.

### *Former Library*

The former library reading room is to be stripped of modern office partitions and returned to its original volume. The room will function as a performance studio for up to 150 patrons. Two new door openings are to be created on the east wall to access the lift and storeroom. Original window joinery is retained but reglazed, and fitted with new acoustic jockey sashes internally. Acoustic treatment is required to the internal wall surfaces with new panelling and retractable curtains on tracks. The existing 1930s plaster ceiling will need to be removed to allow for the acoustic treatments and concealment of numerous services including fire, mechanical, electrical and audio visual. A fixed pipe grid will be installed below the new ceiling for theatre lighting, speakers and digital projectors.

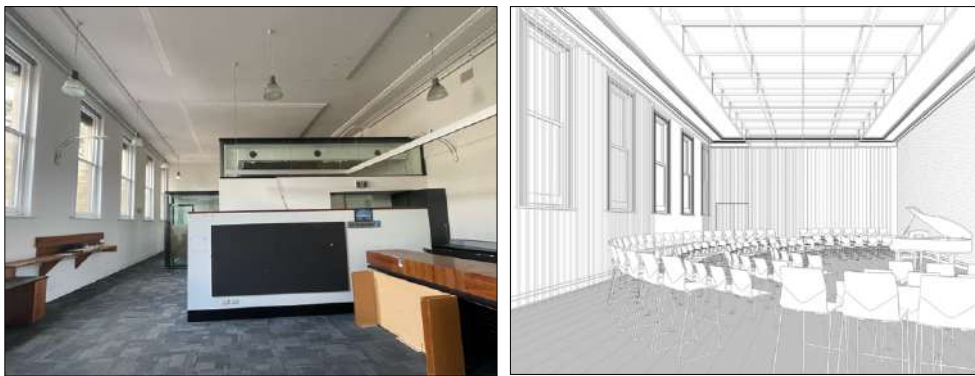


Figure 49 (left) The former library reading room.

Figure 50 (right) Illustration of the proposed performance space in the former reading room.

### *East-West corridor (ground floor)*

The existing passenger lift (at the western end of the corridor) will be replaced with a larger lift suitable for the transporting of the ANAM musical instruments and staging equipment. The new lift will be a walk-through type with doors in an east-west orientation. The new lift requires a soundlock lobby to acoustically isolate it from adjoining performance and rehearsal spaces. The soundlock is to be accessed from the corridor via a new opening (the width of which has been determined by turning templates for the large music instruments). The existing lift opening will be infilled and timber wall panelling reinstated to match existing. The timber stairs at the eastern end of the corridor are retained with code compliance upgrade works to be undertaken by the City of Port Phillip.

### *Ballantyne Room*

This room will function as a practice studio for percussion instruments. Existing curtain tracks and acoustic wall panelling will be replaced with improved acoustic panels and curtains. The chandelier gifted to the City of South Melbourne in 1986 is retained. Window joinery is retained but with new laminated glass within existing sashes. Existing internal jockey sashes are also retained.

### *Former Supper Room*

The former supper room will function as the principal rehearsal studio, requiring significant acoustic upgrades. Windows will be reglazed with laminated glass, augmented by new internal timber framed jockey sashes with laminated glass. New acoustic panels will be applied to the walls.

The existing floor is a patchwork of sheet and tongue and groove boards in poor condition. The floor will be replaced with new tongue and groove boards over a cement sheet underlay to satisfy acoustic requirements. The ceiling has been removed. To satisfy the acoustic requirements, a new sheeted ceiling lining will be installed within the roof volume along with a horizontal labyrinth ceiling under the trusses. All new mechanical, fire and lighting services will be concealed within the upper ceiling space.

The existing lift and opening (to the north side of the supper room) will be removed and replaced with a new larger lift suitable for ANAM instruments. The new lift will be a walk-through type in the east west direction. This requires a soundlock lobby to acoustically isolate it from the rehearsal room with a new pair of lobby door.



Figure 51 (left) Former supper room looking west.

Figure 52 (right) Illustration of the proposed rehearsal space in the former supper room.

### *Former Lodge Room*

This room has been stripped back to a single space as part of the City of Port Phillip early works. It is proposed that it be refurbished for use as ANAM staff office, library and meeting rooms. The existing floor will be upgraded to satisfy the acoustic requirements to isolate the offices from the ANAM performance studio below. This will involve a cement sheet underlay with timber floorboards boards and new carpet over. The east wall will be retained with some amended door openings, including infilling redundant doors and providing new doors to a storeroom, control room/editing suite, staff common room and new lift. The north wall is retained with an additional new pair of doors accessing the stair lobby. Lightweight walls and glazed partitions will be erected at the southern end of the space to form a meeting room, offices and lift lobby. Ceiling joists and battens will be removed to reveal the original timber trusses and coved ceiling. New services will be exposed and run between the trusses.



Figure 53 (left) Former lodge room looking north.

Figure 54 (right) Illustration of the proposed office space in the former lodge room.

#### Former Council Chambers

This room remains unaltered, other than minor works that are to be carried out as part of the City of Port Phillip base build.

#### Former Mayor and Mayoress Suite

These rooms remains unaltered, other than minor works that are to be carried out as part of the City of Port Phillip base build.

#### East Corridor (first floor)

The corridor is unaltered.



Figure 55 (left) Council chambers.

Figure 56 (right) Mayor's suite.

Additional to the works described above, interiors of low intactness and low significance (eg the ground floor office spaces to the north west of the complex, ancillary/back of house areas to the west side of the hall and rehearsal studio spaces in the east wing) will undergo further refurbishment works involving, inter alia, demolition of some internal walls.

## 9.0 Evaluation against CMP Policies

The permit exemption policy for the South Melbourne Town Hall states that all works should be in accordance with the conservation objectives of the *Conservation Analysis and Management Plan* prepared by Helen Lardner Conservation & Design in 1995. An updated Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for the Town Hall was prepared in 2021 by Lovell Chen for the City of Port Phillip, drawing in part on the 1995 report. Given that the 2021 CMP is a more up to date document, prepared with regard for changes to the fabric that have occurred since 1995, it is appropriate that the current proposal be assessed against the policies of the 2021 CMP, as follows. That said, it is noted that the early works strip-out undertaken for the City of Port Phillip has opened up and revealed the condition of the interiors to be more altered than understood in the 2021 CMP.

CMP Policy	Comment
<p><b>5.4 CONSERVATION POLICIES</b></p> <p><b>Policy 8 Conservation of significant fabric and areas</b></p> <p><i>The approach to the conservation of significant fabric, areas and elements at the SMTH complex should correspond with the identified level of significance.</i></p> <p><i>There is a hierarchy of significance at the SMTH complex, and a corresponding suite of conservation requirements and management recommendations.</i></p> <p><i>...elements/areas [of primary significance] should be retained and conserved in accordance with the principles of the Burra Charter. However, it is recognised that these features of the place are varied in terms of degrees of intactness, levels of decorative detail and sensitivity to change.</i></p> <p><i>... elements/areas [of contributory significance] should, as far as possible, be retained and conserved in accordance with the principles of the Burra Charter. However, these elements/areas provide greater flexibility with regards to potential change, alteration and removal.</i></p> <p><i>A considered and sympathetic approach should be adopted in the conservation of areas and spaces that have not been assessed as being expressive of the cultural heritage values of the SMTH complex (in the sense of not being substantially intact as built or as remodelled, and/or having limited capacity to provide evidence of former uses, and/or not being public-facing).</i></p>	<p>As identified in the CMP, external elements of primary significance include nineteenth century fabric to all elevations. The proposal retains and conserves external elements of primary significance with minimal change (typically limited to reglazing of select windows for acoustic upgrades).</p> <p>External elements of contributory significance include the former assistant’s librarians flat. The flat is proposed to be demolished and replaced with a new recording and practice studio. An essential component of the adaptive reuse by ANAM is the provision of a new recording and practice studio to the highest acoustic performance standards – this can only be achieved in a new purpose built structure. There is limited opportunity to accommodate new built form elsewhere on the site given that it is effectively fully built over. The flat is not considered to be integral to the historical significance of the place is not built to a high architectural standard.</p> <p>Interiors of primary significance include the main hall (as remodelled in the 1930s) former library reading room, the mayor and mayoress’s suites and Council chamber. The mayor and mayoress’s suites and Council chambers are unchanged apart from minor works approved as part of the City of Port Phillip base build. The adaptation of the main hall as a performance space is achieved with minimal interventions, designed to be reversible.</p>

	<p>Accepting that the former library reading room is identified in the CMP as being of primary significance, it is to be recognised that this space has undergone a number of alterations and surviving late nineteenth century and interwar decorative elements are fairly standard for the period. That is to say, this interior is not architecturally remarkable or highly sensitive to change.</p> <p>The same can be said of the interiors of contributory significance comprising the former lounge, the supper room, and lodge room. These spaces have already lost their original ceilings, and have been stripped out.</p> <p>With reference to the CMP policy, the interiors of contributory significance typically provide greater flexibility for change, alteration or removal.</p>
<p><b>Policy 9 Setting</b></p> <p><i>The setting for the SMTH complex should be defined as the Emerald Hill Estate, being the block bound by Dorcas, Clarendon, Park and Cecil streets.</i></p> <p><i>The immediate and extended environment that is part of and contributes to the cultural significance and distinctive character of the SMTH complex is the Emerald Hill Estate (VHRH1136) ... The SMTH derives considerable historical and architectural significance as the central component of the Estate, which retains a high level of integrity and homogeneity of scale.</i></p> <p><i>... Within this setting, there are views that support an understanding of the SMTH's historical and architectural significance ...</i></p>	<p>The proposal will not adversely impact the setting of the SMTH. New additions are modestly scaled and utilise a subdued palette of materials. The additions will not interfere with key views or detract from the prevailing nineteenth century built form character of the town hall environs - accepting that this area does not remain unchanged from its late-Victorian stage of development (noting that there is a 1960s double-storey office building on the north west corner of Bank and Fishley Streets, directly opposite the SMTH).</p>
<p><b>Policy 10 Access</b></p> <p><i>Original points of access to the SMTH complex should be retained, conserved and actively used.</i></p> <p><i>From a heritage perspective, active use of the original points of entry to the complex is strongly preferred, to enhance an appreciation of its original programme and planning, and to minimise (or avoid) the requirement for new entries.</i></p> <p><i>The introduction of new openings should be avoided, and given the original planning of the complex (with the multiple addresses detailed above) should not be necessary. Where works are required, the preference is to focus change on areas where openings</i></p>	<p>The proposal complies with this policy. Original entry points are utilised and new door openings are not created in significant fabric.</p> <p>The main entry to the Bank Street façade is to be upgraded for DDA compliance and will be reactivated as the primary point of access/egress.</p>



<p><i>are known to have existed, or where change has previously occurred.</i></p> <p><i>[The principal] address from Bank Street, both at the central vestibule and at either end, is non-compliant and has been a supplementary access for some time. As related to the reactivation of complex, it would be desirable for the central entry to be upgraded for compliance, and for the vestibule to be refurbished to support a more primary role in access/egress ...</i></p>	
<p><b>5.5 USE, ADAPTION AND CHANGE</b></p> <p><b>Policy 13 Use</b></p> <p><i>Future uses of the SMTH complex should be compatible with the assessed values of the place so that its cultural significance is maintained and conserved.</i></p> <p><i>The SMTH complex has been dis-used since 2018. Its reactivation is a priority, not least for economic reasons (the asset is expensive to maintain) and to prevent further deterioration of fabric.</i></p> <p><i>... public access to the complex would be appropriate, consistent with historic precedent and responsive to community sentiment. In this regard, emphasis should be placed on spaces that were designed for public use ...</i></p> <p><i>From a heritage perspective, uses that could be contemplated for the facility are many and varied, and include: a business incubator, arts hubs, community resource or office space. Continued use of the place by ANAM (education and performance) would also be compatible.</i></p>	<p>In accordance with this policy, the proposal will facilitate the continued/long term use of the place by ANAM. This is an ideal outcome from a heritage perspective in that it allows for public to access the SMTH, and provides a compatible use for the main hall - ie as a performance space with minimal change to the significant interior.</p>
<p><b>Policy 14 Changes to significant elements and areas</b></p> <p><i>Physical alterations to elements and areas of primary significance should be limited to works that do not diminish the cultural heritage values of the SMTH complex.</i></p> <p><i>The subject site has long history of adaptation and alteration in response to evolving functional requirements and the needs of occupants. There are relatively few rooms within the complex that retain their three-dimensional form largely intact either as built (1870s) or as upgraded in the 1930s (examples include the Main Hall, Council</i></p>	<p>As discussed above, the proposal involves minimal change to elements and areas of primary significance. Demolition works and alterations are directed to spaces that are not sensitive to change.</p>

<p><i>Chamber, the Mayor and Mayoress' chambers and the east- west corridor at ground level.)</i></p> <p><i>From a heritage perspective further change can reasonably be contemplated, providing that the works do not diminish the cultural heritage significance of the place overall. As discussed elsewhere in this CMP, there is a greater sensitivity to change affecting elements and areas of primary significance. This distinction is reflected in the principles provided below (table 6)</i></p>	
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**Table 6 Principles to guide change: exterior areas/spaces**

<b>Element/area and level of significance</b>	<b>Principles to guide change</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<i>Building envelope (areas of primary and Contributory significance, and elements to which no significance has been ascribed)</i>	<p><i>The building envelope should be retained, including the street-facing roof slopes (i.e. those finished with slate, visible from the public realm).</i></p> <p><i>There is no potential for the removal of render.</i></p> <p><i>There is a somewhat greater scope for alteration of rear/service elevations within the complex where there is limited visibility from the public realm, and where there is generally a history of successive alteration ...</i></p>	The nineteenth century building envelope is retained. Alterations are mostly confined to the rear/service elements.
<i>Bank Street elevation (area of primary significance)</i>	<p><i>There is very limited potential for change to the Bank Street elevation, which is well maintained, retains a high degree of integrity and was subject to a comprehensive package of works during 2004-06</i></p> <p><i>Opportunities to provide DDA access to the central entry vestibule should be explored. Timber window frames should be replaced on a like-for-like basis as/when required. This rationale applies to all elevations.</i></p>	The Bank Street elevation is unchanged apart from minor works to improve DDA access and reglazing of a relatively small number of windows.

<p><i>Layfield Street elevation (areas of primary and Contributory significance, and areas to which no significance has been ascribed)</i></p>	<p><i>The Layfield Street return of the Bank Street elevation (five window bays in length) retains a high degree of integrity to its 1880s design. Conservation works to this section (including repair of render, reinstatement of the ochre skim coat, and reconstruction of parapet urns) were not completed in 2000s projects and should be undertaken when practical.</i></p> <p><i>[...]</i></p> <p><i>The Layfield Street elevation of the former postmaster's residence /former rates office is a highly detailed rendered façade constructed in 1938 to match the principal 1880 facades of the complex, albeit at a reduced scale. It is noted that this portion of the façade, being of a later date, may have somewhat different construction and materials conservation requirement than the 1880s rendered facades. Change, if required, should be limited to areas which have previously been modified, notably the infill between the former court house and postmaster's residence...</i></p>	<p>Change to this elevation is limited to areas that have previously been altered – ie the 1990s infill.</p> <p>Conservation works are to be carried out as part of the City of Port Phillip base. Beyond this, a comprehensive program of external conservation works is outside the scope of the ANAM project.</p>
<p><i>Fishley Street elevation (areas of primary and contributory significance)</i></p>	<p><i>The Fishley Street elevation retains a high degree of integrity to its 1880s design [...]. Change, if required, should be limited to areas which have previously been modified. On the west elevation, this is limited to the Level 1 envelope above the former Fire Brigade station. This level was constructed in 1938 with utilitarian detail that is complementary to the ground level rendering, but of a secondary nature to it.</i></p>	<p>The Fishley Street elevation is retained with no change to fabric of primary significance. Change is limited to the demolition of the 1930s first floor addition.</p>
<p><i>Daly Street elevation (areas of primary significance)</i></p>	<p><i>The Daly Street elevation retains a high level of integrity to its 1880s design ... The varied nature of this elevation is such that there may be a limited opportunity for change and new infill within this elevation, provided that perception of the three major original volumes – the Court House, Main Hall, and Fire Brigade station – with their original ornamentation remains legible [...]. As constructed, the Court House included an open portico to Daly Street which was later infilled with doors and windows. In</i></p>	<p>The significant 1880s elements to the Daly Street elevation are retained.</p>

	<i>preference, the open nature of this feature would be reinstated in order to clarify the relationship of the clerestory volume of the former court room (Ballantyne Room) to this Daly Street entrance.</i>	
<i>Clock tower (element of primary significance)</i>	<i>The external elevations of the Clock Tower were restored during progressive programmes of work in the 1990s and 2000s and retain a high degree of integrity to the 1880 design. There is little to no potential for external change to this feature, except where required to improve the performance of the tower envelope. The clock faces, functional timepieces and bell should be maintained.</i>	There is no change to the clocktower.
<i>Jubilee Fountain (element of primary significance)</i>	<i>The 1905 Jubilee Fountain (including stepped plinth) has been retained in an oval garden setting within the Bank Street forecourt. While the contents of the garden setting may be subject to ongoing alteration and renewal, the oval form and character of this garden setting should be retained</i>	No works are proposed for the Jubilee Fountain.
<i>Bank Street Forecourt</i>	<i>Changes to the forecourt should seek to conserve the appreciation of the Bank Street elevation as a grand classical façade, and should adopt appropriate formal detailing to be viewed in concert with the building, noting that the decision in the late twentieth century to install reproduction lamp standards and other furnishings is only one of several approaches to achieving a complementary formal design for this forecourt space that could be contemplated</i>	No works are proposed to the forecourt other than freestanding ANAM signage and the DDA access ramp, as discussed above. The ramp adopts a contemporary, visually lightweight design as a deliberate counterpoint to the substantial masonry forms of the town hall.

**Table 7 Principles to guide change: primary interior areas/spaces**

<i>Main Hall</i>	<i>There is very limited potential for change within the ornamented (1938) decorative treatment and open volume of the main hall and balcony, including the semi-circular organ space to the rear of the stage.  Reconsideration of the projecting semi-circular stage may reasonably be</i>	The hall remains an open volume, retaining decorative treatment from the 1880s and 1930s. The 1930s pendant lamps will need to be removed as they conflict with acoustic reflectors and lighting rigs – elements which are essential
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	<p><i>contemplated, subject to need and detail of the proposed intervention.</i></p> <p><i>Alteration or long-term storage of the timber infill screen separating the projecting stage and organ space may be possible, subject to need and detail of the proposed intervention.</i></p> <p><i>As detailed in Table 3, a greater latitude for change and adaptation exists in the back of house spaces below and behind the stage at ground and mezzanine levels.</i></p>	<p>to the use of the hall as the main performance space. The removal of the 1930s light fitting is not considered to result in adverse heritage impacts – they are not integral to an appreciation of the 1930s character of the hall.</p> <p>The semi-circular stage is retained with new adjustable platforms to the front. These changes are sensitively designed so as not to detract from the grandeur of the hall, and are essentially reversible in accordance with Burra Charter principles.</p> <p>Repainting of the hall in a monochromatic colour is supported on the basis that the existing decorative scheme dates to the 1980s. A monochromatic paint scheme will be visually neutral and still allow for the original ornamentation to be appreciated. Care will be taken to minimise disturbance of original or early paint layers.</p>
<i>Council Chamber</i>	<p><i>There is very limited potential for change, including as related to the integral furnishing suite which should be maintained and conserved in situ.</i></p>	<p>The Council Chamber will undergo minimal change other than approved City of Port Phillip works.</p>
<i>Mayor and Mayoress's Suite</i>	<p><i>There is very limited potential for change, with the exception of the adjoining kitchenette.</i></p>	<p>These rooms will undergo minimal change other than approved City of Port Phillip works.</p>
<i>Circulation (primary)</i>	<p><i>The arrangement of the main entry (G.01), principal corridors (G.03/G.60 and 1.35), east staircase (G.68) and the Main Hall and balcony (G.57 and 1.36) should be retained as the primary alignment for movement within the building for events in the Main Hall.</i></p> <p><i>The principal corridors have been used along with the adjoining rooms and offices as an exhibition site for</i></p>	<p>The plan form and fabric of the principal corridors (including 1930s joinery) is generally unaltered.</p>

	<p><i>elements of the South Melbourne collection now managed by the CoPP. Sections of the ground level corridor in particular retain large timber display cases and other details as related to this use. If in future the continuation of this display use cannot be practically maintained, it would be appropriate to consider reconfiguration and/or removal of these display cases provided the interior finishes of the corridor can be retained/restored to their c. 1938 form.</i></p>	
<p><i>Library</i></p>	<p><i>The principal room of the former library should be maintained as a singular volume, including its extant interior detailing dating to remodelling works undertaken in 1938 and/or c. 1950s. The room should be managed to avoid detrimental impact to the external presentation of the Fishley Street elevation.</i></p> <p><i>The principal room of the former library should be maintained as a singular volume, including its extant interior detailing dating to remodelling works undertaken in 1938 and/or c. 1950s. The room should be managed to avoid detrimental impact to the external presentation of the Fishley Street elevation. In preference, a use would be identified for this space that would facilitate the removal of existing internal partitioning; however if no complementary use is identified for the room as a single volume, the continued use of freestanding capsules and other light-weight partitioning can be maintained (including a potential for reconfiguration of these arrangements) provided this does not pose impacts to the finishes and perception of the library volume. The south end of the room has been subject to successive alterations where it adjoins the west vestibule, and further change in this area may potentially be accommodated.</i></p>	<p>The library is reinstated as a single volume.</p>

<b>Table 7 Principles to guide change: contributory interior areas/spaces</b>		
<b>Area / element of contributory significance</b>	<b>Principles to guide change</b>	
Former council offices and meeting rooms adjoining the east-west corridor (not including the Mayor and Mayoress suite and Council Chamber)	<p><i>There is some potential for change within these spaces, including the possible alteration of internal partitions, provided that the planning and volume of these rooms is retained vis-à-vis the external presentation of the Bank Street elevation, the functionality of the main east-west corridors and an understanding of these rooms as historical office spaces.</i></p> <p><i>Installation of lowered ceilings or new partitions that do not conform to the external window pattern should be avoided.</i></p> <p><i>The retention of internal room finishes, including timber panelling and architraves, ceiling decoration, and remains of earlier openings and fireplaces, should be understood and assessed as part of an overall approach to renewing use of these rooms.</i></p>	<p>The proposal to strip out former office spaces to create a new reception area and box office is an appropriate heritage outcome. These spaces have already been heavily altered with partition walls and suspended ceiling – they offer considerable potential for change.</p> <p>New internal elements will not intersect with window openings to the Bank Street façade.</p> <p>The more intact office spaces – comprising the Town Clerk’s Office and Assistant Town Clerk’s Office - are retained with minimal change.</p>
Theatrette [former Lounge]	<p><i>There is potential for further change and adaptive use of this volume, provided that this does not result in detrimental impact to the external presentation of the Bank Street elevation.</i></p> <p><i>Change could include further alterations to enable the room’s use as a single large volume, or could contemplate reinstatement of internal partitions (preferably in a form consistent with the 1938 floor plan and the offices east of the central vestibule).</i></p> <p><i>In preference, future change would retain (with alterations where required) the internal timber panelling within this space as an integrating element to the adjoining corridor and rooms to the east, however other approaches may be considered.</i></p> <p><i>Appropriate plaster ceiling detailing would in preference be restored to this room, consistent with the treatment of other major internal volumes within the SMTH.</i></p>	<p>The proposal to use this space as a lounge and bar will not exert a determinantal impact on the Bank Street elevation.</p> <p>The room remains a single large volume.</p> <p>Accepting that the CMP’s preferred outcome is retention of the timber wall panelling, it is understood that the panelling is not original to the 1930s town hall refurbishment. As discussed on pages 33-34 of this report, the 1930s architectural drawings do not show any works in this area apart from a small partitioned office space at the western end.</p> <p>The proposed contemporary ceiling treatment is appropriate having regard for the heavily altered condition of the room.</p>

<p><i>Supper Room</i></p>	<p><i>An original feature of the 1880 town hall, the Supper Room ... should be retained and restored as a single volume space supporting assembly uses. In preference, internal partitioning would not be reinstated to the space where there is an opportunity to accommodate assembly uses ...Reduced to a shell condition as a consequence of the 2018 roof failure, there is broad scope to reconsider the internal treatment of this room. Consideration can be given to the evidence offered by the retained elements of the previous internal finishes in developing the future interior designs, while noting that the Supper Room has been altered and redecorated periodically and that further change to finishes and style of the space would not be anticipated to have a detrimental impact on the values of this area.</i></p>	<p>The refurbished supper room will be retained as a single volume supporting an assembly use – ie it will function as a performance space.</p> <p>The stripped back condition of the room is taken as an opportunity to reconsider the internal treatment to incorporate acoustic upgrades, including the labyrinth ceiling. It is further noted the CMP allows for a discretionary approach as to whether missing original/early fabric is reinstated.</p>
<p><i>Lodge Room</i></p>	<p><i>The current volume of the Lodge Room dates to the 1938 remodelling, which is understood to have expanded the upper-level meeting room which was an original feature of the former Mechanics' Institute. Gutted to allow for structural investigations and temporary reinforcement after the 2018 roof failure elsewhere in the complex, the room should be restored as a large single-volume assembly space. In preference, internal partitioning would not be reinstated to the space where there is an opportunity to accommodate assembly uses (except where required to support service/servery or similar uses). However, where assembly uses of the volume cannot be reinstated or maintained, use of lightweight partitioning to accommodate other uses within the space may be considered as it has been historically. The room has reduced to a partial shell as a result of recent removal of ceiling and floor finishes, and is understood to have been subject to periodic redecoration after its 1938 remodelling. There is broad scope to consider new approaches to internal finishes, including reconfiguration of the ceiling.</i></p>	<p>The proposal will be retained as a single, open-plan space, apart from glazed, lightweight partitions at the southern end - an outcome anticipated by the CMP policy. The ceiling is reconfigured to expose original roof trusses.</p>



<p><i>Circulation (contributory)</i></p>	<p><i>Circulation areas of contributory significance have been identified where these support the function and understanding of adjoining areas and elements of significance and retain a measure of integrity to what are typically 1930s interior treatments. These are principally the east and west vestibules (including the west vestibule stair), the west corridor adjoining the Main Hall, and the corridor and infilled portico adjoining the former courtroom ...</i></p> <p><i>These areas generally exhibit the ongoing, iterative change that has occurred throughout the complex as related to external access, fire egress, and required functionality of internal foyers and vestibules to serve adjacent programme.</i></p> <p><i>The degree of integrity and the heritage value of the internal fabric of these circulation areas varies and needs to be understood and assessed on a case-by-case basis.</i></p> <p><i>However, the historical treatment of these corridors and vestibule spaces as flexible spaces which could evolve successfully (including new partitioning and finishes) to meet contemporary requirements is one that can inform future accommodations of a similar nature.</i></p>	<p>The east vestibule has been substantially altered, including the introduction of glass doors, stud walls and false ceilings. These elements are to be stripped out and the space reinstated as a single lobby. The west vestibule will undergo changes necessary to the adaptive reuse by ANAM, including reduction in the size of the north wall opening to fit sound lock doors for the adjacent performance studio.</p> <p>The west stair with its 1930s terrazzo floor and metal handrails is retained, with compliance upgrade works carried out under the City of Port Phillip base build permit.</p>
<p><i>Back-of-house areas behind/below Main Hall stage</i></p>	<p><i>These areas contain early/original elements of their configuration as back-of-house amenity, changing and service spaces supporting use of the Main Hall as a performance and hospitality space, however they have also been subject to alterations as a result of changing functional requirements, and their internal finishes are functional rather than decorative.</i></p> <p><i>Alteration of these spaces to support the evolving functional requirements of the Main Hall as a performance and assembly setting may be considered</i></p>	<p>The back of house areas behind and below the stage are retained with minimal change.</p>
<p><i>Kitchenette adjoining the Mayor's and Mayoress's rooms</i></p>	<p><i>The adjoining kitchenette located between the Mayor's and Mayoress's Rooms was adapted in recent times. Its purpose is to support the use and functionality of the Mayor's and</i></p>	<p>The room is retained as existing apart from minor changes to non-significant, non-original joinery and cabinetry.</p>

	<i>Mayoress's rooms, including an understanding of these spaces as mixed social/working rooms. Alteration of this room to accommodate new supporting functions as related to the use of the adjoining rooms may be considered.</i>	
<i>Former Assistant Librarian's Residence</i>	<i>This former residential flat was constructed above the former fire brigade station in 1938. Internally, it retains period detailing, and was a late example of the history of residential uses within the complex which supported the town hall's primary functional uses (as related also to evening events in the Main Hall and function rooms, and to the former Post Office). While relatively intact to its 1938 construction, this use was of a secondary or supporting character relative to the key rooms and functions for which the SMTH is of state and local heritage significance.  The retention of this part of the complex to its original domestic condition makes only a limited contribution to the understanding of the SMTH's historical form and function.</i>	As noted, the flat is to be demolished in full. The appropriateness of this work is address above.
<i>Vault</i>	<i>The vault is the main surviving evidence of the former use of this section of the SMTH as the council rates office. In preference it would be retained in situ. If future requirements conflict with this approach, alternative approaches to management of the key surviving fabric of the vault (namely the vault door) could be considered consistent with Policy 22 'Recording' and Policy 21 'Interpretation of heritage values'</i>	The vault is retained.

<b>CMP Policy</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<p><b>Policy 15 New works</b></p> <p><i>The introduction of new built form at the subject site should be sensitive to the heritage values of the place. The SMTH complex occupies an island site, almost all of which is occupied by development.</i></p> <p><i>The high level of architectural significance is such that there is very limited potential for</i></p>	<p>The proposal complies with the policy in terms of the location of new external works in the service courtyard and replacing the 1990s loading bay infill to the east elevation. That aside, the first floor studio addition to the north west corner is appropriate – this being a secondary and already altered part of the complex.</p>

<p><i>visible additions rising above the predominant building lines.</i></p> <p><i>Locations where new works might be contemplated are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• The replacement (and potentially enlargement) of the foyer infill at the north end of Layfield Street; and</i></li> <li><i>• The service area at the north-west of the site</i></li> </ul> <p><i>In both areas, resolution of the interface between retained and new fabric is another complex matter that would require careful resolution. The appearance of new works, and the palette of materials, can contrast with the solid mass of the existing building fabric, but not in an obtrusive way. A simple treatment, such as one with extensive glazing or a limited palette of materials and detailing, would achieve this.</i></p>	<p>The addition will be recessive to the primary south façade.</p> <p>New built form also responds to the policy by using a subdued palette of materials and minimalist detailing.</p>
<p><b>Signage</b></p> <p><i>New identity and/or address signage should generally not be fixed to the exterior of the SMTH (areas that are of primary or contributory significance). Identity signage designed to be viewed at distance should, in general, be of free-standing and set away from the building (separated by the adjoining footpath, for instance, or set within the Bank Street forecourt). Freestanding signage should observe the primacy of the building's classical elevations, and be clearly perceived as a secondary element standing on the Town Hall block and the Bank Street forecourt.</i></p> <p><i>[...]</i></p> <p><i>Where there is otherwise a requirement to fix signage to the building for the purpose of wayfinding and information, this should in general be of small scale appropriate to directing approaching pedestrians (i.e. approaching entry doors).</i></p>	<p>Proposed signage complies with the policy. ANAM signage in front of the south façade is freestanding, and would not be visually dominate or detract from an appreciation of the grandeur of the town hall façade.</p>
<p><b>Policy 19 Furniture and moveable objects integral to the place</b></p> <p><i>Furniture and moveable objects integral to the heritage significance of the place should be maintained, conserved and made available for public viewing.</i></p>	<p>The suite of purpose built furniture in the council chamber is to be retained in-situ. The City of Port Phillip retain within its collection items of furniture and artworks associated with the Town Hall – these remain the responsibility of Council.</p>

## 10.0 Impact Assessment

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.*

To address Section 101(2)(a) of the Heritage Act, the proposal will not adversely affect the cultural heritage significance of the place. The impacts of the proposal are overwhelmingly positive. The place will be adapted for a use that is compatible with the historical, social and architectural significance of place, and ensures that the Town Hall interior remains accessible to the public. The re-occupation of the site by ANAM also brings with it the government capital funding necessary for the upgrading of the entire building, funding that would otherwise not be available.

ANAM's scheme for adaptive reuse of the SMTH has been prepared with an appreciation for the significance of the place and its constituent parts, as described in the registration documentation and the 2021 CMP. As demonstrated in Section 9 of this report, the proposal achieves a high degree of compliance with the CMP polices that inform consideration of future change and reactivation of the SMTH.

The proposal involves minimal change to the principal façade, other than visually low key works necessary for DDA accessibility. New additions are modest in scale and confined to 1990s infill to the east elevation, the altered/utilitarian service courtyard, and 1930s fabric of limited significance at the north-west corner of the complex. Important views to and from SMTH are protected and its landmark status is in no way diminished.

In accordance with Heritage Victoria's principles for considering change to registered places, the proposed additions will not dominate, disrupt or complete with the heritage elements. The additions reference the heritage elements (with new window openings derived from the original decorative motif of a rectangular panel with inverted scalloped corners) but do not resort to replication or mimicry. The State level significance of the SMTH is reflected in the quality of the new design, materials and finishes, per Heritage Victoria's principles.

Considerable care has been taken to ensure that alterations to the plan form and fabric of the highly significant main hall are kept to a minimum, whilst achieving the required acoustic, safety and amenity upgrades. Interventions, including the retractable stage, the glazed lobby enclosure and suspended theatre rig, will not detract from an appreciation of the hall's spatial qualities and late-Victorian and interwar decorative elements. Changes to the hall are also reversible, in keeping best heritage practice.

Other key interiors, such as the main circulation spaces, the former Mayor and Lady Mayoress suites and the former Council chambers, will undergo minimal change. A more comprehensive program of refurbishment is directed at spaces of low intactness and integrity, including the former lounge on the first floor and former supper room and lodge room on the first floor.

As noted, the proposal involves demolition of the 1930s former assistant librarian's flat at the north west corner of the SMTH, which is identified as an element of contributory significance in the CMP. Demolition of the flat will not result in an unacceptable heritage impact. It is not of high architectural quality and its fabric does not readily explain important former civic uses of the SMTH. The CMP does not rule out demolition of contributory graded elements. At page 58 of the CMP, contributory elements are described as providing greater flexibility with regards to '*potential change, alteration and removal*'.

Moreover, the former assistant librarian's flat has been identified as the only suitable location for the new recording and rehearsal studio. Other options have been ruled out because the SMTH site is effectively fully developed, and also on account of the considerable technical difficulties in retrofitting an existing interior to achieve the required acoustic performance. The key concern is the need to provide a new, purpose built space to achieve the highest acoustic performance required for professional standard recording and audition. Further rationale for the proposed recording studio is provided in the Reasonable or Economic Use Report submitted with this application.

Under Section 101(3) of the *Heritage Act*, the Executive Director may consider the extent which an application, if approved, would affect the cultural heritage significance of any adjacent or neighbouring places on the Register or the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay.

As noted in section 3.0 of this report, the SMTH environs form part of the Emerald Hill Residential Precinct (HO440) in addition to including encompassing the Emerald Hill Estate (VHR H1136). This area is significant as an homogenous collection of late-Victorian residential and commercial buildings, although it is not entirely devoid of modern built form - there being a c1960s double-storey office building on the north west corner of Bank and Fishley Streets, directly opposite the SMTH.

The proposal involves minimal change to the exteriors of the SMTH other than modestly scaled, sensitively designed additions to the north-west corner and to the centre of the east elevation (above the existing 1990s infill). These works will not be intrusive to the place's late-nineteenth century urban setting. As such, proposal will have no adverse impact on adjacent or neighbouring heritage places.

## 11.0 Conclusion

In summary, the proposal has been carefully developed on the basis of a detailed appreciation of the significance of the South Melbourne Town Hall and its component parts. The nineteenth century Classical style façades are subject to minimal change and the civic importance and landmark qualities of the Town Hall are undiminished. External works are confined to already altered and/or less significant parts of the complex. The modifications to the main hall interior will be inherently reversible with minimal impact on the retained significant plan form and fabric. The proposal will also encourage an increased patronage of the place and thus an enhanced appreciation amongst the wider community of the Town Hall's historical character and significance.

The overall result is a considered and sensitive response, where the modest impact associated with the changes to some original or early elements is offset by the appreciable benefits of providing a compatible and sustainable ongoing use for the place. As such, the proposal strikes an appropriate balance between heritage objectives and the operational requirements of ANAM.

Having regard for the above, the proposal has been developed with due consideration for the provisions of the *Heritage Act*.