

# FORMER STATE CHEMICAL LABORATORIES

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HERITAGE IMPACT STATEMENT

Treasury Reserve Precinct, 55 St Andrews Place, East Melbourne

September 2024

Prepared for

DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY SERVICES

Prepared by

LOVELL CHEN

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

The Treasury Reserve Precinct is located and this report was prepared on the lands of the Wurundjeri People who have been custodians of this land for thousands of years. We acknowledge their stories, connection to land, water and culture which is embedded in Country. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present and acknowledge that this report includes a post-contact history that forms only a small part of the ongoing story.

## Quality Assurance Register

The following quality assurance register documents the development and issue of this report prepared by Lovell Chen Pty Ltd in accordance with our quality management system.

| Project no. | Issue no. | Description                     | Issue date | Approval |
|-------------|-----------|---------------------------------|------------|----------|
| 20240385    | 1         | Draft Heritage Impact Statement | 20/09/2024 | MK       |
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>  | <b>V</b>  |
| <b>1.0 INTRODUCTION</b>   | <b>1</b>  |
| 1.1 Documentation   | 1         |
| 1.2 Pre-application discussions   | 2         |
| <b>2.0 STATUTORY HERITAGE CONTROLS</b>  | <b>2</b>  |
| 2.1 Victorian Heritage Register (VHR)   | 2         |
| 2.2 Heritage Overlay (HO)   | 6         |
| <b>3.0 OVERVIEW HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION</b>   | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>4.0 PROPOSED WORKS</b>   | <b>10</b> |
| <b>5.0 REASON FOR THE WORKS</b>   | <b>12</b> |
| <b>6.0 ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE IMPACTS</b>   | <b>12</b> |
| 6.1 Heritage Act considerations   | 12        |
| 6.2 Impact on the cultural significance of the registered place – s. 101(2)(a)      | 13        |
| 6.2.1 Conservation Management Plan  | 13        |
| 6.2.2 Consideration of options  | 15        |
| 6.2.3 Assessment of heritage impacts  | 17        |
| 6.3 Impact on the reasonable or economic use of the registered place – s. 101(2)(b) | 19        |
| <b>7.0 CONCLUSION</b>   | <b>20</b> |

## LIST OF FIGURES

|           |   |    |
|-----------|---|----|
| Figure 1  | Location plan with the subject site indicated by the red arrow  | 1  |
| Figure 2  | Treasury Reserve Precinct extent of registration plan, 55 St Andrews Place indicated  | 3  |
| Figure 3  | Heritage Overlay plan showing the HO extent for Treasury Reserve Precinct (HO174)   | 6  |
| Figure 4  | 1967 image of the subject building under construction, prior to the addition of the upper level in 1996   | 7  |
| Figure 5  | Oblique aerial imagery of Treasury Reserve and environs, 55 St Andrews Place indicated  | 8  |
| Figure 6  | Ground floor north elevation to St Andrews Place  | 8  |
| Figure 7  | West elevation, view from St Andrews Place; the ground floor projecting entry is indicated  | 9  |
| Figure 8  | View from within the Treasury Reserve to the south and east elevations of the building  | 9  |
| Figure 9  | View east along the ground floor to the south of the building   | 10 |
| Figure 10 | East elevation and basement level entry, view from St Andrews Place   | 11 |
| Figure 11 | Proposed view to south from St Andrews Place  | 12 |
| Figure 12 | B8 – Former State Chemical Laboratories Ground Floor Building Significance Plan   | 14 |
| Figure 13 | Previous floor plan option enclosing five pillars on the east elevation   | 17 |
| Figure 14 | Ground floor plan indicating the proposed internal planning arrangement; the three hearing rooms are identified in green, breakout/meeting rooms in grey, witness rooms in blue | 17 |
| Figure 15 | View south along the ground floor to the east of the building   | 19 |







## 1.2 Pre-application discussions

Pre-application comments were provided by Heritage Victoria in September 2023 in response to a proposal to construct an additional glazed entrance and extend the glazing on the eastern elevation to increase the internal space on the ground floor. These comments were provided in response to an earlier concept design which proposed to fully enclose a section of the eastern facade (refer Section 6.2). These comments include the following recommendations:

It is strongly recommended that alternative designs are progressed which do not internalise the eastern facade pilotis/pillars. The submitted plan does not appear to show a large gain in useful internal space and therefore a strong Reasonable/Economic use argument would also be required with the application. The proposal to reinstate the original north entrance is of less concern but should be interrogated and assessed as part of a whole proposal.

Revisions have since been made to the proposal, which is the subject of this permit application (refer Section 4.0). Following the presentation of the revised design to Heritage Victoria, comments were received in August 2024 which noted the 'revised proposal appears to strike the right balance between space requirements for the occupants and the need to minimise impacts on the architectural merits of the building.' The comments noted that the permit application should include a 'clear explanation of the evolution of the design and the requirements of the space versus the constraints' (this is provided at Section 6.2.2 of this HIS).

## 2.0 STATUTORY HERITAGE CONTROLS

### 2.1 Victorian Heritage Register (VHR)

#### *Extent of registration*

The Treasury Reserve Precinct is a registered place included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR), designated as place number H1526. The building at 55 St Andrews Place is identified as the 'Former State Chemical Laboratories (B8)' in the extent of registration, which encompasses all of the land marked L1 and all of the buildings marked as follows (refer Figure 2):

- B1 Old Treasury Building including balustraded terraces
- B2 State Government Offices 2 Treasury Place including the Central Plan Office
- B3 State Government Offices 3 Treasury Place
- B4 Government Printers Office 41 St Andrews Place including 33 St Andrews Place and its fence
- B5 Statue of Justice George Higinbotham
- B6 State Government Offices 1 Treasury Place
- B7 State Government Offices 1 Macarthur Place
- B8 Former State Chemical Laboratories 55 St Andrews Place



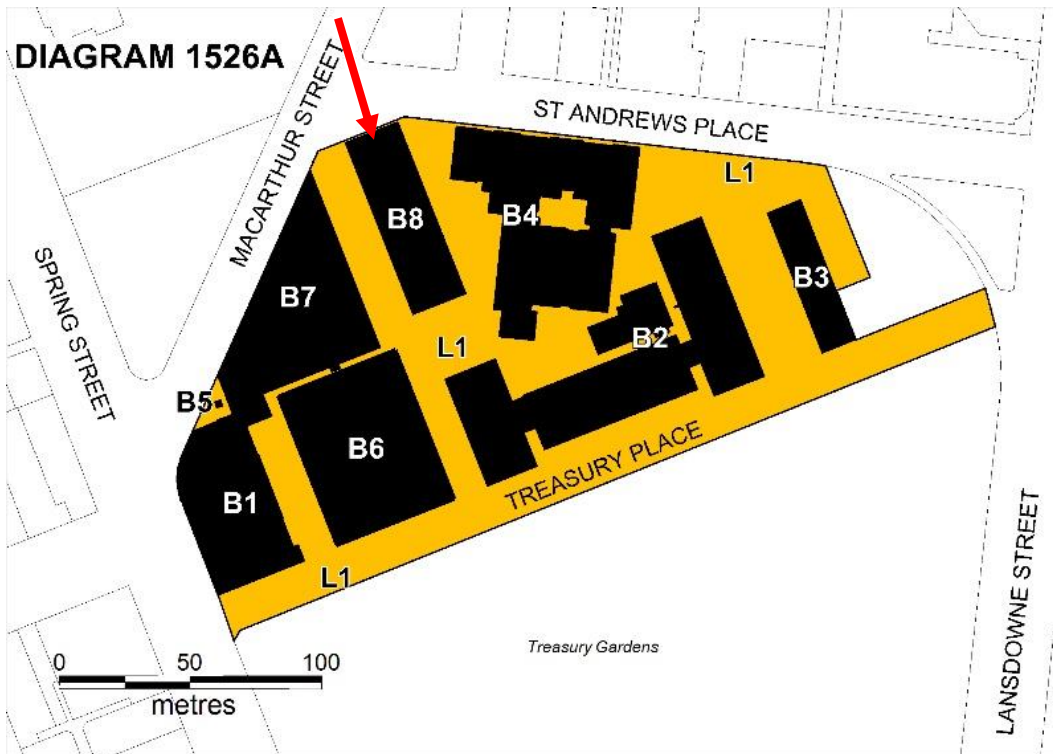


Figure 2 Treasury Reserve Precinct extent of registration plan, 55 St Andrews Place indicated  
Source: Victorian Heritage Database, accessed 16 September 2024

### *Statement of significance*

The VHR statement of significance for the Treasury Reserve Precinct is reproduced below. Reference in the statement to the 1960s buildings are in bold.

#### *What is significant?*

The Treasury Reserve containing Victorian government offices is a triangle of land on the eastern fringe of central Melbourne, bounded by Treasury Place, Spring Street, Macarthur Street, St Andrews Place and Lansdowne Street. **Construction** began on the site in the 1850s and **continued into the 1960s**.

The government offices were originally located around William Street and Flagstaff Hill, which was the point of communication from the Port of Melbourne. The site of Parliament House at the eastern end of Bourke Street (first stage completed in 1856) determined the new location of the government offices and an overall plan for buildings on the Reserve was discussed as early as 1859.

The first building in the precinct, the Government Printer's Office (1856-58), was designed by architect J J Clark and various alterations and additions were subsequently made to this building. J J Clark also designed the Renaissance Revival palazzo-style Treasury Building (1858-1862) at the western end of the precinct, facing Collins Street, which included a gold office and vaults in the basement. On completion it was the leading administration building in Melbourne, the tenants being the Governor of Victoria, the Chief Secretary, the Treasurer, and the Registrar-General and Registrar of the Supreme Court. In 1859 foundations were laid for a third building, the New Treasury Building, in the precinct at No 2 Treasury

Place, but this was not completed until 1876. A classical style was adopted by the architect Michael Egan, consistent with the existing government buildings, and this building accommodated the treasurer and other government departments, including the Public Works Department. Major remodelling included the addition of a third floor to the east and west wings in 1933 to designs by Oakley and Parkes, and the addition of the Western Annexe to the north, by Percy Everett of the PWD in 1949 (demolished 1997). No 2A Treasury Place was built in 1873-75 to accommodate the Central Plan Office.

In 1906-07 offices, designed by George Watson, were constructed for the Department of Agriculture at 3 Treasury Place to the east of the site. This brought together the most important infrastructure departments with Premiers and Treasury to establish the Reserve as a seat of government administration prior to World War 1. A Percy Everett-designed extension to the building in 1948, which included a cinema, was demolished in 1998.

In 1937 a statue of Justice George Higinbotham was unveiled. The bronze statue was designed by Paul Montford and placed to the north of the Old Treasury Building. Higinbotham was editor of the Argus, Attorney General and then Chief Justice for the State of Victoria.

**An architectural competition was held in 1962 for an office tower to be placed behind the Old Treasury Building and on an axis with Collins Street. Despite not conforming to the brief, Barry Patten of Yuncken Freeman won the competition with a design for two buildings; a low scale building directly behind the Old Treasury Building to house government ministers and the Premier, and a taller tower to the north of matching design. A third building, to house the State Chemical Laboratories, was constructed to the east of the tower at the same time in the late 1960s, and all were placed within an elevated plaza, with a basement containing the State Film Centre, an auditorium, car parking and mechanical services located below. Completed by 1970, the buildings were designed in a modern and severe style, with proportions, window openings and materials used reflecting those of surrounding buildings in the precinct. Innovative load bearing precast panelling was used in construction.**

**In 1964 the Geological Museum (1909) and the Mines Laboratory, which had been set up in 1909 in the remodelled engine house (1888), were demolished for construction of the State Chemical Laboratories. These laboratories were relocated to Werribee in 1995.** The trend in the 1980s for the dispersal of government departments to office buildings in the city was reversed in the following decades following restoration of the Old Treasury Building in 1992-95 and the subsequent refurbishment or restoration of other buildings in the Treasury Precinct. This included installation of new services and the demolition of some later accretions.

This site is part of the traditional land of the Kulin Nation.

*How is it significant?*

The Treasury Reserve Precinct is of historical, architectural and scientific (technical) significance to the State of Victoria.

*Why is it significant?*

**The Treasury Reserve Precinct is of historical significance as the centre of Victorian government administration for 150 years.** The buildings constructed prior to the dispersal of government departments, including the Government Printer's Office, Old and New Treasury Building and Department of Agriculture Building, **together with the three buildings constructed in the late 1960s, illustrate the workings of government over this extensive period.** The Former Printer's Office served the publication requirements of the government for over 100 years and represents the first phase of the government's establishment in the precinct. The Old Treasury Building was the leading administrative building of the government, has associations with the gold rush and has always been the city office for the Governor of Victoria. The New Treasury Building (No 2 Treasury Place) has associations with many important figures and housed the Premier and Cabinet until replaced by new State Government Offices, which are themselves a clear expression of political power in Victoria in the 1960s. The statue of Justice George Higinbotham is of historical significance as a commemoration of this important Victorian figure.

**The Treasury Reserve Precinct is of architectural significance for the buildings contained within the precinct.** This includes the Government Printer's Office (J J Clark, 1856-58), Old Treasury Building (J J Clark, 1858-62), New Treasury Building (M Egan, 1859-76), Department of Agriculture Building (G Watson, 1906-07) and **the State Government Offices and former State Laboratories (Yuncken Freeman, 1967-68).** **The latter are an important collection of civic buildings which are designed as an ensemble within a plaza in a severe, yet sympathetic style.**

The former Central Plan Office, former Printer's Office and the Old Treasury Building are of scientific (technical) significance as a demonstration of early fireproofing methods. In particular, the floor construction of the Old Treasury Building demonstrates an early form of fire protection and the former Central Plan Office contains fireproof shutters. **The three 1960s buildings show an important and innovative use of load bearing precast panels in their construction.**<sup>1</sup>

#### *Permit policy and exemptions*

The permit policy for the Treasury Reserve Precinct addresses significance and is reproduced in part below:

The cultural heritage significance of the place is principally due to the importance of the precinct as the centre of Victorian government administration and the architectural character of the individual buildings. Any alterations that impact on its significance are subject to permit application.

There is one relevant permit exemption in place for the Treasury Reserve Precinct as follows:

Works to the interiors of all 1960s buildings are permit exempt.<sup>2</sup>

The subject building is one of the three 1960s buildings within the registered place.

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<sup>1</sup> Victorian Heritage Database, 'Treasury Reserve Precinct', <https://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/places/801>, accessed 16 September 2024.

<sup>2</sup> Victorian Heritage Database, 'Treasury Reserve Precinct', <https://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/places/801>, accessed 18 September 2024.

## 2.2 Heritage Overlay (HO)

The Heritage Overlay (HO) for heritage place 'Treasury Reserve Precinct, 3 Treasury Place, & St Andrews Place & Macarthur Street & 2 Treasury Place, East Melbourne, and Spring Street & 1 Treasury Place & 1 Macarthur Place, Melbourne' under the Melbourne Planning Scheme is scheduled as HO174. The mapping for HO174 is consistent with the VHR extent.

In accordance with Clause 43.01 of the Melbourne Planning Scheme, no permit is required under the Heritage Overlay to develop a heritage place which is included in the Victorian Heritage Register, other than an application to subdivide a heritage place of which all or part is included in the Victorian Heritage Register.

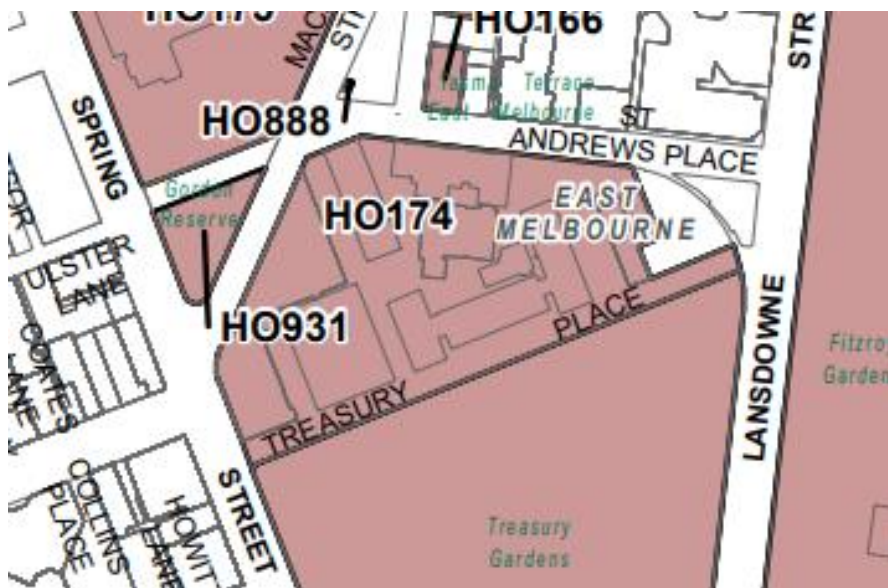


Figure 3 Heritage Overlay plan showing the HO extent for Treasury Reserve Precinct (HO174)  
Source: Melbourne Planning Scheme

## 3.0 OVERVIEW HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION<sup>3</sup>

The Treasury Reserve Precinct is a civic reserve of Victorian government office buildings (Figure 5). Construction on the first building, the Government Printer's Office, began in 1856 with later development of the precinct continuing throughout the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, into the 1960s. The building at 55 St Andrews Place was constructed as part of the State Public Offices project, which also included the construction of the State Government Offices at 1 Treasury Place (B6) and 1 Macarthur Place (B7). 55 St Andrews Place was the last of the three buildings to be constructed and was completed in 1969. It was part of the State Public Offices project as a whole that was awarded the RIAA Victorian Chapter Bronze Medal in 1970. The building was constructed for use as the State Chemical Laboratories and was later used by the Victorian Department of Justice and more recently as Parliamentary offices.

<sup>3</sup> Overview history derived from the *Treasury Reserve Conservation Management Plan*, prepared by Context Pty Ltd and Trethewan Architecture, April 2014.

The building is a narrow rectangular office building of five levels above a basement level. It is constructed of pre-cast concrete panels with regular fenestration, supported by large angled pilotis/pillars above a glazed recessed ground floor. It was constructed as a four level building (Figure 4); an additional upper level, set back from the main building line, was added in 1996 as part of the redevelopment of the Treasury Reserve. In addition to the upper level, there have been some alterations to the building as originally constructed. This includes the removal of former entries at the north end of the building, and the alteration of a projecting entry on the west elevation.

The building addresses street level to St Andrews Place to the north (Figure 6), with a paved plaza and landscaping at this level to the west of the building (Figure 7). Vehicular entry to the basement level is provided to the east of the building; this basement level is visible due to the steep gradient of the land to the south in this location (Figure 8). A narrow balustraded/fenced walkway extends along the east and south sides of the building above the basement level (Figure 9).



Figure 4 1967 image of the subject building under construction, prior to the addition of the upper level in 1996

Source: State Library of Victoria Pictures Collection, Image ID: 1792112



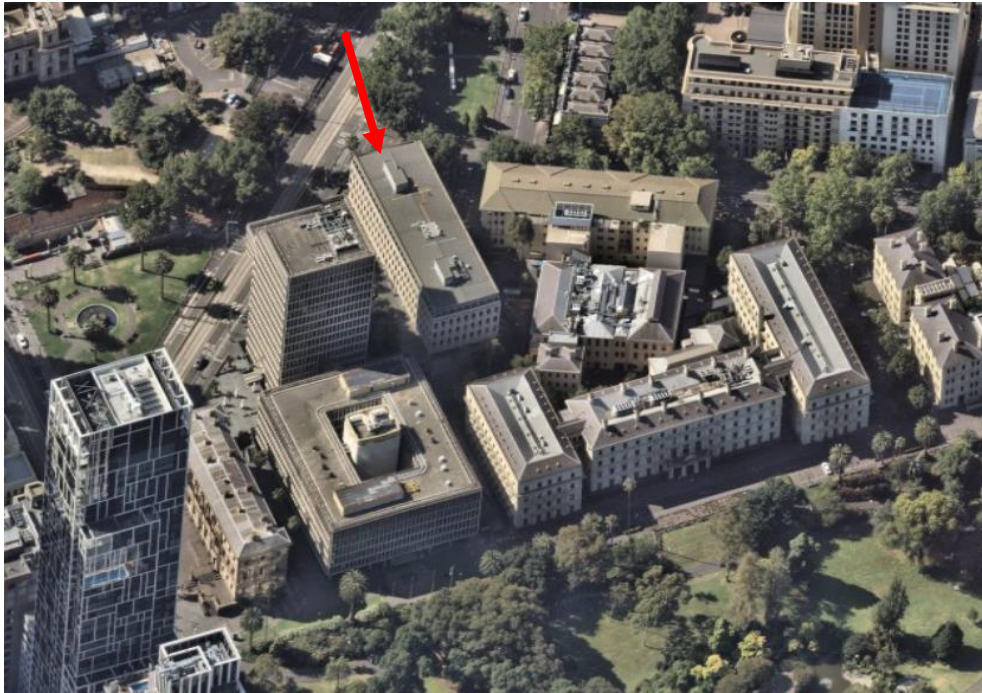


Figure 5 Oblique aerial imagery of Treasury Reserve and environs, 55 St Andrews Place indicated  
Source: Nearthmap, image date 3 February 2024



Figure 6 Ground floor north elevation to St Andrews Place





Figure 7 West elevation, view from St Andrews Place; the ground floor projecting entry is indicated



Figure 8 View from within the Treasury Reserve to the south and east elevations of the building



Figure 9 View east along the ground floor to the south of the building

## 4.0 PROPOSED WORKS

The proposal is for modification to part of the ground level of the building at 55 St Andrews Place to provide additional internal space for Parliamentary committee hearings and meeting rooms for Members and parliamentary staff who occupy the building (refer Section 5.0). The majority of the ground level will be retained as existing, with demolition limited to the airlock entry on the west elevation and one door on the north elevation, as well as sections of the existing façade glazing on the north, east and west elevations to accommodate new entries and an increase in floor space. Where existing non-original entries are proposed to be removed on the north and west elevations respectively, façade glazing will be installed to match the existing.

On the east elevation, it is proposed to remove a section of the existing façade glazing towards the northern end of the building. The façade to be removed measures approximately 22m, and is the equivalent of three bays in length (refer Figure 10). The proposed new ground level will project in the order of 1.6m from the existing building line to the east, to align with the centre of the pillars. The façade glazing will be installed along the new alignment to match the existing materiality of the ground level, with make good works to all surfaces as required (refer Figure 15).

On the north and west elevations, the façade removal is proposed to small sections of the existing glazing only (approximately 1.2m in length), to accommodate one new projecting entry on each elevation. These airlock entries will measure approximately 3.8m x 2.2m, and will be set away from the existing pillars on each elevation.



Internally, the proposed works include demolition of the existing ground level layout, and a new internal fitout to accommodate the project brief. In addition to compliance with the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* for access requirements and general amenities including a carer's room, first aid room, kitchenette and refurbishment of general fixtures and finishes (such as toilets), the project requirements include:

- three purpose built committee hearing rooms, equipped with video conferencing and public broadcast capability and with a public viewing capacity (separated from the committee members) of 20 persons (Hearing Room 1) and 37 persons (Hearing Rooms 2 & 3);
- two witness rooms to enable the support of witnesses and the work of the committees;
- two breakout rooms being connected by adjacent rooms to allow clearance of Members in the case of a security incident (these rooms would be used as (in-person) meeting rooms when committee hearings are not being held);
- two meeting rooms equipped with video conferencing capability, each with approximately 12 person seating capacities;
- one multi-purpose meeting room equipped with video conferencing capability and of sufficient size to provide approximately 20 person public seating capacity, which could be temporarily set up for limited hearings if required;
- two separately located entrances, one entry for Members and staff to provide a separate and secure access, and one for the public (with security screening); and
- purpose built room for Victoria Police, Sergeant in Charge of Protective Services Officers.



Figure 10 East elevation and basement level entry, view from St Andrews Place



Figure 11 Proposed view to south from St Andrews Place  
Source: Gray Puksand, drawing no. HV00.07

## 5.0 REASON FOR THE WORKS

Committee hearings are an important part of Parliamentary procedure and the development of policy for Victoria. Parliamentary committees encourage public participation by way of public hearings. It is part of their mandate to engage with the public for information to inform the committee's findings and recommendations to Government. Public hearings are typically held at 55 St Andrews Place, with some also held at Parliament House. Members of the public and the media can attend open hearings and appropriate space and facilities are required to hold these hearings, including clear sight lines for the public, Members and witnesses within the hearing room space. All committee hearings are now broadcast live and clear sightlines are also important for broadcast equipment.

The Parliament of Victoria does not currently have dedicated or appropriately functional committee hearing room space, and Parliament House does not have the necessary amenities to provide for the introduction of committee hearing rooms within this building. 55 St Andrews Place is considered part of the security boundary of the Parliament precinct and currently provides much of the support facilities for Members to conduct their business as members of parliament. In considering the current function, as well as security provision and location, this building has been identified as the appropriate location for the introduction of specialised and dedicated committee hearing rooms.

## 6.0 ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE IMPACTS

### 6.1 Heritage Act considerations

Relevant considerations that must be considered by the Executive Director are set out at Section 101(2) of the *Heritage Act 2017* and addressed in this HIS are:

- Impact on the cultural heritage significance of the registered place – s. 101(2)(a); and
- Impact on the reasonable or economic use of the registered place – s. 101(2)(b)

In assessing impact on the cultural heritage significance of the Treasury Reserve Precinct, reference is made to the VHR Statement of Significance and the 2014 CMP.

## 6.2 Impact on the cultural significance of the registered place - s. 101(2)(a)

### 6.2.1 Conservation Management Plan

A Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for Treasury Reserve was prepared in 2014 by Context Pty Ltd in conjunction with Trethowan Architecture. The CMP includes an assessment of significance of the Treasury Reserve and provides conservation policies and strategies to guide the management of the whole of the heritage place. It also includes specific policies for the individual buildings that make up the precinct.

The CMP policies for Treasury Reserve state that the significance of the Treasury Reserve derives from:

its tangible heritage values including the setting, design, layout and buildings, elements, objects, furniture, plans, photographs and archival documentation...<sup>4</sup>

The stated goal is to:

conserve the significance of the Treasury Reserve as a whole by protecting the significant urban form that has evolved since the 1850s with substantial developments in the 1850s, 1870s, c1900, 1960s, and 1990s...<sup>5</sup>

The relevant conservation policy is as follows:

Discourage the adaptation of spaces or elements that would result in a loss of cultural significance.<sup>6</sup>

Levels of significance have been assigned to the buildings and areas/spaces between the buildings in the CMP. The Building Significance Plan for 55 St Andrews Place is reproduced at Figure 12 indicating that the external façade and pilotis/pillars are identified as being of A level significance. A level spaces and elements are defined in the CMP as follows:

An outstanding major element / space that have a high degree of intactness and integrity which relates to its original use

*and* can demonstrate original built form, fabric and/or decorative elements

*or* change has occurred but the change is of high historic value.

The element / space significantly contributes to the building's cultural significance and makes an essential contribution to the understanding of the overall cultural significance of Treasury Reserve.<sup>7</sup>

This plan indicates that the lift core/vertical circulation is original but has been modified and is of B level significance (defined as altered but still contributory to overall significance) and that the balance of the internal arrangement is of C level significance (defined as substantially altered). This plan also indicates that the existing projecting entry and façade on the west elevation has been altered since 2014.

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<sup>4</sup> Context and Trethowan Architecture, *Treasury Reserve Conservation Management Plan*, 14 April 2014, Vol. 1, p. 203.

<sup>5</sup> Context and Trethowan Architecture, *Treasury Reserve Conservation Management Plan*, 14 April 2014, Vol. 1, p. 203.

<sup>6</sup> Context and Trethowan Architecture, *Treasury Reserve Conservation Management Plan*, 14 April 2014, Vol. 1, p. 204.

<sup>7</sup> Context and Trethowan Architecture, *Treasury Reserve Conservation Management Plan*, 14 April 2014, Vol. 2A, Section 8.13, p. 3.

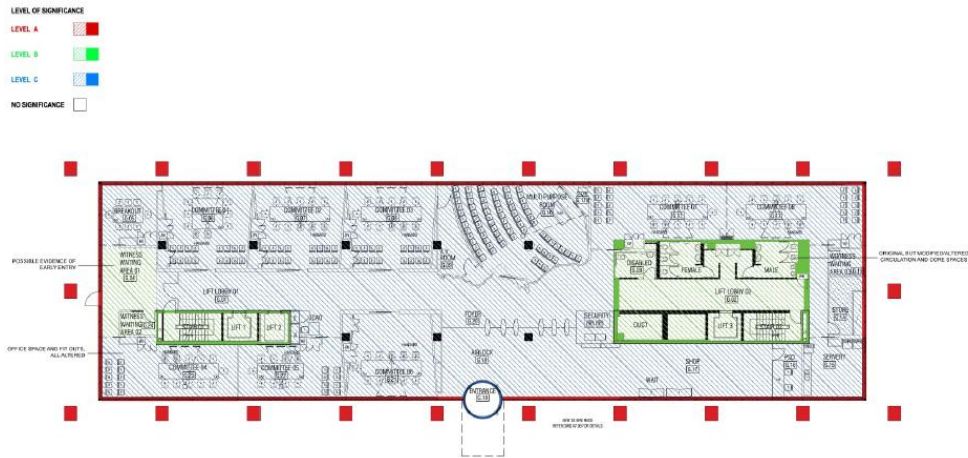


Figure 12 B8 – Former State Chemical Laboratories Ground Floor Building Significance Plan  
 Source: *Treasury Reserve Conservation Management Plan, 2014, Vol. 2A*

The significance of 55 St Andrews Place as identified in the CMP is reproduced below.

55 St Andrews Place is architecturally significant as part of the group of modern buildings and as an element of Treasury Reserve. The external structural grid and recessed ground floor differ from the architecture of the other two buildings however the pre-cast cladding, whilst different in design to the other buildings, is similar in its adoption of the masonry wall aesthetic.<sup>8</sup>

The goal of the CMP policies for this building is to:

Manage 55 St Andrews Place in order to retain the integrity of the building as part of the State Public Offices group (together with 1 Treasury Place and 1 Macarthur Street) and as a representative example of modern architecture.<sup>9</sup>

The relevant specific policies for 55 St Andrews Place included in the CMP are as follows:

Retain the following elements and spaces that are noted as A and B level areas. These include:

- The exterior facades and structural grid of external pilotis
- The location of lift cores, stairs and amenities

Future development should retain the ground floor glazed wall and pilotis that are an important feature of the architectural design.<sup>10</sup>

The proposal has had regard to the CMP policies and the elements of significance as identified above.

<sup>8</sup> Context and Trethowan Architecture, *Treasury Reserve Conservation Management Plan*, 14 April 2014, Vol. 2, p. 92.

<sup>9</sup> Context and Trethowan Architecture, *Treasury Reserve Conservation Management Plan*, 14 April 2014, Vol. 2, p. 92.

<sup>10</sup> Context and Trethowan Architecture, *Treasury Reserve Conservation Management Plan*, 14 April 2014, Vol. 2A, Section 8.13, pp. 7-8.



### 6.2.2 Consideration of options

A series of options for the introduction of committee hearing and meeting rooms within 55 St Andrews Place have been considered. These are outlined in the table below, with a comment on each provided. By way of general comment, it is noted that the internal structural arrangement of the building, including the lift cores and internal column grids, as well as necessary considerations relating to accessibility and audio/visual requirements, have dictated the availability of space and decisions regarding potential internal layout. Similarly, the required separation of entries and meeting rooms for committee members, witnesses, staff and members of the public has also driven considerations relating to the proposed works.

| Option  | Comment  |
|---|--|
| <p>Utilising existing floor plate only, no additional space provided</p>                              | <p>This option cannot be pursued as there is insufficient space within the existing ground floor of the building to provide the required hearing and meeting room facilities. This includes requirements relating to hearing participant and gallery (public seating) numbers for each hearing room, as well as minimum numbers for the witness and meeting rooms, and the required amenities for committee members, staff and the public. The project requirements cannot be accommodated within the existing ground floor space.</p> <p>The upper levels of the building are fully occupied by the Department of Parliamentary Services and are not available for use for committee hearing rooms. It would also present security and other logistical problems with the ability to accommodate members of the public on higher levels of a secure building.</p> |
| <p>Projecting addition to the east, fully enclosing pillars within the addition (refer Figure 13)</p> | <p>This option (or similar) was originally presented to Heritage Victoria, with pre-application comments received expressing concern about the enclosure of the pillars within the projecting façade (refer Section 1.2). This option would result in alterations to the presentation of the ground floor by way of internalising a series of pillars on the east elevation. It was determined not to pursue this option because of the potential for adverse heritage impacts on elements of significance of the building (as identified in the CMP).</p>   |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>Addition to the ground floor to the south end of the building</p>                               | <p>Consideration was given to an addition at the southern end of the building on the basis that a projection to the ground floor in this location may be less visible in public views to the building. However, the existing planning arrangement of the building, in particular the large lift core towards the southern end of the building, inhibits possible room layout options. The provision of the necessary internal planning requirements is not available or possible by way of an addition at this end of the building.</p>  |
| <p>Addition to the ground floor to the north and west sides of the building</p>                    | <p>In considering the potential for additional ground floor space to the north and west sides of the building, these do not present as opportunities for an extension to the ground level. Given the visibility and prominence of these elevations in views to the building, particularly from St Andrews Place and the plaza to the west of the building, it is considered that any change to the ground level arrangement would result in an adverse impact on an understanding of the original building design and the primary presentation and significant elements of the building.</p> |
| <p>Addition to the east, partial enclosure of pillars only (current proposal, refer Figure 14)</p> | <p>The current proposal for a more limited projection to the ground floor on the east side of the building is considered to provide the greatest opportunity for the provision of additional floor space while maintaining visibility of the pillars to all sides of the building. This is considered further below.</p>   |

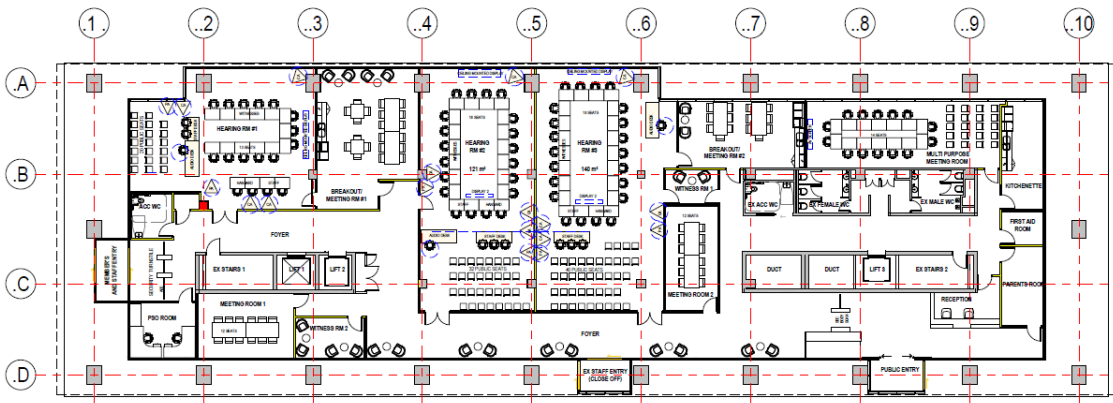


Figure 13 Previous floor plan option enclosing five pillars on the east elevation  
 Source: Parliament of Victoria; Department of Parliamentary Services

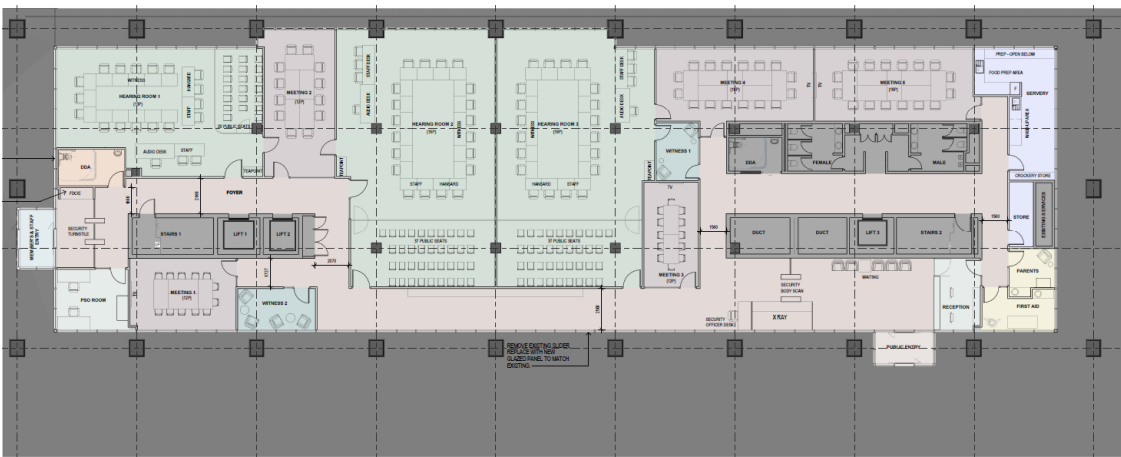


Figure 14 Ground floor plan indicating the proposed internal planning arrangement; the three hearing rooms are identified in green, breakout/meeting rooms in grey, witness rooms in blue  
 Source: Gray Pukсанд

### 6.2.3 Assessment of heritage impacts

The VHR statement of significance for the Treasury Reserve Precinct states that the place is of historical, architectural and scientific (technical) significance. The historical significance is derived from the place collectively as the centre of Victorian government administration for 150 years, including the three 1960s buildings which illustrate the workings of government over this extensive period. There will be no impact on the historical significance of the Treasury Reserve Precinct as the historical function of the place will not be affected by the proposed works. The architectural significance of the registered place is derived from the buildings contained within the precinct, the majority of which will not be affected by the proposal. This includes two of the three 1960s buildings within the precinct, which will remain as existing. There will be some change to the original design of the former State Chemical Laboratories (the subject building), but this is limited in extent and has been carefully considered to minimise the potential for heritage impacts. This is considered further below. The scientific (technical) significance demonstrated by the early fireproofing methods, particularly within the Old Treasury Building and the

former Central Plan Office will not be affected by the proposal as no works are proposed to these buildings. Similarly, the technical significance demonstrated by the innovative use of load bearing precast panels in the 1960s buildings will not be affected by the proposal as no change is proposed to the building fabric above the ground floor of the subject building.

In considering the potential for heritage impacts on the individual building, it is recognised that there will be some impact on the significant fabric of the place, through the replacement of the existing façade glazing in the area of the proposed addition, as well as more limited removal of fabric to introduce two new entries to the building. This impact is mitigated by the limited extent of demolition overall and utilisation of materials to match the existing building fabric so there is consistency to the presentation of the ground floor, albeit with a proposed projection to the ground floor building line to part of the eastern elevation.

In terms of visual impacts, the new entries will be necessarily visible but will read as minor insertions to the building to facilitate access. There has previously been some change to the building entries, and the proposed new entries will not impact on the presentation of the pillars in these locations or on an understanding of the design of the building incorporating a recessed ground level. The potential for visual impacts is greater on the east side of the building where the additional floor space will alter the presentation of part of the ground floor of the building. This is mitigated in part by the location of the proposed addition away from St Andrews Place and the north side of the building, so that the recessed building line is held at the corner and partway along the side elevation of the building. In terms of views along the east elevation of the building, the separation of the existing building line from the pillars is quite narrow (evident at Figure 15), so the potential for visual impacts is lessened in part by the nature of the existing ground floor building arrangement. In terms of views to the south-east more generally, the proposed addition is set away from St Andrews Place which will help to minimise the prominence of the addition in views from this location. Additional factors that will help to minimise the potential for visual impacts are utilising materials to match the existing fabric as well as the existing balustrade/fence that extends along the east side of the building. The gradient of the land in this location which slopes down to the south and visibility of the basement level and vehicular entry along this elevation will also help to minimise the potential for prominence of the addition in these views (refer Figure 10).

Importantly, the design of the proposed addition, which conceals and extends only partway along the pillars to both sides, will maintain visibility and an understanding of the regular arrangement of the pillars to the ground floor of the building. Recognising there will be some change to the presentation of the building in this location, the structural grid of external pillars will remain evident and the ground floor glazed wall will be retained as existing to the majority of the building, with fabric to match the existing in the location of the proposed new addition.

While the required internal layout and planning arrangement has dictated the proposed works, it is noted that works to the interior of the building are permit exempt. Notwithstanding, there will be no impact on the subject building or broader heritage place from the internal demolition and fitout as proposed. The Treasury Reserve Precinct as the centre of Victorian government administration and the architectural character of the individual buildings will not be affected by the proposed internal works at 55 St Andrews Place.



Figure 15 View south along the ground floor to the east of the building

### 6.3 Impact on the reasonable or economic use of the registered place - s. 101(2)(b)

The proposal presents as a reasonable use of the registered place. The Treasury Reserve Precinct is the centre of Victorian government administration, and the use of the subject building for Parliamentary offices is directly related to the historical function of the place. The proposal provides for necessary Parliamentary operation and services as associated with committee hearings, for which there is currently no dedicated location. As outlined above, the subject building currently provides many administrative functions and forms part of the security boundary of the Parliamentary precinct, which is a critical consideration in the selection of an appropriate location for the provision of the required committee hearing rooms.

Taking into account pre-application comments in relation to additional internal space, it is recognised that a considerable addition to the ground floor space is not provided by the proposed addition. However, it is noted that the physical requirements for the committee and meeting room spaces can be met with only limited change to the existing building footprint which assists in achieving an outcome seeking to minimise heritage impacts.

No submission is being made in relation to economic considerations.

## **7.0 CONCLUSION**

The proposal for the introduction of dedicated committee hearing and meeting rooms at 55 St Andrews Place has had regard for the required functional brief and the existing condition of the building. The careful design of the proposed works reflects an understanding of the elements of significance of the subject building and registered place more broadly. The key design features of the building, including the external structural grid and recessed ground level will be largely maintained, with limited intervention only as required and comparatively minor in extent. The proposal presents as an appropriate use of the subject building within the registered place and one which can be supported from a heritage perspective.