

Heritage Impact Statement

Former Newmarket Saleyards & Abattoirs (Kensington Community High School)

Permit Application P40178

December 2024





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1.0 Introduction

This report has been prepared on behalf of Fleetwood Australia in relation to the permit application for the installation of a portable toilet block at the former Newmarket Saleyards/Kensington Community High School (P40178). It provides an analysis of the potential heritage impacts of the proposal, in accordance with the request for further information issued by Heritage Victoria on 26 September 2024.

2.0 Methodology

This heritage impact statement has been prepared with regard to the *Burra Charter* and its guidelines, as amended in 2013, and in general accordance with *Heritage Victoria Guidelines for Preparing Heritage Impact Statements* (June 2021). It seeks to respond to key matters that are set out on page 3 of those guidelines:

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

3.0 Sources of Information

The analysis below is informed by site inspections, along with a review of the Victorian Heritage Register documentation for the former Newmarket Saleyards and Abattoirs Newmarket Saleyards and Abattoirs Newmarket Saleyards and Abattoirs (VHR H1430). Reference is also made to the following documents:

- Heritage Victoria Permit Application P40178 Request for Further Information (Dated 26 September 2024).
- 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).
- State Library of Victoria Picture Collection.
- Museum Victoria Collections

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4.0 History

In August 1856, a Crown grant was made to Melbourne City Council for 24 acres (9.7 hectares) of land to be developed as the Newmarket Saleyards.¹ The site was a trapezium shaped block of land, bounded by Racecourse Road, Smithfield Road, Epsom Road and Market Street, with abattoirs adjoining the saleyards to the south-west. Towards the end of 1857 tenders were invited for the construction of markets to accommodate 1000 head of cattle and 5000 head of sheep.

The official opening of the Newmarket Saleyards and City Abattoirs took place in 1861. The saleyard facilities grew to accommodate close to 2000 sheep pens, 232 bullock pends, 300 calf pens, drafting races, holding yards and loading ramps. Around 1875, a Saleyards administration buildings with a central courtyard was erected near the corner of Racecourse and Smithfield Roads.² A series of additions were made to the north of the administration building in 1911, 1916 and 1919.

The 1880s and 1890s saw considerable expansion and new construction on both the Newmarket Saleyards and Abattoirs sites. The numbers of stock yarded at the Saleyards increased tremendously at the turn of the century with the establishment of an export trade.³ By the 1930s Newmarket was Australia's premier livestock centre. Records were set in 1944 for sales of 2.5 million sheep, three million lambs and almost one million store sheep, and for 650 000 cattle in 1973.⁴

While beneficial for employment and the commercial development of the Kensington area, the industries associated with the Saleyards and Abattoirs commonly produced noxious by-products and waste and resulted in potential dangers for residents.⁵ Repeated calls for the closure of the saleyards were made through successive decades.

Ultimately, economic hardship and drought conditions in Australia during the late 1970s and early 1980s; decentralisation of the livestock industry; and urban development all contributed to a State Government announcement in 1984 that the Newmarket Saleyards were to close in July of the following year. The final cattle sale took place in September 1985, although operation of the facility did not fully cease until 1987.⁶

The Saleyards were subsequently redeveloped as a private and public housing estate known as Lynch's Bridge. In 1988, architects Henderson & Lodge called for tenders for alterations and refurbishment of the former Newmarket Saleyards administration building to accommodate Kensington Community High School.⁷ The school had previously occupied a dilapidated house in Kensington with a former trucking yard and shed at the rear.⁸

¹ https://collections.museumsvictoria.com.au/articles/4305

² https://collections.museumsvictoria.com.au/articles/4305

https://collections.museumsvictoria.com.au/articles/4305

⁴ John Lack, 'Newmarket Saleyards' www.emelbourne.net.au

⁵ https://collections.museumsvictoria.com.au/articles/4304

https://collections.museumsvictoria.com.au/articles/4573

⁷ The Age, 12 October 1988, p. 81.

⁸ The Age, 2 December 1980, p. 11.



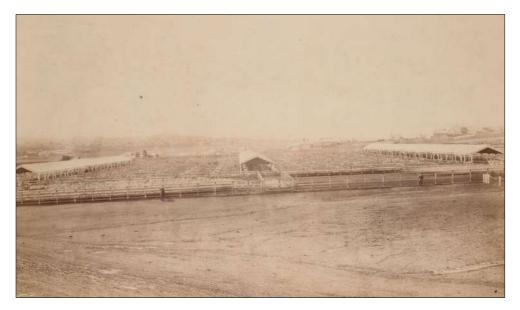


Figure 1 Newmarket Saleyards, c1866. Source: State Library of Victoria.

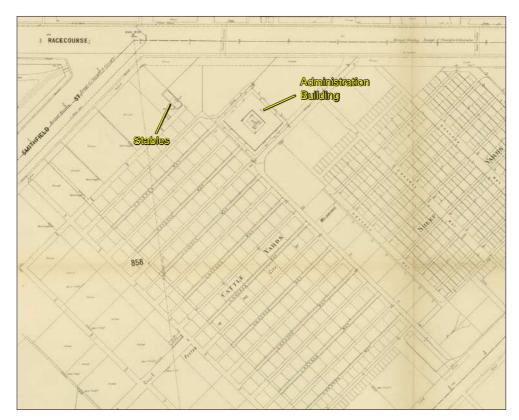


Figure 2 Extract from a 1897 MMBW plan of the Newmarket Saleyards. Source: State Library of Victoria.





Figure 3 A 1953 aerial photograph looking west across the Newmarket Saleyards. Source: State Library of Victoria.

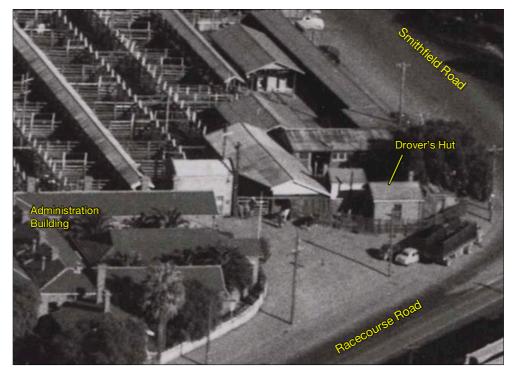


Figure 4 Detail of the 1953 aerial photograph showing the location of the proposed toilet block.



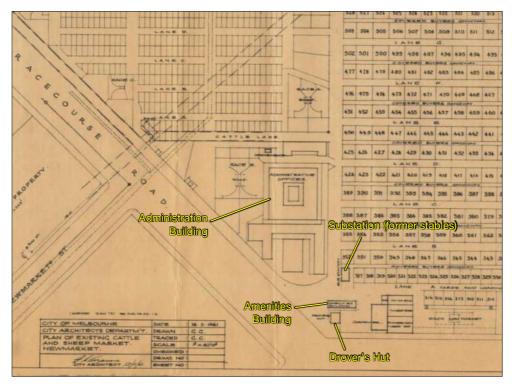


Figure 5 Extract from a 1961 site plan of the Newmarket Saleyards. Source: City of Melbourne Library.



Figure 6 View from the Saleyard's clocktower looking north-west, 1985. Source: Museum Victoria.



5.0 Description

The former Newmarket Saleyards and Abattoirs have been largely redeveloped as a medium density housing estate. Sections of the bluestone paving and plantings along the stock route and in former holding yards have been retained as part of public reserve. The Saleyards site retains the main administration building, various sheds/outbuildings and a section of the cattle holding yards and bluestone paving.

The historic Saleyards buildings are now occupied by Kensington Community High School. A basketball court has been created for the school in a bluestone paved yard to the north-west of the administration building. Adjacent to the basketball court is a small red-brick building with a gable roof, identified in the extent of registration as a drover's hut. This structure appears to date to the early twentieth century. The proposed toilet block is to be located to the south of the drover's hut, occupying a small part of the bluestone paved yard. South of the toilet block site is a former stables, which is shown on an 1897 MMBW plan of the area [Figure 2]. A 1961 plan of the Saleyards shows the stables to have been converted into a substation by that time [Figure 5]. This building is now used by the school as a music studio. The long, metal shed abutting the west of the stables is absent from the 1961 Saleyards plan, but it can be seen in a 1985 photograph [Figure 6] – ie the shed is presumed to have been built c1962-1985.



Figure 7 Aerial photograph of subject site.





Figure 8 View looking north towards the Drover's Hut.



Figure 9 The basketball court to the immediate west of the proposed toilet block.





Figure 10 Former stables (converted into a substation in the post period). The metal sheds to the right were constructed after 1961.



Figure 11 View from Racecourse Road looking west towards the Saleyards gates. The gates are a registered item but are not original. The 1953 aerial photograph at figure 4 shows a different fence/gate alignment (further west of the present gates).





Figure 12 The north elevation of the former Saleyard's administration building.



Figure 13 View from the corner of Racecourse and Smithfield Roads. Note the proposed toilet block would be concealed from this vantage point.





Figure 14 View looking east from Smithfield Road. The proposed toilet block would be concealed by the fence and trees.

6.0 Heritage Listings

Heritage Victoria

The former Newmarket Saleyards and Abattoirs is included on the Victorian Heritage Register as place H1430. The extent of registration is shown in below (Figure 15) and noted as:

As Executive Director for the purpose of the Heritage Act, I give notice under section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended in that the Heritage Register Number 1430 in the category described as a Heritage Place is now described as:

Former Newmarket Saleyards and Abattoirs, Corner Racecourse and Smithfield Roads, Newmarket, Moonee Valley City Council

EXTENT:

- 1. All the buildings marked: B1 Saleyards Administration Building and extensions, B2 Administration Building, B3 fences and paving, B4 Pens, B5 Gates, B6 Drovers Hut, B7 Hut, B8 Clock-tower, B9 Abattoirs Gatehouse Buildings, B10 Sheep Dip marked on Diagram 1430A, 1430B & 1430C held by the Executive Director.
- 2. All of the following land (including remnant bluestone paving and timber fencing); L1 all of the land described in Volume 1212 Folio 371 Allotment B three of Section 2 in the Parish of Doutta Galla including bluestone lane; L2 all that land in the Parish of Doutta Galla being Reserve No. 1 (Municipal Purposes) on Plan of Subdivision No. 210799R described in Vol. 9800 Fol. 309; L3 Reserve No.1 for POS (8215m2), Plan of Subdivision PS 340235Y Vol 10158 Fol 307 part of former Stock Route; L4 Reserve No.3 for POS (3342 m2) Plan of Subdivision PS 340235YVol 10158 Fol 307; L5 Reserve No.2 for POS (1975 m2) Plan of Subdivision PS



340235YVol 10158 Fol 307; L6 the footprint of the Abattoirs Gatehouse Buildings being Part of land described in Volume 10288 Folio 866.

3. All of the Trees listed below marked on Diagram 1430B and 1430C held by the Executive Director:

T1 Schinus molle (Pepper Tree)

T2 Eucalyptus camaldulensis (Red River Gum)

T3-T12 Schinus molle (Pepper Tree)

T13 Schinus molle (Pepper Tree)

T14 Eucalyptus camaldulensis (Red River Gum)

T15 Eucalyptus camaldulensis (Red River Gum)

T16-T20 Schinus molle (Pepper Tree) T21 Schinus molle (Pepper Tree)

T22 Ulmus procera (English Elm) T23 Schinus molle (Pepper Tree)

T24 Ulmus procera (English Elm)

T25 Schinus molle (Pepper Tree)

T26 Ulmus procera (English Elm)

T27 Ulmus procera (English Elm)

T28 Schinus molle (Pepper Tree)

T29 Schinus molle (Pepper Tree)

T30 Schinus molle (Pepper Tree) T31 Schinus molle (Pepper Tree)

T32 Schinus molle (Pepper Tree)

T33 Schinus molle (Pepper Tree)

T34 Populus x canescens 'Aurea' (Golden Poplar)

T35 Populus x canescens Aurea (Golden Poplar)

T36 Schinus molle (Pepper Tree)

T37 Schinus molle (Pepper Tree)

T38 Schinus molle (Pepper Tree)

T39 Ficus macrophylla (Moreton Bay Fig)

T40 Ficus macrophylla (Moreton Bay Fig)

T41 Schinus molle (Pepper Tree)

T42 Schinus molle (Pepper Tree) and

All of the Ulmus procera (English Elms) on the former Stock Route

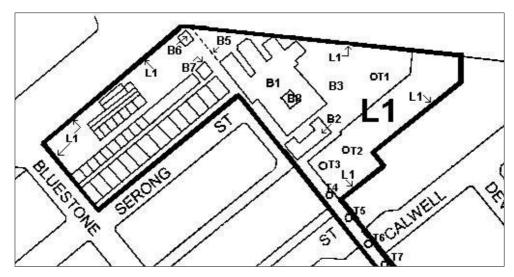


Figure 15 Part of the extent of registration for the former Newmarket Saleyards and Abattoirs.



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City of Melbourne

The former Newmarket Saleyards and Abattoirs is included on the Heritage Overlay Schedule to Melbourne Planning Scheme as HO262. It is nonetheless recognised that the responsible authority with regard to heritage permit applications is Heritage Victoria, and Council will have a role as a referral body.

National Trust of Australia (Victoria)

The former Newmarket Saleyards and Abattoirs are included on the National Trust's heritage register as a place of state significance (File No. B5379).

7.0 Significance

As noted above, the former Newmarket Saleyards and Abattoirs are included on the Victorian Heritage Register, and are recognised as being of State significance. The statement of significance for the site, as endorsed by Heritage Victoria, provides a detailed appreciation of the significance of the place, and is reproduced in full below:

What is significant?

In the late 1850s, the Melbourne City Council decided to move its cattle yards from the corner of Elizabeth and Victoria Streets to a more distant location in the then semi rural district of Flemington. Land was granted in 1856 to the Newmarket saleyards and they were completed in 1858 with the first sales held in January 1859. Served by the extension and refurbishing of the Essendon to Melbourne Railway in the 1870s, by 1888 almost half a million animals passed annually through the markets and in the twentieth century it became the world's biggest livestock auction market. Behind the markets, stretching to the Saltwater River, were the abattoirs; the building of which commenced in 1861. The former City Abattoirs were located on a site of 57 acres bounded by Smithfield, Epsom and Westbourne Roads and the Maribyrnong River, which was granted to the Melbourne City Council on 30 August 1856.

The location of the Saleyards in proximity to the metropolitan area enabled both the local and the export trade to be supplied, and for a long time the sales were regarded as a barometer for process throughout the State. The Epsom Road Bridge and subway was constructed in 1911 and was designed by John Monash's Company, the Reinforced Concrete and Monier Pipe Construction Co. It was constructed to cater for the increased livestock movement from the Saleyards to the Abattoirs, which was causing problems for residents and for traffic in the area. The Saleyards and Abattoirs were closed in 1985 and have subsequently been developed for medium density housing.

The early administration building constructed c.1874 survives on the saleyards site. It is a square planned red brick structure with a central courtyard. The slate roof is hipped and the buildings feature cast iron lacework. On the western side of this building is a series of extensions dating from c. 1911 and c. 1919. In the open courtyard stands a clock tower built c.1939. Most of the yards were demolished in 1987-88 but a small area of cattle pens and some fencing remain. The only building remaining from the abattoirs is the administrative, quarantine and workshop complex. Built c. 1903, it has central gates, which face Smithfield Rd. It is a red brick building, which displays neoclassical elements of the Edwardian period with pediments to the gables and pilasters and corbelled bands framing the windows. Sections of the bluestone paving and plantings along the stock route and former holding yards have been retained. The route is bluestone paved and tree lined before it runs under the road via the stock subway.





From the underpass it proceeds into the Abattoirs site adjacent to the holding yards and then along the rear of this site down to Hobson's Rd.

How is it significant?

Newmarket Saleyards and Abattoirs are of historical, social and architectural importance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The former Newmarket Saleyards and Abattoirs are of historical and social importance as they were the centre for livestock sales and related secondary industry in Melbourne until the 1980s, covering a span of over 130 years since their first establishment. By 1940 the saleyards were the biggest sheep and land market in the world and one of the three largest for cattle sales. The former abattoirs are of historical importance as they were the largest public abattoirs in Victoria and played a key role in developing and maintaining the local meat industry in the State. The Saleyards and Abattoirs are the most tangible link between the pastoral industry and the meat industry, which gave such impetus to Victoria's economic development from its first settlement. They are significant for their contribution to the industrial history of Melbourne, as they were the lifeblood for the area and a major stimulus for development. The Abattoirs Bridge is historically significant as an important part of the former Newmarket Saleyards and Melbourne Abattoirs site, having been built as part of the improvements required for Australia's growing meat export trade early in the twentieth century.

The former Newmarket Saleyards and Abattoirs are of architectural importance as the complex of offices and associated buildings represent a sequence of construction and expansion of the market in designs typical of their representative periods. The buildings along with the remaining sale pens and the stock route reflect the development and importance of the saleyards and abattoirs as a central focus for the livestock industry. The significance of these buildings lies in their architectural form and their references to the lost process buildings. They are a rare intact example of substantial buildings relating to saleyards and abattoirs. The significance of the stock route largely relates to the visual and conceptual link that it provides between a number of related sites. It encapsulates the process of movement of animals through the site to different parts of the handling process. The Epsom Road Bridge is significant as an intact representative example of the innovative work of John Monash and the Reinforced Concrete and Monier Pipe Construction Co. The bridge has some unique design features demonstrating its use as an underpass.

8.0 Heritage Act

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 supporting their sustainability and taking into account economic impacts. Inter alia, the Heritage Act provides the following directions regarding the key matters to be considered in the determination of permit applications:

101 Determination of permit applications

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- (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;

[...]

- (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.

Within the context of assessment under the Heritage Act 2017, it is also appropriate to have regard for the Heritage Victoria Policy: Reasonable or Economic Use Policy (made and published under s19(1)(f) of the Heritage Act 2017, June 2021), and 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).

9.0 Proposal

The proposal is for the installation of a portable/modular toilet block at Kensington Community High School. The toilet block is to be located in the bluestone paved yard north west of the former Saleyards administration building and south of the drover's hut. It is a single-storey, skillion roofed building with a rectangular plan form measuring 8.4 x 3.6 metres. External walls are clad in smooth Weathertex panels up to 1.2 metres in height with corrugated steel sheet above (run horizontally). The roof is clad in a metal deck product. A timber deck will be erected along the south elevation of the toilet block. The proposal will also involve taking up of some of the bluestone paving to create a trench for underground services. The bluestone would then be re-laid to match existing. An electrical conduit would be mounted externally on the north wall of the former stables and run along the facia board of the adjoining shed.

10.0 Heritage Impacts

As noted, this heritage impact statement has been prepared in general accordance with Heritage Victoria's guidelines for such assessments. It seeks to respond to four key questions, as set out in the guidelines:

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



What options were considered in developing the proposal?

The key concern in respect to this proposal is the urgent need to provide toilet facilities for the staff of Kensington Community High School. The existing toilets in the Saleyards administration building will be for student use only. For reasons of student safety, separate toilets must be provided for the staff.

Creating new staff toilets inside the administration building has been ruled out because it will require major intervention to the existing fabric, including demolition of internal walls, at substantially greater cost that can be achieved with a modular toilet, and with a more prolonged timeframe. This is a state school, dependent on government funding and with limited financial resources on which to draw. Creating toilets within the administration building will also reduce the space available for the operation of the school, noting that this is a constrained site with limited scope for the development of new facilities.

The practicality of connecting a new toilet block to existing electrical, sewerage and stormwater services is a critical consideration. This is best achieved in the proposed location, being immediately adjacent to an existing stormwater pit and close to existing sewer and electrical points in the former stables/music room

Further to this, the site of the toilet block is less sensitive to further development than other areas of the school grounds, including to the yards to the east of the former administration. The yard chosen as the site of the toilet block has already undergone change with the introduction of the basketball court with a modern synthetic surface. The former stables to the south of the toilet block site has been altered, and it adjoins a utilitarian shed/workshop of little heritage value.

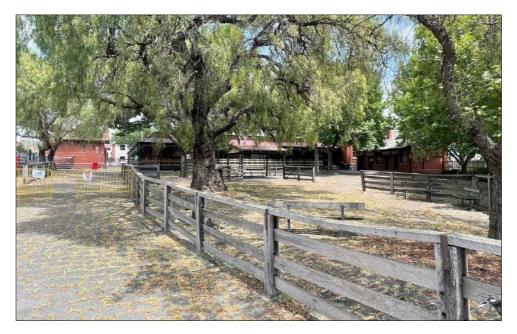


Figure 16 The former saleyards, east of the administration building. This area is more sensitive to the introduction of new built form than the site of the proposed toilet block.



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What impact (positive and/or negative) the proposed works will have on that significance

The proposed will bring about minor change to the setting of the former saleyards by the introduction of new built form. That said, the toilet block is modest in scale and will not obstruct views to key heritage elements, such as the former administration building. Accepting that the toilet block will close off views to the south elevation of the drover's hut, this is not a unacceptable heritage outcome. The drover's hut is minor heritage building and does not have a landmark presence. For much of the post war period the drover's hut was hidden behind an amenities block [refer Figure 5 and Figure 6]. The amenities block was part of a cluster of service buildings occupying this part of the site – ie it was not historically an open, unobstructed area.

The toilet block will not diminish an appreciation of former saleyards in views from surrounding streets. It will be concealed by existing fences and trees in views looking west along Smithfield Road and north from Racecourse Road. The toilet block will be partially screened by the existing timber fence in views looking east towards the main gates. As noted, the gates are a registered item, but do not reflect the original or early configuration of fencing and gates to this part of the Saleyards.

Importantly, the toilet block can be installed without permanent damage to registered fabric. Physical impacts are temporary and generally limited to areas of the bluestone paving that are to be carefully taken up to allow for underground services to installed. Once this occurs, the paving is re-laid to match existing. This will not be difficult to achieve, given that the bluestone is not laid in a complex or unique manner.

The impact of the works is positive in respect to ensuring that Kensington Community High School can operate in a manner that meets current standards and Education department regulations. The minor change that the proposed toilet block will bring to the setting of the registered place is more than offset by the demonstrable net community benefit in providing a safe and secure environment for students who are identified as being at risk of not completing secondary education due to significant personal and interpersonal difficulties, family dislocation, homelessness, personal trauma and learning difficulties.

If a negative impact is proposed, why the proposed option was chosen and why other more sympathetic options were not feasible.

For the reasons outlined above, the proposed works will not have an unacceptable impact on the significant fabric and historic setting of the former Newmarket Saleyards. As discussed, there were no other more sympathetic options in siting the proposed toilet block with ready access to existing services. Other alternatives involving a bespoke toilet design or retrofitting the administration building to accommodate staff toilets are not feasible because of funding constraints and higher cost – the latter option also involves a substantial intervention to the historic building and a prolonged timeframe to deliver new staff toilets. It is critical that the separate toilets be provided for staff, most important for student safety.



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What measures are proposed to minimise and mitigate negative impacts.

The use of a modular/portable building will mitigate long terms impact, being that it is a readily reversible change. Bluestone paving will be re-laid to match existing after installation of underground services. As noted, the bluestone paving is not laid in a complex or unique manner so this re-laying can be readily achieved without adverse visual impacts.

To further soften the visual impacts of the toilet block a change has been made in the external finishes. Instead of the green paint finish shown on the original application drawings, the lower part of the walls and base boards are to be painted in a colour resembling red-brick (ie Dulux 'Georgian Brick'). This will help the toilet block to harmonise with the nearby red-brick heritage buildings. The use of cream coloured corrugated steel cladding to the upper parts of the toilet block walls remains appropriate. A similar cream colour is used for joinery and decorative trim on the heritage buildings, and corrugated steel is a traditional material used on the nearby shed walls.

Reasonable or Economic Use

The proposal needs to be considered within the broad ambit of considerations under the *Heritage Act*, which are intended to support the sustainability of places and also take into account the reasonable or economic use of the place. As noted, under the *Heritage Act* the Executive Director must consider the impact associated with the refusal of any such proposal:

101 Determination of permit applications

[...]

- (2) In determining whether to approve an application for a permit, the Executive Director must consider the following— [...]
- (b) the extent to which the application, if refused, would affect the reasonable or economic use of the registered place or registered object.

Matters of economic use are not a relevant consideration for this application insofar as it is not a commercial project. That said, the funding available to the School limits options to provide new staff amenities.

In respect to the reasonable use of the place, it is Heritage Victoria's policy that the Executive Director may consider the following matters:

(1) the historic, recent and current uses of the registered place or object, (2) other compatible uses of the registered place or object, (3) the context and setting within which the place or object is located, and (4) other relevant matters.

The place has long ceased to function as a livestock saleyards and this use cannot resume for a host of reasons. It is also the case that the broader context of the registered place has undergone substantial change with redevelopment of most of the Saleyards with housing. Kensington Community High School have occupied the site for approximately 35 years without detracting from the remnant historical character of the Saleyards – ie the use of the site as a school is compatible with significance of the place.

Newmarket Saleyards





Further to the above, paragraph 16 of Heritage Victoria's policy on reasonable or economic use states the following:

Refusal to issue a permit for upgrading facilities to bring them to contemporary or safe standards may affect the reasonable use of a place. For example, updating kitchens, bathrooms, access provisions or other necessary infrastructure or services required to meet current regulations or legislation.

As noted, Kensington Community High School must provide separate toilets for staff and students to meet current regulations. The School cannot function properly without dedicated staff toilets. Refusal of the application will therefore adversely affect the reasonable use of the place.

11.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, the proposed works will not result in an unacceptable or inappropriate heritage impacts upon the registered place. The proposal meets Kensington Community High School's critical need for staff toilets without permanent damage to significant fabric. A careful balance has been arrived at in terms of accommodating the School's functional requirements within a constrained footprint. The proposal should therefore be considered appropriate having regard for the identified significance of the registered place and the provisions of the *Heritage Act*.