

3 March 2025

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**Re: PERMIT APPLICATIONS P40042 & P40622 - BLANCHE TERRACE,
169 & 171 VICTORIA PARADE FITZROY, YARRA CITY (H0177 & H0178)**

This letter has been prepared on behalf of the owners of the subject properties 169 and 171 Victoria Parade, Fitzroy (part of a terrace row known as Blanche Terrace). It responds to the following matters raised by Heritage Victoria in a Request for Further Information (RFI) issued on 30 January 2025 in relation to Permit Applications P40042 and P40622, which included a request to respond to comments by the City of Yarra's heritage advisor.

Further information, as set out below, is sought to allow a better understanding of the impacts of the proposed works. The information is required under s98 of the Heritage Act 2017 (the Act) to assist the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria in determining your application:

- *Further detail regarding Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV) requirements regarding the positioning and required minimum size of the fire booster, as requested at pre-application stage.*
- *Further detail regarding the proposed restoration works to the rear brick wall, such as a list of proposed works.*
- *Further detail regarding the widening of front door to no. 177, i.e. how much original fabric is proposed for removal as part of this aspect of the proposal.*
- *A response regarding the issues raised in the attached referral response from City of Yarra [sic], which relate to the actions for which you seek permit approval.*

This letter should be read in conjunction with the HIS prepared by this office and the revised drawings dated 03.03.2025 prepared by Kerstin Thompson Architects provided as part of this response. It should be noted that the scheme has been substantially revised in response to feedback received from Heritage Victoria and the City of Yarra, including the removal of proposed additional levels to the office building at the rear of Blanche Terrace that formed part of a separate application to the City of Yarra.

Each of the requested RFI items is listed below in dot point form as follows, with comments provided below in response.

- *Further detail regarding Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV) requirements regarding the positioning and required minimum size of the fire booster, as requested at pre-application stage.*

The revised scheme now retains the fire booster in its existing location, upgrading the booster and hydrant to accord with FRV requirements. (Further detail as to the treatment of the retained fire booster can be provided if required.)

The original application scheme sought to remove a section of the original front fence, install a firebox along the street boundary of 169 Blanche Terrace and reconfigure the pedestrian entry from the footpath. These elements have been deleted from the scheme. Instead, only a 495mm section of the bluestone and iron picket fence adjacent the pedestrian street entry to 169 Victoria Parade will be removed to allow for the installation

of building code compliant accessibility steps. The original gate will be retained, affixed to the adjacent wing wall in an open position. The proposed landscaping scheme, including the reinstatement of the original fence dividing the two front gardens will otherwise remain the same.

- *Further detail regarding the proposed restoration works to the rear brick wall, such as a list of proposed works.*

A recent, more detailed site inspection suggests the conservation works to the rear elevation will be relatively limited in extent, with repairs and repainting being the primary outcome. It is apparent that the bricks to the rear are very soft and have been bagged and painted. It is essentially impossible to remove bagging from soft brickwork without extensive damage to the bricks themselves.

Close scrutiny also suggests that when the original rear wings were demolished (ie after the 1970s fire), very substantial changes were made to this elevation, including removal of the remnants of the rear wings as they keyed into this elevation. The large window at the stair landing to the west end of the elevation is likely to have been at the transition from the front part of the house to the first floor of the (much lower) rear wing. With the demolition of that wing, the doorway/opening in that location was turned into a window. Moreover, all windows have brick sills, which is not a standard nineteenth century detail. The easternmost terrace has a window on its east elevation visible along a laneway leading from Smith Street, and it has a bluestone sill. It is likely the subject site had bluestone sills to windows that were lost as a result of the fire, the demolition works and a desire for other changes of configuration. The bagging was almost certainly introduced in the works after the fire to help conceal the relatively extensive changes to the elevation, and to provide a relatively uniform appearance to the altered and patched brickwork. It is not considered possible to recover the original unpainted brick appearance of this substantially altered elevation.

For these reasons, the proposed works in this location may be characterised as maintenance works directed towards improving the presentation of this part of the building, rather than reinstatement to an early appearance. They will include removing services and other accretions, repairing the brickwork where required and repainting.

- *Further detail regarding the widening of front door to no. 171, i.e. how much original fabric is proposed for removal as part of this aspect of the proposal.*

The revised scheme considerably reduces the extent of discernible change in this location. The existing door has a clear opening of 835mm, which will now only be slightly widened to be 900mm clear to achieve equitable access. It will require the removal of the existing door, doorlight and some (if not all) of the rendered architrave. The new door, door light and surrounding moulded architrave will be constructed in the likeness of the existing, using original materials where possible. It is anticipated that when viewed from Victoria Parade in the context of the wider terrace row, this change will not be apparent.

- *A response regarding the issues raised in the attached referral response from City of Yarra, which relate to the actions for which you seek permit approval.*

In their referral advice dated 8 January 2025, the City of Yarra's heritage advisor recommended two changes to elements of the proposed works located within the registered land. These were summarised in Heritage Victoria's RFI as follows.

Based on the information provided, I write to advise that Council has no objection to the application, and suggests the following conditions:

1. *That the location of the proposed fire booster box be relocated so that it does not require removal of the original fence and is not located directly in front of the principal façade – but rather to the side of it.*
2. *That the replaced front door to no. 171 Victoria Parade must maintain the consistency of the original matching front doors along the full length of Blanche Terrace when closed.*

As noted above, the revised scheme responds well to both of these requested changes.

Please contact this office if there are any queries in relation to the above.

Guy Murphy
Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd