

ROYAL VICTORIAN INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND

555-557 ST KILDA ROAD
MELBOURNE

CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN



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Prepared for

THE ROYAL VICTORIAN INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Brief

This Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind (RVIB) was commissioned by the Institute. The purpose of the CMP is to provide an assessment of the cultural heritage significance of the building overall, and on the basis of this, to develop conservation policies to guide the future management of the site, as well as to identify development potential.

1.2 Location and Site Description

The RVIB is located at 555-557 St Kilda Road, Prahran as shown in Figure 1. The complex occupies a large site on the east side of St Kilda Road, at the intersection of Moubray Street. The principal entry is located at this intersection. Major elements of the Institute include the main administration complex, Ormond Hall, and various detached buildings such as the caretakers' residence and a storeroom. Additional building areas, formerly part of the RVIB and now privately leased, include the supper room west of Ormond Hall, gymnasium on the south boundary, and stable on the north-east corner.

1.3 Heritage Listings and Classification

Victorian Heritage Register

The RVIB is included on the *Victorian Heritage Register*, maintained by the Victorian Heritage Council, to the extent of the whole site. This includes the RVIB administration building, Ormond Hall, Myers House and the former RVIB stables building which is owned by the Alfred Hospital. The full extent of the RVIB grounds, as well as the site gates located on the corner of Mowbray Street and St Kilda Road, are also included within this registration.

Designated as building H1002, permits will be required from Heritage Victoria for subdivision of the site, and for new buildings and works.

Register of the National Estate

The RVIB is not included on the *Register of the National Estate*, maintained by the Australian Heritage Commission.

National Trust of Australia (Victoria)

The RVIB was classified by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) as a building of regional significance on 24 October 1990 (File No. B4840). There are no statutory requirements as a consequence of this classification.

Melbourne Planning Scheme

The main RVIB administration building is identified as HO 492 and the site, including the former stables identified as HO6 in the Heritage Overlay Schedule in the Melbourne Planning Scheme. Planning permits will be required for subdivision, new buildings and works.

Citations, relevant to the above, are included in Appendix A.

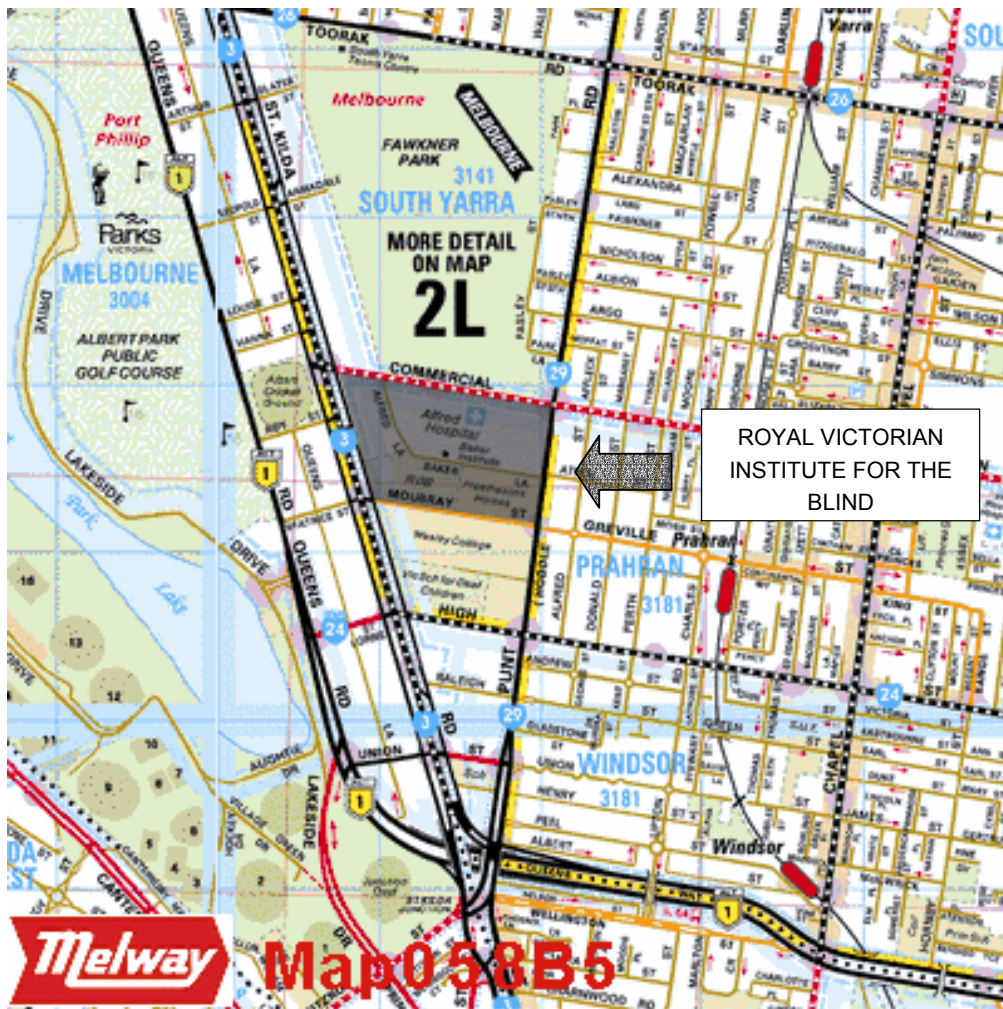


Figure 1 RVIB Location Plan

1.4 Methodology

The report broadly follows the format of the Australia ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) guidelines for the preparation of conservation plans¹ and the principles set out in the *Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter*, 1999, adopted by Australia ICOMOS to assist in the conservation of heritage places. Refer to Appendix B.

1.5 Constraints

The main constraints encountered relate to the available documentation of the chronological development of the RVIB complex, and in addition to this, sourcing the original architectural drawings. Whilst a reasonably comprehensive suite of architectural drawings was located at the RVIB, which indicated the various stages of evolution of the building, it was not possible to confidently date all the modifications and additions to the complex.

1.6 Terminology

The conservation terminology used in this report is of a specific nature, and is defined within *The Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance (the Burra Charter)* as endorsed by all statutory and national heritage bodies (See Appendix B). The terms most frequently referred to are: *place, cultural significance, fabric, conservation, preservation, restoration, reconstruction, adaptation and interpretation*. These terms are defined in the revised charter as follows:

Place means site, area, land, landscape, building or other work, group of buildings or other works, and may include components, contents, spaces and views.

Cultural significance means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations. *Cultural significance* is embodied in the *place* itself, its *fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places* and *related objects*.

Fabric means all the physical material of the *place* including components, fixtures, contents and objects.

Conservation means all the processes of looking after a *place* so as to retain its *cultural significance*.

Maintenance means the continuous protective care of the *fabric* and *setting* of a *place*, and is to be distinguished from repair. Repair involves *restoration* or *reconstruction*.

Preservation means maintaining the *fabric* of a *place* in its existing state by removing accretions or by reassembling existing components without the introduction of new material.

Restoration means returning the existing *fabric* of a *place* to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by reassembling existing components without the introduction of new material.

Reconstruction means returning a *place* to a known earlier state and is distinguished from *restoration* by the introduction of new material into the *fabric*.

Adaptation means modifying a *place* to suit the existing use or a proposed use.

Use means the functions of a *place*, as well as the activities and practices that may occur at the *place*.

Compatible use means a *use* which respects the *cultural significance* of a *place*. Such a *use* involves no, or minimal, impact on *cultural significance*.

Setting means the area around a *place*, which may include the visual catchment.

Related place means a *place* that contributes to the *cultural significance* of another *place*.

Related object means an object that contributes to the *cultural significance* of a *place* but is not at the *place*.

Associations mean the special connections that exist between people and a *place*.

Meanings denote what a *place* signifies, indicates, evokes or expresses.

Interpretation means all the ways of presenting the *cultural significance* of a *place*.

2.0 HISTORY

2.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with an overview of the development of the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind (RVIB) site. It then examines aspects of medical and other care available for the ill and infirm in Victoria in the mid-nineteenth century and the circumstances which led to the establishment of a school for the blind. The early years, different phases of development, and changing activities and aims of the institution are covered, as are the impact of the First World War, the extension of workshops thereafter, and the Institute's contribution to the Second World War. Of major significance in the post-War period, was the decision to build a residential school and nursery at Burwood, and the effect this shift in focus had on the St Kilda Road property.

2.2 St Kilda Road

In the 1840s St Kilda Road was little more than a bush track leading from a crossing on the Yarra, and extending to the beach at St Kilda. The 1850s and 1860s saw extensive improvements to the road and development of adjacent land, including the setting aside of Crown land reservations for benevolent, military, institutional and parkland use. During this time, land on the eastern side of St Kilda Road was reserved for the Alfred Hospital, the Deaf and Blind Asylums (1866), and Melbourne Grammar (1858) and Wesley College (1865), which became two of Melbourne's more prominent schools. Land on the western side of the road was developed for the new Military Barracks (Victoria Barracks) in 1859. As a group these institutions would evolve into complexes of outstanding buildings, many designed by some of Victoria's finest architects, with spacious grounds and landscaped settings. The attractive appearance of St Kilda Road was further enhanced by the reservation of large areas of land, for Fawkner and Albert Parks, and the future development of the Alexandra, Queen Victoria and Domain Gardens (Figure 1).

Private development on the emerging boulevard came some time after the initial burst of Government activity. Despite subdivision and land sales in the 1860s, many of the blocks fronting St Kilda Road remained vacant for many years, with the most intensive building activity occurring in the boom of the 1880s. In general, those who purchased these large and well-located allotments were amongst Melbourne's wealthier citizens, and residential development, when it occurred, was most often in the form of villas or mansion houses, with some large terrace houses.¹

Alexander Sutherland, writing at the time of the second Victorian International Exhibition in 1888, described his experience of travelling along St Kilda Road:

Over this [Princes] bridge we come upon the St Kilda-road; rather dreary just at first, with a marshy bit of park to the left, and a wilderness of smoky factories to the right; but after a few hundred yards the road assumes a finer aspect, being lined with public buildings each detached, and most of them enclosed in spacious grounds. Some indeed will not easily be seen, so thick are their arboreal surroundings ... On our left stands the Governor's domain, with a smart little lodge just inside the great iron gates.

We might well wish that the St. Kilda-road itself were a trifle better kept. Spacious dwellings and fine public buildings are very well in their way, but we can scarcely look at them contentedly when this uneven road is jolting us up and banging us down every second or two upon the seats of our vehicle. Verily an archangel would lose patience if you asked him to view fine buildings with such concomitants.

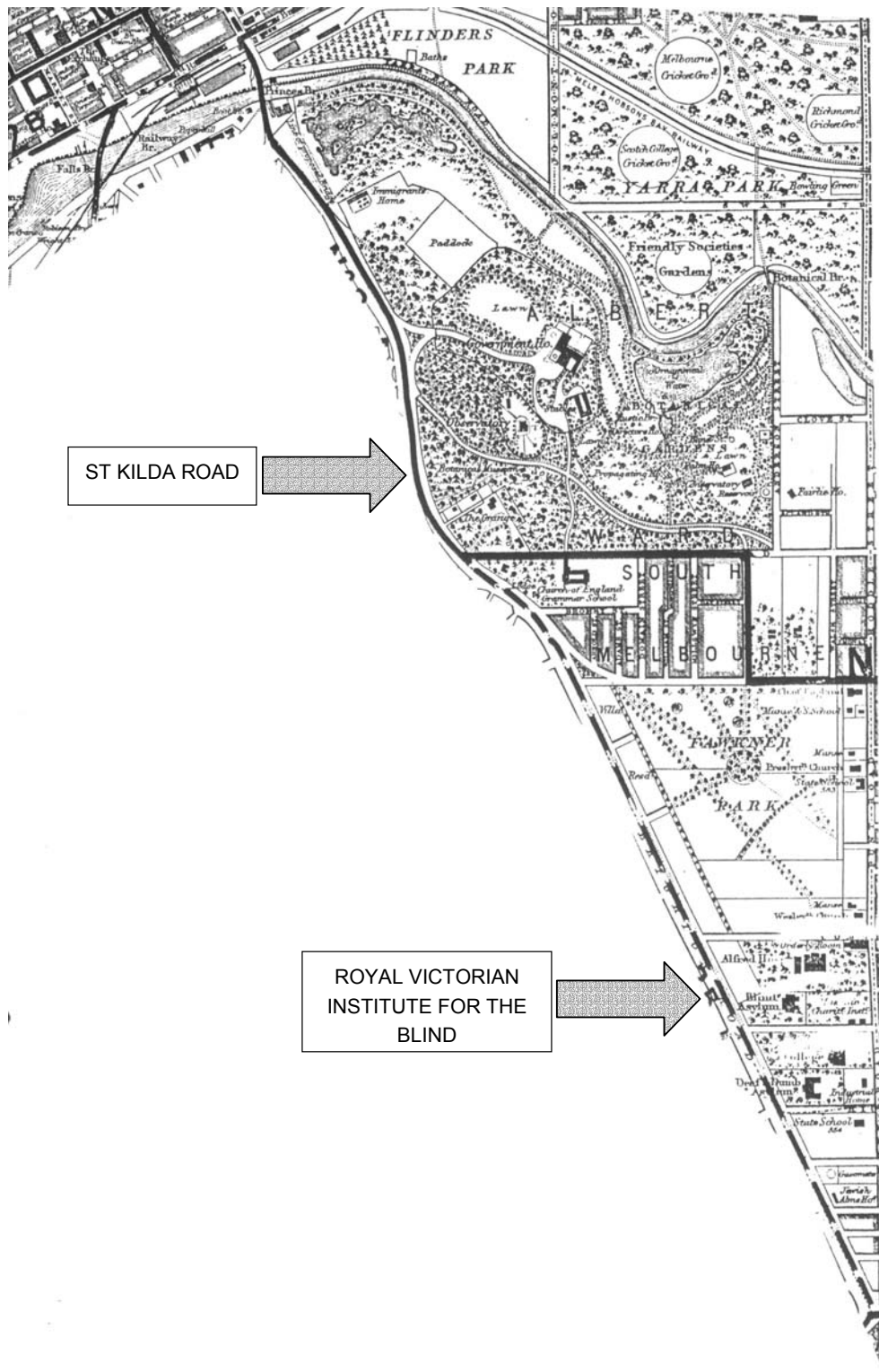


Figure 1 Map showing the relationship of the RVIB to St Kilda Road c.1879
 Source: Moore, c.1879 'Melbourne and Suburbs', SLV Map Collection.

Many passengers sigh for the times when tolls were charged and the roads kept properly in repair ... On our right ... we notice the Observatory ... after passing its picturesque tower, we have parks on either hand - to our left the Fawkner Park of South Yarra, to our right, behind a fringe of mansions that faces the road, there stretches the breezy extent of Albert Park, green and level expanse lying between us and the bay...

There is a splendid carriage-drive running through the park, but we must keep to the main road and see the buildings that lie on its left-hand side. Here is the Alfred Hospital, a bright and cheerful-looking structure of fancy brick. In this healthful situation, with its pleasant grounds, its elaborate appliances, its handsome wards on the most scientific principles, its large and capable staff of officers, surely never were patients better situated for recovery. But hard by stands a spacious building for those who have no hope of recovery. It is the Asylum for the Blind. A visit to the young folks housed within would be full of interest. Though nothing can be done for their bodily eyes, yet for their mental vision the State has here made munificent provision, and the cheerful inmates are all able to read; their minds are being stored with information which in after years will form a source of constant delight to them; and many of them are musicians of great talent, their want of sight seeming to endow their ears with increased delicacy, and their fingers with increased tenderness of feeling.

The next building is the Wesley College, and then comes the Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb prettily situated, and suggestive of the care which civilisation now gives to those who but a century ago were looked upon as outcasts accursed of Heaven.²

Sutherland went on to a 'half a mile of road lined by pleasant mansions' which led to St Kilda Junction.³ Clearly, St Kilda Road was a prestigious area.

2.2.1 A Precinct of Schools and Charitable Institutions

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the triangular piece of land bordering St Kilda and Commercial Roads, was occupied by the Deaf and Dumb Institution (1866), the Victorian Asylum and School for the Blind (1867), Wesley College (1865), and the Alfred Hospital (1870). The latter was named after the Duke of Edinburgh, who laid the foundation stone. The hospital grounds adjoined those of the Asylum and School for the Blind;⁴ Jewish Alms House, and a State School.⁵

2.3 Victorian Institutions

The charitable Institutions of this city and colony, which minister to the wants of the destitute and mitigate the sufferings of the afflicted, bear noble testimony to the general benevolence of the community. There are, however, still in our midst the helpless and needy, whose claims for relief, specially adapted to their requirements, have for some time past pressed upon the attention of the thoughtful and humane.⁶

In the colony of Victoria in the nineteenth century, for most people being sick or disabled in any way meant being unable to pay for care, with the 'deserving poor' attending public hospitals. By the 1860s Melbourne had two hospitals, the Melbourne Hospital (1846), and the Lying-in-Hospital (1856, later renamed the Royal Women's Hospital).⁷ The Eye and Ear Hospital and Homeopathic Hospital were built in 1868, and the Alfred Hospital in 1870. Melbourne also supported the destitute and needy through the work of the Melbourne Benevolent Society; Melbourne Orphan Asylum; Immigrants' Aid Society; Female Refuge, and the Institution for the Deaf and Dumb.

As a result of the *Neglected and Criminal Children Act* 1864, industrial schools were established in Sunbury and Geelong to remove homeless children from the streets. These schools also catered for some disabled children. In the nineteenth century, society regarded the deaf, dumb or blind as the responsibility of their families or charities, and many of the blind, because of their disability, lived in poverty without access to education or employment.

2.3.1 Gold and its Legacies

One of the many legacies of the discovery of rich gold resources in Victoria in the 1850s, and the wealth which was consequently generated, was an immediate expansion in public building, especially cultural and social institutions.⁸ The University of Melbourne, Public Library and Parliament House were constructed in the mid-1850s. They were joined in the 1860s by the Museum and Picture Gallery, General Post Office, Town Hall and the Royal Mint.⁹

Yet the gold rushes also impacted negatively on the colony. The rapid expansion of the city led to the pollution of its waterways; the Yarra River earned a reputation as ‘the river which flows upside down’.¹⁰ Disease, poverty and prostitution also thrived in the slums and lanes of Little Bourke and Little Lonsdale Streets. The subsequent rise in illness, destitution and child neglect, put pressure on the city hospitals, orphanages and industrial schools. An unknown number of blind children were also on the streets of Melbourne, for whom no suitable accommodation or institution was available.

2.3.2 A Home and Instruction for the Deaf and Dumb¹¹

In 1859 a group of Melbourne citizens successfully lobbied government to set aside land and provide teachers for a school for deaf and dumb children. A substantial site was selected on the south-west corner of St Kilda Road and High Street, Prahran, with frontage to St Kilda Road. The Governor of Victoria, Sir Henry Barkly, and his wife Lady Barkly addressed the first public meeting to help raise funds for what would become the Victorian Deaf and Dumb Institution (Figure 3), which opened in 1860. The institution moved to its permanent home, which was south of the later RVIB complex, in 1866.

It is interesting to note that ‘all the principal Protestant denominations’ were represented on the platform of the first public meeting.¹² The Catholic Church was not represented, and this may have contributed to the sectarian conflict which later arose with regard to the setting up of the Asylum and School for the Blind. Reverend William Moss, who was the first honorary secretary of the Deaf and Dumb Institution, also became a member of the Provisional Committee (later Board) of the Asylum and School for the Blind.¹³ He was associated with both institutions until his death in 1891.¹⁴

The success of the efforts at raising funds and obtaining Government support for setting up the Deaf and Dumb Institution, encouraged those concerned with the welfare of the blind to also seek assistance. Many people behind the push to establish the blind school were also involved in the charities which ran Melbourne’s hospitals, and were therefore aware of current thinking and trends in the care and treatment of society’s poor and disadvantaged.

2.3.3 Special Efforts for the Blind

A meeting of prominent citizens and philanthropists was convened on 27 February 1866 by the Reverend James Mirams, to consider setting up a school for blind children in Melbourne. This was followed by a public meeting in Prahran on 21 August 1866, which decided to establish an asylum and school. A Provisional Committee was also formed and the following resolution passed:

That steps be taken to establish an Asylum and School for the Blind; that the gentlemen now present form a Provisional Committee to carry out this object; that the Hon. George Harker be Chairman,¹⁵ and the Rev. Jas. Mirams,¹⁶ Secretary.¹⁷

In the Victorian era, institutions and charities were founded on the ‘subscriber charity’ model. This meant that any person or organisation who subscribed a stated amount to the funds of the organisation, was entitled to stand for committee membership, vote in committee elections, and recommend applicants and patients for relief from the institution.¹⁸ Committees were usually self-perpetuating institutions, with vacancies being filled each year by the same members.¹⁹

The Provisional Committee for the Asylum and School for the Blind consisted of a chairman, treasurer, secretary, physician, surgeon oculist and twelve other members. The main office bearers were prominent in other charitable works, with some being on the committee of the Melbourne Hospital. A sub-committee was also appointed to prepare a draft ‘address to the public’ to raise subscriptions for a building fund.

2.4 The Victorian Asylum and School for the Blind: 1866

Before land was obtained and a building constructed in St Kilda Road, accommodation for the fledgling asylum and school was found in 1866 in a building in Commercial Road, Prahran. This had been vacated by the Institution for the Deaf and Dumb (Figure 3) when their St Kilda Road building was completed in 1866.²⁰ Seven blind children were removed from industrial schools and the Melbourne Orphanage, and relocated to the Commercial Road premises. Their numbers soon increased to twenty one, but lack of space precluded the institution from taking more.²¹ Catholic children were also accepted, despite the sectarian debate, which surrounded the school’s establishment (see below).²²

The Provisional Committee, in the meantime, set about canvassing subscriptions for a building fund. By June 1866, £2,143 had been raised for building purposes.²³ The Government also promised to commit a sum of £200, and granted an allotment of three acres and three perches of land in Moubay Street, which was gazetted as a site for an Asylum and School for the Blind.²⁴ Representatives of the Catholic community of Melbourne, however, raised objections at this time, on the basis that land was being made available for an institution, which was to be conducted on ‘general Protestant principles’.²⁵

The adjoining frontage to St Kilda Road, and two allotments of freehold land immediately west of the existing site, were later purchased in c.1895 for £350.²⁶ This provided the RVIB with a formal address on St Kilda Road as well as a spacious garden frontage.

2.4.1 Sectarian Differences

Catholic opposition to the proposal to build an institution based on Protestant principles must be seen in the light of the debate, which was raging in Melbourne in the 1860s and early 1870s, over state aid to schools. The James McCulloch government introduced an *Education Bill* in 1870, with the express purpose of cutting state aid to denominational schools. The McCulloch government fell in June 1871, before the legislation was passed. The new Government was led by Gavan Duffy from June 1871-72. Duffy was then succeeded by James Francis who revived the controversial legislation. The Catholic community was outraged, and the Archbishop, James Goold, urged Catholics to vote against the Francis Government and its ‘godless and compulsory system of education’, because it would ‘rob Catholics of their rights’.²⁷ Catholic opposition merely encouraged the Protestant churches to support the Bill, however, and the *Education Act* was passed in 1872. State aid to church schools was effectively withdrawn, and education became ‘secular, compulsory and free’.²⁸ Historians of the Catholic Church in Australia see this as a key instance of sectarianism.²⁹

As a consequence of Catholic reaction to the formation of the Asylum and School for the Blind, the Provisional Committee refused to meet with their representatives, and instead decided that it would be ‘unwise to attempt a mixed management’ of the asylum and school.



Figure 2 *Asylum and School for the Blind, illustration, c.1866, Crouch and Wilson*
Source: State Library of Victoria Pictoria Collection

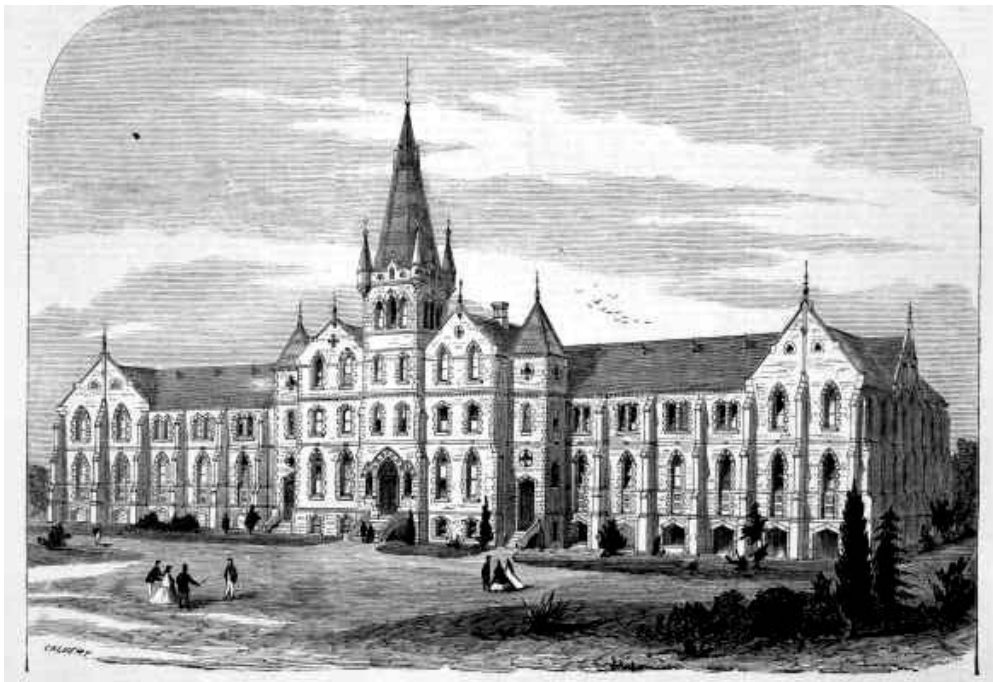


Figure 3 *Deaf and Dumb Institute, c.1866, Crouch and Wilson*
Source: State Library of Victoria Pictoria Collection

2.4.2 The First Years

When submissions were called from architects for the design of a building to accommodate 120 inmates, the architectural firm of Crouch & Wilson, which had by this time been responsible for the design of the Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, submitted the winning drawings. Tenders for construction were called on 21 October 1867,³⁰ and the contract was let to Billing & Sons, for £5,955. According to a report in the *Age* in early 1868, the new building was to be ‘of the Italian style of architecture, and somewhat similar in construction to the sister institution [the Deaf and Dumb Asylum]’. The report also noted:

The centre portion is to be three stories high, with a tower rising to the height of eighty feet. There are also wings to be erected on either side, two stories high. The centre part will be set apart for offices, with a dining room 48 feet by 30 feet, and work rooms in the rear. The boys’ and girls’ school rooms, measuring 60 feet by 32 feet, and 14 feet high, are to be in the wings, with dormitories above and lavatories behind. The third story will be devoted to the use of paying pupils, and the staircase window is to be stained glass. There is a frontage of ninety-six feet to the St Kilda Road.³¹

The opening, just seven months later on 21 August 1868 (Figure 4), celebrated ‘a new epoch in the history of the blind in Victoria, and it will be to many the inauguration of a happy life, to succeed one that has been dark indeed’.³² Accommodation and tuition were free for the destitute inmates, while for those children whose parents could pay, a minimum fee of £40 per year was charged. At the time of its opening, the Asylum and School for the Blind was the first institution of its kind in Australia. It was estimated that there were more than 200 totally blind people in the colony in 1866. These figures were based on statistics that indicated the average of blindness in Victoria was 1:1,000. This compared favourably with the statistic for Britain, which was 1:800.³³

Although the building was not entirely finished in August 1868, it was still described as ‘imposing, and even elegant’ and the site was enclosed by ‘handsome fencing’. The central administration building housed the superintendent’s quarters, with servants’ quarters on the first floor, while the dormitories were located in the side wings. The boys’ schoolroom featured an organ ‘built by Mr Fincham of Richmond’.³⁴

In c.1870, the original north and south wings, including the north tower, were built, as was the chapel to the east of the main building. Extensions were also added to the east of the wings at this time, comprising workrooms, laundries and kitchens. By 1871, the pupils and inmates were making baskets and nets in the new facilities. Whilst this industrial training helped some to find outside employment (see below), the income from sales of the institution’s products failed to meet financial expectations. In 1872 the McPherson Wing (adjoining the north wing) was constructed and named in recognition of Board member, Thomas McPherson, then Mayor of Melbourne, who had helped to raise the funds for the extension. This additional space provided a showroom and sales area for public viewing of the products. It also had a teaching area at ground level, with the boys’ dormitory over. By this time, a freestanding timber structure located on the north property boundary was also used by the Institute, as an isolation hospital.

In 1872 further workshops and accommodation were added, at a cost of £1,775, and the new trades of mat and brush making began.³⁵ In this year the growth of workshop accommodation enabled the Board to cater for adult pupils to be taught trades³⁶, for by this time the Asylum had expanded to employ many blind adults in addition to the children. Sales of the institution’s products had also increased by this time, with several prizes won at international exhibitions.

Reverend Moss, who had acted as honorary secretary of the Institute since 1874, was appointed superintendent in 1875 and served in this capacity until his death in 1891. In addition, a piano-

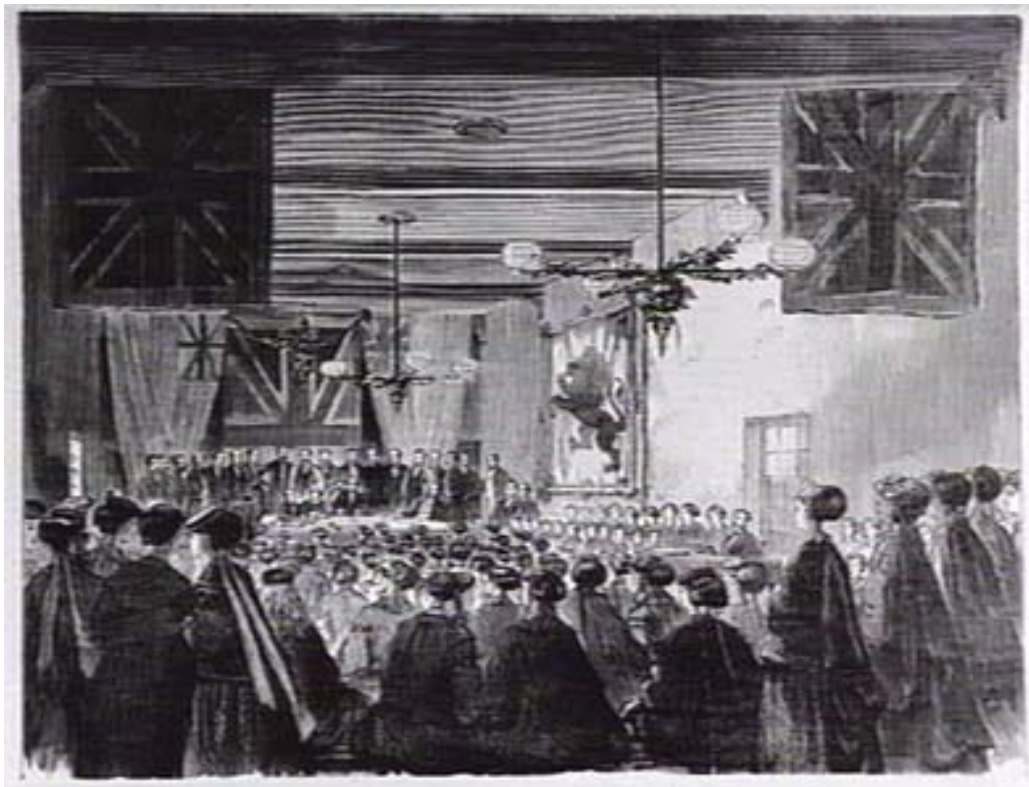


Figure 4 *Opening Ceremony of the Asylum and School for the Blind, 21 August 1868*
Source: State Library of Victoria Pictoria Collection

tuning instructor from London's Academy of Music for the Blind was appointed. His duty was to teach piano tuning to the students.

2.4.3 Education Ideals

The objects of the Institution shall be to provide a home for the blind, with suitable education of a religious, general, and industrial character.³⁷

The education of blind children was required to fulfil a number of related purposes. It had to provide a scholastic education commensurate with that of state schools, although no allowance was made for blindness at annual examinations. The children were also to be taught skills which would allow them to leave the school and be gainfully employed.

In 1874, the school began an apprenticeship scheme for boys aged 14 to 16 years. They were required to attend school for four hours a day, and to work four hours in the workshop. The school had also, by this time, adopted a curriculum which complied with the Board of Education's *Common Schools Act* 1862, to enable it to qualify for teaching grants.³⁸ Subjects included music and singing, trade training, Latin, French, algebra, physics and geography. Braille was taught as early as 1873, indicating that the Institute clearly kept pace with other developments in the teaching of the blind. The annual reports record that new rules introduced in 1878 required, amongst other things, that all pupils in the 'Industrial Department' work eight hours per day, with spare hours to be dedicated to compulsory reading, worship, and knitting or making other materials for the institution.³⁹

The second main stage of the building programme began in the late 1870s, with the completion of the south tower in c.1879, together with an adjoining two-storey wing which comprised a supper room at ground level and a senior girls' dormitory over. Bluestone stables were constructed on the north-east boundary of the site in 1887.



Figure 5 View of the RVIB building from the south-east c.1870
Source: State Library of Victoria Pictoria Collection

In 1890, after 22 years of operation, a feature article on ‘Melbourne Institutions’ appeared in the *Illustrated Sydney News*, reporting on the Victorian Asylum and School for the Blind.⁴⁰ The author of the article noted that the education provided was of a vocational nature, and that students were qualified to find employment outside the institution upon reaching the age of 16. Some were qualified to teach music; others to make baskets. However, at a time when few state schools in Melbourne, and only the largest private denominational schools, provided the necessary classes, it was possible for these students to enrol in a course in Leaving Honours, matriculate and gain entry to the University of Melbourne.⁴¹ One student, Tilly Aston, matriculated at the age of 16 and began an arts course at the University but lack of Braille textbooks and a nervous disposition forced her to abandon her course in her second year.⁴²

In the Victorian era, social and educational mores dictated particular behaviour in all classes in society. These attitudes were reflected in the Asylum’s treatment of their young charges, particularly the girls and young women entrusted to their care. The school upheld the ideals of the institution acting *in loco parentis*,. mixing of the sexes was limited, and separate dormitories and classrooms were maintained. The need to bring in income also resulted in an emphasis on productivity. Boys were the major contributors to basket weaving, while the girls were encouraged to knit, even as they sang in the choir. Little time was set aside for leisure or pleasurable activities.

2.5 The Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind: 1891

In 1891, the Asylum and School for the Blind was officially renamed the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind. The decade of the 1890s also saw an increase in student numbers, and another programme of building at the institute, despite the severe economic conditions in Victoria at the time.

Music was used as a major teaching and entertainment tool for the blind, and this led to a decision to build Ormond Hall, a music hall, in Moubay Street, Prahran. It was opened in June 1891 by Lady Janet Clarke, (Figure 7) and was named after Francis Ormond who had

bequeathed £5,000 to the institution.⁴³ The new building adjoined the complex on the south-east side and comprised an auditorium, stage and front-of-house areas.

The increase in student numbers in the early 1890s again put pressure on accommodation at the institution. A report by the Inspector of Charities in 1891 was damning, and contained many criticisms of the existing facilities.⁴⁴ These findings were also supported by the Institute's Superintendent, who noted that the existing buildings were totally unsuited for their combined training and asylum purposes. There was also a disproportionate ratio of adults to children and this went against the original aims of the institution. Blind adult men were being encouraged to become journeymen, employed by the institution but boarded outside of it. This trend in fact established the concept still in place today, of providing a residential school for children and a daily employment scheme for blind adults. It was deemed less costly and more profitable for the Institute to house the adult workers separately. Additionally, this level of independent living was also seen as a means of enhancing the individual's self esteem.

The Superintendent's 1891 report also reveals a great deal about the conditions of the buildings at the turn of the century. The boys' toilets were 'of the most crude and rough description', while the only bathroom was a temporary wooden building, with a single bath.⁴⁵ There was no room for servants to have meals; no store house for linen, etc; and the Superintendent's own rooms doubled as a public reception area and office.⁴⁶

The output of the Industrial Department, which had previously grown slowly, also began to pick up in the early 1890s. New manufacturing machinery and labour-saving devices were purchased, with a consequent increase in sales. By 1892 the income of the Industrial Department had reached £4,836, or nearly four times the amount of ten years before.⁴⁷ Within two years, the manufacturing arm of the institution was separated from the school. It kept its own accounts, and employed former students. Piecework also became available at the Institute in 1895-6.⁴⁸

Although revenue from manufacturing activities was increasing, by the mid-1890s the Institute's overall finances were still in an unfavourable condition. The buildings erected during the land boom, such as the stables, remained unpaid for, and accruing interest meant that the Institute was operating with a deficit.

In 1895, Lady Brassey, wife of the Governor of Victoria, supported a campaign to raise £5,745 through a public appeal. From that time, and with the addition of other bequests and endowments, the Institute began to better manage its finances and 'make ends meet'.⁴⁹

An 1894 MMBW plan shows the overall development of the site by this time (Figure 10). The western part, adjacent to St Kilda Road, consisted of a large open landscaped area, with a serpentine-asphalted driveway leading to the main building. To the east of the main building, a number of smaller areas appear on the plan as including a drying green, grass plot and yard area. A vegetable garden and small poultry farm were added after the First World War.⁵⁰

2.6 Twentieth Century Expansion

The new century saw gradual changes at the institute, and a further expansion in industrial activities. Typewriting was incorporated into the curriculum, and courses in telephony were also popular. In 1906, Superintendent J T Hogarth reported that physical fitness had become an important part of the curriculum.⁵¹ The Institute established a kindergarten in 1914, and the first nursery for blind babies in Australia in 1933. A poultry farm and vegetable garden were also introduced after World War One, and later a horticultural nursery. Additional curriculum subjects introduced in the 1920s and 1930s included 'direction sense training', voice training and practical science.

The Institute began to play a wider role in the community, with initiatives such as the introduction of a special telephone switchboard to rehabilitate servicemen blinded during World War One. The Board of Management also undertook to care for blind soldiers upon

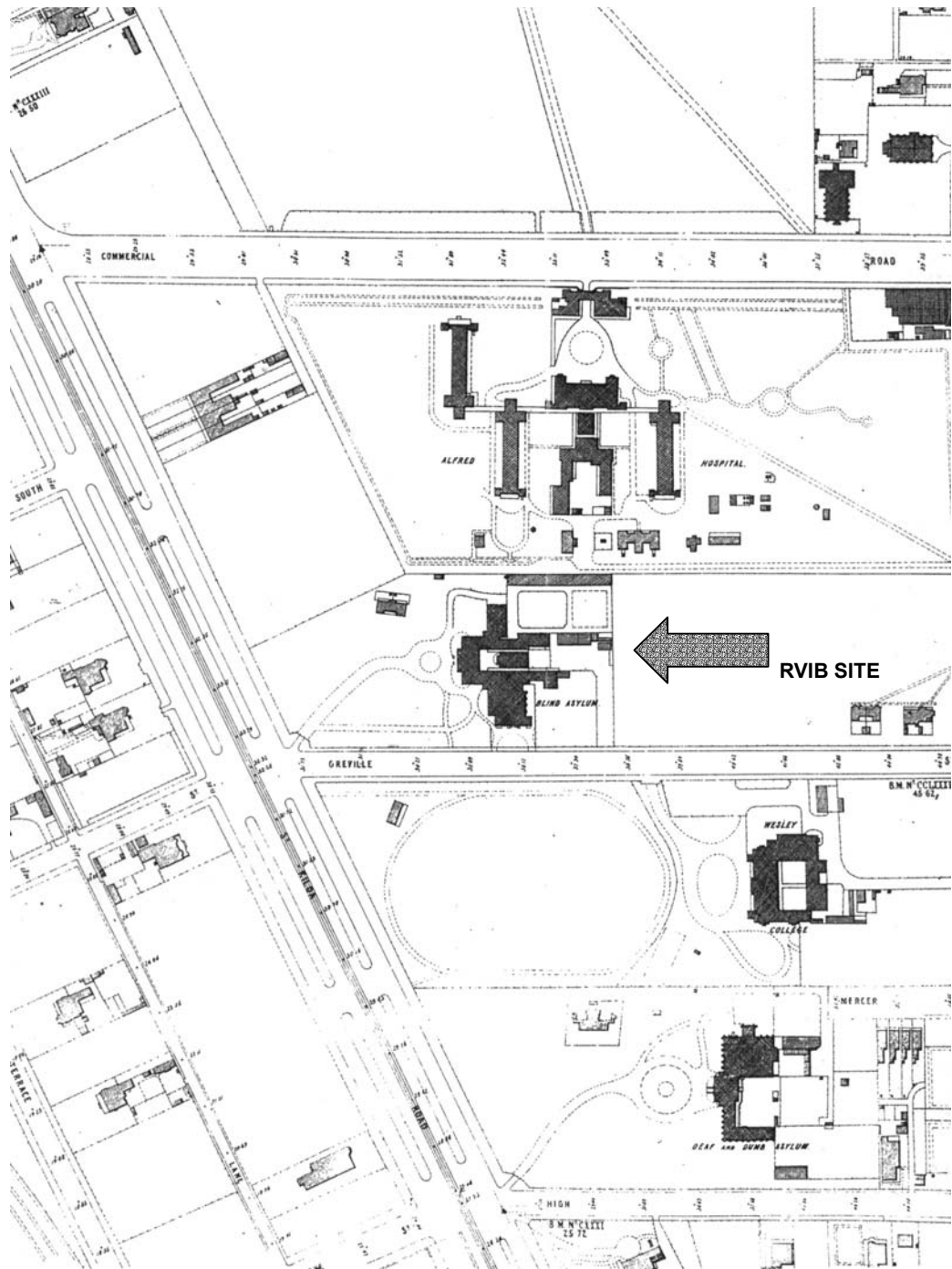


Figure 6 MMBW 1894 Map showing development in the immediate vicinity of the RVIB
Source: SLV Map Collection.



*Figure 7 RVIB c.1898, showing the completed additions of Ormond Hall to the south
Source: State Library of Victoria Pictoria Collection*

their return to Australia, and several were admitted to the institute. This service was again provided during World War Two. Forty eight of the institute's adult blind men were also placed in munitions and other factories.

The expansion in activities also impacted on the building program. In 1921 three workshops were constructed on the eastern boundary, and Ormond Hall was remodelled internally. The stables were converted in 1925 into workshops for factory use, and the building was widened to the south and re-roofed. An additional two-storey factory was also constructed to the south. In 1931-32, two additional storeys were also added to the original stables (see Figure 8 and Figure 9). Also at this time, the west façade of the complex was altered, the supper room and the McPherson Wing were enlarged, and a function room was added to the east of Ormond Hall.

The Talking Book Library was established at the RVIB in 1934. Home visits to blind people in the community were also introduced in this period, and by the 1970s traveling teachers visited non-resident pupils across Victoria. In 1969, the institution developed a Tape Reading Service in response to the demand for recorded material at University level. In 1941 the Education Department established its own school for partially sighted pupils, at *Carronbank* in Kew, providing two levels of education for partially as well as legally blind children. The children at *Carronbank* were then integrated into normal schools.⁵²

In the 1940s, a weatherboard nursery building was constructed at the RVIB site, replacing the former isolation hospital. Additional timber-framed buildings were built on the site in the 1950s, including a nurses' quarters and gymnasium on the south boundary, and a staff room to the north as shown in Figure 11. Significantly, the roof turrets to the original towers of the main building were also removed at this time, which substantially altered the architectural presence of the west façade. By the 1990s, various freestanding buildings had been demolished on the site including the two-storey factories on the east boundary, excluding the former stables, the nurses' quarters and the nursery. The east boundary area has subsequently been developed by the Alfred Hospital for the provision of an infectious disease and rehabilitation facility.

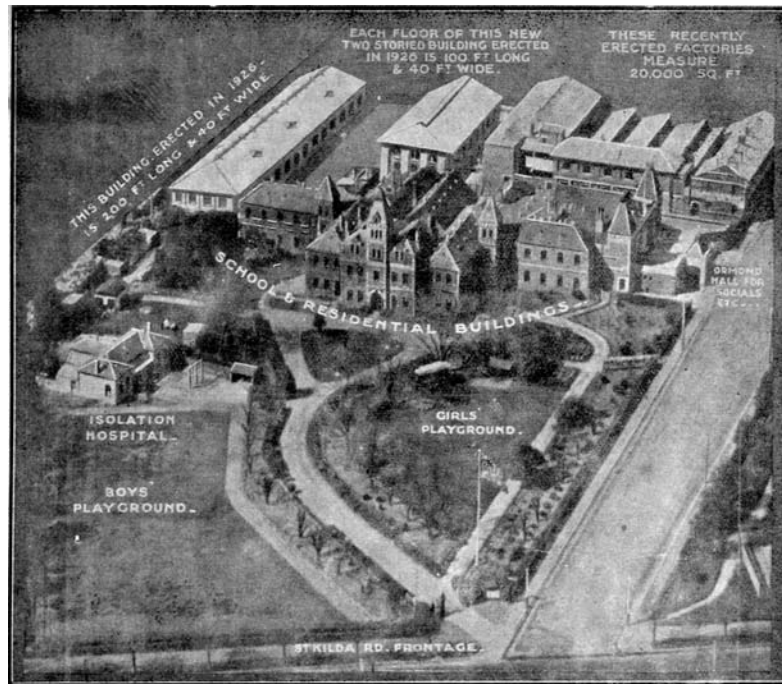


Figure 8 *Aerial view of the RVIB site showing the single storey former stables which have been widened on the south side, located on the north-east boundary .*
 Source: RVIB Annual Report 1927

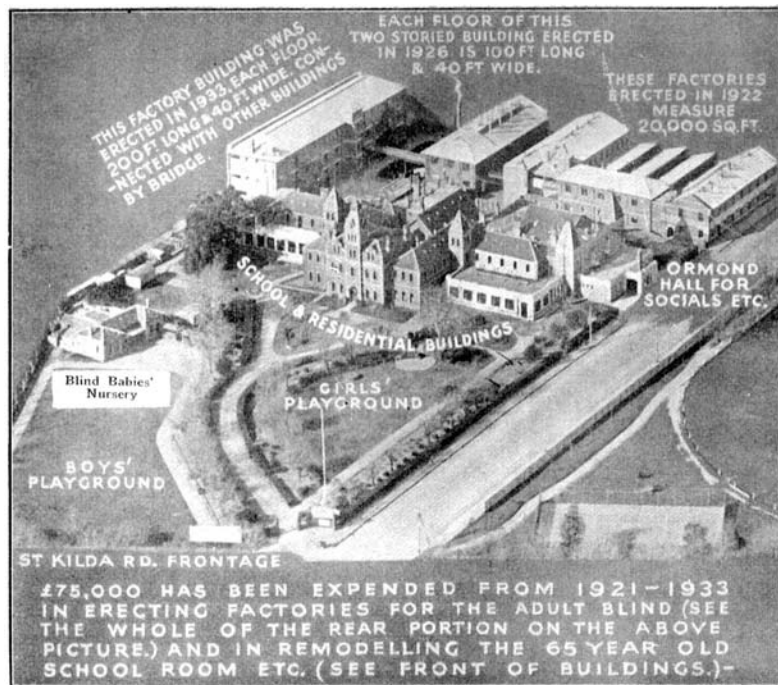


Figure 9 *Aerial view of the RVIB site showing the two-storey addition to the former stables, and the bridge connection to the factories to the south.*
 Source: RVIB Annual Report 1947

2.6.1 Myer House

After the Second World War, a scarcity of building materials, combined with an acute housing shortage and an increase in post-war immigration in Australia, led to the use of prefabricated houses.⁵³ One of these was the ‘Myer House’ – a steel-framed prefabricated structure, designed, engineered and produced by the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation, and made available to the public in Victoria by the Myer Emporium from February 1947. It is not known whether the Myer House was a donation by the Myer Emporium or Norman Myer, its Managing Director, or purchased by the Institute itself. In 1949, a three-room annexe was constructed to the east of this building.

2.6.2 RVIB at Burwood

In the period following World War Two, the RVIB purchased forty acres of land at Burwood for the purposes of establishing another school for the education of blind or vision-impaired children. A residential school and nursery were opened at the site in October 1958. At the original RVIB complex in St Kilda Road, a new Residential Rehabilitation and Training Centre was established in 1963, the first of its kind in Australia. The centre was designed to provide expanded vocational training, with a telephonist training section which became the largest telephonist training center for the blind in Australia by the 1970s.

2.6.3 1970s to Present

The work of the RVIB has diversified substantially since the 1970s, particularly in the area of increasing community integration programs for people with disabilities. Developments in technical aids have also altered the focus of activities. Additional buildings were purchased in High Street, Prahran, and many of the teaching components of the Institute were moved to those premises. The site in St Kilda Road is now used exclusively for administration purposes.

2.7 Crouch and Wilson, Architects

Thomas James Crouch was born in Hobart in 1832 and received his early architectural training under Alexander Dawson, a member of the Royal Engineers and later Colonial Architect. In 1850, the young Crouch commenced his own practice as an architect and surveyor, but was soon lured to Victoria by the gold rush. After spending time on the diggings at Bendigo and Beechworth, Crouch settled in St Kilda by 1853. He set up an architectural practice, subsequently entering into partnership with Ralph Wilson in 1858. Over the next two decades, the firm of Crouch & Wilson was prominent and prolific, being responsible for such buildings as the Prahran Town Hall, the Deaf and Dumb Institution, the Victorian Asylum and School for the Blind in St Kilda Road, the Methodist Ladies College and a number of country mansions.⁵⁴

Crouch & Wilson were in particular demand as designers of ecclesiastical buildings, and the firm received commissions from most of the Christian denominations. Their churches included the South Melbourne Congregational (1867), Roman Catholic Church of the Immaculate Conception in Hawthorn (1867), St Luke’s Church of England in North Fitzroy (1879), the Quaker Meeting House in Russell Street (1859) and the synagogues at St Kilda (1872) and East Melbourne (1877). Thomas Crouch was a Wesleyan, and his firm designed countless Wesleyan and Methodist churches throughout metropolitan and country Victoria including those at Kilmore (1858), Seymour (1859), Daylesford (1861), Glen Iris (1862), Maldon (1863), South Yarra (1864), Flemington (1865), Whittington (1869), Echuca (1869), Bendigo (1870) and Williamstown (1876).⁵⁵ Crouch’s renown also resulted in a commission to design the Wesleyan Church at Christchurch, New Zealand, in 1863.

The partnership of Crouch & Wilson dissolved in 1881, apparently due to Crouch’s ill health. Wilson subsequently went into partnership with their former articled pupil, John Beswicke, while Crouch continued to practice on his own. Crouch’s later work included the subdivision

plans for the mansion and estate, Synott Park, in Brighton Road, St Kilda (1885), the Empire Buildings in Collins Street (1888) and the Homeopathic (now the Alfred) Hospital.⁵⁶ During this time, Crouch continued his long association with the Methodists, undertaking new work including the Wesleyan Church and Manse at Warragul, and a competition entry for the Wesleyan Church in Brisbane (both 1888). He also maintained his connection with the two synagogues, undertaking alterations at St Kilda in 1885 and 1888, and additions at East Melbourne in 1883.

A founding member of the Victorian Institute of Architects and a one-term Mayor of St Kilda, Thomas Crouch died in 1889 at the age of 67 years. His architectural practice was subsequently carried on by his son, Ernest William Marston Crouch (1866-1919).

3.0 PHYSICAL SURVEY

3.1 Introduction

The following physical survey of the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind (RVIB) is based on an examination of the available documentary evidence and on a physical examination of the building fabric as it exists. The objective of the survey has been to establish, as far as possible, those elements which are original and/or significant and those elements which may have been added or removed at various times, and which may or may not be significant.

3.2 Documentation of Alterations

As described in the previous chapter, the first building on the RVIB site was completed in 1868. Since that time, numerous alterations and additions have taken place, not only to the extent and fabric of the original building, but also to the site as a whole.

Despite an extensive search, the original building documentation has not been located, although the Institute holds copies of architectural drawings which detail alteration works to the building, particularly during the twentieth century. The City of Melbourne Property Index, which lists building permit records from 1916, has been consulted to confirm the alteration and building works which have taken place since that time.

The existing form of the building has also been compared to illustrations and descriptions of the RVIB during the late nineteenth century. Particularly useful were descriptions contained in the Superintendent's report of 1891, illustrations of the building published in contemporary journals such as the *Illustrated Sydney News*, and other secondary sources.¹

3.3 The RVIB Complex

3.3.1 Site and Curtilage

The RVIB occupies a large landscaped garden site on the east side of St Kilda Road at the intersection of Moubray Street (Figure 13). Various buildings associated with the Royal Alfred Hospital and Baker Medical Research Institute are immediately north of the site (Figure 14). Neighbouring buildings located to the east are separated from the Institute by a laneway. The Institute itself includes a main administration complex, which is a two and three-storey bluestone building facing west. Ormond Hall, constructed between 1890-91, adjoins the building on the south-east side, and has a separate portico entrance located on Moubray Street. Various detached buildings associated with the Institute are also on the site and include the caretakers' residence and a storeroom on the north boundary. Additional building areas, formerly part of the RVIB and now privately leased or owned, include the former supper room directly west of Ormond Hall, now a tavern-style restaurant; the former gymnasium which is located on the south boundary and used as a store and staff room; and a three-storey building on the north-east corner, formerly a stable, and currently used for storage and workshops by the Alfred Hospital.

The buildings which are the subject of this assessment, are illustrated below in Figure 15.

The principal RVIB entry gates are located at the St Kilda Road/Moubray Street intersection. A serpentine asphalt drive, flanked by large mature trees and lawn areas, leads to the main building entry which is centred on the west facade. A vehicular entrance is located west of Ormond Hall on Moubray Street and leads to car parking areas in front of the main building. A narrow lane, east of Ormond Hall, runs along the entire boundary of the site providing access to the rear areas of the complex. Pedestrian access to the site is possible via the north boundary, from the Alfred Hospital grounds.



Figure 13 The main entry drive, looking towards St Kilda Road



Figure 14 View of the Institute building (in the background) from the Alfred Hospital site to the north

3.3.2 Planning, Construction and Form

History

The external form of the RVIB consists of a principal building, which is U-shaped in plan and forms a rectilinear configuration around a courtyard and chapel. The original design comprised a central area, which contained the building entry, offices and main stairwell. It was flanked to the south by the girls' dormitory wing and to the north by the superintendent's headquarters and boys' dormitory. To the east, at the rear of the site, was the courtyard and freestanding chapel. Various workshops and kitchens were added to the rear of the north and south wings and due to requirements for additional facilities, a dormitory and teaching facility was constructed to the north of the site, known as the McPherson Wing. By 1891, a hall for musical purposes, Ormond Hall, was constructed.

Description

The planning of the RVIB is more or less identical on the ground, first, and in the case of the main administration building, second floors (see Figure 16, Figure 17 and Figure 18). At these levels, the elongated plan form of the main complex is bisected by a north/south corridor, which provides access to the side wings. At either end, the corridor forms a short single-loaded passage providing access to larger rooms located within the north and south wings.

Vertical circulation is concentrated in the centre of the building and at the rear of the original north and south wings. The main entrance, located centrally within the west façade, opens into a large triple-height stairwell which services the ground, first and second floors of the building. Secondary stairwells, smaller in scale and fully enclosed, are located at the rear of the north and south wings, and provide access between the first and second floor levels in these areas. Two external steel escape stairs are located on the north elevation of the McPherson Wing and within the courtyard to the east.

Throughout the building, there is a simple hierarchy evident in interior decoration. The main stairwell and the chapel are the only elaborately decorated spaces, with the general office areas and corridors being much plainer in presentation.

The Main Administration Building

The earliest portion of the building comprises a three-storey bluestone structure with a central tower. The building was extended in the period immediately following its completion in 1868, and again in both the later nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Externally, the original form is evident with the exception of the slate roof turret to the central tower, which was removed during 1949-50. Internally, the building contains much of its original fabric overlaid with the various phases of alterations and additions. Currently, the Institute uses the ground and first floors for administration purposes, whilst the second floor is unoccupied.

North and South Wings

The two-storey bluestone wings either side of the central building were part of the original building design but constructed after the completion of the central building. The north and south wings constructed in c.1871 provided teaching areas and a superintendent's residence at ground level, with boys' and girls' dormitories over. In c.1879, a dining hall, workrooms, kitchens and were added to the east of the north and south wings. The original extent of the north and south wings are largely intact.

Chapel and Courtyard

The bluestone chapel is believed to date from the same period of construction as the north and south wings, i.e. c.1870, and originally contained a Fincham organ within the nave on the west

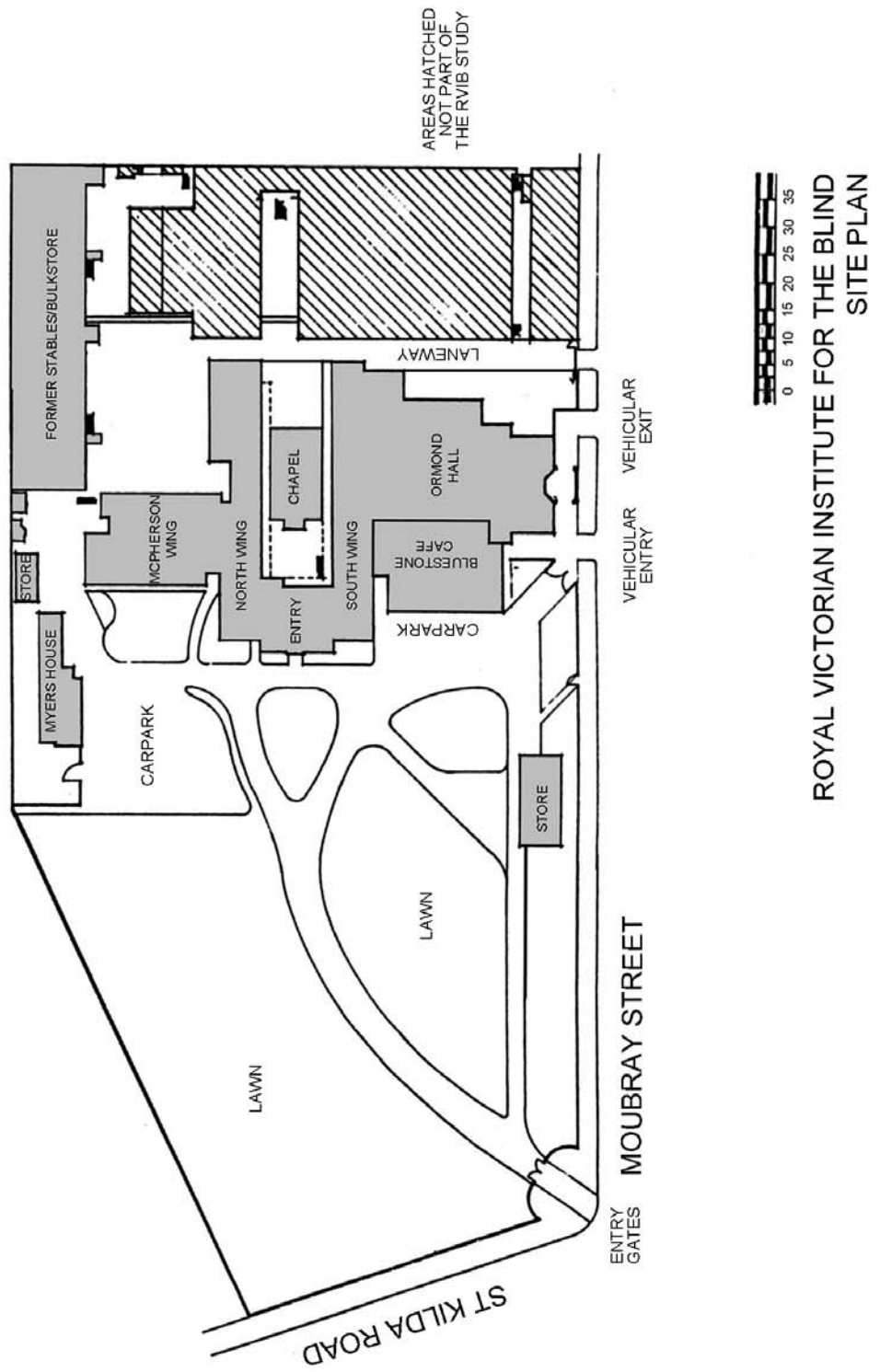


Figure 15 Site plan of the existing RVIB site

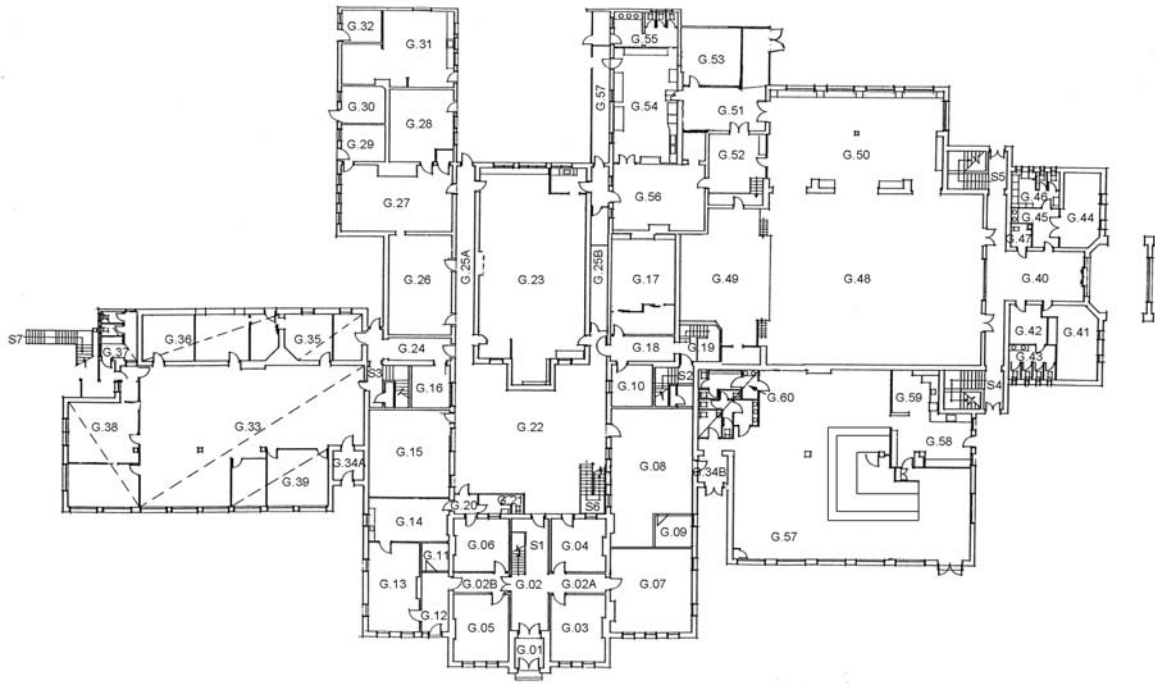


Figure 16 RVIB Ground Floor Plan

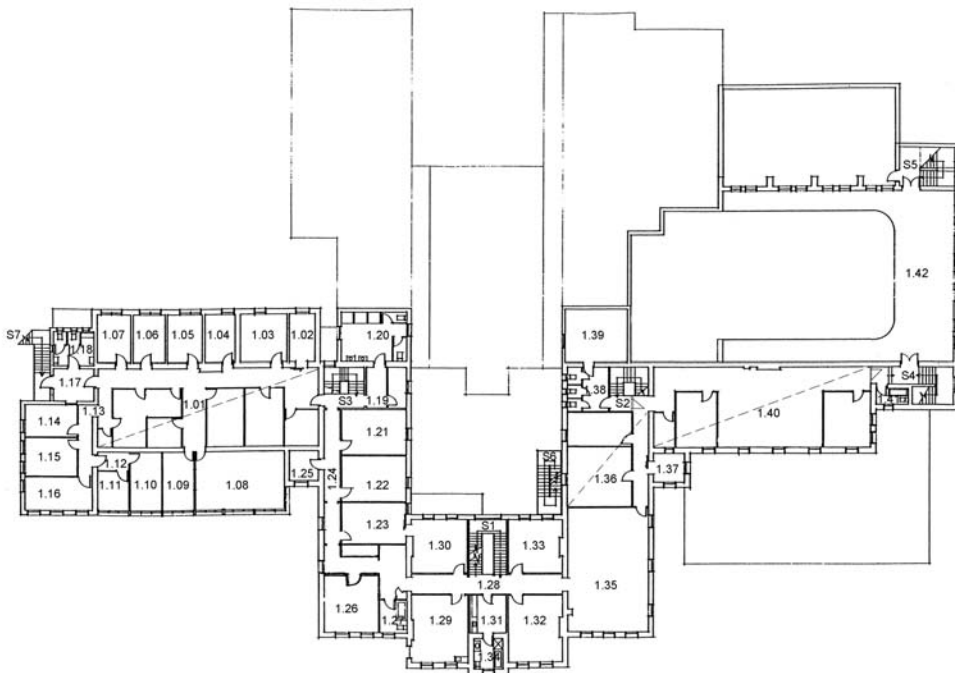


Figure 17 RVIB, First Floor Plan

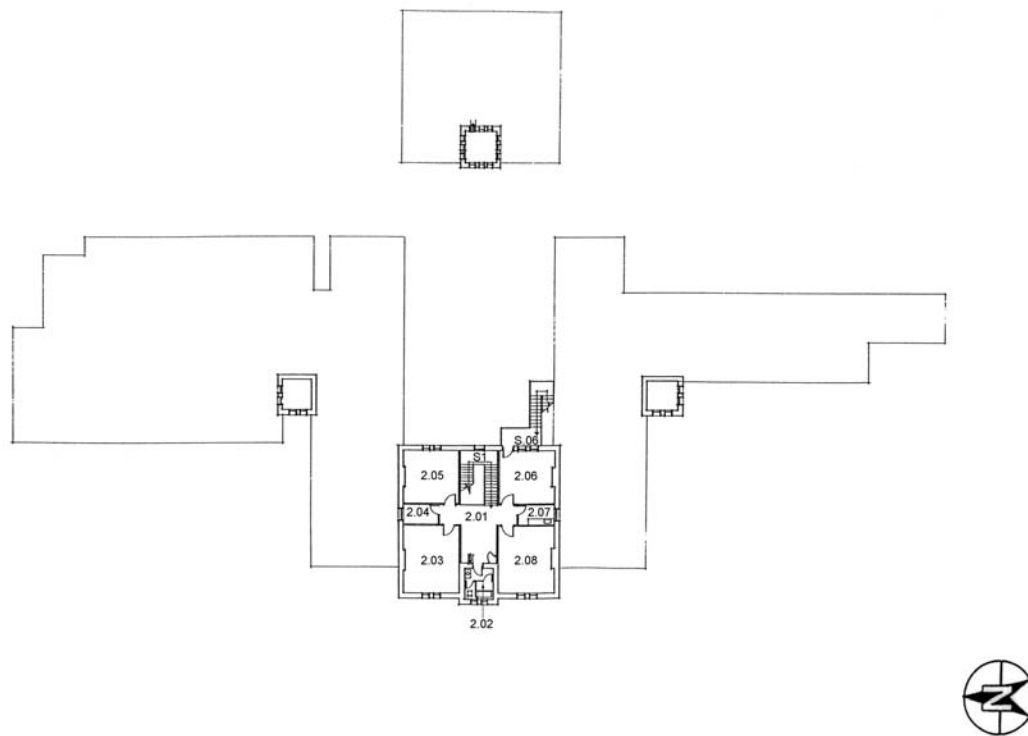


Figure 18 RVIB Second Floor Plan

side. The building fabric is essentially intact although the organ and all internal fixtures and fittings have been removed. In 1924, verandas were added between the chapel and side wings by Stephenson and Meldrum. In addition, a brickwork toilet block has also been constructed in the north-east corner of the courtyard. The external area, east of the chapel was formerly used as a drying yard for laundry.

Former McPherson Wing (North)

The two-storey bluestone wing to the north of the north wing was constructed in 1871-72 to meet the growing accommodation needs of the school and its industrial activities. Further extensions were made to the north and west sides of the building in 1932 and in 1950, under Percy Everett, Chief Architect of the Public Works Department (PWD), the first floor was extended on the west to provide additional dormitory space for boys.

Bluestone Cafe—Former Supper Room (South)

The two-storey bluestone wing and south tower, both south of the south wing, were constructed in c.1879 and provided additional dormitory space for girls on the first floor. In 1932, a single storey bluestone building was added to the west, extending the size of the dining room. J.B. McLean, District Architect of the PWD, executed the contract drawings. Currently, the area is privately leased from the Institute, and was recently refurbished for use as a restaurant/bar and is known as the Bluestone Cafe.

Ormond Hall

Ormond Hall is an addition to the south-east of the main building, and is constructed of bluestone with cream brick dressings to match the earlier structure. The building was designed by Nathaniel Billing and was officially opened on 24 June 1891. It was named in memory of

Francis Ormond who had bequeathed £5,000 to the Institute. At the time of its remodelling in 1921-22, three additional workshops were constructed. The exterior of the building is largely intact to the 1890s design, with the exception of the removal of two corner slate roof turrets, demolished in 1949-50. The original design has also been altered by the addition of the portico and further extensions to the east and south sides. The interior predominantly reflects the 1922 refurbishment works. Currently, the hall and kitchens are leased for catering purposes.

Former Stables and Bulk Store

Originally constructed as a single storey bluestone structure with gable roof in c.1887, the building was located on the north-east corner of the site, providing stables for the Institute. The building was widened to the south and re-roofed in 1925, and the existing two-storey brickwork structure was added to the top in 1932-33. It has large open timber floor spaces typical of buildings constructed at this time. In 1980, a new lift was installed on the south side of the building.

Myer House

Myer House is a prefabricated building, which may have been donated to the Institute by Sir Sydney Myer in 1947. It is located on the east side of the main complex along the north site boundary. The building, which was designed by the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation, is an example of a standard kit home available from the Myer Emporium after the Second World War. In 1949, Percy Everett, Chief Architect of the PWD, designed an annexe to the east of the building. The building and immediate grounds to the west are currently used as a caretaker's residence, whilst the annexe to the east is used as a staff room.

Store Room (former Lunch Room)

The store is located on the north site boundary, to the east of Myer House. The building is a timber-framed weatherboard structure, with a corrugated steel-clad skillion roof which appears to date from the 1950s. The building is currently in poor condition, is structurally unsound, and is used as a store by the Institute. A small red brick toilet block containing a male and female toilet is located immediately to the east of this building.

Store Room (former Gymnasium)

Formerly a gymnasium, the building is located on the south boundary of the site, west of the Bluestone Cafe. The building was designed by the PWD under Percy Everett, constructed between 1950-51, and is a simple timber-framed structure with a pitched roof.

3.4 The Exterior of the RVIB Complex

3.4.1 West Elevation

The west elevation is the principal facade of the RVIB, and comprises the main three-storey administration building, flanked either side by the two-storey north and south wings (Figure 19). Further to the south is a single storey building, formerly the supper room, whilst the McPherson Wing is located to the north.

The west elevation of the central administration building, which addresses the front garden and driveway, is divided into three bays. It comprises rock-faced coursed squared random rubble, delineated horizontally into floor levels by cream brick stringcourses. The four-storey central tower is break-fronted, flanked either side by three-storey bays, and contains the entrance porch at ground level. Cream brick quoining highlights the vertical divisions of the facade. The arched entry opening, located in the central bay has a painted rendered dressing with a moulded keystone and cream brick segmental arch over.



Figure 19 *RVIB west façade facing St Kilda Road*



Figure 20 *South façade showing Ormond Hall, Moubray Street*

Immediately above, the lettering '*The Victorian Institute for the Blind*' is centrally positioned over the entry portal. The second storey has a centrally positioned window with painted rendered dressings, whilst the third has paired openings with mitre arched heads. The fourth storey, of cream brick masonry, is articulated by red brickwork lozenges at the cornice and head, and has a grouped opening of three narrow windows.

A slated turret, which has since been removed, originally capped the central tower; while the original entry steps have been replaced by a paved ramp, which slopes up to ground floor level. The decorative lamps with glazed lanterns either side were donated to the RVIB in 1880 by the Prahran City Council.

The north and south flanking bays comprise pairs of similarly detailed windows with rendered dressings. At the third storey, the paired openings which have mitre arched heads, break the line of the cornice and are surmounted by a parapeted gablet which comprises bluestone masonry with a centrally positioned red brick lozenge. The north and south wing elevations are identical in their decorative detailing and comprise rock-faced coursed squared random rubble, with cream face brickwork stringcourses and quoining. The first and second floors have three windows with dressed surrounds. The only exception is that the ground floor window in the north wing has been modified to accommodate a door opening.

The single storey (former) supper room to the south of the main building comprises rock faced bluestone masonry with a painted rendered crenellated parapet above a moulded dentillated cornice. The wall is articulated into bays by large full-height openings which are divided by cream face brickwork piers, with protruding bluestone blocks. The multipane, timber-framed windows have centrally positioned casement sashes surrounded by top and sidelights. The entry, which is located to the south, has painted timber two-leaf panel doors and concrete steps at the threshold.

The McPherson Wing comprises a two-storey bluestone addition to the north. The elevation is divided into bays by cream face brick piers with protruding bluestone blocks. Window openings comprise pairs of timber-framed, double hung sash multipane windows with highlights, and are fitted with retractable canvas awning blinds. The north end bay has double-hung sash timber-framed windows with dressed surrounds at the first floor level, whilst the central infill area comprises a timber-framed wall which has painted (Masonite?) sheet infill to sill height and glazing over.

The north and south wings are connected to the main building by a three-storey square tower which features cream face brick quoining, redbrick lozenges and dressed paired window openings. The original slate roof turrets to the towers have been removed.

3.4.2 South Elevation of Ormond Hall

The south elevation of Ormond Hall, which faces Moubray Street, comprises a centrally located portico set forward of a single storey bluestone wall, with the two-storey music hall beyond (Figure 20). With the exception of the portico addition and removal of the two corner roof turrets, removed in the twentieth century, the material treatment and detailing of the bluestone walls generally reflects that of the original building.

The two-storey music hall has two end bays which are articulated by cream brick quoining at the corners and red brick lozenges at the parapet. The central bay has grouped window openings with dressed surrounds. The cream face brick is ornamented by a centrally positioned crown supporting a pressed cement crucifix, below which is a wall-mounted metal crest. The entry portico by contrast, has a bluestone masonry base with painted render over. The arched stained glass window, which is symmetrically located between corner piers, has a moulded hood and corbelled sill and features the lettering '*Ormond Hall*'. The parapet is ornamented and features the lettering '*Ormond Hall*'. The hipped roof is clad with slate and surmounted by a small flèche with a pyramidal capping.



1. North tower and McPherson Hall



2. South tower and Bluestone Cafe



3. South wing rear elevation



4. Chapel rear elevation



5. McPherson Wing north elevation



6. North tower and entry

Figure 21 North, south and east (rear) views of the RVIB

3.4.3 Side and Rear Elevations—North, South and East

The side and rear elevations of the main administration building, incorporating the north and south wings and the chapel, predominantly comprise rock-faced bluestone with contrasting dressings which are similarly detailed to the west façade (Figure 21). These elevations are substantially intact, although minor alterations have been made to the windows and the bluestone to the north and south wing verandas has been painted.

Beyond this central courtyard area, the level of non-original fabric varies, reflecting the fluid nature of the alterations and additions which have taken place over the years. For instance, the north façade of the McPherson Wing comprises red face stretcher bond brickwork and rectangular openings with rendered lintels and sills, but no surrounds. The east elevations of the north and south wings are rendered painted brickwork.

Two steel escape stairs have been added to the north elevation of the McPherson Wing and in the south-west corner of the courtyard.

Conclusions

The west elevation of the RVIB, comprising the original building, side returns, north and south wings and towers, are predominantly intact and are of primary significance. The removal of the north, south and central roof turrets in 1949-50 is a notable modification to the historical presentation of the façade as is the modification of the north wing ground floor window. Minor exceptions include the removal of the original entry steps and alterations to the windows which are of little or no significance.

Additions to the original building include the construction of the McPherson Wing in 1871, the south tower and former supper room wing to the south in c.1879. These areas, which are fundamental to the original design, have been subsequently concealed or altered by extensions undertaken to the west façade in the 1932 and 1950. These extensions, which substantially conceal the original fabric of the north and south ends of the building diminishing the symmetrical nature of the original design, do however demonstrate the twentieth century expansion of the Institute and are of contributory significance. Non-original elements to the McPherson Wing include the additions of canvas awning sunshades, solar reflective film to the windows and the like, which are not significant.

The north, south and east courtyard elevations of the original building and side wings are predominantly intact and are of primary significance. Exceptions include the addition of verandas to the north and south wings, over-painting of the bluestone at ground level, the insertion of an escape stair and amenity block, and numerous alterations to windows including the installation of air conditioners.

The four elevations of the chapel are predominantly intact and are of primary significance.

The south elevation, comprising Ormond Hall and the portico is intact and of primary significance. The single storey extensions to Ormond Hall comprising the supper room to the west and function room to the east, demonstrate the twentieth century expansion of the Institution are of contributory significance.

The north elevation of the McPherson Wing has been substantially modified and is of no significance.

The rear elevations of the north and south wing along the laneway are substantially modified and are of no significance, as is the lean-to structure at the rear of the south wing.

3.4.4 Roof

Generally, the roofs to the central administration area, north and south wings, McPherson Wing (north), supper room wing (south) and chapel are gable in form, most have hipped ends, and are



1. Chapel, west elevation



2. Courtyard, south-west corner



3. Former stables, north-west view



4. Myer House, south-west view



5. Store, south-west view



6. Former gymnasium, north-east view

Figure 22 RVIB chapel, courtyard and outbuildings

clad with slate. The grouped chimneys, which have decorative mouldings and chimney pots, are dominant elements of the roofscape. Metal roof cowls, which ventilate the kitchens, have been installed to various roofs and are obtrusive, particularly at the rear of the south wing.

As noted previously, the removal of the roof turrets in 1949, substantially detracts from the original design, diminishing the formal hierarchy and symmetry of the various building components.

Conclusion

Notwithstanding the removal of the corner turrets, the roofs to the original RVIB buildings –comprising the central administration area, north and south wings, McPherson Wing (north), supper room wing (south) and chapel—are predominantly intact and of primary significance to the extent of their original plan, form and materials, including chimneys and roof vents.

Non original metal roof sheeting to the extensions, including the rear verandas and the installation of mechanical plant to exhaust to the supper room kitchens, are of no significance.

3.4.5 Outbuildings

Myer House

Myer House erected in 1947 is a ‘steel-framed but asbestos concrete-clad building’² on a brick plinth with a stuccoed finish (Figure 22). The pitched roof is clad with corrugated metal roof sheeting with painted metal fascias. The gable ends are clad with pressed metal which resemble shingles. The soffit is lined with fibro-cement sheet.

The entrance is located on the south elevation of the building, which features a red face brick stretcher bond chimney. Window and door openings are timber-framed, and the windows have double-hung timber sashes and sills which are painted. Wall vents are positioned over all windows and openings on the north and east elevations which are fitted with retractable, manually operated canvas awning blinds.

The east annexe, constructed in 1949, is similarly detailed with regard to materials, form and fabric. A small galvanised sheet canopy protects the building entry, located on the south elevation

Store

The store is a simple weatherboard-clad building, which has a corrugated metal skillion roof with no eaves and box gutters. The floor and walls are timber-framed, and the wall openings are fitted with aluminium-framed glazed sliding windows. The entrance on the south façade, contains a solid core flush panel door.

Former Gymnasium

The former gymnasium is a simple timber-framed gable structure with a corrugated metal sheet roof and vertical timber board wall cladding. The north and south eaves of the building have exposed painted timber rafter ends, and metal box gutters. The wall openings have a mixture of timber and aluminium-framed windows, which are fitted with retractable, manually operated canvas awnings.

Former Stables/Bulkstore

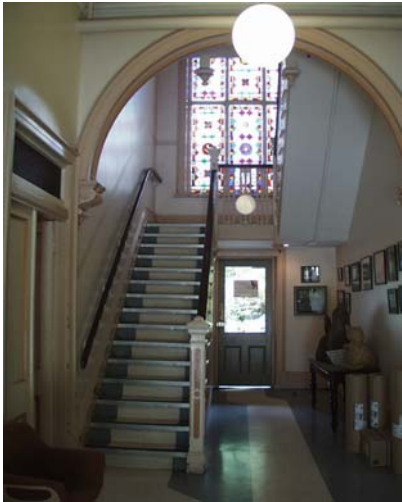
The building, originally used as a stable, is a rectangular three-storey structure, which comprises a rock-faced coursed squared random rubble base, with two storeys of red face



1. Entry door fan light



2. Entry lobby fanlight



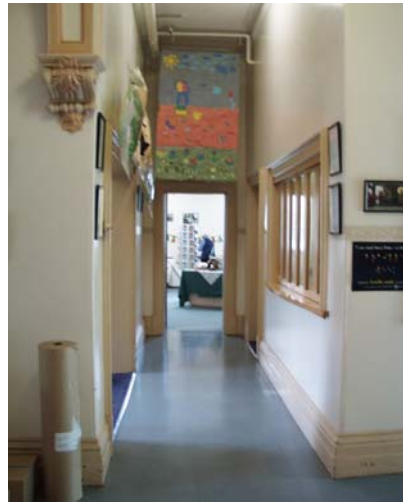
3. Main staircase



4. Reception office and lobby



5. Opening to north corridor



6. South corridor

Figure 23 Central administration area, ground floor areas

stretcher bond brickwork over. The additions were made when the building was converted for factory use in 1925.

Generally, the elevations are delineated horizontally by rendered string courses at floor levels and have irregularly placed rectangular window openings above which are metal wall vents. The building has a gable roof with eaves along the east, west and south sides, but is parapeted along the north side. The openings are metal-framed and have a mixture of fixed glass panels and operable hopper windows. Two steel escape stairs has been installed either side of a projecting face brick lift well which is centrally located on the south elevation. The west elevation has exposed plumbing, whilst the east has a steel-framed awning with painted brickwork and flashing, which is remnant fabric of a pre-existing gabled building adjacent.

Conclusions

Myer House is a predominantly intact example of a prefabricated post-war house and is of contributory significance. The annexe on the east side is of no significance.

The store and former gymnasium are of no significance.

With regard to the former stables building, the original bluestone fabric and brickwork dressings at the base of the building along the north, east and west sides, are intact and of primary significance. The original bluestone base on the building's east elevation has been substantially altered and is of little significance. The upper brickwork is the last surviving remnant of the RVIB large-scale factories, and is of contributory significance. Alterations to the south elevation including the installation of escape stairs and a new lift core are of no significance.

3.5 Interior

3.5.1 Central Building 1866-68

History

- 21 January 1868: foundation stone laid.
- 21 August 1868: building opened.
- 1949-50: slate-roofed timber framed turret removed from the central tower.
- 1952: external escape stairs added to the south-east corner of the courtyard.

The former uses of this building include a matron's office and nurses' room to the south, and a superintendent's room to the north on the ground floor; staff bedrooms and headquarters on the first floor; and domestic (maids) quarters on the second floor.

Description

Central Entry, Reception Lobby and Main Staircase

The principal entry area consists of two spaces, a wind lock (G.01) and a reception lobby (G.02), and a stairwell (S1), which are rectangular in plan, and arranged in a linear configuration (Figure 23). The walls and ceiling are painted hard plaster, with moulded plaster cornices, a stencilled decorative dado frieze and moulded timber skirtings. The main stair positioned against the east wall, contains a large stained glass window.

The wind lock has original two-leaf four-panel solid timber doors to the west and automatic sliding glass doors to the east. Above each opening are original glazed semi-circular fanlights. The entry fanlight to the west has etched glass which depicts an allegorical female figure with



1. Reception office



2. Sitting room fire place



3. Non-original entry to sitting room



4. Dining room door to courtyard



5. North office



6. North office fire place

Figure 24 Central administration area, ground floor, south and north areas

open arms and holding a ribbon upon which is the lettering: *'The eyes of the blind shall be opened'*. The east fanlight is divided by moulded glazing bars into segmental arcs and has textured coloured glazing. The floor paving is concrete and ramps up from the external ground to the finished floor level. Tactile floor tiles are located at either side of this threshold and painted steel pipe hand rails are fixed to the north and south walls. Non-original fittings to the wind lock include ceiling-mounted fluorescent lights, sprinklers and a security access panel.

The reception lobby is divided from the main stair by an arch supported on foliated capitals. A corridor (G.02A) provides access to rooms south of the central wing, whilst areas to the north are accessed through a door fitted with original two-leaf four-panel solid timber doors which have a top light over with textured coloured glazing. The glazed solid timber panel door in the east wall behind the stair provides external access to the courtyard.

The timber floor is covered with vinyl tiles which are blue/grey in colour with white highlight tiles and define directional circulation. Two non-original timber-framed counters and openings have been inserted into the reception office adjacent to the main entry. These openings have timber countertops with six folding panels which are glazed, and monogrammed with 'RVIB'. Other non-original fittings to the lobby area include a pendant light with glass ball shade, ceiling-mounted fluorescent lights and sprinklers, the fire security panel and the manual door override panel.

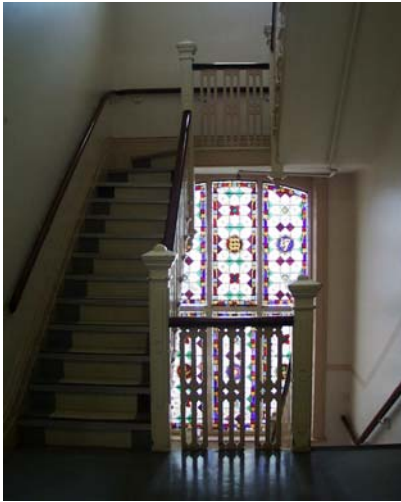
The main stair is timber-framed, painted, and has vinyl tile treads and risers with aluminium safety nosings. At ground level, the stairwell is in-filled with moulded timber panelling, providing a small cupboard space. Other original features of the stair include the painted timber balusters which have rose-shaped cut-outs, and turned newel posts which support a varnished timber handrail. The arched opening in the east wall at the level of the stair landing comprises six panels of stained glass, divided by timber mullions and transoms. The design of each panel has a geometric border and distinctive floral and diamond patterned infill. Various heraldic iconography are located at the centre of each panel symbolising Ireland (three-leaf clover, angel with harp), Scotland (a thistle, a lion rampant) and England (three lions couchant, rose). The stair continues to the first and second floor levels in similar detail. The original ceiling, at the top level, is painted hard plaster and has raked perimeter edges.

Ground Floor South

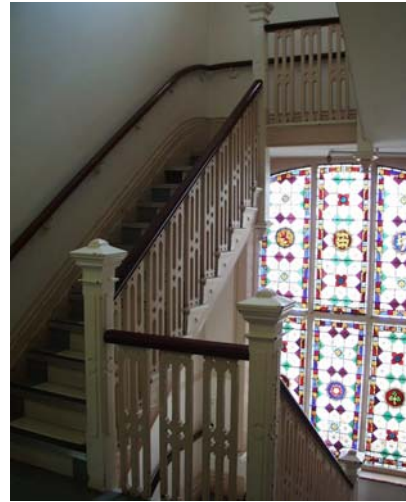
The south area comprises a double-loaded corridor between the reception office (G.03) located to the west and a small sitting room to the east (G.04). An opening in the end wall provides access to the south wing (Figure 24). Walls and ceilings are painted hard plaster with moulded cornices. Four panel solid timber doors provide access to the reception office and south wing, whilst the original doorway to the sitting room has been widened to enlarge the entry from the reception area. Windows comprise timber-framed double-hung sash windows with painted moulded timber architraves and sills.

The reception office is rectangular in plan with counter windows located in the north and east walls. The timber floor is covered with carpet and has moulded timber skirtings. The original stone mantelpiece and chimneybreast on the south wall is intact, although a gas heater has been installed in the fireplace and the stonework has been painted. Other non-original fittings to the room include ceiling-mounted fans and sprinklers, suspended fluorescent lights, vertical blinds and a built-in reception desk in the corner of the room.

The sitting room is rectangular in plan and similarly detailed with respect to floor, wall and ceiling finishes. Similar alterations have also been made to the fireplace. The east wall which comprises an original solid timber panel door with a glazed top light and highlight over, provides direct access to the external courtyard. Loose fittings to this room include glass display cabinets and cupboards, which feature objects associated with the history of the Institution and RVIB honorary members.



1. Main stairwell and window



2. Stairwell detail



3. Typical corner office



4. North corridor



5. Kitchen/staff room



6. Bathroom

Figure 25 Central administration building, first floor

Ground Floor North

The plan of the north area mirrors the south and comprises a double-loaded vestibule space (G.02B) which provides access to an office to the west (G.05), a small dining room to the east (G.06), and entry to the north wing in the end wall (Figure 24). Openings to the rooms have original four-panel timber solid doors; walls and ceilings are painted hard plaster with moulded cornices. The timber floors throughout are covered with carpet and have moulded timber skirtings. Below dado level in the vestibule, extant (floral?) wallpaper has been over-painted. Non-original fittings to the vestibule include cloak hooks on the west wall, exposed plumbing and sprinklers at ceiling level, and modern glass ball light shades and door furniture.

The office is rectangular in plan with timber-framed, double-hung sash windows to the west and north walls. The original fireplace and chimneybreast is located in the north wall and features a varnished timber mantelpiece and surround, with brown tiles infilling the fire box above a modern gas heater. An earlier photograph of the office illustrates that the room had carpet of a floral design, the walls were covered with patterned wallpaper to a picture rail mounted approximately 300mm below ceiling level, and the windows covered with chintz curtains. Other non-original fittings include ceiling-mounted fans and fluorescent lights, exposed sprinklers and vertical blinds.

The dining room is rectangular in plan and similarly detailed with respect to floor and ceiling finishes. The walls contain an ornamental frieze at dado level, below which wallpaper has been over-painted. A moulded timber picture rail is fixed at approximately 300mm below ceiling level. The original fireplace is intact and contains a black marble mantelpiece and surround with a brown glazed tiled hearth and infill above a gas heater. Original decorative ventilation grilles are located in this wall. The modern glass ball light shade and vinyl blinds are non-original. The east wall, which comprises an original solid timber panel door with a glazed top light and highlight over, provides direct access to a small entry vestibule. This space is square in plan and has doorways which provide access to the kitchen to the north, a toilet and wash area to the south, and the courtyard to the east. It has bitumen paving, corrugated metal and fibreglass roof sheeting, and the fittings and finishes are utilitarian including painted bluestone and brickwork walls, plasterboard infill and exposed plumbing.

First Floor

The first floor plan is symmetrical and comprises a central east-west circulation spine, which incorporates the main stair and landings, crossed by a wide transverse corridor. Principal rooms are located in each of the four corners. Opposite the stair, a storeroom connects the male bathroom to the central corridor (Figure 25). Generally throughout this level, the timber floors are covered with carpet. The ceilings and walls are hard plaster, without cornices, but with moulded timber skirtings.

Originally, the north and south corridors (1.28) were connected to the stair landing by two-leaf four panel timber doors with glazed top lights and sidelights. The north doors have since been removed and the highlight in-filled, whilst one leaf is missing to the south opening. Door openings to the individual offices are fitted with four-panel timber doors with modern furniture. Whilst the plan form of the first floor is intact, non-original fittings include exposed plumbing and sprinklers at ceiling level, ceiling-mounted fluorescent light fittings, fire hydrant and hose reel cupboards, and wall-mounted directional signage.

The three corner offices (1.30, 1.32 and 1.33) and the staff lunchroom (1.29) are similar in plan form and fabric. Non-original fabric includes fans, fluorescent lights, exposed sprinklers and electrical wiring at ceiling level, air-conditioning units mounted in the window openings, venetian blinds and timber pelmets, metal cabling ducts at skirting level, and standard office fit-out items such as pin boards and the like. All fireplaces have been blocked-in and modern gas heaters installed. Additionally, the door to the lunchroom has been removed, and built-in



1. Central store room, second floor



2. Central turret timber floor



3. Typical corner office, second floor



4. Access ladder to non-extant roof turret



3. Typical fireplace, corner office



3. Central turret walls

Figure 26 Central administration building, second floor and turret space

cupboards installed along the west wall. This bench unit contains a stainless steel sink and hot water unit, a tiled splash back and a mechanical fan which has been installed into the north-facing window.

The store room (1.31) houses an electric hot water unit in the north-west corner and the timber floor is covered with vinyl sheet. This room opens onto the male bathroom (1.34) which is original in plan form but has non-original fabric and fittings such as a bath, shower screen, toilet pan, vanity basin and mirror. The floor is tiled with 40mm brown mosaic tiles and the walls with 150x150mm glazed white tiles to approximately 1800mm high. A manhole and mechanical vent is located in the ceiling and hand dryers, towel and soap dispensers have been installed.

Second Floor and Central Turret

The second floor plan is identical to the floor below and comprises the main central stair area (S1) which has a raked plaster ceiling, the north-south transverse corridor (S2) with rooms at either end, and four rectangular rooms located at each corner (Figure 26). Access to the central turret is via a timber ladder located in the north-west corner of the landing. Generally throughout this floor, the materials and finishes have been altered or are in poor condition, whilst the plan form and fabric of each area is original.

The timber floor is generally covered with carpet and has moulded timber skirtings. The kitchenette to the south (2.07) has vinyl sheet flooring, as does the central circulation zone, whilst the store to south (2.04), has an unlined floor which is in disrepair. Walls are generally painted hard plaster, without cornices, except for the non-original internal partitions to the kitchenette and store which are timber-framed and clad with vertical timber boarding. Additional non-original fittings to the kitchenette include a small bench and sink, hot water unit, overhead cupboards and fluorescent lights.

The ceilings to the principle four corner rooms have raked perimeter edges exposing the bottom timber chords and tie rods of the roof framing which is painted white. Heaters have been installed in the fireplaces, and the original stone mantels and surrounds (marble?) have been painted. Additional non-original fittings to the corner rooms include ceiling-mounted fluorescent lights, fans and sprinklers, and vertical. An external opening to provide access to the external steel escape stair (S6) has been inserted into the east wall of room S.06 and fitted with a glazed door.

Building services to this level include a fire extinguisher, hose reel and distribution board, which are located in the central stair area. The bathroom, which is in poor condition, has hard plaster walls which show evidence of cracking, the floor is covered with exposed particle board sheet and the timber architraves around the windows have been removed. The central roof turret is rectangular in plan and has timber flooring, over which steel channels have been installed, originally for the support of water tanks. The walls are exposed brick and feature triplets of timber-framed windows with mitre-arched heads. A timber ladder provides access to the timber floor above, which originally provided access to the turret.

Conclusion

The plan and form, together with the fabric of the original walls and ceilings of the central building are predominantly intact, including the entry, the main stairwell, the north and south corridors and offices on all levels of the building, and are of primary significance. Original elements also of primary significance include fireplaces and surrounds, raked plaster ceilings, exposed roof structure, stained and etched glass, and decorative detailing including moulded dados and ceiling roses. Gas heaters, air conditioners, solar reflective film, blinds, built-in joinery, pelmets and the like are of no significance.



1. RVIB shop



2. RVIB shop fireplace



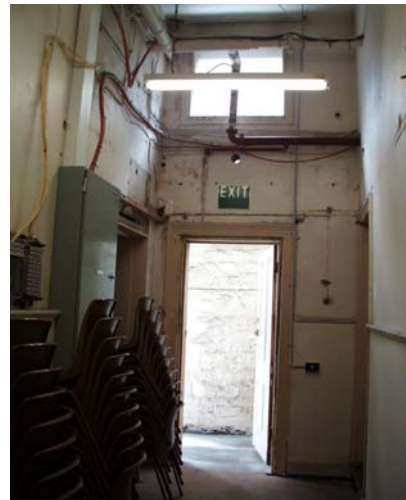
3. Computer room



4. Small partitioned office in computer room



5. Stairwell to first floor



6. Corridor access to courtyard

Figure 27 South wing, ground floor

3.5.2 South and North Wings c.1870

History

- 1870-71: wings constructed after completion of central administration building.
- Post 1870: Various further additions to the east of the wings to provide kitchen, workshop and laundry facilities were constructed.

The ground floor of the south wing was originally a large singular space used as a sitting room for the girls, but has subsequently been subdivided to accommodate the RVIB shop to the west (G.07) and the IT Department area (G.08 and G.09) to the east. To the extreme east end of the wing is a small office which was formerly a sitting room (G.10), a stair (S2), and a corridor (G.18) which provides external access to the courtyard (Figure 27). The first floor level, accessed by stairs located in the south-east corner of the wing, was originally a large open rectangular space, used as the junior girls' dormitory. The room has similarly been subdivided, to provide additional office accommodation for the Institute.

The current configuration of the ground floor north wing reflects the original use of the area for the superintendent's residence. At the west end of the wing, an original stairwell has been removed and altered to provide a disabled toilet (G.11). The plan form, however, of the original living room (G.13), which is now a boardroom, and the kitchen, formerly a food storeroom (G.14), is intact. Directly to the east are a large meeting room (G.15), office (G.16), stairwell (S3) and corridor (G.24), which provide external access to the courtyard. The first floor level, accessed by stairs located in the north-east corner of the wing, was originally used as the staff bedrooms, with the boys' bathroom and boot room located at the east end. These rooms are currently used as offices.

3.5.2.1 South Wing

Former Girls' Dormitory – South Wing Ground and First Floors

On the ground floor, the perimeter walls consist of painted hard plaster and timber-framed double-hung sash windows with painted moulded timber architraves. Although the original plan form and fabric of the original ground floor room is evident, non-original alterations to the area include the installation of:

- a stud-framed plasterboard wall which divides the original area into two principal rooms G.07 and G.08;
- a small office (G.09) which is located in the south-west corner of G.08 and has glazed openings and venetian blinds;
- metal ducting to perimeter walls at the height of the workstations and skirting;
- suspended tile plasterboard ceiling with flush-mounted fluorescent lights;
- infill (plasterboard?) to the fireplace in G.09;
- carpet to the timber floors; and
- venetian blinds, air-conditioning units and solid (Masonite?) infill to the original window highlights.

Original fabric which has been modified includes the black marble mantel and fireplace surround in the RVIB shop, which has a gas heater installed. Whilst the rooms generally contain loose furniture and workstations, the computer room has built-in benches in the south-east corner. In addition, the original door opening to the south turret has been closed off and the wall cavity used for electrical and cable ducting.



1. Original form and fabric of the ceiling



2. Typical false ceiling over



3. Non-original entry to stairwell



4. Raked ceiling in toilet



5. Timber-lined skylight in stairwell



6. Female toilets and former shower area

Figure 28 South wing, first floor

The stairwell (S.2) is located in the south-east corner of the wing and is square in plan, with a U-shaped configuration of flights and landings. The steps are constructed of concrete, lined with carpet and have varnished timber handrails fixed to the walls on both sides. The walls, which are rendered and painted, are detailed with a V-shaped incision at dado level, and there are no skirtings or cornices. The soffit of the stairwell appears to be off-form concrete, painted white. The walls to corridor G.18 have a Masonite sheet dado with painted hard plaster over. This space is generally in poor condition and has exposed plumbing and electrical building services.

Although the original plan form and fabric of the first floor dormitory spaces are evident, the area has been subdivided by lightweight internal partitions to provide a waiting/office area (1.35) and two individual office spaces and corridor (1.36). Non-original elements within these rooms include:

- stud-framed plasterboard wall partitions with glazed viewing panels and modern flush panel doors;
- carpet to the timber floors throughout;
- built-in joinery;
- ducted hydronic heating;
- suspended fluorescent lights;
- suspended plasterboard ceilings with exposed stained timber rafter over in offices 1.36;
- venetian blinds, solar reflective film and air-conditioning units;
- standard office fittings including pin boards, notice boards and the like; and
- exposed building services and a fire services down pipe which is located in the south-east corner of office 1.36.

The form and fabric of the dormitory space ceiling is original. The ceiling is lined with hard plaster and features a raked perimeter edge. Circular flues are evident between the structural timber and tie rod members which are exposed and painted white.

The female toilet (1.38) and former shower/bathroom (1.39) additions are located at the eastern end of the south wing. Access to these rooms is by a small landing, which opens off the stairwell (S2), and which has been modified to provide an entry to the south wall. The raked ceiling to the stairwell is original and comprises exposed timber rafters with painted timber board lining. A timber-lined recessed skylight is centrally located in the east raked plane.

The toilet is rectilinear in plan, with three cubicles equally spaced along the north wall which has narrow window openings fitted with wired safety glass louvres. The form and material of the ceiling is similar to the stairwell and includes an identical recessed timber-lined skylight to the east. The floor is concrete screed and the walls and partitions are tiled to approximately 1400 mm high with painted plaster above. Tiles are square, ceramic, cream in colour, and laid in a stretcher bond pattern. Bands of darker speckled tiles are used to highlight the top and bottom edges of the walls. Non-original fittings include towel and soap dispensers, vanity basin and mirror, ceiling-mounted fluorescent lighting and sprinkler pipes. The material and treatment of the walls and floor of the former shower/bathroom (1.39) is identical to the toilets, but the fabric is in poor condition. Originally, five shower cubicles were located along the east wall and at least one bath along the south wall. The room is currently used as a storeroom, with signs of missing and/or cracked tiles evident due to the removal of plumbing and fittings. The ceiling is lined with timber boarding, and has exposed ducting, sprinklers, fluorescent lighting, a manhole and flue.



1. Non-original entry to north wing



2. Board room fireplace



3. Kitchen south wall



4. Kitchen north wall joinery



5. Corridor with access to courtyard



6. Meeting room

Figure 29 North wing, ground floor

3.5.2.2 North Wing

Former Boys' Dormitory – North Wing Ground and First Floor

The ground floor perimeter walls consist of painted hard plaster and timber-framed double-hung sash windows with painted moulded timber architraves. Although the original plan form and fabric of the ground floor rooms are evident (Figure 29), non-original elements and alterations to the area include:

- The removal of the original stair, which opened off the north-south transverse corridor of the main central area, and the installation of stud-framed plasterboard walls for the provision of a disabled toilet (G.11).
- The modification of the original window to G.12 converted to a door with leadlight top and side lights.
- The refurbishment of facilities and built-in joinery to the kitchen (G.14).
- The upgrade of materials and finishes to the meeting room (G.15) including a suspended tile plasterboard ceiling with flush-mounted fluorescent lights.
- Carpet to rooms G.12, G.13 and G.15, and linoleum sheet to G.14.
- Venetian blinds, air-conditioning units, and services pipes and fluorescent light fittings.

Despite alterations to the plan of the original stair vestibule (G.12), extant original fabric includes the hard plaster walls, wallpaper (floral?) below dado level, decorative moulded plaster cornices and a timber picture rail mounted at door head height. The pendant glass light shade is non-original. The original fireplace in the board room (G.15) comprises a white marble surround fitted with a cast iron fire box which features decorative side panels tiled with glazed ceramic tiles. A small copper fire screen depicts a perspective view of the original west façade of the RVIB. The original oval-shaped decorative ceiling rose and cornices are intact although the candelabra light fitting does not appear to be original.

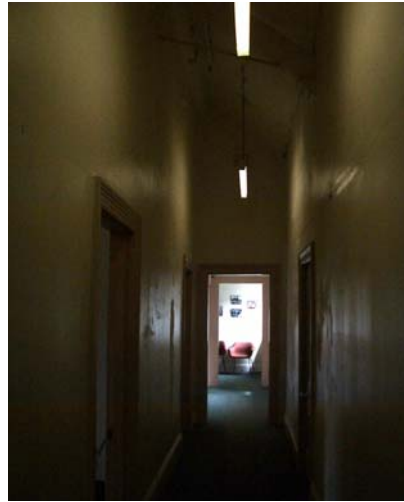
The plan form of the kitchen (G.14) is intact and the original bluestone and brickwork walls are evident above a 1600mm dado, lined variously with Masonite and/or laminate sheet. Non-original fittings in the room include timber cupboards, bench cupboards, various exposed service ducts and electrical cabling to the ceiling, and a ducted mechanical exhaust to the wall. The previous existence of a dumb-waiter located in the south wall is evident, although access to it was restricted. The ceiling is painted hard plaster and features an original decorative (cast iron?) rose.

Generally, modern materials and finishes conceal the original fabric of the meeting room (G.15). These elements include a suspended plasterboard tile and lighting grid to the ceiling, plasterboard walls, and carpet covering the concrete floor. In addition, an original window opening on the south wall has been enlarged and fixed glazing installed. Venetian blinds and air-conditioning units have been installed to the windows and a modern flush panel door with glazed highlight has been added to the south veranda entry.

The plan form and fabric of the stairwell (S.3) is identical to that of the south wing (S.2) described previously. The adjacent storeroom (G.16) which houses the communications server and distribution board, is in poor condition with a timber floor and exposed cabling and ducts attached to the hard plaster walls. The corridor (G.24) has a non-original ceiling, hard plaster walls and an arched opening in the north wall. Generally, the original plan form of the first floor dormitory spaces is intact and comprises a single loaded corridor along the north wall with offices along the south. Notwithstanding the removal of the stairwell in the south-west corner of the wing as described above, the original finishes and materials to the various rooms appear intact.



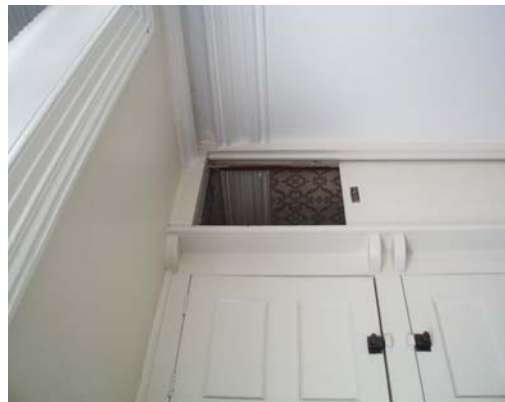
1. Typical south facing office



2. Corridor 1.24



3. Ceiling ventilation rose in office



4. Corridor cupboards showing wallpaper



5. Detail of timber corridor joinery



6. Non-original finishes to female bathroom

Figure 30 North wing, first floor

The first floor corridor is C-shaped in plan (1.24 and 1.25), and has hard plaster walls and moulded timber skirtings (Figure 30). The plaster ceiling is raked and exposes the timber roof framing and tie rods which are painted white. Full-height timber cupboards have been built-in the west end of the corridor (1.25) and remnant gold and white patterned wallpaper (original?) is evident within the ceiling space. This area also houses a fire extinguisher and distribution board. Remnant material of the original stair evident in the waiting area (1.27) includes the moulded cornice and plaster ceiling.

Offices (1.22, 1.22 and 1.23) are more or less identical in size, plan form and fabric and comprise hard plaster walls with timber-framed double-hung sash windows with splayed timber reveals, architraves and four-panel solid timber doors. The original plaster ceiling is raked, without cornices, and has exposed timber roof framing. Original features to the room also include decorative wall and ceiling vents. Non-original elements in these rooms include carpeted floors, ducted metal skirting, overhead fans, suspended fluorescent lights and exposed wiring and sprinkler pipes. Air conditioning units and venetian blinds installed and the rooms have been fitted with standard office furniture such as desks, pin boards and the like. The office located at the west end of the wing (1.26) is similarly detailed although the fireplace in the north-east corner has been infilled with plasterboard, the ceiling relined and painted. An original window opening located in the south wall has been blocked-in.

The plan form of the female bathroom (1.27) adjacent is intact although the fittings and finishes are non-original. These include a bath and glazed screen, toilet, vanity basin and mirror, soap and towel dispensers and a hand dryer. The brown mosaic floor tiles and white 150 x 150mm ceramic wall tiles are non-original, and the hard plaster over is in poor condition.

The short end corridor, adjacent to the stair S3, opens onto a cleaner's room (1.19) before leading to the women's toilet and shower area (1.20). The finishes and fittings to the cleaners' room are utilitarian such as a sink, coat hooks and benches. The materials and fittings to the bathroom are non-original and include tiled shower bays, toilets, and vanity units with mirrors. The floor, which is ramped at the door threshold, is tiled with 25mm brown mosaic tiles and the walls to approximately 1800mm in white 150x150mm tiles. The ceiling is lined with timber boards, a timber quad cornice, and non-original sprinklers, flue hole and fluorescent lights.

3.5.2.3. Rear Buildings, North and South Wings

Building additions to the rear of the original north and south wings are of a utilitarian nature and are currently used for storage. Rooms directly east of the south wing corridor (G.18) comprise a computer server room (G.17), formerly a workroom and first aid room, and the enclosed veranda (G.25B), which is adjacent to the chapel and has a metal and translucent corrugated sheet roof (Figure 31). The original plan form and fabric of the server room is intact including the hard plaster walls, and raked plaster ceiling with exposed timber framing. Non-original elements include suspended fluorescent lights, exposed sprinkler pipes, built-in work stations and ducted conduits, and a low height timber-framed enclosure to the west end which is lined with Masonite sheet. The chimneybreast, centrally located on the east wall is intact, although the fireplace has been filled-in and timber cupboards have been built on either side.

Further east are rooms which are associated with the back-of-house areas to Ormond Hall and comprise kitchens (G.51, G.54 and G.56), a cold store (G.53) and toilets (G.55). External access is through a delivery door in the south-east, and from the enclosed veranda on the north side. Again, these rooms are original in plan form and fabric but have undergone various alterations, to include non-original fittings and finishes which are typical of commercial kitchens viz. vinyl sheet floor with coved skirting up to a wall height of 1600mm; fixed stainless steel benches and sinks; built-in timber framed cupboards and shelving; and plasterboard ceilings, cornices and modern flush panel doors.



1. North wing veranda (G.25A)



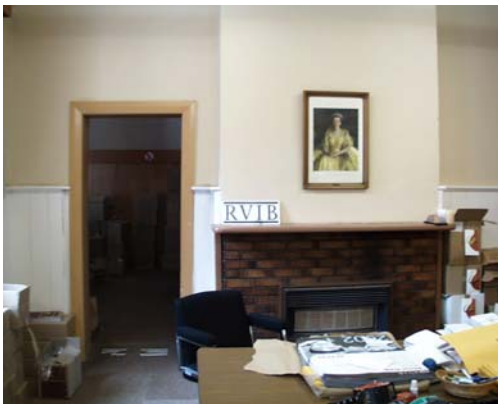
2. Enclosed south veranda (G.25B)



3. Server room G.11, south wing



4. Store room G.27, north wing



5. Fireplace infill to store room G.26



6. Storage mezzanine to G.31

Figure 31 Ground floor, rear areas

The plan form and fabric of the kitchen G.56 is notable in that the raked plaster ceiling exposes the timber roof trusses and chords in a manner typical of the second floor offices of the central administration building. This room was formerly used as a committee room. In addition, the room has a central skylight and roof lantern over, but this has subsequently been covered with clear corrugated fibreglass sheeting.

Rooms directly east of the north wing corridor (G.24) comprise rooms G.26 and G.27, which are accessed from the external covered corridor (G.25A) adjacent to the chapel. The original uses of these rooms include a library (G.26), a kitchen equipped with built-in brick ovens (G.27), an ironing room (G.28), pantry (G.29), boiler room (G.30) and laundry and drying room (G.31). They are all intact in plan form, although the fabric has been variously altered. The walls to room G.26 have a painted timber dado lined with vertical boards and hard plaster above. Openings located in the north walls of both rooms have timber-framed, double-hung sash windows with splayed timber reveals and architraves. In both rooms, ceilings are raked, exposing roof-framing members, which are painted white. Identical to room G.11 in the south wing opposite, room G.27 features a central skylight and strapped fibrous plaster ceiling. Non-original elements within these rooms are numerous and include pelmets, blinds, air conditioners gas heaters with modern surround, fluorescent lights, fans, and built-in cupboard joinery.

Conclusions

South Wing Conclusions

The plan form and fabric of the original c.1870 south wing is essentially intact to the extent of the ground floor (former girls' sitting room) and first floor (former girls' dormitory). It is of primary significance. Original elements include the perimeter walls and windows, raked ceilings with exposed roof framing, fireplaces, and all original window and door joinery.

The former committee room (G.56) at the east of the original south wing, has been converted for kitchen use, but retains the original plan form and fabric such as raked ceilings, exposed roof structure and a roof lantern. The room reflects the architectural treatment of the upper levels of the 1868 central administration building, is essentially intact, and is of contributory significance.

The single storey additions to the east of the original south wing, viz. the former first aid room, kitchens and rear veranda, have been modified by the installation of non-original fabric and are of little significance.

The subdivision of the original rooms, and in some cases the installation of false ceilings, has concealed primary fabric. Non-original elements which are of no significance include:

- lightweight plasterboard walls;
- suspended plasterboard ceiling tiles, fluorescent lights, ceiling fans and sprinklers;
- carpet floor coverings;
- painted finish to the original fireplace in G.07;
- built-in joinery;
- bathroom fittings and finishes to 1.38 and 1.39;
- building services such electrical ducts, sprinkler pipes and plumbing; and
- alterations to the perimeter windows including air-conditioners, pelmets and blinds, solar reflective film and the like.



1. East wall



2. West wall and nave



3. Truss detail



4. Ceiling rose detail



5. Window detail east wall



6. Central east window

Figure 32 Chapel details

North Wing Conclusions

The plan form and fabric of the original 1870 wing, including the ground floor (superintendents' residence), first floor (former boys' dormitories) and north tower are intact and are of primary significance. Original elements include the perimeter walls and windows, raked ceilings with exposed roof framing, marble fireplaces, built in timber cupboards (to corridor 1.24) and decorative detailing such as moulded plaster ceiling roses and cornices.

Of the single storey additions to the east of the original north wing, the former library (G.26) and kitchen (G.27), although altered, retain their original plan form and fabric, including raked ceilings, exposed roof structure and roof lanterns. These two rooms reflect the treatment evident in the upper levels of the 1868 central administration building, are essentially intact, and are of contributory significance.

The other single storey additions to the east of the original north wing, viz. the former laundry, ironing and boiler rooms, have been progressively altered since their construction, and are of little significance.

Non-original elements which are of no significance include:

- the disabled toilet, including all material, finishes and fittings to G.11, which replaced the original stair at the west end of the wing;
- the modification of the original window to provide an entry door into G.12;
- built-in cupboards, wall lining and fittings to the kitchen G.14;
- plasterboard wall lining, ceiling tiles and flush fluorescent lights to G.15;
- window opening to south wall of G.15;
- built in joinery and fireplaces;
- bathroom fittings and finishes to 1.20;
- suspended fluorescent lights, ceiling fans and sprinklers;
- carpet and linoleum floor coverings;
- building services such electrical ducts, sprinkler pipes and plumbing; and
- alterations to the perimeter windows including air-conditioners, pelmets and blinds, solar reflective film and the like.

3.5.3 Chapel c.1870

History

- c.1870-71: building completed.
- c.1920s: concrete floor added.

Former uses of the building include a concert music hall, dining room and chapel, although the Fincham organ, originally located in the west nave, has since been removed.

Description

The chapel is a large rectangular space with a high ceiling (Figure 32). The plan form of the building and ceiling is intact including a centrally positioned full-height 'nave' along the west wall. Entry to the chapel is from the veranda via an opening positioned in the north-east corner of the room. The ceiling is divided into five bays by timber trusses which have large top, side and bottom chords which are cross braced. At the wall, a moulded timber mounting supports an arched member, which is fixed to the pitched side member of the truss. Five timber sections are

fixed to the bottom chords of each truss, providing lateral stability. Banks of fluorescent light fittings are also suspended from these cross supports.

The ceiling is lined with diagonally laid boards. Large circular flue vents and ceiling roses (cast iron?) are located centrally within each ceiling bay. By contrast, the ceiling to the nave, which has a pointed arched opening, is hard plaster and comprises perimeter raked bands to the north, south and west sides. The chapel walls are painted hard plaster with a timber quad cornice and a 200mm high concrete skirting which is non-original. This alteration occurred when the floor was replaced with concrete in c.1920s. Subsequently, the floor has been covered with parquetry over which carpet has more recently been laid.

The north wall and south walls are predominantly original fabric. Timber-framed window openings are centred within each structural bay and comprise clear glazed double-hung sashes with moulded timber architraves and splayed timber sills. Each window is fitted with blackout blinds and has a rectangular wall vent positioned above. The south wall has an exit door in the east corner which is fitted with an original four-panel solid timber door. The fireplace located on the north wall has been infilled.

The east wall of the chapel has three large windows, equally positioned. These windows comprise an upper sash, which is subdivided by a timber transom, and a similar lower sash which incorporates a ventilation hopper. The central window has a fixed glazed highlight over. The three openings have moulded timber architraves, splayed timber sills, are fitted with blackout blinds and have security mesh and flyscreens mounted externally. Two similar windows are located on the east wall, either side of the central nave.

Non-original elements in the room include:

- concrete floor and skirting;
- modern solid core flush door to the opening in the north wall;
- exposed electrical and telephone conduits to all walls;
- distribution board and fire extinguisher to the south wall;
- alterations to windows including obscure and textured glass to some sashes;
- a large air-conditioning unit in the upper sash of the central window, east wall; and
- a low height timber-framed partition in the south-east corner of the room which provides a small tea-making facility, and includes a sink, hot water unit, and cupboard bench with tiled splashback.

There is evidence of damp in some walls in the interior of the chapel.

Conclusion

The plan form and fabric of the chapel, including the interior, is predominantly intact and of primary significance. Original elements include the perimeter walls and windows, timber boarded and plaster ceilings, and exposed structural roof elements. Non-original elements are of no significance, as are various alterations to the original windows.

The adjoining north and south verandas, which are enclosed by the installation of an awning roof, are non-original, and are of no significance.

3.5.4 McPherson Wing, Ground and First Floors

History

- 1871-72: original wing was constructed.
- c.1932: wing was extended to enlarge rooms on the north and west sides.

- 1949-50: west balcony on the first floor was infilled to provide additional dormitory space.
- 1980s: partitions added to the ground floor for office use.

Former uses include a school room, kindergarten and boys' sitting room (ground floor) and boys dormitory and balcony (first floor).

Description

The original plan form of the ground floor is intact and comprises a large open office area with a row of single rooms along the east. The principal entries are located in the south-west and north-east corners of the building, where internal entry is possible via the north wing (Figure 33).

The original plan form of the entry under the north tower (1.34A) is square and the ceiling is lined with timber boards. The timber floor is covered with carpet and the hard plaster walls have built-in cupboards on either side. The entry opening has an original four-panel solid timber door, although the recessed floor mat is missing. Non-original elements to the room include exposed electrical conduits, fluorescent lighting, and infill to the semi-circular fanlight over the entry door.

The main office area has a timber floor covered with carpet. The ceiling is lined with exposed timber boards fixed to boxed cross beams which, in turn, are supported by a deep concrete beam supported on columns, two of which are free-standing. Along the east and west walls, the cross beams are supported on timber corbels.

Generally, the walls are hard plaster and painted. A wainscot runs around three sides of the room – south, east and west – comprising vertical timber boarding and a timber capping. While the east wall comprises a series of door openings to the individual offices, the original west wall comprises eight pairs of double-sash windows set within structural piers. The sashes have six-pane glazing with an additional highlight row, separated by a timber transom. The bottom sash incorporates a ventilation hopper. The original fittings for internal roller blinds are evident. Heating is provided by hydronic panels positioned along the east and west walls. Non-original elements to the main office area include the full-height timber-framed veneered partitions which provide pairs of offices along the north and west walls. Door openings and fixed glazing with venetian blinds are incorporated into the partitioning system. Fluorescent lights and ceiling fans are suspended throughout the space, and many of the windows are fitted with non-original curtains and venetian blinds.

The plan form of the original two rooms located along the east wall is intact, although the rooms have been subdivided to provide offices and storerooms. The timber floor to G.35 is covered with linoleum and the walls are hard plaster, painted, and without cornices. A suspended tiled ceiling with flush fluorescent panels and ceiling fan has been installed in the centre office G.36. The doors to these rooms vary: the north is a steel safe door (locked), the centre is a timber door with a glazed upper panel, whilst the south door is a modern flush panel hollow core door. The original angled fireplace between the two rooms was not inspected.

The original plan form of the first floor is similar to the ground level and comprises a long rectangular central room (1.01) with individual rooms along the east wall (F.02 to F.07), and a large rectangular room to the west (1.08 to 1.12), originally a balcony (Figure 34). Small rooms located to the north of the wing have been added and include a toilet (F.18), which opens onto a wide rectangular corridor space (1.17), which in turn provides access to the external steel fire stair.

Generally, the first floor has hard plaster walls and timber floors covered with carpet. The perimeter windows along the east wall comprise timber-framed, double-hung sashes, whilst the



1. Main room showing partitioned north wall



2. 1932 west wall window and dado



3. Main room original fabric



4. Pairs of windows, west wall



5. Office, north-west corner



6. Partitioned office

Figure 33 McPherson Wing, ground floor

west window wall comprises painted timber frames with operable awning windows at the lower level, with fixed upper panels. The ceiling material varies throughout the rooms, however, original strapped fibrous plaster ceiling is evident in the corridor and offices at the north end of the building (1.13 to 1.16).

Non-original elements to this floor include:

- full-height aluminium-framed plasterboard partitions to rooms 1.01 and 1.08 to 1.16, which provide numerous smaller rooms for office use;
- suspended plasterboard ceiling tiles with flush-mounted fluorescent light panels to the original central room, exit corridor (1.17) and toilets (1.18);
- plasterboard ceiling and moulded cornice to the west rooms (1.08 to 1.12);
- ceiling-mounted fans and fluorescent lights to rooms 1.02 to 1.07;
- ramped door thresholds to rooms 1.02 to 1.07;
- infill to the fireplace along the east wall of 1.01;
- modern flush panel doors with ventilation grilles;
- air-conditioning units, flyscreens and venetian blinds to many of the windows;
- ceiling-mounted fans, fluorescent lights and sprinkler pipes throughout;
- building services such as a distribution board and fire extinguisher in the south-west corner of room 1.01, a mechanical duct in the north-east corner of room 1.01, and a hose reel and telecom board to corridor 1.17; and
- all finishes and fittings to the men's toilets including brown mosaic floor tiles, white 150 x 150 ceramic wall tiles, two ceramic basins and toilet suites, a stainless steel urinal with exposed cisterns and chrome pipes, mirrors, and soap and towel dispensers.

Conclusion

Although elements of the original plan form of the McPherson Wing are evident and are of primary significance, the 1932 additions have landlocked the original room by incorporating the original perimeter walls, creating openings by the removal of original fabric, and the addition of rooms to the north and west sides. Overall, the plan form and fabric of the original wing has been substantially modified and is of contributory significance. The perimeter additions, which themselves have undergone further alteration, by the introduction of non-structural partitioning for office purposes and the inclusion of numerous non-original elements are of little significance.

3.5.5 Former Supper Room Wing, South, Ground and First Floors

History

- c. 1879-80: south tower and two-storey bluestone wing constructed.
- c. 1932: a single storey bluestone extension was added to enlarge the size of the supper room to the west of the wing.
- c.1950s: cross walls were installed on the first floor providing office spaces.
- c.1990s: the entire ground floor area, including the south tower, was refurbished for restaurant/bar use

Former uses of the area include a supper room (ground floor) and senior girls' dormitory (first floor).



1. Main corridor, room 1.01



2. Partitioned office within room 1.01



3. South-west corner, room 1.08



4. Exit corridor, 1.17



5. Typical office, east of corridor, 1.07



6. Toilets

Figure 34 McPherson Wing, First floor

Description

The plan form of the ground floor comprises an L-shaped open bar area (G.57), a kitchen (G.58), small office (G.59), the entry under the south tower, and public toilets which are located in the north-east corner of the room. The area, which was recently converted for restaurant use, retains the perimeter plan form and fabric of the 1879-80 construction, while much of the interior fabric is intact to the 1932 alterations (Figure 35). These elements include the coffered and panelled plaster ceiling, and large timber-framed multipane casement windows along the south, north and west walls. In addition, a timber-panelled dado to the perimeter of the room is substantially intact, as is the timber floor.

Non-original elements on the ground floor level include:

- marble inlay panels to the timber floor in the bar area;
- a granite and stainless steel bar counter with brass rails, timber-panelled sides and a false raised floor behind;
- built-in timber-panelled banquette seating;
- non-structural free-standing columns;
- wall-fixed incandescent lights, suspended lighting and ceiling-mounted fans;
- bar facilities including built-in shelving, storage areas, cool rooms and refrigerators;
- all fittings to the kitchen including tiled floor and walls, stainless steel benches and appliances, plasterboard ceiling, fluorescent lights and mechanical services;
- low-height timber partitioning to the office and a built-in bench; and
- male, female and disabled toilets in the north-east corner of the room.

The first floor, constructed as the senior girls' dormitory (1.40), is intact to the extent of the original plan form and materials. Original elements include the perimeter hard plaster walls which are detailed with an incised dado line, timber-framed, double-sash windows, and decorative vents along the west wall. The open interior of the room has since been modified by the installation of partition walls to provide offices and a small tea facility along the west side of the room.

The square plan form of the photocopy room (1.37) retains the perimeter walls of the south tower constructed in c.1880. The room has painted hard plaster walls, without cornices, and a plasterboard ceiling, through which views to the original turret space above are possible. The timber floor is covered with carpet and the original narrow timber-framed, double-hung sash windows have venetian blinds.

Other non-original elements on the first floor level include.

- carpet to the timber floors throughout;
- Masonite-clad partition walls to offices and strapped fibrous ceiling;
- built-in joinery to the kitchen and the infill of the window on the west wall;
- exposed pipes and ceiling-mounted fluorescent lights;
- infill to the fireplace in 1.40;
- venetian blinds, solar reflective film and air-conditioning units to perimeter window openings;
- standard office fittings such as pin boards, notice boards and the like; and
- surface mounted fluorescent lights, ceiling fans and sprinklers



1. Balcony, west wall



2. View to the function room



3. Auditorium looking south



4. Stage and proscenium



1. Bluestone bar, view to the southwest



2. Bluestone bar, detail

Figure 35 Ormond Hall, auditorium and Bluestone Café

Conclusion

The original plan form and fabric of the south tower and first level of the former supper room wing is substantially intact and is of primary significance.

The ground floor perimeter wall addition to the supper room, constructed in 1932, is of contributory significance. The extension of the original room however, which involved the removal of original fabric, has recently been fully renovated as a bar and is of no significance.

3.5.6 Ormond Hall

History

- 1 September 1890: foundation stone laid by the Earl of Hopetown.
- 24 June 1891: building opened by Lady Clarke.
- 1922: extensive remodelling of the hall including the replacement of the sloping timber floor, and the addition of the portico to the south.
- 1932: extension to the east side of the hall to provide a function room.
- 1949-50: removal of the corner slated roof turrets.
- c.1980s: refurbishment of the front-of-house area and auditorium.

Former uses of Ormond Hall include a music hall, a function hall for the RVIB annual balls, a goods store, and a hall for religious service.

Description

The front-of-house areas to Ormond Hall comprise an entry foyer (G.42) flanked to the east and west by public toilets (women G.43, men G.46, and disabled G.47). The auditorium (G.48) with balconies (1.42), a stage (G.49) and a function room (G.50) are located directly to the north. Back-of-house facilities located further to the east, predominantly comprise kitchens and toilet facilities (Figure 35).

Generally, the original plan form of Ormond Hall is intact, although most of the interior materials, finishes and fittings are non-original, the hall having been substantially refurbished in the 1920s. The front-of-house area is in good condition and elements dating from the 1920s refurbishment include:

- rendered painted walls;
- a glazed ceramic Fowler urinal in the men's toilets (G.45);
- hard plaster and moulded ceiling cornice and light fitting (G.41);
- painted timber-framed, double-sash windows of multi-pane design (G.41); and
- two-leaf timber-framed glazed auditorium entry doors.

More recent non-original finishes and materials include:

- aluminium-framed sliding automatic glass doors (foyer south wall);
- built-in laminate and granite feature counter with a large monogrammed mirror over (foyer north wall);
- sprayed concrete painted ceiling without cornices (foyer);
- 200 x 200 mm floor tiles set in a diamond pattern with a black perimeter tiled border (foyer, east and west corridors);

- floor tiles, plasterboard ceilings, spot lighting, wall tiles, timber-framed toilet partitions and doors, basins, pans, hand dryers, soap dispensers and the like to the male, female, and disabled toilets;
- mirror walls, built-in laminate joinery and vanity units in the male and female powder rooms;
- built-in laminate cupboard joinery to office G.41; and
- the installation of various building services located throughout including the distribution board and fire extinguisher in the west corridor and the main switchboard/meter in the men's toilets.

Auditorium

The entry to the Ormond Hall auditorium is by a pair of two-leaf timber-framed glazed doors located either side of a central feature mirror. The main auditorium is a double-height rectangular space with a mezzanine balcony around three sides. The fourth side of the room, which faces south, contains the stage which is prominent with its moulded proscenium arch and full height curtains. A large rectangular function area, is located to the east of the auditorium, whilst stairwells, located at the east and west ends of the foyer corridor, provide access to the balconies. The original plan form of the auditorium is intact although the design and finishes are typical of the Moderne style of the 1920s renovation work. The hard plaster walls have curving corners and geometric patterned mouldings.

Other distinctive 1920s elements of the auditorium include:

- timber flooring and painted moulded timber skirtings;
- two-leaf timber-framed, glazed and varnished timber entry doors of multi-pane design with stainless steel kick board and push plates; and
- wall-mounted mirrors, to the auditorium walls.

The stage floor level is approximately one metre above the auditorium, and is accessed at either side by timber steps and steel pipe balustrade. The plan of the stage is rectangular and has full-height curtains to the north, east and west sides, which are hung on a semi-circular track. The proscenium curtains are heavy gauge velvet, and coloured gold with a red bottom sash. The stage floor is timber and has traps which provide access to the sub-stage area. To the west of the stage is a cupboard housing the main switchboard.

The function room is rectangular in plan and opens onto the auditorium by three clear, square-set openings separated by columns. The east and south walls are divided by pairs of windows of multipane design which are timber-framed and have a central casement window surrounded by top and side glazing. A timber-panelled dado runs around the perimeter walls and incorporates bench seating. The hard plaster ceiling has moulded ceiling roses and original glass pendant 1920s light shades. More recent alterations include the installation of wall-mounted spot lights to the east and west walls, exit signage, sprinkler hose outlet and exposed sprinkler pipes.

The east and west upper walls of the auditorium are divided into four main bays by large moulded window openings. While the east wall incorporates glazed windows within the openings, the west wall has painted infill. The openings comprise pairs of painted timber-framed, double-hung sash windows with toplights which are inclined at the head for ventilation. The geometric mouldings and stencilled paintwork which surrounds each opening feature patterned 'sills' and 'architraves' with bevelled corners and a diamond-shaped keystone. Wall-mounted up-lights are positioned between each opening. The south wall comprises three centrally positioned double-hung timber-framed sash windows with pairs of similar windows either side, separated by decorative plaster mouldings. All windows are fitted with vinyl black-out roller blinds which are in poor condition.

The auditorium ceiling comprises strapped fibrous plaster and features two tiers of vaulted bands around the perimeter. The ‘cornice’ treatment is accentuated by the contrasting paintwork of the moulded timber strapping which divides the ceiling into distinct sections. Perforated ceiling roses (cast iron?) are positioned along the perimeter bands and the centre of the ceiling. A large 1920s chandelier-style white glass lantern is hung in the centre of the room.

The balcony is semicircular in plan with the east and west sides raking approximately 300mm down to the stage. The balustrade comprises decorative painted cast-iron supporting a varnished timber handrail. The balcony itself is comprised of timber plats, each with continuous rows of timber bench seating which have panelled backs and are painted. The side balconies have two timber plats, whilst additional seating rows are located at the rear of the auditorium along the south wall. The balcony floor appears structurally unsound in parts.

Conclusion

Generally, the plan form of the original auditorium and stage, as constructed in 1890-91, is intact and of primary significance. The fabric associated with the 1920s interior refurbishment is intact to that period and is of contributory significance. The twentieth century portico addition is also of contributory significance.

The c.1932 function room addition to the east of the hall, the finishes and fittings to which have been substantially altered, is of little or no significance.

3.6 Outbuildings

Myer Cottage

- 1947: building erected on the site; and
- 1949: annexe added to the east side of the existing building.

Myer House is a steel-framed prefabricated house. Its construction and materials reflect post-War technologies and the application of standardised industrial production to domestic construction.

Although the interior of the building was inaccessible at the time of the inspection, the overall plan form of the original cottage appears to be intact and comprises a hallway with living, kitchen and dining areas to the south, and two bedrooms and a bathroom to the north.

The annexe, added to the east of Myer House in 1949, has a straightforward arrangement of three equally sized adjoining rooms, comprising a kitchen to the west of two living rooms. The rooms are square in plan form and the internal fabric includes carpeted timber floors with a moulded timber skirting. The timber-framed walls are lined with plasterboard and have a decorative moulded cornice and timber curtain rail mounted at approximately 1800mm high. The doors are solid core painted flush panels whilst the window openings have double sashes with textured glass and flyscreens, timber architraves and sills. The plasterboard ceiling has suspended fluorescent lights and fans. Built-in joinery reflects 1950s materials and treatments including plywood bench tops and aluminium edge strips.

Store

- Former uses include a staff lunch room

The plan of the store is rectangular and although in its original form, the building is in poor condition. Walls and ceilings are clad with strapped Masonite sheet and the timber floor is covered with vinyl tiles. The building has exposed wiring and the internal column supporting the roof appears to be structurally unstable.

Former Gymnasium

- 1950-51: building constructed
- Former uses include a brush factory, store and gymnasium

The interior of the former gymnasium is divided into four structural bays. The three full-width bays to the west have a gabled ceiling, lined with Masonite sheet and exposed timber trusses. The timber-framed walls are lined with Masonite sheet and the floor is carpeted. In the south-east corner of the room, various staff amenities are provided including a small kitchen (with a sink and a stove), a toilet and tiled shower.

Conclusions

Myer House, which was not inspected internally, is intact externally, as is the three-room annexe extension to the east. The building's significance lies mostly in its technology as an intact example of a prefabricated steel-framed house, which was available for purchase from the Myer Emporium after World War Two. As such, it is of some significance. Other examples of post-War prefabricated houses are the 'Beaufort' prefabricated steel houses in Pascoe Vale South. Further investigation as to the rarity or otherwise of this structure is required in order to determine an appropriate level of significance.

The store and former gymnasium buildings are twentieth century additions to the site, are of standard domestic 1950s construction, and are of no significance. Although the gymnasium structure is intact, the store is in disrepair and represents a hazard structurally.

3.7 Landscaping

The dominant feature of the RVIB landscaping addresses St Kilda Road and comprises spacious grassed areas with a bitumen drive leading from the mild steel entry gates (which are monogrammed) at Moubray Street, diagonally across the site to centre on the main building entry. The aesthetic quality of the open landscaping is enhanced by the formal drive which is serpentine in form and flanked either side by large mature elm trees and a clipped hedge. Other landscaping elements, including border vegetation to the buildings, carparking areas, boundary plantings, and fencing are of lesser importance.

Conclusion

The RVIB is closely located to other institutions set within similarly spacious reserves including the Alfred Hospital, the Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, and Wesley College. Although the development of the RVIB over 140 years has involved the addition of new buildings, and alterations and extensions of the existing buildings, the presence of the original buildings within a mature landscape predominates. The mature elm trees on the site are of primary significance.

4.0 ANALYSIS AND ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

4.1 Assessment Criteria and Methodology

The significance of Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind has been assessed against the criteria used by the Australian Heritage Commission and that used by the Victorian Heritage Council. In assessing significance, the methodology used by Dr Jim Kerr has been referenced.¹

4.2 Historical Significance

Nineteenth Century Institutions in Victoria

The establishment of the RVIB can be seen in the context of an explosion in the development of institutions and medical and benevolent organizations, which Melbourne experienced in the second half of the nineteenth century as the first wave of settlement developed into the maturation of the Colony. Many of these institutions were founded on the subscriber charity model, and were partly endowed by a small number of philanthropists, usually wealthy squatters. The antecedents for this philanthropic model came from Britain in the late eighteenth century, where reformers and philosophers such as Jeremy Bentham, advocated the concept of social and moral obligation. This burgeoning of institutions occurred in the context of an extraordinary population boom, mainly due to the gold discoveries which began in the early 1850s, and which generated wealth. Social and health problems associated with overcrowding and housing shortages were also contributing factors. In combination with nineteenth attitudes to social welfare and the role of private philanthropy, the cause of charity began 'to flourish'.²

Over a period of more than twenty years, a range of institutions and benevolent societies were established. In addition to the Victorian Asylum and School for the Blind (forerunner of the RVIB, 1867), they included the Melbourne Orphan Asylum (for protestant orphans, 1851); the Immigrants' Aid Society (for newly arrived immigrants, 1853); the Lying-In Hospital, later renamed the Royal Women's Hospital (1856); the Carlton Refuge for 'fallen' women (1857); the Victorian Deaf and Dumb Institution (1860); the Eye and Ear Hospital (1868), and the Homeopathic Hospital, later Prince Henry's Hospital (1868). They were followed in the 1870s by the Alfred Hospital, the Melbourne Hospital for Sick Children, and the Victorian Infant Asylum. The Hospital for Incurables was founded in 1882, and the Queen Victoria Hospital established in 1896.³

Pioneers for the Blind

The RVIB was the first institution in Australia to care for blind children and adults. Its coming into being shortly after the establishment of the Deaf and Dumb Asylum, demonstrates the pioneering efforts of a few visionary patrons in Melbourne society. Melbourne was, at the time, one of the fastest growing and most affluent cities in the world, and its growing number of public and private institutions reflected the aspirations of a cultured and forward-thinking society.

The RVIB was also pioneering in the way it supported, cared for and educated the blind. The diverse curriculum on offer, coupled with the vocational training which included opportunities for developing practical and creative skills in basket weaving, mat making, piano tuning and singing, were far-sighted for the time. The Institute aimed to equip its students with both an education and a means of survival once they left the school. Particularly capable students even had the opportunity to move on to tertiary education. At a time when very few state schools, and mostly the largest private denominational schools, provided the necessary classes, it was possible for RVIB students to enrol in a course in Leaving Honours, and thereby matriculate and gain entry to the University of Melbourne.⁴ The expanding industrial activities of the

institute are also of note, and allowed the organization to generate some of its much needed income.

St Kilda Road

The establishment of the RVIB, in its spacious grounds amidst the institutional precinct of St Kilda Road, is characteristic of the distinctive institutional development along this grand tree-lined boulevard which had begun as a humble track, later to evolve into a principal entry to the city. It had this in common with Royal Parade, Flemington Road, Victoria Parade, Queens Road and Sydney Road. St Kilda Road also became a prestigious thoroughfare and sought after address, accommodating not only the Governor of the colony, but also the major health and welfare institutions, as well as Victoria Barracks and private boys schools. Many of these institutions, including the Alfred Hospital, the Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, Melbourne Grammar School and Wesley College, were set within spacious grounds.

Philanthropy

RVIB is testament to the extraordinary generosity of Francis Ormond, a prominent nineteenth century philanthropist who played a key role in the establishment of many of Victoria's educational and social institutions. Ormond, a Western District grazier, bequeathed an estate of nearly £2,000,000, which was divided up and allocated to numerous educational causes, including the construction of Ormond Hall at the RVIB in 1891.⁵

4.3 The Institutional Work of Crouch & Wilson

During the twenty-three years of its existence, the architectural firm of Crouch & Wilson was extremely prolific. The *Australian Architectural Index* includes over 350 entries covering their work, and this is thought to represent only a proportion of their entire *oeuvre*.⁶ The architects, however, are perhaps best known as designers of churches. Further research by Dr Miles Lewis, in his catalogue *Victorian Churches*, reveals that Crouch & Wilson were, statistically, the most prolific ecclesiastical architects in Victoria in the nineteenth century.⁷

Along with their prodigious output of church designs, Crouch & Wilson also undertook a considerable number of institutional commissions. In Victoria in the second half of the nineteenth century, the concept of the specialist 'institutional' architect was still largely unrealised. Many local designers, both in Melbourne and in regional areas, simply designed hospitals, asylums, benevolent homes and similar establishments as part of their general practices. Melbourne's first hospital in Lonsdale Street, for example, was designed by Melbourne's first architect, Samuel Jackson. Many other 'name' architects of the day, including Albert Purchas, Charles Laing, Leonard Terry, Lloyd Tayler and Nahum Barnet, all have one or two hospital or other institutional projects among their extensive catalogues of works.

Frequently, hospital committees employed the same architect to carry out successive additions and alterations to their premises over the years. These professional associations sometimes continued for decades. Samuel Jackson, designer of the original Melbourne Hospital, was succeeded as that institution's resident designer by Charles Vickers, and later by Francis Maloney White, who executed much work there from the late 1850s until the early 1880s. Alfred Smith was architect to the Melbourne Benevolent Asylum for a decade from the mid-1850s, while Charles Webb, another prolific designer of the period, held the same post at the Alfred Hospital from its foundation in 1868 until his own death in 1898.⁸

By contrast, the number of architectural firms who actually carried out repeated institutional commissions, for different clients, is relatively low. Charles Webb, in addition to his ongoing works at the Alfred Hospital, also designed the Protestant Orphan Asylum in South Melbourne (1855) and the Melbourne Orphan Asylum in Brighton (1877). Another architect, L J Flannagan, was responsible for works at the Eye and Ear Hospital in the 1870s, as well as the Infant's



Figure 36 *Deaf and Dumb Institution, St Kilda Road (1865)*
Source: *Illustrated Australian News*.

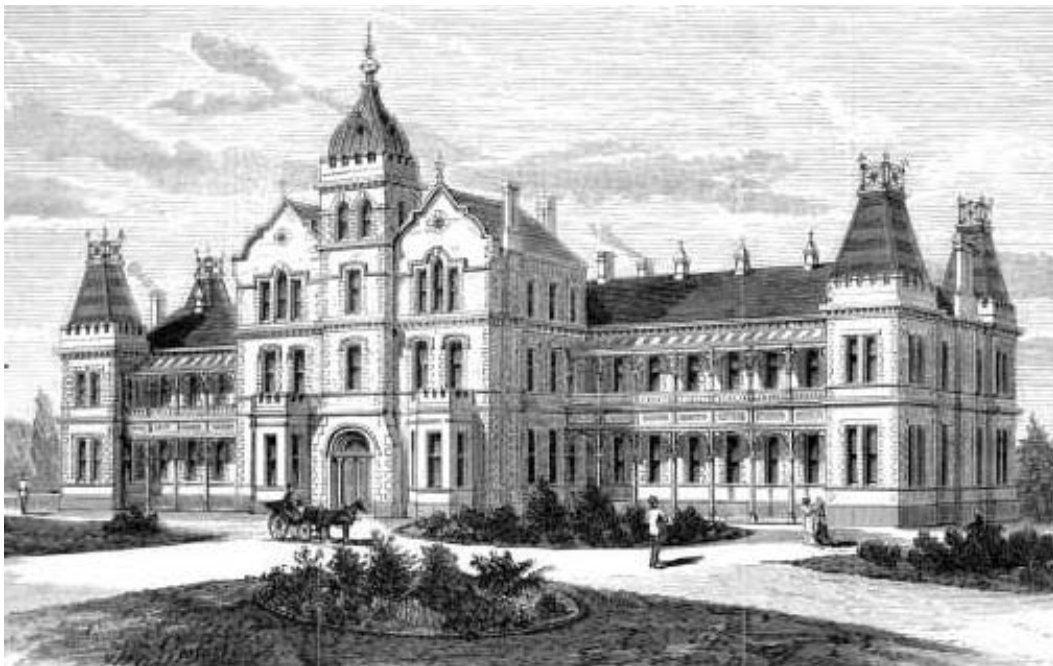


Figure 37 *The new Homeopathic Hospital in St Kilda Road (1881-85)*
Source: *Illustrated Australian News*.

Asylum at Eastern Hill (1880), and the Home for the Aged and Poor at Northcote (1889). But perhaps the most prolific institutional architect in Victoria was George Wharton, who designed the Wesleyan Emigrants Home (1852), the Horsham Hospital (1874), the Infectious Diseases Hospital at Fairfield (1893), and works at the Children's Hospital in Carlton (1878 onwards) and the Eye and Ear Hospital in Victoria Parade (1881 onwards) and the Melbourne Sick Children's Hospital at Brighton (1884).

The origins of Crouch & Wilson's flourishing practice in institutional design can be traced back to the 1850s, when Thomas Crouch reputedly won second place in a design competition for works at the new Benevolent Asylum in Hotham (North Melbourne). Nothing came of this, and the firm's earliest known institutional project to be realised, dating from the year that the partnership was formed, was the first stage of the Kilmore Hospital (1858-59). In 1873, they designed the so-called 'Retreat for the Cure of Inebriates', located near Merri Creek, off St George's Road, in Northcote. This was followed a year later by St Andrew's Almshouse in South Melbourne, and then, in 1875, by the Victorian Hydropathic Establishment in Greville Street, Prahran (1875). Following the dissolution of the firm in 1881, Crouch continued to undertake institutional projects on his own. That year, he was responsible for a 'Private Asylum for the Insane and Inebriate', near the Cremorne Gardens in Richmond, which opened in 1881. This unusual complex, about which little is known, consisted of ten cottages on a fourteen acre (5.7 hectare) site, on the south side of Balmain Street. Also in 1881, Crouch was engaged to design the administration block and northern wing of the new Homeopathic Hospital on the west side of St Kilda Road; he was then, in fact, joint secretary and treasurer of the hospital's committee. As late as 1890, the firm, by then under the control of Crouch's son Ernest, was engaged to design fever wards and outbuildings at the Nhill Hospital.

In addition to these one-off institutional projects, Crouch & Wilson also maintained ongoing and lengthy associations with individual organisations. In 1864, the architects were engaged by the Deaf and Dumb Institution to design a new schoolroom at their St Kilda Road property, and were subsequently retained to design their new building (1866), an additional wing with kitchen and laundry (1870), unspecified alterations and repairs (1874) and some timber workshops (1894). The firm enjoyed a similar association with the nearby Asylum and School for the Blind (later the RVIB). They designed the asylum's first stage, Ormond Hall, in 1867, followed four years later by the second stage, McPherson Hall. In 1879, the architects were engaged to undertake further alterations, including the installation of venetian blinds. An ongoing association was also forged with the Lying-in Hospital in Carlton. While Crouch & Wilson were not in fact the original architects for this complex, they were engaged for additional works over a period of at least five years, including a brick wall (1878), isolation wards (1879), 'sundry jobbing works' (1880), additional wards (1881) and balconies (1883).

Conclusion

Crouch & Wilson were one of the most prolific architectural firms to practice in Melbourne in the second half of the nineteenth century. While they are perhaps best known for their countless ecclesiastical projects, they were also responsible for a number of substantial institutional buildings. In this respect, they stood out from many of their contemporaries who tended to either dabble in the design of hospitals and the like, or, conversely, to maintain an ongoing association with a single organisation. Such was the success of Crouch & Wilson's practice that they were able to maintain these associations with numerous organisations simultaneously over a period of several decades.

Despite these enduring associations, and their prolific output, very little evidence now remains of Crouch & Wilson's institutional work. By their very nature, hospitals and asylums are subject to sudden obsolescence, and to ongoing addition, rebuilding and redevelopment. The upgrading of institutions during the twentieth century, in particular, has left little or no evidence of their nineteenth century fabric. This is true, for example, of the Austin Hospital, the Alfred Hospital, and the original Melbourne Hospital (later the Queen Victoria Hospital) in Lonsdale Street. The institutional projects of Crouch & Wilson are no exception. Their work at the Lying-in Hospital

and the Homeopathic Hospital has been completely obliterated by twentieth-century redevelopment, while many of their smaller institutional projects, such as the Inebriate's Retreat at Northcote and the Private Asylum at Richmond have entirely disappeared into suburbia.

Crouch & Wilson's extensive works at the Deaf & Dumb Institution and the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind, both in St Kilda Road, thus remain as somewhat rare examples of the firm's once-extensive institutional practice.

4.4 Myer House and Post-War Housing Schemes

Following the Second World War, the combination of a huge increase in immigration and a greatly improved capacity for mass production and manufacturing, gave rise to innovative attempts to meet the post-War housing shortages. With encouragement from the Commonwealth Government, these attempts included programs for the production of prefabricated housing. The programs utilised redundant wartime industrial capacity, developing new technologies and standardised methods of production. Imported prefabricated kit homes from Britain, and timber cell-house systems from Scandinavia, were also promoted to meet the shortages.⁹

The prefabricated houses also proved to be popular with new home buyers, as they were easily and speedily constructed, although their popularity within the suburban housing sector was short-lived. Prefabricated buildings did, however, find another market as workers' housing, particularly associated with the establishment of public utility townships outside Melbourne. These included the State Rivers and Water Supply settlement at Eildon, and the State Electricity Commission's villages at Kiewa, near Mt Beauty.¹⁰

There were several parallel developments in prefabricated housing. One of these was the so-called the Beaufort House, which was built by the Beaufort Division of the Department of Aircraft Production (and further developed by the Victorian Housing Commission), and which went into production in 1945-46. The Beaufort House, designed by architect Arthur Baldwinson, was a steel-framed structure where the external wall panel sheeting acted as a stressed skin which braced the entire structure, a construction technique derived from aircraft building.¹¹

Another prefabricated housing initiative was 'Operation Snail', organised by the Victorian Railway Department in the late 1940s to provide accommodation for its migrant employees. This pre-cut housing, manufactured in the United Kingdom, was exported to Australia, where the houses were erected mostly near railway lines. By the end of 1950, over two thousand had been assembled. The timber-framed houses had Swedish whitewood components, which were kiln-dried, dressed, pre-painted and pre-cut so that they could be easily assembled on site without further measuring or cutting. Roof trusses, water reticulation, cupboards and electrical wiring were all prefabricated. From this standard range of components, over forty design variations could be constructed. Clusters of these distinctive houses still exist around Melbourne, including Fairfield and North Coburg.

The Myer House was developed in 1946 by the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation, and was a steel-framed structure, clad in asbestos sheet, and rendered in cement stucco. It was promoted and sold through the Myer Emporium in Melbourne, and was also for a time popular with buyers. On 20 February 1947, for instance, the *Argus* reported that after the close of business the previous day, the selling agent for the Myer House, Spencer Jackson, had confirmed book orders for 240 homes at a total cost of £348,000.¹²

A prefabricated five-roomed Myer House was erected in the grounds of the RVIB in 1947.¹³ Although the building holds little significance in the context of the history of the Institute, it is of interest as a surviving example of its type, and representative of post-War developments in housing. It would appear that the building is a rare survivor.

4.5 Aesthetic Significance

4.5.1 Stylistic Diversity in Institutional Design

The Dilemma of Styles

The defining characteristic of architectural design in the Victorian period was Revivalism; there was no Victorian 'style' as such, merely a range of historic styles, culled from various times and places, a range which became increasingly broad as the nineteenth century wore on. The various styles, however, were seldom used entirely arbitrarily, as there was a strong notion of what was the most appropriate style for the building type. Styles carried with them a range of historic, physical and typological connotations, sometimes obvious and sometimes quite obscure, which led to them being considered appropriate for a given building type. Sometimes this was quite straightforward; Victorian-era churches, for example, were almost always in the Gothic style, except for the Baptists, which were Classical. Synagogues were usually in deliberately exotic styles such as Byzantine, and secular public buildings and banks were mostly in the Classical mode. But a given style could apply to several building types and, conversely, a given building type could be realised in a number of different styles. Banks and building societies, for example, might be in the Venetian style, with its connotations of mediaeval commerce, or perhaps in the Egyptian or Neo-Classical mode, evoking physical strength and security. But Egyptian was also deemed appropriate for cotton mills, synagogues and masonic temples, due to quite specific historic connotations. Clearly, the approach was never absolute, and this led to what architectural historian J Mordaunt Crook has called 'the Dilemma of Styles'.¹⁴

The link between typology and style in Victorian architecture was thus significant, and often convoluted. By the same token, there were some building types, such as hotels and hospitals, where concerns about the most appropriate style were secondary to the more prosaic and practical problems of planning.¹⁵ Moreover, some buildings, such as railway stations, exhibition buildings and market halls, represented entirely new typologies and thus had no historic precedents to offer stylistic inspiration. Institutional buildings such as hospitals, asylums and hostels represented a case in point. New developments in health science, coupled with increasing concerns for the humane treatment of institutionalised people, be they the sick, disabled, mentally ill or criminal, prompted many changes in design from the early nineteenth century. In a very real sense, these establishments indeed represented a 'new' building type. At the same time, they were not entirely without historic precedent, as their typologies were ultimately derived from monastic complexes and hospices of the Middle Ages.

While there was thus considerable scope for stylistic diversity in institutional design during the Victorian period, some definite trends can be perceived. By the functionalist nature, institutional buildings of the nineteenth century were frequently symmetrical in plan and massing. This would suggest that the Classical tradition would be an appropriate model, although this was, in fact, seldom the case. There was a tendency amongst designers to avoid styles derived from Antiquity. English hospitals built in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century were almost always in the Palladian, Neo-classical or Greek Revival mode, and thus were of stark and foreboding appearance. The new developments during the Victorian period included a desire to impart a less 'institutional' character to these types of buildings, and designers turned to defiantly non-Classical styles. There was, for example, a strong tendency to hark back to the styles of the Middle Ages, thereby acknowledging the typological origins of institutional complexes. This approach, which could be broadly described as Mediaevalism, included the Gothic style, and its many variants, as well as the Tudor and Scottish Baronial. There were certainly some institutional designers who worked in the Classical mode, but rather than using the pure and academic Classicism which had characterised the Regency period, they turned to the coarser local variations of Classicism such as Jacobean, Elizabethan and French

Second Empire, which were more decorative and thus imparted a less clinical quality to the building.

The Overseas Context: Some English Examples

Early Victorian institutions of the 1830s and '40s were somewhat transitional in that they still, to a certain extent, had stark institutional qualities of their eighteenth century Classical antecedents. This was evident in the administration block of the Surrey County Asylum at Wandsworth, London, designed by William Mosley in 1838. (Figure 38c). This Elizabethan-style building, of face brick construction with dressed stone quoining, had a stark façade divided into three bays, each with a stepped gable at the roof level. Fenestration was regular and repetitious, with bays of multi-paned rectangular windows with dressed stone surrounds. A building of similar style, also in London, was the Brompton Hospital by F J Francis, opened in 1844. (Figure 38e) Here, however, the starkness of the brickwork was relieved by diaperwork, and wall surfaces embellished by crenellations, oriel windows and buttresses to produce an almost collegiate effect. The Royal Earlswood Asylum in Surrey, designed in 1852 by W B Moffatt, was also in the Elizabethan style, with a similar use of plain brickwork with stone quoining, and multi-paned rectangular windows. In this example, the façade was dominated by a square tower of somewhat severe design, showing some Italianate influences. The Somerset Country Asylum, designed by architects Scott & Moffat in 1844, was an early example of the Jacobean tendency in institutional design. (Figure 38b) Like the Elizabethan examples cited above, this building also made use of stark brickwork with stone quoining and rectangular windows. The windows, however, were ornamented with strapwork, and the roofline was embellished with distinctive Dutch gables and a narrow tower with an ogee-profile roof.

By the 1860s, the Gothic Revival was reaching its peak in England, and this inevitably affected institutional design. Sir George Gilbert Scott, one of the stalwart architects of the movement, cleverly adapted the Gothic style to the institutional use in his design for the Leeds Infirmary of 1864.¹⁶ Another notable example was the St Pancras Infirmary at Highgate, London, designed by hospital specialists John Giles & Biven in 1868-70. Here, the use of pointed arches, canted bay windows and polychromatic brickwork resulted in a complex of friendlier scale, far less severe than those of only three or four decades earlier. The main entrance block of the Royal Holloway Sanatorium, designed by W H Crossland in 1879, was a particular fine example of Gothic Revival design, with an arcaded cloister at ground level, a row of traceried lancet windows to the first floor, and a castellated parapet with corner turrets. (Figure 38a) Once again, the entire composition was dominated by a vertical element, in this case in the form of a central square tower, also with corner turrets, lancet arches and castellations, surmounted by a pyramidal roof with an ornate *fleche*.

Other Mediaeval styles remained popular during the 1870s and '80s. The Royal Infirmary at Edinburgh, designed by David Bryce (1870-79), was a particularly assured example of an institution in the Scottish Baronial mode. The central administration block, dominated by a square clock tower with cylindrical corner turrets and polygonal hipped roof, was flanked by ward wings, with circular corner towers and stepped gables. The Liverpool Eye and Ear Hospital, designed by C O Ellison in 1879, was in the Tudor mode, with decorative red brickwork, half-timbered gable ends and clusters of chimneys with corbelled shafts. The Jacobean and Elizabethan styles were also widespread in such later examples as the Fleming Memorial Hospital in Newcastle (1887), with its Dutch gables, and the Free Cancer Hospital, Chelsea (1885), with octagonal turrets surmounted by ogee-profile roofs.

The Local Scene: Some Australian Examples

Not surprisingly, the earliest institutions in Victoria tended to follow the prevailing architectural trends in England of the 1830s. The first Melbourne Hospital, designed by Samuel Jackson in

1846, was very much in the tradition of the stark but mediaevalised institutions back home. (Figure 39) Of vaguely Elizabethan form, it was built of red brick with



a) Royal Holloway Sanatorium (1879)



b) Somerset County Asylum (1844-47)



c) Surrey County Asylum (1838-41)



d) Royal Earwood Hospital (1852-55)



e) Brompton Hospital, London (1844)

Figure 38 Some English examples of nineteenth century hospital and asylum architecture.
Source: H Richardson. English Hospitals, 1660-1948.

stone quoining, and was described by Garryowen as ‘red rookery, perched in the centre of a waste of bush’.¹⁷ Like many of its English counterparts, it had stepped gables, rectangular windows, grouped chimneys, and the ubiquitous turret. As Garryowen further recalled,

the old structure was capped with a curious sort of cupola formed of lead-covered wood, a style of finishing head-gear to which Mr Samuel Jackson, architect of several of the old buildings, was partial.¹⁸

The Melbourne Benevolent Asylum in Hotham (North Melbourne), designed by Charles Laing in 1850, was a comparable hulking bulk, this time in the collegiate Gothic style. (Figure 40) The huge façade comprised a wide central bay with a crocketed frontispiece, flanked by two pairs of projecting pavilions, each with a castellated bay window and stepped gable flanked by polygonal turrets.

Crouch & Wilson’s design for the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind (1867) was in the Tudor Gothic style, with rough-hewn stone walls with dressed stone quoining, and repetitious rows of large windows with flat hood-moulds. The square tower, a ubiquitous element in Tudor Gothic, and in institutional design in general, was surmounted by a steeply hipped roof, indicating the influence of the Scottish Baronial style. Crouch & Wilson’s design for the nearby Deaf and Dumb Institution (1871) was a more assured example of Scottish Baronial, bearing strong visual affinity with David Bryce’s design of the Royal Infirmary in Edinburgh. Here, the sprawling and symmetrical façade was articulated by a row of buttresses with pointed arched windows between, raked gable ends with trefoil vents and finials, and, at the centre, a square tower with steep hipped roof and corner turrets.



Figure 39 *The original Melbourne Hospital, designed by Samuel Jackson from 1846.*
Source: Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria.



Figure 40 *The Melbourne Benevolent Asylum in Hotham (North Melbourne)*
Source: Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria.

It was not until the 1870s and 1880s that institutions in Australia began to be designed in a deliberately less ‘institutional’ style. In 1870, architect George Johnson designed the Jewish Almshouses in St Kilda Road, a cluster of small brick cottages in a polychromatic Gothic style which was described by a correspondent for the *Illustrated Australian News* as ‘somewhat of the Lombardo-Venetian School’.¹⁹ (Figure 41) Additions were made to the complex in the 1880s by another architect, Nahum Barnet, who used Barabool Hills stone with dressing of Stawell or Oamaru stone, the style being described in the *Argus* as ‘domestic Gothic, eclectically treated’.²⁰ The term ‘Domestic Gothic’, which implied a smaller-scaled and decidedly less foreboding style, was also used to describe George Wharton’s contemporaneous design for the new Austin Hospital for Incurables, which opened in 1882.²¹ This was of red brick construction, with white stone dressing, pointed arch windows and the ubiquitous vertical element, this time in the form of an 80 foot (24.4 metre) clock tower with a steep mansard roof. (Figure 42) The ‘domesticity’ of the design was also apparent in the fact that it was single-storeyed, representing a considerable contrast to the sprawling three- and four-storey complexes of the 1850s and 1860s.

Amidst the plethora of Gothic Revival and otherwise mediaevalised institutions in Australia, the Jacobean style was also particularly popular. An early example was the Fremantle Lunatic Asylum and Invalid Establishment in Western Australia (1861-65), a limestone building which boldly combined Jacobean and Gothic influences, with a ground floor arcade of pointed arches and the Dutch gables to the roofline. A far more assured example of the Jacobean was the original Alfred Hospital in Commercial Road, Prahran, designed by Charles Webb from 1869 onwards. (Figure 43) This extensive complex of diapered brick and stone-quoined buildings featured canted bay windows, arcading, and an extraordinary roofline with Dutch gables, clustered chimneys and, at the centre of the administration block, a slim clock tower in the form of a *flèche*. Jacobean influences, notably the use of the Dutch gable, was evident in a number of major institutional buildings in Victoria, particularly towards the end of the nineteenth century. These included Crouch & Wilson’s Homeopathic Hospital in St Kilda Road (1881; Figure 37),

the Children's Hospital in Rathdowne Street, Carlton (1900 onwards) and portions of the Lying-in Hospital in Carlton, as well as some of the smaller-scale regional institutions like the Swan Hill District Hospital (1889) and the Ovens & Murray Home in Beechworth (1862).

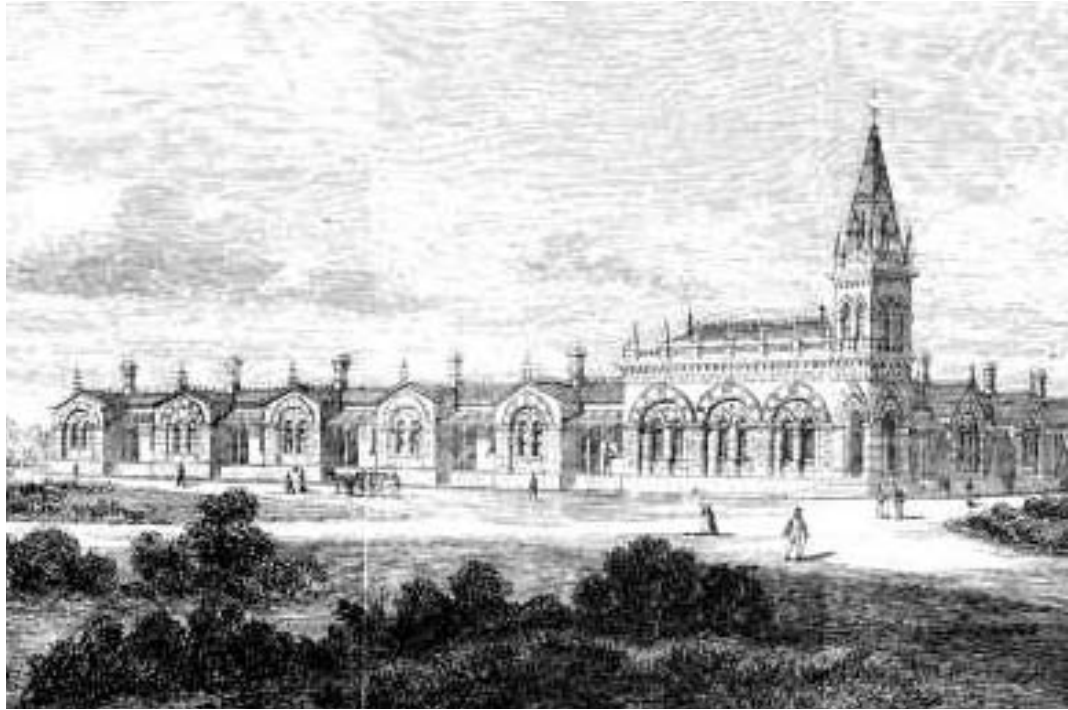


Figure 41 *The Jewish Almshouses in St Kilda Road by George Johnson (1870)*
Source: Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria.

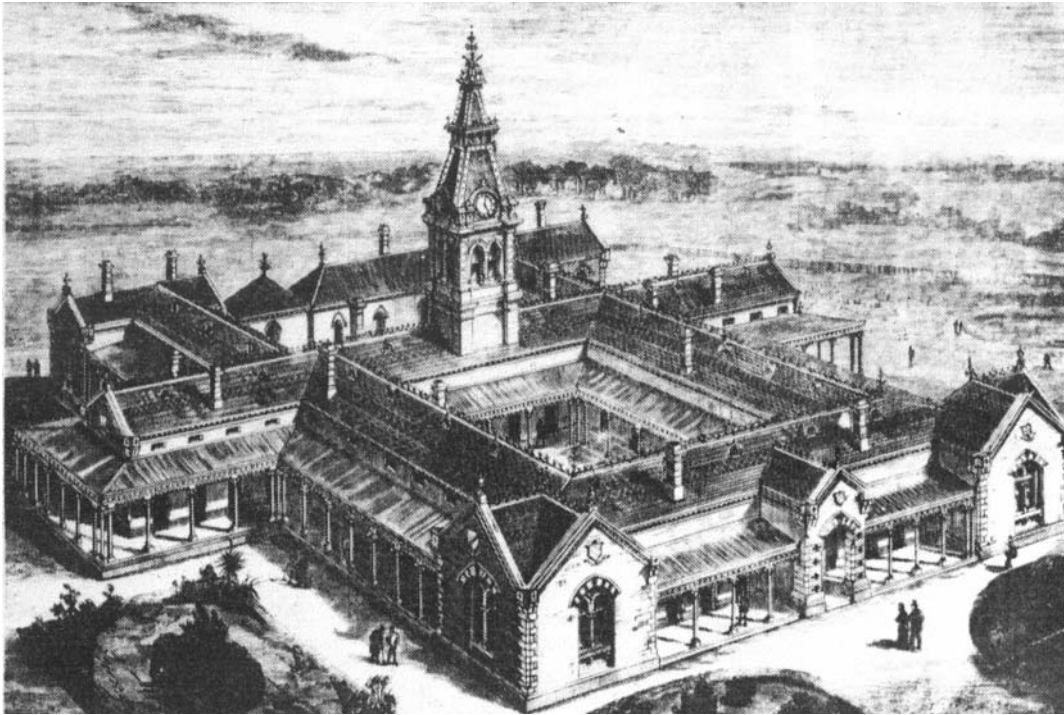


Figure 42 *George Wharton's intimately-scaled Austin Hospital (1882)*
Source: Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria.



Figure 43 *The original Alfred Hospital by Charles Webb (1869)*
Source: Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria.

It should also be remembered that the Classical tradition, at the opposite end of the stylistic spectrum, was also used for institutional design in Victoria in the second half of the nineteenth century. Early examples include the Geelong Infirmary and Benevolent Asylum (1852), a severe Georgian-style stone building with stark ashlar walls relieved only by a squat tetrastyle portico. A number of large asylums were built in Victoria the 1860s in an academic Italianate mode, include Mayday Hills at Beechworth, and Willesmere at Kew. As late as the 1880s, this approach was still being used, as in George Jobbin's design for the new Eye and Ear Hospital in Victoria Parade, which was a hybrid confection of Italianate, French Second Empire and Renaissance sources. This Classical approach in institutional design ran parallel with, and contrasted strongly with, the 'de-institutionalising' approach that was associated with the Mediaeval styles of Elizabethan, Tudor, Jacobean and Gothic Revival.

Conclusion

Institutional buildings in the second half of the nineteenth century varied considerably in their style, with a recurring tendency towards Mediaevalism. While examples in the Classical mode were not entirely unknown in Australia, most local institutions tended to follow closely the prevailing architectural tastes in England at the time, namely the Gothic Revival, Elizabethan Tudor and Jacobean styles, or eclectic combinations thereof. Crouch & Wilson's design for the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind was of a typically eclectic mediaevalised style, incorporating influences of collegiate Gothic, Tudor, Elizabethan, and even, in the case of the mansard roofed tower, French Second Empire. Compositionally, the building also closely follows the English model, with symmetrical planning and massing, and a multi-bayed facade dominated by a strong vertical element in the form of a tower.

4.6 Statement of Significance

The Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind is of considerable historical, social and aesthetic significance to the state of Victoria.

Established in 1866-7, the RVIB is of historical and social significance as one of many health, welfare and educational institutions founded in Melbourne in the booming social and economic conditions of the second half of the nineteenth century. It is also demonstrative of the fundamental role played by organised charities and private philanthropists in establishing and supporting these institutions, in an era when Government provided little funding for such activities. The association with the prominent nineteenth century philanthropist, Francis Ormond, is also of note.

The RVIB's pioneering role in the provision of education and welfare for the blind additionally significant. The institute was the first of its kind in Australia, and came into being shortly after the establishment of the nearby Deaf and Dumb Asylum. Both institutions represented the efforts of a farsighted group of individuals, who in turn reflected the advanced social thinking of elements of Melbourne society. The RVIB was also progressive in the way it cared for and educated the blind, through offering a diverse curriculum and practical vocational training. The layout and remnant buildings of the complex provide clear evidence of its operations and evolution over 130 years, including a major period of expansion in the 1920s and 1930s, when new factories were built, and existing buildings converted, to cater for the ever-growing industrial and manufacturing activities.

The design, construction, location and setting of the RVIB is of considerable aesthetic significance. The core of the original complex was constructed of coursed bluestone between 1867 and 1887, and is a rare surviving example of a nineteenth century institutional building designed by Crouch & Wilson, one of Melbourne's most prolific architectural practices. Other

examples of the firm's institutional work have been substantially modified or demolished, including the Lying-in Hospital (Royal Women's Hospital), and the Homeopathic Hospital (Prince Henry's Hospital).

Architecturally, the design of the RVIB in an eclectic mediaevalised style, which incorporates Gothic, Tudor, Elizabethan and French Second Empire influences, is typical of nineteenth century institutional design. Compositionally, however, the original building closely follows English precedence, with symmetrical planning and massing and a strong vertical emphasis in the form of a tower, the presentation of which is predominantly intact save for the removal of the original tower roof mansards in 1950.

The RVIB's situation in spacious grounds amidst the institutional precinct of St Kilda Road, is characteristic of the distinctive nineteenth century institutional development along the boulevard; a character which has been eroded in recent years by demolitions and redevelopment. Furthermore, the RVIB is one of the largest and most conspicuously sited of the older public and private institutions, for which the road is renowned.

4.7 Applicable Criteria

AHC H1 Importance for close associations with individuals whose activities have been significant within the history of Victoria.

i.e. associations with prolific Victorian architects Crouch & Wilson, and the philanthropist Sir Francis Ormond.

HV B The importance of a place or object in demonstrating rarity or uniqueness.

i.e. as a rare surviving example of the institutional work of Crouch & Wilson

HV D The importance of a place or object in exhibiting the principal characteristics or the representative nature of a place or object as a part of a class or type of places or objects.

i.e. important as the first institution of its kind in Australia.

AHC D2 Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of the range of human activities in the Victorian environment (including way of life, custom, process, land-use, function, design or technique).

i.e. providing evidence of nineteenth century benevolence towards the disabled.

HV E The importance of the place or object in exhibiting good design or aesthetic characteristics and/or in exhibiting a richness, diversity or unusual integration of features.

AHC E1 Importance for a community for aesthetic characteristics held in high esteem or otherwise valued by the community.

AHC F1 Importance for its technical, creative, design or artistic excellence, innovation or achievement.

i.e. a fine example of an institutional building in an eclectic Mediaeval style, incorporating influences of the Gothic Revival, Elizabethan, Tudor and French Second Empire styles

AHC G1 Importance as a place highly valued by a community for reasons of religious,

spiritual, symbolic, cultural, education, educational, or social associations.

i.e the institution as a place highly valued for its benevolence towards the 'less fortunate' disabled people from the 1970s onwards.

HV H Any other matter which the Council considers relevant to the determination of cultural heritage significance.

5.0 CONSERVATION POLICY AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

5.1 Introduction

The following conservation policy for the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind (RVIB), has been developed at a time when the Institute is considering development on the site, and probable sale and relocation of the Institute.

The policy has, in the first instance, been developed on the basis of the preceding assessment of the cultural significance of the building. Its chief focus is the fabric of the building, and how this should be managed to retain or reveal the overall significance of the place. Accordingly, the policy recommends management actions or strategies to retain, conserve, alter or remove fabric, as appropriate. The policy also provides guidance and direction on adaptation or development of the place, and the accommodation of compatible future uses.

5.1.1 General Policies

This chapter includes policies applying to the management of significant fabric, repairs and maintenance, and curtilage and setting; together with recommendations on statutory and safety requirements, permits, *Building Code of Australia* compliance, and provision for the disabled. Policies on future development, adaptation and use, plan implementation and review, risk preparedness, and interpretation and display are also included. Sources of funding for conservation works are identified.

5.1.2 Conservation Actions

The significant individual exterior and interior elements of the RVIB are listed in Section 5.3 'Levels of Significance and Degree of Intervention', and described in more detail in Chapter 3. Specific conservation actions for these elements are also included in this chapter. The recommended actions could occur either in isolation or as part of a larger redevelopment project.

5.2 Basis of Approach

5.2.1 Understanding the Building

The preceding chapter concluded that the RVIB was of considerable historical, social and aesthetic significance. Of comparable nineteenth century institutions in Victoria, the RVIB is distinguished through retention of the major elements which demonstrate its original form and function as an institution for the accommodation and care of blind children, and the training and employment of blind adults.

Due to the growth and development of the RVIB over a period of 130 years, the original building has been progressively altered and extended and new buildings erected on the site. Notwithstanding the large-scale factories built on the east boundary of the site, now since demolished, the buildings added to the premises have been, in the main, unspecialised and utilitarian in nature.

Since the 1970s, the diversification of the Institute's activities has involved the increasing integration of its programs for people with disabilities into the community. This development has altered the focus of activity away from the St Kilda Road site, which is now used primarily for administrative purposes. The change in the use of the existing premises, combined with the stock of buildings on the site, represents considerable scope for proposed redevelopment, adaptation or conversion of the premises.

5.2.2 Statement of Policy

Having regard to the assessed significance of the RVIB, and recognising that the level of significance varies overall, the following policies are framed to:

- retain and conserve original fabric as far as is feasible;
- retain those features which distinguish the building as a nineteenth institutional complex;
- retain the aesthetic qualities of the building, in particular the principal west and south facades;
- maintain the setting of the building; and
- provide for adaptation and new works which are compatible with the above.

5.2.3 Implications of Policy

The overall policy is firstly directed at conservation and retention of significant fabric, and secondly at providing guidance on where adaptation or new works can occur. As the complex has had many alterations and extensions since the completion of the original building in 1868, the levels of significance of the building fabric vary.

Given this situation, the policy places most emphasis on conserving and enhancing those elements which are of primary significance, and hence demonstrate the key aspects of the significance of the place. Adaptation can occur providing it involves minimal intervention to the significant fabric, and new works and elements do not detract from the aesthetic of the building, or substantially alter the original plan form. Areas or elements of little or no significance provide the greatest opportunity for adaptation and alteration.

5.3 Levels of Significance and Degree of Intervention

In developing the conservation policy, consideration has been given to the significance of different elements and areas within the building. Three levels of significance have been identified: primary or considerable, contributory or some, and little or no significance. The purpose of ascribing levels of significance is

- to recognise that not all aspects of the building, or elements within it, are of equal levels of significance;
- to recognise that relatively few of the building elements are of individual significance in their own right, but that they may be of a higher level of significance because of their contribution to the building as a whole;
- to enable such variation to be reflected in the development of the conservation policy; and
- to indicate where there is scope for adaptation and alteration of any given element without diminishing the overall significance of the place.

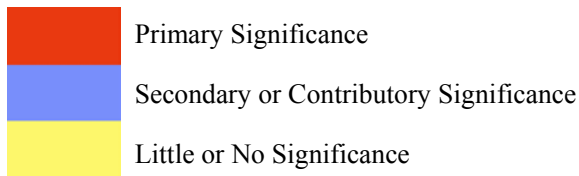
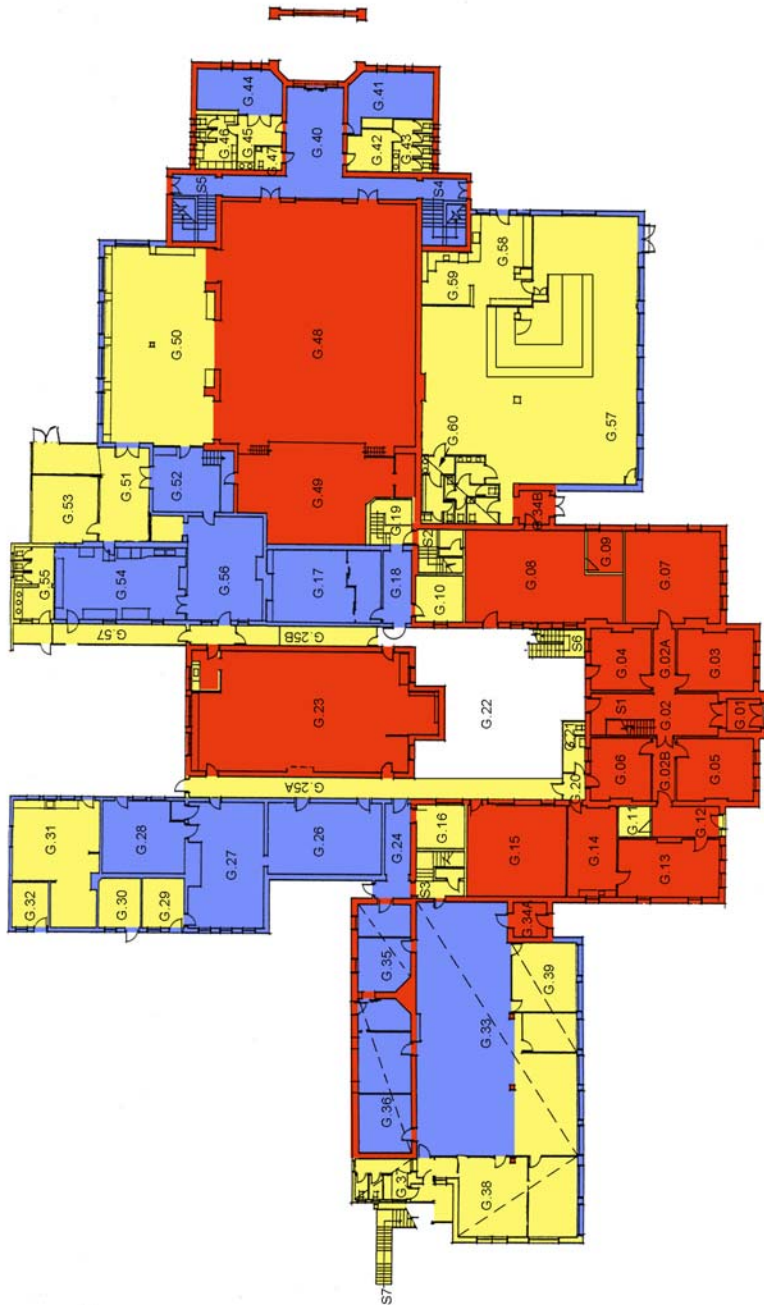
5.3.1 Elements of Primary Significance

Elements or areas of primary or considerable significance are essential in recognising and understanding the assessed significance of the place. The elements may have one or more of the following attributes:

- are predominantly intact in building form and fabric;
- are particularly demonstrative of the original architectural concept with regard to building form or materials;

- are fundamental to an understanding of the functioning and operation of the building;

MOUBRAY STREET



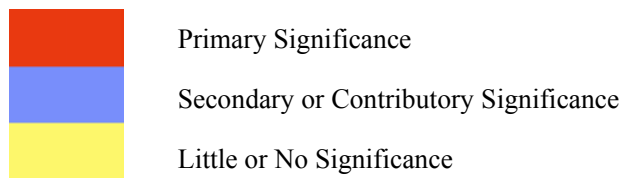
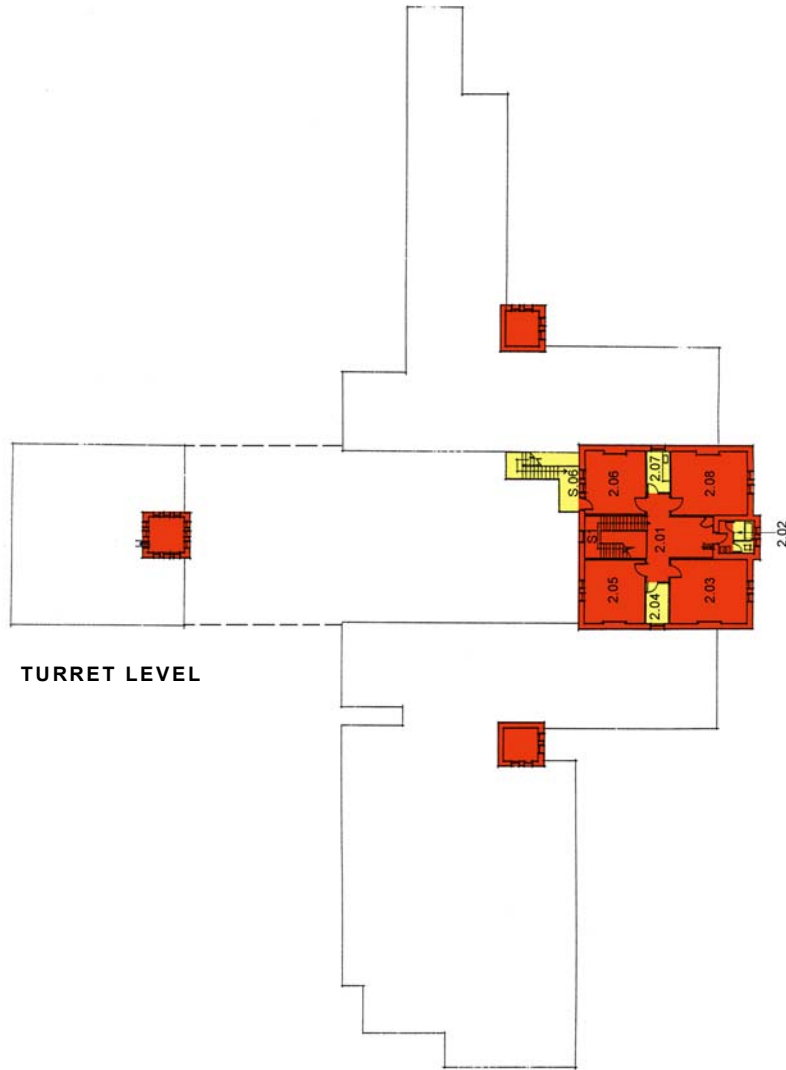


Figure 46 Second Floor Plan & Turret, Levels of Significance

- are fundamental to an understanding of the cultural significance of the building; and/or
- are fundamental to an understanding of the history of the place.

As noted above, the RVIB has a high level of significance overall, made up of its many elements and areas of primary significance. In particular, the fabric of the central 1868 building, the 1870 side wings and chapel, and the 1890 Ormond Hall are intact (excluding the 1932 additions), as are much of the interior spaces associated with them. The original plan forms of these areas are also intact, representing a key factor in understanding the systematic design of the building, as well as its function and operation.

Elements and areas of primary, or considerable, significance should be retained and conserved, and if altered, it should be done with minimal impact on the significant fabric. The elements and areas are:

Exterior

- The original form and fabric of the west facade (including the 1868 central building, the c.1870 north and south wings, the north, south and central towers) with the exception of the modified north wing door opening, the 1932 extensions to the 1872 McPherson Wing to the north, and the c.1879 supper room to the south. The original first level perimeter walls of the girls' dormitory above the former supper room are intact and also of primary significance;
- The original form and fabric of the south facade including the 1890 Ormond Hall and portico in Moubray Street, with the exception of the 1932 supper room extension to the west and the function room to the east;
- The form and fabric of the courtyard elevations including the rear (east) of the central building and sides of the north and south wings (to the extent of the original construction) and with the exception of the non-original veranda awnings, corner amenity block and escape stair;
- The form and fabric of the four principal elevations of the chapel;
- The form and fabric of the original roof to the central building, north and south wings, chapel, original McPherson Wing, former supper room wing, Ormond Hall and portico including chimneys, lantern roofs and ventilation cowl;
- The 1880 door lamps located either side of the main building entry; and
- The formal entry driveway and elm trees.

Interior

- The entire internal fabric of the central 1868 building to the extent of the original plan form and fabric including the timber floors, perimeter walls, fireplaces and ceilings to the ground first and second floor levels, but excluding all later alterations and additions to the building. Elements of primary significance include:
 - The entry wind lock, lobby and main stair, to the extent of the original plan form and fabric including panelled timber double doors, glazed fanlights, the open timber stair and balustrade, and stained glass window;
 - Principal offices, stair landings and corridors to the extent of the original plan form and fabric of the ground, first and second floor levels;
 - Raked plaster ceilings and exposed roof structure elements to the second storey;

- Rooms within the north, south and central towers, at all levels, to the extent of the original plan form and fabric, but excluding non-original finishes and materials.
- Perimeter plan form and fabric of the north and south wings including the original cross walls, raked ceilings, moulded ceiling roses, exposed roof structure and built-in timber joinery;
- Perimeter plan form and fabric of the original McPherson Wing ground and first floor levels, excluding non-original partitions;
- Original plan form and fabric of the former supper room ground and first floor levels, excluding non-original cross walls;
- Perimeter plan form and fabric of the original chapel, including the exposed roof structure and ceiling fabric, but excluding non-original partitions;
- Auditorium, stage and front-of-house areas to Ormond Hall to the extent of the original plan form and fabric, but excluding non-original walls, finishes, materials and fittings.

5.3.2 Areas of Contributory Significance

Elements of contributory, or some significance are of a secondary or supportive nature in understanding the assessed significance of the place. While they contribute to the overall significance, they may not be of individual distinction with regard to form, fabric or function. In a building developed and added to over time such as the RVIB, these elements could include areas which post-date the completion of the original 1868 design but are nonetheless supportive of the main functioning of the place. Alternatively, they may have undergone varying degrees of alteration through the removal or replacement of original fabric, but still retain their original plan and form.

With respect to elements of contributory significance it is preferable that as much as possible should be retained and conserved, and if altered, it should be done with minimal impact on the significant fabric.

Elements and areas of contributory significance are:

Exterior

- 1932 extension to the original McPherson wing west perimeter wall, excluding the first floor balcony infill c.1950 and the later addition of canvas awnings and the like;
- 1932 extensions to the former supper room west of Ormond Hall and the function room to the east, including the perimeter walls, rendered parapets and casement windows;
- Extensions to the original north and south wings to the extent of the plan/roof form and fabric including the single storey perimeter walls east of stairs S2 and S3, but excluding the two-storey bathroom extensions 1.20 and 1.39;
- The entire plan form and fabric of Myer House to the extent of the 1947 prefabricated structure and excluding the 1949 annexe addition to the east.

Interior

- The original McPherson Wing to the extent of the plan form and fabric of the ground and first floor levels, comprising G.33, G.35 and G.36 on the ground floor and 1.01 to 1.07 on the first floor;
- The plan form and fabric of the north and south wing extensions to the extent of the original kitchens and meetings rooms G.24, G.26 and G.27 (north) and G.17, G.18 and

G.56 (south) including the perimeter walls, fireplaces, raked ceiling, exposed timber roof structure and roof lanterns but excluding later alterations and internal partitions;

- The original plan form and fabric of front-of-house areas to Ormond Hall to the extent of the entry, patron amenities, the cross-corridor and stairwells to the balcony;
- The entire internal plan form and fabric of Myer House to the extent of the 1947 structure including original fittings and finishes, but excluding the 1949 east annexe.

5.3.3 Areas of Little or No Significance

Elements and areas of little or no significance are mostly minor in nature or importance and contribute little to an understanding of the assessed significance of the building. Typically, these elements are significantly modified from the original design, and/or are of recent origin. At the RVIB, such elements would include substantially altered interior spaces and additions.

Generally, these elements can be altered or removed as required, and therefore provide the greatest opportunities for adaptation and modification.

Elements and areas of little or no significance are:

Exterior

- The ramp to the main entrance;
- North wing window modification to provide an entry door and sidelight in G.12, a fixed glazed window opening in the meeting room G.15, and bluestone infill to the original window in office 1.26;
- North and south wing two storey bathroom additions 1.20 and 1.39 to the extent of the plan form and fabric;
- South wing rear extensions to the extent of the awning structure G.57 (north), the toilets G.55 (east) and infill G.51 and G.53 (south);
- McPherson Wing extensions comprising the north elevation and west balcony infill, and including the canvas shade awnings and escape stair;
- Non-original insertions to the east courtyard comprising the escape stair, amenity block and the enclosed veranda awnings to the north and south wings;
- Roof form and fabric to the former supper room extension including metal traydeck roofing, roof-mounted mechanical exhausts and ducting;
- Alterations to original windows and glazing including the installation of solar reflective film, external sun shades and air-conditioners;
- Wall-mounted services such as plumbing, pipes and exhaust fans;
- The entire plan form and fabric of the former gymnasium located on the south boundary and the store and toilet block on the north boundary; and
- The entire plan form and fabric of the 1949 annexe addition east of Myer House.

Interior

- Non-original alterations to the form and fabric of the 1868 central building comprising:
 - automatic doors to the principal building entry;
 - floor coverings;
 - glazed openings and counters to the reception area;

- gas heaters and non original fireplace elements;
 - finishes and fittings of central bathrooms on the first and second floors;
 - finishes and fittings of kitchen areas on the first and second floors; and
 - non-original building services including suspended fluorescent lighting, ceiling-mounted fans, fire and electrical services.
- Non-original alterations to the original form and fabric of the 1871 north and south wings comprising:
 - South and north wing stairs S2 and S3, corridors G.18 and G.24 and shower areas 1.38, 1.39 and 1.20, to the extent of the materials, finishes and fittings;
 - South wing cross walls and partitions dividing the original ground floor girls' sitting room (G.07-G.09);
 - South wing former workshops and meeting rooms to the extent of non-original cross walls, finishes, fittings and built-in appliances to G.17, G.18 and G.56;
 - South wing east additions G.54, G.55 and G.57 including floor, wall and ceiling materials, built-in joinery and finishes;
 - North wing ground floor disabled toilet (G.11) including plan form, finishes and fittings;
 - North wing non-original fabric and finishes to the extent of the kitchen (G.14) and meeting room (G.15), including the installation of joinery, plasterboard walls and suspended plasterboard ceiling; and
 - North wing former workshops and meeting rooms to the extent of non-original finishes, fittings and built-in appliances and linings to G.24, G.26 and G.27; and
 - North wing east additions G.28 to G.32 including floor, wall and ceiling materials, machinery, boiler units, built-in joinery and finishes.
 - Alterations to the original form and fabric of the original 1872 McPherson Wing including:
 - Non-original elements to original rooms (comprising G.33, G.35 and G.36 on the ground floor and 1.01 to 1.07 on the first floor), including the installation of floor coverings, cross wall partitions, office partitioning, suspended plasterboard ceilings and mechanical ducting and the like; and
 - Internal additions extended to the west and north of the original perimeter plan of the wing comprising fabric, finishes and fittings to G.37, G.38 and G.39 on the ground floor and 1.08 to 1.18 on the first floor;
 - Alterations to the original form and fabric of the original c.1879 former supper room wing including:
 - Ground floor extended plan form of the former super room, including non-original walls and the entire extent of finishes, fittings and built-in fabric to G.57 to G.60; and
 - First floor non-original elements to the first level girls' dormitory (1.40) to the extent of cross walls, finishes and fittings;
 - Alterations to the original form and fabric of the original 1890 Ormond Hall including:
 - Plan form, internal fabric, finishes and fittings of front-of house toilet areas G.42 and G.43 (west) and G.45 and G.46 (east); and

- Plan form, internal fabric, finishes and fittings of back-of-house infill areas G.51 to G.53;
- Entire plan form and internal fabric of the former gymnasium (south boundary) and the store and toilet block (north boundary).

5.4 General Conservation Policies

The following general policies apply to the RVIB building as a whole and are intended to provide a framework for the formulation of specific strategies for individual areas and elements.

5.4.1 Significant Fabric

1. *Those elements identified as being of primary, or considerable, significance should be conserved in accordance with the conservation policies and strategies identified in this study. These policies should also be considered in, and form the basis of, future management of the property.*

The original RVIB building, incorporating the central administration building, side wings, chapel, and workshops, is made up of intact areas which provide demonstrable evidence of the significance of the building. Significant elements include the substantial amount of intact 1868 and 1870 exterior fabric and integral plan form.

Additions to the original building are substantial and include extensions to the original complex such as the McPherson Wing, the rear sections of the side wings and Ormond Hall; but also include additions to the site overall such as the former stables building, factories (since demolished), storerooms, a gymnasium and Myer House.

While these additions and alterations are of varying levels of significance, collectively they contribute towards an understanding of the development of the RVIB, and acknowledgment of this should form the basis of, and guide, future approaches to management, interpretation, adaptive re-use and development.

Specific conservation objectives should include:

- the retention and enhancement of existing cultural heritage values;
- the retention of identity and its contribution to a sense of place;
- the retention of significant fabric; and
- the removal of intrusive accretions.

Specific conservation policies have been provided for elements of individual significance and these policies should be observed when works are undertaken. These policies allow for appropriate adaptive reuse and alteration of individual elements and spaces.

2. *All future conservation and adaptation works to the RVIB which affect elements of significance should be carried out having regard for the principles of the Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter 1999.*

The principles of the *Burra Charter* provide guidance on the conservation and adaptation of places and elements of cultural heritage significance. As such they should be referred to when assessing the suitability of any proposed works to the RVIB.

5.5 Building Fabric

5.5.1 Conservation Policies and Actions

The following conservation actions are recommended for specific areas and features of the building. In some cases the works involved require immediate action to prevent ongoing

deterioration of fabric, and such works are identified as priorities. Other works could occur either in isolation or as part of a larger scale project. The overriding policy objective for fabric of primary significance is one of retention and conservation.

Exterior

Elevations

Elements of primary significance include the external fabric of the principal west and south facades of the building, the chapel, and courtyard elevations to the east of the central building. This fabric makes a significant contribution to the aesthetic qualities and overall historical presentation of the institution.

Elements of contributory significance, such as the 1932 additions to the west façade and the extension of the north and south side wings, should preferably be retained and conserved.

Elements of little or no significance, such as the north and south verandas, can be retained, altered or removed as required.

Roof

The original form of the roof planes, together with original roof elements such as the roof lanterns and moulded chimneys, area of primary significance. Where re-roofing is being considered the original slate should be retained where sound, and replaced where necessary with slates to match.

Elements of little or no significance, such as the non-original metal deck roof to the supper room extension, can be retained, altered or removed as required.

The current presentation and aesthetic qualities of the building are severely diminished as a result of the absence of the roof turrets, which were removed in 1949-50. Consideration could be given to the reinstatement of these elements to the central, north and south towers, in order to restore the formal and aesthetic integrity of the original building.

Interior

General

The overriding conservation policy for the interior of the central building and side wings is one of retention and conservation of fabric of primary significance.

The original internal planning of the 1868 building and 1870 side wings is straightforward, and its form and fabric should be retained and conserved where possible. The overall original configuration of rooms, which includes the principal circulation elements, offices and main stairwell, should also be retained.

The original arrangement of door openings and corridors should also be retained, and/or preferably reinstated where they have been altered or removed. The original ceiling and exposed structural fabric on the upper levels is also largely intact and the overall approach to conservation should be to retain and conserve these elements.

Generally, although the original building appears structurally sound, problems associated with water ingress through the roof on the first level and rising damp at ground level is evident and should be addressed as a priority.

Elements of contributory significance, should be preferably be retained and conserved.

Elements of little or no significance can be retained, altered or removed as required. In general, consideration could be given to rationalising the building services including plumbing, fire and electrical services, which are currently exposed throughout the building, intrusive, and in some cases hazardous.

Entry Vestibule and Lobby

The spatial relationship and internal volumes of the wind lock, lobby and reception area, including the main staircase, stained glass window and cross-corridors, are elements of primary significance and should be retained in any future development of the building.

Elements of little or no significance can be retained, altered or removed as required. Consideration could also be given to rationalising the floor and window coverings, restoring the original fireplaces and unifying the lighting treatment as a means of enhancing the understanding of the original function of the entry.

Ground, First and Second Floor Offices

Preference should be given to conservation of the original fabric as a means of enhancing the significance of elements such as the fireplaces, perimeter windows, raked ceilings and exposed roof structure. The reinstatement of the original dormitory areas, particularly in the south wing, by the removal of insignificant elements, could be considered to expose the original raked ceiling fabric.

Elements of little or no significance can be retained, altered or removed as required.

Chapel

The chapel is predominantly intact fabric comprising the original walls with large sash windows, and the decorative gable roof trusses, timber board ceiling and roses. The recommended conservation policy is generally one of retention, conservation and one of minimal intervention where possible.

More specifically, given the attributes of the chapel as an intact open rectangular volume, consideration could be given to enhancing the interior presentation of the space by removing elements of little or no significance which are intrusive, including the tea-room partitioning and the mechanical air outlet which is currently incorporated into the central window on the east wall.

As a further means of enhancing the significance of this area, consideration could also be given to removing the adjoining verandas either side of the chapel to the north and south wings, removing the over-painting of the external walls, and addressing the rising damp evident in the south-west corner of the room.

McPherson Wing

The original plan form and fabric of the building has been substantially altered by the addition of rooms on the north and west sides of the wing. This has involved the loss of significant fabric, and with the subsequent installation of office partitioning, the openness of the large dormitory spaces has been compromised. The original plan form of the ground and first floors is, however, still evident and it is desirable, though not essential, that they be reinstated in future works. The entry area under the north tower should be retained and conserved.

Elements of contributory significance such as the 1932 perimeter west wall, timber board dado and window bays, should be preferably be retained and conserved.

Elements of little or no significance can be retained, altered or removed as required such as the 1950s west balcony glazed infill, the modern internal office partitioning, suspended plaster board ceilings, noticeboards and the like.

Supper Room Wing/ Bluestone Café

The plan form and fabric of the original building has been substantially altered by the addition of Ormond Hall to the east in 1890 and the extension of the supper room to the west in 1932.

These alterations have involved the loss of significant fabric, particularly to the original ground floor upper room. The original plan form of the first floor internal volume is still evident and it is desirable, though not essential, that it be reinstated in future works by the removal of the cross walls which are of little or no significance. The plan form of the entry under the south tower, although substantially modified, should be retained and conserved.

Elements of contributory significance such as the 1932 perimeter west wall, timber dado and casement windows, should be preferably be retained and conserved.

Elements of little or no significance can be retained, altered or removed as required such as the refurbished bar area, the restaurant kitchen, and the like.

Ormond Hall

Although the hall was remodelled in the 1920s, including the replacement of the sloping floor, the overriding policy objective for the hall is the retention and conservation of fabric of primary significance which extends to the original plan form of the front-of-house areas, auditorium, balcony and stage. These areas, plus the portico, are integral to the understanding of the layout and use of the hall and its presentation to Moubray Street.

Elements of contributory significance such as the 1932 function room extension, east of the auditorium and the fabric and fittings to the front of house areas, should be preferably be retained and conserved.

Elements of little or no significance such as the interior fabric, materials and fittings of the back-of-house delivery areas, can be retained, altered or removed as required.

Outbuildings

The building and interior of the 1947 Myer House, although contributing little to the significance of the RVIB site as a whole, is an intact example of a prefabricated steel-frame house which was manufactured to meet the demand of acute housing shortages experienced in the post-War period. Depending on the future use of the building, consideration could be given to removing it and re-erecting it off-site, or elsewhere on the site, for educational or social history purposes. The building has an interesting story to tell and the Building Science Division of the CSIRO or even Myer itself, might be approached for expressions of interest in such as a collaboration.

The 1949 annexe extension to the east of Myer House is of little or no significance and can be retained, altered or removed as required.

The north boundary store is of little or no significance and can be retained, altered or removed as required. The building is in poor condition, and consideration should be given to an assessment of its structural integrity as a matter of priority.

The north boundary brick toilet block is of little or no significance and can be retained, altered or removed as required.

The south boundary former gymnasium is of little or no significance and can be retained, altered or removed as required.

5.5.2 Repairs and Maintenance

- 1. All future repairs and maintenance to the RVIB should be carried out within the principles established by the Burra Charter and in a manner which is consistent with the assessed significance of the place and individual elements, and the conservation policy.*

The RVIB is generally in good condition although some aspects of the building, particularly the electrical, plumbing and fire services, are uncoordinated and in some cases a hazard. The

following elements require maintenance which should be addressed in order to alleviate further deterioration:

- rising damp where evident in walls;
- water ingress through the roof, particularly in the north-west corner of the north wing;
- electrical wiring, particularly in the ground floor areas of the south wing used by the computer department; and
- structural assessment of the storeroom on the north boundary.

Repairs and maintenance of the building should therefore firstly address any safety hazards and non-compliance issues associated with the above problems. This would probably entail a full building and services survey.

Repairs and maintenance should secondly ensure that the identified significant fabric does not deteriorate and that it is conserved where necessary. To achieve both objectives, an ongoing cyclical inspection and maintenance programme should be implemented to ensure that the building is kept in good physical condition and the fabric is not jeopardised or allowed to deteriorate. Future repairs should not result in ad hoc decisions and the symptom of deterioration should be treated, rather than being simply patched up.

Generally, day-to-day maintenance work can be carried out in accordance with the conservation policies without particular reference to a conservation specialist. However, major maintenance works, particularly those of a specialised nature such as the reinstatement of the tower roof turrets or general re-slating, should be undertaken under the direction of an appropriately qualified conservation practitioner.

Where significant fabric requires maintenance or repair, these activities should be carried out in accordance with the *Burra Charter*, and the conservation policies contained in this report. In particular, where existing fabric needs to be renewed, the replacement should match the original in design, materials and construction unless there are strong overriding functional reasons for altering the original design or materials. The fabric of the significant objects and artworks such as the stained glass panels may also require specialist conservation treatment.

A guide for the repair and maintenance of significant internal and external building elements is as follows:

<i>External Element</i>	<i>Existing</i>	<i>Repairs and Maintenance</i>
Roof	Slate	Where re-roofing is being considered the original slate should be retained where sound, and replaced where necessary with slates to match. If reinstatement of the original roof turrets is being considered, materials, including slates, timber and finials should match the original design. Contract documentation of the turret removal in 1950 is held by the RVIB, and should be consulted in such works.
	Metal roof sheeting	To match existing
	Chimneys/vents	Restoration and maintenance of render to match original detail of grouped chimneys.
Exposed roof	Timber painted/ steel	Repair any corroded areas and paint to

framing	tension rods	match existing.
Bluestone walls	Rock-faced coursed squared random rubble	Repair in bluestone with pointing to match original exactly.
Brickwork dressings and string courses	Cream brick	Repair in cream brick with matching flush pointing.
Rendered dressings and parapets	Painted render	Repair in render and paint to match existing.
Doors	Timber	Use timber four-panel doors to match existing.
Windows	Stained glass	If replacement or rectification occurs, consult a conservation specialist to guide recommended treatment.
	Glazing	If replacement occurs, use glazing and timber framing section to match original.
Solar reflective film	West-facing perimeter windows	If replacement occurs, it is desirable that a less obtrusive reflective film is used. Consideration could also be given to replacing the glazing with clear glass with thermal ratings against heat gain such as Pilkington's 'E Glass'.
Paint colours	Various	Investigate original colours and preferably reinstate, at least externally.

<i>Internal Element</i>	<i>Existing</i>	<i>Repairs and Maintenance</i>
Surfaces	Floors, walls, ceilings	Maintain timber floors in Ormond Hall and the chapel which includes the annual treatment of the timber. Avoid sanding as much as possible and ensure that shoes do not damage floors. Maintain original plaster walls, raked and moulded ceilings which includes replacing or repair cracked plaster to match existing. Maintain exposed timber roof framing, particularly the metal tension chords and inspect for any corrosion.
Paintwork	General	Repaint in original colours as required.
Lighting	General	Lighting of intact original areas such as the RVIB entry, the chapel and auditorium to match original and with subsidiary lighting installed sympathetically as might be required. Investigate original fittings.

5.6 Building Fabric: The Setting

1. *The curtilage and setting of the RVIB should be maintained.*

The RVIB building has roads and car parking areas in its immediate vicinity which are accessed from Moubray Street, whilst lawns and mature plantings establish the setting of the Institute from St Kilda Road. Of particular note, is the serpentine entry drive from St Kilda Road which is flanked by mature elms and contributes to the picturesque presentation of the place. The RVIB, is itself, closely located to other institutions set within similarly spacious reserves including the Alfred Hospital, the Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, and Wesley College.

Although the development of the RVIB over 130 years has involved the addition of new buildings, and alterations and extensions to the existing buildings, the presence of the original buildings within a mature landscape predominates. This includes the siting of the building, its setting within spacious grounds, and the substantial setback from St Kilda Road, which are typical design instruments of nineteenth century civic and institutional planning. The aesthetic setting of the RVIB therefore, which is also present in the extensive open grounds of the adjacent institutions, maintains the picturesque character which has historically defined this section of St Kilda Road, but has, in the main, been subsequently diminished on other sites, and should be preferably retained in whole or part, and conserved.

5.7 Statutory and Safety Requirements

5.7.1 Permits

Permits are required for any activity that alters or damages a place or object listed on the *Victorian Heritage Register*. A permit is generally not required for minor repairs or maintenance work, or for works that have been ‘exempted’.

A permits exemption policy for the buildings and site, designated as building PROV H1002, is currently in draft form and is included in Appendix C. Once gazetted, a permit will be required from Heritage Victoria to carry out all works and related activities, which are not the subject of a permit exemption. This includes any demolition, subdivision or new construction. Notwithstanding the extensive works which may be required to for compliance with various applicable codes, the permit exemptions have been prepared so as to obviate any future requirement to apply for permits for minor works, or works of a routine nature. The permit exemptions are not intended to replace the need to obtain a permit for major works or works which impact on significant heritage fabric.

A planning permit, in accordance with Clause 43 of the local planning scheme, will also be required from the City of Melbourne for subdivision, demolition, construction, external alterations and works, and signage. Planning permits may also be required for other proposals depending upon their nature.

5.7.2 BCA Compliance

1. *Undertake an audit to ensure occupational health and safety compliance with the Building Code of Australia (BCA).*

The RVIB is currently not compliant in a number of areas. As an existing building, however, and subject to the scope of any further works which may be proposed, the RVIB may not be required to specifically comply with some of the relevant provisions of the BCA. The scope of work needed to comply should also be referenced against the limits of the historic structure. In some instances modifications or an innovative approach may be more appropriate than literal compliance. In any event, disabled access, which has already been addressed, will be required.

5.7.3 Provision for the Disabled

1. *Undertake an access audit to determine required levels of accessibility.*

The *Building Code of Australia* and the *Disability Discrimination Act* both require provision for the disabled.

Presently, although a ramp has been constructed to the building entry and a disabled toilet has been provided in the ground floor north wing, there is no specific allowance for disabled access through the building to the east areas of the complex or with regard to vertical circulation.

Access to and within the ground floor of the building and the provision of facilities in accord with BCA D3 (Access for People with Disabilities) is recommended. However, given the particularly significant nature of this building and its protection, further investigation is required in order to address this issue in relation to the future use of the first and second levels and to locate a lift and toilets.

It is recommended that a separate report be commissioned by the RVIB to assess the building in relation to BCA and disabled access requirements. Disabled access might be considered via the north and south tower entry doors which provide direct access to these areas of the building, avoiding the present system of circumambulation via the rear courtyard.

5.8 Future Development: Adaptation and Use

1. *Adaptation of the RVIB should be carried out within these conservation guidelines, and adaptive reuse involving physical alteration should concentrate, where possible, on areas or elements of little or no significance.*

The functional and physical adaptation of the RVIB is generally supported from a conservation viewpoint, provided it does not diminish the identified significance of the building. The limitation of adaptation works, as far as possible, to areas or elements of little or no significance, therefore, is intended to retain to the maximum possible extent the physical evidence of the cultural significance of the place as a whole. Where adaptation works include alterations to individually significant areas and elements, they should be designed to have minimal physical impact on significant fabric, and where reasonable and sensible, should be reversible.

The intact nature of the central administration building, towers and side wings, the chapel and Ormond Hall, with their original function, fabric and configuration, represents a high degree of architectural integrity, and places some limitations on adaptation. Within these parameters, however, adaptations can be made to individual spaces and areas, provided original fabric is substantially retained in any new works.

2. *Future use of the RVIB should have regard for those factors which have been identified in the statement of significance as contributing to its significance, and should not detract from the identified cultural significance of the place.*

The RVIB was originally purpose-built as an institutional facility for the care, teaching and accommodation of blind babies, children and adults, and the Institute's evolution over time reflected changes in its programs and operations. While it would be problematic for the complex to retain or reinstate these original functions, any proposed future use of the complex, however, should have regard for the historical use of the place and its traditional focus as a large institutional complex. It is also acknowledged that changes would be required to make the complex compliant and that this may result in some loss of significant fabric. Significant elements directly related to the design, construction and use of the building include, in particular, the formality of the west façade, the north and south wings, the chapel, in addition to the curtilage of the building which comprises a spacious and mature garden.

In assessing the RVIB's potential for re-use, several factors should be considered in addition to the statutory and conservation objectives outlined above. These are:

Controls and Regulations

- Any change of use should conform with the appropriate legislative controls with regard to zoning and heritage.

Economic Factors

- Market demand and usability (short, medium and long term);
- Ongoing maintenance costs, including the operation of services;
- Long-term flexibility of the structure; and
- Position in relation to surrounding land use.

Scope and Cost of Works

- In assessing the suitability of individual spaces for particular new uses, the following should be addressed: proportion of usable floor area in relation to the gross floor area of the building, floor loadings, ceiling heights, shape and size of internal spaces, access including public, disabled, deliveries etc. and the ability to install modern services. The nature of the works required should specifically reference the conservation objectives at the design stage and should recognise and accept the constraints imposed by the limits of the historic structure.

5.9 Risk Preparedness

The RVIB should prepare an emergency response plan which addresses the cultural heritage issues in addition to emergency and safety issues.

A risk preparedness analysis, outlining the most likely threats and hazards posed to the fabric and contents by environmental and social factors, indicates that greatest threats to the building would seem to be:

- *Fire*

The risk of fire is always present. The most common source of fire is electrical fault, however naked flames, cooking fires and arson are also causes which cannot be ignored. Likely sources of fire, such as the kitchen should contain at least a fire blanket and a hand-held extinguisher. A regular program of inspection of all electrical cabling, switchgear and appliances, by a qualified electrician, should be instituted and a hard-wired alarm system installed.

- *Theft and Vandalism*

The risk of theft and vandalism to the building and garden is always present, especially if a place is unattended say over weekends. A hard-wired alarm system and security patrol should be instituted.

- *Storm Damage*

There is always a risk from storm damage and from wind, rain, hail and lightning strike. Wind, hail and rain often occur in combination, which can result in lifting of the roof and subsequent water penetration, and depending upon the size of any hailstones, they can dent a corrugated steel roof. Storms can also result in weakening of tree root systems, falling

trees and broken tree limbs. Blocked gutters and downpipes can cause a bank up of water and flood into the roof space, with possible damage to ceilings and wiring below. As the building is located on a relatively level site, free of cause for ponding, localised flooding caused by heavy or torrential rains is not regarded as a potential hazard.

A lightning conductor attached to the roof can be useful in exposed locations.

- *Mini Tornadoes*

While the risk is relatively low, mini tornadoes can and do occur and are unpredictable. Resultant damage is similar to storms, with the risk being weakening of tree root systems, falling trees, broken tree limbs, damage to plants, airborne projectiles and roof and window damage. Regular maintenance should ensure that all potential projectiles such as bins, seats etc. are secured and that roof fixings are maintained and secured as appropriate.

- *Pests*

Known pests include possums, rats and mice, birds (pigeons, starlings), bees and various insects, including borers, termites, silver fish, moths, plant diseases, timber decay, fungi and mould. The Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind, as the responsible management authority for the building, should manage pest populations on site. Management includes trunk collars to discourage possums and chemical treatment, or barriers, to control insects and diseases, baits for vermin and removal of bees.

Threat	Probability	Preparation/Response
Fire	High	Install/maintain a fire suppression system or extinguishers and fire blanket; inspect all possible fire sources regularly and maintain electrical systems in good order; install a hard-wired alarm and maintain liaison with fire brigade
Storm Damage	Moderate	Maintain roof in good order, inspect fixings; inspect and maintain windows and doors in good order; maintain lightning conductor in good order; regularly inspect and clean eaves gutters and downpipes
Theft and Vandalism	Moderate	Probably accept this as a potential risk.
Vehicle Impact	Low	Accept the level of risk which is low.
Pests	Low to moderate	Apply appropriate strategies including tree collars, baits, spraying, fumigation, etc.
Flood	Very low	Maintain drains in good order. Ensure that new construction and gardening practices do not increase any potential risk.
Water ingress	Moderate	Maintain and keep clear all rainwater goods (gutters, downpipes, sumps). Regularly inspect and maintain roof, and windows.
Seismic Activity, impact from falling objects.	Very low	None practicable. Call emergency services as appropriate.
Riot, War, Civil Disturbance, Bomb Threat	Very low	Call police; barricade entrances.

If not already prepared, prepare an evacuation and emergency response plan and regularly rehearse it. Include it as part of any induction of new staff. The *Emergency Management*

Manual prepared by CFA in association with the MFESB would be of some assistance. It may be ordered from either of the above organizations or from brochures@cfa.vic.gov.au or tel. 9262 8403.

5.10 Interpretation and Display

Provide an interpretation display in the entry lobby.

Despite its distinctive architectural form and scale, the building has an interesting story to tell which is not immediately obvious, particularly with regard to the contributions made by the institution with regard to the care, accommodation, education and employment of blind people. At present, there is no interpretative information provided. Some illustrative signage or promotional material would be highly desirable. Discrete explanatory signage could be located near, or in, the main entrance of the building. Such signage could give a brief historical and architectural explanation, possibly including a site plan and historical photographs.

Consideration could also be given to commissioning a history of the Institute.

5.11 Adoption and Implementation

The RVIB should be responsible for the implementation of the conservation plan.

The RVIB, as owners of the site, should have responsibility for the implementation of the conservation plan. These obligations should also be made clear to any future owners.

5.12 Review

The conservation policy should be subject to periodic review.

The policy should be subject to review, normally at not less than five yearly intervals so that it remains current. Should the circumstances affecting the site alter in any significant way, then the policy should be reviewed at that time. It is recommended that the policy be adopted by the RVIB.

5.13 Sources of Funding for Conservation Work

Heritage Council Funds

Funding assistance for the conservation of any heritage place listed on the Victorian Heritage Register is available through Victorian Heritage Council funds, administered by Heritage Victoria. This program offers assistance in the form of low-interest loans, interest-free loans, direct grants and remission or deferral of municipal and water rates and land tax. The main criterion for funding is the urgency and importance of works, while repairs and maintenance to unusual features are often given a high priority. The fund is not intended as a source of funding for routine maintenance costs incurred by all building owners, but rather repairs and maintenance associated with a heritage place.

The interest rates on low interest loans are charged according to how the property in question is used. The rate for a fully commercial premises is 3%. For a partial commercial venture, such as a B&B where the owner resides, or the residence is attached to some other kind of commercial operation, the rate is 2%. A rate of 1.5% is set for a fully private residence. In addition, the owner is required to obtain a bank guarantee, which usually amounts to an extra 2%. Therefore a low interest loan will cost the owner somewhere between 5% and 3.5%, depending on the nature and use of the property.

An application form is available online from the Heritage Victoria website, located at www.heritage.vic.gov.au/how-1.html. For further information, contact Tony Armstrong, the Co-ordinator of Financial Assistance at Heritage Victoria, on 9655 6519.

Heritage Victoria's Public Heritage Program

The Public Heritage Program has been established to assist government agencies (state and local) to recognise, maintain and capitalise upon heritage assets as part of an economically valuable and cultural resource. The program also helps local government identify, manage and promote heritage places in private as well as public ownership and to provide seed capital to initiate and launch heritage projects.

Three types of funding are available under the program:

- Capital works funding for the conservation, adaptation and interpretation of public heritage places;
- Grants to local government for studies to identify and document heritage places with a view to their protection in planning schemes; and
- Grants on a dollar-for-dollar basis to assist local councils to engage a heritage advisor.

An application form is available online from the Heritage Victoria website, located at www.heritage.vic.gov.au/how-1.html. For further information, contact Tony Armstrong, the Co-ordinator of Financial Assistance at Heritage Victoria, on 9655 6519.

Cultural and Heritage Projects Program

Funding for conservation work to buildings listed on the Register of the National Estate is available through the Cultural and Heritage Projects Program (CHPP), which is administered by the Environment and Heritage Portfolio of the Australian Heritage Commission. This scheme replaces the National Estate Grants Program, which is now closed.

As a general guide, individual funding from the CHPP would be expected to range from a minimum of \$10,000 to a maximum of \$250,000. Further information, including a copy of the application form, can be obtained from the Australian Heritage Commission website at www.environment.gov.au/heritage/awhg/chpp/index.html.

Alternatively, contact the Heritage Assistance and Projects Section, Australian and World Heritage Group, the Department of the Environment and Heritage on (02) 6274 1111 or 1800 653 004.

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ENDNOTES

Chapter One

- 1 J S Kerr. *The Conservation Plan*. passim.

Chapter Two

- 1 Allom Lovell and Associates. *Statement by Robyn Riddett with respect to the Proposal for Demolition of 83 Queens Road, St Kilda; The Mansion (formerly Clarence)*. November 1998. pp.1-5.
- 2 A Sutherland. *Victoria and its Metropolis: Past and Present*. vol. I, p.561.
- 3 Ibid. p.561.
- 4 *Picturesque Atlas of Australasia*. Volume 1. p.247.
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- 6 'Report of the Provisional Committee presented to a meeting of contributors and others, 21 August 1866'. p.2.
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- 8 M Lewis. P Goad and A Mayne. *Melbourne: The City's History and Development*. p.61.
- 9 D Garden. *Victoria: A History*. p.173.
- 10 Ibid., p.176.
- 11 Constitution, Victorian Deaf and Dumb Institution, quoted in J H Burchett, *Utmost for the Highest: The Story of the Victorian School for Deaf Children*. p.7.
- 12 Ibid.. pp.6-7.
- 13 Ibid. pp.5-13.
- 14 N Gunson. *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. Volume 5. pp.303-4.
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- 16 James Mirams (1839-1916), politician and failed banking speculator, Mirams was the son of a Congregational minister who migrated to Melbourne in 1857. A Sabbatarian and a leading temperance advocate; he was also the promoter of the Federal Coffee Palace (later the Windsor Hotel). His interest in the Asylum and School for the Blind appears to derive from his involvement with the National school in Fitzroy, and possibly his work as a bookseller, stationer and newsagent in Collingwood 1863-74. He was an unsuccessful speculator during 1880s land boom, and the Premier Building Association, of which he was Secretary, was forced to close its doors in 1889. He was convicted of issuing a false balance sheet with intent to defraud, and sentenced to one year's imprisonment. The Chief Justice, in passing judgement on Mirams, declared that he was a man 'determined not to consider that he has done wrong'. He served on the Committee of the Victorian Asylum and School for the Blind from 1866-1867. S M Ingham. *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. Volume 5.. pp.258-9
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- 18 Subscribing funds to such institutions enabled the donor to become eligible to join the committee and therefore influence the direction taken by the institution. S Swain. 'The Victorian Charity Network in the 1890s'. Chapter 3.
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- permanent school, on the corner of St Kilda Road and High Street, Prahran. The foundation stone was laid by the Governor, Sir Charles Darling, on 6 March 1866 and the building opened in September that year. It was in the Commercial Road premises that the Asylum and School for the Blind was first housed in 1866. 'Report of the Provisional Committee', p. 12.
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- 28 R J W Selleck, in Davison, Hirst, Macintyre (eds), *The Oxford Companion to Australian History*.. pp. 207-8.
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- 37 Constitution and Rules, The Victorian Asylum and School for the Blind. p. 2.
- 38 F O'Kane. *A Path is Set: The Catholic Church in the Port Phillip District and Victoria 1839-1862*. p. 137.
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- 40 'Melbourne Institutions: The Victorian Asylum and School for the Blind'. *Illustrated Sydney News*. 2 August 1890. p. 9.
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- 43 *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 5, p. 372.
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- 47 *The Cyclopaedia of Victoria*. op.cit., p. 63.
- 48 Nipper, op.cit., p. 19.
- 49 Nipper, Loc.cit.
- 50 Nipper, p.5.
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