

Heritage Council Determination

Determination date	3 April 2025
Place name	Former Carlton Refuge and Chapel Complex (<i>former name: Queen Elizabeth Maternal and Child Health Centre</i>)
Location	54–88 Keppel Street and 455–495 Cardigan Street, Carlton, Melbourne City, Wurundjeri Country
VHR number	H1813
Category	Registered Place
Relevant legislative provision/s	Amendment to the Victorian Heritage Register, pursuant to section 62 of the <i>Heritage Act 2017</i>

Determination of the Heritage Council

The Heritage Council of Victoria determined on 3 April 2025, in accordance with Part 3 and Part 5 of the *Heritage Act 2017*, that the existing registration of the Queen Elizabeth Maternal and Child Health Centre is to be amended in the Victorian Heritage Register ('VHR').

The Heritage Council determined to make the following amendments to the Victorian Heritage Register:

- changing the name of the Place from 'Queen Elizabeth Maternal and Child Health Centre' to 'Former Carlton Refuge and Chapel Complex'
- removal of land (being 475–485 Cardigan Street, 487–495 Cardigan Street, and 110–112 Keppel Street, Carlton) from the extent of registration
- amending the extent of registration for the registered place to read *All of the place shown hatched on Diagram 1813 encompassing all of lots CM5, H10A1-H10A4, H10B1, H111-H113, H121, H122, H51-H54, H6A1-H6A4, H6B1, H71, RES1 and RES2 on Plan of Subdivision 640946*
- revoking existing permit exemptions applied at the time of registration in 1999 under section 92(6) of the *Heritage Act 2017* as they are now either spent or contained with the General Permit Exemptions applying to all VHR listed places.

The Place

Description

Extract from the Executive Director's Recommendation, for information only.

The Queen Elizabeth Maternal and Child Health Centre is located on the traditional land of the Wurundjeri People.

The following is a description of the Queen Elizabeth Maternal and Child Health Centre at the time of the site inspection by Heritage Victoria in November 2024. The place is now largely in private ownership and the inspection was undertaken from the public domain, commencing at the former Chapel (Building 1) and proceeding clockwise around the site.

Chapel (Building 1) (1881)

The former Chapel (Building 1) is a polychrome brick building, with gabled ends and a rectilinear floor plan. With its long elevation to Cardigan Street the former Chapel is the most easily recognisable remaining part of the complex. The Chapel now houses the City of Melbourne Carlton Toy Library, and is set within a small park, with a modern steel and glass addition on the western side.

Dormitory (Building 2) (1907)

South of the Chapel, running east-west, and presenting its short facade to Cardigan Street is a former Dormitory (Building 2). This painted brick building with a terracotta tiled roof has now been adapted to four dwellings.

Dormitory (Building 3) (1907)

Perpendicular to this building is another former Dormitory (Building 3) also of painted brick and terracotta tile. Steel and glass additions provide entries to each of the three new residences within from Cardigan Street.

Model Baby Health Centre (Building 4) (1951)

Further south, at the corner of Cardigan Street and Keppel Street is the former Model Baby Health Centre (Building 4). On the corner are wrought iron gates and cast-iron gate posts marking a former entry to the place. The Model Baby Health Centre sits behind steel and glass additions to the east and west street facing facades. This building has been adapted as a single dwelling. West, along Keppel Street, is the triangular Keppel Street Park from which can be viewed the tiled roofs of the former Dormitories (Buildings 2 and 3).

Entry and Administration Building (Building 5) (1907)

The Federation style former Entry and Administration Building (Building 5) has a gable end addressing the street with a door topped by a segmental arch with a decorative keystone and flanked by paired moulded pilasters on either side. This building has been adapted as a single dwelling.

Refuge (Building 6) (1861) Behind the Keppel Street carpark can be seen the shapes and roof forms of the former Refuge (Building 6). The refuge has been adapted as five dwellings. A public walkway heads northeast from Keppel Street towards Cardigan Street. To the north of the walkway are numerous large scale, multi storey residential buildings.

Former Hospital (Building 7)

(1882) On the south of the walkway is the former Hospital (Building 7), now a dwelling, of painted brick and corrugated steel roof.

Laundry (Building 8)

(1861) Further along, and to the south of the walkway, is the former Laundry (Building 8) now utilised as four dwellings, also of painted brick with a corrugated steel roof.

Executive Director's Recommendation

The State-level cultural heritage significance of the Queen Elizabeth Maternal and Child Health Centre was recognised in 1999 by its inclusion in the VHR.

On 29 June 2022 the Executive Director accepted an application to amend the registration of the Place for the following reason:

- removal of land which has been subdivided and has no cultural heritage significance.

The Executive Director also proposed to change the name of the Place in the VHR from 'Queen Elizabeth Maternal and Child Health Centre' to 'Former Carlton Refuge and Chapel Complex'.

The Executive Director also proposed to make the following changes, which are not statutory elements of the existing registration and are therefore not the subject of the Heritage Council's determination.

The Executive Director will make the following changes:

- amending the Heritage Council Criteria for Inclusion (by removing reference to Criterion G, which would not be met if assessed against the Heritage Council's current Criteria and Threshold Guidelines)
- amending the Statement of Significance to reflect current practice
- updating the history and description sections.

On 13 January 2025 the Executive Director made a recommendation to the Heritage Council ('the Recommendation') that the existing registration of the Place should be amended in the VHR. The Recommendation was advertised publicly for a period of 60 days, beginning on 17 January 2025.

Section 44 submissions

No submissions were received during the public advertisement period.

Reasons for the amendment application

The registered extent of the Place (prior to amendment) includes a portion of land to the north of the registered heritage buildings that was developed in 2012 and contains (at the time of this determination) 7 complexes, housing 250 individual apartments and associated carparking. The northern portion of land proposed for removal from the VHR originally formed part of the reserve that was set aside and used by the Refuge but it remained largely undeveloped for a century after the founding of the institution. The few structures and landscape elements that did exist were removed during development that occurred from the 1960s onwards.

The Executive Director recommended that the northern portion of the land is not of cultural-heritage significance.

Removal of additional land

The Executive Director recommended that the Heritage Council amend the registration of the Place by removing land, because in accordance with section 40(4)(c)(i) and (ii): (i) the State-level cultural heritage significance of the Place would not be substantially less if the land or any part of the land which is or has been used in conjunction with the Place were developed; and (ii) the land surrounds the Place but is not important to the protection or conservation of the Place; and does not contribute to the understanding of the Place.

Assessment and summary under section 40(4)(c)(i)

- The potential for future development on the land proposed for removal to impact upon the Queen Elizabeth Maternal and Child Health Centre, and substantially reduce the State-level cultural heritage significance of the place, is negligible.

Assessment and summary under section 40(4)(c)(ii)

- The land proposed for removal does not contribute to the understanding of the place, as the understanding comes from the relationship between the remaining buildings on the southern portion of the site.

- The land proposed for removal is not important to the protection or conservation of the Place given the level of development that has occurred, and maintenance of a buffer provided by the public walkway, landscaping and park.

Change of name

The Executive Director recommended changing the name of the Place in the VHR, as the name 'Queen Elizabeth Maternal and Child Health Centre' does not clearly relate to the current place. The Executive Director recommended that the place be named 'Former Carlton Refuge and Chapel Complex'.

Heritage Council's findings

The Heritage Council's statutory remit is confined by the *Heritage Act 2017*. When a place or object is included in the VHR, the description, history, Statement of Significance and permit policy do not form statutory components of the Heritage Register. Nonetheless, those elements assist in understanding and managing places and objects included in the VHR. The Heritage Council therefore records its strong view that the Executive Director should amend the Statement of Significance and history of the Place to acknowledge and record the complex history of the Place, as a place of trauma. A neutral and accurate portrayal of the historic purpose and operation of the Refuge is considered to be essential. This could include the stigma of pregnancy for unmarried mothers; the attitude towards, and poor treatment, of women, including women undertaking sex work and victims of sexual abuse or sexual assault; their confinement as 'inmates'; the work they were required to do; and the treatment of their children including those who were separated or removed from their mothers.

The Heritage Council's decision is confined to the extent of registration, permit exemptions and name.

The Heritage Council's findings in relation to the Place accord with the Executive Director's Recommendation. The Heritage Council determined that removing the land (being 475–485 Cardigan Street, 487–495 Cardigan Street, and 110–112 Keppel Street, Carlton) from the extent of registration would not impact the cultural heritage significance of the Place. The Heritage Council agrees that removal of the northern portion of the site is a practical amendment while retaining the State-level cultural heritage significance of the buildings contained within the southern portion of the site and new extent of registration.

The Heritage Council also determined that revoking the existing permit exemptions that were applied at the time of registration in 1999 is appropriate.

The Heritage Council determined that the name of the Place should be changed from Queen Elizabeth Maternal and Child Health Centre' to 'Former Carlton Refuge and Chapel Complex'.

Extent of Registration (Attachment 1)

The Extent of Registration is provided as **Attachment 1** and includes all of the place shown hatched on diagram 1813.

Everything included in the extent of registration including all of the place, the land, all soft and hard landscape features, plantings, and all buildings are included in the VHR. A permit or permit exemption from Heritage Victoria is required for any works within the extent of registration.

Permit exemptions (Attachment 2)

The Heritage Council determined that revoking the existing permit exemptions that were applied at the time of registration in 1999 is appropriate. The Heritage Council determined that no specific permit exemptions should apply to works or activities at the Place.

Conclusion

The Heritage Council has determined, pursuant to Part 3 and Part 5 of the *Heritage Act 2017*, that the existing registration of the Queen Elizabeth Maternal and Child Health Centre is to be amended in the Victorian Heritage Register.

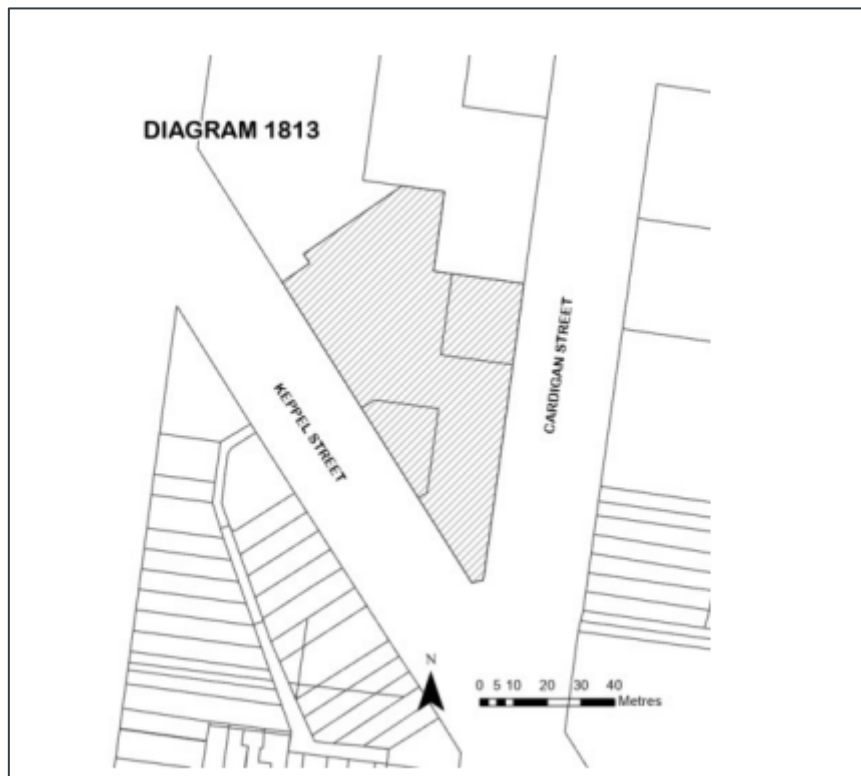


Professor Philip Goad
Chair, Heritage Council of Victoria

Attachment 1

Extent of Registration

All of the place shown hatched on Diagram 1813 encompassing all of lots CM5, H10A1-H10A4, H10B1, H111-H113, H121, H122, H51-H54, H6A1-H6A4, H6B1, H71, RES1 and RES2 on Plan of Subdivision 640946.



Attachment 2

Categories of works or activities which may be undertaken without a permit (permit exemptions)

Introduction

A heritage permit is required for all works and activities undertaken in relation to VHR places and objects. Certain works and activities are exempt from a heritage permit, if the proposed works will not harm the cultural heritage significance of the heritage place or object.

Permit Policy

The Queen Elizabeth Centre Conservation Management Plan prepared by Allom Lovell & Associates for the Department of Human Services (Office of Housing) in 2003 may be useful in managing the place in a manner which respects its cultural heritage significance. However, this document was prepared prior to the construction of new higher density residential buildings to the north, and prior to the adaptation of the significant buildings to the south for residential use. It is recommended that a new Conservation Management Plan be commissioned for the Former Carlton Refuge and Chapel Complex to reflect the current use and management of the place.

Permit exemptions

General exemptions

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the VHR. General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which do not harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the *Heritage Act 2017*.

Subdivision/consolidation: Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions. Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).