

14 August 2024

Department of Transport & Planning
1 Spring Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

*Re: 8-10 & 14 Lofts Avenue, Kew
Planning Application*

This letter was prepared at the request of Planning & Property Partners Pty Ltd on behalf of Methodist Ladies College (MLC). It comments on heritage issues in relation to the proposal for works to the MLC owned properties at 8-10 and 14 Lofts Avenue, Kew.

The analysis below is informed by an inspection of the subject site and its environs, along with a review of the Heritage Overlay provisions at Clause 43.01 of the Boroondara Planning Scheme and the heritage policy at Clause 15.03. Reference is also made to the *City of Boroondara Schedule of Gradings Map* (18 April 2024) and *Heritage Policy Statements of Significance – Reference Document* (January 2018).

The subject site is comprised of the two adjoining properties at 8-10 and 14 Lofts Avenue – each occupied by a single-storey late-Victorian timber framed dwelling. The front boundary to 8-10 Lofts Avenue is enclosed by a tall Colorbond fence. 14 Lofts Avenue has a low cyclone wire fence with timber posts and rails. There is also a remnant polychrome brick wall on the shared boundary at the front of the site – it appears to be of relatively recent origin.



Figure 1 (left)

The dwellings at 14 Lofts Avenue and 8-10 Lofts Avenue.



Figure 2 (right)

The brick wall located to the front part of the shared boundary. It was possibly constructed with recycled bricks with a modern capping detail.

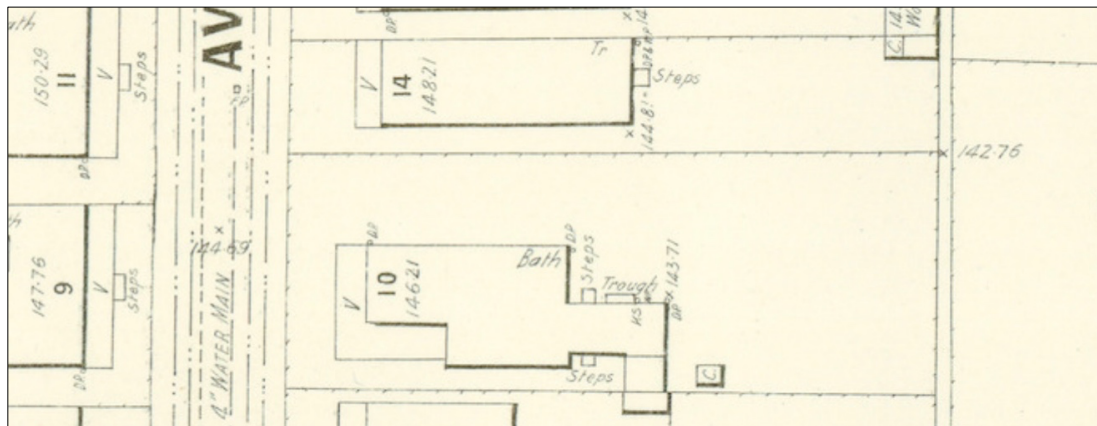


Figure 3 Extract from a 1903 MMBW Detail Plan. It shows the house at 10 Lofts Avenue to have been extended to the north at a later date, and also indicates that the boundary fences were timber – ie there is no evidence of a solid masonry fence between the two sites (as shown in figure 2). Source: State Library Victoria.

The subject site is located on the east side of Lofts Avenue and has a row of single-storey late-Victorian dwellings to its north. To the immediate south of the subject is an at-grade car park and a modern institutional building housing MLC’s junior school and kindergarten. MLC’s main campus is located on the west side of Lofts Avenue.

The subject site is located within the Glenferrie Road Precinct, identified as HO150 in the schedule of the Heritage Overlay in the Boroondara Planning Scheme. No external paint controls, internal alteration controls or tree controls apply under the provisions of this overlay. The statement of significance for HO150 provided in the *Heritage Policy – Statements of Significance Reference Document* is reproduced in part as follows:

- *The western parts of this precinct are marked by mansion development of the Victorian period, and though some are surrounded by unsympathetic later development, a significant number of individually significant early Kew mansions survive here, albeit in some cases converted to institutional uses. This is one of three notable mansion precincts in Kew, the others being HO158 (Walmer Street) and HO162 (Sackville Street).*
- *More modest but still valued late Victorian residential development, such as single fronted cottages and terrace rows, is also located in the western areas of the precinct.*
- *The eastern section of the precinct is significant for its mixture of small and medium scale Victorian housing, much of which relates to two important 1880s estates: Edgevale and Doona Hill.*
- *The area has a strong visual connection with several fine assemblages of school buildings: either in its midst (Ruyton) or at its borders (Trinity, Xavier, Methodist Ladies’ College).*
- *The area includes the former Kew civic buildings and the Sacred Heart Church and School, both in Cotham Road, the latter important to the considerable Roman Catholic heritage in the area.*
- *The area also includes the entire Glenferrie Road streetscape north of Barkers Road up to Wellington Street, including two of MLC’s most important buildings and a mixed 1880s to interwar streetscape.*
- *The area includes a number of individually significant architectural designs, the majority of which are Victorian mansions.*

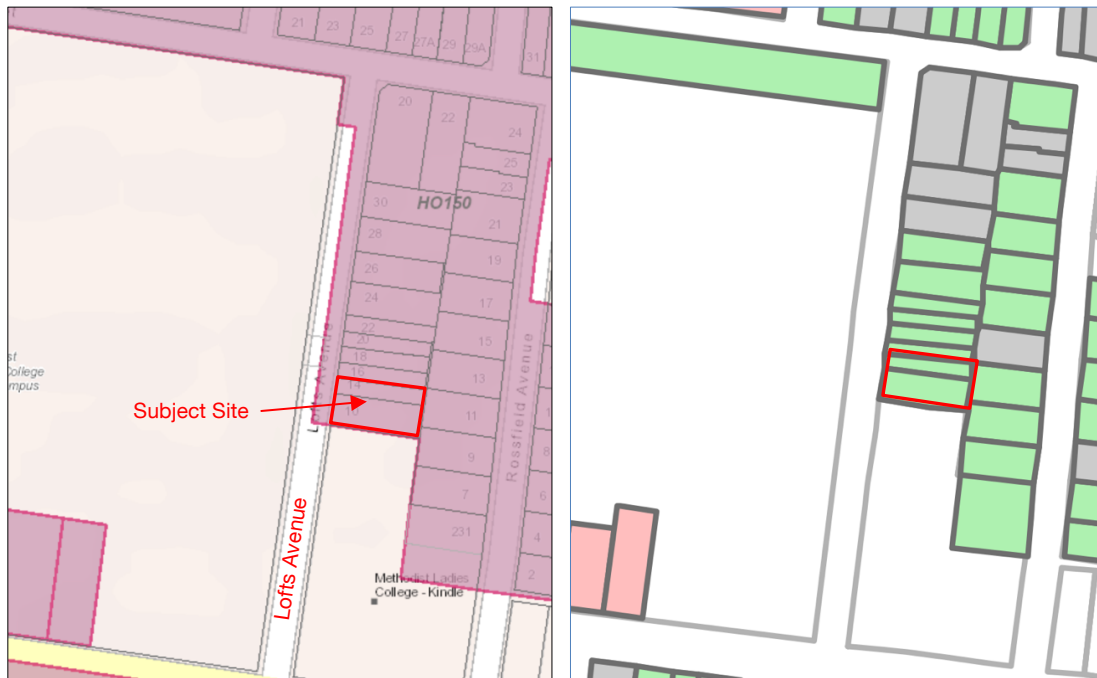


Figure 4 (left) Heritage Overlay map showing the subject site located within the Glenferrie Road Precinct (HO150).

Figure 5 (right) Extract from the Boroondara Schedule of Gradings map. The subject site and neighbouring properties to the north are shaded green to indicate a contributory grading. Non-contributor places are shaded grey.

As the Lofts Avenue properties are within a Heritage Overlay, they are subject to the provisions of Clause 43.01. Inter alia, the purpose of Clause 43.01 is to ensure that development does not adversely affect the significance of a heritage place. The decision guidelines at Clause 43.01 require the responsible authority to have consideration for the following, as appropriate:

- *The Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.*
- *The significance of the heritage place and whether the proposal will adversely affect the natural or cultural significance of the place.*
- *Any applicable statement of significance (whether or not specified in the schedule to this overlay), heritage study and any applicable conservation policy.*
- *Any applicable heritage design guideline specified in the schedule to this overlay.*
- *Whether the location, bulk, form or appearance of the proposed building will adversely affect the significance of the heritage place.*
- *Whether the location, bulk, form and appearance of the proposed building is in keeping with the character and appearance of adjacent buildings and the heritage place.*
- *Whether the demolition, removal or external alteration will adversely affect the significance of the heritage place.*
- *Whether the proposed works will adversely affect the significance, character or appearance of the heritage place.*

[...]

The proposal also needs to be assessed against the relevant provisions of Boroondara's heritage policy as set out under Clause 15.03-1L:

Contributory heritage places strategies

Retain contributory built fabric and not normally allow demolition.

[...]

Support demolition to remove non-original and non-contributory additions to 'contributory' heritage places.

Ensure alterations, including restoration or reconstruction works, maintain the cultural heritage significance and integrity of the place.

[...]

Ensure additions and new buildings do not alter or obscure fabric that contributes to the cultural heritage significance of a 'contributory' heritage place including changes to the principal visible roof forms or principal façade.

Ensure additions and new buildings do not unreasonably obscure 'contributory' or 'significant' fabric in the wider precinct.

[...]

All places - fencing strategies

Retain original or early fences of 'significant' or 'contributory' heritage places.

Encourage the reconstruction of original fences where historical evidence exists of their form, or encourage the construction of new front fences in sympathy to the period and design of the 'significant' or 'contributory' heritage places.

Discourage the construction of high solid fences that block the view of the principal façade (or secondary façade for corner lots) of 'significant' or 'contributory' places from the street.

[...]

All places - landscape setting strategies

Retain or restore (where evidence can be found) original hard and soft landscape elements that contribute to the significance of the heritage place.

Design hard and soft landscaping to not detract from the heritage values of the place.

All places - vehicle accommodation, outbuildings and services strategies

Ensure vehicle accommodation and other services do not dominate heritage places.

Minimise new vehicle cross-overs for heritage places with narrow street frontage, where few or no crossovers exist or where rear laneway access is available.

Discourage the widening of vehicle crossovers, or the construction of large areas of paving or other hard surfaces in the front setback where this is not responsive to the heritage place, except in the interests of traffic safety.

Encourage the location of new carports, garages and outbuildings to the rear of the main building (excluding verandahs, porches, bay windows or similar projecting features) except where the character of the heritage place supports the location of carports, garages and outbuildings to the side of the heritage building behind the main front building line.

[...]

It is proposed that the subject site undergo minor works so that it can be used by MLC. The existing driveway will be updated and paved in concrete, providing access and surfacing to the rear of the site. Existing outbuildings at 14 Lofts Avenue are to be demolished and a new shed erected close to the rear boundary of 8-10 Lofts Avenue.

The non-original front fences will be replaced by a 1.5 metre high timber picket fence with a double swing gate opening onto the new driveway. A secondary 1.8 metre high gate would be erected further along the driveway, at a setback from the facades of the dwellings. The proposed works also include widening of the existing driveway crossover to Lofts Avenue.

In accordance with Clause 15.03, all contributory built fabric on the subject site is retained. The demolition works are confined to non-significant rear outbuildings and the non-original front fences. The new front fence is appropriate in height and sympathetic to the era and style of the dwellings on the subject site. It will be a marked improvement on the existing Colorbond fence.

Accepting that the widening of crossovers is generally discouraged by Clause 15.03, it will not in this instance have an adverse impact on the heritage overlay precinct. The increase in the width of the existing crossover by 1200mm to serve two integrated properties is a modest adjustment, and consistent with the (wider) double-crossover at 26 and 28 Lofts Avenue.

It can also be observed that the contributory dwellings on Lofts Avenue are isolated from the main body of the Glenferrie Road heritage precinct and are experienced within the context of larger, modern institutional buildings on the MLC campus. That is to say, this streetscape is not highly sensitive to change – notwithstanding that most of the proposed changes would be concealed from view. The new outbuilding is modest in scale and located at the rear of the site, as encouraged by Clause 15.03. The front setbacks of the heritage dwellings are predominately retained as gardens with soft landscaping, consistent with the original domestic character of the place.

In conclusion, the proposal represents an appropriate heritage outcome having consideration for the objectives and design guidelines of the Heritage Overlay as set out in Clause 43.01, as well as the associated heritage policies provided within Clause 15.03 of the Boroondara Planning Scheme.

Martin Turnor
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Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd