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CONSERVATION | HERITAGE

Heritage Impact Statement

Application for Development
Loreto College, Ballarat

19 February 2026

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1.0 Introduction

This report was prepared at the request of MGS Architects on behalf of Loreto College, Ballarat. It comments on heritage issues arising from the proposal to construct a new building at Loreto College (to be known as the Mornane Centre) and whether it is acceptable in terms of its impacts upon the significance of the heritage buildings on campus and the broader heritage overlay precinct in which it is located.

2.0 Sources of Information

The analysis below draws upon an inspection of Loreto College and its environs and a review of the relevant provisions of the Ballarat Planning Scheme including the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) and Heritage (Clause 15.03). Reference is also made to the following documents and sources:

- *Ballarat Heritage Precincts – Statements of Significance 2006* (Revised August 2014)
- Heritage Victoria’s registration documentation for Loreto College/Mary’s Mount (VHR H1017)
- *The Heritage Overlay – Guidelines for Assessing Planning Permit Applications; Public Draft February 2007*
- *Loreto College Mary’s Mount 1600 Sturt Street Ballarat: Conservation Management Plan (Draft)* (Wendy Jacobs & David Rowe, December 2002)

It is intended that this report be read in conjunction with the drawings prepared by MGS Architects and other documents submitted with respect to this application.

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3.0 History

A thorough history of the school's inception and development has been provided in *Loreto College Mary's Mount 1600 Sturt Street Ballarat: Conservation Management Plan (Draft)* (Wendy Jacobs & David Rowe, December 2002), from which much of the historical information here is sourced. The inception of the school is recorded as the following (from Loreto CMP):

Loreto College, 1600 Sturt Street (Mary's Mount), Ballarat, represents the original parent house of the Loreto Order in Australia founded by Mother Mary Gonzaga Barry of Loreto Abbey, Rathfarnham, Ireland, in 1875, upon the invitation of the Bishop of Ballarat, Michael O'Connor (also originally from Rathfarnham). Loreto Convent and College was established in the former mansion house built for Ballarat businessmen, E.A. Wynne in 1869. Between 1875 and 1915, Mother Barry instigated the profound transformation of the property into one of the most substantial Gothic-inspired Catholic convents in Victoria.

The College, upon purchase, comprised a double storey, rendered brick mansion, overlooking Lake Wendouree, that later became known as Loreto Abbey. A further piece of land was purchased soon after, following which saw the successful inception of the school, with student numbers rapidly increasing. To meet this demand, a substantial amount of construction was undertaken in the following years, coinciding with the boom years in Victoria's history.

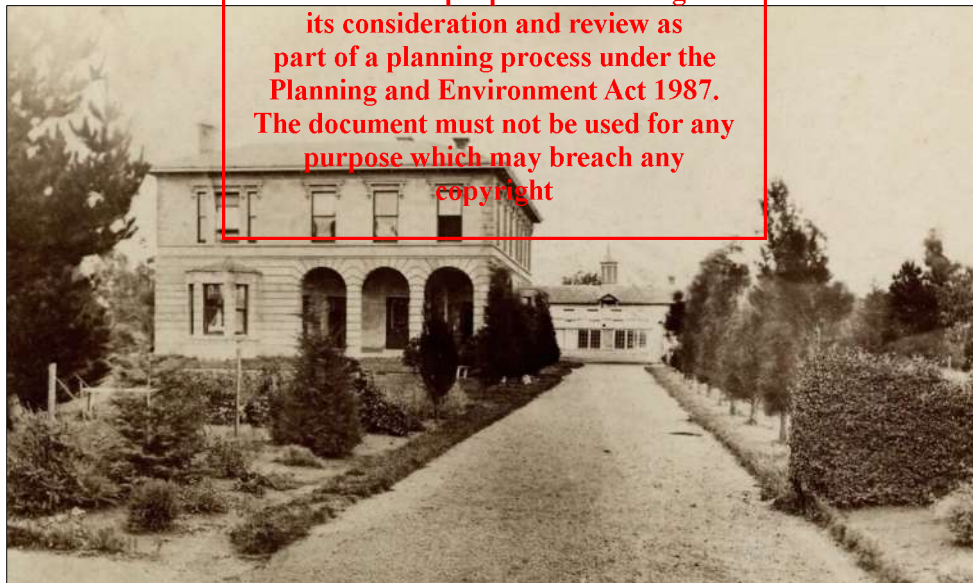


Figure 1 Wynne's mansion – Loreto convent's first home – viewed from the east, c1875. Source: Loreto College Archives

The College's architecture reflected the ecclesiastical nature of the site, which was further enhanced by the creative vision of the early founders of the school to create a Gothic-inspired Catholic Convent and college complex. Of particular note in inspiring this vision was the first Reverend Mother of Loreto (from 1875-1915), Reverend Mother Mary Gonzaga Barry (from Loreto CMP):

The parallel and perpendicular configuration of the distinctive Gothic-inspired buildings at Mary's Mount provide an appreciation and understanding of Mother Mary Barry's vision for the Convent and College complex between 1875 and 1915.

Broadly modelled on other convent prototypes in Ireland and more generally on medieval monastic design, those particular two and three storey buildings that comprise the core to the Loreto complex include the original mansion house/abbey, residential wing, administration building, Michael's Novitiate and chapel. Architecturally, the St. Anne's wing also contributes to this vision, although a later building.



Figure 2 A c1889 illustration of the north elevation of the abbey and the infirmary (lower left).
Source: Loreto Australia & South East Asia Archives.

The western part of the College campus, which has been reduced in size following the excise of the northwest corner to provide additional space for Wendouree Parade, was an paddock in the 1860s, that was regularly used for football matches. This was acquired by Loreto Convent in 1876 and used for sports including hockey, croquet, archery and tennis.

Around 1887 an infirmary was built towards the southwest corner of the College. This single-storey picturesque Gothic style building with a distinctive triple gabled façade and slender tower was surrounded by a rose garden and box hedge with a tennis court to its north. The infirmary appears to have been little used for its intended purpose and was demolished in the twentieth century.

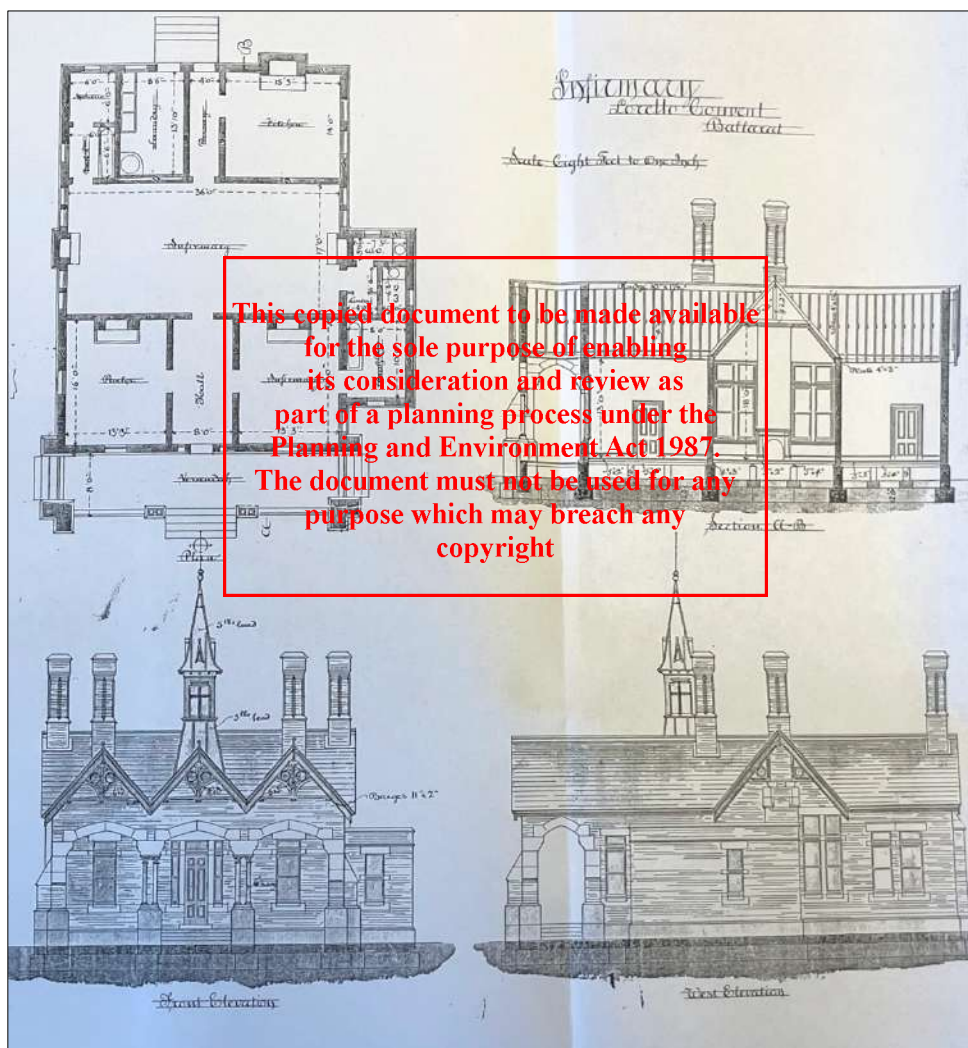


Figure 3 Architectural drawings of the Loreto College infirmary, 1886. Source: Loreto College Archives

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Figure 4 A c1906 photograph of students at the College sports field with the tennis courts and infirmary visible to the rear. Source: Loreto Australia & South East Asia Archives.

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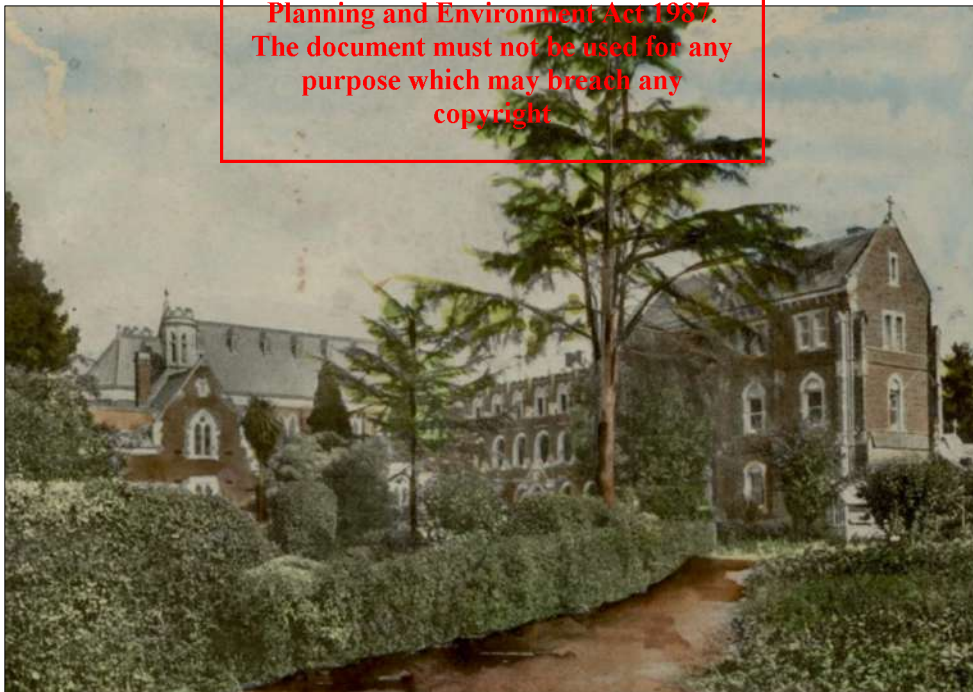


Figure 5 Loreto College viewed from the Sturt Street entry gate, c1926. Source: Loreto Australia & South East Asia Archives.

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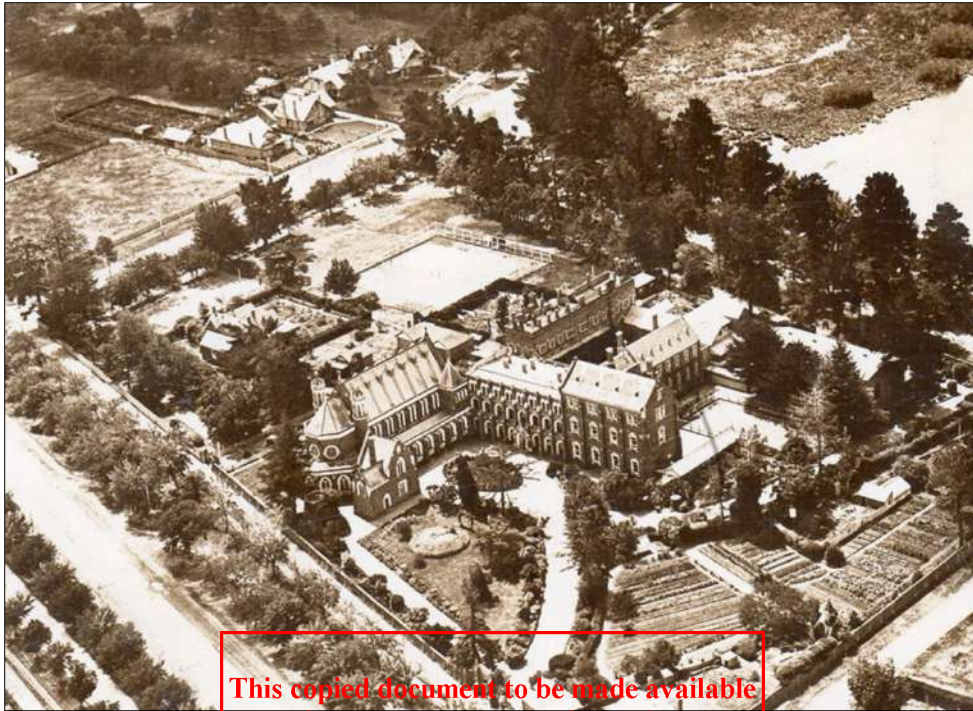


Figure 6 A c1930 aerial image of the Loreto College Campus. Source: Loreto College Archives

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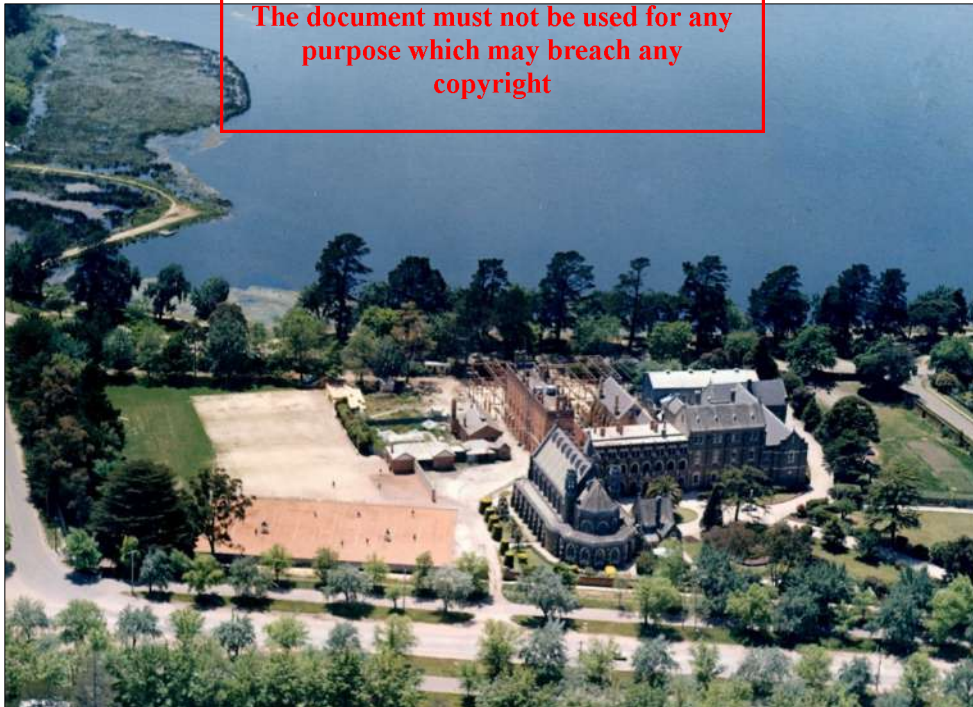


Figure 7 A 1963 aerial photograph of Loreto College. Source: Loreto Australia & South East Asia Archives.

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The school has increased in size, as has its requirements for accommodation and amenity. The site has continued to evolve, with a series of buildings constructed at the periphery of the central core of buildings. This increase in built form has increased more rapidly over the last 50 years, with the *Gonzaga Barry Centre* constructed c1996 (located centrally behind the northern boundary); the *Mary Mount Centre* completed in 2015 (to the west of the Chapel and Abbey) and the *Mary Ward Centre* opened in 2016 (at the northeast corner of the site). Some of these new buildings replaced earlier built form.

4.0 Site Description

Loreto College occupies a large site located to the south of Wendouree Parade (which encircles Lake Wendouree) and to the north of one of Ballarat's main dual carriageways, Sturt Street, with Hamilton Avenue to the west and Morrison Street to the east.

The site displays an evolution of ecclesiastical and institutional buildings, commencing from the 1860s to modern day, which have been part of an incremental development of the site as it adapts to ever-changing requirements. The central portion of the site comprises the most intact display of buildings from the late nineteenth century, which has been recognised on a state level and is on the Victorian Heritage Register. The less developed portion of the site, to the west, is outside of the extent of registration, reflecting its modern collection of buildings.

The Mornane Centre is proposed to be built at the south-west corner of Loreto College, occupying part of a flat, grassed, playing field, and to the west of the recently constructed Mary's Mount Centre. The site remains undeveloped and is sparsely planted with trees. The street boundaries are enclosed by a modern chain wire fence, with the historic red brick wall boundary terminating short of this portion of the site.

The surrounding area to the subject site comprises a rich heritage character: the western side of Hamilton Avenue comprises a largely intact interwar residential streetscape, Morrison Street far less intact with most dwellings on the eastern side being post war or modern.

Sturt Street is a very broad multi-lane boulevard with multiple median strips including plantings of mature street trees, and flanking service roads to each side. It is considered a significant heritage environment, with key elements including the broad, multi-lane layout of the street, mature plantings of street trees and early Victorian era bluestone open gutters and kerbing, all of which are evident on the frontage to Loreto College.

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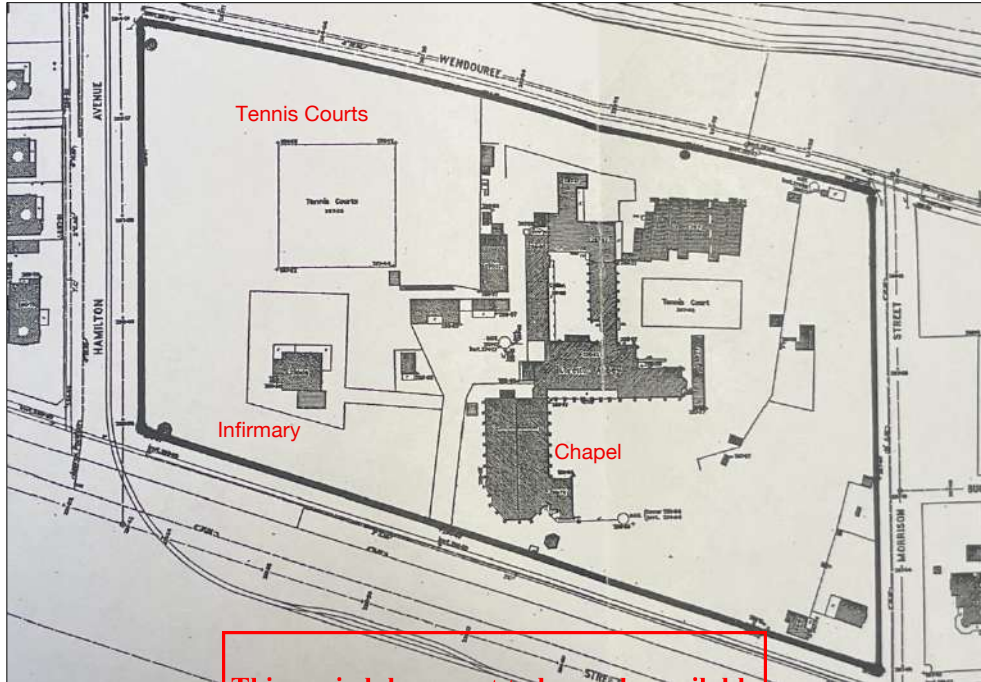


Figure 8 Extract from a 1930s sewerage plan of Ballarat showing the layout of Loreto College at that time. Source: Reproduced from the Loreto College CMP.

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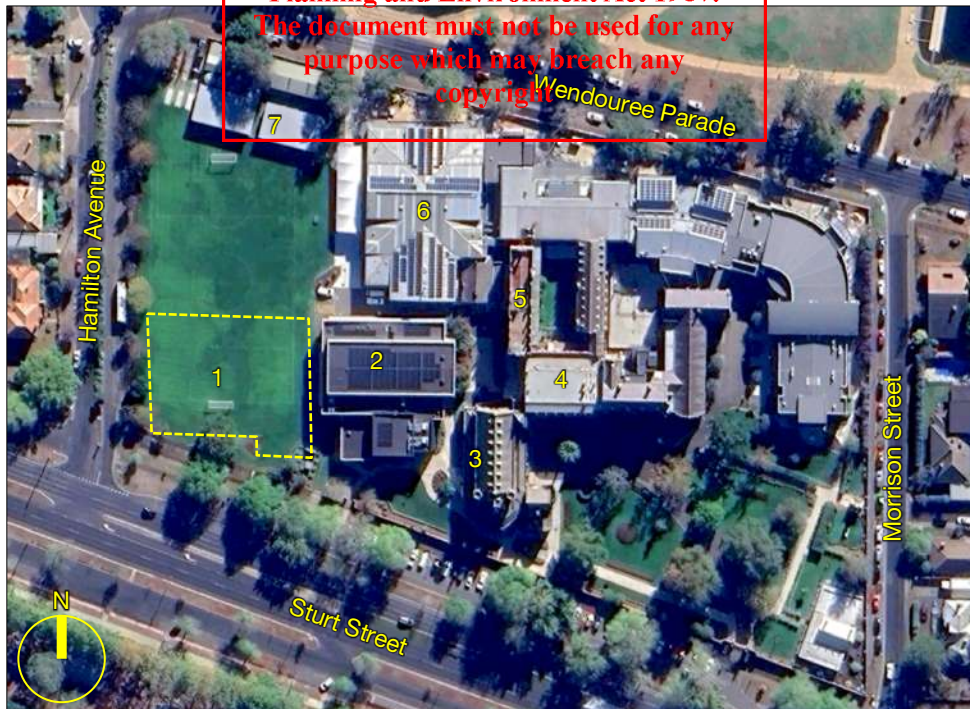


Figure 9 Recent aerial of Loreto College. 1: Proposed Development site. 2: Mary's Mount Centre, 3: Chapel, 4: Mansion House/Abbey, 5: St Michael's Novitiate, 6: Gonzaga Barry Centre. 7: Portables.

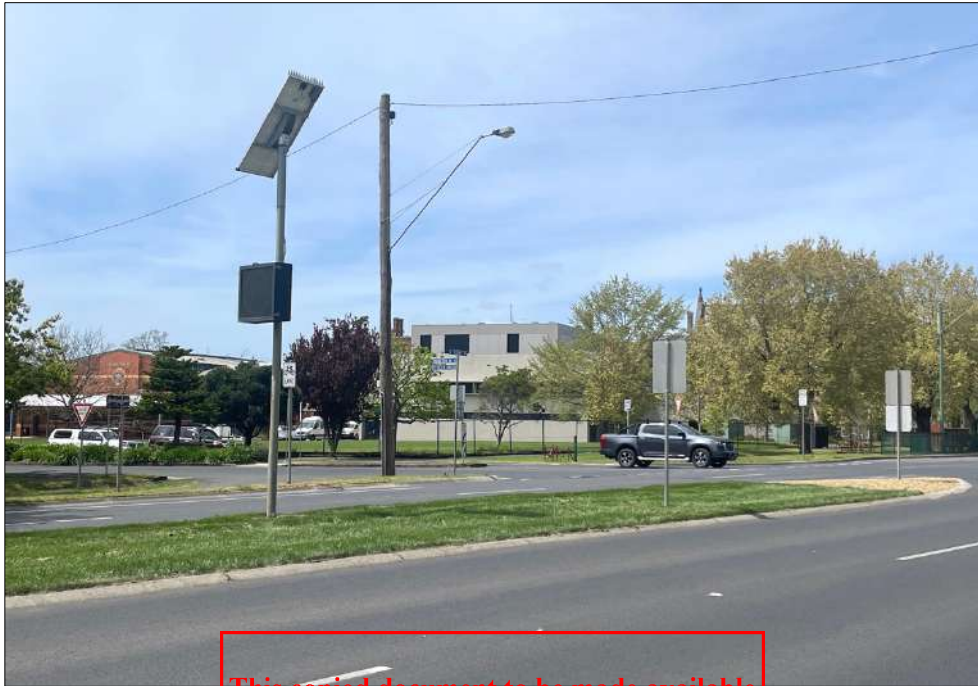


Figure 10 View of the College from the corner of Sturt Street and Hamilton Avenue.

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Figure 11 View from the development site looking west towards the Mary's Mount Centre.

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Figure 12 The west facade of the Gonzaga Barry Centre, located alongside the College sports field, north-east of the proposed development.

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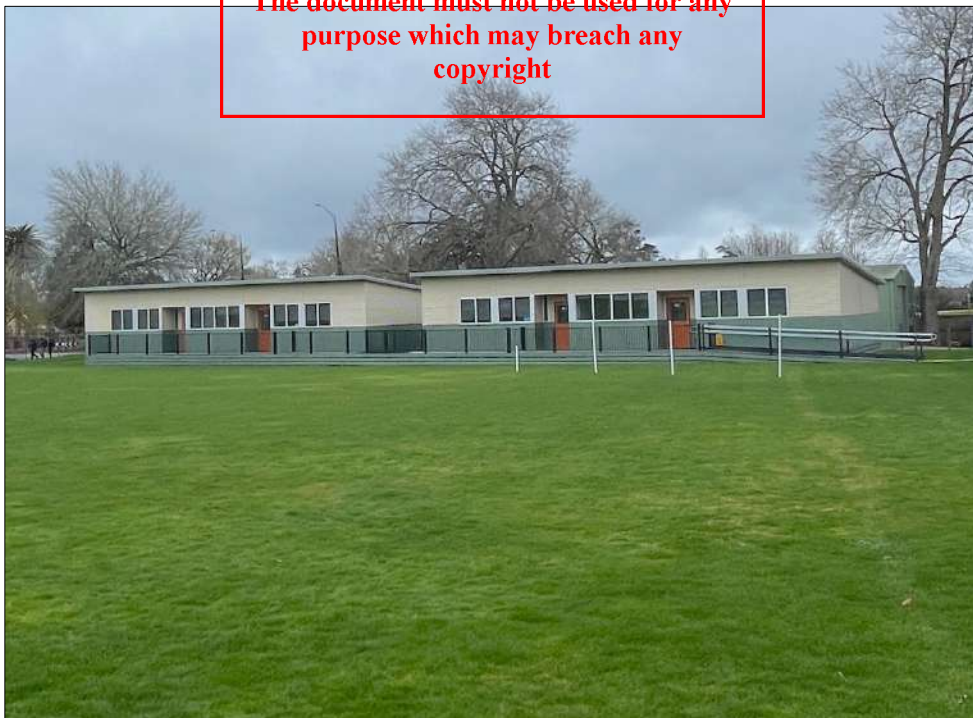


Figure 13 Portable classrooms at the northern end of the sports field.

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Figure 14 View from Sturt Street showing the Mary's Mount Centre (left) and Chapel (right). The historic red-brick boundary wall is visible in the foreground.

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Figure 15 The Wendouree Parade frontage looking west from Hamilton Avenue.

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Figure 16 Modern Loreto College buildings at the intersection of Wendouree Parade and Morrison Street.

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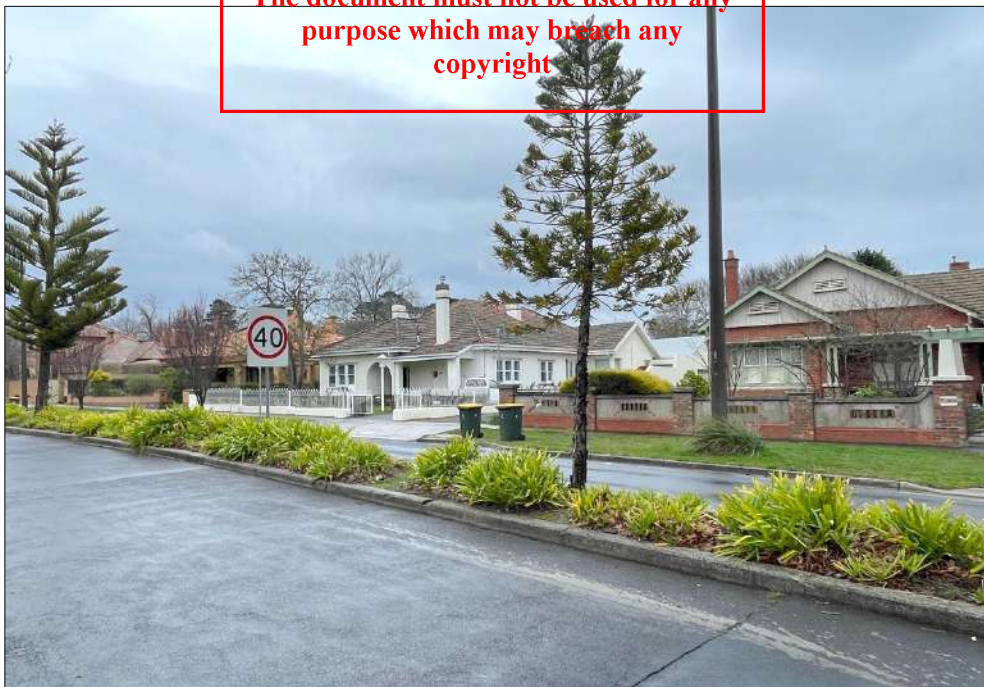


Figure 17 Interwar residences on the west side of Hamilton Avenue, viewed from the Wendouree Parade intersection.



Figure 18 Interwar residences on the west side of Hamilton Avenue, viewed from the intersection with Sturt Street.

5.0 Heritage Listings

City of Ballarat

Loreto College is located within the West Ballarat Precinct, identified as HO164 in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Ballarat Planning Scheme. Neither external paint controls nor internal alteration controls apply, however tree controls and solar energy systems controls do apply.

The eastern half of the College campus is identified as Former Mary's Mount Convent (Loreto Abbey) HO126 in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay – corresponding to Heritage Victoria's extent of registration (as described below).

Heritage Victoria

The eastern half of the College campus is included on the Victorian Heritage Register (H1017).

National Trust of Australia (Victoria)

The Loreto Convent Chapel and cloister are listed on the register of the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) as a place of state significance (File No. B5950).

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Figure 19 Map showing the eastern half of Loreto College within the West Ballarat Precinct (HO164). The eastern half of the College is included in the Victorian Heritage Register, to the extent indicated by the orange shading. The eastern part of Wendouree Convent is also visible to the upper right corner of the map, is also on the Register.

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6.0 Significance

The West Ballarat Precinct has been identified as being of local historical, aesthetic, architectural, scientific and social significance to Ballarat. The statement of significance for the precinct is reproduced in part below:

The urban development and character of the Precinct, founded in 1850s, has historic significance for its association with a number of significant activities that links together some of the main themes in the historical, social and architectural development of Ballarat.

The Precinct is historically significant for its associations with underground quartz mining that was sustained over a long period of time. The importance of the late expansion of quartz gold mining on the basalt plateau, in particular the rich Inkerman Lead that wound its way through the precinct and was the target of a variety of mining companies from the late 1850s onwards is fundamental to understanding the pattern of development in the area.

The Precinct is historically important as an early example of a highly desirable mid 19th- to mid 20th century goldfields residential area [...]

The Sturt Street boulevard is the focus of city design in this area as the formal western gateway to the centre of the city, and to the east, it links with the commemorative Ballarat

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Avenue of Honour, where between 1917 and 1921, over 3,000 trees were planted along the Western Highway for 22km. [...]

The Precinct is important as it demonstrates the lasting continuity of civic pride and urban beautification schemes that had defined the 19th century structure of the city. [...]

The Precinct's reputation for a better class of housing was encouraged by the introduction in 1887 of a horse drawn tram service along Sturt Street as far as Lake Wendouree, linking the central business area with outlying residential pockets. Improved access promoted the attractiveness of the area for the successful merchants and business people, who had begun to establish separate residences from their places of work in central Ballarat. Many of the residences in the area were designed by leading Ballarat architects.

The West Ballarat Precinct is aesthetically and architecturally significant at a LOCAL level (AHC criteria D.2, E.1 and F.1).

The Precinct is important for its outstanding collection of high quality denominational schools and associated buildings. They demonstrate a way of life and priorities of the gold rush citizens on which the reputation of Ballarat as a provincial city which excelled in educational institutions was founded. The size, architectural achievement and stability of these schools also indicate the strength and influence of the Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, and Anglican communities in the early nineteenth century.

The collection of buildings includes the first convent of the Loreto nuns in Australia, with the establishment of Loreto School in 1875. The development of the Bishop's Palace, built in 1876 as the home of the Roman Catholic Archbishop of the Ballarat Diocese. The construction of St. Patrick's College designed by Architects Tappin, Gilbert and Dennehy in 1889, the Ballarat and Clarendon College, built in 1912 as well as the present Pleasant Street Primary School. The precinct contains three churches, the former St Cuthbert's Presbyterian Church (1911) and former Pleasant Street Wesleyan Church (c.1867) and the architecturally outstanding Spanish Mission Style Catholic Church, St Theresa of the Little Flower, in Wendouree Parade (1938).

The Precinct is architecturally important for its small groups of private residential development which consist of a wide variety of substantially intact residential buildings of outstanding architectural quality that are associated with Victorian, Federation and Inter-War eras. [...]

The Precinct has aesthetic significance for its outstanding visual qualities of its setting, urban layout and architecture. The important visual qualities reflect the historical, cultural and architectural development of the Precinct, and contribute to the contextual setting of Ballarat.

The important visual qualities of the Precinct are also enhanced by the street landscape design and layout that has contributed to the appearance of a gracious provincial City. These streetscape features include the tree-lined avenues, the soft landscaping of the gravel/grass road shoulders, turf nature strips and asphalt footpaths; the extensive network of bluestone drains, the extensive areas of grassed and landscaped public and private open space including the school grounds, parks, gardens with their mature canopy trees, all contribute to the outstanding wide thoroughfares and residential streets.

Other important aesthetic qualities include a variety of significant individual urban landmarks that stand out from the generally contextual appearance of the majority of buildings. A number of these individual buildings can be seen from outside of the Precinct such as the churches; the various educational institutions; the City Oval with its ornate grandstand and the mullock heap near the corner of Russell Street and Alfred Street South.

The West Ballarat Precinct is scientifically significant at a LOCAL level (AHC criteria F.1).

The Precinct is of importance for contributing to a history of the infrastructure development of West Ballarat, as identified by the extensive network of significantly intact bluestone channels, gutters and kerbs.

The West Ballarat Precinct is socially significant at a LOCAL level (AHC criteria G.1).

The Precinct is recognized and highly valued by the local community for residential, educational, religious, and recreational reasons. The City Oval, home to the Ballarat Football Club and including the grandstand, tennis and croquets clubs, is of considerable social significance. It was originally the site of the Royal Saxon Company's mine and has been used for recreational activities since the 1850s.

7.0 Policy Considerations

As Loreto College is within a Heritage Overlay, it is subject to the provisions of Clause 43.01 - one of the purposes of which is to ensure that development does not adversely affect the significance of heritage places. Clause 43.01 also includes decision guidelines that the Responsible Authority must consider, as appropriate, including:

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- To implement the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.*
 - To conserve and enhance heritage places of natural or cultural significance.*
 - To conserve and enhance those elements that contribute to the significance of heritage places.*
 - To ensure that development does not adversely affect the significance of heritage places.*
 - To conserve specified heritage places by allowing a use that would otherwise be prohibited if this will demonstrably assist with the conservation of the significance of the heritage place.*

Clause 43.01 also includes decision guidelines that the Responsible Authority must consider, as appropriate, including:

- *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 proposed works will adversely affect the significance, character or appearance of the heritage place.*

In addition to Clause 43.01, development proposals will need to be prepared with regard for Council's heritage policy, as set out under Clause 15.03. Inter alia, Clause 15.03 has the following objectives and policies relevant to the proposed development:

15.03-1S Heritage conservation

Strategies

[...]

Encourage appropriate development that respects places with identified heritage values.

[...]

Ensure an appropriate setting and context for heritage places is maintained or enhanced

[...]

15.03-1L Heritage conservation

Strategies

Encourage sympathetic forms of development adjacent to heritage sites.

[...]

Require that new development interprets culturally significant places and respects heritage and cultural boundaries.

Noting that Clause 15.03 does not provide any detailed policies to guide new works to heritage overlay places, consideration can be given to Heritage Victoria's *Heritage Overlay – Guidelines for Assessing Planning Permit Applications; Public Draft February 2007*. While these guidelines are no longer a reference document to the Ballarat Planning Scheme, they are relevant as a document that is currently published on the 'heritage planning permits' page of Council's website thus:

<https://www.ballarat.vic.gov.au/property/statutory-planning/planning/heritage-planning-permits>

The Draft Heritage Overlay Guidelines applicable to new buildings are reproduced in part below:

5.1 Objectives

To ensure that new buildings enhance the character and appearance of the Heritage Place.

To ensure that new buildings do not adversely affect the significance, character or appearance of the Area Heritage Overlay (HO)

To ensure that Contributory Elements retain their prominence in the Heritage Place and are not dominated by new buildings

To allow for reasonable change within Heritage Place and Area HOs, while ensuring that all other heritage objectives are met.

5.2 Rationale

New buildings should not undermine the significance or detract from the prominence and character of adjoining and nearby Contributory Elements and the area covered by the Area HO. New buildings should reinforce the existing spatial and visual characteristics of a Heritage Place.

Either contemporary or conservative design approaches may be appropriate. The design of new buildings should have close regard to context and reflect a relationship between nearby contributory elements and streetscape. Design that closely imitates, replicates or mimics historic styles is discouraged because it can distort an understanding of the development of an area, and hence the significance of a Heritage Place.

[...]

New buildings present an opportunity for innovative development within a Heritage Place.

[...]

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Development Guidelines

5.4.1 Design of New Buildings

While both contemporary and conservative design approaches are appropriate, forms and materials that detract from nearby Contributory Elements should be avoided.

In addition, Non-contributory Elements and Atypical Elements should not be used as the reference point for new works.

The design of new buildings should not detract from the form and materials of nearby Contributory Elements within the Area HO. New buildings should be positioned and sized to ensure that the prominence of adjoining Contributory Elements in the Area HO are retained.

The use of simple shapes of similar scale, proportions and materials is appropriate. However, the use of traditional details should not confuse an understanding of the historical development, and hence the significance of the Heritage Place [...]

5.4.2 Setback of New Buildings

To enhance Contributory Elements and ensure that development does not adversely affect the significance of a Heritage Place:

For front setbacks

- Adopt a setback no less than that for any adjoining Contributory Elements, e.g. verandahs should be set back to match adjoining verandah setbacks and building facades should be set back to match adjoining front walls.
- Avoid setbacks which are substantially greater than for adjoining Contributory Elements.
- Avoid setbacks associated with Atypical Elements.
- Where the site does not adjoin Contributory Elements, adopt the setback common for Contributory Elements in the street block.

[...]

For side setbacks

- Adopt the side setbacks which are common within the Heritage Place covered by the Area HO, e.g. where zero side setbacks are common, consider alignment at the property boundary; where there is a clear rhythm of open side setbacks, match this; and where open space on all sides is a key characteristic, adopt similar side setbacks.
- On either corner or open sites, adopt setbacks to the side street which are consistent with corner setbacks within the Heritage Place covered by the Area HO, and which would not diminish the prominence of adjoining Contributory Elements.

[...]

5.4.3 Facade Height of New Buildings

To ensure that development does not adversely affect the significance of a Heritage Place:

- adopt a facade height consistent with adjoining contributory buildings [...]
- where the site adjoins atypically tall contributory building/s, use the common facade height for Contributory Elements in the street as the reference point;
- avoid facade heights substantially lower than the common facade height for Contributory Elements;
- on corner sites have regard to adjoining Contributory Elements in both streets;
- on corner sites and open situation, the overall new building height should not dominate adjoining Contributory Elements when viewed from the footpath directly opposite in both streets or from the open situation e.g. adjoining parks
- [...]

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5.4.4 Rear Portions of New Buildings

For sites where a portion of the proposed development is to be taller than the facade height:

- consider the level of concealment that is appropriate within a Heritage Place;
- avoid the overall new building height, including the roof, dominating any adjoining Contributory Elements, the Contributory Elements in the streetscape and the area covered by the Area HO;
- increase the front setback for parts of walls which are taller than the facade height;
- assess the visibility of the development within the Heritage Place, and from viewing points 1.7m above natural ground level on the opposite footpath, from directly in front and from a position aligned with the boundary two allotments away on either side; and
- on corner sites, assess the visibility of taller parts from both streets

8.0 Proposal

A new classroom building – to be known as the Mornane Centre - is proposed to be constructed towards the south-west corner of the site. It takes the form of a three storey building of contemporary architectural expression, drawing inspiration from the College’s history. The ground floor façade to Hamilton Avenue and Sturt Street is clad in red brick - referencing the college’s historic red-brick boundary and articulated by angled cantilevered awnings with integrated seating for students waiting at the bus stop on Hamilton Avenue. The first and second floor facades have light coloured metal cladding with vertical fluting. The west elevation to Hamilton Avenue incorporates double-height semi-circular elements (housing folding partitions for classrooms) set between recessed window bays. The whole of the north facade is sheltered by a deep canopy with a colonnade echoing the rhythm of the College’s historic colonnades. The north façade also incorporates a red-brick, sculptural element with stairs, seating and integrated landscaping.

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The building footprint is roughly a square shape, with protrusions and insets at various locations. A setback has been provided to the western boundary and from Sturt Street to allow for retention of an existing tree and also to provide opportunities for new soft landscaping. Open space is maintained in the setback of the east wall from the Mary’s Mount Centre. The northern facade broadly aligns with the north wall of the Mary’s Mount Centre with the canopy sitting forward of this.

9.0 Discussion

The key heritage considerations of the proposal are impacts on the College’s historic buildings and on the surrounding heritage overlay precinct. In respect to the former, the proposed development would occur in one of the less sensitive areas of the school campus. It is located wholly outside of Heritage Victoria’s extent of registration, directly adjacent to the Mary’s Mount Centre – a substantial modern building that forms a buffer to the highly significant chapel and other historic school building further to the east.

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It is recognised that the proposal will bring about a change to the built form context of Loreto College by introducing a large building of contemporary design, but it is to be appreciated that the College's heritage buildings are located in an institutional environment where modern built form of a reasonably large scale already exists. The College grounds are capable of accommodating additional well-designed contemporary development without adversely impacting the significance, appearance and character of the heritage buildings.

As noted in section 7.0 of this report, the appropriateness of the scheme can be considered with regard for Heritage Victoria's *Heritage Overlay – Guidelines for Assessing Planning Permit Applications*. The Guidelines recognise that contemporary design approaches can be appropriate and that innovative development can occur within a heritage place. The proposal aligns with the objectives of the Guidelines in that it does not closely imitate, replicate or mimic historic styles. An innovative contemporary design response has been adopted, with elements that interpret the site's historic built form context – notably in the form of the brick surfaces that reference the College's red-brick boundary wall.

That aside, the Guidelines have generally been prepared with reference to a more typical scenarios of infill development in a residential or commercial streetscape. It is apparent that that the proposed development occupies an exceptional or unusual site rather than a typical site in the context of Ballarat, in terms of its scale, siting and form. The site has an institutional built form context, which encompasses large areas of land that do not support or include heritage fabric. In this context, it is reasonable that some discretion should be exercised in the application of heritage policies that are intended for more typical heritage sites.

Moreover, the introduction of modern institutional buildings of scale within the setting of historic buildings is today a relatively common occurrence, and to this extent the proposal is comparable to outcomes approved for other institutional/educational heritage sites. Examples can be found nearby Loreto College at St Patrick's College and Ballarat Clarendon College - both of which are located in the West Ballarat heritage precinct. There is, more generally, a role for well-designed contextually appropriate contemporary architecture in historic environments, and this point is well illustrated by the award-winning buildings at Loreto Mandeville Hall Toorak and Melbourne Grammar School.

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Figure 20 The recently completed Performing Arts Centre at St Patrick's College, Ballarat. It is located in the West Ballarat Precinct (HO164).



Figure 21 St Patrick's College Performing Arts Centre, looking south along Wanliss Road from Sturt Street.

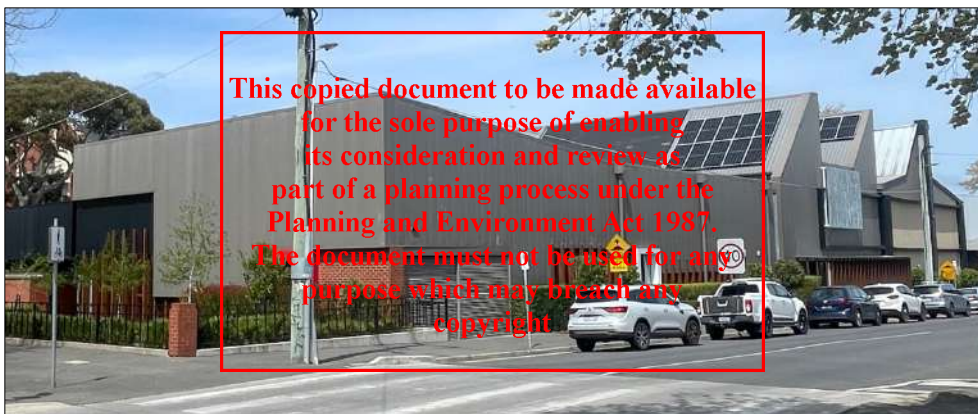


Figure 22 Ballarat Clarendon College's Physical Education Centre, fronting Sturt Street - located in the West Ballarat Precinct.



Figure 23 Ballarat Clarendon College's Year 7/8/9 building - also located in the West Ballarat Precinct.



Figure 24 Left: Nigel Peck Centre for Learning and Leadership, Melbourne Grammar School.
Figure 25 Right: The Mandeville Centre at Loreto Mandeville Hall, Toorak.

To address impacts on the surrounding heritage overlay precinct, the west side of Hamilton Avenue is an attractive and largely intact interwar residential streetscape with front gardens contributing to the domestic character. The proposed development establishes a respectful relationship to this streetscape by the introduction of a setback from the Hamilton Avenue boundary and refinements to the façade articulation. This will moderate the impact of the new building and create further opportunities for landscaping to soften its appearance.

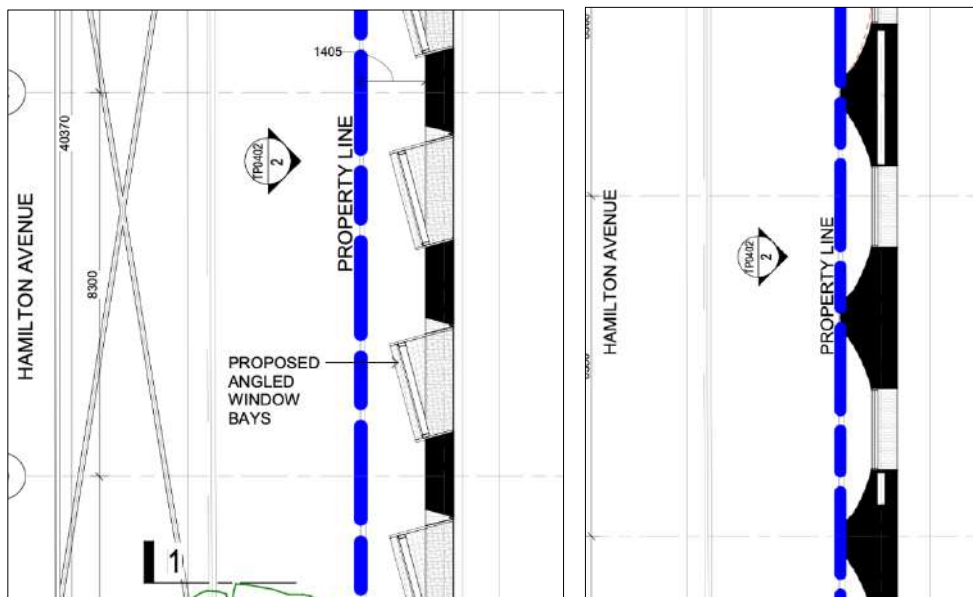


Figure 26 Extract from the current application drawings showing the ground floor setback from the Hamilton Avenue boundary (left), compared to the scheme presented at the DTP pre-application meeting (right).

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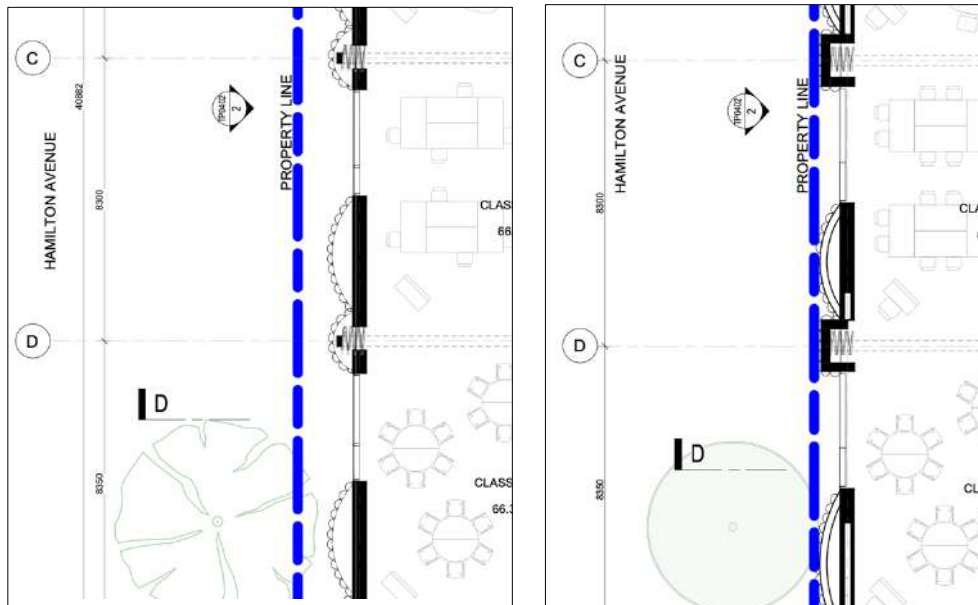


Figure 27 Extract from the current first floor plan showing increased setbacks from the Hamilton Avenue boundary (left) relative to scheme presented at the DTP pre-application meeting (right).

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The above notwithstanding, the significance of interwar houses on the west side of Hamilton Avenue is not dependant on there being no or limited change on the opposite side of the street. Which is to say, the heritage streetscape will not be disturbed by the introduction of a large, well designed building on the College grounds.

In terms of the impacts on Sturt Street, the proposal has been designed to complement the civic character of this major boulevard. With regard to concerns expressed by Council, the development does not turn its back to Sturt Street or present as a rear service wall. It has been designed to present as a building in the round with equal care paid to the appearance of the street facades as to the elevation facing the College playing fields.

Further to matters to be considered under the Heritage Overlay, the statement of significance for the West Ballarat precinct refers to the visual qualities of the area as being enhanced by tree-lined avenues and landscaped private open space, including school grounds, parks and gardens with mature canopy trees. To that end, the proposed building has been carefully sited to allow for the retention of a mature tree near the Stuart Street boundary. While some open space will be lost at the Sturt Street frontage, this will be offset by the removal of the portable classrooms at the north end of the College playing field. It is also the case that there are limited opportunities for new development to be sited elsewhere within school grounds. The loss of some open space on this part of the College campus will not detract from an appreciation of the West Ballarat's significant landscape character.

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Further to Council's concerns regarding the loss of open space on the College grounds, it is a key consideration that the on-going viability of the present school use of the land is dependent on the ability to upgrade educational facilities to meet current standards and community expectations. The proposal for a new purpose-built structure on the western part of the campus is the best means by which to accommodate such facilities, whilst also taking developmental pressures off the more sensitive College land within Heritage Victoria's extent of registration.

The West Ballarat Precinct is not only valued for its historic residential streetscapes and landscape character, but also for its collection of high quality denominational school buildings, including Loreto College. As such, the proposed Mornane Centre could be said to have a positive impact in supporting the ongoing, long-term operation of an institution that is highly significant to the West Ballarat Precinct.

10.0 Conclusion

In summary, the proposed development has been designed to provide a substantial improvement to the functionality and amenity of Loreto College, while at the same time respecting the physical and visual integrity of the College's historic buildings. This is achieved by siting the proposed development in an area of relatively low sensitivity, where no heritage buildings or significant landscape elements exist (other than the solitary tree that is to be retained).

While the proposed development will clearly bring about a change in the built form character of this part of Loreto College, it is not a change that will adversely impact the significant buildings on the campus or that of the surrounding heritage overlay precinct. An architecturally innovative design strategy has been adopted, successfully managing the transition between the historic and modern elements that characterise the Loreto College Campus.

Overall, the scheme represents a considered and balanced outcome having regard for the objectives and design guidelines of the Heritage Overlay as set out under Clause 43.01, as well as the associated heritage strategies and policies provided within Clauses 15.03 of the Ballarat Planning Scheme.

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