

History & Heritage

Circulating throughout Bendigo, Eaglehawk, Heathcote, Castlemaine,
Maldon, Kyneton, Elmore, Echuca, and Rochester areas

A publication of the National Trust Bendigo & District Branch

February 2026



SUPERIOR Accommodation for Gentlemen
Boarders. Belle Vue House, next All Saints',
Forest street.

Cover story: What's happened to "Belle Vue " 32 Forest Street Bendigo?

Next meeting

Tuesday February 24th 5.30pm

Bendigo Library (enter via Hargreaves Street)

All members and supporters are welcome

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Cover images: Belle Vue in the 1870s (Supplied: Mike Butcher) Note early picket fence bordering All Saints next door. Inset: Belle Vue today, Photo: Bendigo Branch, February 2026. Below: Advertisement from the *Bendigo Advertiser* 12/9/1885.

Cover Story: What's happened to "Belle Vue" 32 Forest Street? - Elaine Doling



Belle Vue today, neglected, vandalised and burnt out, front door and windows missing. Photo: Bendigo Branch, February 2026.

A reader has sent the Branch the following concern:

The consequences of the financial collapse of the late 1980s were catastrophic for the Anglican Church locally. The demise of All Saints' Church was well-publicised at the time, but the future of the adjacent former Diocesan Registry building seems to have been largely overlooked by the public. An undated photograph from the 1870s (cover photo), when it was known as *Belle Vue Guest House*, shows the original design. It was an asset to any streetscape. At some later stage, the verandah and balcony and parapet were removed and a pitched roof added, but it was maintained and water-tight.

Since the demise of the repeatedly vandalised adjacent former church, the former Registry seems to have been ignored. Is there a role for the National Trust with such a building?

Not all buildings can be preserved into the future, but this one, with its larger neighbour, *Bishopscourt*, form part of a precinct that is strongly supported on the other side of Forest Street. The future of *Belle Vue* is likely to be linked to the adjacent development of the former All Saints' site, but is it now beyond restoring?

Mike Butcher

Thanks Mike. We have followed up this concern and feel that this may be an example of 'demolition by neglect'. For the record, it is under different ownership to All Saints next door, neither site is currently owned by the Anglican Diocese. 32 Forest Street was transferred from them to the Department of Education in 2000.

The building was in use and in good condition both inside and out at the time that it was sold to private owners in 2014. In 2016 restoration was underway - paint had been removed from the front wall, along with the modern portico over the front door. Later windows had been removed from the upper storey pending replacement with those replicating the originals, and modern material from renovations had been removed from the interior.

However, work came to a standstill, and the place was put on the market. It was sold to the current owners in 2019, who applied for a development permit in 2020. It was not approved and nothing has been done since apart from several attempts to secure the building. Otherwise, the place has been neglected, and it has been subject to repeated vandalism. Currently it has temporary fencing around the site.

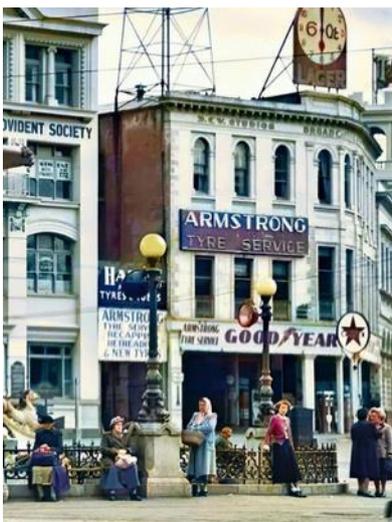


Before and after. *Bishopscourt* 40 Forest Street next to *Belle Vue*. Above: 2006 Photo: Streetview. Right: Despite its later roof, restoration has been a great success. Photo: *Bendigo Advertiser* 21/9/2023

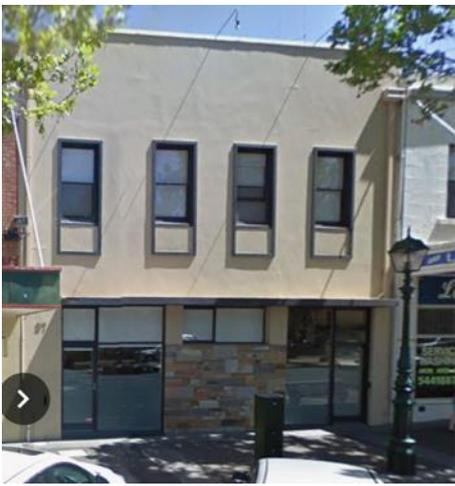
By comparison, its neighbour *Bishopscourt* (1876) has undergone extensive restoration. Both buildings had their original corrugated iron roofs replaced with identical tiled pitched roofs with eaves in the mid 1950s and had their verandahs removed. By 2006 *Bishopscourt* was undergoing restoration, with its verandahs being reinstated.

Despite its current appearance, 32 Forest Street could be restored externally to the same standard as *Bishopscourt* next door. Despite the loss of its parapet, restoration of the verandah using photographic evidence could bring *Belle Vue* back to close to its original appearance, and reinstate its contribution to the streetscape, where it is surrounded by local and state heritage listed buildings. It is covered by HO 12, Short St Precinct (see diagram page 5).

In View Street there are several more examples of verandah reinstatement- *Bendigo Disposals* on the corner of Pall Mall, and the former *Athenaeum Club Hotel*.



Left: Then and now - *Aussie Disposals* had lost its verandah and was for a number of years used as a petrol station and tyre service. Photos: supplied



Left: Streetview in 2010 and in 2023. The former *Athenaeum Club Hotel* has had its verandah and pediment reinstated after undergoing “modernisation” in the 1960s. See page 11 for more photographs of this hotel.

The issue of ‘demolition by neglect’ is real and widespread however, without clear legislation by the State Government little can be done locally to address the issue. The more the public bring the issue to the Government’s attention the more chance that things will change. The Branch will follow up with Council.

Photographs below and on the following page illustrate the sad neglect of *Belle Vue*:



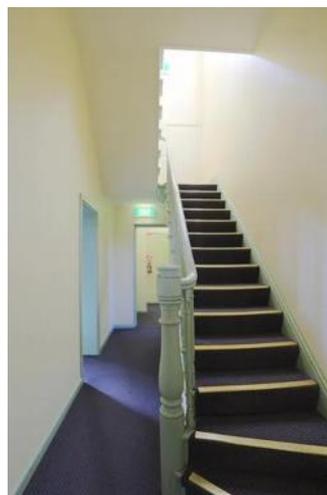
During its time as the Diocesan Registry. Photo: Supplied- Mike Butcher



In 2010 - intact and in use Photo: Streetview



As advertised in 2014. Photos: property.com

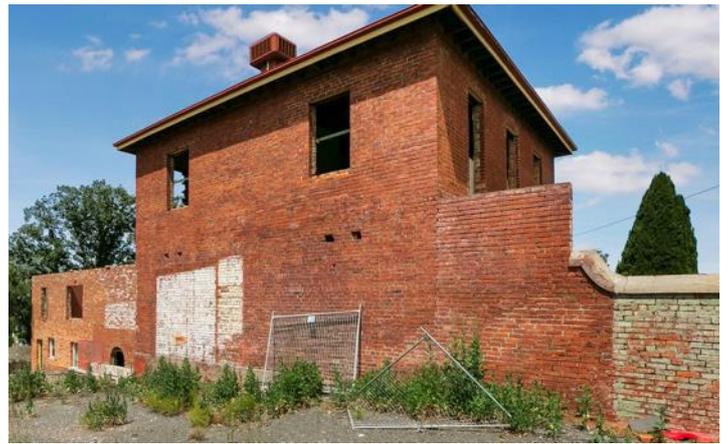




Belle Vue in 2016 showing scaffolding in place and works underway. Restoration was intended but did not eventuate. Photo: Streetview



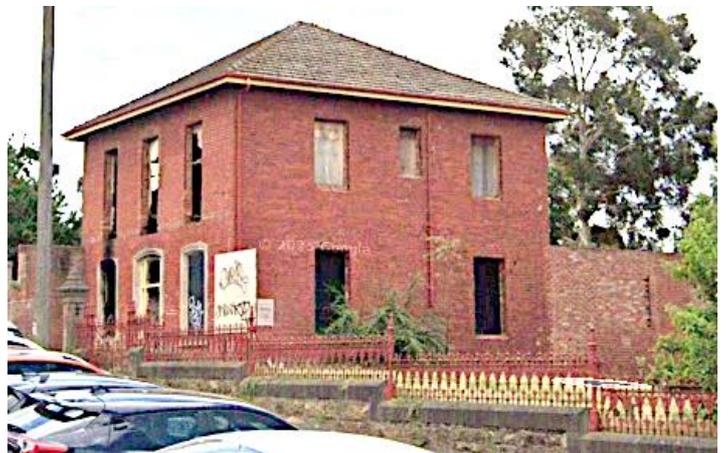
Still from an advertising video in 2018. Image: supplied



Above and right: For sale in 2019. Sold May 2019. Photos: [realestate.com](https://www.realestate.com.au).



Under new ownership in 2019. Photo: Streetview



December 2024. Photo: Streetview



Planning Property Report. Within HO 12, Short St Precinct.

City of Greater Bendigo - Residential and Commercial Heritage Design Guidelines 2025 A (not so brief) summary - Michael Lake

City of Greater Bendigo released the 2025 Heritage Design Guidelines in 2025 for public comment. I downloaded the documents, skimmed through them and completed the brief questionnaire on the COGB website. The short survey did not go into much detail or allowed for any lengthy comments, but it at least allowed for some feedback from local residents and property owners.

The previous Heritage Design Guidelines released in 2020 mainly applied to Residential properties. The new 2025 Heritage Design Guidelines come in two separate documents, one for Residential and a new one for Commercial properties.

A summary of the 2025 Heritage Guidelines is shown below:

Guidelines at a glance

Residential Heritage Design Guidelines and Commercial Heritage Design Guidelines

What are these guidelines?

- They explain how heritage buildings and places in Greater Bendigo can be cared for, adapted, or developed
- They help protect our city's heritage character while still allowing change
- They give clear, consistent advice for property owners, builders, and designers

Why do they matter?

- They support good quality renovations, extensions and new development
- They make it easier to understand what changes are likely to be supported
- They help property owners, the community and the City of Greater Bendigo work towards the same goal: keeping Greater Bendigo's heritage strong while meeting today's needs

Who do they apply to?

- Any property covered by a Heritage Overlay in the Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme
- This includes both residential and commercial properties
- **Not sure if this applies to you?**

Check your property on Bendigo Pozi or VicPlan or contact the City's Statutory Planning team

What is in the guidelines?

• Residential Guidelines:

Advice for heritage homes. This includes miners' cottages, Victorian, Federation, interwar and post-war houses

• Commercial Guidelines:

Advice for heritage shops, offices and other commercial buildings on verandas, shopfronts, signage etc

Both guidelines include diagrams, photos and examples of what is supported.

These draft guidelines don't stop change. They guide it, so heritage places can be adapted, maintained and lived in while keeping the character that makes Greater Bendigo unique.

The City of Greater Bendigo offers interpreter services in various languages.

COGB have also published a separate "GLOSSARY" document describing the various terms used in the Residential and Commercial Heritage Design Guidelines. A few examples from the GLOSSARY are shown on the following page.

Entablature



A horizontal architectural element that rests on columns, typically in classical architecture. It is composed of three parts: the architrave, which directly supports the columns; the frieze, often decorated with carvings or patterns; and the cornice, the uppermost section that extends outward.

Balustrade



A set of posts (balusters) and rail or decorative panel that encloses balconies, stairs, bridges and sometimes verandahs. Balustrades are usually regularly spaced and may be constructed of metal, wood, stone or cast concrete.

Motif



A repeated figure or design in architecture or decoration. Motifs can be shapes, patterns, or decorative details that are repeated or varied throughout a building or architectural style. Examples include the acanthus leaf, floral depictions, geometric shapes, or classical features like Greek key designs or symbols, such as the fleur de lis.

The example image shows a crimped shell motif inside a pediment. This motif was popular in the Victorian era.

Daggerboard



On a verandah refers to a decorative architectural element, typically vertical timber pickets with pointed or rounded profiles or a metal board with a scalloped or chevron edge. Usually located at verandah ends and or underneath the fascia.

Awning



A type of roof-like structure that is typically made of fabric, metal, or other materials. It is attached to the exterior wall of a building and extends outward, often providing shade or shelter from rain or sun. Awnings are commonly seen over windows, doors, patios, or sidewalks to protect from the elements.

Fenestration



The arrangement, design, and placement of windows, doors, and other openings in a building's exterior. It plays an important role in both the aesthetic and functional aspects of architecture, influencing light, ventilation, and the building's overall appearance. Fenestration includes factors such as the size, shape, style, and spacing of windows and doors.

RESIDENTIAL HERITAGE DESIGN GUIDELINES:

The Residential Heritage Design Guidelines have been developed to guide appropriate changes to and development of residential heritage buildings. These Guidelines are intended for property owners and managers, designers and planners, to assist with decision-making process when planning changes to heritage places.

The Guidelines will:

- Explain what heritage significance means and identify local architectural styles and characteristics
- Provide guidance on conserving and restoring heritage buildings
- Provide guidance on sympathetically modifying heritage buildings to suit contemporary needs
- Encourage site-responsive design that respects the past while maintaining a distinct contemporary identity
- Ensure the City continues to evolve in a way that strengthens its unique heritage character
- Support consistent and informed planning decisions to achieve good design outcomes and align with the heritage objectives of the Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme

Properties to which these guidelines apply:

These Guidelines apply to residential properties located within a Heritage Overlay in the Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme. They may also be used as a reference for other residential properties that are not yet covered by a Heritage Overlay.

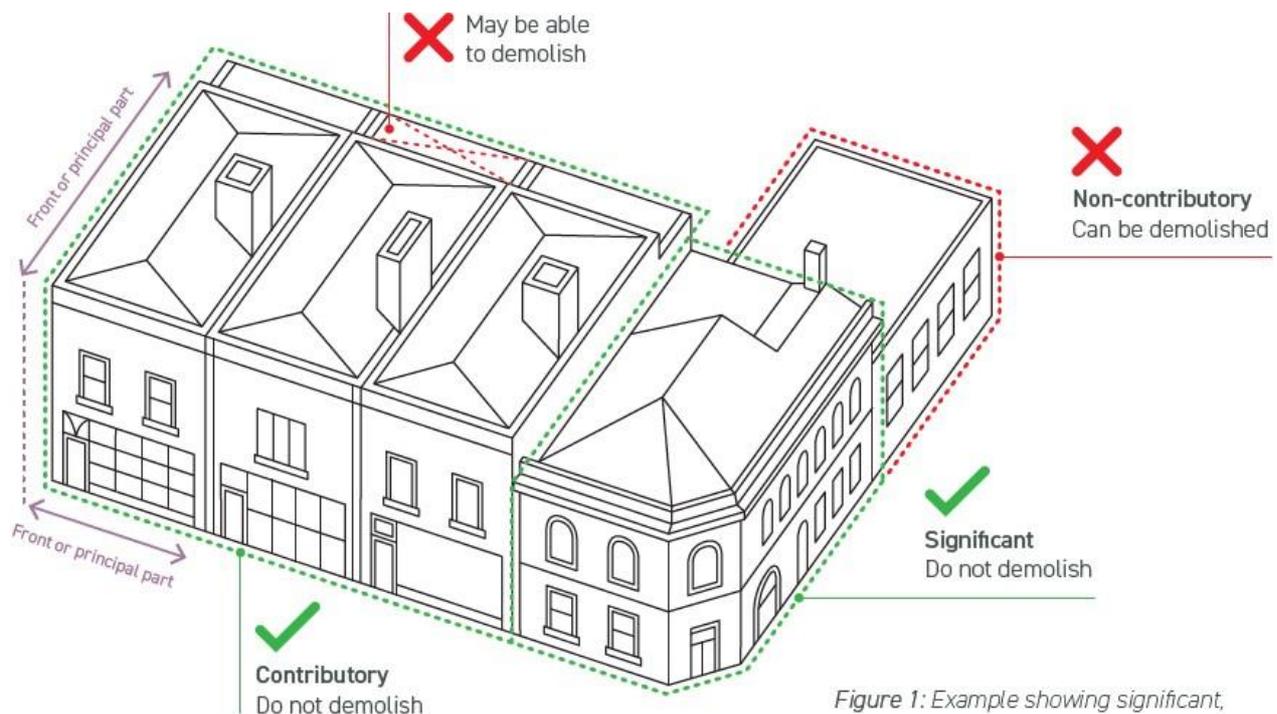
The type of Guideline that applies relates to the type of building, rather than its current zoning. This helps protect the heritage character and intended purpose of the building. This is clarified further below:

- Residential Heritage Design Guidelines will apply to a residential building, even if it's located in a commercial zone
- Commercial Heritage Design Guidelines will apply to a commercial building, even if it's located in a residential zone
- With respect to properties in mixed-use or activity zones, the applicable Guideline depends on the building's original purpose: residential, commercial, or both. This can be determined by looking at architectural features, past planning approvals, or historical records.

If you're unsure which Guideline applies to your property, contact the City's heritage advisor for advice.

(Note: If your property is listed on the Victorian Heritage Register, you may need additional approvals from Heritage Victoria.

The Design Guidelines contain diagrams illustrating Significant, Contributory and Non-contributory features to help owners decide which parts of the building can be demolished and which should be retained.



The 2025 Guidelines contain a section on “**Demolition by Neglect**”, which had not been covered in the previous Guidelines.

1.2.1 Demolition by neglect

Demolition by neglect is the process of allowing a building to deteriorate over time, either deliberately or due to prolonged lack of maintenance.

Under the Planning and Environment Amendment Act 2021, the City may apply permit conditions or planning scheme provisions that limit future development opportunities where neglect of a heritage place has occurred. Specifically, if a heritage building is unlawfully demolished or allowed to fall into disrepair, the City may issue an order to restrict development on the affected land. This measure aims to prevent property owners from financially benefiting from the neglect or illegal demolition of heritage places.

Structural integrity and the safety of a heritage place are not the only factors when considering the possibility of demolition. A building may retain significant heritage value even if its condition is poor, and there are many approaches to making heritage buildings structurally sound.

In assessing potential demolition by neglect, the City will consider the following (including, but not limited to):

- Whether the deterioration was avoidable or the result of deliberate neglect
- The building’s structural integrity and safety
- The heritage significance of the place, including its design, materials, and architectural context
- The owner’s efforts (or lack thereof) to maintain the property

The City encourages proactive maintenance and early intervention to prevent deterioration. Owners of heritage places are required to maintain a reasonable standard of care to preserve the heritage significance.

The guidelines also refer to **subdivisions** in a Heritage precinct.

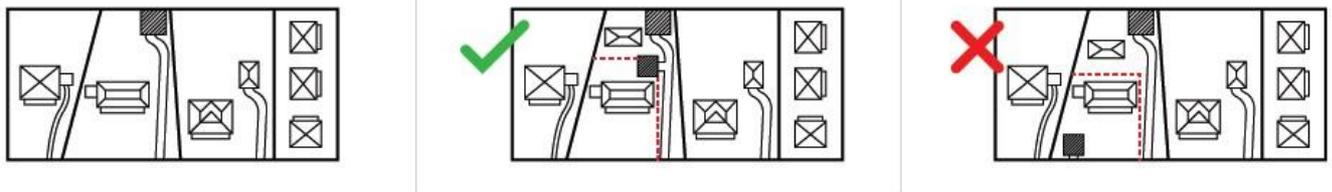


Figure 5: Example of a subdivision that maintains the setting of the heritage building.

“Avoid creating subdivision proposals which allow for inappropriate forms of development.” These include development which is over-scale or disrupting the streetscape rhythm. Views of the heritage building(s) from the street should be maintained where new buildings are proposed in front of the heritage building.

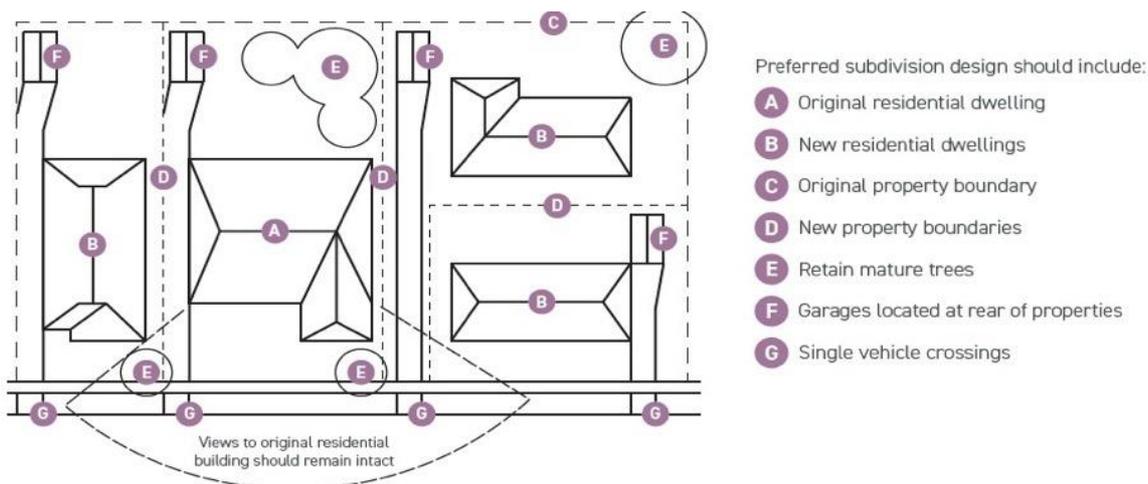


Figure 7: Example of preferred subdivision design.

There are guidelines for alterations and additions, infill development, installation of solar panels, carparking and vehicle access, trees and gardens, fences, and external finishes and colour schemes.

Section 2 – “Understanding Heritage Significance” covers 3 “gradings” of significance (significant, contributory and non-contributory) and identifying architectural styles.

Architectural styles include Early Victorian (1850-1875), Bendigo Boom-Late Victorian (1875-1900), Federation (1901-1917), Inter-War (1918-1945), and Postwar (1945-1970s). There are numerous photos of houses of each of the different periods, with heritage features noted.



- A** Triple gable roof
- B** Terracotta finial
- C** Flat top chimney with tapered stack
- D** Timber shingles cladding gable end
- E** Timber brackets
- F** Windows in group of three with lintel and timber brackets
- G** Recessed entry
- H** Bow (curved) window bay
- I** Front porch with masonry balustrade and columns
- J** Clinker brick walls

Figure 52: Early interwar – Arts and Crafts bungalow.

Overall, this is a comprehensive document which is easy to understand for any homeowner considering purchasing or renovating a heritage property.

COMMERCIAL HERITAGE DESIGN GUIDELINES:

The COMMERCIAL Heritage Design Guidelines are set out in a similar fashion to the Residential Guidelines.

PROCESS: (Copied from the Commercial Heritage Design Guidelines)

The City strongly encourages property owners and developers to discuss any proposals with the City's Statutory Planning Unit prior to making an application. The following steps are recommended:

Do your research:

- Speak with our heritage advisor and use these guidelines
- If you are a new or interested purchaser of a property within the heritage overlay, you can refer to the City's Pozi website www.bendigo.pozi.com to view heritage overlays across Greater Bendigo. Alternatively, you may contact the City's heritage advisor, or Statutory Planning Unit for advice

Develop concepts and discuss it early:

- Begin with a design concept that respects the heritage significance of the place, consider how proposed works will impact the heritage significance of the site or building
- Use these Guidelines to shape your design development
- Share design concepts or preliminary plans at a pre-application meeting. For some projects, a site visit with a heritage advisor may also be recommended
- For general advice, contact the City through the webpage: www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/building-and-business/planning/pre-application-advice-planning-permits or call customer service on 1300 002 642

Submit your application:

- Once your plans are final, prepare and submit your application with detailed plans and documentation
- Clearly demonstrate how your proposal responds to the Heritage Policy, the Heritage Overlay, and these Guidelines.

The sections on Demolition by Neglect, Subdivision and Alterations and Additions are similar in wording to the Residential Guidelines.

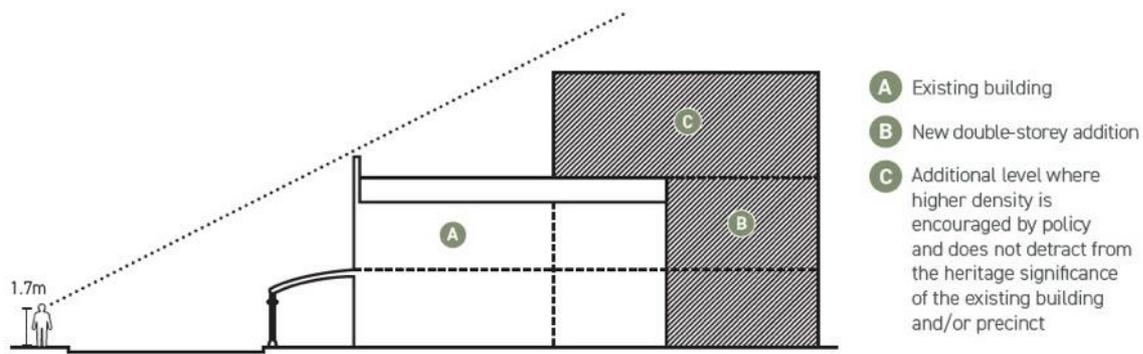


Figure 8: Example showing additions behind a double-storey shopfront with a parapet.

The section on **“Shopfronts and Verandahs”** addresses the streetscape in our heritage commercial precincts.

Design guidelines: (copied from *Commercial Guidelines*)

- Retain and conserve original and early shopfronts and verandah fabric, including but not limited to:
 - Timber or metal glazing frames, recessed ‘ingo’ entrances (either splayed or rectangular), stall risers, verandah posts, friezes, balustrades and roofs, historic signage, special glazing (i.e. stained, leaded or textured glass), ceramic tiles and pressed metal cladding
 - Retain visibility and views into shopfronts and window displays from the public domain
 - Avoid alterations that would enclose verandahs, balconies or porches
 - Seek opportunities to reinstate known early or original features, such as shopfronts or verandahs, based on physical or documentary evidence of the original or early appearance
- New shopfronts, where appropriate, should have regard to the heritage character of the place and/or precinct, including:
 - Whether entrances in the area are recessed or flush with the façade plane
 - Whether entrances are located centrally or to the side of the façade
- New verandahs/awnings where appropriate, should have regard to the local character of the precinct, including:
 - The original verandah/awning design (if known)
 - Verandah/awning height of adjacent buildings
 - Verandah roof pitch and profile of adjacent buildings
 - Local topography and street grade
 - Appropriate form and material for verandah posts
- Avoid reproducing historic detailing (shopfront framing, verandah friezes, balustrades and posts) unless there is sufficient evidence to enable authentic reconstruction. A simplified interpretation of these elements using like materials is preferred

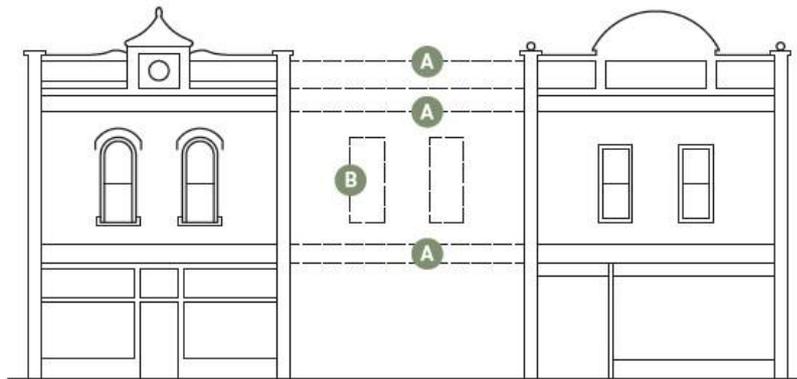


Figure 10: Restoration of former Athanaeum Club verandah. The historic black-and-white photo reveals the original design and was used to inform the reconstruction of the verandah.

The section on **“Infill Development”** also addresses the streetscape in heritage commercial precincts.

Design guidelines

- Ensure new development integrates harmoniously within the local context. New design should complement the dominant heritage characteristics in the area, with reference to:
 - Building height and street frontage height
 - Massing and scale
 - Front and side setbacks
 - Window openings, proportions and placement
 - Verandahs, awnings and balconies
 - Shopfronts
 - Materials and finishes



- A** Incorporate and respect major compositional proportions of adjacent historic buildings
- B** Interpret or match fenestration patterns

Figure 11: Historic commercial infill design showing key levels.

There are sections on “Restoration and Reconstruction” and integration of “modern” services into heritage buildings.

Other sections include Parking and Vehicle Access, Disability Access, Trees and Garden settings, Signage, Finishes and Colour Schemes.

A link to these documents [can be found here](#).

Community Feedback is currently under review, and the outcome will be shared with the community in “mid 2026” according to “Let’s Talk Bendigo” website.

Thanks, Michael, for your excellent summary

Unlock your home's history -
article from the ABC website
[Click here](#)

How to unlock your home's history with patience, a little detective work and the internet

By Gavin McGrath History

3h ago



Getting ready for the 2026 Heritage Festival - from Branch President Philip Howe

We are now gearing up for the annual National Trust Heritage Festival. The Branch will have 2 major events: tours of the old Bendigo Law Courts and the former Bendigo Gas Works. These tours will be promoted via the National Trust website and future H & H newsletters so look out for these as they sell out quickly.

Volunteers needed

What we do need as usual are volunteers so now is the time to register which needs to be done on the [National Trust Victoria website Volunteering page](#) and you will also need an up-to-date Working With Children Check, these are mandatory requirements for any organisation operating public events (see links below). We need people to help with tours of our events as well as for checking in attendees, managing book sales, etc. We only need an hour or two from volunteers to make our events a success. More details will be provided in the next edition, but we need you to think about registering now.

[Apply for a Working With Children Check](#)

[Renew your Working With Children Check](#)

Who designed the Forest Street Wesleyan Church? - Mike Butcher



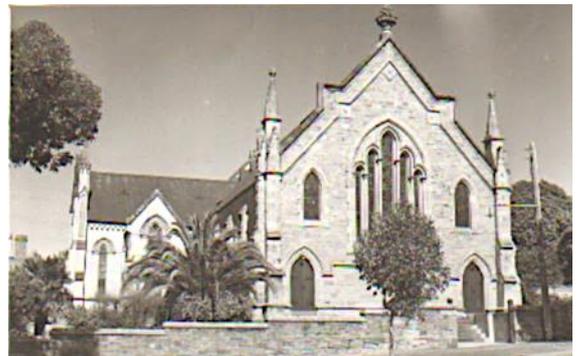
Forest Street Uniting Church (previously Methodist) showing the main body of the church by J A Doane and the transept behind by William Vahland. Photo: TripAdvisor: Chrystalline4U

Historians need to be careful about repeating information without checking it. This can be easy with academic works that support their opinions with footnotes. Typically, local histories and guides are not footnoted and when mistakes are made, it can be difficult to correct them. A particularly stubborn example is the architect of the Wesleyan Church in Forest Street, Bendigo. I admit I got it wrong in *Bendigo Historic Buildings* (1982) but corrected it in the 1987 edition.

The *Wesleyan Chronicle* gave the architect as J A Doane from Ballarat (1863, p 132). If that is not definitive enough, we have the word of William Vahland himself, when he commented in 1912 'The Forest Street Methodist Church was designed by J. A. Doane, a Ballarat architect, but the transept was added by me.' (*Bendigo Independent*, 26 July 1912). There is no disputing Vahland's 1877 addition to the church, and Vahland and Getzschmann were probably involved with the 1862 church as the local building supervisors.

The Revd. Lindsay D Faulkner's brief but well-researched *Has a Pioneer Church a Future? A History of the Forest Street Uniting Church Buildings* unfortunately identified Vahland and Getzschmann as the architects and the most recent history *One Hundred and Fifty Years of Worship, Witness and Service, 1853-2003*, continued the mistake.

Joseph Attwood Doane (1822-1901) was a Canadian, born in Nova Scotia, whose father was a carpenter. He emigrated to Ballarat in the early 1850s with several family members. A description of his successful practice as an architect was included in a 2012 Heritage Assessment of the former St James Presbyterian Church, Miners Rest. The authors were Dr David Rowe and Wendy Jacobs. Doane designed many churches. Ballarat architects are known to have designed buildings in Bendigo, but no Ballarat buildings are known to have been designed or influenced by any Bendigo architects.



The church in 1953. Photograph is on [Victorian Collections](#)

Regional voices needed

The Bendigo Branch of the National Trust covers a large part of Central Victoria and would love to provide a regional voice for members and interested parties throughout the area.



From time to time it has published and highlighted heritage issues in its newsletter from other towns in the region but lacks consistent information from any representatives in those towns.

In the next issue of *History and Heritage*, the Branch will address a strategy to more fully engage with the wider region that includes the towns shown on the front page of this newsletter.

In the meantime, the Branch would love to hear from any people or groups who could provide your local issues so the Branch can publish them or have them discussed at one of the monthly Branch meetings. Please get in touch.

History & Heritage Branch newsletter - receive, contribute, read past issues

Everyone has a story that, when combined with others, provides a record of the social history of our region and draws attention to the significance of local built heritage. The Branch welcomes your ideas, contributions and photographs for the newsletter which is published monthly. The contribution deadline for *History & Heritage* is the first day of each month. Send to the [Bendigo Branch here](#) For previous issues of *History & Heritage* [click here](#)

To help increase circulation send it to your friends and family or sign up your organisation to receive it.

Next Branch meeting, Tuesday February 24th at Bendigo Library 5.30pm

Email: National Trust of Australia (Vic) Bendigo & District Branch [click here](#)

You can see the current Victorian advocacy issues at the Trust Advocate blog: [Click here](#)

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We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Victoria and recognize the continuing connection to lands, waters and communities. We pay respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and to Elders past, present and future.

