Locality:	YARRAM
Place address:	290-292 COMMERCIAL ROAD
Citation date	2016
Place type (when built):	Bank
Recommended heritage	Local government level
protection:	Local Planning Scheme: Yes
	Vic Heritage Register: No
	Heritage Inventory (Archaeological): No

Place name:

Union Bank of Australia (former)



Architectural Style: Designer / Architect: Construction Date: Federation Arts & Crafts Walter Butler 1913-14

Statement of Significance

This statement of significance is based on the history, description and comparative analysis in this citation. The Criteria A-H are the Heritage Council Criteria for assessing cultural heritage significance (HERCON). Level of Significance, Local, State, National, is in accordance with the level of Government legislation.

What is significant?

The former Union Bank of Australia building at 290-292 Commercial Road, Yarram, is significant. The original form, materials, detailing and colours, as constructed in 1913-14 are significant.

Outbuildings, alterations and additions to the building are not significant, including the modern verandah on the rear elevation and modern shed to the rear of the bank.

How is it significant?

The former Union Bank of Australia is locally significant for its historical, social and aesthetic values to the Shire of Wellington and particularly the town of Yarram.

Why is it significant?

The former Union Bank of Australia **is historically significant at a local level** as it illustrates the importance of Yarram as a town centre and the cattle market for the whole of South Gippsland, serving the dairying and grazing district. Yarram was the seat of government for the Alberton Shire, and began to commercially develop from the 1880s after the release of private land for sale. The building served as a bank from 1914 until 1953, when it was sold into private ownership. (Criterion A)

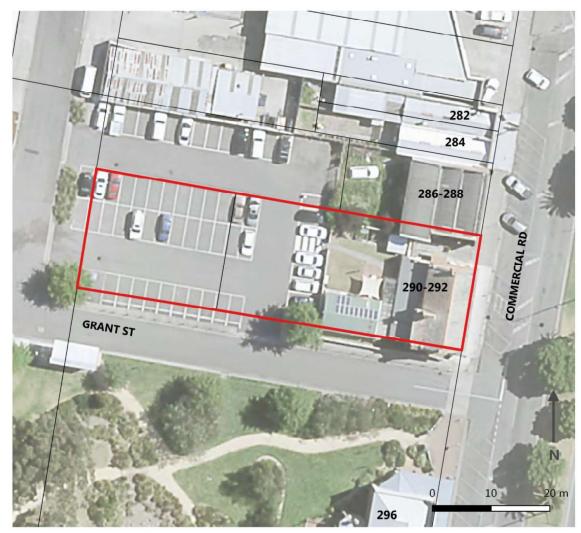
The former Union Bank of Australia **is socially significant at a local level** as an early example of community action which saved the bank from being demolished by the Alberton Shire Council in 1994. Community members gained support from the National Trust and the Historic Buildings Council, formed the Union Bank Committee and presented a formal proposal to retain the building to the Wellington Shire Council, who decided to retain the building in 1995. It was reopened after restoration, as a community facility in 2001. (Criterion G)

The former Union Bank of Australia **is aesthetically significant at a local level** as a fine and intact example of a substantial Federation Arts and Crafts building designed by prominent architect Walter Butler in 1913-14, who was an advocate of the English Arts and Crafts movement. It is the only commercial building in Yarram designed in the Arts and Crafts style. The style is evident in the gable roof clad with terracotta tiles, face-red brickwork of the walls, contrasting with roughcast, rendered architectural decorative details, the pair of roughcast rendered parapeted gables, each with a wide chimney at the apex, the wide eaves of the roof with exposed rafters with timber brackets to the cornice, bands of roughcast render that continues across the round projecting balcony of the first floor, central semi-circular entrance and (c1950s?) wrought iron and fence that encloses the entrance. Either side of the central arch are groupings of three timber sash windows (with geometric leadlight to the top sash), with a geometric pattern in render above each window. The words 'The Union Bank of Australia Limited' were reconstructed on the curved balustrade in the 1990s, to the original design. The bank is significant for its ornamental contribution to the streetscape, particularly the picturesque brick gable ends viewed from both directions along the street. (Criteria D, E & H)

Statutory Recommendations

This place is recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Wellington Shire Planning Scheme to the boundaries as shown on the map.

External Paint Controls	Yes
Internal Alteration Controls	No
Tree Controls	No
Outbuildings or fences which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-3	No
Prohibited Uses May Be Permitted	No
Incorporated Plan	No
Aboriginal Heritage Place	Not assessed



Map of recommended boundary for Heritage Overlay

KEY

Recommended for Heritage Overlay

Union Bank of Australia (former) 290-292 Commercial Rd, Yarram

Project:Wellington Shire Stage 2 Heritage StudyClient:Wellington Shire CouncilAuthor:Heritage Intelligence Pty LtdDate:12/2/16

History

Locality history

The Tarra Creek pastoral run was taken up in the 1840s, in the area that now encompasses the Yarram township. In the early 1850s, John Carpenter built a flour mill and sawmill near the Tarra River, upon which a bridge was soon built. A small township began to develop on private land on the west side of the River, which was first named Barkly, after Victorian Governor Sir Henry Barkly. However, the small township soon became known as Yarram Yarram; the parish name. Yarram is an Aboriginal word though to mean 'plenty of water' or 'billabong'. The town would be called Yarram Yarram until 1924 (Fletcher & Kennett 2005:79; YDHS website)

Yarram was part of the first Shire established in Gippsland – Alberton Shire established 1864 – where a District Road Board was formed in 1855 (Context 2005:38). In 1857, the first store was opened in the town of Yarram Yarram by Charles Devonshire. Soon other stores were established as the town grew, including a shanty on the site of the Yarram Hotel. The development was a result of the marketplace located in Yarram, which served local farmers who preferred the location over the more distant Port Albert (YDHS website). The first mechanics' institute was built in 1860 and a school opened in 1861. All communication during this period was via Port Albert to the south (Fletcher & Kennett 2005:80).

Yarram's growth was constrained by the release of private land for sale. Development within the town gained momentum from the 1880s, with town allotments purchased from private landholders (Fletcher & Kennett 2005:80). One such developer was James Nicol, who owned the land east of Commercial Road, between (just north of) Gipps Street and James Street. Nicol subdivided the land and sold town allotments from 1889. By the 1890s, Yarram had established itself as a commercial centre, servicing an extensive dairying and grazing district. The Yarram Butter Factory (1891) was a major component of the industry in this area of the Shire (Context 2005:12, 38). The township of Yarram Yarram was gazetted in 1893 and in 1897 the Alberton Shire offices were relocated to Yarram, establishing the southern town as a seat of Government (Context 2005:38; YDHS website).

From the early 1900s, large areas of land were selected in the Strzelecki Ranges to the north and west of Yarram for dairying, supplying cream to the butter factory. By 1903, Yarram Yarram also had a Shire hall, four churches, the Commercial and Yarram hotels, Masonic and Rechabite Lodges and a state school. At the centre of the pastoral district, Yarram remained the cattle market for southern Gippsland (*Australian handbook* 1903). The Yarram courthouse opened in 1908, the hospital was officially opened in 1914 and a higher elementary school was established in 1918. In 1921, the Great Southern railway Line from Melbourne reached Yarram (Context 2005:30, 41, 44). The Forests Commission established an office in Yarram in 1945 to manage the reforested lands in the region. From the 1950s, the Housing Commission and several housing co-operatives built many new homes in Yarram. However, the town was affected by the decline of rural industries in the 1970s. The milk factory and railway line closed in 1987 (Fletcher & Kennett 2005:80).

In 1994, Wellington Shire was created by the amalgamation of the former Shires of Alberton, Avon and Maffra, the former City of Sale, most of the former Shire of Rosedale, as well as an area near Dargo which was formerly part of Bairnsdale Shire (Context 2005:39). The town continues to serve as an important regional centre. It is also the location of the regional headquarters for the Department of Natural Resources and Environment (Fletcher & Kennett 2005:80).

Thematic context

This place is associated with the following themes from the Wellington Shire Thematic History (2005):

- 7. Building Settlements and Towns
- 7.2 Service Centres

Banks were an indication of the importance of a town as a main commercial centre. When banks were first established in regional Victorian locations, they often operated out of the rooms of existing commercial premises (for example hotels), before the construction of a purpose-built bank which was a direct result of commercial growth in the location. Early purpose-built banks often had an attached manager's residence to the rear. During periods of economic growth, the banks were often upgraded with the construction of new premises. These new buildings were usually imposing structures in the architectural style of the era, often architect designed. With the amalgamation and disseverment of banks due to changes in Acts, banks often closed and the buildings were sold into private ownership. A number of former bank buildings remain today in the Shire, and now serve as either commercial premises or private residences. Examples of these are the former Commercial Bank of Australia in Maffra, the former Bank of Australasia in Rosedale, the former State Savings Bank in Stratford and the former Union Bank of Australia in Yarram.

Place history

The Dukes, farmers of Yarram, owned lots on the west side of Commercial Road from at least 1891 (including part of portion 46, Parish of Yarram Yarram), which they leased out (LV:V2390/F853). In March 1911, Margaret A. Thompson (formerly Dukes, widowed and remarried) sold the subdivided lot to The Union Bank of Australia Limited (LV:V2799/F636).

The Union Bank of Australia had been established in Yarram from 1906, first conducting business from rooms at the Federal Coffee Palace (plaque on site; Stone, n.d.). In October 1913, tenders were called for the erection of a 'two-storey brick banking premises, residence, &c., for the Union Bank of Australia Ltd., at Yarram Yarram.' Plans could be viewed either at the existing Union Bank in Yarram Yarram or the office of architects Butler and Bradshaw, Williams Street, Melbourne (*Argus*, 4 Oct 1913:14). The purpose-built bank was constructed in 1913-1914, and was designed by architect Walter Butler (NT). It is thought that Butler worked in partnership with a Mr. G. Insaif (YDHS).

In July 1914, a local newspaper reported that the staff of the Union Bank had moved into the new quarters. The building was described as 'an ornament to the town' (*Gippsland Standard*, 8 Jul 1914:2). The new bank premises were officially opened in August 1914 (plaque on site). A photo dating to soon after the bank was built in 1914 (YDHS) showed the facade of the building, with its tiled gabled roof and parapeted gables with chimneys at each end (Figure H1). The sash windows to the facade appeared as they do in 2015. The central semi-circular arch at the recessed entrance was located below the balcony, with the words 'The Union Bank of Australia Limited' on the solid balustrade (removed, and reinstalled in the 1990s).

The rear portion of the property, adjacent to Grant Street, was subdivided and on-sold in 1949 (LV:V488/F576). In 1953, the Union Bank sold the property to private owners Percy and Elizabeth Copeland, Yarram dentists, who may have added the wrought iron fence and gates. In 1966, the building was sold to Ian Cameron, Yarram dental surgeon, and in 1974, Donald McIvor, solicitor, and his wife Marain became the owners. The property was transferred to the Alberton Shire Council in 1985 (LV:V7428/F540).

In the 1990s, the building served as a community Neighbourhood House and also housed a number of other community groups and services (YDHS). A photo dating to the 1990s (NT) showed the facade and south elevation of the bank (Figure H2). The rendered decorations were painted brown (except for the rendered band under the eaves) and a sign 'Neighbourhood House' was installed across the projecting balcony.

In 1994, community action saved the bank from being demolished by the Alberton Shire Council, who considered it too costly to repair the building to satisfy public amenity requirements, in comparison to the construction a new building. However, the building was occupied and the community considered it structurally sound. Community member Peter Stone gained support from the National Trust and the Historic Buildings Council and demolition order was delayed. Heritage Victoria recommended that the place was of local significance and stated that the proposed demolition be

deferred until a conservation analysis had determined its significance. The community members formed the Union Bank Committee and a formal proposal to retain the building was presented to the Chairman of Commissioners of the newly formed Wellington Shire Council (which amalgamated the former Alberton Shire Council). As a result, in December 1995, demolition was deferred for 6 months, at which date a detailed proposal was presented. The Commissioners responded favourably and following a public meeting in January 1995, a feasibility study was compiled by the Union Bank Committee and the National Trust stated that the place had 'regional level classification' (YDHS).

The building was retained and the Committee raised funds for renovations and repairs to the roof and ceiling, particularly where the building had been damaged. In December 1995, the Council granted management of the building to the local Union Bank Committee. Interior renovations were carried out during this period, including painting and laying of new floor covering. State Government grants were subsequently received for works and exterior renovations were completed in 2001. These included painting of the window joinery, painting of the rendered decoration to the facade and the *reconstruction* of the original name to the balcony balustrade. In 2001, the building was officially reopened by the Shire Mayor Cr. Gordon Cameron. From 2003, the Neighbourhood House managed and leased the building from the Shire of Wellington (YDHS).

A ramp has recently been constructed on the north elevation, providing wheelchair access to the side entrance. A verandah is attached to the rear (west elevation), which appears to be a modern construction. A large modern shed has been built to the rear of the building.

In 2015, the building serves as the Yarram Community Learning Centre. Internally the building retains the bank vault and safe, and benches (NT).

Walter Butler, architect

Walter Richmond Butler (1864-1949) migrated to Australia from England in 1888, where he worked with some of the most important figures of the English Arts and Crafts movement, including architects William Lethaby, Ernest Gimson and the Barnsley Brothers. Butler retained the Arts and Crafts philosophy throughout his career in Australia. Butler's would design a variety of buildings, including residences, shops, warehouses, hospitals, banks, office buildings and ecclesiastical buildings. Two of Butler's major clients were the Diocese of Melbourne (as the Anglican Diocese Architect) and the Union Bank (Dernelley 2012:128; Pearce 1991:23).

Between 1889 and 1893, Butler established a partnership in Melbourne with Beverley Ussher. Butler later formed a partnership with George H. Inskip (1867-1933) between 1896 and 1905, establishing Inskip & Butler. Butler had many residential commissions during this period, many of which favoured the design elements typical of the period, with Arts and Crafts references (Dernelley 2012:128). His work for the Anglican Church was extensive during this period.

Between 1907 and 1916, Butler formed Butler & Bradshaw with Earnest R. Bradshaw. In 1908 Butler notably designed the David Syme Tomb at Boroondara cemetery in Kew (Dernelley 2012:128). Butler's designs for the Union Bank were intended to be easily identified, with similar designs often repeated throughout Australia (Dernelley 2012:128). Some of his Union Banks were distinctive for their design comprising gables at each end with a semi-circular arched entrance central to the facade (Trethowan 1976), which is exemplified by the Union Bank in Yarram (1914-14). Butler designed the Union (later ANZ) banks in Loch (1902), Casterton (1903), Rochester (1907), Camperdown (1913), Colac (1914) and Cohuna (1922) (Trethowan 1976).

A later partnership formed was with his nephew Austin R. Butler as W. & R. Butler between 1919 and 1938. Butler's greatest impact on Australian architecture was through the papers he delivered, such as 'The prospect of the development of the arts among the handicrafts' (1893) and 'Garden design in relation to architecture' (1903), which engendered Butler's first-hand knowledge of English Arts and Crafts philosophy (Dernelley 2012:128).



Figure H1. The bank in 1914, after completion of the building (YDHS website).



Figure H2. The bank in the 1990s (National Trust).

Sources

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<http://www.victorianplaces.com.au/maffra>, accessed Feb 2016.

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Fletcher, Meredith & Linda Kennett (2005), Wellington Landscapes, *History and Heritage in a Gippsland Shire*, Maffra.

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<a>http://yarrampa.customer.netspace.net.au/union.html>, accessed 25 Jan 2016.

The Argus.

Trethowan, Bruce (1976), A Study of Banks in Victoria, 1851-1939, prepared for the Historic Buildings Preservation Council.

Victorian Places, 'Yarram', <http://www.victorianplaces.com.au/>, accessed 16 February 2016. Yarram & District Historical Society (YDHS) collection: historical information and photos generously provided by Cate Renfrey, Nov 2015. Including the booklet 'Heritage Trail along Commercial Road, Yarram'.

Description

This section describes the place in 2016. Refer to the Place history for additional important details describing historical changes in the physical fabric.

The bank was built in 1913-1914, designed by architect Walter Butler of the Melbourne firm Butler and Bradshaw, in the Arts and Crafts style. The substantial two-storey red brick building is located on the west side of Commercial road, the main street of Yarram. The building is located on the eastern title boundary, flush with the footpath.

Figure D1. The bank has a prominent gable roof clad with terracotta tiles, a pair of roughcast rendered parapeted gables, each with a wide chimney at the apex (overpainted) and short hips to support the continuation of the exposed eaves. The entrance is accentuated at ground level with a large central semi-circular red brick arch, which is further emphasized by the elaborate projecting and rendered (overpainted) bow shaped balustrade above, which was typical of Walter Butler's designs for Union Banks during this period. Butler replicated this design throughout Victoria, with slight alterations to each bank (Trethowan 1976). As typical of the Arts and Crafts style, the wide eaves of the roof have exposed rafters with timber brackets to the cornice. The face-brick building has wide bands of rough-cast render (overpainted) at the eaves and at the ground floor level of the first floor. The central band of render continues across the round projecting balcony which is supported by a bracket which forms the keystone of the large semi-circular arch at the recessed entrance at ground level. The words 'The Union Bank of Australia Limited' were reconstructed on the solid balustrade in the 1990s, replicating what was originally there. The first floor has a pair of double-hung sash windows with geometric leadlight to the top sash, as typical of the style. The first floor recessed behind the balcony, with openings of a similar style.

Figure D2. The recessed entrance is reached by two bluestone steps and has a tiled floor (possibly original) with a large window (with three leadlight panes to the top portion) and entrance doors and an airlock to the left. A (c1950s ?) wrought iron gate and fence encloses the entrance. Either side of the central arch are groupings of three timber sash windows (with geometric leadlight to the top sash), with a geometric pattern in render above each window.

Figures D3 & D4. The bands of rough-cast render continue on the side elevations, which have windows in the same style as the facade. An entrance on the north elevation (presumably providing

access to the residence) has a small skillion-roof porch, clad with tiles. This entrance has a highwaisted timber door with glazing at the top and leadlight highlights and sidelights. To the rear of the building is the single-storey residence section of the building with a skillion roof which is partly hidden on the side elevations by the band of render which continues and becomes a parapet. This section is constructed of brick with windows in the same style (ground floor level with leadlight).

The rendered decorations were painted (except for the gabled ends which have an old layer of paint in fair condition) in the 1990s during a program of internal and external renovations, which also comprised repairs to the roof, painting of the windows and the reinstallation of the name to the balcony. Modern signage has been attached to the facade. A concrete ramp is located on the north elevation, providing wheelchair access to the side entrance, and a modern verandah is attached to the rear (west elevation). A large modern shed has been built to the rear of the building. These elements are not significant. Overall, the 1913-1914 building has a high level of integrity and is in very good condition.



Figure D1. The facade of the bank with the predominantly gabled roof clad with terracotta tiles, exposed eaves, a pair of parapeted gable ends which have small hipped extensions for the continuation of the eaves and central semi-circular red brick arched entrance and wide bank of (over painted) render.



Figure D2. A detail of the entrance with its large semi-circular red brick arch and (c1950s) wrought-iron gates, in front of the large window with geometric leadlight, which is also evident in the other timber-framed windows.



Figure D3. The north elevation with the domestic entrance porch and recently added concrete ramp for access.



Figure D4. The facade and south elevation, showing the single-storey section to the rear and modern skillion verandah.

Sources

All photos taken in 2015 by Heritage Intelligence Pty Ltd as part of Wellington Shire Stage 2 Heritage Study.

Dernelley, Katrina, 'Walter Butler' in Goad, Philip & Julie Willis (2012), *The encyclopedia of Australian architecture*, Port Melbourne [Vic.].

Trethowan, Bruce (1976), A Study of Banks in Victoria, 1851-1939, prepared for the Historic Buildings Preservation Council.

Comparative analysis

There are no other banks of this design in Wellington Shire, although there are similar ones in other country towns in Victoria, nor is there another commercial building in Yarram of this architectural style.

Butler's designs for the Union Bank were intended to be easily identified, with similar designs often repeated throughout Australia (Dernelley 2012:128). Some of his Union Banks were distinctive for their design comprising gables at each end with a semi-circular arched entrance central to the facade (Trethowan 1976), which is exemplified by the Union Bank in Yarram (1914-14). Butler designed the Union (later ANZ) banks in Loch (1902), Casterton (1903), Rochester (1907), Camperdown (1913), Colac (1914) and Cohuna (1922) (Trethowan 1976).

Management Guidelines

Whilst landowners are not obliged to undertake restoration works, these guidelines provide recommendations to facilitate the retention and enhancement of the culturally significant place, its fabric and its setting, when restoration works or alterations to the building are proposed. They also identify issues particular to the place and provide further detailed advice where relevant. The

guidelines are not intended to be prescriptive and a pragmatic approach will be taken when considering development proposals. Alternative approaches to those specified in the guidelines will be considered where it can be demonstrated that a desirable development outcome can be achieved that does not impact on a place's heritage integrity.

1. Additions and new buildings

- 1.1. Retain clear views of side elevations of the building, as well as the front elevation.
- 1.2. New structures should be restricted to the rear of the property and largely concealed behind the heritage fabric when viewed from Commercial Road.
- 1.3. Additions and new buildings should be a maximum of two-storeys tall

2. Restoration

2.1. Chemically remove the paint from the render. The original finish was unpainted render. Removal of the paint removes the cost of ongoing painting.

3. Care and Maintenance

- 3.1. Obtain a copy of "Salt Attack and Rising Damp" by David Young (2008), which is a free booklet available for download from Heritage Victoria website. It is in plain English, well illustrated and has very important instructions and should be used by tradesmen and Council maintenance staff. Further assistance is available from the Shire's heritage advisor.
- 3.2. If there is damp in the walls, or the timber floor is failing, it is imperative that the drainage is fixed first. This may involve the lowering of the ground outside so that it is lower than the ground inside under the floor, installation of agricultural drains, running the downpipes into drainage inspection pits instead of straight into the ground, or in this case, encased in concrete. The reason for the pits is that a blocked drain will not be noticed until so much water has seeped in and around the base of the building and damage commenced (which may take weeks or months to be visible), whereas, the pit will immediately fill with water and the problem can be fixed before the floor rots or the mortar falls out, the bricks start to crumble, and the building smells musty.
 - 3.2.1. First floor balcony and the entry porch ceiling below it: water has damaged the ceiling of the entry porch and this is most likely due to a break down of the water proofing of the balcony above. It is important to repair the drainage above before the supporting structure of the ceiling in the ground floor entry rots, and falls in.
- 3.3. Ensure good subfloor ventilation is maintained at all times to reduce the habitat for termites and rot of the subfloor structure. Subfloor ventilation is critical with solid masonry buildings. Check that sub floor vents are not blocked and introduce additional ones if necessary. Ensure the exterior ground level is 250mm or more, lower than the ground level inside the building.

3.3.1. E.g. along the wall where the concrete ramp has been installed.

- 3.4. Never install a concrete floor inside a solid masonry building as it will, after a year or so, cause long term chronic damp problems in the walls. Do not install a new damp proof course (DPC) until the drainage has been fixed, even a DPC may not work unless the ground has been lowered appropriately.
- 3.5. Use appropriate cleaning materials, agents and methods, as recommended by the Shire's heritage advisor. The biggest risk to solid masonry buildings is permanent damage by the use of cleaning materials, agents and methods. Sand and water blasting removes the skilled decorative works of craftsmen as well as the fired surface on bricks and the lime mortar from between the bricks. It is irreversible and reduces the life of the building due to the severe damp that the damage encourages.
- 3.6. Never use cement mortar, always match the original lime mortar. Cement is stronger than the bricks and therefore the bricks will eventually crumble, leaving the cement mortar intact. Lime mortar lasts hundreds of years. When it starts to powder it is the canary in the mine,

alerting you to a damp problem – fix the source of the damp problem and then repoint with lime mortar. Traditional mortar mixes were commonly 1:3, lime:sand.

- 3.6.1. Remove the dark grey patches to the mortar joints. This is cement mortar which will damage the bricks and longevity of the walls. Repoint those joints with lime mortar. The mortar is not the problem it is the messenger.
- 3.7. Repair the roughcast render on the gable ends, and paint it the same colour as the other roughcast render as shown in Fig H1.
- 3.8. Retain the rectangular herringbone patterned red encaustic tiles in entry foyer and the bluestone steps. Figure D2.

4. Signage

4.1. Ensure all signage is designed to fit around the significant architectural design features, not over them. Eg the current signs fixed to both sides of the brick arch, extend over the voussoir (wedge shaped) bricks of this magnificent arch, as though it is insignificant. This is not appropriate.

5. Services

5.1. Ensure new services and conduits, down pipes etc, are not conspicuous. To do this, locate them at the rear of the building whenever possible, and when that is not practical, paint them the same colour as the building or fabric behind them. Therefore if a conduit goes up a red brick wall, it should be painted red, and when it passes over the cream coloured roughcast render, it should be cream. The air conditioner should be incased in a red-brick coloured cage to reduce the cluttered visual impact it has now.

NOTE: The blue shaded area is the preferred location for additions and new development



Sources

Young, David (2008), "Salt Attack and Rising Damp, a guide to salt damp in historic and older buildings" Technical Guide, prepared for Heritage Victoria.