

KARDINIA HOUSE



Kardinia House primary facade. 2023.



KARDINIA HOUSE SOHE 2008



Kardinia House with bay windows and cast-iron verandahs. 2023.



KARDINIA HOUSE SOHE 2008



Eastern elevation of Kardinia House. 2023.



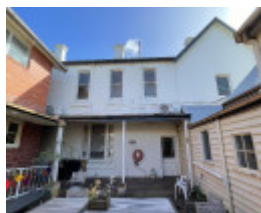
KARDINIA HOUSE SOHE 2008



Views of the house and landscape across the river. 2023.



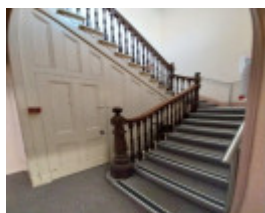
1 kardinia house riverview terrace belmont front view green balcony



back of Kardinia house from courtyard with both extensions visible. 2023.



kardinia house riverview terrace belmont side view of house



Timber joinery to internal staircase. 2023.



kardinia house riverview terrace belmont additions



Views to the river from the house. 2023.



Aerial extent.



Diagram 337

Location

1 RIVERVIEW TERRACE BELMONT, GREATER GEELONG CITY

Municipality

GREATER GEELONG CITY

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0337

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO13

VHR Registration

October 9, 1974

Amendment to Registration

June 20, 2024

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - September 2, 2025

Kardinia House is located on Wadawurrung Country.

What is significant?

Kardinia House, a two-storey brick and stone house, constructed in various stages. The name “Kardinia” is from the Wadawurrung language meaning ‘morning’ or ‘sunrise’. The house is a two-storey masonry dwelling with a central portion flanked by two wings, with bay windows and a verandah. The house occupies an elevated and commanding position with an outlook towards the Barwon River. Several mature exotic trees survive from the nineteenth-century garden.

How is it significant?

The Kardinia House is of historical significance to the State of Victoria. It satisfies the following criterion for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register:

Criterion A

Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria’s cultural history.

Criterion H

Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria’s history.

Why is it significant?

Kardinia House is historically significant as one of the oldest residences in the Geelong region. The original stone house (c. 1850) is still present, though it was extended and renovated in the 1860s and again in the 1880s. The house has a position of prominence within the landscape with views from the house to the Barwon River as well

as views of the house from across the river. Kardinia House has a long and varied history and is associated with several influential Victorians. Subsequent owners included other local and colonial politicians, cementing Kardinia House's place at the centre of high society in the region.

(Criterion A)

Kardinia House is historically significant for its association with one of the founders of Geelong, Dr. Alexander Thomson. Thomson's career is interwoven with the history of Geelong and the infant Port Phillip colony. Thomson was an influential Victorian, campaigning for Victoria's separation from New South Wales, being elected twice to the new colony's Parliament, serving as Geelong's first mayor, and becoming director of the Geelong-Melbourne Railway Company. Thomson was also heavily involved in requests for the 'protection' of the newly arrived squatters, which came at the expense of the Wadawurrung People. Ultimately, his usurping of Wadawurrung Country, and the grazing of cattle and sheep, helped end the traditional way of life for Wadawurrung People in Greater Geelong. Kardinia House, with its commanding and elevated position overlooking the Barwon River and surviving mature plantings, is demonstrative of Thomson's status and his close relationship with the Geelong region, being one of the earliest residences to be established in this region.

(Criterion H)

Permit Exemptions

General Exemptions:

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

Places of worship: In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must **notify** the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

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

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

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).

Specific Exemptions:

Specific Exemptions

The works and activities below are not considered to cause harm to the cultural heritage significance of the Kardinia House subject to the following guidelines and conditions:

Guidelines

1. Where there is an inconsistency between permit exemptions specific to the registered place or object ('specific exemptions') established in accordance with either section 49(3) or section 92(3) of the Act and general exemptions established in accordance with section 92(1) of the Act specific exemptions will prevail to the extent of any inconsistency.

2. In specific exemptions, words have the same meaning as in the Act, unless otherwise indicated. Where there is an inconsistency between specific exemptions and the Act, the Act will prevail to the extent of any inconsistency.
3. Nothing in specific exemptions obviates the responsibility of a proponent to obtain the consent of the owner of the registered place or object, or if the registered place or object is situated on Crown Land the land manager as defined in the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978, prior to undertaking works or activities in accordance with specific exemptions.
4. If a Cultural Heritage Management Plan in accordance with the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 is required for works covered by specific exemptions, specific exemptions will apply only if the Cultural Heritage Management Plan has been approved prior to works or activities commencing. Where there is an inconsistency between specific exemptions and a Cultural Heritage Management Plan for the relevant works and activities, Heritage Victoria must be contacted for advice on the appropriate approval pathway.
5. Specific exemptions do not constitute approvals, authorisations or exemptions under any other legislation, Local Government, State Government or Commonwealth Government requirements, including but not limited to the Planning and Environment Act 1987, the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006, and the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth). Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to obtain relevant planning, building or environmental approvals from the responsible authority where applicable.
6. Care should be taken when working with heritage buildings and objects, as historic fabric may contain dangerous and poisonous materials (for example lead paint and asbestos). Appropriate personal protective equipment should be worn at all times. If you are unsure, seek advice from a qualified heritage architect, heritage consultant or local council heritage advisor.
7. The presence of unsafe materials (for example asbestos, lead paint etc) at a registered place or object does not automatically exempt remedial works or activities in accordance with this category. Approvals under Part 5 of the Act must be obtained to undertake works or activities that are not expressly exempted by the below specific exemptions.
8. All works should be informed by a Conservation Management Plan prepared for the place or object. The Executive Director is not bound by any Conservation Management Plan and permits still must be obtained for works suggested in any Conservation Management Plan.

Conditions

1. All works or activities permitted under specific exemptions must be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents harm to the registered place or object. Harm includes moving, removing or damaging any part of the registered place or object that contributes to its cultural heritage significance.
2. If during the carrying out of works or activities in accordance with specific exemptions original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the registered place are revealed relating to its cultural heritage significance, including but not limited to historical archaeological remains, such as features, deposits or artefacts, then works must cease and Heritage Victoria notified as soon as possible.
3. If during the carrying out of works or activities in accordance with specific exemptions any Aboriginal cultural heritage is discovered or exposed at any time, all works must cease and the Secretary (as defined in the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006) must be contacted immediately to ascertain requirements under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006.
4. If during the carrying out of works or activities in accordance with specific exemptions any munitions or other potentially explosive artefacts are discovered, Victoria Police is to be immediately alerted and the site is to be immediately cleared of all personnel.
5. If during the carrying out of works or activities in accordance with specific exemptions any suspected human remains are found the works or activities must cease. The remains must be left in place and protected from harm or damage. Victoria Police and the State Coroner's Office must be notified immediately. If there are reasonable grounds to believe that the remains are Aboriginal, the State Emergency Control Centre must be immediately notified on 1300 888 544, and, as required under s.17(3)(b) of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006, all details about the location and nature of the human remains must be provided to the Secretary (as defined in the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006).

Exempt works and activities

1. All internal works to and demolition of the detached post 1960s buildings to the east and west of Kardinia House.

2. All internal works to and demolition or removal of the corrugated metal shed located on the southern property boundary.

Construction dates 1850,
Heritage Act Categories Registered place,
Hermes Number 121
Property Number

History

Dr. Alexander Thomson and the Port Phillip Association

Originally known as the Geelong and Dutigalla Association, the Port Phillip Association was established in 1835 by Tasmanian colonists and led by John Batman. After arriving in Melbourne, Batman entered a 'treaty' with the local Aboriginal peoples of Melbourne, the Bunurong and Woi Wurrung language groups, to purchase 500,000 acres around Melbourne and 100,000 acres near Geelong. Notably, this deal was not made with anyone belonging to the Wadawurrung Country around Geelong. While the government in Sydney did not recognise Batman's treaty, shortly afterwards large tracts of Wadawurrung Country had been taken up by members of the Association for grazing.

In 1837 Scottish migrant Dr. Alexander Thomson, a member of the Association, took up land on the Barwon River. He is considered one of the founders of Geelong, which was gazetted as a town the next year. The Association appointed Thomson as medical officer and catechist to the Aboriginal people. Whilst there is evidence to indicate that Thomson held particular concerns for the plight of the Wadawurrung, he was also heavily involved in requests for the 'protection' of the newly arrived squatters which came at the expense of the Wadawurrung People. Thomson was involved in a meeting of Port Phillip colonists voting to afford protection to the Aboriginal peoples, promoted and supported the establishment of the Wesleyan Buntingdale Aboriginal Mission, and as a member for the NSW Legislative Council spoke about the 'amelioration' of the Aboriginal peoples, however ultimately, his usurping of Wadawurrung Country, and the grazing of cattle and sheep, helped end the traditional way of life for Wadawurrung People in Greater Geelong

From a twenty-first century viewpoint, Thomson's approach, like that of most of his squatter contemporaries, is not positively regarded as little acknowledgment was made of the traditional cultural practices of the Wadawurrung, or their ways of life which are indelibly linked to Country.

Thomson was a highly influential man, both in Geelong and across Victoria. In 1843 he was one of the Port Phillip members to the New South Wales Legislative Council. In 1844 he resigned, protesting the need to travel to Sydney to attend Parliament. He became an active campaigner for the separation movement, which ultimately saw Victoria become an independent colony from New South Wales.

In 1851 Thomson became Geelong's first mayor. He was elected to the Victorian Legislative Council from 1852-54 and helped draft the Victorian Constitution bill. He then returned as Geelong's mayor in 1855-57 and served in the Victorian Legislative Assembly in 1857-59. His career also saw him become director of the Geelong-Melbourne Railway Co, and he was active in starting and promoting Presbyterian services in the Geelong region.

Thomson died in 1866, and the property passed to his wife, Barbara Thomson. Subsequent owners of Kardinia included John Richardson, Member of the Legislative Assembly, William Sommers, a publican and mayor of Geelong, and Horace Frank Richardson, councillor and Member of the Legislative Council.

Kardinia House

Thomson established Kardinia on the south bank of the Barwon River. To the Wadawurrung, this waterway is known as Barwong (Barri Warri Yaluk) – the great river (Yaluk) that runs from the Otway Ranges (Barri –

mountains) in Eastern Maar Country (the place of the Gadubanud and Gulidjan Peoples) into Wadawurrung Country and enters the sea (Warri) at Barwon Heads (the place where the salt and fresh waters mingle).

Kardinia House was constructed in various stages correlated to ownership. After Thomson acquired the freehold in 1846, an original rudimentary timber structure was replaced by a stone house, likely between 1850 and 1855. The house at this time comprised a central, hipped-roofed dwelling with a front veranda featuring timber detailing.

By 1866 the hipped roofed stone dwelling was flanked by stone attic gabled wings. These wings included faceted bay windows on the ground floor, attic windows, and decorative bargeboards and finials.

Though the fabric of the c. 1850 stone house is still thought to be present, it has been transformed and extended extensively and reflects the substantial alterations and additions made during the ownership of the local publican, William Sommers, between 1881 and 1890. This is supported by the South Barwon Rate Books which show the net annual value of the property increasing from £80 in 1882, to £95 in 1883-84, and then to £100 in 1886-87.

Under Sommers, Kardinia House became the house we see today. It is a two-storey masonry dwelling with a central portion flanked by two wings, bay windows, and a verandah.

From 1947-1986 Kardinia House was used as a children's home for the Salvation Army, catering mainly for toddlers aged two to five years' old. This led to extensive changes to the building's interior and the grounds. From 1965 cottage homes were opened on the property, allowing siblings to remain together. More recently, Kardinia House was used as the headquarters of a non-profit organisation providing disability, senior and employment services.

Selected bibliography

Lyndsay Gardiner, 'Thomson, Alexander (1798–1866)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/thomson-alexander-2731/text3853>, published first in hardcopy 1967, accessed online 27 February 2024.

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Acknowledgment

Dr. David Rowe for his research of the history of Kardinia House and Dr. Alexander Thomson's relationship to the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners.

Extent of Registration

Heritage Act 2017

NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the **Heritage Act 2017**, I give notice under section 53 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by modifying a place in the Heritage Register:

Number: H0337

Category: Registered Place

Place: Kardinia House

Location: 1 Riverview Terrace, Belmont

Municipality: Greater Geelong City

All of the place shown hatched on Diagram 337 encompassing all of Lot 1 and part of Lot 2 of Title Plan 847101

20 June 2024

STEVEN AVERY
Executive Director

[Victorian Government Gazette G 25 20 June 2024]

This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.

For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>