

# St Kilda Domestic Air Raid Shelter



1 sicree family air raid shelter  
mitford street st kilda elevated  
view of shelter jan1995



SICREE FAMILY AIR RAID  
SHELTER SOHE 2008



23 Mitford St - front view



23 Mitford St - entrance porch



H0616 plan

## Location

23 MITFORD STREET ST KILDA, PORT PHILLIP CITY

## Municipality

PORT PHILLIP CITY

## Level of significance

-

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0616

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO368

## Heritage Listing

Vic. War Heritage Inventory

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - June 24, 1999

David V Isaacs, a consulting engineer, designed this air raid shelter for the owner, Mrs Sicree in December 1940. Construction began in February 1941. The builders were Pollard Brothers.

Research has clearly established that the Sicree shelter is not typical of those structures commonly constructed in great numbers by citizens in their backyards after 1941. The shelter is unusual for its very early date, the sophistication of its engineering and for the lack of soil cover over the concrete roof. The comfort provided for the few occupants is also unusual. The sophisticated design of the air raid shelter suggests a British influence. It was later shown that the extra effort and cost of elaborate subterranean concrete shelters was not justified by a corresponding improvement in protection. The shelter remains surprisingly intact.

There is added significance in the association through the engineer, Isaacs, with the earliest official concern about home defence. Isaacs was a member of a sub-committee formed by the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects and the Institution of Engineers, Australia, Melbourne division. The two bodies had been asked to prepare a series of reports to the State Emergency Council for Civil Defence early in 1940.

Construction dates	1941,
Architect/Designer	Isaacs, David V, Ruck, Edwin J,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Hermes Number	125243
Property Number	

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## Physical Description 1

Date Started 1941; Date Finished ; Storeys 0; Desc INDIVIDUAL BUILDING OR GROUP; Walls REINFORCED CONCRETE;

## **Usage/Former Usage**

; UNKNOWN ;

## **Veterans Description for Public**

The St Kilda Air domestic air raid shelter was designed by the engineer David V Isaacs for the Sicree family in February 1941, when, following the bombing of Rotterdam and the fall of France in June 1940, precautions against air attack were being investigated in Victoria. The builders were Pollard Brothers.

The Sicree shelter is not typical of those structures commonly constructed in great numbers by citizens in their backyards after 1941. The shelter is far more elaborate and costly than the subsequent local examples, and is of reinforced concrete with a barrel-vaulted ceiling, escape hatch in the toilet compartment, hand basin, three bunks, two folding benches, and food containers. The level of comfort provided in the design for the few occupants, also makes it unusual. The sophisticated design of the air raid shelter suggests a British influence. It was later shown that the extra effort and cost of elaborate subterranean concrete shelters was not justified by a corresponding improvement in protection. The shelter remains surprisingly intact.

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## **Extent of Registration**

The air raid shelter structure and fittings and the whole of the land described in Certificate of Title Vol. 4489 Folio 800, but excluding all other improvements.

*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/>*