

FORMER UNION BANK AND GOLD SMELTING OBJECTS



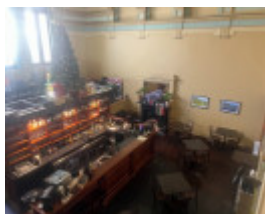
FORMER UNION BANK
SOHE 2008



1former union bank front
facade



2024. Union bank attic space



2024. Union bank banking
chamber



former union bank entrance
colonnade july01



2024. Strong room door



2024. Strong room door



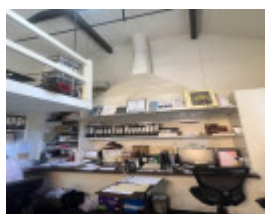
Exterior Window Detail June
01



2024. View from the back of
the banking looking towards
smelter, with residence on the
right.



former union bank kiln gold
room july01



2024. Smelter interior



2024. Residence



2024. Right of way access to MacKenzie Street.



2024. Union Bank gate post on MacKenzie street.



2024. Union bank gate posts.



2024. Bank vault.

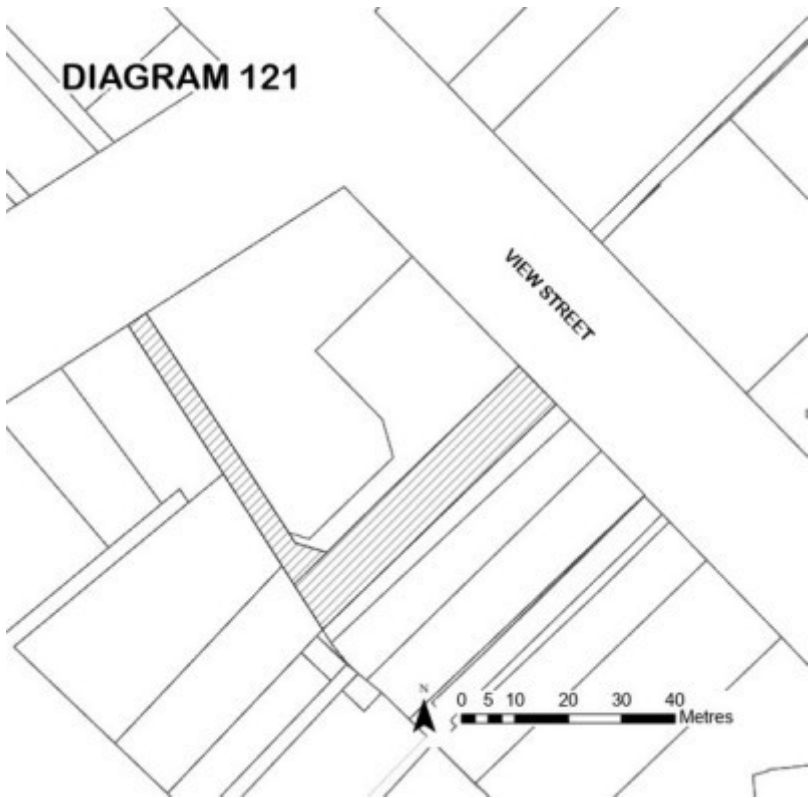


Diagram 121 v2

Location

45 VIEW STREET BENDIGO, GREATER BENDIGO CITY

Municipality

GREATER BENDIGO CITY

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0121

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO269

VHR Registration

October 9, 1974

Amendment to Registration

August 21, 2025

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - August 21, 2025

The Former Union Bank and Gold Smelting Objects are located on the land of the Dja Dja Wurrung people.

What is significant?

The Former Union Bank in View Street, Bendigo built in a Classical style in 1876-7 to the design of architects, Smith and Johnson. It comprises a banking chamber and strong room, attached residence, and a smelting house with chimney at the rear of the property. The gold smelting objects were removed from the smelting house in 1976 and are now held in the ANZ Group Archive collection. They consist of six ingot moulds, five crucible tongs, a gold cart, mortar and pestle, two crucibles, and a crucible lid.

How is it significant?

The Former Union Bank and Gold Smelting Objects is of historical and architectural significance to the State of Victoria. It satisfies the following criterion for inclusion in the VHR:

Criterion A

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

Criterion B

Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history.

Criterion D

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects

Why is it significant?

The Former Union Bank and Gold Smelting Objects is historically significant for its direct and tangible links to the crucially important history of gold mining in Victoria and the associated wealth it generated. The bank dates from a period when gold mining was changing from shallow alluvial workings to an industry of deep leads and quartz mining. With the increasing proportion of gold coming from quartz mining, the problem of determining the purity of gold when extracted from the ore became apparent, so facilities for smelting were included alongside the banking premises. The extant smelter and the ANZ Group's collection of objects relating to smelting at the Former Union Bank are demonstrative of the important theme of banking and finance in Victoria's history. The bank is a manifestation of the consolidation of Bendigo as a key provincial city in the post Gold Rush era.

(Criterion A)

The Former Union Bank and Gold Smelting Objects constitutes a rare surviving place with an associated collection that demonstrates how Victorian goldfields banks bought, sold and smelted locally mined gold.

(Criterion B)

The Former Union Bank is architecturally significant as a particularly fine and intact example of a nineteenth century bank and associated outbuildings. The Former Union Bank is a Classical design with detailing of the colonnaded, recessed facade and the use of the giant Corinthian order. It is also of architectural significance for its associated outbuildings including a gold safe, residence and smelter which illustrate the banking practice of this era. The Former Union Bank is also significant as a fine example of the work of prominent architects, Smith and Johnson, whose most notable work is the Law Courts (VHR1514) in William Street, Melbourne. The Union Bank also forms a key component of the historic streetscape of View Street Bendigo.

(Criterion D)

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:

Objects integral

The below exemptions must be undertaken in accordance with the accepted collection management standards, policies and procedures of the ANZ Group Archive.

1. Management of items (including removal and relocation, display, conservation, and temporary external loans of eighteen months or less).
2. Relocation of items between the ANZ Group Archive location and the ANZ Gothic Bank Museum on Collins Street.
3. Conservation, research or analysis of a registered heritage object where the custodian employs qualified conservators.

Construction dates	1876,
Architect/Designer	Smith & Johnson,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place, Registered object integral to a registered place,
Other Names	SMELTER, UNION BANK,
Hermes Number	144
Property Number	

History

The Union Bank of Australia was formally founded in London on 7 July 1837. In October 1838, the Port Phillip Agency of the Derwent Bank was taken over by the Union Bank and became its first Victorian branch. The discovery of gold in the newly separated colony of Victoria in 1851 resulted in dramatic economic growth as well as changes in banking practices.

The Union Bank was first established on this site in Sandhurst (the former name of Bendigo) in 1857 following the establishment of branches in Castlemaine and Ballarat in 1854. A two-storey Italianate premises was built by the Union Bank in 1857 (image below, left), though the bank may have been operating elsewhere in Sandhurst prior to the building's completion. After the turbulent early years of the gold rush, banking became more stable into the later 1850s and beyond. The Bendigo branch of the Union Bank was lucrative and important enough that a more impressive building was built after 1876 replacing the 1857 bank.

The 1876 Union Bank premises were built to a design by Alfred Louis Smith and Arthur Ebdon Johnson, consisting of a facade dominated by large Corinthian columns on bluestone pedestals. The design is harmonious with that of the Masonic Hall on the other side of the same street, also built in the giant Corinthian order two years prior. The new premises were built at a time when gold mining was changing from shallow alluvial workings to an industry of deep leads and quartz mining. With the increasing proportion of gold coming from quartz mining, the problem of determining fineness became apparent (the purity of gold when extracted from the ore) and facilities for smelting were introduced alongside the banking premises.

The premises remained unchanged until the beginning of the 20th century, when substantial alterations were made to the residence c.1909.

The Union Bank merged with the Bank of Australasia in 1951 to form the ANZ Bank. In 1952, following the merger, alterations were made to the interior of the banking chamber and residence. The bank continued to function until 1975 when the ANZ operations were transferred to another location. The implements from the smelting house were removed in 1976 and are now held by the ANZ Group Archive. The premises were purchased by the National Trust in 1976 for use as the headquarters of the Central Victorian Branch. In 2003, the

National Trust sold the property to the current owners.

Selected bibliography

Bick, B.V. *Old Union Bank, 45 View Street Bendigo: an historic structure report*. Prepared for The Bendigo Trust, 1981.

Butcher, Mike and Gill Flanders. *Bendigo Historic Buildings*. National Trust of Australia, 1987.

Trethowan, Bruce. *A study of banks in Victoria, 1851-1939*. Prepared for the Historic Buildings Council, 1976.

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: H0121

Category: Registered Place and Registered Objects Integral to a Registered Place

Place: Former Union Bank and Gold Smelting Objects

Location: 45 View Street, Bendigo

Municipality: Greater Bendigo City

All of the place shown hatched on Diagram 121 encompassing all of Lots 1 and 2 on Title Plan 832609, and the following objects integral:

1) Ingot moulds (total of six) ANZ Group Catalogue No MUS1913-MUS1917, MUS1919

2) Crucible tongs (total of five) ANZ Group Catalogue No MUS1971-MUS1975

21 August 2025

STEVEN AVERY

Executive Director

[General Government Gazette G 34 21 August 2025]

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/>