

# OLD CURIOSITY SHOP



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SOHE 2008



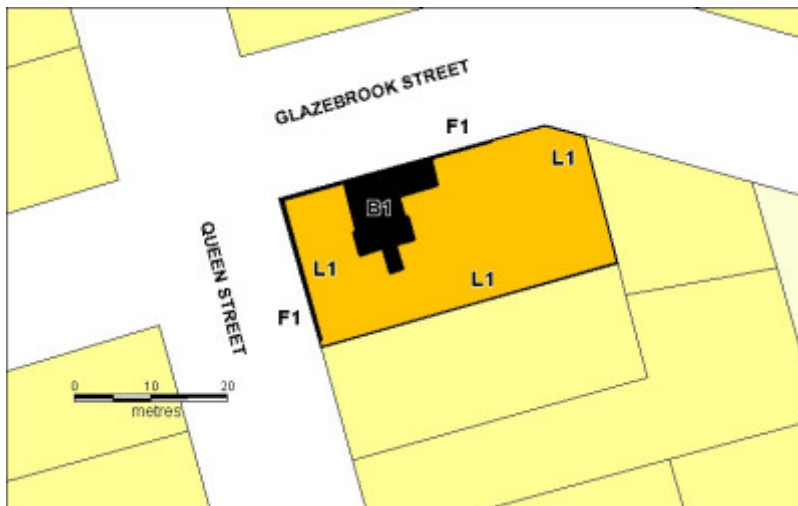
H01982 old curiosity shop  
nov 2001



H01982 old curiosity shop  
exterior nov 2001



H01982 old curiosity shop  
think of the old man nov 2001



H01982 old curiosity shop extent nov 2001

## Location

7 QUEENS STREET SOUTH BALLARAT EAST, BALLARAT CITY

## Municipality

BALLARAT CITY

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1982

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO100

## VHR Registration

February 22, 2002

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - February 22, 2000

What is significant?

Construction of the house later known as the Old Curiosity Shop commenced about 1863, the year bricklayer, James Warwick obtained a miner's right for a residential block on the edge of the exhausted Eureka diggings in the newly proclaimed municipality of Ballarat East. James built a modest 4-roomed timber and brick house for his expanding family and continued in the bricklaying trade until retiring around the early 1880s. By then he was pursuing his gardening interests in the local Horticultural Society and was supervising the gardens of many East Ballarat residents. It was during these years that his gardening and building interests converged to find expression in the marvellous permutations of decoration that extend over the house and garden. Using cast-off crockery, glass, ceramic figurine and mirror shards, shells, wallpaper samples, architectural ornament and slag, a place was found for all manner of things, large and small. Children would bring broken china dolls and bits of crockery, and the patient mosaic work preoccupied James and his wife Caroline for the rest of their lives. The work has its origins in the grottoes and shellhouses that ornamented the gardens of large English estates from the 1730s. In the few years before James' death in 1898, the house had become known as the 'Old Curiosity Shop', inspiring associations with the Charles Dickens novel of the same name. By then professional photographs had also been taken and thousands of tourists were visiting it yearly. Caroline obtained copyright for 2 of the photos and began issuing her own postcards before she died in 1903. The Shop passed to their son Charles and then to a succession of owners who added their own mythology to the story of the Warwicks and their work. After attracting tourists for more than 100 years, the Shop closed to the public in 1999.

How is it significant?

The Old Curiosity Shop is of aesthetic, historical and architectural significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Old Curiosity Shop is important for its exceptional aesthetic characteristics and rich, diverse and unusual integration of decorative features. Created outside the aesthetic norms of the period, the embellishments in their marvellous permutations conjure a fantasy world, a special environment that was home and sanctum for its

elderly owner-makers and a source of wonder to its many visitors. It is unique in Victoria, if not Australia as a late nineteenth century example of the unusual medium of shell and shardwork. The imaginative arrangements are similarly unique, with mosaic patterns of shell, crockery, glass as well as small everyday objects and architectural ornament embellishing the house, fence, paths, garden and grotto. The ornament is historically important as an index to a myriad of everyday domestic things used and discarded by a late nineteenth century community. The wallpaper samples inside the house comprise an important catalogue of late Victorian popular styles that extend our knowledge on the detail of interiors of the period.

The Old Curiosity Shop has further historical importance as an early house museum, a privately-run tourist enterprise that operated from the late nineteenth century, drawing visitors from all over the world.

The house is architecturally significant as an early and intact example of the modest class of dwellings erected in this vicinity of Ballarat by holder's of miner's rights, and it contributes to an understanding of the cultural landscape of the East Ballarat goldfields and their haphazard settlement pattern.

## 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:

General Conditions: 1. All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object. General Conditions: 2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of alterations that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such alteration shall cease and the Executive Director shall be notified as soon as possible. General Conditions: 3. If there is a conservation policy and plan approved by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it. General Conditions: 4. Nothing in this declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions. General Conditions: 5. Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authority where applicable.

DRAFT - NOT YET CONFIRMED BY HERITAGE COUNCIL

- \* Repair where the replacement component matches the original in size type layout and material.
- \* Rewiring of the place
- \* New plumbing services provided the work does not destroy the original paving and objects in the landscaping around the building.
- \* Replacing external weatherboarding providing the new work matches the type, size and timber of the original work.
- \* Replacing and patch renewal of the plaster work on the interior
- \* Re-papering of the walls where there is no original paper work
- \* Repair and replacement of the subfloor structure and the flooring with boarding of similar size, type and layout.
- \* Removal of asphalt from the pavements of the pathways

Or

- \* Those works which are in accordance with an endorsed Conservation Management Plan.

Construction dates            1855,  
 Heritage Act Categories    Registered place, Registered object integral to a registered place,  
 Hermes Number                1499  
 Property Number

## History

James and Caroline Warwick worked together to create this place.

Keywords: Woman, women, house museum, domestic, decoration.

## Assessment Against Criteria

### Criterion A

The historical importance, association with or relationship to Victoria's history of the place or object. The old Curiosity Shop is a long standing tourist attraction dating as it does from the late 19th Century. The place could be considered a naïve and private work of art created as a tourist attraction and as such possibly the oldest developed attraction in the state.

### Criterion B

The importance of a place or object in demonstrating rarity or uniqueness. The old Curiosity is unique in Victoria.

### Criterion C

The place or object's potential to educate, illustrate or provide further scientific investigation in relation to Victoria's cultural heritage.

### Criterion D

The importance of a place or object in exhibiting the principal characteristics or the representative nature of a place or object as part of a class or type of places or objects.

### Criterion E

The importance of the place or object in exhibiting good design or aesthetic characteristics and/or in exhibiting a richness, diversity or unusual integration of features.

The old Curiosity Shop is composed of a series of concreted walls into which remnants of found objects have

been permanently cemented. TAlthough considered naïve, it is its extensiveness that is astounding, incorporating as it does thousands of pieces of objects into a whole building. There are few such pieces of work in the world. The most celebrated are the Watts Towers in Los Angeles.

Criterion F

The importance of the place or object in demonstrating or being associated with scientific or technical innovations or achievements.

Criterion G

The importance of the place or object in demonstrating social or cultural associations.

Criterion H

Any other matter which the Council considers relevant to the determination of cultural heritage significance

## **Extent of Registration**

1. All the buildings and structures being B1 Old Curiosity Shop and ancillary buildings including grotto and F1 original picket, stone and brick fence as marked on Diagram 1982 held by the Executive Director.
2. All the landscape features being paths, gardens and moveable ornaments.
3. All the land marked L1 on Diagram 1982 held by the Executive Director, being described in Volume 9011 Folio 606.

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*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/>*