

## FORMER MOWBRAY COLLEGE PATTERSON CAMPUS



Former Mowbray College library



Former Mowbray College Coppin Court



Former Mowbray College library



Former Mowbray College art



Former Mowbray College admin 1989-97.JPG



Former Mowbray College classroom



Former Mowbray College library north end



Former Mowbray College science laboratories



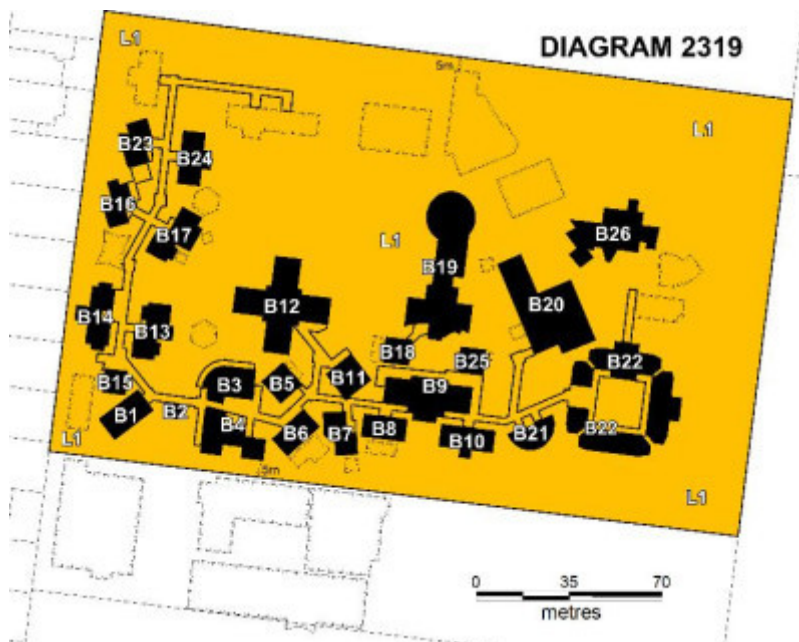
Former Mowbray College toilet block



Former Mowbray College art



Former Mowbray College walkways



Mowbray Plan

---

### Location

102-112 CENTENARY AVENUE KURUNJANG, MELTON CITY

### Municipality

MELTON CITY

### Level of significance

Registered

### Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H2319

### Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO125

### VHR Registration

January 23, 2014

### Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

---

## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - September 3, 2025

The Former Mowbray College Patterson Campus is located on Wurundjeri Country.

## What is significant?

The former Mowbray College Patterson Campus at Melton is a cohesive complex of low-cost Post-modern style school buildings designed by the architect and critic Norman Day between 1982 and 1997.

### *History Summary*

Mowbray College was an independent community school established by local residents in Melton in 1983 and named Mowbray College to honour early settlers in the area, who came from Melton Mowbray in England. A school advisory committee formed in 1980, appointed Alan Patterson as founding headmaster and purchased a former knitting mill at Melton to use for classes. The school was to follow the ideas of the German educator Kurt Hahn (1886-1974), with a greater emphasis on pastoral care, individual initiative and social concerns than was usual in schools at the time. Classes began in 1983 at various sites in the town and moved into the mill building later that year. In 1982 Patterson had commissioned the Melbourne architect Norman Day to design new school buildings, and together they developed a master-plan based on a village concept, with low-cost domestic-scale classrooms and communal buildings connected by walkways. The buildings were designed by Norman Day + Associates in the Post-modern idiom of the 1960s-1980s. It was intended that the students would find the school environment as familiar as their homes, and the buildings were closely related to their suburban context in materials, scale and form. The school was built in stages with the close participation of the school community, and with the architecture evolving as the school developed. The school received wide coverage in the architectural press, and in 1988 Day was awarded the inaugural national Lustig & Moar Architectural Prize for the buildings and the Australian Library Promotion Council/RAIA Library Design Award for the library building. Day's period as school architect ended in 1997 and several buildings designed by others were added to the site after that date. The campus was renamed the Patterson Campus in 2002 in honour of the former headmaster. The school closed in 2012 and was taken over by Heathdale Christian College.

### *Description Summary*

The former Mowbray College Patterson Campus is a complex of inventive and exuberant Post-modern style buildings based on the local suburban typology. The buildings are mostly of multi-coloured brick in shades of brown, red, orange and apricot laid in a variety of patterns. The school was conceived as a village community with a series of self-contained classrooms as 'houses', each with their own front door, back door and garden. The library building with its prominent rotunda with a square roof is the focus of the school, and together with the art, art technology, science and administration buildings are the main 'public buildings' of the complex. Each building is made distinctive through varied roof forms and the bold colours and patterns of the brickwork. The buildings are set amidst landscaped gardens with sculptures and murals and are linked by lattice-screened walkways that serve as the streets, with meeting places at the intersections.

This site is part of the traditional land of the Wurrundjeri people.

## How is it significant?

The former Mowbray College Patterson Campus satisfies the following criteria for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register:

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

Criterion E Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics

Criterion F Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period

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?

The former Mowbray College Patterson Campus is significant at the State level for the following reasons:

The former Mowbray College Patterson Campus is notable as a rich and innovative example of architectural Post-modernism. It is considered to be an exemplar of the style in Victoria, and references and celebrates the surrounding suburban building typologies, forms and materials. It is an inventive and intact example of 1980s school design and planning and an important example of the reforming school designs of the period. It is significant as a large collection of buildings in a consistent style and constructed within a relatively short period of time which were designed to provide an informal and humanised educational environment reflecting contemporary educational ideals and drawing on the notion of the school as a village.

(Criterion D)

The former Mowbray College Patterson Campus is an inventive and rich complex of school buildings, which has been described as 'Melbourne's most joyful set of postmodern structures'. It is widely regarded as an innovative and influential project, which received considerable attention in the architectural press and was the recipient of several major architectural awards.

(Criterion E)

The former Mowbray College Patterson Campus is an inventive and rich complex of school buildings, which has been described as 'Melbourne's most joyful set of postmodern structures'. It is widely regarded as an innovative and influential project, which received considerable attention in the architectural press and was the recipient of several major architectural awards.

(Criterion F)

The former Mowbray College Patterson Campus is a notable example in Victoria of the work of the influential architect, critic and academic Norman Day, and reflects Day's interest in contextual design and the principles of Post-modernism.

(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:**

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 works 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 works shall cease and Heritage Victoria shall be notified as soon as possible. General Conditions: 3. If there is a conservation policy and plan endorsed by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it. Note: A Conservation Management Plan or a Heritage Action Plan provides guidance for the management of the heritage values associated with the site. It may not be necessary to obtain a heritage permit for certain works specified in the management plan. General Conditions: 4. Nothing in this determination prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions. General Conditions: 5. Nothing in this determination exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authorities where applicable. Minor Works : Note: Any Minor Works that in the opinion of the Executive Director will not adversely affect the heritage significance of the place may be exempt from the permit requirements of the Heritage Act. A person proposing to undertake minor works must submit a proposal to the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is satisfied that the proposed works will not adversely affect the heritage values of the site, the applicant may be exempted from the requirement to obtain a heritage permit. If an applicant is uncertain whether a heritage permit is required, it is recommended that the permits co-ordinator be contacted.

## **Works to non-numbered buildings:**

The buildings not designed by Norman Day may be altered without the need for a permit, but additions to these buildings would require a permit.

### **Building exteriors:**

The following works are permit exempt:

- . Minor repairs and maintenance which replace like with like;
- . Repainting of previously painted surfaces, including joinery, in the same colour;
- . Removal of extraneous items such as external lighting, air conditioners, pipework, ducts, flues, antennae, flyscreens and making good; and
- . Resurfacing of existing paths and driveways.

Building interiors (not including B20 Art building, B12 Laboratories, B26 Art Technology and B19 Morton Library):

The following works are permit exempt:

- . Removal of non-original partition walls, built-in cupboards, cubicle partitions, classroom and office fittings;
- . Construction of light-weight partition walls, ceilings and bulkheads provided they do not intersect with windows;
- . Refurbishment of bathrooms, toilets, wet areas and kitchens including installation, removal or replacement of sanitary fixtures and fittings, kitchen equipment and wall tiling;
- . Installation, removal or replacement of hydraulic, pneumatic, electrical, fire and mechanical services;
- . Painting of previously painted walls and ceilings; installation, removal or replacement of carpets and/or flexible floor coverings;
- . Installation, removal or replacement of curtain tracks, rods, blinds, signs, handrails, plumbing, fittings, door and window hardware;
- . Installation, removal or replacement of hooks, nails and other devices for the hanging of mirrors, paintings and wall-mounted teaching apparatuses and the like.

Building interiors (B20 Art building, B12 Laboratories, B26 Art Technology and B19 Morton Library):

The following works are permit exempt:

- . Removal of non-original partition walls, built-in cupboards, cubicle partitions, classroom and office fittings;
- . Installation, removal or replacement of hydraulic, pneumatic, electrical, fire and mechanical services;
- . Installation, removal or replacement of hooks, nails and other devices for the hanging of mirrors, paintings and wall-mounted teaching apparatuses and the like.

## Theme

8. Building community life 9. Shaping cultural and creative life

Construction dates	1983,
Architect/Designer	Public Works Department,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	Heathdale Christian College,
Hermes Number	191761
Property Number	

---

## History

### CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

#### Postmodern architecture

The Postmodern movement in architecture began in America in the mid-1970s, largely as a reaction to the abstractions, rationality and functionalism of Modernism. It encouraged eclecticism and its aims included communicating ideas with the public, often in a humorous or witty way. Postmodern buildings were sensitive to the context within which they were built, and often quoted extensively from past architectural styles. This split from orthodox modernism resulted in a new pluralist or inclusive architecture which sought to reintroduce ornament, colour, decoration and human scale to buildings.

In Victoria postmodernism was first adopted in the 1970s by the architects Edmund & Corrigan and Greg Burgess, and by 1980, according to Philip Goad (*Melbourne Architecture*, p 199) 'most Melbourne architects had gone postmodern'. The idea of architecture as a bearer of meaning had become popular again, and 'buildings were adorned with symbols and ideas of reference and context were explored'. 'Melbourne architects displayed a hearty respect for the local, as well as idiosyncratically assimilating overseas trends. ... Melbourne experiments have generally been confined to three main building types: the institution, the university and the house. [They are] predicated on breaking down scale, creating communities of buildings rather than one overall image.' (Goad, p 212)

The architect: Norman Day (1947- )

[From Conrad Hamann's entry for Norman Day in Goad & Willis (eds), *Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, 2012, p 196.]

After graduating in architecture from the University of Melbourne, Norman Day worked with Romberg & Boyd (1967-72) before starting his own practice, Norman Day & Associates. He became architecture critic for the *The Age* and editor of *Architect* and *Architecture Australia*. Day attacked formulaic commercial architecture, championing emerging architects such as Edmond & Corrigan and Gregory Burgess. The Pizzey House at Kew (1980) and Mowbray College at Melton (c1985-), his best-known Australian works, were broadly linked with early

postmodern architecture. His later designs engaged both Rationalism and neo-Constructivism, as did more recent parts of Mowbray College. His College of Anaesthetists building (2000), an addition to the Italianate Ultimarora (1899) in St Kilda Road extends his earlier white-walled architecture to fit built-up surroundings. RMIT's Ho Chi Minh City campus and the University of Can Tho, both in Vietnam, are conspicuously modernist. Day also assisted in restoring Dili in East Timor after its 1999 devastation and designed both the Hotel Dom Aleixo and the Xanana Gusmao Museum there. He became adjunct professor at RMIT (1993) and his work has appeared consistently in Melbourne's major architectural exhibitions. He is also a director of Architects Without Frontiers.

## HISTORY OF PLACE

Mowbray College was a community school established by a cooperative of local residents to supplement educational facilities in the Melton area. An advisory committee first met in 1980 to discuss the building of an independent school, to be called Mowbray College to honour the early settlers of the area, who came from Melton Mowbray in Leicestershire. The school purchased the former Maryborough Knitting Mills factory in late 1982 for conversion to a school and Alan Patterson was appointed founding headmaster.

The school was to be independent and non-denominational, with a curriculum and organisational ethos based on the ideas of the German educator Kurt Hahn which were first seen in his Gordonstoun School in Scotland, with a greater emphasis on pastoral care, risk taking and individual initiative, empathy, tolerance and social concerns than was usual in school programs at the time. Hahn was also involved with the establishment of Outward Bound, an international adventure and character building program, the influence of which can be seen in the outdoor adventure programs of many Australian schools.

Mowbray College began in 1983 in Melton with 93 students from grades prep to seven and with seven staff, at first spread around three locations in the town (the Uniting Church, the Golf Club and the Guide hall), and only moved into the former Mill building on the school site in term 2 that year.

The architect Norman Day was commissioned by Patterson to design new school buildings, with a master-plan developed in 1982 in line with Patterson's educational vision. The plan for the school was for it to be delivered in stages in accordance with the limited budget. The design was based on a 'village' concept with the low-cost domestic-scale classrooms and communal buildings connected by latticed walkways that incorporated meeting places at their intersections.

All of the school buildings were designed by the architects Norman Day + Associates in close cooperation with the principal, Alan Patterson, and the Mowbray College Council. The design team was Norman Day (Principal in Charge), David Wilson (Associate), Dean Cass, Leng Kwok, Jane Davie, Yin Kwok, Phillipa McMahon, Sylvia Der, John O'Brien, Viv Freeland, Zvonko Orsanic (Associate), Liz Giagtzis, Marc Raszewski, Kathy Howell, Alp Soyugul, Sharyn Kerrigan, Jenny Saggars, Adie Courtney, Rachael Salter, Rod Dawson, Kirsten Hulley.

The architectural idea of the school, as expressed by Day (quoted in the nomination report), was to 'symbolise the school community's hopes, aspirations and spirit - we have taken regional materials and aesthetics and given them new life and meaning'. According to Day 'It is an ordinary aesthetic, made extraordinary, it redefines our view of suburbia with optimism and delight, with low cost architecture, closely argued as design which celebrates Mowbray's educational philosophy.' The buildings are part of an architectural investigation of contemporary culture, using architecture as a critique of the suburban aesthetic. The school is surrounded by a suburb dominated by A V Jennings houses, and the school, in Day's words:

uses an 'A V Jennings' language of spoutings and ordinary timber window frames and cream brown and red bricks, along with simple gable roofs, front gardens and fences. To that we add critical dimension: the scale of windows, screens, sunshades and roofs are designed to draw attention to their original possibilities so we appreciate them afresh. ... The school is a small city pattern with side streets, lanes, arcades and so on where individual classrooms are arranged as 'houses' (or homerooms) and larger facilities as community foci.

The hope was that the students would find the school and its buildings as familiar as their local environments, with a village feel that linked to students' homes and their environment. Rooms were designed with their own gardens and outdoor spaces as a reflection of home while other buildings such as administration buildings and the library 'took on a more city shopping centre persona'.

Day's buildings were completed in four main stages (1983-4, 1985, c1986-8 and c1989-97).

The first stage, comprising several groups of classrooms on the western side of the site, connecting walkways, the bell tower and toilet blocks, commenced in 1983, with the intention to develop the school over ten or twenty years with the architecture evolving as the school developed and with the close participation of the school community. Weekly meetings were held involving Day, the builders, the principal and school council members.

Day's period as school architect ended in 1997, and several buildings designed by others were added to the site after that date. Alan Patterson retired as headmaster in 2001 and died in 2002. The Mowbray College Melton Campus was renamed the Patterson Campus in his honour.

In 2012 Mowbray College went into voluntary receivership and was closed. It was purchased for ongoing use as a school by Heathdale Christian College.

## **Plaque Citation**

This Postmodern style complex, designed in stages by the architect Norman Day from 1982-97, is an inventive example of 1980s school design. Based on the concept of the school as a village, it reflects the form and materials of the surrounding houses.

## **Assessment Against Criteria**

### **Criterion**

The former Mowbray College Patterson Campus satisfies the following criteria for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register:

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

Criterion E Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics Criterion F Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period Criterion H Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history

## **Extent of Registration**

1. All of the land marked L1 on Diagram 2319 held by the Executive Director, being part of Plan of Consolidation 350437.

2. All of the buildings and structures marked B1 to B26 on Diagram 2319 held by the Executive Director.

B1 Rendell Room (staff room)  
B2 Bell tower  
B3 Canteen  
B4 Classrooms and WC  
B5-B8 Classrooms  
B9 Administration  
B10-B11 Classrooms  
B12 Laboratories  
B13-B14 Classrooms  
B15 Toilet block  
B16-B17 Classrooms  
B18 Administration  
B19 Morton Library  
B20 Art building  
B21 Toilet block  
B22 Coppin Court classrooms  
B23-B24 Classrooms  
B25 Administration  
B26 Art Technology  
General: The walkways  
[Victoria Government Gazette No. G4 23 January 2014]

---

*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/>*