

# VILLA ALBA



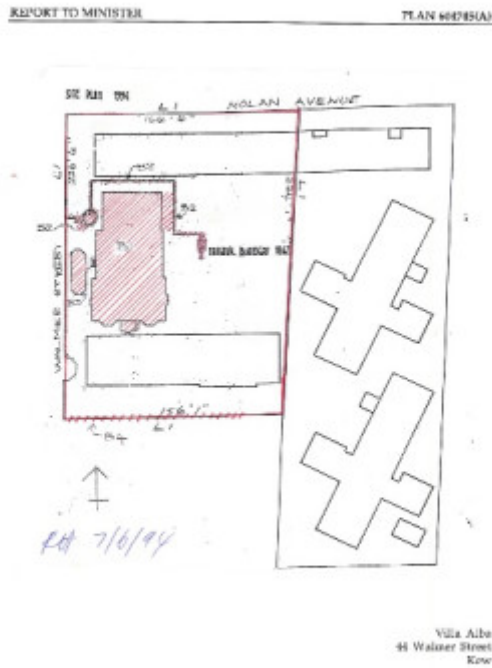
VILLA ALBA SOHO 2008



H0605 Villa Alba garden



villa alba walmer street kew  
front view jun1984



H0605 Image001

## Location

44 WALMER STREET KEW, BOROONDARA CITY

## Municipality

BOROONDARA CITY

## **Level of significance**

Registered

## **Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number**

H0605

## **Heritage Overlay Numbers**

HO134

## **VHR Registration**

August 20, 1982

## **Amendment to Registration**

October 20, 1994

## **Heritage Listing**

Victorian Heritage Register

---

## **Statement of Significance**

Last updated on - June 5, 2000

What is significant?

Villa Alba, a two-storeyed residence with rendered masonry walls and a slate roof, stands opposite Studley Park, overlooking the Yarra River. It is believed to have been first built before 1863, but substantially remodelled and enlarged in about 1882-83 for William Greenlaw, the Manager of the Colonial Bank of Australasia. Although the house and its tower must always have been a landmark in the area and the architecture is unusual, almost Norman in style, it is the interior which is the most remarkable feature of Villa Alba.

How is it significant?

Villa Alba is significant to the state of Victoria for architectural, historic, social and aesthetic reasons.

Why is it significant?

Villa Alba is of significance for the outstanding late Victorian painted decoration throughout its interior. The consistently high standard of design in the decoration, and high, and at times, superb quality of its execution, the variety of illustrative techniques, the variety of illusionist effects and the hierarchy of treatments between the rooms of the house all contribute to the significance. The decorative scheme is also of significance as a fine example of the work of the leading Melbourne decorators, the Paterson Brothers. It is one of their first interiors to depart totally from the use of pre-prepared wallpapers of repetitive designs and it is a rare and comprehensive extant example of their domestic work. The decorative schemes in the ground floor hall, the dining room, the drawing, the vestibule, the stair hall, the upper hall, bedroom 1 and the boudoir are also individually of significance as outstanding examples of Victorian decoration.

The property is of significance for its association with William Greenlaw during his most prosperous and prominent years. The scale and design of the house and its surrounding landscaping (of which some ancillary elements survive) are a reflection of the Greenlaw family's social role and aspirations.

## 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. Note: All archaeological places have the potential to contain significant sub-surface artefacts and other remains. In most cases it will be necessary to obtain approval from the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria before the undertaking any works that have a significant sub-surface component. 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: The existence of a Conservation Management Plan or a Heritage Action Plan endorsed by the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria 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.

Regular Site Maintenance : The following site maintenance works are permit exempt under section 66 of the Heritage Act 1995: a) regular site maintenance provided the works do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant above-ground features or sub-surface archaeological artefacts or deposits; b) the maintenance of an item to retain its conditions or operation without the removal of or damage to the existing fabric or the introduction of new materials; c) cleaning including the removal of surface deposits, organic growths, or graffiti by the use of low pressure water and natural detergents and mild brushing and scrubbing; d) repairs, conservation and maintenance to plaques, memorials, roads and paths, fences and gates and drainage and irrigation. e) the replacement of existing services such as cabling, plumbing, wiring and fire services that uses existing routes, conduits or voids, and does not involve damage to or the removal of significant fabric. Note: Surface patina which has developed on the fabric may be an important part of the item's significance and if so needs to be preserved

during maintenance and cleaning. Note: Any new materials used for repair must not exacerbate the decay of existing fabric due to chemical incompatibility, obscure existing fabric or limit access to existing fabric for future maintenance. Repair must maximise protection and retention of fabric and include the conservation of existing details or elements.

**Fire Suppression Duties :** The following fire suppression duties are permit exempt under section 66 of the Heritage Act 1995, a) Fire suppression and fire fighting duties provided the works do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant above-ground features or sub-surface archaeological artefacts or deposits; b) Fire suppression activities such as fuel reduction burns, and fire control line construction, provided all significant historical and archaeological features are appropriately recognised and protected; Note: Fire management authorities should be aware of the location, extent and significance of historical and archaeological places when developing fire suppression and fire fighting strategies. The importance of places listed in the Heritage Register must be considered when strategies for fire suppression and management are being developed.

**Weed and Vermin Control :** The following weed and vermin control activities are permit exempt under section 66 of the Heritage Act 1995, a) Weed and vermin control activities provided the works do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant above-ground features or sub-surface archaeological artefacts or deposits; Note: Particular care must be taken with weed and vermin control works where such activities may have a detrimental affect on the significant fabric of a place. Such works may include the removal of ivy, moss or lichen from an historic structure or feature, or the removal of burrows from a site that has archaeological values.

**Landscape Maintenance :** The following landscape maintenance works are permit exempt under section 66 of the Heritage Act 1995, a) landscape maintenance works provided the activities do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant above-ground features or sub-surface archaeological artefacts or deposits; b) watering, mowing, top-dressing and fertilising necessary for the continued health of plants, without damage or major alterations to layout, contours, plant species or other significant landscape features; c) pruning to control size, improve shape, flowering or fruiting and the removal of diseased, dead or dangerous material, not exceeding 20% of the crown of the tree within a period of two years; d) tree surgery by a qualified horticulturalist or tree surgeon necessary for the health of those plants.

**Public Safety and Security :** The following public safety and security activities are permit exempt under section 66 of the Heritage Act 1995, a) public safety and security activities provided the works do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant above-ground structures or sub-surface archaeological artefacts or deposits; b) the erection of temporary security fencing, scaffolding, hoardings or surveillance systems to prevent unauthorised access or secure public safety which will not adversely affect significant fabric of the place including archaeological features; c) development including emergency stabilisation necessary to secure safety where a site feature has been irreparably damaged or destabilised and represents a safety risk to its users or the public. Note: Urgent or emergency site works are to be undertaken by an appropriately qualified specialist such as a structural engineer, or other heritage professional.

**Signage and Site Interpretation :** The following Signage and Site Interpretation activities are permit exempt under section 66 of the Heritage Act 1995, a) signage and site interpretation activities provided the works do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant above-ground structures or sub-surface archaeological artefacts or deposits; b) the erection of non-illuminated signage for the purpose of ensuring public safety or to assist in the interpretation of the heritage significance of the place or object and which will not adversely affect significant fabric including landscape or archaeological features of the place or obstruct significant views of and from heritage values or items; c) signage and site interpretation products must be located and be of a suitable size so as not to obscure or damage significant fabric of the place; d) signage and site interpretation products must be able to be later removed without causing damage to the significant fabric of the place; Note: The development of signage and site interpretation products must be consistent in the use of format, text, logos, themes and other display materials. Note: Where possible, the signage and interpretation material should be consistent with other schemes developed on similar or associated sites. It may be necessary to consult with land managers and other stakeholders concerning existing schemes and strategies for signage and site interpretation.

**Mineral Exploration :** The following Mineral Exploration activities are permit exempt under section 66 of the Heritage Act 1995, a) mineral Exploration activities provided the works do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant above-ground features or sub-surface archaeological artefacts or deposits; b) preliminary non-intrusive exploration, including geological mapping, geophysical surveys, and geochemical sampling and access to shafts and adits; c) advanced forms of exploration (drilling), including the location of drill pads and access tracks where this has been the subject of on-site negotiation and agreement with representatives of Heritage Victoria, DSE and Parks Victoria, and where all significant historic site features have been identified and protected as part of an approved work plan.

**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 may 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.

## Classes of Works

### Exterior

- Minor repairs and maintenance which replace like with like.
- Repainting of previously painted surfaces in the same colour.
- Removal or replacement of extraneous items such as external lighting, conduit, pipe work, wiring, fly screens, louvres and making good.
- Removal of waterproof membranes in tower and replacement with like material on exposed flat surfaces.
- Replacement of flag pole to original height or as otherwise agreed by the Executive Director
- Installation of external fixtures and fittings such as lighting, sensors, general power outlets, water supply, hot water services and taps in garden area. This work is to be carried out without causing damage to significant fabric unless agreed otherwise by the Executive Director.
- Installation or replacement of balustrades to steps to existing design, disabled ramp to west side of mansion without causing damage to significant fabric.
- Removal or replacement of concrete paving.
- Resurfacing of non-original paths and driveways.
- Installation or removal of freestanding signage and noticeboards in the grounds on the fence to a maximum of 3 x 3m unless otherwise agreed by the Executive Director.
- Installation of affixed heritage plaques other than on masonry or plaster surfaces.
- Demolition of non original fabric in the course of alterations does not require a separate permit.
- 

### Interior

- Installation, removal or replacement of carpets and/or flexible floor coverings.
- Installation, removal or replacement of curtain tracks, rods and blinds on timber surfaces.
- Installation, removal or replacement of bathroom partitions and tiling, sanitary fixtures and fittings, floor coverings in existing toilets, including associated piping, mirrors.
- Installation, removal or replacement of kitchen sink, tiled splashbacks, built-in cupboards, gas cooking equipment, dishwasher and the like. This does not apply to the solid fuel stove or the original dresser and original cupboard unit.
- Removal and replacement of non-original light fittings.
- Removal or installation of non-original door and window furniture including, hinges, locks, knob sets and sash lifts.
- Removal of two concrete slabs in wet areas provided there is no damage to, or alteration of, original structure or fabric.
- Installation, removal or replacement of electrical wiring and provided that any original light switches, pull cords, push buttons or power outlets are retained in-situ.
- Installation, removal or replacement of public address (EWIS) systems, detectors, alarms, emergency lights and exit signs.
- Installation, removal or replacement of bulk insulation in the roof space.

## Landscaping

- Regular garden maintenance, including removal of trees under 3 metres, shrubs and plants.
- Management of trees in accordance with Australian Standard AS 4373 Pruning of Amenity Trees.
- Installation, repair, removal or replacement of garden watering and water supply systems to the grounds.

Weed and Vermin Control : The following weed and vermin control activities are permit exempt under section 66 of the Heritage Act 1995, a) Weed and vermin control activities provided the works do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant above-ground features or sub-surface archaeological artefacts or deposits; Note: Particular care must be taken with weed and vermin control works where such activities may have a detrimental affect on the significant fabric of a place. Such works may include the removal of ivy, moss or lichen from an historic structure or feature, or the removal of burrows from a site that has archaeological values

· *Landscape Maintenance : The following landscape maintenance works are permit exempt under section 66 of the Heritage Act 1995, a) landscape maintenance works provided the activities do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant above-ground features or sub-surface archaeological artefacts or deposits; b) watering, mowing, top-dressing and fertilising necessary for the continued health of plants, without damage or major alterations to layout, contours, plant species or other significant landscape features; c) pruning to control size, improve shape, flowering or fruiting and the removal of diseased, dead or dangerous material, not exceeding 20% of the crown of the tree within a period of two years; d) tree surgery by a qualified horticulturalist or tree surgeon necessary for the health of those plants.*

## 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.

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. If there is a conservation policy and plan endorsed by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it. Note: The existence of a Conservation Management Plan or a Heritage Action Plan endorsed by the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria 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. 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 may 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. Nothing in this declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions. Nothing in this declaration prevents owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authority where applicable.

**THE ATTENTION OF THE OWNER AND/OR APPLICANT IS DRAWN TO THE NEED TO OBTAIN ALL OTHER RELEVANT PERMITS PRIOR TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF WORKS.**

Pursuant to Section 66(1) of the Heritage Act (1995) and in respect to the above-registered place / object, the Executive Director hereby DECLARES EXEMPT THE OWNERS NEED TO OBTAIN A PERMIT TO CARRY OUT ANY OF THE FOLLOWING CLASSES OF WORKS OR ACTIVITIES, SUBJECT TO ANY CONDITIONS PRESCRIBED HEREUNDER:

Erect a sign attached to the ripple iron fence at 44 Walmer Street Kew advising the public what the place is and the current time of opening. The size of the sign is approximately 1.2 x 1.5. m as described in the attached letter from Jessie Serle dated 26 May 2005. (See Attachment A)

## CONDITIONS:

1. Exempt classes of works or activities are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the registered place / object. However, if other previously hidden original or inaccessible details of the object or place are uncovered, any works that may affect such items shall immediately cease. The Executive Director shall be notified of the details immediately to enable Heritage Victoria representatives to inspect and record the items, and for discussion to take place on the possible retention of the items, or the issue of a modified approval.
2. If there is a Conservation Policy and Plan approved by the Heritage Council or Executive Director, all works and activities shall be carried out in accordance with that Policy and Plan.
3. Nothing in this Declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exempt alterations provided work has not commenced on the alteration.

THE ATTENTION OF THE OWNER AND/OR APPLICANT IS DRAWN TO THE NEED TO OBTAIN ALL OTHER RELEVANT PERMITS PRIOR TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF WORKS.

Construction dates            1863,  
Heritage Act Categories    Registered place,  
Hermes Number                624  
Property Number

---

## History

Associated People:

## Extent of Registration

### AMENDMENT OF REGISTER OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Historic Building No. 605:

Villa Alba, 44 Walmer Street, Kew, City of Kew

To the extent of:

\* All the buildings and works known as Villa Alba including the house (B1), the fish pond and the steps and the tessellated tiles and the retaining walls (B2), and the base of the conservatory (B3) and the hoop wire fence to the southern boundary (B4), and marked on Plan No. 604745 (A), endorsed by the Chairperson, Historic Buildings Council and held by the Director, Historic Buildings Council.

\* All of the land marked L1 on Plan No. 604745 (A) endorsed by the Chairperson, Historic Buildings Council and held by the Director, Historic Buildings Council, being part of the land described in Certificate of Title Volume 9045 Folio 439.)

[Victoria Government Gazette No. G42 20 October 1994 p.2832]

*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/>*