

Statement of recommendation from the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria to the Heritage Council of Victoria

Name: MacRobertson Girls' High School

Address: 350 Kings Way, Melbourne

Local Government Authority: Port Phillip City



MacRobertson Girls' High School (May 2020)

Executive Director recommendation

I recommend to the Heritage Council of Victoria that the existing registration of VHR H1641, MacRobertson Girls' High School, 350 Kings Way, Melbourne, in the Victorian Heritage Register ('VHR') be amended under section 62 of the *Heritage Act 2017* ('the Act').

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steven Avery'.

STEVEN AVERY
Executive Director, Heritage Victoria
DATE OF RECOMMENDATION: 15 March 2021

Statement of recommendation from the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria to the Heritage Council of Victoria

Executive Director Recommendation to the Heritage Council of Victoria

The Executive Director, Heritage Victoria ('Executive Director') recommends that the Heritage Council amends the existing registration of VHR H1641, MacRobertson Girls' High School, 350 Kings Way, Melbourne, in the VHR by:

- Including additional land
- Determining categories of works or activities which may be carried out in relation to the place for which a permit is not required (permit exemptions).

The process from here

1. The Heritage Council publishes the Executive Director's recommendation (section 41).

The Heritage Council will publish the Executive Director's recommendation on its website for a period of 60 days. Submissions must be received by Heritage Council on or before **17 May 2021**.

2. Making a submission to the Heritage Council (sections 44 and 45)

Within the 60 day publication period, any person or body can make a submission to the Heritage Council. This submission can support the recommendation, or object to the recommendation and a hearing can be requested in relation to the submission. Information about making a submission and submission forms are available on the Heritage Council of Victoria's website:

<https://heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/registrations-reviews/executive-director-recommendations/>

3. Heritage Council determination (sections 46 and 49)

The Heritage Council is an independent statutory body. It is responsible for making the final determination to include or not include the place or object in the VHR, or amend a place or object already in the VHR.

If no submissions are received the Heritage Council must make a determination within 40 days of the publication closing date.

If submissions are received, the Heritage Council may decide to hold a hearing in relation to the submission. If a hearing does take place, the Heritage Council must make a determination within 90 days after the completion of the hearing.

4. Obligations of owners of places and objects (sections 42 and 43)

The owner of a place or object which is the subject of a recommendation to the Heritage Council has certain obligations under the Act. These relate to advising the Executive Director in writing of any works or activities that are being carried out, proposed or planned for the place.

The owner also has an obligation to provide a copy of this statement of recommendation to any potential purchasers of the place or object before entering into a contract.

5. Further information

The relevant sections of the Act are provided at Appendix 1.

Statement of recommendation from the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria to the Heritage Council of Victoria

Description

There is no change to the existing description of the place.

History

There is no change to the history of the place.

Reasons for registration in 1982

The State level historic and architectural cultural heritage significance of MacRobertson Girls' High School was recognised in 1982 by its inclusion in the Register of Government Buildings (VHR H1641). MacRobertson Girls' High School is historically significant for its association with its benefactor, Sir MacPherson Robertson, and for its association with its direct antecedents: the Model School, the Melbourne Continuation School (Victoria's first state secondary school) and Melbourne Girls' High School (Victoria's first single sex girls' state school). MacRobertson Girls' High School is architecturally significant as an important early work of the architect Norman Seabrook, and for its influential role in the introduction of Modernist architecture to Victoria. It is also important for its role in establishing a new standard of school buildings, emulated in the following decades by the Public Works Department under chief architect Percy Everett.

Amendment application made on 10 July 2020

On 10 July 2020 the Executive Director made and accepted an application to amend the registration of MacRobertson Girls' High School (VHR H1641) by including additional land and permit exemptions. to ensure that they are consistent with current practices under the *Heritage Act 2017*.

Amendment recommendation reasons

The Executive Director recommends that the Heritage Council amend this registration in accordance with section 62 of the Act in accordance with section 32(1) he considers that:

- a) the State-level cultural heritage significance of the place would be substantially less if the land or any part of the land which is or has been used in conjunction with the place were developed; or
- b) land surrounding the place is important to the protection or conservation of the place or contributes to the understanding of the place.

Traditional Owner Information

MacRobertson Girls' High School is located on the traditional land of the Kulin Nation. Traditional owners have not been formally recognised for this area. A Registered Aboriginal Party under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* has not been appointed.

Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register

MacRobertson Girls' High School is not included in the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register.

Change of heritage category

No change of category.



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Change of name

Change place name to MacRobertson Girls' High School (with a plural possessive apostrophe) for consistency with the Statement of Significance, and the name by which the school is currently known.

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Statutory requirements under section 40

Terms of the recommendation (section 40 (3)(a))

The Executive Director recommends that the registration of MacRobertson Girls' High School in the VHR is amended.

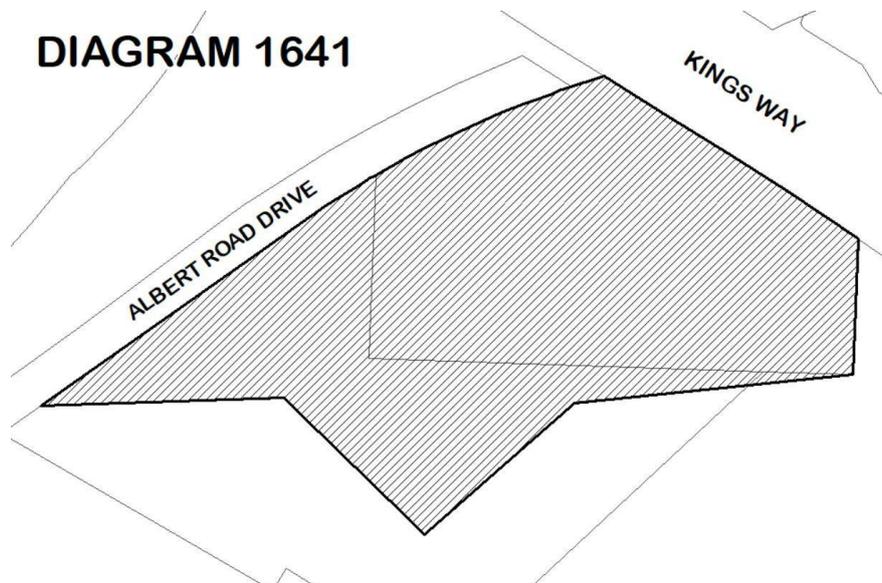
Information to identify the place or object (section 40(3)(b))

Name: MacRobertson Girls' High School

Address: 350 Kings Way, Melbourne

Proposed extent of registration

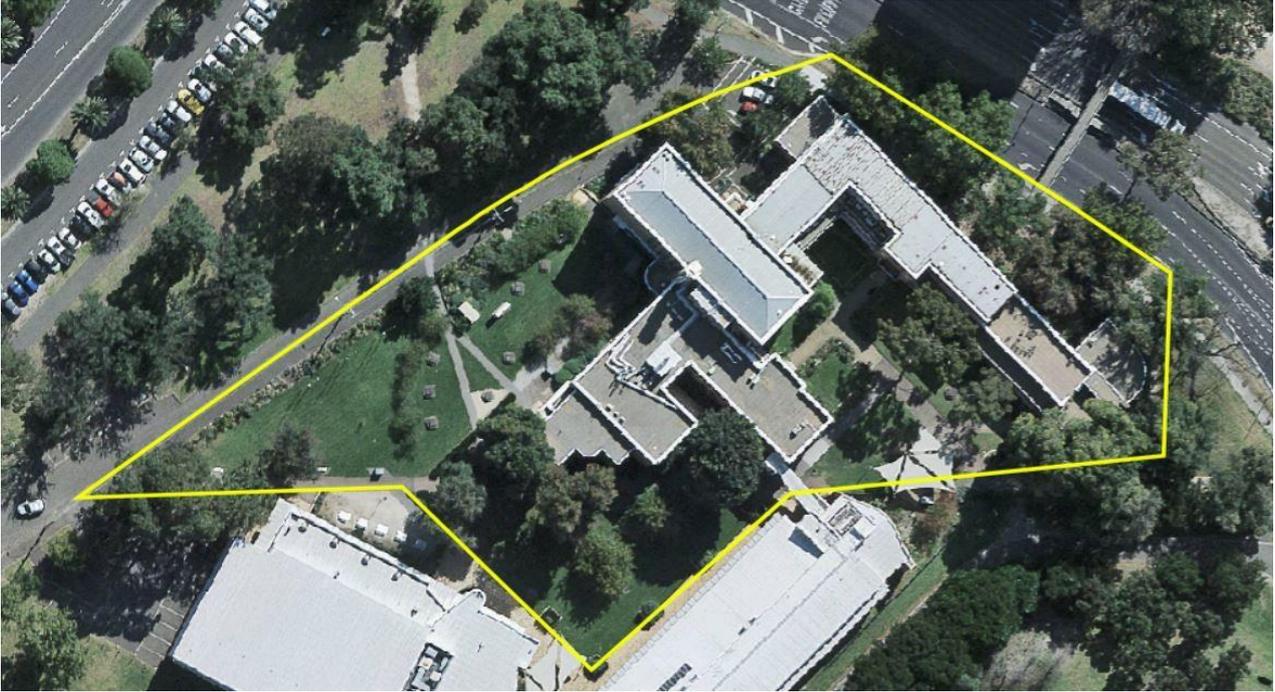
All of the place shown hatched on Diagram 1641 encompassing all of Crown Allotment 2104 City of South Melbourne Parish of Melbourne South and part of Crown Allotment 2103 City of South Melbourne Parish of Melbourne South and part of Crown Allotment 2111 City of South Melbourne Parish of Melbourne South.



The extent of registration of MacRobertson Girls' High School in the VHR affects the whole place shown on Diagram 1641 including the land, all buildings (including the exteriors and interiors), trees, landscape elements and other features.

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Aerial photo showing recommended extent



Rationale for extent

The recommended extent of registration is sufficient for protecting the cultural heritage significance of the place. It includes the interior and exterior of the 1934 Norman Seabrook school building and the land upon which it is located. It also includes the footpath and lawn area to the south and south-west of the building.



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Statement of significance

Revised Statement of Significance

What is significant?

The MacRobertson Girls' High School, designed by architect Norman H Seabrook and constructed in 1934, a Modernist multi-storey brick school building with a clock tower and paved courtyard.

How is it significant?

The MacRobertson Girls' High School is of architectural and historical significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The MacRobertson Girls' High School is of historical significance for its association with noted industrialist and philanthropist Sir MacPherson Robertson, who donated over £100,000 to the State of Victoria as a gesture of goodwill and thanks in the year of its centenary allowing for the establishment of the new school. The school is also of significance for its associations with its direct antecedents: the Model School in Spring Street; the Melbourne Continuation School, Victoria's first state secondary school, later renamed Melbourne High School; and Melbourne Girls' High School, the first single sex girls' state secondary school in Victoria. Each of these schools has played a notable part in the evolution of the state's education system, as has the MacRobertson Girls' High School. [Criterion A]

The Modernist design of MacRobertson Girls' High School, by architect Norman H Seabrook, was revolutionary in Victoria for its time. It was informed by Seabrook's firsthand knowledge of the work of leading contemporary Dutch architect Willem Dudok and his followers on the Continent and in Britain. MacRobertson Girls' High School was influential in the introduction of the Modernist modes of architecture and the growth in their acceptance in the 1930s in Victoria. The design of the school was refined in its conceptual clarity, its internal traffic efficiency, and skilful zoning of various educational activities. MacRobertson Girls' High School set a new standard for school architecture by the Public Works Department in subsequent decades under chief architect Percy Everett. [Criterion D]

The MacRobertson Girls' High School is of historical significance for its association with the notable and prolific architect Norman H Seabrook, who later co-founded the renowned Melbourne architectural firm Seabrook and Fildes. Seabrook has been recognised in subsequent decades as a significant and talented architect and a major figure in the evolution of twentieth century architecture in Victoria. [Criterion H]

Categories of works or activities (permit exemptions) recommended under section 38 (section 40(4)(b))

Introduction

The purpose of this information is to assist owners and other interested parties when considering or making decisions regarding works to a registered place. It is recommended that any proposed works be discussed with an officer of Heritage Victoria prior to making a permit application. Discussing proposed works will assist in answering questions the owner may have and aid any decisions regarding works to the place.

It is acknowledged that alterations and other works may be required to keep places and objects in good repair and adapt them for use into the future. However, under the Act a person must not knowingly, recklessly or negligently remove, relocate or demolish, damage or despoil, develop or alter or excavate all or any part of any part of a registered place without approval. It should be noted that the definition of 'develop' in the Act includes any works on, over or under the place.

If a person wishes to undertake works or activities in relation to a registered place or registered object, they must apply to the Executive Director for a permit. The purpose of a permit is to enable appropriate change to a place and to effectively manage adverse impacts on the cultural heritage significance of a place as a consequence of change. If an owner is uncertain whether a heritage permit is required, it is recommended that Heritage Victoria be contacted.

Permits are required for anything which alters the place or object, unless a permit exemption is granted. Permit exemptions usually cover routine maintenance and upkeep issues faced by owners as well as minor works or works to the elements of the place or object that are not significant. They may include appropriate works that are specified in a conservation management plan. Permit exemptions can be granted at the time of registration (under section 38 of the Act) or after registration (under section 92 of the Act). It should be noted that the addition of new buildings to the registered place, as well as alterations to the interior and exterior of existing buildings requires a permit, unless a specific permit exemption is granted.

Disrepair of registered place or registered object

Under section 152 of the Act, the owner of a registered place or registered object must not allow that place or object to fall into disrepair.

Failure to maintain registered place or registered object

Under section 153 of the Act, the owner of a registered place or registered object must not fail to maintain that place or object to the extent that its conservation is threatened.

Conservation management plans

A Conservation Management Plan was prepared for MacRobertson Girls' High School by Bryce Raworth in 1996.

Archaeology

There is no identified archaeology of State level significance at the place. However, any works that may affect historical archaeological features, deposits or artefacts at the place is likely to require a permit, permit exemption or consent. Advice should be sought from the Archaeology Team at Heritage Victoria.



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Aboriginal cultural heritage

To establish whether this place is registered under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* please contact Aboriginal Victoria. The *Heritage Act 2017* and the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* are separate pieces of legislation. Please be aware that both Acts are required to be satisfied and satisfying the requirements of one Act may not satisfy the requirements of the other.

If any Aboriginal cultural heritage is discovered or exposed at any time it is necessary to immediately contact Aboriginal Victoria to ascertain requirements under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*. If works are proposed which have the potential to disturb or have an impact on Aboriginal cultural heritage it is necessary to contact Aboriginal Victoria to ascertain any requirements under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*.

Other approvals

Please be aware that approval from other authorities (such as local government) may be required to undertake works.

Notes

- All works should ideally be informed by a Conservation Management Plan prepared for the place. The Executive Director is not bound by any Conservation Management Plan, and permits still must be obtained for works suggested in any Conservation Management Plan.
- Nothing in this determination prevents the Heritage Council from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.
- Nothing in this determination exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits where applicable.

General Conditions

- All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place.
- Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of works that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place are revealed which relate to the significance of the place, then the exemption covering such works must cease and Heritage Victoria must be notified as soon as possible.

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Permit Exemptions

Permit exemptions for interiors (1934 Building)

- Works to maintain bathrooms, kitchens and laboratories, including installing new appliances, re-tiling and the like.
- Removal or replacement of carpets and/or flexible floor coverings.
- Installation, removal or replacement of existing electrical wiring. If wiring is currently exposed, it should remain exposed. If it is fully concealed it should remain concealed.
- Removal or replacement of devices for the hanging of wall mounted artworks in existing locations.
- Maintenance, repair and replacement of light fixtures, tracks and the like.
- Removal or replacement of smoke and fire detectors, alarms and the like.
- Repair, removal or replacement of existing ducted, hydronic or concealed radiant type heating provided that the central plant is concealed, and that the work is done in a manner which does not alter building fabric.
- Installation of plant within the roof space, providing that it does not impact on the external appearance of the building or involve structural changes.
- Installation, removal or replacement of bulk insulation in the roof space.

Landscape/outdoor areas

Hard landscaping and services

- Subsurface works to existing garden watering and drainage systems provided these are outside the canopy edge of trees. Existing lawns, gardens and hard landscaping, including paving and paths are to be returned to the original configuration and appearance on completion of works.
- Maintenance, repair and replacement of existing services such as plumbing, electrical cabling, surveillance systems, pipes or fire services which does not involve changes in location or scale.
- Like for like repair and maintenance of existing hard landscaping including carparks, footpaths and driveways where the materials, scale, form and design is unchanged.
- Removal or replacement of external signage provided the size, location and material remains the same.
- Installation of physical barriers or traps to enable vegetation protection and management of vermin such as rats, mice and possums.
- Repair, removal and replacement of flagpoles (not part of the 1930s design or fabric of the place) to the west of the 1934 Building, providing replacements are in the same locations.

Gardening, trees and plants

- The processes of gardening including mowing, pruning, mulching, fertilizing, removal of dead or diseased plants (excluding trees), replanting of existing garden beds, disease and weed control and maintenance to care for existing plants.
- Removal of tree seedlings and suckers without the use of herbicides.
- Management and maintenance of trees including formative and remedial pruning, removal of deadwood and pest and disease control.
- Emergency tree works to maintain public safety provided the Executive Director is notified within seven days of the removal or works occurring.
- Removal of environmental and noxious weeds.

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Appendix 1

Heritage Council of Victoria determination (section 41)

The Heritage Council is an independent statutory body that will make a determination on this recommendation under section 49 of the Act. It will consider the recommendation after a period of 60 days from the date the notice of recommendation is published on its website under section 41.

Making a submission to the Heritage Council (section 44)

Within the period of 60 days, any person or body with a real and substantial interest in the place or object may make a submission to the Heritage Council regarding the recommendation and request a hearing in relation to that submission. Information about making a submission and submission forms are available on the Heritage Council's website.

Consideration of submissions to the Heritage Council (section 46)

- (1) The Heritage Council must consider—
 - (a) any written submission made to it under section 44; and
 - (b) any further information provided to the Heritage Council in response to a request under section 45.
- (2) The Heritage Council must conduct a hearing in relation to a submission if—
 - (a) the submission includes a request for a hearing before the Heritage Council; and
 - (b) the submission is made by a person or body with a real or substantial interest in the place or object that is the subject of the submission.
- (3) Despite subsection (2), the Heritage Council may conduct a hearing in relation to a submission in any other circumstances the Heritage Council considers appropriate.

Determinations of the Heritage Council (section 49)

- (1) After considering a recommendation that a place or object should or should not be included in the Heritage Register, or should be amended in the Heritage Register, and any submissions in respect of the recommendation and conducting any hearing into the submissions, the Heritage Council may—
 - (a) determine that the place or part of the place, or object, is of State-level cultural heritage significance and is to be included in the Heritage Register; or
 - (b) determine that the place or part of the place, or object, is not of State-level cultural heritage significance and is not to be included in the Heritage Register; or
 - (c) in the case of a recommendation in respect of a place, determine that the place is not to be included in the Heritage Register but—
 - i. refer the recommendation and any submissions to the relevant planning authority for consideration for an amendment to a planning scheme; or
 - ii. determine that it is more appropriate for steps to be taken under the Planning and Environment Act 1987 or by any other means to protect or conserve the place; or
 - (d) in the case of a recommendation in respect of additional land which has been nominated to be included in the Heritage Register as part of a registered place in accordance with section 32, determine that the land be included in the Heritage Register if—

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- (i) the State-level cultural heritage significance of the place would be substantially less if the land or any part of the land which is or has been used in conjunction with the place were developed; or
 - (ii) the land surrounding the place is important to the protection or conservation of the place or contributes to the understanding of the place; or
 - (e) determine that the object is integral to understanding the cultural heritage significance of a registered place or a place the Heritage Council has determined to be included in the Heritage Register.
- (2) The Heritage Council must make a determination under subsection (1)—
- (a) within 40 days after the date on which written submissions may be made under section 44; or
 - (b) if any hearing is conducted into the written submissions, within 90 days after the completion of the hearing.
- (3) A determination that a place or part of a place, or object, should be included in the Heritage Register may include categories of works or activities which may be carried out in relation to the place or object for which a permit under this Act is not required, if the Heritage Council considers that the works or activities would not harm the cultural heritage significance of the place or object.
- (4) If the Heritage Council determines to include a place in the Heritage Register, with the consent of the owner of the place, the Heritage Council may determine to include in the Heritage Register additional land of the owner that is ancillary to the place.
- (5) If a member of the Heritage Council makes a submission under section 44 in respect of a recommendation, the member must not take part in the consideration or determination of the Heritage Council.
- (6) The Heritage Council must notify the Executive Director of any determination under this section as soon as practicable after the determination.

Obligations of owners of places and objects (section 42)

- (1) The owner of a place or object to whom a statement of recommendation has been given must advise the Executive Director in writing of—
- (a) any works or activities that are being carried out in relation to the place or object at the time the statement is given; and
 - (b) any application for a planning permit or a building permit, or for an amendment to that permit, that has been made in relation to the place but not determined at the time the statement is given; and
 - (c) any works or activities that are proposed to be carried out in relation to the place or object at the time the statement is given.
- (2) An advice under subsection (1) must be given within 10 days after the statement of recommendation is given under section 40.
- (3) The owner of a place to whom a statement of recommendation has been given must advise the Executive Director in writing of an application, permit or amendment if, before a determination under section 49 or 52 in respect of a place—
- (a) an application for a planning permit or a building permit or for an amendment to that permit in relation to the place is made; or
 - (b) a planning permit or building permit or an amendment to that permit in relation to the place is granted.
- (4) An advice under subsection (3) must be given within 10 days after the making of the application or the grant of the permit or amendment.
- (5) The owner of a place or object to whom a statement of recommendation has been given must advise the Executive Director in writing of the following activities or proposals if, before a determination is made under section 49 or 52 in respect of a place or object—
- (a) any activities are carried out in relation to the place or object that could harm the place or object;



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- (b) any activities are proposed to be carried out in relation to the place or object that could harm the place or object.
- (6) An advice under subsection (5) must be given within 10 days after the owner becomes aware of the activity or the proposal, as the case requires.
- (7) If, before a determination is made under section 49 or 52 in respect of a place or object, a proposal is made to dispose of the whole or any part of the place or object, the owner of the place or object must advise the Executive Director in writing of that proposal.
- (8) An advice under subsection (7) must be given at least 10 days before entering into the contract for the disposal of the place or object.
- (9) The owner of a place or object who proposes to dispose of the whole or any part of the place or object before a determination is made under section 49 or 52 in respect of the place or object must, before entering into a contract for that disposal, give a copy of the statement of proposed contract, is to acquire the place or object or part of the place or object.

Owners of places and objects must comply with obligations (section 43)

An owner of a place or object to whom section 42 applies must comply with that section.

Penalty: In the case of a natural person, 120 penalty units;
 In the case of a body corporate, 240 penalty units.

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Appendix 2: Existing registration detail

Existing Category of Registration

Registered Heritage Place.

Existing Extent of Registration

Amendment of Register of Government Buildings, South Melbourne City, MacRobertson Girls' High School, Kings Way, Albert Park [*Victoria Government Gazette* No. G39 12 October 1988, p. 3094]

Transferred to the Victorian Heritage Register 23 May 1998 (2 years after the proclamation of the Heritage Act 1995 pursuant to the transitional provisions of the Act)

No extent diagram accompanies this registration.

Existing Statement of Significance

What is significant?

The MacRobertson Girls' High School at Albert Park, South Melbourne, was built in 1934 with funds donated by Sir MacPherson Robertson as a gift to the state of Victoria, celebrating the Centenary of its foundation. The building provided a permanent home for the former Melbourne Girls' High School, which was renamed in honour of its benefactor. The bold modern design, which had taken first prize in a strongly contested architectural competition for the new school, was prepared by the young architect Norman H Seabrook, at that time recently returned from working in Britain. Seabrook has been recognised in subsequent decades as a significant and talented architect and a major figure in the evolution of twentieth century architecture in Victoria.

How is it significant?

The MacRobertson Girls' High School is of architectural, historic and social significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The modern design of the school, clearly informed by Seabrook's first hand knowledge and experience of the work of leading contemporary Dutch architect Willem Dudok and his followers on the Continent and in Britain, was revolutionary for Victoria at this time and was influential in the introduction of the modern modes and the growth in their acceptance in the 1930s in this state. The planning of the school was refined in terms of its conceptual clarity, its traffic efficiency, and the skilful zoning of the various activities within the school, and established a new standard to be emulated in the many schools produced in the following decades by the Public Works Department under chief architect Percy Everett.

The exterior retains much of its significant character and fabric despite the impact of some changes and additions. A number of the interiors of the school were also notable, and despite some superficial changes these retain the bulk of their original fabric substantially intact.

The MacRobertson Girls' High School has important historical associations with noted industrialist and philanthropist Sir Michael MacPherson Robertson, who donated over £100,000 to the state of Victoria as a gesture of goodwill and thanks in the year of its centenary. £40,000 of this money was set aside for the new school. The school is also of significance for its associations with its direct antecedents: the Model School in Spring Street; the Melbourne Continuation School, Victoria's first state secondary school, later renamed Melbourne High School; and Melbourne Girls' High School, the first single sex girls' state secondary school in Victoria. Each of these schools has played a notable part in the evolution of the state's education system, as has the MacRobertson Girls' High School.

The MacRobertson Girls' high School has social significance as one of Victoria's premier education institutions, as a major school for girls, and alongside the Melbourne High School and the University High School, as one of three high



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schools recognised as outstanding and special within the state secondary education system. It has additional significance for its links with past students and staff, many of whom have enjoyed distinguished careers and public note.

Existing Permit Exemptions

There are no existing permit exemptions.