



---

## Location

1444 STURT STREET LAKE WENDOUREE, BALLARAT CITY

## Municipality

BALLARAT CITY

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0413

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO125

## VHR Registration

August 31, 1977

## Amendment to Registration

March 14, 1979

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

---

## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - July 2, 2004

What is significant?

The Bishop's Palace is one of the most imposing houses in Ballarat. It owes its existence to the fact that in 1873 the Roman Catholic Church created the Ballarat Diocese, and a palace was needed for the first bishop, Bishop O'Connor, as well as space for diocesan headquarters. A contract was signed in 1875 for a grand new palace, designed by Reed and Barnes, to cost £6000. It was built by George Broom, and internal plaster work was by William Taylor. It was completed in 1877, and was on a scale in keeping with the importance of the town of Ballarat as a gold-mining centre at the time. It was set amid a large garden on eleven acres [nearly five hectares] sloping down towards Lake Wendouree.

The Bishop's palace at Ballarat is a two storey Gothic bluestone mansion of an unusual design. It has a two level cast iron verandah with an interesting ecclesiastical design on the cast iron. Two projecting bays on the symmetrical front facade incorporate the balcony, which elsewhere is an elegant cast iron structure. On the ground floor are a drawing room, a dining room which seats fifty people, and a library. A broad staircase leads to the bedrooms and bathrooms on the first floor. Its most impressive feature is a magnificent private chapel, with an altar of striking Italian marble. The altar is inlaid in marble with the arms of the then Pope on one side and those of the Bishop on the other. The building is particularly notable for its intactness and also for its impressive garden

setting. Grand entrance gates open to a winding driveway which leads through a formally landscaped area with mature trees and shrubs to the house. At the rear is an open paddock, which allows views of the house from the lake and Wendouree Parade, and this rural setting to an urban house is unique in Victoria.

How is it significant?

The Bishop's Palace at Ballarat is of architectural, aesthetic and historical significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Bishop's Palace at Ballarat is of architectural significance as an impressive example of a large nineteenth century Gothic mansion of an unusual design.

The Bishop's Palace at Ballarat is aesthetically significant for its particularly large, impressive and intact garden, which forms an appropriate setting for the house. The survival of such a large garden, with the open paddock behind, in an urban context is unique in the State. The relationship between the grandeur of the front garden and the Sturt Street streetscape, which is characterised by intact Victorian and Edwardian houses, is unparalleled elsewhere in the state.

The Bishop's Palace at Ballarat is of historical significance for its associations with the Roman Catholic Church in Victoria, and as a reminder of the creation of the Diocese of Ballarat, the first Victorian Diocese outside Melbourne, in 1873. The scale and grandeur of the building and garden attest to the power and importance of the church at the time.

*[Online Data Upgrade Project 2004]*

## 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 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.

Construction dates	1875,
Architect/Designer	Reed & Barnes,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Hermes Number	81
Property Number	

---

## History

The Bishop's Palace is one of the most imposing houses in Ballarat. It owes its existence to the fact that in 1873 the Roman Catholic Church created the Ballarat Diocese, and a palace was needed for the first bishop, Bishop O'Connor, as well as space for diocesan headquarters. A contract was signed in 1875 for a grand new palace, designed by Reed and Barnes, to cost £6000. It was built by George Broom, and internal plaster work was by William Taylor. It was completed in 1877, and was on a scale in keeping with the importance of the town of Ballarat as a gold-mining centre at the time. It was set amid a large garden on eleven acres [nearly five hectares] sloping down towards Lake Wendouree.

**The draft statement of significance and the above history were produced as part of an Online Data Upgrade Project 2003. Sources were as follows:**

Jacobs Lewis Vines, Ballarat Conservation Study. Vol 2. Building Inventory, 1978.  
Jacobs Lewis Vines & Aitken, *Ballarat A Guide to Buildings and Areas 1851-1940*, South Yarra [Vic] 1981.  
MMH Partnership, Specification of Materials to be used and work to be done in carrying out and completion of alterations to the Bishop's Palace at 1444 Sturt Street Ballarat, 1984.

## Extent of Registration

Historic Building No. 413. The Bishop's Palace, Sturt Street, West Ballarat, (to the extent of the buildings and the Bishop's Palace house allotment as indicated by the red perimeter on the attached plan).

[*Victoria Government Gazette* No.20 March 14, 1979 p.704]

*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/>*