PERUMAL
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Heritage Consultants

PM-20078

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE IMPACT

Clarence Valley Conservatorium of Music

Nos. 6-8 Villiers Street, Grafton

January 2025

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1.0 Introduction

This report has been prepared on behalf of the Clarence Valley Conservatorium Inc to assess the potential heritage impacts of the proposed alterations and additions to the existing main building and site at Nos. 6-8 Villiers Street, Grafton (the site).

2.0 Background & heritage listing status

The Clarence Valley Conservatorium (CVCON) is located on the eastern side of Villiers Street, in the block bounded by Fitzroy Steet to the north and Victoria Street to the south. A lane also extends mid-block to the rear of the site (**Figure 2.1**).

Villiers Street is a wide, two-way street with grassed verges, street trees, plantings and car parking on both sides. The built context around the site comprises a mix of residential, commercial and educational buildings of one to three storey height and scale and generally dating from the 20th century.

The CVCON is currently accommodated in two buildings including a former timber boarded and FC clad cottage converted for educational uses constructed in the c. early 1930s. The cottage occupies the southern part of the site. The existing, main building which contains a small reception and auditorium was constructed in c. 1985-1986. The buildings occupy an irregularly shaped site. Both buildings address and face the Villiers Street frontage and are connected by walkways and ramps. A pedestrian path and hardstand are located within the Villiers Street frontage and some informal parking is located at the rear and accessed from Hickory Lane.

It is currently proposed to undertake some alterations and additions to the existing main building and remove the existing cottage that has practice, teaching and storage spaces and replace the building with a new purpose designed building with new main entry, staff and teaching spaces and storage to supplement the 1980s building which will be largely retained.

The site is not listed on the State Heritage Register and is not classified by the National Trust of Australia (NSW). The site has not been listed as an item under Schedule 5 of the Clarence Valley Local Environmental Plan 2011 (LEP), however, is located in the Grafton Heritage Conservation Area (C3). There are also a number of listed items in the vicinity, in Villiers and Victoria Streets including residential buildings at Nos. 16 and 28 Victoria Street (I808 and I809 respectively). However, these are separated from the site. The significant St Mary's Precinct and associated buildings including the Convent (No. 2 Villiers Street, I835) are located to the south of the site and south eastern corner of Victoria and Villiers Streets (refer **Figure 2.2**).

As such, Clarence Valley Council must take into consideration the potential heritage impacts of the "removal" and replacement of the existing cottage and new building on the cultural significance of the conservation area, the Villiers Street streetscape, items in the vicinity and their setting. A pre-DA has been undertaken and the proposed works have been reviewed and amended in accordance with Council's advice.

This assessment is based on an inspection of the site, review and analysis of the context. The report follows the standard format, in accordance with NSW Department of Planning and Environment, Environment and Heritage updated guidelines and includes site specific information, description of the existing buildings and their contribution to the area. The proposed works have been assessed with reference to the Clarence Valley Local Environmental Plan 2011, Development Control Plan and standard criteria.

The purpose of the report is to outline the proposed works and how any potential heritage impacts may be reduced or are mitigated.

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Figure 2.1 Location plan.

(Google Maps)

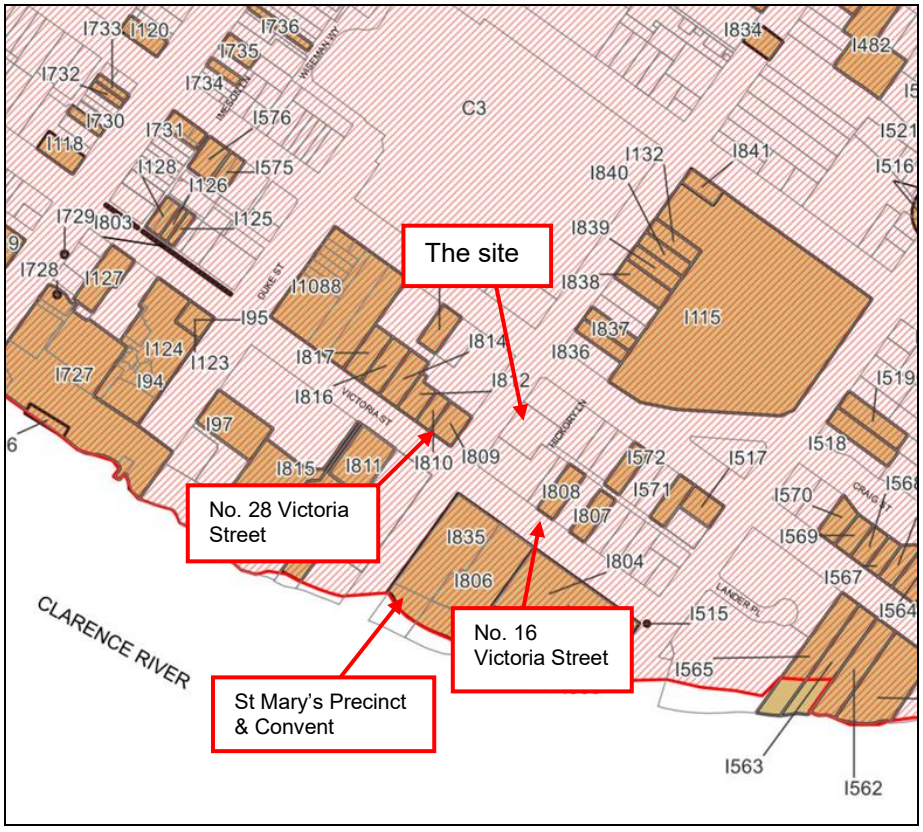

Figure 2.2 LEP Map.

(CVLEP 2011, Map HER_007HB)

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3.0 Historical overview

Prior to European occupation, the Clarence River marked the border between the Bundjalung, Gumbaynggirr and coastal Yaegl peoples.[1] European "settlement" dates from the 1830s. Early visitors, mainly escaped convicts from Port Macquarie and Moreton Bay had traversed the area prior to this time and were aware of the "Big River", however, the River remained largely unknown into the 1830s. Early explorers came in pursuit of timber, however, the need for pastoral development was realised and settlers started to come to the area from 1839, when Governor Gipps also named the river the "Clarence".[2]

Grazing and cedar cutting (and related ship building) became the first commercial activities. Gipps sent out surveyors in 1840 and by the end of 1841 eighteen of the eventual twenty-four parishes had been laid out around the Clarence River. By the end of the 1840s inhabitants requested the establishment of a formal town at the head of navigation of the river.[3] William Wedge Darke, an experienced surveyor who had worked under Robert Hoddle (famous for his grid layouts) was sent to survey the area. When the town of Grafton was laid out in 1849 it was named after the third Duke of Grafton who was the grandfather of Governor Charles Augustus FitzRoy who was New South Wales governor from 1846-1855. By the time of the gazettal the new official town already had a police presence also a courthouse and lock-up. Grafton and South Grafton were incorporated as a Municipality in 1859.[4]

By the 1860s Grafton had developed into a township with more than 2000 inhabitants with both brick and timber buildings located along the well laid out streets. A number of fine public buildings were noted including a School of Arts, the Court House, various banks, Public School, Hospital, Odd Fellows Hall in addition to a number of offices and hotels. In early 1878 it was noted that Grafton also had seven places of worship. Grafton was proclaimed a city in 1885.[5]

A small private school was operating in Grafton before 1850, but public education began in 1852 when the Grafton National School was established. This operated on a site on the eastern side of Prince Street. A new site was later granted and the school was re-established there on the corner of Bacon and Queen Streets in 1871.[6]

Grafton Public School became Grafton Superior Public School in March 1881 and by 1887 it was reported to be the biggest educational establishment (in the colony) north of Newcastle.[7] At this time there was no formal system of secondary education in NSW. However, in the early years of the 20th century there was a general and local push for the establishment of public secondary education. In October 1910 the Government decided to establish a high school in the north of the State and following some activity from parents' associations in Grafton and surrounding districts and lobbying by local members of parliament, it was decided to establish such a school in Grafton. The High School in Grafton was formally opened in July 1912, however, the first classes were started in early 1912 in the Primary School buildings. After some negotiations the Department purchased a site comprising of just over 4 acres on Mary Street in 1913 for the establishment of a separate high school.[8]

[1] Clarence Valley Council website.

[2] Clarence Valley Council, Stubbs, BJ, *A Thematic History of the City of Grafton*, Volume 2 of Community-based Heritage Study (2007), p. 8-12.

[3] Clarence Valley Council, Stubbs, BJ, *A Thematic History of the City of Grafton*, Volume 2 of Community-based Heritage Study (2007), p. 14.

[4] Clarence Valley Council, Stubbs, BJ, *A Thematic History of the City of Grafton*, Volume 2 of Community-based Heritage Study (2007), p. 19.

[5] Clarence Valley Council, Stubbs, BJ, *A Thematic History of the City of Grafton*, Volume 2 of Community-based Heritage Study (2007), p. 22-23.

[6] Clarence Valley Council, Stubbs, BJ, *A Thematic History of the City of Grafton*, Volume 2 of Community-based Heritage Study (2007), p. 30.

[7] Clarence Valley Council, Stubbs, BJ, *A Thematic History of the City of Grafton*, Volume 2 of Community-based Heritage Study (2007), p. 31.

[8] Mack F. & Clarence River Historical Society *Grafton High School Centenary 1912-2012*, (2012), p. 11-13.

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In addition government schools, the churches, particularly the Roman Catholic Church, played a significant role in education in Grafton. A Roman Catholic School had been operating for some years prior to the arrival of the Sisters of Mercy in 1884. The Sisters took over the operation of the school which had been erected in Villiers Street in 1881. A Convent was erected for their accommodation and was completed in late 1884. The two storey, brick building faced the river and was located in close proximity to the St Marys School. A two storey addition to the Convent was also completed in 1913.

The St Marys complex of buildings are located to the south of the subject site in Section 6 of the City of Grafton. The foundation stone for first St Marys Church was laid in September 1866 and the brick and stone building was completed in December 1867. Additions to the Church were made in 1877. The current Presbytery was constructed in 1911. The first St Marys was destroyed by fire in 1913. The foundation stone for the replacement and current St Marys Church was laid in January 1914.[9]

The Sisters also conducted a high school and constructed a new high school building, St Marys College, with frontages to Victoria Street and the river in 1928. The two storey brick building was located between the Convent and St Marys Church. Additions to the College were later constructed on the corner of Victoria and Villiers Street and were officially opened in November 1954. A plaque on the current corner building indicates that additions or a new building were also opened in 1967.[10]

The subject site is part of Allotment 1 of Section 8 of the City of Grafton that was granted to Edward Greenwood in October 1856 (**Figure 3.1**).[11]

It is not known if Greenwood used the allotment in any way, however, he was also granted other parcels of land. In September 1867 probate of the will of Edward Greenwood was awarded to Mary Hoskings Greenwood. The probate of the will of Mary Hoskings Greenwood was then granted to Thomas Bowden, an auctioneer of Grafton, in July 1873.[12]

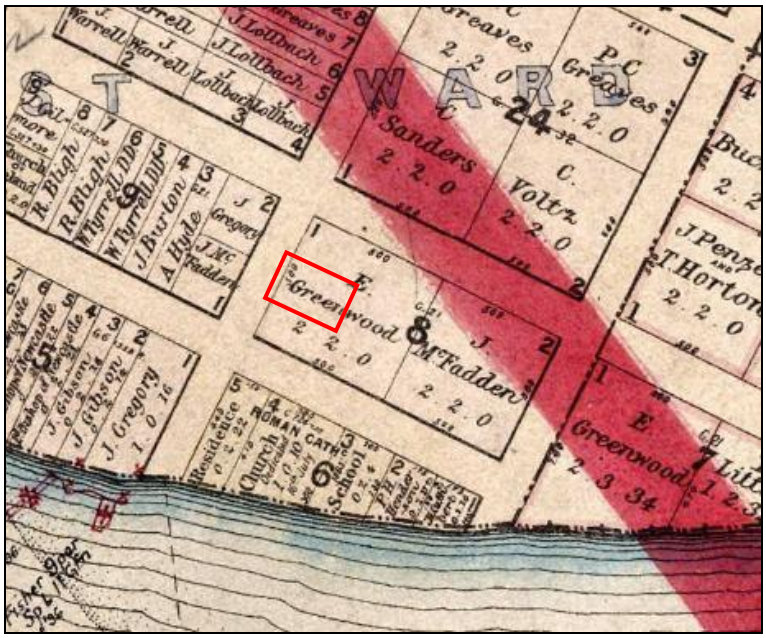

Figure 3.1 The site is part of just over 2 acres granted to Edward Greenwood and part of Section 8 of the City of Grafton.

(NSW Land Registry Services, Historical Parish Map, Grafton Sheet 2 Ed 4)

[9] Clarence Valley Council, Stubbs, BJ, *A Thematic History of the City of Grafton*, Volume 2 of Community-based Heritage Study (2007), p. 31.
[10] Clarence Valley Council, Stubbs, BJ, *A Thematic History of the City of Grafton*, Volume 2 of Community-based Heritage Study (2007), p. 32, 35 & 37.
[11] NSW Land Registry Services, Primary Application No. 30715.
[12] NSW Land Registry Services, Book 207 No. 740.

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By 1879 the "inheritance" had been subdivided and parts were sold by the Bank of NSW and Bowden and later by an assignee of his insolvent estate. The subject site comprises of two portions. The southern part of the subject site was part of a larger, rectangular shaped parcel (Lot 8 of the subdivision) at the south western corner of the grant that had 165 feet frontage along Villiers Street and extended 183 feet along Victoria Street. This lot was conveyed to Timothy Morrissey, an Inn Keeper of Grafton, in September 1882. Morrisey had also purchased two lots to the east of this parcel in 1879.[13]

Morrissey died in August 1887 and the land was passed to his wife. His executors and heir subsequently took out a mortgage, however, the lot was transferred by the Australian Joint Stock Bank Ltd to John Boadle in January 1904. The land was transferred again in 1909 and in March 1914 to Joseph Simon Buckley. Buckley, a plasterer from Grafton, retained ownership until 1927 when the larger lot was transferred to Stuart Edgar Jordon, a shop keeper from Grafton. [14]

In a conveyance dated 21 May 1929 the north western corner of the lot with 56 feet frontage and extending back 96 feet from Villiers Street was transferred to Wunderlich Limited, who had their registered offices in Baptist Street, Redfern (Sydney).[15]

The Wunderlich company was established by Ernest Julius Wunderlich after his arrival in Sydney in 1885. He initially worked as a manufacturers agent for stamped zinc mansard windows and German stamped metal ceilings before establishing a patent for an improved ceiling with his brother Alfred in 1888. By 1897 Wunderlich also advertised as sole agent for imported Marseilles, terracotta roof tiles. The brothers were joined by another brother Otto in 1900 and formed the Wunderlich Patent Ceiling & Roofing Co. Ltd (incorporated in 1904). By the time of the purchase the company had opened branches in all states and in New Zealand. Wunderlich were known for the importation and later manufacture of decorative pressed metal sheeting and products and it was through its production of pressed metal sheeting and tiles, terracotta and asbestos-cement (fibro), the company had a profound influence on Australian domestic, public and commercial buildings.[16]

The Company had asbestos mines near Grafton in the 1940s, which was used to augment the overseas supplies of the fibres used to manufacture fibrous cement sheeting and building products.[17] It is not known why they purchased the site.

At the time of the purchase the land (**Figure 3.3**) was noted as being vacant and unoccupied.[18] However, it is assumed that the current cottage was constructed on the lot from this time, between 1929 and 1939. In 1935 the site was transferred to Charles William Creighton, described as an agent from Grafton and his wife Florence Mary Creighton. It could not be established if the Creightons were associated with Wunderlich. However, in a transfer dated January 1939 the lot was transferred to Ellen Mary Donegan, Mary Jane Coleman, Mary Josephine Flaherty and Elizabeth Wright all Sisters of Mercy of Grafton and to the Trustees of the Sisters of Mercy for the Diocese of Lismore in May 1945.[19]

The Trustees of the Sisters of Mercy had also purchased the "L" shaped parcel of land on the north eastern corner of Victoria and Villiers Street in 1941 and effectively reconsolidated the corner lot (**Figure 3.4**) in November 1945[20] and it would appear developed the corner lot in the 1950s and 1960s.

[13] NSW Land Registry Services, Book 207 No. 740, Book 235 No. 546, Book 255 No. 515 & Book 1560 No. 359.

[14] NSW Land Registry Services, Book 651 No. 860, Book 1488 No. 778.

[15] NSW Land Registry Services, Book 1560 No. 359, Primary Application No. 30715 & Certificate of Title, Volume 4118 Folio 36.

[16] Wikipedia & Australian Dictionary of Biography, *Ernest Julius Wunderlich (1859–1945).*

[17] Trove, "Wunderlich Ltd", extract from an address from Mr Alfred Wunderlich, Master Builders Federation of Australia, *Building and Engineering* (magazine), May 24, 1948, p. 59.

[18] NSW Land Registry Services, Primary Application No. 30715.

[19] NSW Land Registry Services, Certificate of Title, Volume 4118 Folio 36.

[20] NSW Land Registry Services, Certificates of Title, Volume 5231 Folio 6 & Volume 5536 Folio 231.

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Figure 3.2 Plan indicating the subdivision of Section 8. The subject site comprises of two portions including part of the larger, corner Lot 8 and Lots 12,13 and part of Lot 11 with frontage along Villiers Street.

(NSW Land Registry Services, Grafton Charting Map, Sheet 9)

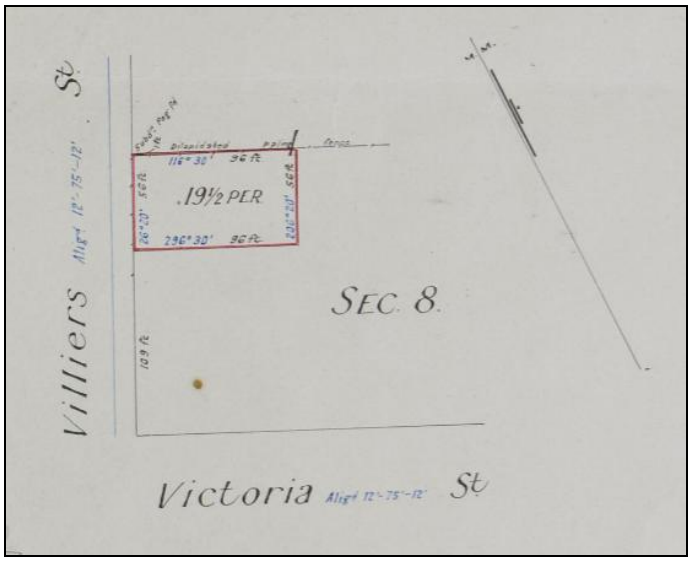


Figure 3.3 Part of the subject site transferred to Wunderlich Ltd in 1929 and to the Sisters of Mercy in 1939.

(NSW Land Registry Services, CT Volume 4418 Folio 36)

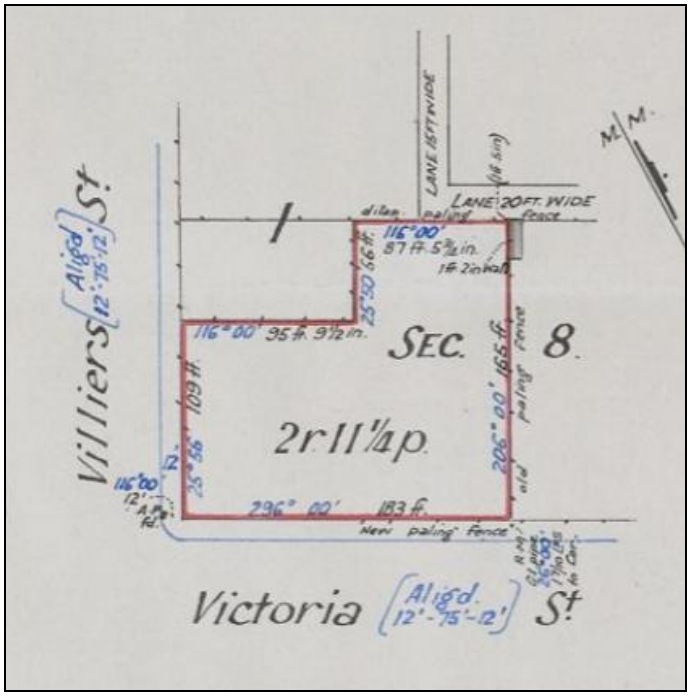
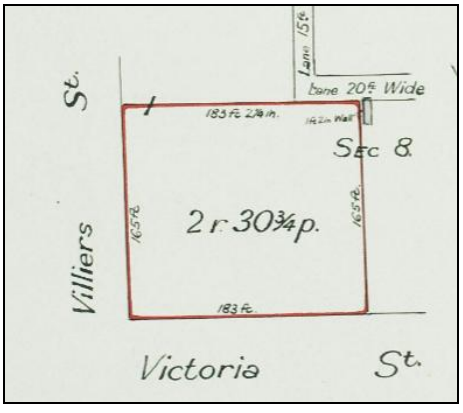


Figure 3.4 L shaped parcel purchased by the Sisters of Mercy in 1941 and area reconsolidated later in 1945 (below).

(NSW Land Registry Services, CT Volume 5231 Folio 6 & Volume 5536 Folio 231)



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The northern part of the subject site, with nearly 74 feet frontage along Villiers Street and extending back 132 feet to a 15 feet wide rear lane (part of Lot 11 and all of Lots 12, 13 of the subdivision of the original grant) had also been transferred several times before it was also acquired by the Trustees of the Sisters of Mercy, Diocese of the Lismore, in September 1950.[21]

Title documents indicate that land was in the occupation of FO Gallagher (No. 6 Villiers Street) and H May (No. 8 Villiers Street) and confirms that the property to the south west was also owned and occupied by the Sisters. The plan on the title (**Figure 3.5**) also indicates that buildings existed on this portion of the site at the time of purchase.[22]

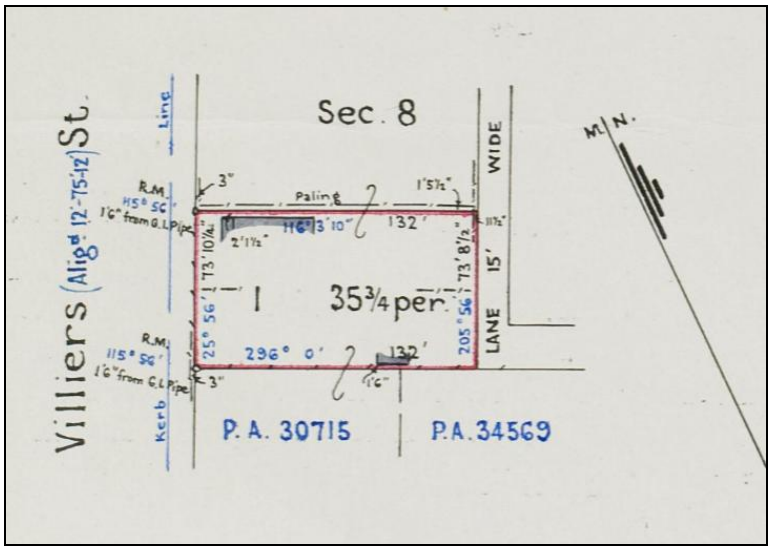

Figure 3.5 The northern portion of the site purchased by the Trustees of the Sisters of Mercy, Diocese of Lismore in 1950.

(NSW Land Registry Services, CT Volume 6381 Folio 161)

3.1 The development of the Clarence Valley Conservatorium Inc

Music Rooms were established by the Sisters of Mercy at Nos. 4-8 Villiers Street in the 1930s. The classes were run as part of the Catholic school system, but lessons were also offered to non-Catholic students.[23] It is assumed initially in the cottage (now No. 6 that remains on the subject site) from the time of its purchase in 1939 and later in the two cottages located to its north. Various newspaper articles indicate the achievements of the school and musical scholarships awarded to its students.[24]

The Sisters continued and some fifty years later, in 1982, the land consolidated was re-subdivided (the site was part of Lot 1, **Figure 3.6**).[25] From this time, under the direction of the Sr Cecilia Moran a new purpose built premises was constructed. A plaque on the building notes 1982, however, it is understood that that the current building, named St Cecilia's Music Academy was constructed in c. 1985-1986. The new brick building appears to have replaced the two cottages previously referred to as Nos. 6 and 8 Villiers Street. The architect was Vilhy Brickman of local firm, McDonald Brickman and Corkhill.[26]

An undated photograph (**Figure 3.7**) shows Sr Cecelia in the midst of a youth orchestra in the new hall. Sr Cecilia was a foundation member of the International Society for Musical Education and in 1982 was presented with an Order of Australia for her contribution to musical culture.[27]

[21] NSW Land Registry Services, Certificate of Title, Volume 6381 Folio 162 & Primary Application No. 37521.
[22] NSW Land Registry Services, Certificate of Title, Volume 6381 Folio 162.
[23] Clarence Valley Conservatorium Inc website – History.
[24] Trove.
[25] NSW Land Registry Services, Certificates of Title, Volume 6381 Folio 162, Volume 14901 Folios 170 & 171. Cecilia Moran, pi
[26] Clarence Valley Conservatorium Inc website – History & Mr Warren Steele, DRA Architects.
[27] Institute of Sisters of Mercy in Australia and Papua New Guinea, website, Architects and Heritage – Education.

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In 1995 the centre became an independent, incorporated, community based organisation called the St Cecilia's Music and Performing Arts Centre of Grafton Inc. The Sisters ceased to be involved in the day to day operations of the centre which was run by a a newly formed Management Committee and Administrator. The Sisters, however, retained ownership of the buildings and for the next two years, the centre became a campus of the Northern Rivers Conservatorium.

In 1999 St Cecilia's received funding from the Department of Education and Training under the Regional Conservatorium Program and was formally accepted into the NSW Regional Conservatorium Association.[28]

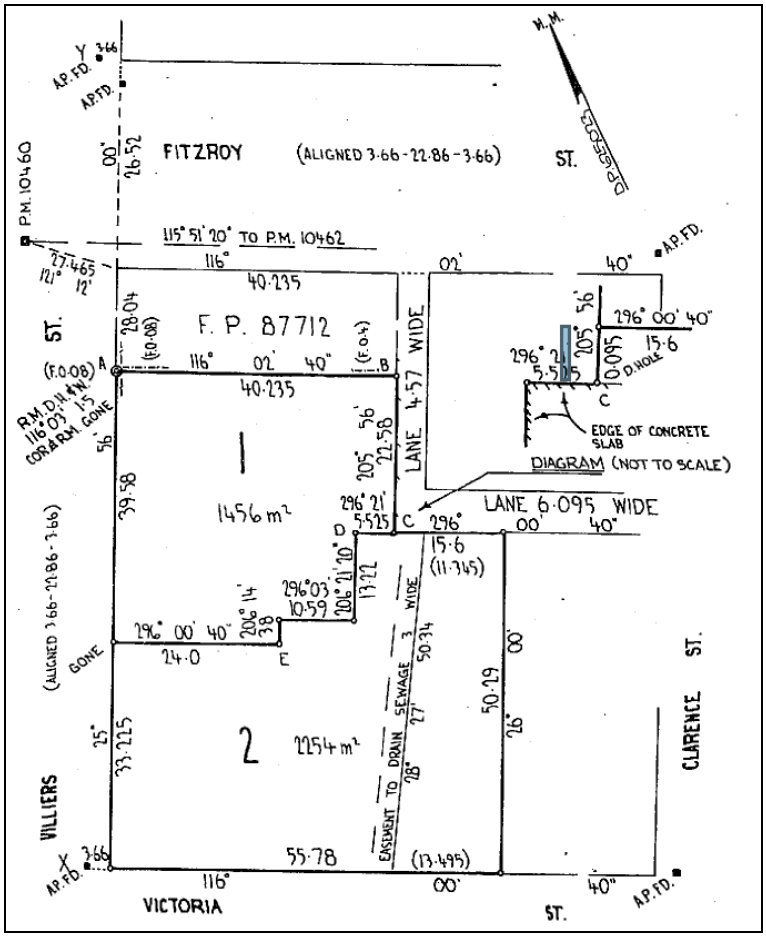

Figure 3.6 The land consolidated by Trustees of the Sisters of Mercy was re-subdivided in 1982. The site is part of Lot 1.

(NSW Land Registry Services, CT Volume 14901 Folio 170)

Figure 3.7 Undated image of Sr Cecilia in the midst of a youth orchestra in the new hall in Grafton.

(Institute of Sisters of Mercy in Australia and Papua New Guinea, website, Architects and Heritage - Education)

[28] Clarence Valley Conservatorium Inc website – History,

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To reflect the amalgamation of several local council regions the name was changed to the Clarence Valley Conservatorium Inc in 2003. At the same time ownership of the site was transferred from the Trustees of the Sisters of Mercy and a Director was appointed alongside the Administrator and Clerical Officer. In 2006 the staff structure changed and in 2008 was expanded.[29]

The current site was formed in c. 2003.[30] Since that time the CVCON has continued to use and maintain the buildings with only minor changes and upgrades undertaken.

In 2017 a DA was submitted and approved by Council for the addition of access ramps and stairs. In 2018 additions to the music academy were also approved by Council and a DA for rooftop solar panels was also submitted and approved in 2020.[31]

A recent aerial photograph (**Figure 3.8**) shows the two existing buildings occupying the irregularly shaped site and built context. The main hipped and curved roof forms of the modern main building are visible with the solar panels added in c. 2020. The larger building retains a hall and administration and staff areas with some teaching/practice spaces and facilities. The building is setback from the front Villiers Street frontage and rear lane. Some open green spaces also remain around the building and adjacent converted cottage. The smaller, former cottage is constructed closer to the street frontage and has a main gabled roof form with separate verandah roofs extending around three sides. The building has practice and teaching spaces located within, however, has poor acoustics and is not fit for the current uses. Today, the CVCON continues the traditions established in the 1930s, however, requires additional accommodation and facilities so that it can continue to cater for the local and wider community.

Figure 3.8 Recent aerial showing the two existing buildings occupying the irregularly shaped site and built context.

Google Maps)

[29] Clarence Valley Conservatorium Inc website – History & NSW Land Registry Services, Folio 10/ 1047477, Transfer 9520276, 10/04/2003.
[30] NSW Land Registry Services, DP 1047477, 10/810 approved 6/9/2002.
[31] Clarence Valley Council, DA2017/0194, DA2018/0159 & DA2020/0488.

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4.0 The site context

The CVCON is located on the eastern side of Villiers Street in the block between Fitzroy and Victoria Streets. Villiers Street is a wide two-way street with grassed verges and car parking located on both sides. The built context in this section of the street is characterised by a mix of one to three storey, relatively low scale residential, commercial/ hotel and educational buildings that largely date from the 20th century. The built context is enhanced by mature street and garden trees and plantings.

To the immediate north of the site, extending to the eastern corner of Fitzroy Street is a large, two and three storey late 20th / early 21st century commercial building (No. 41 A Fitzroy Street, Cetnaj Lighting, Electrical and Data). The building has a long rectangular shaped footprint extending along the Fitzroy Street frontage and a narrow façade facing Villiers Street rendered and lightweight metal clad walls, parapeted main roof and aluminium framed windows. Two, three storey high square towers with a hipped/ pyramidal roofs are located at each end of the building. Skillion roofed awnings and an open verandah with a separate metal roof supported on concrete columns and steel struts and framing also extend from the main building form. The verandah roofs also shade the ground floor glazed shopfronts.

No. 41A Fitzroy Street is setback from the shared boundary with the subject site. A concrete crossover and driveway extends from the Villiers Street frontage and accesses the sealed car parking area located between the commercial building and Colorbond boundary fence. The car parking area is also accessible from Hickory Lane which separates the property from the large two storey face and painted brick building (Grafton Central Motel, No. 37 Fitzroy Street) occupying the property to the east.

To the south of the site, on the north eastern corner of Villiers and Victoria Street, is a two storey, late 20th century building with face brick walls, aluminium windows and doors and a flat metal roof with simple projecting eaves. The building (Child and Wellbeing Hub, Nos. 18-26 Victoria Street) has an L-shaped footprint with main wing (and entry) on Victoria Street. Constructed as part of St Marys College (1950s-1967)[32], the building accommodates community and educational services and has a narrow façade facing and constructed close to the Villiers Street frontage. The main building is also setback from the shared boundary with the subject site. A concrete crossover accesses a sealed driveway that extends between the building and low brick boundary fence. A single storey brick garage with attached carports occupies the north eastern corner of the property and is constructed to the shared boundary with the site. A sealed basketball court and open courtyard and garden spaces are also located at the rear of the building. The basketball court also extends across the rear of the subject site.

Figure 4.1 Villiers Street is a wide two-way street with deep, grassed verges, car parking and mature street trees along both sides.

[32] Plaque on Victoria Street façade.

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Figure 4.2 To the north of the site, No. 41A Fitzroy Street is a late 20th/ early 21st century two and three storey commercial building.

Figure 4.3 No. 41A Fitzroy Street has rendered parapet and lightweight walls and roof cladding and prominent awnings and open verandah extending around the front of the building.

Figure 4.4 No. 41A Fitzroy Street is setback from the shared boundary with the subject site (at right). A driveway and sealed car park is located between. The two storey Grafton Central Motel, No. 37 Fitzroy Street, is located beyond.

Figure 4.5 To the immediate south of the site, Nos. 18-26 Victoria Street is a two storey brick and steel modern building with flat roof.

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Figure 4.6 Nos. 18-26 Victoria Street is constructed close to the Villiers Street frontage with a planted garden bed located between. Large streets trees are also located around the building.

Nos. 18-26 Victoria Street is also setback from the shared boundary with the subject site (at left).

Figure 4.7 A driveway and a detached garage and carport are located between Nos. 18-26 Victoria Street and shared boundary with the subject site.

Figure 4.8 The intersection of Villiers and Victoria Streets which is also framed by several mature street trees. The St Mary's Precinct extends from the south eastern corner of the intersection.

Figure 4.9 Nos. 18-26 Victoria Street.

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Further along the northern side of Victoria Street and located to the south east of the subject site are two detached residential buildings. No. 14 Victoria Street is a single storey, timber boarded and brick Post-war dwelling with a hipped roof clad in terracotta tiles and a brick chimney. The dwelling is setback from the street frontage with open grassed area located between. An open grassed area and vacant site also extends east of building to Clarence Street.

No. 16 Victoria Street is a two storey, timber framed and boarded, Federation style building that has been divided into flats. The building has gable main roof form and rear wing and infilled verandah and balcony facing Victoria Street. The building, which has been listed as a local item, is set well back from the Victoria Street frontage which has a modern steel palisade fence.

The rear of these properties also have rear and vehicular access from Hickory Lane which extends mid-block from Clarence Street to the rear of the subject and neighbouring sites. No. 16 Victoria Street has a deep setback from the rear lane with open garden and driveway accessing car parking spaces and a carport located in the rear yard.

Figure 4.10 Nos. 14 and 16 Victoria Street.

Figure 4.11 No. 16 Victoria Street which has been listed as a local item.

Victoria Street is also a wide, two-way street with deep verges and car parking each side. Some large street trees are also located around the intersection with Villiers Street. The St Mary's buildings occupy the block extending from the south eastern corner of the intersection and between Victoria Street and the riverfront.

The Convent (No. 2 Villiers Street) is setback from the street frontages and is a large, two storey face brick building with rendered details and hipped and gabled roofs clad in terracotta tiles and metal sheeting. Later additions including single storey flat roofed brick garages and the modern Mercy Centre are located closer to the corner and Victoria Street frontage.

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A sealed driveway, open setback, garden and paved forecourt areas separate the buildings from the neighbouring former School building, St Mary's Church and Presbytery which are prominent two storey, face brick buildings with large pitched roofs clad in terracotta tiles and slates. The buildings have varying setbacks from the Victoria Street frontage and are also enhanced by low, face brick fences with steel and iron railings and details.

Figure 4.12 Victoria Street looking east from the intersection with Villiers Street. The street is also a wide tow-way street with deep grassed verges, some street trees and car parking each side.

Figure 4.13 The St Marys Precinct extends from the south eastern corner between the southern side of Victoria Street and riverfront.

Figure 4.14 The Convent (No. 2 Villiers Street) is setback from the corner and addresses Villiers Street and the river.

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Figure 4.15 The Convent looking from Victoria Street. Modern additions, the Mercy Centre and garages are located between the building and the Victoria Street frontage. A driveway and open areas are also located between the buildings which have been listed as local items.

Figure 4.16 St Marys College, Church and Presbytery buildings.

Opposite the subject site, on the western side of Villiers Street and western corner of Villiers and Fitzroy Street, is a modern hotel complex (Quality Inn Grafton, No. 51 Fitzroy Street). The building comprises of two sections constructed to the corner and close to the Fitzroy and Villiers Street frontages. A long, narrow wing with gabled roof clad in terracotta tiles and open verandahs and balconies extends parallel to the Villiers Street boundary which has a rendered brick fence with modern steel palisaded between the rendered piers. The fence continued to and returns around the north western corner of Villiers and Victoria Street and street frontages of No. 28 Victoria Street.

No. 28 Victoria Street is a single storey, Inter-war timber boarded and FC clad dwelling with gabled and gabled hipped main roof clad in corrugated steel. The dwelling, which has been listed as a local item, has an open front verandah which wraps around the front, south eastern corner. The building is setback from the street frontages with lawn and garden beds located between. A driveway and service areas separates the house from the neighbouring hotel buildings.

The neighbouring site (No. 30 Victoria Street) is vacant. Further west, the neighbouring buildings and some properties located on the southern side of Victoria Street, including the Post-War face brick offices at No. 31 Victoria Street have also been listed as items.

On the south western corner of Villiers and Victoria Street, the Clarence House Villas (No. 1 Villiers Street) are a complex of single storey, face brick late 20th century attached dwellings with low lying hipped roofs clad in terracotta tiles and aluminium framed windows. The buildings are setback from the street frontages which have a brick fence with steel infilled between brick piers. The large site is also bounded by deep grassed verges and a large Fig is located at the corner. Villiers Street is terminated by the Clarence River.

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Figure 4.17 Villiers Street looking north from near the junction with Victoria Street.

Figure 4.18 The modern hotel buildings located opposite the subject site, on the western side of Villiers Street and western corner of Villiers and Fitzroy Street, (Quality Inn Grafton, No. 51 Fitzroy Street).

Figure 4.19 The hotel buildings from the front of the subject site.

Figure 4.20 The Hotel wing extending along the western side of Villiers Street opposite the subject site.

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Figure 4.21 A driveway and service area separate the modern hotel buildings from No. 28 Victoria Street which is located to the south west of the subject site, on the north western corner of Villiers and Victoria Streets.

Figure 4.22 No. 28 Victoria Street which has been listed as a local item.

Figure 4.23 The rear of the Quality Inn and part of the vacant site (No. 30) to the west of No. 28 Victoria Street.

Figure 4.24 Listed dwellings to the west of the vacant site (No. 30 Victoria Street).

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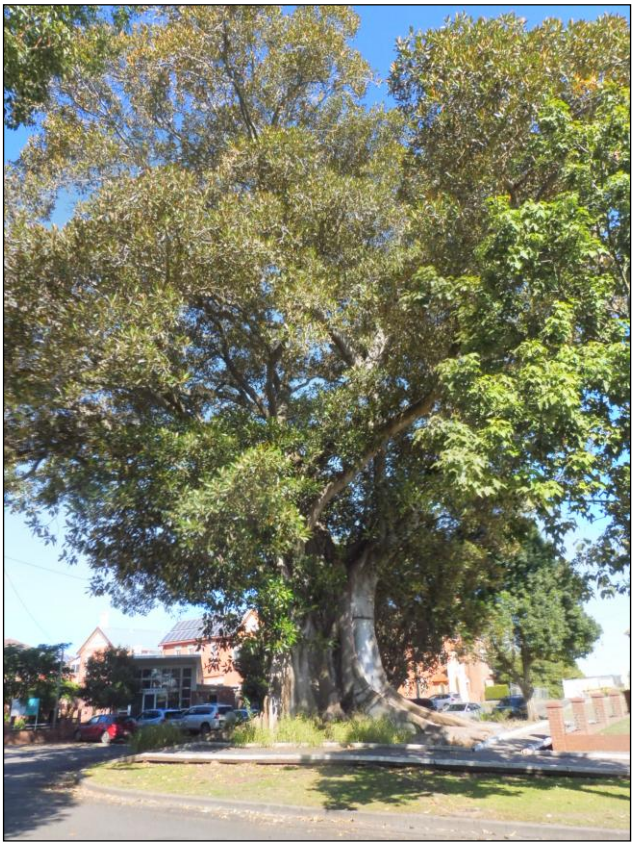

Figure 4.25 The large mature Fig tree and buildings at the south western corner of Villiers and Victoria Streets.

Figure 4.26 The end of Villiers Street south of the intersection with Victoria Street.

5.0 Clarence Valley Conservatorium, Nos. 6-8 Villiers Street

The CVCON is currently accommodated in two very different, single storey buildings that are connected by an open verandah, access ramp and steps. The buildings occupy an irregular L-shaped site that has main frontage on Villiers Street and also extends back and is accessible from Hickory Lane.

The existing main (1980s) building occupies the slightly longer, northern section of the site and is a modern, late 20th century face brick building with a gabled hipped main roof with brick parapeted and raised curved and skillion roof sections clad in corrugated steel and timber framed windows and doors. The roof also has some roof elements, ventilators and solar panels and boarded finish to the gabled and curved ends. An open verandah with concrete floor and a curved roof supported on simple steel posts wraps around the front and two sides of the building.

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A small, semi-detached, brick amenities block with parapeted walls is located at the eastern end of the southern verandah.

The main entry has simple double doors located toward the northern end of the front Villiers Street façade that open into a double loaded corridor that accesses a hall/ auditorium space with high ceiling and stage and a small reception/ office space and individual practice rooms that extend along the northern side of the corridor and building. The corridor kinks at the eastern end and also accesses storage, staff room and additional practice spaces at the eastern end of the building.

The interior is simply finished and has concrete floor with carpeted and timber floor finishes, brick and lightweight walls and suspended ceilings.

The main building is setback from the Villiers Street frontage. A wide sealed path extends from the front boundary to the building entry. A concrete crossover and hardstand are also located in the front setback. A large street tree is also located in front of the building.

The existing main building is also setback from the Hickory Lane boundary. An open grassed area and informal staff car park are located at the rear of the building.

Practice and teaching spaces and storage areas are also located within the converted cottage that occupies the southern part of the subject site. The cottage is a single storey, timber framed, timber boarded and FC clad Inter-war building with main gabled and skillion roofed sections clad in corrugated steel and timber framed windows and doors. The building is elevated above street level and sits on brick piers and also has a face brick chimney.

The front facade of the former cottage has a larger, wide gable and front projecting bay also with a gabled end with timber battened details facing the street and an infilled verandah. The front bay has a window with decorative timber bracketed awning. Matching awnings are also located over the windows on the northern façade. The infilled verandah wraps around the front, south western corner of the building and has multi-paned timber framed windows on a FC clad base and a separate skillion roof.

Contemporary steel ramps and steps have been added along the north western façade and front of the building. The structure is elevate above the original front steps and rendered dwarf wall.

The former cottage is setback from the street frontage which has a small garden with some rock edging and no fence. A low brick fence extends along the south western side boundary (shared with Nos. 18-26 Victoria Street).

The rear of the building also has an infilled verandah and is setback from the rear site boundary. A modern brick shed with aluminium windows and a flat roof occupies the rear yard and south eastern corner of the site.

Internally, the former cottage has timber floors with carpeted and vinyl floor finishes, lightweight walls, battened and decorative plaster ceilings and timber joinery including simple timber skirtings, architraves and picture rails. The former living room retains a splayed with painted brick surround.

The interior retains a sense of the early and typical layout with rooms located about the central entry and hall which extends from the front to the rear infilled verandahs. However, some walls have been removed and spaces opened up. Services and service areas have bene typically upgraded and modified and some elements have been added in an attempt to improve the acoustics and sound attenuation in the spaces.

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Figure 5.1 The site in context

Figure 5.2 The northern side boundary and surrounds.

Figure 5.3 The existing main, 1980s building from Villiers Street. A large street tree is located in front of the building.

Figure 5.4 The cottage which occupies the southern part of the site.

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Figure 5.5 A large street tree is also located in front of the cottage.

Figure 5.6 The existing main building has face brick walls and parapets and gable hipped main roof with curved and skillion roof sections clad in metal sheeting. A wide sealed pedestrian path extends from the Villiers Street façade to the building entry which is located toward the northern end of the front façade.

Figure 5.7 The 1980s building is setback from the Villiers Street frontage. Lawn and garden beds are located in front of the building.

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Figure 5.8 The 1980s building is located close to the northern side boundary. Open verandahs extend across the front and two sides of the building.

Figure 5.9 The building entry and open front verandah.

Figure 5.10 An existing concrete crossover and driveway are also located in the front setback and extend to the southern end of the front façade and verandah.

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Figure 5.11 The front, south western corner of the 1980s building and roof.

Figure 5.12 The southern side verandah. A semi-detached, simple brick amenities block is located at the eastern end.

Figure 5.13 The south eastern façade and roof.

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Figure 5.14 The existing amenities block.

Figure 5.15 An open lawn currently serving as an informal staff car parking area is located at the rear of the building and is accessed from Hickory Lane.

Figure 5.16 The rear amenities block has simple parapeted wall and roof.

Figure 5.17 A games court (part of No. 18-26 Victoria Street, at left) also extends across the rear of part of the site.

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Figure 5.18 The rear of the building also appears to have had a verandah which has been infilled. A ramp extends to the existing rear doors.

Figure 5.19 The building from Hickory Lane and rear of No. 41A Fitzroy Street.

Figure 5.20 The building is simply finished. The entry opens into a double loaded corridor which accesses the auditorium (double doors at right and below) and reception, offices and practice rooms which run along the northern side (at left).

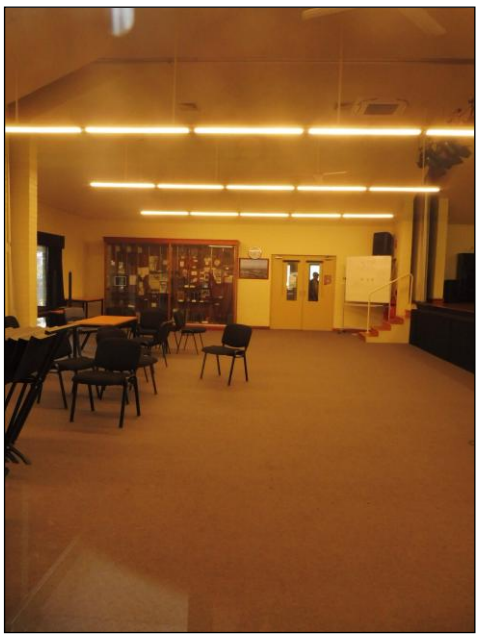

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Figure 5.21 Modern ramps and steps connect the two buildings.

Figure 5.22 The ramps and steps added in c. 2017 also access the cottage.

Figure 5.23 The cottage has two street facing gables with simple timber battened details to the gable ends, a front projecting bay with a hooded window and an infilled verandah which wraps around the front, south western corner and side of the building.

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Figure 5.24 The original front verandah steps and dwarf wall remain below the access landing and front steps added in c. 2017.

Figure 5.25 The infilled verandah which is located close to the southern side boundary which has a low brick fence.

Figure 5.26 The window openings on the front bay and northern façade have awnings with decorative timber brackets. Aluminium screens have also been added to the windows.

Figure 5.27 The access ramp and elements between the two buildings.

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Figure 5.28 The rear wing and infilled rear verandah. A small annex (at left) also extends from the south eastern corner of the cottage.

Figure 5.29 The rear yard and setback.

Figure 5.30 The rear annex which appears to be a later addition.

Figure 5.31 A modern brick shed with a flat roof and aluminium windows is located in the rear yard and south eastern corner of the site.

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Figure 5.32 A shade-cloth and support also have been added to the rear yard.

Figure 5.33 The buildings are separate and are only connected by the covered verandah and open ramp and landings.

Figure 5.34 The rear of the cottage which also has a wide gable.

Figure 5.35 The cottage sits on brick piers and is elevated above the rear yard level.

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Figure 5.36 The original recessed entry in the infilled front verandah.

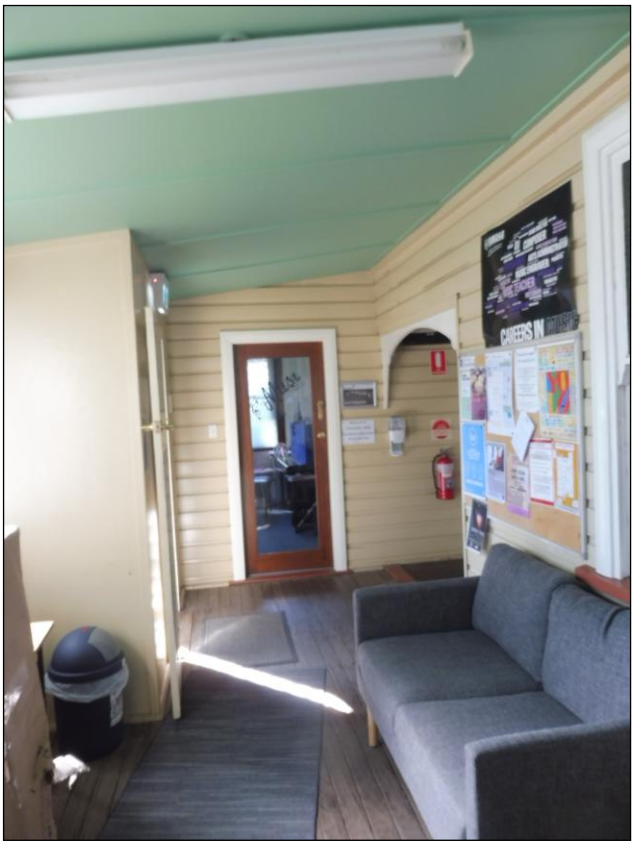

Figure 5.37 The verandah has timber floors and a battened sheeted ceiling. A door opening has been added to access a small practice room in the front projecting bay.

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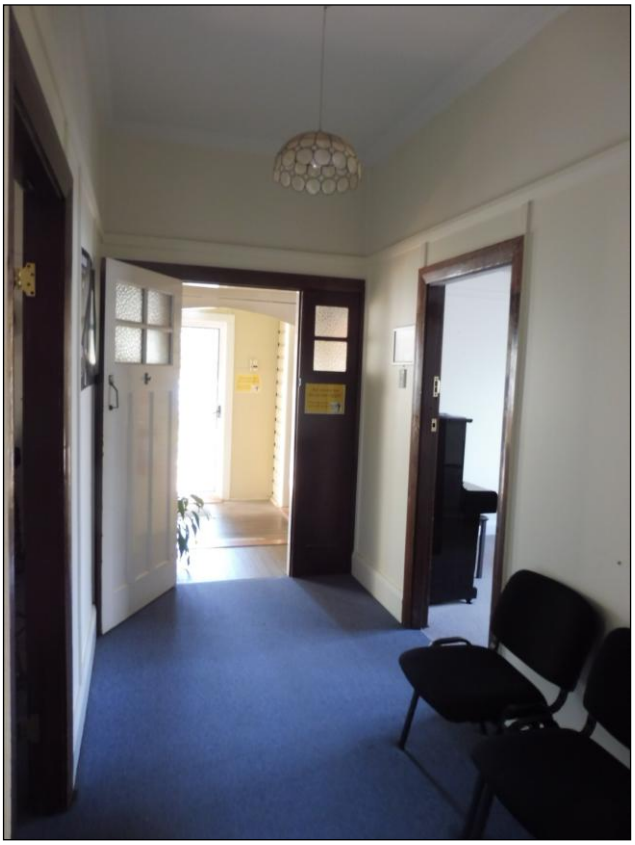


Figure 5.38 The original entry. The interior retains a typical layout with main rooms located about the central hall and has high decorative plaster, battened and simple sheeted ceilings. The interior also retains timber joinery including the front entry door and sidelight.

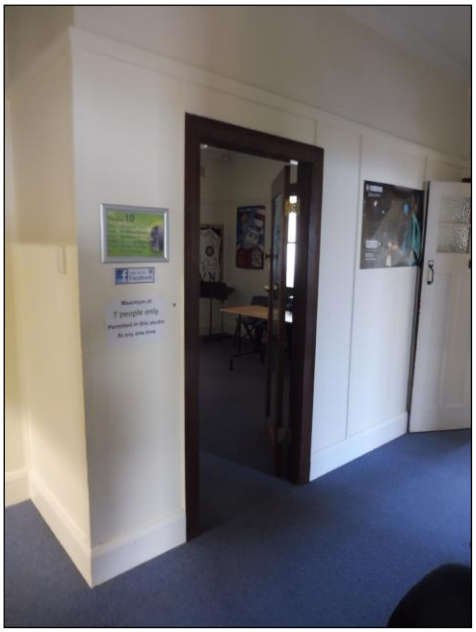
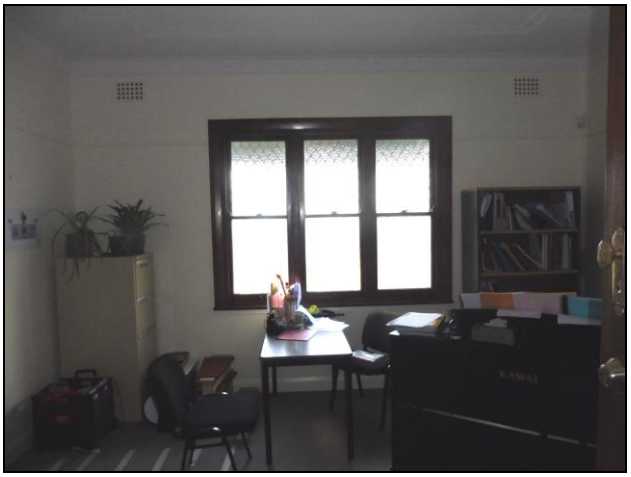


Figure 5.39 Room on the northern side of the corridor which also retains timber windows.



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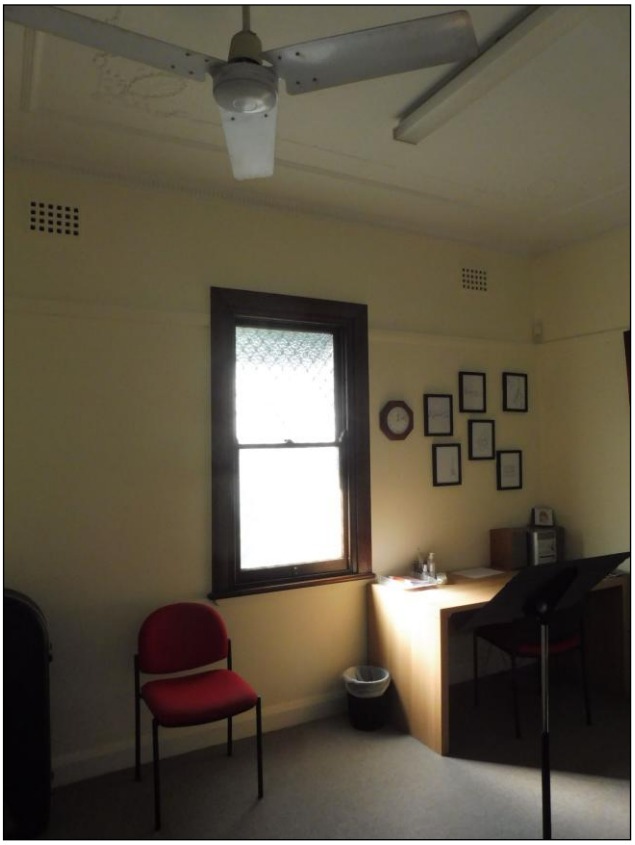
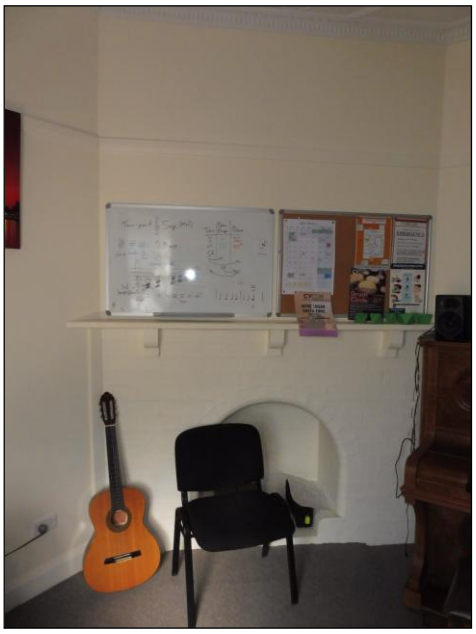


Figure 5.40 Room on the northern side of the hall which also has a splayed fireplace with painted brick surround and a simple bracketed timber mantle.



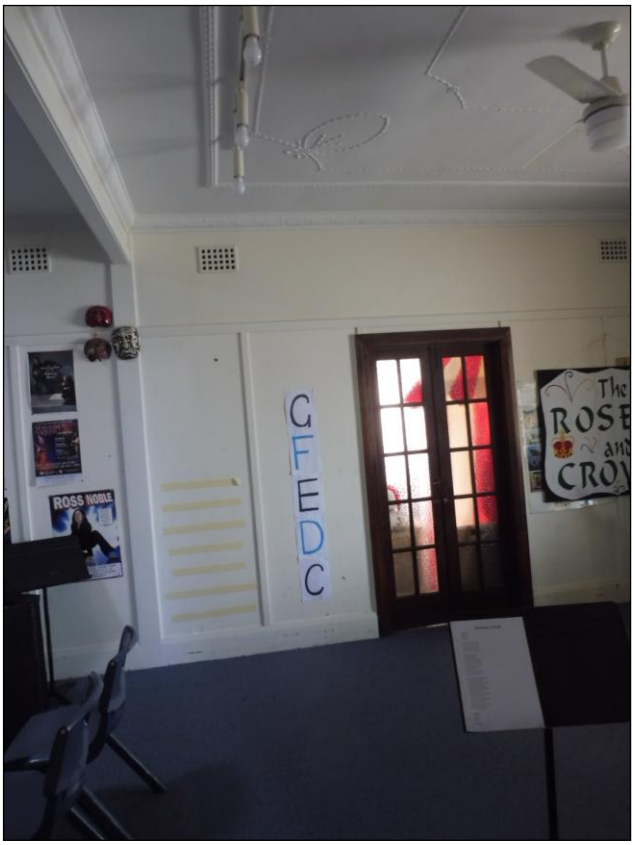
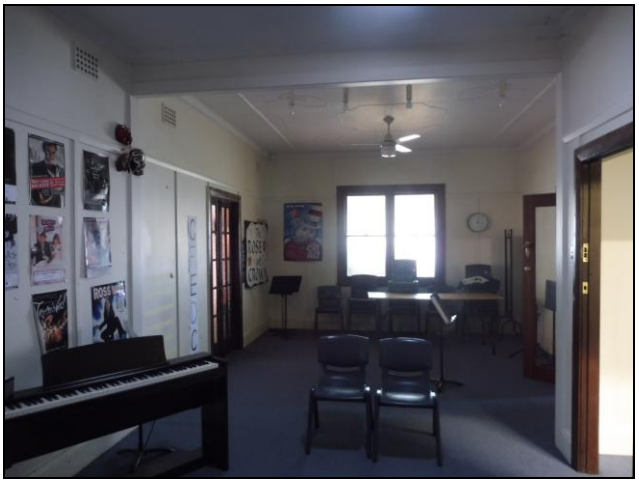


Figure 5.41 The main rooms on the southern side of the central hall have been opened up, however, also retain high decorative plaster ceilings and timber joinery including timber windows and panelled doors facing into the front and side infilled verandah.



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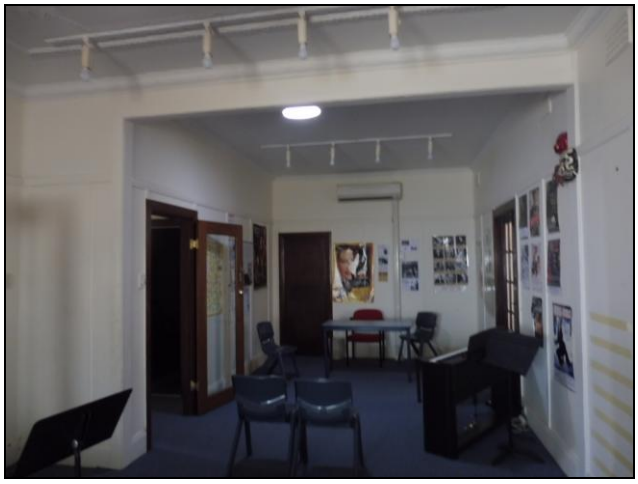

Figure 5.42 The opened up spaces. Lighting and services have generally been added.

Figure 5.43 The infilled southern and rear verandahs.

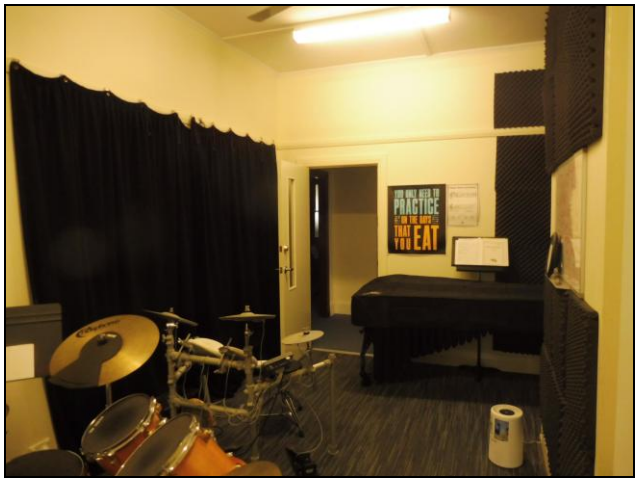

Figure 5.44 A rear practice room. Elements (carpets, curtains and flexible acoustic panels) have been added to improve the acoustics.

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Figure 5.45 The rear practice room.

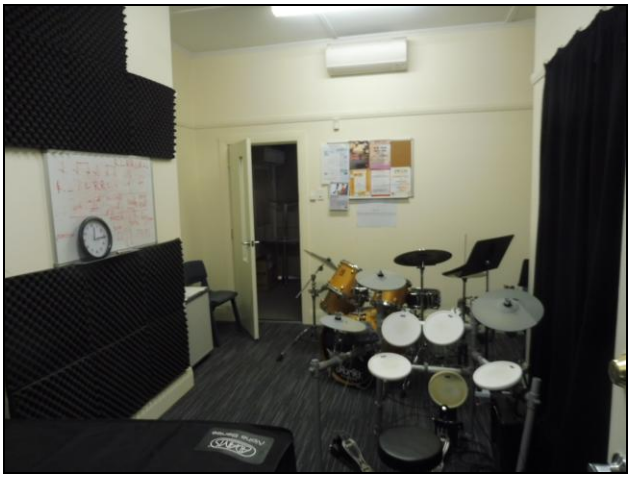

Figure 5.46 The bathroom which has also been typically modified.

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6.0 Summary analysis and assessment

Nos. 6-8 Villiers Street has not been identified as a local heritage item, however, is also located in the Grafton Heritage Conservation Area.

The subject site and neighbouring properties are part of an early, 1856 land grant and late Victorian period (c. 1870s) subdivision. The lots that now comprise the subject site appear to have been transferred a number of times before they were developed in the early 20th century. Sisters of Mercy from Grafton purchased the existing cottage (now No. 6 Villiers Street) in 1939 and established their music school here from this time.

The lot on which the cottage was constructed was noted as being vacant in 1929 when it was purchased by Wunderlich Ltd. It is assumed that the cottage was constructed between 1929 and 1939 by which time the ownership of the lot had been transferred (in 1935). The house style is consistent with this period and retains some decorative plaster ceilings and FC sheet cladding, however, no pressed metal or elements for which Wunderlich are renown. The firm had a presence in Grafton later, in the 1940s, however, no other links could be established.

The subject site was amalgamated by the Trustees of the Sisters of Mercy in 1945 at which time the northern portion of the site was occupied by two cottages. It would appear that the three cottages were used by the Sisters, who also developed the corner site to the south (Nos. 18-26 Victoria Street). The current main, 1980s building appears to have replaced two of the three cottages.

The Sisters of Mercy played a significant role in the establishment and early development of what is now the CVCON. Their direct role ceased in 1995 and ownership of the site and buildings were transferred in 2003. However, the site is located close to the significant St Marys Precinct which remains as a strong reminder of the association and their role in the development of the area around the intersection of Victoria and Villiers Streets.

The subject site is also located in the Grafton Heritage Conservation Area which is recognised for its historic and aesthetic values. The Statement of Significance for the area states:

> *…Grafton (including South Grafton) is historically significant for its pivotal role as an administrative centre associated with the development of the North Coast during late 19th Century and for its exceptional collection of intact and noteworthy domestic, commercial, civic and ecclesiastical buildings and settings. Grafton also contains the magnificent canopies of ficus, jacarandas and camphor laurels which provide shade and colour while serving to link the natural and manmade features of the city.*[33]

The existing buildings are now part of a diverse streetscape and built context.

The cottage (No. 6 Villiers Street) is now the only remaining detached “dwelling” addressing Villiers Street in the block between Fitzroy Street and the river. Villiers Street, north of Fitzroy Street and surrounding streets, including Fitzroy, Clarence and Victoria Streets retain a number of detached cottages and dwellings, a number of which have been listed as local items. Two in the vicinity of the subject site which were listed as items (Nos. 12 and 30 Victoria Street) appear to have been demolished, however, Nos. 16 Victoria Street, 5 Clarence Street, 25 and 31 Fitzroy Street remain in the block and are significant for their character and group value.

The CVCON buildings are separate and not visible in the context of these items. No. 28 Victoria Street has a side facing gabled wing that is visible in Villiers Street, however, like the other items the primary views are from the main, primary Victoria, Clarence and Fitzroy street addresses.

[33] NSW Heritage Database, No. 1640088.

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The cottage on the subject site remains as part of the early 20th century, Inter-war period of development of the local area. Despite some alterations including the infill of the front and rear verandahs, addition at the rear and access upgrades, the building retains its original scale, character and period external details including timber boarded claddings, front projecting bays, gabled roof and details of the gable ends, timber windows and doors and bracketed hoods.

The interior has also undergone some alterations and modifications, however, also retains a strong sense of its early layout and internal details including timber joinery and plaster and battened ceilings.

Typical upgrades and maintenance including painting and addition of linings and finishes and upgrade of services areas have been undertaken. The roof cladding also appears to have been replaced.

The CVCON buildings make some visual contribution to this section of the Villiers Street and are enhanced by the wide street proportions, street trees and surrounding garden areas, however, the cottage in particular has lost its residential context and is dominated by the larger, neighbouring, commercial, hotel and mixed use buildings. Two large street trees in front of the subject buildings also screen and obscure some views to and from the site.

A number of similar, Inter-war period, timber dwellings remain in the wider area and particularly in Mary, Alice and Fry Streets. A number of these are also protected by heritage listing.

The building has not been used as a residence since 1939. The building appears in good and sound condition and has been maintained, however, is no longer suitable and it is not viable to adapt the building to suit the needs and spatial requirements of the CVCON.

The existing main, modern building is also a relatively simple and utilitarian structure that was constructed to provide an auditorium and additional practice and teaching spaces, storage and also staff and office areas. The building has no real entry or reception and waiting areas. The verandahs and existing services provide limited covered area and facilities during lessons or for concerts and recitals.

Other structures on the site, the semi-detached amenities block, shade structure and rear brick storage shed date from the later development of the site and are simple and utilitarian structures.

There are no significant trees or plantings on the subject site.

Summary significance

The CVCON site at Nos. 6-8 Villers Street, Grafton, has not been recognised as a heritage item, however, is of some local historic and social value for its associations with the local community and long term use and focus for musical tuition, practice and performance in Grafton and wider area since 1939.

The former cottage is a representative example of an Inter-war period, detached timber dwelling that since 1939 has been used and adapted for use as part of a music school established by the Sisters of Mercy, Grafton. Despite some changes, the building retains a strong sense of its early scale, character, fabric and details and a front garden setting, however, has lost its residential context. Its contribution to this section of the Villiers Street streetscape has been diminished by the change of use and the surrounding mixed development.

The building appears to have been the first constructed on the site, however, the potential for early resources is considered to be low and affected by the re-subdivision and development of the site (including construction of the 1980s building) and neighbouring lots.

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The building incorporates standard construction materials and details. The remaining early fabric and details contribute to the character, however, these are not outstanding or rare and overall the building is not likely to retain any early relics or reveal any new information that is not available elsewhere. There are a number of similarly scaled and styled buildings in the local and wider conservation area.

The existing main building is a representative example of a late 20th century educational facility. Constructed in c. 1985-1986, it is associated with the Trustees of the Sisters of Mercy and particularly the Grafton Sisters who established a music school here in 1939 and expanded and developed the site and neighbouring lots from 1945.

The association with the Sisters ceased in 1995 and site was sold to the Clarence Valley Conservatorium Inc in 2003 who significantly continue to provide music tuition, practice space and facilities for the local and wider community.

The existing main building also incorporates standard brick, concrete and timber construction and details and has also undergone some minor changes. The building is associated with local architects, McDonald Brickman and Corkhill and retains an auditorium, however, is not architecturally unique or rare. The building is part of a mixed and diverse streetscape.

Other structures and shed on the site are part of the later development of the site and make no contribution to the street, rear lane or conservation area.

There are no significant trees or plantings on the subject site, however, the site is enhanced by the wide street and verge portions and mature streets trees which make an active contribution to the Villers Street streetscape and character of the area.

7.0 Description of the proposal

It is currently proposed to undertake renovations, alterations and additions to the existing CVCON site for ongoing use by the Clarence Valley Conservatorium Inc as illustrated in the architectural drawings prepared by DRA Architects Pty Ltd.

It is proposed to retain most of the existing main modern (1980s) building, demolish parts and connect to a new addition proposed to be constructed on the southern portion of the site. If the existing cottage cannot be sold and relocated off site (referred option), the cottage and associated walkways and ramps and external paths will be demolished.

The existing street frontage and site boundaries, deep grassed street verge and two street trees in front of the site will be retained and protected. Access from the rear lane is also proposed to be retained.

The proposed works are summarised as follows:’

- removal of the front paths, driveway, hardstand and turf and replacement with new garden beds and planting and some new paving for informal gathering. New planting is also proposed along the northern side setback;
- opening up and demolition of the rear storage and staff rooms, adjacent practice rooms and enclosed rear verandah of the 1980s building and demolition of the existing semi-detached amenities and rear access ramp. Some minor internal works are also proposed. The existing auditorium will be retained with the existing practice rooms and offices along the northern side of the building;
- opening up and modification of the openings on the southern wall of the auditorium;

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- construction of a new two storey addition at the rear of the 1980s building with new storage areas, WCs and change rooms, rear entry/ exit and open covered car parking extending to the rear site boundary on the ground floor and a new common room, store and large practice room on the first floor. A new external access ramp and passage to connect to the new addition are also proposed;
- removal of the existing cottage, walkways and ramps connecting the buildings, existing external paths, fences, shade-cloth structure and rear shed; and
- construction of a new two storey, purpose designed addition with open front forecourt, double height foyer and entry, reception and staff offices and staff room, a meeting room, practice room and amenities including an access WC on the ground floor also lift and stair connecting to the first floor practice rooms and amenities. Garden beds and planting are also proposed across the front and along Villiers Street frontage. A path is also proposed across the front and southern side.

The two storey forms are articulated and have been setback from the side and front, Villiers Street boundaries. An open passage is proposed along the southern side boundary. The existing low brick fence will be retained with a new fence also proposed. The existing fence along the northern side boundary will also be retained and softened with new planting.

A new and visible entry with covered forecourt area is proposed and also provides necessary waiting area and is connected to the existing front verandah and auditorium. The front setback is proposed to be improved to minimise maintenance but also improve the appearance of the street address. Some paved areas are also proposed to allow informal gathering. A courtyard space is also proposed at the rear.

The alterations and additions are contemporary in architectural character and incorporate concrete slab floors, concrete block and fibre cement clad walls, aluminium framed windows and doors, curved and parapeted roof sections clad in metal roof cladding. Some louvred aluminium solar shades are also proposed on the front, west elevation.

The existing face brick walls, verandahs and roofing will be retained and will be complemented by a relatively neutral and matching colours and elements.

8.0 Heritage Impact Assessment

The relevant clauses of Clarence Valley planning documents and updated guideline document on the preparation of Statement of Heritage Impact reports have been considered below.

8.1 Clarence Valley LEP 2011 & DCP

In accordance clause **5.10 Heritage conservation** of the CVLEP 2011:

> *(4)* ***Effect of proposed development on heritage significance***
>
> *The consent authority must, before granting consent under this clause in respect of a heritage item or heritage conservation area, consider the effect of the proposed development on the heritage significance of the item or area concerned. This subclause applies regardless of whether a heritage management document is prepared under subclause (5) or a heritage conservation management plan is submitted under subclause (6).*
>
> *(5)* ***Heritage assessment***
>
> *The consent authority may, before granting consent to any development:*

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> *(a) on land on which a heritage item is located, or*
> *(b) on land that is within a heritage conservation area, or*
> *(c) on land that is within the vicinity of land referred to in paragraph (a) or (b),*
>
> *require a heritage management document to be prepared that assesses the extent to which the carrying out of the proposed development would affect the heritage significance of the heritage item or heritage conservation area concerned.*

The significance of conservation area relates to historic associations, aesthetic and architectural character and values of the early development of the area and streetscapes which are enhanced by the canopies and colours of the mature street trees.

The subject site is of some local historic and social value relating to its associations and ongoing use. The site retains a cottage and a modern building which remain as a reminder of the early residential development and historic significance and association with the Sisters of Mercy who established a music school on the site in c. 1939 and constructed the existing main building in the 1980s.

However, the buildings have not been recognised and are not significant in themselves and make limited visual contribution to the character of the conservation area. The buildings are part of a mixed and diverse built context that whilst enhanced by the street proportions and mature street trees, this section of the Villiers Street largely relates to the late 20th and early 21st centuries and later development and redevelopment of the area.

The proposed removal of the cottage, renovations, alterations and additions are considered acceptable from a heritage point of view as the primary historic association and social values of the site and use will be retained, improved and enhanced by the proposed works.

The existing cottage, despite the various alterations and additions, retains its early scale and character, however, is separated from other residential buildings and does not contribute to the recognised residential or group value of other dwellings on the block. Its removal will incur no material or visual impact on any other cottages or listed buildings in the area. The building is now part of a diverse streetscape and its contribution to the area has been affected by the development of the neighbouring commercial, hotel and educational buildings.

The relocation off the site is the preferred outcome and is achievable due to the scale, form and as a lightweight, timber framed and clad structure. The brick footings, front steps and chimney structure can be recreated.

However, if there is no interest, the potential demolition of the building will have acceptable impact on the area. The cottage is a representative example of a single storey, Inter-war timber dwelling that incorporates standard materials and construction techniques and fabric that is not outstanding or rare. There are a number of similarly scaled and detailed buildings located in the conservation area and a number of these are also protected under the LEP.

The proposed removal will enable construction of a purpose designed addition that provides much needed additional practice rooms and facilities, a visible and recognisable building entry with appropriate reception, foyer and waiting areas, staff rooms and offices that will cater for the current and future requirements of the CVCON.

The proposed opening up and demolition of the existing amenities and spaces at the rear of the 1980s building, also demolition of the rear sheds, paths, steps and ramps and shade-cloth structure and use of the existing open areas along, the rear, eastern boundary will have no adverse impact on the conservation area.

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The rear setback is currently used as an informal, staff car park. Hickory Lane is utilitarian and the western end is dominated by the large hotel complex and modern buildings at No. 37 Fitzroy Street and Nos. 18-26 Victoria Street.

The existing subdivision pattern and site boundaries have been retained. Hickory Lane will continue to extend mid-block and will continue to access the subject site and neighbouring properties including the dwellings and listed items along Victoria and Fitzroy Streets. The existing neighbouring games court and buildings will also remain and continue to separate the buildings from the listed items in the block and will also visually screen the site.

The proposed new additions will be a visible addition to the area, however, the two storey forms have been setback from the Villiers Street and side boundaries.

The additions are consistent with the scale of the surrounding buildings. The additions have been articulated and incorporate a mix of building materials which reduce the height, perceived bulk and scale and have been designed to relate to the existing 1980s building and built context along this section of Villiers Street.

The ongoing use and development by the CVCON in close proximity to the St Marys precinct is a positive impact that reinforces the historic associations and social values of the site. Any potential heritage impacts of the proposed works are also reduced by the improvement of the 1980s building and provision of a purpose designed building and facilities that will enable the long term use and associations of the site to continue and benefit the local and wider community.

The building and site will also continue to be enhanced by the wide street and verge proportions, mature streets trees and improved open garden areas and planting along the Villiers Street and northern side boundaries.

In relation to Part F Heritage Conservation of Residential areas of the Clarence Valley DCP 2011:

F6 Demolition Controls

F6.2 *An application for demolition shall also address in the statement of heritage impact:*

1. *The historic, aesthetic and/or social significance of the building, its nature and degree, and its relationship to the overall character and significance of the locality.*

The significance of the site relates to its historic associations and ongoing use as a music school with practice and performance spaces which has contributed to the cultural development of Grafton.

The existing cottage is part of the Inter-war period of development of Grafton. However, its streetscape value and contribution to the conservation area have been reduced by the relative isolation and loss of the residential context in this section of Villiers Street and loss of its residential setting. The building has not been used as a residence since c.1939. It has undergone some alterations and additions and is dominated by the surrounding built context which have impacted on its relationship and visual contribution to the area.

Relocation is the preferred option and a positive heritage outcome, however, the potential demolition would have no adverse impact on the site or area. The building has not been recognised and is a representative example that incorporates standard form, fabric and details. There are a number of similarly styled and scaled dwellings in the area. A number are also protected by LEP listing.

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The demolition of the rear of the existing 1980s building and later steps and ramps, rear structures and shed will have no adverse impact on the area. These elements date from the later development of the site, are simple and utilitarian and make no particular contribution to the character of the streetscape, rear lane or area.

2. *The impact of the removal of the building or work on the overall significance of the area.*

The proposed demolition works and removal (including potential relocation) of the cottage will not detract from the identified historic and aesthetic values of the conservation area.

The subject site is separated from the listed items and removal (from the site or demolition) will create no additional adverse impact on this section of Villiers Street which has mixed uses and displays a differing and diverse streetscape character.

However, the street and verge proportions and significant street trees which contribute to the character of the area, also contributory and identified buildings and items, their uses and primary form and setting and contribution to the Villiers, Victoria, Clarence and Fitzroy Street streetscapes will be retained.

The listed buildings in the area will remain highly visible and their identified values will be able to be interpreted and not affected by the proposed works.

3. *The reason for the proposed removal, especially why it is considered, and to what extent, the building/site can no longer be used in its existing form or with appropriate adaptation.*

It is currently proposed to undertake some demolition, alterations and additions to provide much needed additional spaces and facilities to supplement and improve the existing use of the site.

A music school has operated on the site since the 1930s. The existing buildings lack a clear entry and reception areas and no longer meet the current functional and spatial requirements of the CVCON. The 1980s building has an auditorium and proposed renovation and additions will improve its use. However, further adaption and use of the Inter-war period cottage is not considered practical or viable. The demolition and removal would enable the construction of a considered addition connected to the existing main building and auditorium and with a clear and appropriate entry and access, spaces and facilities that will ensure the ongoing use of the CVCON which is a positive impact.

F8 Development on the vicinity of a Heritage Item or within a Heritage Conservation Area

F8.2 Controls

1. *Development on land adjacent to, or within the vicinity of a heritage item or a heritage conservation area should not detract from the identified significance or setting of the heritage building or the heritage conservation area.*

The site is separated from the listed items in the block and nearby area with the wide street and verges, mature street trees, games court and also several lager scale, two storey modern buildings located between.

The listed items, the associated curtilages, site proportions and settings will not be affected by the proposed works and their contribution to their respective streetscapes will be retained and able to be interpreted.

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2. Where development is proposed adjacent to or within the vicinity of a heritage site or heritage conservation area, the following matters must be taken into consideration:

(a) The character, siting, bulk, scale, height and external appearance of the development;

The proposed alterations and additions are contemporary in architectural character and incorporate one and two storey scale and materials that are consistent with the scale, form and materials of the surrounding commercial, hotel and educational buildings.

The two storey form is setback from the Villiers Street and side boundaries. The building form has also been articulated and also has curved and parapeted low pitched roofs, louvred, vertical and horizontal architectural details which reduce the apparent bulk and scale, reflects existing details and adds to the character of the building.

The form also masonry (block) and lightweight walls and metal roof claddings are intended complement the existing 1980s building and are compatible with materials evident in the conservation area.

(b) The visual relationship between the proposed development and the heritage item or heritage conservation area;

The additions are separated from the listed items and will form part of the mixed and diverse built context in this section of Villiers Street and western end of Hickory Lane.

The street address is proposed to be improved and buildings will also be softened and enhanced by the improvements to the front and northern side setbacks also wide street and verge proportions and mature street trees which will be retained and protected during the works.

(c) The potential for overshadowing of the adjoining heritage item or any building within a heritage conservation area;

Some shadowing of the games court, rear yard, garages and driveway of No. 18-26 Victoria Street may occur, however, the proposed additions will not overshadow any listed items or primary garden and settings.

(d) The colours and textures of materials proposed to be used in the development;

Complementary colours and materials consistent with the existing building and area are proposed.

(e) The landscaping and fencing of the proposed development;

The landscaping, identification and address of the building and site are proposed to be improved. The existing fencing and garden areas, particularly the setback along the northern side boundary will also be retained with new access ramps at the rear. The concrete driveway and hardstand are proposed to be removed and new garden beds, planting and reduced paving are proposed at the front. The proposed new fencing matches and is consistent with the existing fencing on the site and area.

(f) The location of car parking spaces and access ways into the development;

The location of the car parking spaces has been appropriately located at the rear and make use of the lane and will have no visual impact on the Villiers or surrounding streetscapes.

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(g) The impact of any proposed advertising signs or structures;

The proposed new signage is restricted to the front of the new addition and site and is intended to improve the address and identification of the site which is currently lacking.

(h) the maintenance of the existing streetscape, where the particular streetscape has significance to the heritage site including impact on grassed verges in the road reserve;

The subject site is part of a diverse built context and streetscape, however, the significant elements, the wide street and verge proportions, grassed verge and mature street trees will be retained.

The open north western setback and street frontage with garden plantings will also be retained and improved and will continue to soften and enhance the streetscape and views when looking from the junction of Fitzroy and Villiers Street.

(i) The impact the proposed use would have on the amenity of the heritage site; and

The existing use of the site will significantly be retained.

It is the ongoing use of the site (since the 1930s) as a music school, practice and performance space that is of cultural significance to the local area.

The proposed works are intended to facilitate ongoing use and will enhance its historic associations and use and social significance and values.

(j) The effect the construction phase will have on the well being of a heritage building.

The proposed alterations and additions are separated from the listed items in the area, however, works will be undertaken with care to ensure the structural stability and safety of the retained and surrounding buildings.

3. Development in the vicinity of a heritage item should give strong regard to any significant views to and from the heritage item or heritage conservation area and any public domain area.

The proposed alterations and additions will be visible, however, are confined to the subject site and will not impede or impact any significant views along Villiers or surrounding streets or along Hickory Lane.

The buildings and site will also continue to be softened and visually screened by the two large street trees on the Villiers Street frontage and neighbouring buildings, games court and associated fences (Nos. 37 and 41A Fitzroy Street and Nos. 18-26 Victoria Street).

4. Where subdivision is proposed in the vicinity of a heritage item, the impact of future development of the lots should be considered.

No subdivision or lot amalgamation is proposed.

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8.2 NSW Department of Planning & Environment, Environment & Heritage criteria

The updated guidelines and questions relating to ***Works adjacent to a heritage item or within the heritage conservation area (listed on an LEP)*** have been considered in detail below.

Will the proposed works affect the heritage significance of the adjacent heritage item or the heritage conservation area?

The proposed alterations and additions are intended to expand and provide much needed recognisable entry, additional spaces and facilities that will enhance the existing use of the site and will have no adverse impact on the heritage significance of any items or heritage conservation area.

The works will provide a visible and identifiable presence that will reinforce the cultural values and social significance of the site and its contribution to the area. Any potential heritage impacts are minimised in the following ways:

- by the retention of the existing subdivision pattern and site boundaries (no subdivision or lot amalgamation proposed);
- by the retention of the existing main street pattern, street and verge proportions and mature street trees along Villiers Street;
- by the retention of a front and side setbacks with existing and improved access and landscaping;
- by the retention of the rear lane and vehicular access and parking at the rear;
- by the retention and provision of a one and two storey scale that is consistent with the existing built context in this section of Villiers Street and around the site;
- by the setback of the two storey form and articulation of the facades and roof to reduce the apparent bulk and scale;
- by the use of contemporary architectural style that does not seek to mimic or detract from the earlier buildings in the area;
- by the use of complementary and compatible materials and colours and reflect details on the site, street and area; and
- by the potential salvaging and relocation off-site of all or parts of the existing cottage for use by others.

Will the proposed works affect views to, and from, the heritage item? If yes, how will the impact be mitigated?

The proposed removal or relocation of the existing cottage, renovations, alterations and additions will have no impact on any primary views or vistas along Villiers Street or to any listed items in the surrounding streets.

The proposed alterations and additions will be a visible, however, are confined to the subject site and main building form has also been setback from the front, Villiers Street frontage and side boundaries. Any potential visual impacts are also reduced and softened by the retention of wide grassed verges and mature street trees and plantings at the front of the site and along the surrounding streets which will remain visually prominent.

Will the proposed works impact on the integrity or the streetscape of the heritage conservation area?

The proposed works will have no adverse impact on the integrity of this section of Villiers Street or conservation area.

The residential character and integrity of this section of Villiers Street has been previously affected by the development and redevelopment of the site and surrounding properties.

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However, the contributory elements, the street layout and proportions and mature street trees will remain and will not be affected by the proposed works.

The proposed alterations and additions will alter the existing scale and character of the subject site, however, also retains a relatively low and compatible scale and streetscape pattern with front and side setbacks. The additions incorporate compatible materials, colours and details that will enhance and form part of the existing mixed character of this section of Villiers Street.

9.0 Conclusion & recommendations

In summary, the proposed removal (relocation or demolition) of the former cottage, renovations, alterations and additions to CVCON at Nos. 6-8 Villiers Street, Grafton, are considered acceptable from a heritage point of view.

The existing site and buildings have been a focus for musical tuition, practice and performances since the 1930s. The existing buildings are good representative examples of their periods, however, the significance of the site and its contribution to the area relates to its historical association with the Sisters of Mercy and ongoing use.

The ongoing use of the site by the CVCON is a positive. However, the existing buildings and particularly the cottage no longer meet the functional and spatial requirements of the CVCON.

The CVCON needs a visible and identifiable entry that also can provide covered waiting areas and appropriate reception/ office, additional practice spaces, staff areas and amenities that can connect to the existing auditorium and spaces to meet current and future needs and requirements.

The further adaption of the former cottage is not considered practical or viable. The building has not been recognised and its contribution to the area has been reduced by the loss of its residential context and setting. There are a number of similarly scaled, Inter-war timber dwellings in the area. A number are also protected by LEP listing. If the whole cottage cannot be salvaged or relocated, any potential impacts of its demolition may also be reduced by the salvaging of parts.

The proposed alterations and additions are intended to provide much needed additional spaces and facilities that will expand and enhance the existing use of the site and will have no adverse impact on the heritage significance of the heritage conservation area.

The existing subdivision pattern, site boundaries and rear lane access have been retained. The proposed alterations and additions retain a relatively low and compatible scale and streetscape pattern with front and side setbacks. The facades and roof have been articulated to reduce the apparent bulk and scale and incorporate contemporary but compatible materials, colours and details that will form part of the existing mixed character along this section of Villiers Street.

The works will give CVCON a visible and identifiable presence that will reinforce the cultural values and social significance of the site and its contribution to the area.

The proposed works are confined to the subject site and will have no impact on any primary views along Villiers Street or to and from any items. Any potential visual impacts are also reduced and softened by the improved landscaping along the Villiers Street frontage, retention of the wide street and verge proportions and mature street trees and plantings at the front of the site and along the surrounding streets which will remain visually prominent.

On this basis, Council should have no hesitation in approving the proposed works on heritage grounds.

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