

# CONTEXT

## Beaumaris Art Group Studios

### Heritage Assessment

### Draft Report

Report prepared for Bayside City Council

27 July 2020



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## Report Register

The following report register documents the development and issue of the report entitled Beaumaris Art Group Studios—Heritage Assessment, undertaken by Context in accordance with its quality management system.

Job No.	Issue No.	Notes/Description	Issue Date
2461-4	1	Draft Heritage Assessment—BAG Studios	22 May 2020
2461-4	2	Final Heritage Assessment—BAG Studios	27 July 2020

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## 1.0 Introduction

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### 1.1 Purpose of this report

This Heritage Assessment has been prepared for Bayside City Council to develop a more detailed understanding of the heritage significance of the Beaumaris Art Group (BAG) Studios and the contribution of this building to the Beaumaris Memorial Community Reserve (also referred to as the Beaumaris Recreation Reserve and Beaumaris Reserve).

GML Heritage Victoria Pty Ltd (trading as Context) were engaged by Bayside City Council to undertake this heritage assessment of the BAG Studios within the context of the Beaumaris Memorial Community Reserve and within its own right.

This advice draws on our previous research and the heritage citation prepared for the Beaumaris Memorial Community Reserve in late 2019 as part of the 'Mid-Century Modern Heritage Study—Council-owned Places' (the 'Heritage Study') in which 8 Council-owned, mid-twentieth-century buildings were assessed for their heritage potential.

Context were initially asked to assess three mid-century buildings located within the Beaumaris Recreation Reserve: the Community Centre (now including later library additions), Senior Citizens Centre and Tennis Pavilion. Fieldwork and historical research indicated, however, that the Reserve had been designed from the outset as a planned precinct. Further investigation of the built and landscape components of the place and a comparative analysis of the Beaumaris Recreation Reserve confirmed that the place had heritage significance 'as one of relatively few community facilities in Bayside designed to incorporate a range of communal and recreational uses and demonstrating the concept of 'useful' memorialisation' (Place citation, Statement of Significance).

At the time the Heritage Study was undertaken the BAG Studios were scheduled for demolition with the intention to build a new building to accommodate the Group and their expanded activities on the same site. Redevelopment of the BAG Studios to meet contemporary safety and spatial requirements has been under discussion by Council and the BAG committee since 2016. A decision to demolish the building was made in May 2019 but overturned in February 2020 in response to community and heritage concerns.

While the statutory controls have not yet been formerly imposed by the Bayside City Council on the Beaumaris Memorial Community Reserve, Council have instructed that this Heritage Assessment should be contextualised in relation to the heritage values assessed as significant in the heritage citation prepared for the Reserve as part of the Heritage Study. Additional findings regarding the heritage significance of the BAG Studios made as part of this assessment are to be incorporated within the place citation for the Reserve.

### 1.2 Subject Site

The Beaumaris Art Group Studios is located within the Beaumaris Reserve at 88 Reserve Road, Beaumaris.

The Beaumaris Reserve is bounded by Reserve Road to the west, Cloris Avenue to the north, the rear fences of residences facing Hugo Street to the east and Victor Street to the south. The eastern end of the Reserve is occupied by a sports oval. A community centre consisting of a library, an elderly citizens centre, a sports pavilion (currently scheduled for redevelopment) and the existing Beaumaris Art Group



Studios are arranged around a central grassed forecourt that is focused on a war memorial at its eastern end. Tennis courts and associated club rooms are located within the southwest part of the site and carparking areas service the site off Reserve Road and Cloris Avenue. Some additional parking is situated at the west end of the oval.

The Beaumaris Art Group Studios is sited adjacent to the oval on the southeast corner of the forecourt (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Aerial view of the Beaumaris Reserve showing the boundaries (indicated in red) and the location of the existing Beaumaris Art Group Studios (circled in blue) (Source: Nearmap 2019)

### 1.3 Heritage Context

The Beaumaris Art Group Studios are situated in the Beaumaris Memorial Community Reserve, a place recently assessed by Context as being of historic, architectural (representative) and social significance to the City of Bayside.

### 1.4 Methodology

Preliminary site inspections of the Beaumaris Memorial Community Reserve were undertaken by Context personnel and subconsultants Jon Griffiths, Richard Aitken, and Kaylie Beasley on 4 September 2019 as part of fieldwork for the City of Bayside Mid-Century Modern Heritage Study (Council-owned Places). A further site inspection undertaken by Kim Roberts and Jessica Antolino as part of the same fieldwork on 5 September 2019. As the Beaumaris Art Group Studios were not initially included in the scope of the City of Bayside Mid-Century Modern Heritage Study (Council-owned Places), an internal inspection of the building was not undertaken at this time.

An internal and external inspection of the Beaumaris Art Group Studios was undertaken Kim Roberts and Jessica Antolino on 31 March 2020.

Formal community consultation has not been undertaken as part of this study, but the project team have had the opportunity to speak to a limited number of community members associated with the BAG Studios in the process of collecting additional historical information. These discussions have provided historical detail not accessible through research channels available during the course of the project. They have also informed an understanding of the social associations with the BAG organisation and building.

## **1.5 Acknowledgments**

The assistance of the following people is gratefully acknowledged:

Tom Vercoe, Bayside City Council

Rachael Hudson, Bayside City Council

Michelle Laragy, President, BAG Committee

Cate Rayson, Member BAG and Save BAG representative

David Conomy, grandson of Charles Bricknell, architect and former BAG president and member

Julia Clements, granddaughter of Inez Hutchinson, early BAG member

Cheryl Taylor, Member BAG

Robyn Downie, Member BAG

Jenneke Casson, Member BAG

Geri Colson, Member BAG

Tony Cheverton, former tutor BAG

## **1.6 Constraints**

This report considers the heritage significance of the Beaumaris Art Group Studios within the context of the Beaumaris Memorial Community Reserve and within its own right.

As noted above in Section 1.2, formal community consultation did not form part of the scope of works of this Heritage Assessment.

Due to the government regulations associated with the COVID-19 outbreak, historical research was limited to online sources, documentary records Context had to hand, or material provided by Council, the BAG committee and community members. Due to temporary closures of repositories, such as the State Library and the Public Records Office Victoria, archival research was not undertaken.

Internal and external visual inspections were carried out from the ground. Roof access and high-level access was not available.

The scope of the Heritage Assessment did not provide for assessment of impacts on Indigenous heritage values or any historical archaeology investigations.

## **1.7 Author Identification**

The report was prepared by Kim Roberts, Associate, Jessica Antolino, Heritage Consultant and Jon Griffiths, Graduate Consultant.

## **1.8 Images**

Except where indicated all images have been taken by Context.

## 2.0 Historical Context

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### *Beaumaris Community Centre*

The Beaumaris Art Group Studios located within the Beaumaris Memorial Community Reserve. This site was part of the area acquired by Dunlop Rubber Australia Ltd in the 1940s to facilitate the development of a new factory and garden village-style accommodation for over 2000 staff (*Argus* 2 December 1944:8). The company progressively sold the land in the 1950s after the proposed development proved unfeasible in the postwar era (*Herald* 29 September 1950:10).

Planning for a community centre in Beaumaris was began in 1952 by the Beaumaris Parents' and Citizens' Association (Monument Australia 2014). The group was established in the early 1950s as locals took a strong interest in the rapidly expanding community of Beaumaris (Marian 1982).

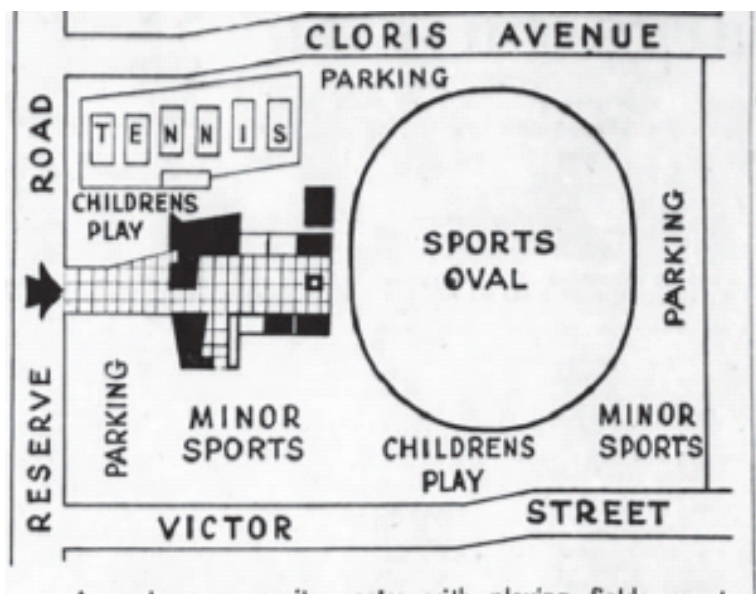


**Figure 2.** A photograph taken in 1957 from the house at 93 Reserve Road looks toward the future site for the Beaumaris Community Centre and library, which appears to be largely undeveloped bushland. (Source: Glaskin 1957, Bayside Library Service)

By July 1960 a subcommittee led by local architect Eric Lyon was formed to assist in the planning of the Beaumaris Memorial Community Centre, and fourteen and a half acres of land off Reserve Road and £6000 was allocated by the City of Sandringham for its construction.

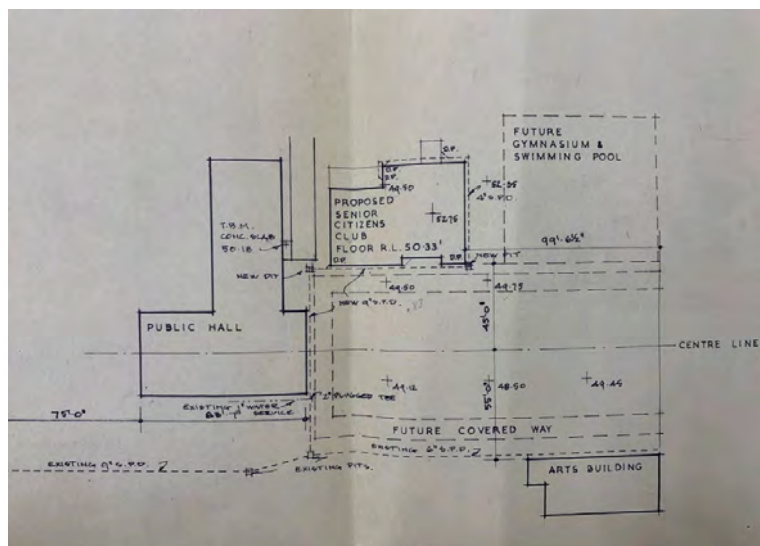
The earliest designs show community buildings arranged around a forecourt adjacent to a sports oval and other sporting facilities. Early versions of the design were described in the *Age* as incorporating the 'features of a Roman forum and an English village green.' The proposed community centre was reported to be a first in Australian planning and won acclaim from architectural and planning critics both in Australia and abroad (*Age* 12 July 1960:7; *Age* 14 September 1960:20; *Age* 1 February 1963:2).





**Figure 3.** An early plan for the Beaumaris Memorial Community Centre. Whilst the tennis courts were relocated south and the building footprints changed, the general scheme of built form surrounding a forecourt and cenotaph remained true. (Source: Age 14 September 1960:20).

The design reflected the 1950s and 1960s movement towards co-locating community services of different types in order to comprehensively cater to all sectors of a local community (Darian-Smith, Nichols & Willis 2010:191). The first published scheme incorporated facilities dedicated to the arts, sports and social welfare. The design included a hall with a stage and dressing rooms, an arts building, sports pavilion and oval, six tennis courts, an infant welfare centre and a building for senior citizens. The buildings were focused around a memorial cenotaph located within the central courtyard (Age 14 September 1960:20). The design was conceived as a whole, with each building designed to 'fit harmoniously into the whole development' (Age 14 December 1960:20).



**Figure 4.** A 1964 plan for the principal buildings on the site surrounding the forecourt. Note the unrealised gymnasium and swimming pool. (Source: PROV VPRS 7882/P1 unit 338).

A loan totalling £24,000 was granted by the City of Sandringham for the project in late 1960. The Beaumaris Arts Group part-funded the arts studio and local theatre group, the Beaumaris Players, contributed funds towards the construction of the hall (Age 14 December 1960:20). A public subscription program consisting of regular donations made by local community members raised further funds for the community centre (Age 11 June 1961:2).

The community hall and library building was the first completed component of the community centre master plan. It was designed by prominent architectural firm Bates, Smart & McCutcheon. A plaque was unveiled at the opening of the building in March 1963 to commemorate the role of the Parents' and Citizens' Association in the development of the site (Monument Australia 2014). By this time the oval had also completed, and approval for the construction of the art centre had been granted (Age 1 February 1963:2).

The Beaumaris Arts Group building, consisting of a studio area and gallery, was designed by local architect Charles Bricknell, who worked in the office of Hassell & McConnell in the early 1960s. It was opened in 1965 by Dr Eric Westbrook, then the director of the National Gallery of Victoria. Until this time, Bricknell's independent work had mostly consisted of small-scale residential commissions throughout Beaumaris. He designed his own home in Scott Street in 1951. An extension to the BAG Studios designed by art group member and architect, John Thompson, was developed and constructed between 1973 and 1977.

The senior citizens centre was designed by architect Charles Dentry in 1966 and was opened the same year. An addition to the building, designed by local architect Graham Gilchrist & Associates, was constructed in 1976 (PROV VPRS 7882/P1 unit 338).

The Beaumaris Community Centre Tennis Club was established in 1963. The first courts had been constructed by 1964 and the clubhouse was built later in 1966. Further courts were added in 1972 and 1982, bringing the total to seven courts. Six of these were completely replaced in 2005 (BCCTC 2019).

Between 1968 and 1970 a sports pavilion was constructed immediately to the west of the oval ('Melbourne 1968 Project').

A large addition to the Reserve Road frontage of the hall and library building was completed to the design of Nicholas & Alexander Architects in 2005 and built by McGinley & Partners Pty Ltd. This new wing of the building addressing Reserve Road was built to house the enlarged local library.



Figure 5. An aerial view of the site with each individual building date noted. (Source: Nearmap 2019).

### *Beaumaris Arts Group Studios*

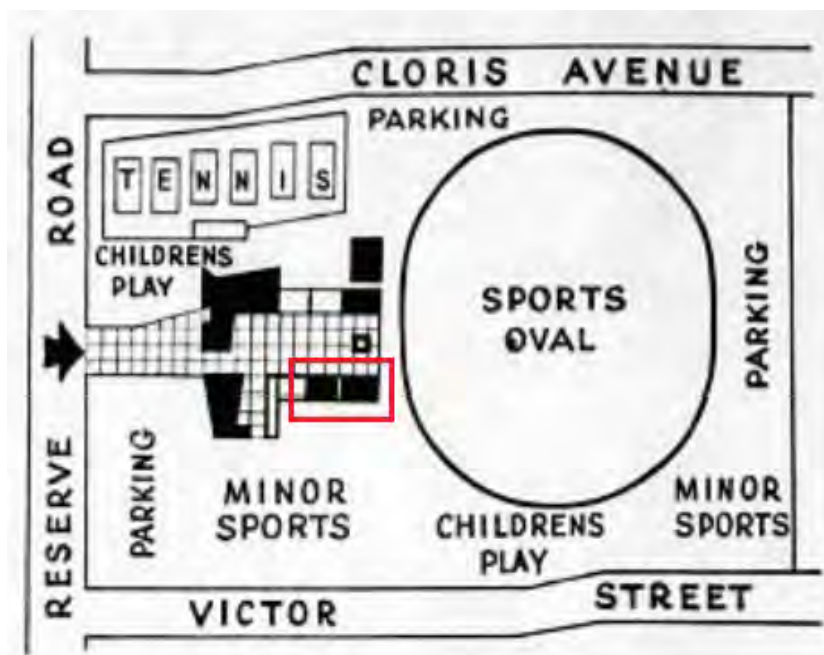
In the mid-1950s, the newly formed Beaumaris Arts Group (BAG) approached the Dunlop Rubber Company to purchase land for a purpose-built art centre. The Dunlop Rubber Company were in the process of selling large tracts of land in Beaumaris following their decision to abandon pre-war plans for a large factory site, for which they had consolidated much of the suburb in the decades previous (Age 23 November 1940:19). An unpublished history of the Group, prepared by Michele Laragy in 2020 based on conversations with and notes from key founding BAG member Joan McCrae, states that the Group purchased two blocks of land on Agnes Street close to Beaumaris Concourse from Dunlop Rubber, a discounted rate provided to assist the Group's community-based intentions (Laragy 2020).

Although the land was cheap, BAG took much of the following decade to repay the mortgage. Additionally, the Group came to the realisation that raising additional funds for a purpose-built studio would be difficult in the foreseeable future (Laragy 2020).

By 1960, the Sandringham Council was preparing a masterplan for the Beaumaris Memorial Community Centre on the present site on Reserve Road (Age 14 September 1960:20) (see Figure 6). The Council offered parcels of land on the site to the Beaumaris Arts Group, amongst other local community groups and societies. The Arts Group and the Senior Citizens Centre took up the offer, whilst the Beaumaris Players chose to locate their group at another site. No longer needing the land they owned in Agnes Street, the Group offered the site back to Dunlop, who had made an agreement during the sale process that they were to receive the first chance at repurchasing the land should it be sold. Noting that the proceeds of the sale would be used to construct an Arts Centre elsewhere, the Company permitted BAG



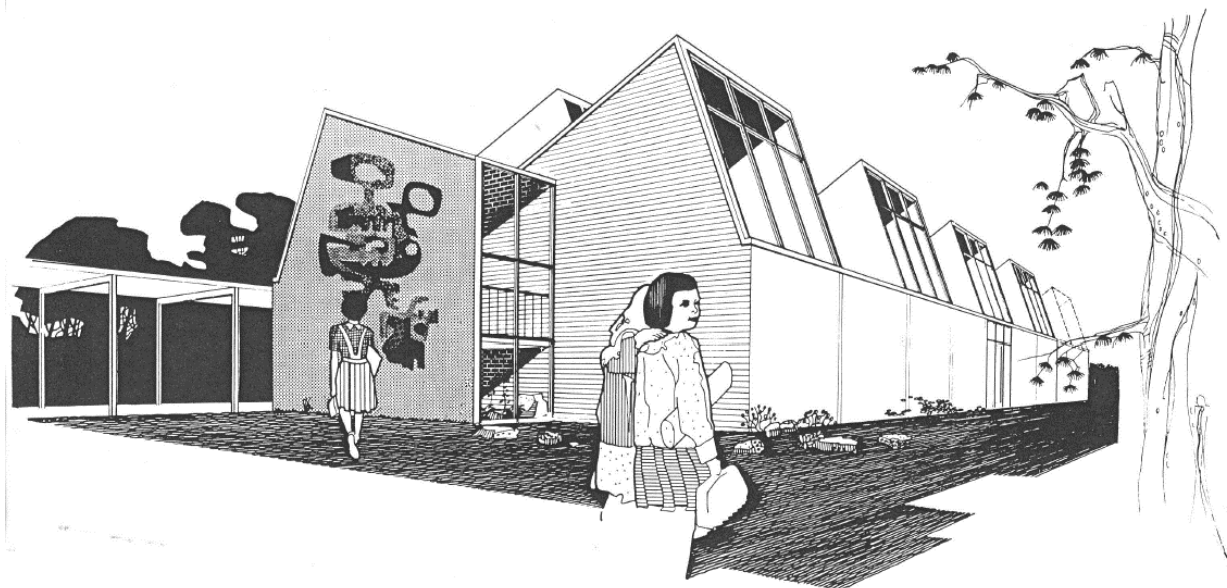
to put the land on the open market and wished them luck. This provided a financial windfall for the Group, who having purchased the land for £600, sold it for £8000 (Laragy 2020).



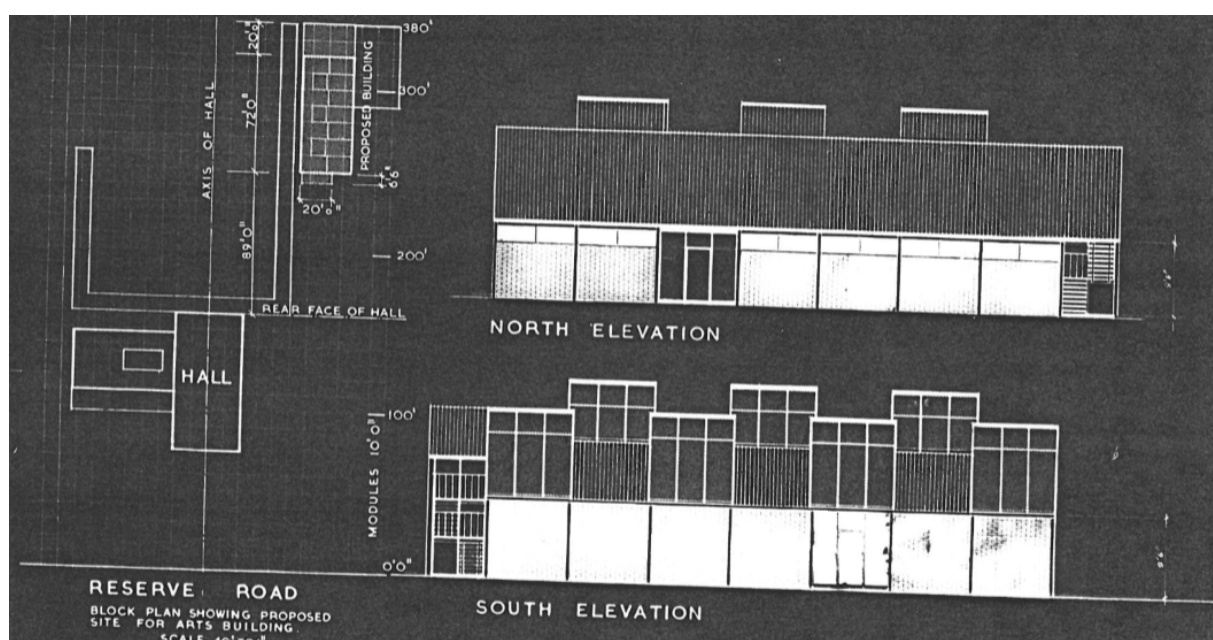
**Figure 6.** An early image of the masterplan for Beaumaris Community Centre, with the site of the Arts Centre indicated in red. Although the masterplan was ultimately realised in a different form, the Centre's location remained in the same position. (Source: Age 14 September 1960:20).

Although the eventual realisation for the Beaumaris Community Centre differs from the plan presented to the public in 1960 (see Figure 6), the general layout was followed, and the Arts Centre land allocation remained at the southeast edge of the forecourt. In 1962, the Beaumaris Arts Group presented a paper to the Sandringham Council, outlining their proposed plans for their site within the Community Centre. These plans (see Figure 8) were significantly different to the building eventually realised, however they are indicative of the scope of the Group's vision of their future and position in the community. The Group stated that each artist would require approximately 100 square feet of space in which to work, and there were to be provisions for drying, storing and firing ceramics, amongst other facilities (BAG 1962). They noted that, in addition to their ambitious plan, they believed they would require further additions within the three years following construction to allow them the amount of space required (BAG 1962).

Work was hoped to begin in May 1962, with completion within the same year. Local architect, Charles Bricknell, was president of BAG in the early 1960s at the time when this preliminary proposal was developed. While the paper and the accompanying drawings presented to Council were titled as a product of the Group rather than of an individual or group of individuals, it would seem likely that Bricknell had a hand in their development. Despite the building initially proposed being of a different scale and form the plan form has similarities to the Studios completed in 1965. In both designs a bank of utility and storage spaces located to the north of the building buffer the enclosed service areas.



**Figure 7.** A perspective of the preliminary design for the building, presented to the Sandringham Council in 1962. (Source: Beaumaris Arts Group 1962).



**Figure 8.** Proposed block plan and elevations for the preliminary design for the building. (Source: Beaumaris Arts Group 1962).



**Figure 9.** Proposed elevation, showing the Arts Centre (far right) and its relationship to the Hall and library building (to the left). (Source: Beaumaris Arts Group 1962).



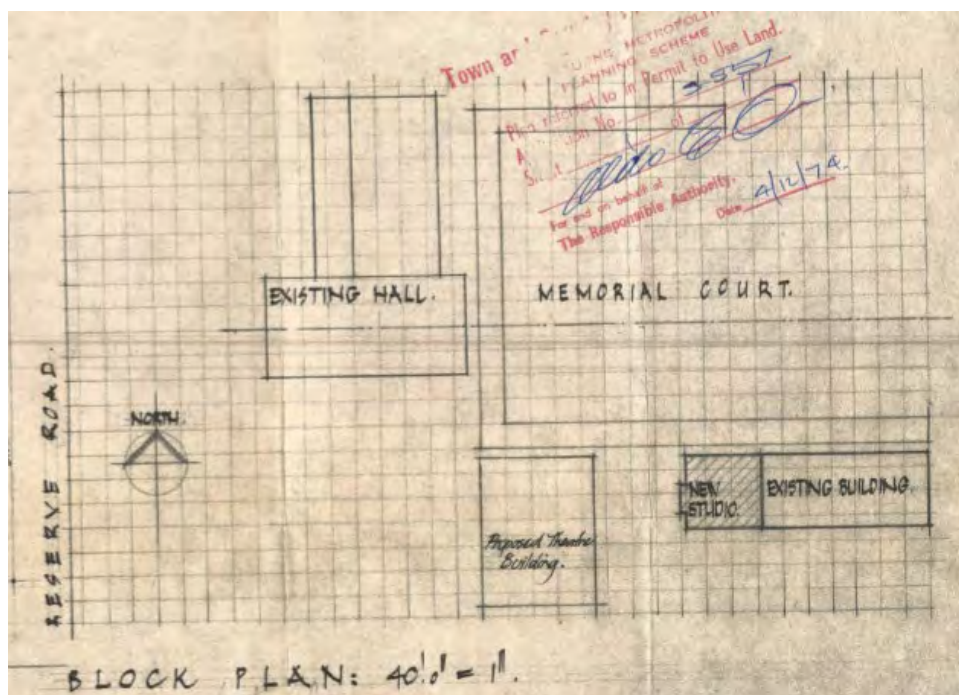
In the following years, however, it became apparent that there would not be adequate funding to construct the two-storey building. An alternate, modest one-storey building was designed by Charles Bricknell, and constructed by 1965 at a cost of £7573 (Laragy 2020). This building housed two studios (for painting to the east and ceramics to the west) and was serviced by a bank of utility areas along the northern wall. It featured a flat roof, cream brick walls to the east, south and west and a distinctive breeze block wall presented to the memorial forecourt to the north. Early photographs indicate the breeze block wall wrapped around into the original entry alcove (Figure 10).

The new building was ready by April 1965, and was officially opened by Dr Eric Westbrook, the Director of the National Gallery of Victoria. The building contained two principal rooms: the main studio, and the pottery room, which was later to become the members' gallery (Clements 2013:4).



**Figure 10.** Beaumaris Art Group Studios viewed from the west, c. 1965 (Photographs supplied by C Taylor).

In 1977, the second phase of building was completed. Plans for the extension to the western end of the existing building were prepared by another local architect and member of the Group, John Thompson, in April 1973. Permits for the extension were approved on 04 December 1974 (Figure 10). Thompson's design (Figure 11 & Figure 12) marked a break from the pure flat-roofed form of the earlier building. The south-facing clerestory windows and skillion roof section of the extension, however, does bear some resemblance to the original roof structure proposed in the unrealised 1962 plans.



**Figure 11.** Block Plan detail of drawings prepared by John Thomson in April 1973 showing the location and extent of the addition at the west of the original building. (Source: Beaumaris Arts Group Building Plans 1973).



**Figure 12.** Elevations and section detail of drawings prepared by John Thomson in April 1973 showing the addition, constructed by 1977. (Source: Beaumaris Arts Group Building Plans 1973).

The new extension was opened in 1977 by Mr Eric Rowlinson, the Director of the National Gallery of Victoria. The extension had been funded by a loan of \$20,000 from the Sandringham City Council, with repayment terms of 9% over 25 years. In total, the extension cost the group \$25,390 (Laragy 2020).

Subsidence of the entry foyer floor in the 2012 led to a change of flooring material. John Thompson donated materials and labour, installing the current tiles with the assistance of his son (M Laragy, pers. comm. 28 April 2020).

Between 2000 and 2016 the original kitchen was refurbished by the BAG committee. In 2000 the original linoleum flooring had begun peeling and was replaced with tiles installed by BAG members. In 2014-15 the BAG committee made the decision to modernise the existing kitchen cabinetry, following the footprint of the original kitchen layout. In 2016 floating shelves donated by members were installed in the kitchen (C Taylor, pers. comm. 21 April 2020; M Laragy, pers. comm. 28 April 2020).

In 2016 the Joan McCrae Members Gallery was created in the western end of the original building.

The former men's toilets to the east of the entry foyer have been converted to an all-access toilet but the date of this change is unknown.

### *Beaumaris Arts Group*

The Beaumaris Arts Group traces its foundation to an Art Exhibition held by parents of the Beaumaris State Primary School, which had been held to raise funds for the school. The exhibition was well supported, with over 100 pieces shown and a turnout of over 1500 visitors. Much of the artwork sold at the exhibition had been donated by local residents, and included paintings by notable artists such as Sir Arthur Streeton, Ivor Hele, Max Ragless, John Loxton, Arnold Calder, Rex Bramleigh, Frank Norton, C. Dudley Wood and John Gardner (Laragy 2020).

Recognising the artistic interests of the Beaumaris community, and a need for an outlet to encourage those interests, Mark Lee Bernstein, who had instigated the Beaumaris Primary School exhibition, formed a committee to establish the Beaumaris Arts Group on the 7<sup>th</sup> of November 1953 (Clements 2013:2). The Group established their aims as a collective that would arrange exhibitions, lectures, classes and facilities for all forms of art.

Monthly meetings were held at the Beaumaris State School, and lessons were taught in the nearby Olive Phillips Kindergarten. Lessons for children were held in the homes and garages of members, and later the local Yacht Club (Clements 2013:3; D Conomy, pers. comm. 16 April 2020). From the Group's early years, they attracted influential speakers including Arthur Boyd who presented to the group in 1959 (Laragy 2020). An annual art exhibition was established by the group at the school, which would continue there until the construction of their own premises at the Reserve Road site. In 1961, an exhibition by five female members was held to assist in raising funds for the group, with the contributing artists being made up of June Stephenson, Sue McDougall, Grace Somerville, Margaret Dredge, and Inez Green (later Hutchinson) (Laragy 2020).

A general program described for the years of 1960-1961 included open nights, film nights, talks on Japanese Wood Block Printing and lectures from artists, amongst the usual schedule of classes (BAG 1962).

Whilst waiting for the building at Reserve Road to be completed, the group rented two local shops on the Beaumaris Concourse. This make-shift studio was short lived, though, with classes briefly reverting to the homes of members before the new site was ready in 1965 (Laragy 2020).

The year 1965 also saw the establishment of the Inez Hutchison Award for painting, created in celebration of their new building. Named after an early member of the Group, Inez Hutchison was noted not only for her paintings, but her active role in the community. The award was funded by an anonymous gift of \$200 and drew a 'very high standard' of entrants from around Australia. In the prize's history, it has attracted notable judges such as John Brack, Fred Williams, Roger Kemp, Erica McGilchrist, Alan McCulloch and Professor Patrick McCaughey (Clements 2013: 10). Prominent entries included those from Howard Arkley, Arthur and David Boyd, John Brack, Jeffrey Bren and Clifton Pugh (Clements 2013: 13). The Group also held a well renowned ceramics award, with entries open Australia-wide.

The Group has been an important part of the Beaumaris Community since its establishment. Along with the other community groups that came together to help establish the rapidly expanding suburb, the arts group provided an essential community space for likeminded residents of the area. Members were drawn from all ages and walks of life, and were not limited to Beaumaris alone; John Thompson, the member-architect responsible for the later addition, had built his home in Cheltenham.



Geri Colson, a member of 50 years, describes the Beaumaris Arts Group in the following terms:

*When I first joined BAG, there were no other opportunities in the area for meeting and working with other artists. Beaumaris was a new suburb, beautiful because of the proximity of the Bay, and the architecture of the time acknowledged this and venerated it. New houses were hunkered down into the land. They were often of natural timbers inside and out, there were verandahs for the appreciation of the sea air, and new plantings mimicked the vegetation still lining the streets, ti-trees, coastal banksias, light scrub accustomed to salt and soft colours of the sand and sea...*

*I came to know the architects, who remained loyal and part of the art scene for many years. I was made aware of the time and effort which had gone into ensuring the building 'fitted in' with the models of housing and community living already established. They were people of the area. They were artists, protective and defiant about their work, strong advocates for the 'new modernism' of the time and determined to establish a building appropriate for the area, the environment, and the people of the time and of the future. Their design ensured that the BAG building did not intrude or impinge on the landscape, either visually or actually. The interior space was large enough, light enough, welcoming enough, for many hundreds of members over the years to comfortably work in 2D and 3D work. They knew that artists need to feel free, but encompassed, so privacy was and still is an issue and large glass windows and exteriors were avoided. (G Colson, pers. comm. 24 April 2020)*

The Arts Group reflected a growing trend of modernism and a reverence for the natural surroundings, which was especially prevalent in the wave of architect designed homes that increasingly appeared in Beaumaris and the surrounding suburbs following WWII. The Arts Group and its building represented the philosophy of many of the local members and residents, both physically and culturally, and came to embody the community-driven spirit intended by the construction of the Community Centre and its environs.



**Figure 13.** An image of a pottery demonstration by an early and integral member of the Arts Group, Jean McCrae, in 1961. (Source: The News 27 October 1961:7).

Membership at the Arts Group has continued to provide a space for the artistic endeavours of its members since construction. By 1961, the Group had 180 members, ranging in age from 8 to 80 years old (BAG 1962). This diversity in membership came to characterise the Group's relevance to the broader Beaumaris and Bayside community and continues to do so. Membership has remained at a constant level of roughly 200 members since the 1950s (G Colson, pers. comm. 24 April 2020). Membership is often long held, and the Group attracts an inter-generational loyalty and attachment. Among the many

individuals who have inter-generational associations with BAG are Julia Clements, the author of an unpublished history of the Group's during their 60th anniversary year who is a granddaughter of former member Inez Hutchinson and Charles Bricknell's daughter and grandson, Anne and David Conomy.



Figure 14. Examples of the exhibition poster for the Beaumaris Arts Group. (Source: Beaumaris Arts Group).

The Group has significance outside its membership and has continued to provide an ongoing contribution to not only the Beaumaris community, but the Victorian and country-wide arts communities. The Group was formed with the intention of contributing to, and encouraging, all forms of art, and members, teachers and associated figures have had a wide-ranging impact on the art world. The annual shows, a tradition established early in the Group's history, were important cultural experiences for the Beaumaris community. Shows held by the Group continue to contribute to the life and culture of the Bayside region, earning much respect for the quality of work exhibited.

Indicative of the respect afforded to the exhibitions held by the Group throughout its history, entries to various prizes have included work by artists such as Howard Arkley, Arthur and David Boyd, John Brack, Jeffrey Bren and Clifton Pugh (Clements 2013: 13).

The Beaumaris Arts Group continue to occupy the site, celebrating their 60-year anniversary in 2013.

### *Community connections*



Community attachment to and concern regarding the future of BAG and the BAG Studios building has been a feature of discussions and initiatives considering redevelopment of place between 2016 and the present day.

Formal community consultation did not form part of the scope of this assessment, however, during the process of historical research about BAG and the BAG Studios building a small number of people with current or prior connections with the Group were consulted. While limited in its scope, these conversations and associated email correspondence revealed passionate support of and strong associations with the Group and its history.

A conviction in the historical importance of the Group to the local area and its rich social and artistic heritage was a common thread of all communications. Divisions were revealed, however, between those who were primarily invested in the social history of the Group and those who felt these historical associations were also manifest in the physical form and characteristics of the BAG Studios building.

The first group of community members felt deeply about the continuity BAG and the ongoing legacy of the Group. Representatives of this part of the BAG community were concerned with honouring the ambitious vision of its founding members and their artistic engagement, output and teachings. That is, they were concerned with the more intangible aspects of the Group's heritage. Insofar as they represented the current BAG committee, this part of the BAG community were concerned the on-going economic viability of the Group, citing concerns about the threat posed to this legacy and the Group's future viability by the competition presented by similar classes held by the Bayside University of the Third Age (Bayside U3A) held in the Beaumaris Seniors Centre on the opposite side of the Beaumaris Memorial Community Reserve forecourt. Concerns were also raised about the practicalities of managing and maintaining an aging building, its capacity to accommodate a program that needed to expand to meet the demands of its membership and expensive upgrades required in order to ensure the building met contemporary standards.

The second group of community members connected their associations with the Group with the BAG Studios building itself. They saw the building as a tangible connection with the mid-twentieth century development of the Group. Some noted its integral place within the Beaumaris Memorial Community Reserve as a planned precinct as one of a suite of mid-century buildings. They felt that something of the spirit of the times and community energy was embodied in the building.

Most commented on the 'character' of the building, noting particular features. The features most commonly noted included the distinctive breeze block wall facing the memorial courtyard, the commodious and functional internal spaces and the quality of light provided by the barrel-vaulted skylight in the 1965 section of the building and the clerestory windows of the 1977 ceramics studio.

These community members spoke of the building as being like home to them and felt that along with the Group, that it was an invaluable community asset: a place of joyful associations, community connections and support for artistic endeavours. They spoke of it as the rightful home of the vibrant and long-standing artistic community of the local area. Among this group there was a general acceptance that the building may need some level of repair or even more extensive alterations and additions, however they were adamant that the Group should not be rehoused.

#### *Charles Bricknell, Architect*

Charles Bricknell (1926-2008) started his career as a draftsman at the notable Melbourne architecture firm Yuncken, Freeman Brothers, Griffiths & Simpson (abbreviated to Yuncken Freeman), after only

completing one year at the University of Melbourne Architectural Atelier (Built Heritage 2019:5). His early work included the so-called Snail House, a prototypical form of pre-cut housing designed to accommodate British migrant railway workers (Built Heritage 2019:5). He also designed a number of houses for friends and family in and around the suburb of Beaumaris during the 1950s, with his own house showing modernist influences. Family members recall that Bricknell was greatly influenced by fellow Yuncken Freeman architect John Gates, as well as architects Roy Grounds, Walter Burley Griffin and Robin Boyd (D Conomy, pers. comm. 13 November 2019). By the late 1950s Bricknell had moved to the architectural practice of Hassell & McConnell.

In 1965 Bricknell's design of a new purpose-built venue for the Beaumaris Art Group, of which he was member and one-time president, was undertaken independently of his work with Hassell & McConnell,

In 1966-67 he was involved in the design of Latrobe University's Glen College, following which he returned to Yuncken Freeman to undertake a number of high-profile projects including BHP House (1969-70), Eagle Star House (1971-72) and the Toorak/South Yarra Library (1972-73) (Built Heritage 2019: 5). Throughout the 1970s and 80s Bricknell worked in private and commercial practice (with Bates, Smart & McCutcheon), serving as a key member of the project team for Melbourne Central (1984-92) (Built Heritage 2019: 5).

#### *John Thompson, Architect*

John Thompson (1930-2018) was born in Woodend and studied architecture at Melbourne University. Following his graduation in 1956 Thompson was employed at the office of D G Lumsden. By the early 1960s he was a leading designer with the firm, designing the Peters Ice Cream factory in Clayton in 1963 and the Royal Mail House in Bourke Street in 1964 (Built Heritage Pty Ltd 2019). Thompson designed his own home at 8 Beverley Court, Cheltenham (1962) and this address features on the title block of the 1977 drawings for alterations and additions to the Beaumaris Arts Group Studios undertaken while serving as an honorary architect for the Group. Thompson was also a member of the Beaumaris Arts Group and an accomplished ceramicist. He spent many years working overseas in Hong Kong in the latter part of his career before returning to Melbourne. Thompson maintained his interest in and connection to the Beaumaris Arts Group and was present at early meetings with Council that considered the proposed redevelopment of the building in 2016 (M Laragy, pers. comm. 28 April 2020).

### 3.0 Existing Condition and Integrity

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The BAG Studios is situated on the south side of the memorial forecourt of the Beaumaris Memorial Community Centre. It is a long rectangular building that consists of two main built components: the original, eastern, section of the building constructed to the design of Charles Bricknell in 1965 and the addition to the west designed by John Thompson in 1973 and completed in 1977.

The eastern section of the building retains the flat-roofed form and horizontal massing of Bricknell's original design (Figure 15 & Figure 23). The distinctive northern concrete breeze block wall continues to dominate views of the building from the memorial forecourt area.

The main entrance to the Studios is located at the western end of the north elevation of the building. Here a glazed door with transom windows and sidelight provide access to an entry foyer abutting an office. Contrasting plain brick walls remain to the east and south external walls of the building, but the original cream face brick has been painted.

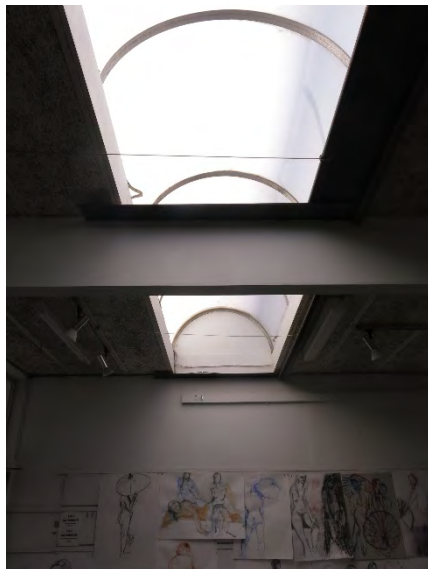


**Figure 15.** BAG Studios viewed from the northern side of the memorial forecourt. To the left is the 1965 part of the building designed by Charles Bricknell, to the right is the 1977 addition designed by John Thompson.

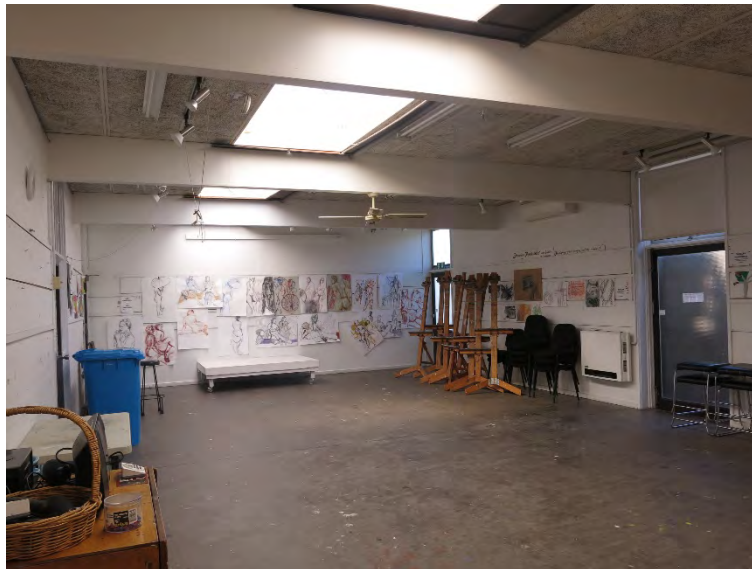
The plan form of the 1965 section of the building is inward looking, with privacy from the public forecourt provided by the breeze block screen to the north and reinforced by the enclosed bank of service and storage areas along this wall. Two open spaces are located to the north, these are lit primarily by the east-west running barrel-vaulted skylight and secondarily by the opaque glass doors with transom windows that rhythmically punctuate the south wall of the building. The larger, eastern space continues

in its original use as a painting studio, the western space (the original ceramics studio) is now used as the Joan McCrae Members Gallery.

These well-proportioned spaces are characterised by the warm, even light provided by the skylight and the original expressed structural beams and wood wool ceilings (Figure 17).



**Figure 16.** Vaulted skylight to painting studio to the eastern end of the original 1965 BAG Studios building.



**Figure 17.** Painting studio showing expressed structural beams, wool wood ceiling, skylight and opaque glazed doors and transoms to the south.

Initial consultation with community members about the history of the BAG Studios indicated that some people believed that the installation of the skylight formed part of Thompson's 1977 works to the building. However, Thompson's drawings show this skylight extant in the plans and evident in the elevations and do not label it as new work. This indicates that skylight did not form part of the 1973-1977 alterations and additions and was intact earlier within Bricknell's original design. That fact that the skylight formed part of the original design was subsequently confirmed by the accounts of early members of the Group (G Colson, pers. comm. 30 April 2020; M Laragy, pers. comm. 1 May 2020).





**Figure 18.** View of the BAG Studios from the northwest showing the 1977 addition designed by Thompson to the right.



**Figure 19.** View of the 1977 addition from the northeast.

The 1977 addition to the west of the original Studios complements the diminutive scale, rectangular plan footprint and flat roofed form of the 1965 building. The northern elevation directly reflects the height and horizontal emphasis of the 1965 section of the building. Its cream brick external walls respond directly to both the original building and the other mid-century buildings around the memorial forecourt.

Wing walls to the east and west and a shallow verandah to this northern face of the addition create a frame to this western bay that is formally and functionally differentiated from the earlier eastern wing of the building (Figure 18). The steel structural beams that support the ceiling of the addition are expressed both internally and externally, extending beyond the building envelope to support the verandah projection (Figure 19).

Unlike the highly enclosed 1965 section of the building, the 1977 ceramic's studio includes a horizontal band of metal framed windows that create an outlook onto the memorial forecourt to the north. A garden bed is located in the verandah set back.

A steeply pitched skillion section of roof clad in Colorbond steel deck houses a band of south-facing clerestory windows (Figure 20). These provide natural light to the studio space (Figure 21).





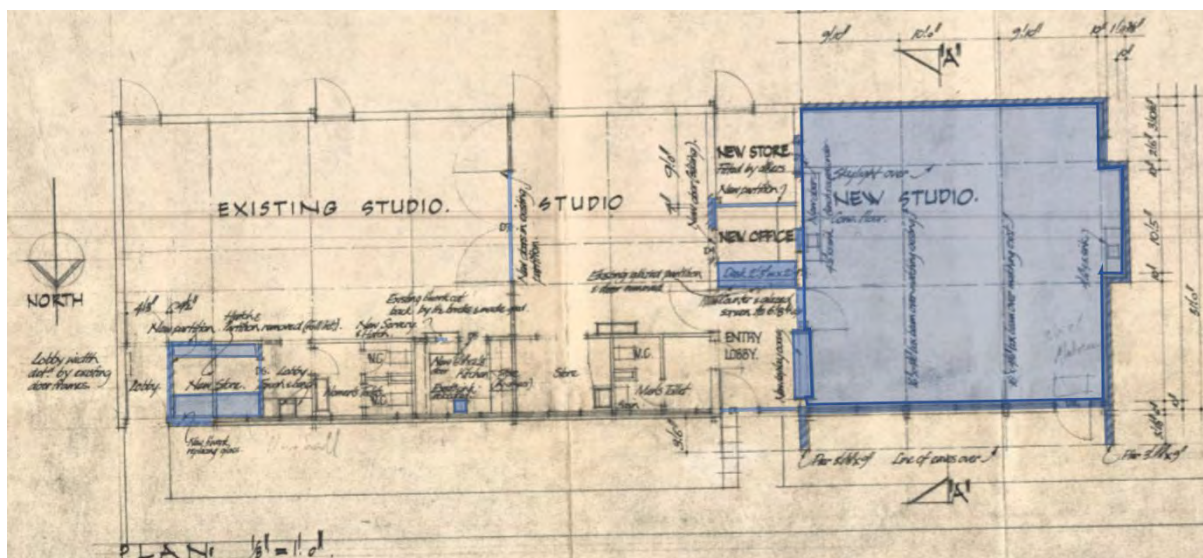
**Figure 20.** View of the 1977 addition from the southeast showing the south facing bank of clerestory windows.



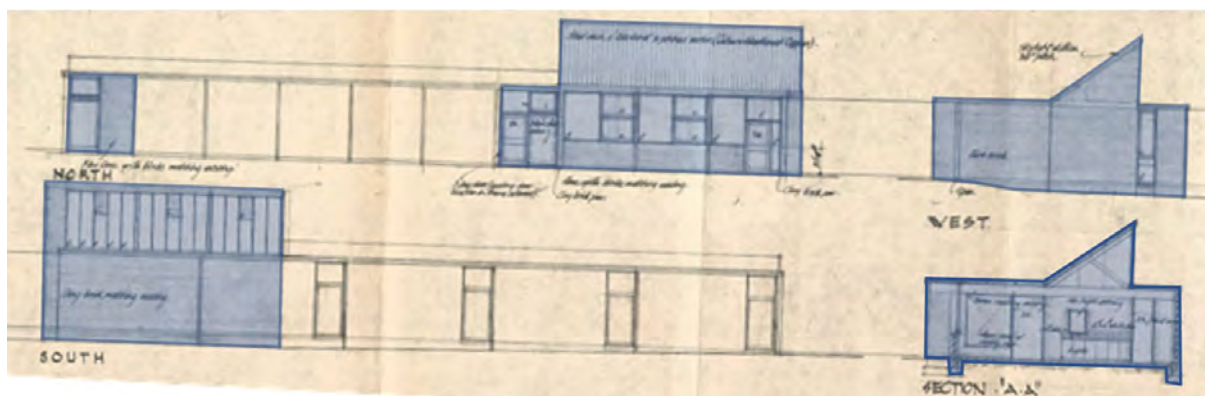
**Figure 21.** Interior of the 1977 addition looking east beneath the skylight skillion.

The two stages of the building's construction are clearly discernible in its external form. Minor alterations to the 1965 section of the building undertaken in 1977 are documented in the drawings for alterations and additions to the building by Thompson dated April 1973 (Figure 22 & Figure 23).

To the west end of the original building this included altering the external door and window frames to the entry lobby. Drawing notes indicate that the location of the door in the original frame was altered and that new clear glass was provided to the western portion of the frame.



**Figure 22.** Plan prepared by John Thomson in April 1973 showing the addition and alterations to the existing studio. New works proposed at this time are shown highlighted in blue. (Source: Beaumaris Arts Group Building Plans 1973).



**Figure 23.** Elevations and section detail of drawings prepared by John Thomson in April 1973 showing the addition and alterations to the existing studio. New works proposed at this time are shown highlighted in blue. (Source: Beaumaris Arts Group Building Plans 1973).

A new glass display cabinet was installed to the west wall of the entry lobby. An existing glazed partition and door was removed to the south, with Thompson installing a new partition and desk to create a new office and store. New internal doors and windows associated with these new spaces were also created as part of the 1977 works.



**Figure 24.** Display cabinet to western wall of entry foyer.



**Figure 25.** View of office from entry foyer.

Alterations were made to the 1965 kitchen with the wall opening increased to create a new servery and hatch. A new door was added and the existing sink was relocated.

The general plan form of the 1965 section of the building with its two open studio spaces to the south, bank of enclosed service and storage areas to the north and entry foyer and office to the west is still largely intact with only minor changes introduced to the detailed planning in layout in the 1977 alterations and additions designed by Thompson.

Alterations were also made in 1977 to the lobby at the eastern end of Bricknell's building. This lobby appears to have originally had similar floor area to the existing entry lobby. The existing internal partition that would have formed the western wall of the lobby was demolished and new partitions were created to create a new store. Thompson's 1973 drawings indicate that the external glazing to the north was to be replaced with an extension of Bricknell's concrete grille block wall. However, this section of wall was constructed in clay brick when the building was completed in 1977. It is unclear if the laundry sink and bench were also installed as part of these works but as they are specifically labelled on Thompson's plans this would seem likely.

The building appears to be in good, serviceable condition and to be reasonably well maintained. With the exception of some minor changes, including the alteration of the foyer floor tiles, refurbishment of the kitchen and alterations to the internal wall between the painting studio and Joan McCrae Members Gallery, the building is largely unaltered from the time of the 1977 alterations and additions designed by Thompson.



## 4.0 Comparative Analysis

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The following comparative assessment comprises a desktop assessment that considers comparative art group buildings and known buildings designed by the architect Charles Bricknell.

### 4.1 Comparable examples

#### 4.1.1 Table of comparative examples – art group buildings

Art societies and groups have endured since as early as the 1870s, when the Victorian Artists' Society, Australia's longest functioning art society, was founded. These types of groups were often born of like-minded, often amateur, artists, gathering in each other's homes or makeshift premises to share their common pursuits in art. The Beaumaris Art Group studio is the only example of purpose-built art studio in the City of Bayside, thus the following comparable examples are located outside the City of Bayside, with and without existing heritage protection afforded through their respective municipalities' planning schemes:



City of Kingston, Mentone Activity Hub (Mentone-Mordialloc Art Group). New premises constructed 2016.

Image source: [mentone-mordiallocartgroup.org.au](http://mentone-mordiallocartgroup.org.au)

The Mentone-Mordialloc Art Group was officially formed in 1956, after a group of local artists had been meeting in their homes, and then a local Sunday School hall in Mentone, to share their common interest in realist art.

In 1975 the group moved into a converted agricultural building, spending 34 years at the premises before it was slated for demolition. Council consulted with the group to design a new purpose-built studio and this was constructed as part of the Mentone Activity Hub in 2016.



City of Knox, 'The Hut' (Ferntree Gully Arts Society), 157 Underwood Road Ferntree Gully (circa 1950).

Image Source: Google Maps

The bulk of the building is made up of an ex-military corrugated iron shed, repurposed into a gallery space for the Arts Society. The front reception area was added in the 1960s, with further additions throughout its history.

The Ferntree Gully Arts Society was formed in 1944, making it one of the oldest suburban arts groups in Victoria. The group took over the present building within a matter of years after their formation and have remained at the site since. Though the building was not specifically 'purpose built' (being an ex-military structure), it has been adapted continuously to suit the ongoing needs of the group.



City of Stonnington, Malvern Artists' Society, 1297-1299 High Street Malvern (c.1910s, 1975 rear addition)

Image source: Google Maps

An Edwardian shop-residence that has been retrofitted as a gallery space and art studio. Initial adaptive renovations c.1971, with a larger rear addition to the designs of noted architect Neil Clerehan in 1975.

The Malvern Artists' Society was formed in 1957 and relocated to the current premises in 1971. The group undertook initial renovations after taking possession of the site, and constructed the first purpose-built portion of the building in the form of a gallery space at the rear in 1975. The group have remained at the site since.



City of Frankston, Peninsula Arts Society, Overton Park (1988).

Image Source: Google

A low-rise 1988 concrete block structure with expressed glazing elements surrounded by corrugated iron. The building also employs features such as glass bricks inset within the concrete block walls.

The Peninsula Arts Group was formed in the Frankston Mechanics Hall in 1954 and was located in various places prior to purchasing a property in Overton Road, Frankston. The group was granted a lease of land within Overport Park, Frankston, where they built their first purpose-built studio in 1988. The group have remained there ever since. Building programs to update and expand the original building have been carried out, most notably in 2006.





City of Whitehorse Overlay HO246, Box Hill Arts Group Building, 470 Station Street Box Hill (1990)

Image source: Box Hill Community Arts Centre

A purpose-built community art studio built in 1990 in an organic style. The building features multiple large open spaces with differing internal volumes created by curved and semi-curved ceilings and expanses of high windows.

The Box Hill Art Group was established in 1952, making use of different community buildings and leased spaces. The Group moved into the purpose-built site in 1990 and have remained at the location since.

#### 4.1.2 Table of comparative examples – select examples of the work of Charles Bricknell



Recommended for Heritage Overlay, Bricknell House, 29 Scott Street Beaumaris (1952, 1960, 1973)

A single-storey, timber-framed and clad residence built in 1952 to a design by the architect Charles Bricknell for his own family. Modest in size and minimal in detailing, the house is a refined example of a carefully designed solution to the economic austerity of the immediate postwar era.



(Demolished) 73 Scott Street, Beaumaris (1954)

A rectilinear single-storey family home built to the designs of architect Charles Bricknell within the vicinity of his own family home. The house was designed for friends of Bricknell, Bill and Marge Downs, who were also involved with the Beaumaris Arts Group. The building's low-slung design and simple rectangular form bear a resemblance to the Beaumaris Arts Group Building.

Image source: Peter Wille Collection, SLV



A 1957 house designed by the architect Charles Bricknell adopting the mid-century modern style with wide overhanging eaves, low rise form and large spans of glazing, similar to the design for his own home.

(Demolished) 17 Nautilus Street, Beaumaris (1957)

Image source: realestate.com.au



Constructed circa 1958 to the designs of the architect Charles Bricknell, for friends Alfred and Jean Holderness. The building exhibits many similarities to the former 73 Scott Street, with a low-rise rectilinear form, expanses of glass along the length of the building, and brick gable ends with large windows set into the corner.

50 Reserve Road, Beaumaris (1958)

Image source: Google Maps



A 1962 single-storey house constructed to the designs of the architect Charles Bricknell for his sister-in-law and her husband. This building is strikingly similar to the design for his own home at 29 Scott Street, as it is arranged with large expanses of glazing opening to a central-rear courtyard. This building is also strikingly similar to the Beaumaris Arts Group, presenting a broad brick façade and flat roof.

97 Hillcrest Road, Frankston (c1962)

Image source: realestate.com.au

## 4.2 Discussion

The Beaumaris Art Group studio is the only purpose-built studio building in the City of Bayside. Historically, it demonstrates the noted local associations with Modern art and design and the identity of Beaumaris as a creative community.

In terms of demonstrating a longstanding connection with an associated local community, it compares well to the above examples, all of which boast enduring community ties with their respective gathering places. While it was been commonplace for art groups to adapt an existing building to suit their needs and growing memberships, often continually over the years as was the case for the Ferntree Gully Arts Society (formed in 1944) and the Malvern Artists Society (formed in 1957), the Beaumaris Art Group studio reflects the rarer trend of a suburban art group having a facility purpose-built for their use.

Architecturally, the Beaumaris Art Group studio provides a good and intact representation of a Modernist architect-designed community building, and the work of local Beaumaris architect Charles Bricknell, undertaken independently of his work with Hassell & McConnell. It embodies the principal characteristics of Modernist architectural design, with its distinctive breeze block northern wall and flat roof. As a fine illustration of Bricknell's private work it compares well to the above examples, which collectively provide a cross-section of his largely residential and fairly modest independent works.

## 5.0 Cultural Heritage Significance

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The Beaumaris Art Group Studios is part of Beaumaris Memorial Community Reserve, a precinct that has been assessed as possessing cultural heritage significance to the City of Bayside.

### 5.1 Beaumaris Memorial Community Reserve

The following outline of heritage significance for the Beaumaris Memorial Community Reserve is drawn from the Statement of Significance for the place citation:

What is Significant?

*The Beaumaris Reserve (former Beaumaris Memorial Community Centre), comprising buildings and landscape elements constructed between 1963 and 1969, is significant.*

*The following features contribute to the significance of the place:*

- *Beaumaris Library and Community Centre building (1963);*
- *former senior citizens centre building (now U3A centre) (1966);*
- *Beaumaris Art Group art studio (1965) and 1975-77 additions;*
- *Beaumaris Community Centre Tennis Club building (1966);*
- *sports pavilion building (c.1969) and oval;*
- *forecourt, original layout of pathways and Beaumaris War Memorial cenotaph;*
- *Angophora costata and Banksia integrifolia located at the eastern (principal) elevation of the Community Centre building.*

*Additions to the Reserve Road frontage of the library building constructed in 2005 are not significant.*

How is it significant?

*The Beaumaris Reserve (former Beaumaris Memorial Community Centre) is of local historic, architectural (representative) and social significance to the City of Bayside.*

Why is it significant?

*The Beaumaris Reserve (former Beaumaris Memorial Community Centre) is historically significant as one of relatively few community facilities in Bayside designed to incorporate a range of communal and recreational uses and demonstrating the concept of 'useful' memorialisation. Developed in the early 1960s, it is distinguished from later 1960s models for community-centred facilities which began to combine community facilities with civic functions and municipal administration. It continues to be used for its original purpose. As a memorial community centre, it also demonstrates the innovation in planning that occurred in the interwar and postwar years, that encouraged the construction of multi-purpose community facilities that included a hall and library or cultural centre, recreational space, carefully sited around a public garden or courtyard with statues or other landscape elements, and which incorporated space for recreation. Its original name provides tangible evidence of the additional function of the place as a memorial. The combined communal and memorial functions of the Beaumaris Memorial Community Centre demonstrate efficient use of limited resources, an ethos which reflected wider popular sentiment in interwar and postwar Australia that encouraged pragmatic use of meagre resources for development of community facilities. (Criterion A)*



*The collection of structures comprising the Beaumaris Reserve (former Beaumaris Memorial Community Centre) are a group of largely intact, highly representative examples of Modernist architect-designed community buildings that combine to create a planned precinct. Key design elements across the collection of buildings include the overall simplicity of the built form and landscape design, with simple box-like built forms with flat or skillion roofs, large expanses of brick wall delineated at the roof line with strips of ribbon windows, and the layout of the buildings around and with larger windows facing a central forecourt, providing integration of internal spaces with the landscape. The decorative effect of the shadows cast by the leafy canopies of the mature *Angophora costata* and *Banksia integrifolia* onto the large expanse of unadorned brick wall of the Hall and library building is also characteristic of Modernist architecture and landscape design. The placement of these two trees suggests they may have been part of an original or early landscape planting. (Criterion D)*

*The Beaumaris Reserve is of social significance for its long and continuing associations with the local Beaumaris community, and specific local groups within the broader community, including the Beaumaris Art Group and the Beaumaris Community Centre Tennis Club. The site as a whole has played an ongoing role in the social life of the local Beaumaris community since 1963, when the first hall and library building was opened on the site. The hall has served the community for over 50 years for various functions and activities, including concerts and meetings of local groups. The Beaumaris Art Group have gathered at the art studios since their construction in 1965. (Criterion G)*

As indicated in the Statement of Significance, the heritage values of the place relate to the principle of 'useful' memorialisation and the planned nature of the precinct as a collection of community and recreational facilities arranged around a central courtyard and memorial cenotaph. This planned aspect is reinforced by the largely intact and highly representative Modernist buildings arranged around the courtyard in accordance with the vision defined in early master plans for the site. The early social investment that was instrumental in the development of the community centre is reflected in long-term and continuing associations with various community groups.

## 5.2 Beaumaris Art Group Studios

### 5.2.1 Within the context of the Beaumaris Memorial Community Centre

The statement of significance cited above includes the BAG Studios as a built element of the former Beaumaris Memorial Community Centre that contributes to the wider significance of the place.

The original (northern) section of the building designed by Bricknell completed in 1965 was built in the mid-twentieth century in accordance with the planning vision established for the place. This simple flat roofed section of the building is very much of its era and reflects the aesthetic preoccupations of the mid-century Modern architectural idiom. These characteristics are shared by other original buildings within the precinct built between 1963 and c.1969. Historical research indicates that the studio building constructed at this time, was a far more modest outcome than the building initially envisioned by BAG in 1962.

The 1977 extension to the south designed by John Thompson, while built in the following decade, similarly reflects the mid-century design aesthetic. Its relationship with the original part of the building is respectful in terms of scale, form and massing. With the contrasting openness of its framed northern façade and its steeply pitched skillion roofed skylight, however, it introduces an architectural character of its own, one that is equally representative of mid-century Modernism.

## 5.2.2 Assessment against criteria

The framework for assessing places of heritage significance in Victoria uses a recognised heritage criteria adopted within minor variations across statutory jurisdictions throughout Australia. This framework incorporates values identified in the Burra Charter into a framework that is currently accepted as the required format by heritage authorities in Victoria.

Criteria referred to in *Practice Note 1: Applying the Heritage Overlay*, Department of Planning and Community Development, revised August 2018, modified for the local context.

*CRITERION A: Importance to the course or pattern of the City of Bayside's cultural or natural history (historical significance).*

The Beaumaris Arts Group Studios is historically significant as the art studio purpose-built in 1965 for the Beaumaris Arts Group. An early postwar group of its type within Victoria, the Beaumaris Arts Group, its members, artistic programs, exhibitions and prestigious awards, were an important part of the development of the artistic and social life of the local area and its identification as a creative community. The building itself, while modest in scale, reflects the aesthetic preoccupations of the Group and the postwar architectural development of the local area. Both the original 1965 section of the building and the 1977 addition to the west are significant, demonstrating the vision and development of the Beaumaris Arts Group.

*CRITERION B: Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of the City of Bayside's cultural or natural history (rarity).*

N/A

*CRITERION C: Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the City of Bayside's cultural or natural history (research potential).*

N/A

*CRITERION D: Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).*

The Beaumaris Arts Group Studios is an intact and strong representative example of a Modernist architect-designed community building. The simple, rectangular built form of the original 1965 section of the building, with its distinctive breeze block northern wall and flat roof is highly characteristic of Modern architectural design. The 1977 addition to the west similarly reflects the design characteristics of the age with the box-like framing of its northern façade and dramatic full length skillion roof light and is considered a significant component of the building.

*CRITERION E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).*

N/A

*CRITERION F: Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance).*

N/A

*CRITERION G: Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).*

The Beaumaris Arts Group Studios is of social significance as a purpose-built art studio that has long, continuing, and intergenerational associations within the local Beaumaris community and members of the Beaumaris Art Group. A home for the artistic community of Beaumaris since its construction in 1965, the building is the focus of strong attachment for many of those associated with the Beaumaris Arts Group and the creative identity of the suburb.

*CRITERION H: Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in the City of Bayside's history (associative significance).*

The Beaumaris Arts Group Studios is locally significant for its associations with the Beaumaris Arts Group which have occupied the building since its construction in 1965. The Group was formed in 1953, emerging from the vibrant community of artists and designers that flourished as the suburb of Beaumaris grew and developed in the postwar era. The Group is noted throughout the Victorian artistic community for its high-calibre exhibitions, painting and ceramics awards and the many accomplished artists who have been associated with the Group, as members and tutors, since its inception.

### **5.2.3 Significance of elements**

The built form of the BAG Studios is identified as both contributing to the heritage significance of the Beaumaris Memorial Community Centre. It is considered that even without the supporting context of the Beaumaris Memorial Community Centre the BAG Studios would possess sufficient cultural heritage value to meet the threshold of local heritage significance in its own right. This includes both the form of the original 1965 Studios designed by Bricknell and the 1977 addition designed by Thompson.

#### **Significant aspects, spaces and details**

The original 1965 Studios designed by Bricknell and the 1977 addition designed by Thompson include the following significant aspects and spaces:

- The built form, building footprint, external openings and broad internal planning divisions.
- The northern elevation of the building facing the Beaumaris Memorial Community Centre – its flat roof profile to the east and the form of its set-back skillion skylight to the west. The breeze block wall, brickwork, 1965 and 1977 fenestration, façade composition and original external detailing.
- Views to the building and its principal northern aspect from the memorial forecourt area.
- The main internal spaces, including the painting studio, ceramics studio, gallery and entry foyer and expressed internal structure. The three-dimensional spatial qualities and the natural lighting provided by the barrel-vaulted skylight in the original 1965 part of the building and the skillion skylight in the 1977 part of the building contribute to the significance of these spaces.
- The northern bank storage and utility areas and the bank of enclosed office/storage areas south of the entry foyer. The internal divisions of these areas are of secondary significance.

## 6.0 Recommendations

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This section of the report provides high-level recommendations for the conservation, care and development of the BAG Studios building so that its assessed cultural significance is appropriately maintained, enhanced, and interpreted.

### 6.1 Recommendations

#### 6.1.1 Demolition

Demolition of individually significant and contributory buildings within Heritage Overlays is generally discouraged unless it can be demonstrated that the building is structurally unsound, has fabric that has deteriorated to the extent that extensive and financially prohibitive reconstruction would be required, and that the replacement building exhibits design excellence and supports the heritage environment.

It follows that demolition of the significant components and fabric of the BAG Studios identified in Section 5 of this report should be avoided. The building is not apparently structurally unsound and there is no evidence that significant fabric has deteriorated beyond repair.

It is accepted that some level of demolition of heritage fabric may be necessary to facilitate the upgrade of the building and the long-term sustainability of the Group's use of the building. It is advised that the extent of such demolition works should be restricted in size with the aim of maximising the retention of significant and contributory fabric. Any demolition should be judiciously located with the aim of mitigating negative heritage impacts to the most significant components and aspects of the building and its presentation within the Beaumaris Memorial Community Reserve.

#### 6.1.2 Views and setting

Carefully consider any redevelopment proposals in terms of their potential impact on the setting of the Beaumaris Memorial Community Reserve and the existing suite of heritage buildings arranged around the memorial forecourt.

Ensure that any development of the building does not detract from the heritage significance and setting of the BAG Studios. Instead, ensure that development proposals seek opportunities to highlight and interpret significant aspects the cultural heritage of the place for the users of the building and wider community.

Restrict development to the areas of the building and surrounding site that have less heritage significance.

Maintain views of the BAG Studios from within the memorial forecourt, including oblique views to the northern face of the building from the southwest corner of the forecourt where it is entered from Reserve Road.

Endeavour to set back any development of the BAG Studios behind the main façade of the 1965-1977 building, allowing the heritage building to retain its primary interface with and views from the memorial forecourt.

Confirm and refine the set back of any proposed development using sightlines and mass modelling from key viewpoints in the memorial forecourt. This should include the viewpoint from the southwest corner of the forecourt where it is entered from the Reserve Road carpark.



### 6.1.3 Built Form

Ensure that any development of the BAG Studios retains the legibility of the external form of the building and the spatial integrity and characteristics of its significant internal spaces.

Ensure that clear distinctions are made between new and old elements of the site and that there is no room for confusion between heritage fabric and new interventions.

Site and mass any development to the east and west of the building to preserve the legibility of the BAG Studios within the Beaumaris Memorial Community Reserve context.

Ensure that any new development does not physically or visually dominate the existing building and the its scale, form character and materiality is sympathetic to the building and its heritage values.

Site any additions that involve a significant increase in height above the existing roof line should be sited well back from northern face of the building. The alignment of the existing skylights may make a suitable setback line, but any second storey addition should give due consideration to the heritage and functional value of these elements. As with the overall setback of any development, the setbacks of any higher rooflines or second storey addition should be confirmed and refined using sightlines and mass modelling.

Some level of contrast in form, character and materiality can be considered to demarcate the contemporary nature of proposed works but this should be complementary and subservient to existing characteristics.

Design that sensitivity and innovatively interprets the aesthetic principles and characteristics of the heritage place is encouraged.

### 6.1.4 Landscaping

While existing trees and vegetation have not been assessed for their heritage values and are not considered integral to the significance of the Beaumaris Arts Group building ensure that they are considered in light of their potential landscape value when change to the place is considered.

Ensure new landscaping is in keeping with the prevailing landscape character of the Beaumaris Memorial Community Reserve area.

As with the built form some level of variation in landscape character could be contemplated, however new landscaping should be complementary and subservient to existing characteristics.

## 7.0 References

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