

Item 5 - Councillor Question Time

Question from Councillor Pearl

Can officers provide details of the works to remove bluestone blocks in the gutters around St Vincent's Gardens over the past 12 months? There are reports from the public that the work stopped for a number of weeks. During this time the bluestone blocks were on the sidewalk and on the road, laying stationary, and over a few nights trucks arrived to illegally remove the blocks. Did Council make reports to police, and what security measures are being taken to protect our heritage at this site?

Response:

St Vincent's Place South, Albert Park underwent kerb and channel renewal works during the 2021/22 financial year for the Capital Works Program. The extent of the works consisted of relaying 55 lineal metres of dressed bluestone kerb & 4 pitcher channel during June 2022.

The project was temporarily paused during construction while Council liaised with Heritage Victoria to ensure that the history of the street was maintained and protected.

The process for kerb & channel renewal requires the bluestone pitchers to be removed, placed on the nature strip, and then reinstated. In terms of security, whilst the bluestone pitchers were on the nature strip they were cordoned off and the area was monitored on a daily basis.

During the time that the works were put on hold, it was reported that a member of the public had made attempts to remove pitchers from the site. Police are aware of the theft in the area. An officer from South Melbourne Police contacted Council and asked if the general public had permission to remove bluestone, after he spoke with a person taking the pitchers that claimed council had allowed it. Council advised the officer that Council had not granted any permission.

When the bluestone was reinstated, the contractor advised that approximately three square metres of pitchers were missing. However, Council was able to replace the bluestones from its reserves. The works were successfully completed.

**Please note: answers to any questions in Public Question Time and Councillor Question Time which were answered at the meeting are included in the minutes of that meeting.*