

APPENDIX C



HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

Name Woolton Street Precinct
Address 37-43, 55-57 & 58-60 Woolton Street THORNBURY

File No
Grading
2008
Local

Date
Building Type Residential Precinct
Assessment by

Extent of Overlay
Refer recommendations



Condition

Recommended Heritage Protection VHR - HI - PS Yes

Designer / Architect No information held
Maker / Builder No information held

Architectural Style Victorian Period (1851-1901)

Integrity

High

History and Historical Context

Thematic context

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2. *Peopling Darebin* 2.3 Promoting settlement

5. *Building suburban Darebin* 5.3 Developing the suburban ideal

History of Thornbury

Thornbury takes its name from Job Smith's farm, established near the Merri Creek in the 1850s, and subdivided for housing in the 1880s. The opening of the Whittlesea railway in 1889, and the making of St George's Road as far as Thornbury encouraged other rural landholders in the area to subdivide during the land boom. By 1888 most of the land between High Street and St George's Road was sold (Lemon, 1983:90-2). However little development in Thornbury ensued before the boom collapsed. One successful boom-time development was the Prince of Wales Park to the east of High Street, where a community with a school and a couple of churches was established by the early 1890s. The failed Pender's Grove estate was sold for Closer Settlement after the turn of the century, and in the years prior to the First World War Thornbury began to develop as a residential suburb.

History of Woolton Avenue Precinct

Woolton Avenue is so named for the 'Woolton Park' homestead, demolished c.1888. As 'Woolton Park' the land was used for dairy farming and grazing until its subdivision in the 1880s, which created the east-west streets between Leinster Grove and High Street. The north side of the street was part of Crown Portion 128 and was subdivided as the Woolton Park Estate. A Muntz and Barge survey showed this area auctioned on 26 November 1887 at which most lots sold, a note indicating that the area between St. Georges Road and the railway line went for £685 per acre by auction in a block (Ward, 2001, Database No.338).

The south side of Woolton Avenue was part of Crown Portions 129, which was purchased by G.S. Brodie in 1839. The land was surveyed by Bruford and Brain, who provided a series of allotments for the auctioneers, Langridge and Sons, to sell progressively from 1884 to 1885. Bernard Marks, the owner of the Croxton Park Hotel (q.v.), was listed as owning sixteen acres of this subdivision by 1890 (Ward, 2001, Database No.136).

The first house in this section of Woolton Avenue, east of St George's Road was constructed for David Marks who purchased an allotment in 1892, building *Woolton* in the following year. This is the house now at No.58 (Ward, 2001, Database No.136).

However, Woolton Avenue, situated about halfway between Croxton and Thornbury railway stations did not see much further residential settlement until the turn of the century. In 1900 the only residents listed between the railway and St George's Road were the railway gate keeper, and David Marks whose house *Woolton* (Which is now No.58) was the only house then on the north side.

Development commenced in the first decade of the twentieth century. In 1903 there were a few houses on the south side, including R. Ritter's *Thoringia* (No.41), *Reesville* (No.51) and *St Albans* (No.53). In 1905 there were nine houses on the south side, including *Inveriel* (No. 39) and *Wellington* (No.43). By 1908 *St Just* (No.55) and *Loreto* (No. 57) were also listed (Sands & McDougall Directory).

The house at No.54 was erected in 1912 for Wilfred Hooper, a tanner who possibly worked at Joshua Pitt's nearby tannery (Ward, 2001, Database No.338).

Primary sources

MMBW Detail Plan, No.2093, dated 1908

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Sands & McDougall Directory

Secondary sources

Lemon, Andrew, *The Northcote side of the river*, North Melbourne, Hargreen Publishing [for the] City of Northcote, 1983

Ward, Andrew, *Darebin Heritage Review 2000. Volumes 2 and 3*, City of Darebin, 2001.

Relevant Historical Australian Themes

No information held.

Description

Physical Description 1

This is an early twentieth century residential precinct, which comprises a group of early twentieth century villas in a Victorian Transitional-style on the north and south sides of Woolton Avenue, between the Melbourne to Whittlesea Railway Line and St George's Road in Thornbury. They are relatively substantial detached double-fronted villas setback from their street boundaries behind mature gardens. Of particular note are Nos. 55 & 57 which are built on larger blocks, with No 57 built of brick and retaining much of its original fabric including its cast iron verandah and slate tile roof.

The houses at No.54 and No.60 are individually significant and are described in detail in separate citations in the *Darebin Heritage Review 2000*.

Physical Condition

Fair

Conservation Policy

Objectives

To conserve the surviving fabric that contributes to the early twentieth century appearance of the houses and their setting when viewed from Woolton Avenue.

To reveal the significance of the place by encouraging the restoration or reconstruction of missing features.

Policy Basis

These houses are surviving example of an important and early stage of residential development of Thornbury, and because of this they should be retained as a record of the historic development of this area. This does not mean that development cannot occur provided that it is carefully designed, however, it does place some limits upon the type of new development. The houses are relatively intact externally and this contributes to their significance. The overall conservation objective therefore is to conserve and maintain the historic fabric, with an emphasis upon the elements that are visible from Woolton Avenue.

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Guidelines (General)

In order to conserve the heritage significance of these houses, it is policy to:

Conserve the fabric of the building/s or other elements that contribute to the significance of the place and in particular to:

- Encourage the accurate restoration or reconstruction of missing or modified elements on the basis of available evidence.
- Encourage the removal of non-significant or intrusive elements, particularly where this would assist in revealing or interpreting the significance of the place.
- Encourage a contextual approach to new development that is complementary in form, scale and materials to the elements of primary significance, but is clearly contemporary in design.
- Ensure that new development does not become a visually dominant element as a result of its scale, form or siting; i.e. it should appear as a secondary element when compared to the original or contributory building/s.. Discourage the demolition of elements of primary significance except where it can be demonstrated that:
 - The building is structurally unsound and cannot feasibly be repaired without undertaking significant alterations that would diminish the integrity of the building, and
 - The proposed replacement building embodies design excellence that is complementary in form, scale and materials to the elements of primary significance, but is clearly contemporary in approach.

Demolition of part of an element of primary significance may be allowed when it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the responsible authority that its demolition or removal will not adversely affect the significance of the place and, as appropriate:

- It will assist in the long term conservation or maintenance of the place, or
 - It will support the viability of the existing use of the place or will facilitate a new use that is compatible with the ongoing conservation of the building, or
 - It will upgrade the building to meet contemporary living standards such as improving energy efficiency.
- Consider the demolition or modification of elements of secondary significance only if the proposed replacement building embodies design excellence that is complementary in form, scale and materials to the elements of primary significance, but is clearly contemporary in approach.

Guidelines (Specific)

None specified.

Review of significance and policy

While every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in this citation is accurate, it is possible that more detailed investigation may reveal further information about the significance of the place. For example, in most cases

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an internal inspection was not made of buildings at the time of initial assessment. In the time since the place was first assessed it is also possible that the condition of buildings or trees may have changed.

The information contained in this citation should therefore be reviewed at the time that it is proposed to make changes to the property. This would likely require a more detailed assessment of any significant or contributory element that is affected by any proposed buildings or works. Once this more detailed assessment has been made, a review of the significance of the place and the conservation policy should be carried out by Council's Heritage Adviser or an appropriately qualified professional.

Comparative Analysis

This precinct comprises one of the best groups of substantial early twentieth century villas in the Victorian Transitional-style in Darebin. The houses individually have a high degree of external integrity and compare with similar examples already within the Heritage Overlay in Darebin. Comparative examples assessed by this Study and recommended for inclusion in the HO include:

Gladstone Avenue Precinct, Northcote

A precinct of Victorian and Edwardian villas, which are considerably smaller and modest in comparison.

Broomfield Avenue Precinct, Alphington

A precinct of Edwardian villas and later styles. The Broomfield Avenue Precinct is more unified, in terms of having less intrusive and later styles interspersed between the street's early twentieth century building stock.

Statement of Significance

What is significant?

The Woolton Avenue precinct comprises 37-43, 55-57 & 58-60 Woolton Avenue, Thornbury. It is an early twentieth century residential precinct comprising groups of houses on both sides of Woolton Avenue, between the Melbourne to Whittlesea Railway Line and St George's Road. Apart from *Woolton* at No.58 the houses were built in the first decades of the twentieth century and are relatively substantial detached double-fronted villas setback from their street boundaries behind mature gardens.

The houses at No. 54 and No.60 are of individual significance and have separate citations in this Study.

How is it significant?

The Woolton Avenue Precinct in Thornbury is of local historic and architectural significance to Darebin City.

Why is it significant?

Historically, the Woolton Avenue Precinct in Thornbury is significant as a representative example of an early twentieth century residential subdivision, which provides evidence of an important early phase in suburban development in Thornbury as the economy recovered in the first decades of the twentieth century. (AHC criteria A.4, D.2)

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The houses at 55 and 57 are architecturally significant as fine examples of Victorian Transitional-style villas in a garden setting, and have typical features of this style. The significance of these houses is enhanced by relatively high degree of external integrity. (AHC criterion D.2)

Levels of significance

The following levels of significance apply to this place:

Primary - The houses to the extent of the late nineteenth/early twentieth century fabric including form, scale, materials and architectural embellishment.

Secondary - Early landscape elements, and front-fences

Limited/Not significant - Later additions and alterations.

Assessment Against Criteria

RNE Criterion A.4

Importance for association with events, developments or cultural phases which have had a significant role in the human occupation and evolution of the nation, State, region or community.

The Woolton Avenue Precinct in Thornbury is considered to meet Criterion A.4 as it provides evidence of the earliest phase of suburban development in the suburb during the early twentieth century, in the years immediately after the economic crash of the 1890s. Its proximity to the Melbourne-Whittlesea Railway Line demonstrates the impact railways had on suburban development in metropolitan Melbourne in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

RNE Criterion D.2

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of the range of human activities in the Australian environment (including way of life, custom, process, land-use, function, design or technique)

The housing in the Woolton Avenue Precinct in Thornbury is considered to meet Criterion D.2 as representative example of an early twentieth century residential subdivision with houses in garden settings that are characteristic of the period. The houses at 55 and 57 are architecturally significant as fine examples of Victorian Transitional-style villas in a garden setting, and have typical features of this style. The significance of these houses is enhanced by relatively high degree of external integrity.

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Recommendations 2008

External Paint Controls

No

Internal Alteration Controls

No

Tree Controls

No

Fences & Outbuildings

No

Prohibited Uses May Be Permitted

No

Incorporated Plan

None Specified

Aboriginal Heritage Place

No

Other Recommendations

It is recommended that the Woolton Avenue Precinct comprising the houses at 37-43, 55-57 & 58 Woolton Avenue (Note: Nos. 54 and 60 are already included in the HO as HO159 and HO93 respectively) in Thornbury be added as an individual place to the Heritage Overlay of the Darebin Planning Scheme with the schedule entry as shown below. The extent of registration is the whole of the property as defined by the title boundaries.

References