

# **DAREBIN HERITAGE REVIEW 2000**

**Volume One**

**February, 2001**

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## **Volume Two**

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**Former City of Northcote Data Sheets – Street names J-Y**  
**25 Jackson Street**

**Former City of Preston Data Sheets**

## Introduction

### 1.1 Background

This review of the cultural heritage of the City of Darebin was commissioned in March, 1999. The consultant team was lead by Andrew Ward, architectural historian and supported by Robert Cooper of Collie Landscape and Design Pty. Ltd. Data base management and map generation was undertaken by Ian Perry of Big Picture Software Pty. Ltd. and research assistance was provided by Jenny Dalrymple and Doug Allison of Andrew Ward's office. The project was directed initially and for the greater part by Lucy Botta, strategic planner at the City of Darebin and completed by Warren Wood, strategic planner.

The work was supervised by a project steering committee. Membership was as follows:

- Lucy Botta, strategic planner, City of Darebin
- Suzanne Becker, Co-ordinator Strategic Planning, City of Darebin
- Natascha Placencio, Statutory Planner, City of Darebin
- Merv Lia, Preston Historical Society
- Paul Michell, Northcote Historical Society
- Geoff Austin, Heritage Victoria
- Willys Keeble, Heritage Adviser

The support of the members of this committee throughout the course of the Study is acknowledged with thanks, the experience and long associations of several members with the Municipality being of great value. The support of the present heritage adviser, Bernadette de Corte, in undertaking the assessment of the cultural values of the Newmarket Street Area is also acknowledged.

The City of Darebin was formed in June 1994 by the amalgamation of the former Cities of Northcote (north of Heidelberg Road) and Preston (including small portions of the former City of Heidelberg and Shire of Diamond Valley). Several reports had been previously prepared on the cultural heritage of the former Cities and more recently, the City of Darebin. These are as follows:

- Graeme Butler and Associates: *Northcote Urban Conservation Study*, 1981.
- Gary Vines and Matthew Churchward: *Northern Suburbs Factory Study*, 1992.
- Allom Lovell and Associates: *City of Darebin Citations*, 9/96.
- Michelle Summerton and Allom Lovell and Associates: *Darebin An Environmental History*, 4/97.
- Graeme Butler and Allom Lovell and Associates: *Northcote Building Citations*, 6/97.
- Jill Burness, John Patrick Pty. Ltd. and Allom Lovell and Associates: *Preston Landscape Citations*, 6/97.
- Charles Nilsen and Allom Lovell and Associates: *Preston Heritage Areas*, 7/97.

Their relationships with the purposes of the Heritage Review were given careful consideration in the development of a Study Method for this project.

## 1.2 Project Brief

The main objectives of the Study are stated on page one of the Brief as follows:

- *To identify buildings, places and sites of state and local historical significance (European).*
- *To recommend buildings and areas of significance for inclusion within a Heritage Overlay, to form part of the Darebin Planning Scheme.*
- *To examine how the influences described in Attachment 1 have contributed to the social, architectural and cultural heritage of Darebin.*

Attachment 1 describes the following themes that have impacted upon the development of the Municipality:

- *Architectural trends over time...from Victorian through to post war housing.*
- *The pattern of industry.*
- *Migration.*

The project outcomes were to:

- *Identify places, sites and buildings of historical significance.*
- *Map buildings and sites of significance.*
- *Make Recommendations for Heritage Overlay protection.*
- *Co-ordinate and consolidate previous studies.*

## 1.3 Study Method

### 1.3.1 Historic Themes

A working paper was prepared using Michelle's Summerton's *Darebin An Environmental History* as a basis, listing the historic themes that were most likely to underscore the cultural heritage values of the places to be identified. The purpose of this task was to inform the Study authors of the themes that they should be sensitive to prior to the commencement of the field survey. It was based on the trial framework of themes contained in the report entitled *Principal Australian Historic Themes: A Guide for Heritage Agencies (draft)*, being a document prepared under the Australian Heritage Commission's National Heritage Co-ordination Strategy.

### 1.3.2 Field Survey

The Environmental History and Summary of Historic Themes incorporating the Attachment 1 themes provided a basis for the identification and evaluation of the significance of places in the field. The criteria for the assessment of cultural heritage significance adopted by the Heritage Council on 6<sup>th</sup> March 1997 were used in conjunction with the above documents and the field inspections to provide preliminary

assessments of significance for those places within the Municipality likely to include areas forming Heritage Overlay Areas. The survey area, therefore, was determined in discussion with the Steering Committee which resolved that the whole of the western and southern portions of the former City of Northcote should be surveyed. As far as the former City of Preston was concerned, the value of the recent reviews was reflected in the decision only to survey those areas previously identified by other consultants.

The maps generated from the field work recorded information according to a system of ranking which can be explained in the following terms. Importantly, the information was used solely as a tool for the identification of potential Heritage Overlay Areas. The findings of the field surveys were accordingly reviewed during a subsequent stage in the light of more rigorous inspection and research.

Preliminary levels of importance were simplified along traditional lines, assigning the letter A to places considered to be of national importance, B to those of regional importance and C to those of local importance. These levels of importance had implications for the introduction or confirmation of existing statutory control provisions in the Planning Scheme. Where a place was considered to have lesser importance than level C, it was ranked D, meaning that it was likely to be substantially intact but merely representative of an era. Places of lesser cultural value were ranked E, usually implying that the place had been defaced, but not irretrievably, or that it was aesthetically undistinguished. Finally, a place was ranked F if it was considered to have been important in the past but as a result of intervention now so compromised that it was likely to be of interest only. Further to this generalisation, it is noted that places ranked F have potential significance, especially if they are situated within a Heritage Overlay Area, since their aesthetic values may be recovered through careful conservation works. Places having for planning purposes no cultural value were ranked N.

It is important to note when interpreting the maps produced in this way that they represent a “picture” of the Municipality that is in many instances based upon imperfect data. A quick visual inspection of the exterior of a building, after all, cannot be said to constitute a thorough appraisal. By the same token, however, if a data sheet has been prepared for a place, then the recommendations arising from the review of this data sheet have been incorporated in the maps and may therefore be counted as a firm basis for future planning decisions. The maps are therefore of greatest value for their capacity to graphically present an overview of the Municipality, not only in terms of its evolution but also in terms of the cultural value of neighbourhoods. Their primary purpose, however, has been to assist the consultant to identify potential Heritage Overlay Areas.

The maps themselves used a digital base supplied to Council by the State Government. One of the layers of this base consists of a series of polygons representing the boundaries of properties. The mapping software allows data fields to be attached to each property with the result that the map becomes a front end to a data base table. Data generated during this Review, however, was included on the map by adding a separate data base table, linked to the map table by a unique identifying number. In this way, one can work on the data in the heritage table independently of the map. In its final form, the Review

consists of data sheets for individual places linked to the map by the appropriate identifying numbers. The mapping software was Mapinfo, having the capability of linking with Microsoft Access 97 for the storage of linked data.

### 1.3.3 Heritage Overlay Areas

These areas were identified on the basis of the field work and the findings of earlier consultants. They were then studied in greater detail both in the field and in terms of their historical development and final conclusions drawn as to the extent of the areas having cultural heritage value warranting Planning Scheme control. There are important changes between the work of earlier consultants and this Review which can be accounted for in the following ways:

- In some instances, places have been altered since the earlier surveys. In extreme circumstances, contributory buildings have been demolished. This was, not surprisingly, most evident in the areas that had not been protected by planning scheme controls.
- In the former City of Northcote, areas appeared to have been identified principally on the basis of the numbers and aesthetic/historical values of nineteenth century buildings with lesser attention being given to Post Federation and Inter-War development. Whilst this was not universally the case, there was a bias which has been redressed in this Review having arisen out of a heightened community awareness of its own identity.
- In the former City of Preston, several areas previously considered to be candidates for Heritage Overlay controls were excluded on the basis of the low numbers and/or low aesthetic values of the contributory buildings.
- Importance has been placed on the need to identify discrete areas for Heritage Overlay control which, over time, will stand out against the surrounding urban fabric that will continue to sustain higher levels of demolition and reconstruction. The areas have therefore been selected where practicable to have natural or logical boundaries such as main roads, railway lines, water courses and subdivisional discontinuities.
- Importance has been placed on the identification of reasonably large areas as opposed to individual streets or sections of streets since the cultural heritage values of the areas are most commonly but not always expressive of the representative processes in the settlement of the Municipality. The values of several areas, therefore, is in many instances dominated by representative places which, when reduced to small enclaves, lack the significance of larger areas and are consequently more difficult to defend in the face of opposition. Nevertheless, there may be grounds for reviewing some small areas in the light of expressed concerns and cultural heritage value.

The horticultural values of the Areas were also studied and the findings incorporated in the Heritage Overlay Area documentation.

Once identified, the Areas were carefully documented and their cultural values defined in accordance with the criteria set down by the Heritage Council. Where appropriate, the Areas were subdivided into sub areas which, whilst being functionally linked, were



sufficiently different in cultural heritage terms to warrant different policy recommendations. The Areas have been documented in terms of the following headings:

- Location
- Description
- History
- Significance
- Policy Recommendations

The information in the maps has been presented under three categories as follows:

- places which are significant. The conservation of these places should be seen as crucial, the cultural heritage values of the Areas being demonstrated most effectively by them.
- places which are contributory. The conservation of these places should be seen as important and whilst some may be demolished over time on account of their diminished cultural values, neither their collective importance nor their capacity for the recovery of significance should be underestimated if the Planning Scheme objectives are to be achieved.
- places which are non contributory.

#### **1.3.4 Data Sheets**

Data sheets have been prepared for all of those places already scheduled or proposed for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay Table in the City of Darebin Planning Scheme. They include the Heritage Overlay Areas themselves and individually significant places situated within and outside of the areas. A standard format has been used that is similar to the Heritage Overlay Area data sheets. This format has also been applied to the data sheets prepared by the past consultants to form a uniform data base. Where this is the case, responsibility for the assessments rests with the consultant nominated on the form. All places were visited and re-photographed during the Review.

#### **1.3.5 Recommendations**

It is recommended that the findings of this Review be adopted by the City of Darebin with a view to undertaking the following actions:

- 1) Listing the Review document as an Incorporated Document in the Scheme so as to ensure that the specific findings and management recommendations for areas and individual places have maximum statutory effect.
- 2) Amending the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay Table in the City of Darebin Planning Scheme to include those places recommended for planning scheme control. These will include the thirteen Heritage Areas documented in Section 2 of this Review as well as those individual places recommended for control.
- 3) Nominating those places not previously nominated for inclusion by Heritage Victoria on the Victorian Heritage Register.

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- 4) Extending the field surveys to include the entire Municipality, thereby achieving a complete coverage.
- 5) Continuing to document the cultural heritage values of those places identified in this Review as having potential individual cultural heritage significance.

The review findings are summarised in the table.

**Table 1: Darebin Heritage Review 2000: Summary of findings and recommendations**

■ Recommended

○ Not recommended

◆ Presently in Planning Scheme

		Victorian Heritage Register	Register of the National Estate	Darebin Planning Scheme	Within larger HOA
17-19 Arthur Street	House and Shop	○	○	◆	
35 Arthur Street	House	○	○	◆	
92-96 Arthur Street	Fairfield Post Office	○	○	■	
5 Auburn Ave	House	○	○	◆	
8 Auburn Ave	Padua	○	○	◆	
51 Austin Street	House	○	○	◆	
59 Austin Street	Rosebank	○	○	◆	
11 Bastings Street	Beaumont	○	■	◆	HO97
46 Bastings Street	House	○	■	◆	
58 Bastings Street	Corner shop and dwelling	○	○	■	
Bayview Street	Epiphany Anglican Church	○	○	◆	
Bayview Street	Epiphany Church Vicarage	○	○	◆	
13 Bayview Street	Merridale House	○	○	◆	
135 Bent Street	Residence	○	○	■	
42 Bower Street	Shop and residence	○	○	■	
16-20 Candy Street	Row Houses	○	○	◆	
2-10 Charles Street	Albion Family Hotel	○	○	◆	HO100
61-69 Charles Street	Row Houses	○	○	◆	HO100
12- 16 Christmas Street	Residences	○	○	■	
41-45 Christmas Street	Terrace	○	○	■	
5-11 Clarke Street	Row Houses	○	○	◆	proposed
24 Clarke Street	Moravia	○	○	◆	HO100
67 Clarke Street	Row Houses, Former	○	○	◆	HO100
89 Clarke Street	House	○	○	◆	HO100
106 Clarke Street	House	○	○	◆	
107-109 Clarke Street	Row Houses	○	○	◆	HO100

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		Victorian Heritage Register	Register of the National Estate	Darebin Planning Scheme	Within larger HOA
108-110 Clarke Street	Maryville and Bellevue: Terrace	○	○	■	
127 Clarke Street	Residence	○	○	■	
151 Clarke Street	House	○	○	◆	
155 Clarke Street	House	○	○	◆	
157 Clarke Street	Row Houses	○	○	■	
178 Clarke Street	House	○	○	◆	
186-192 Clarke Street	Worthing (Marienfels)	○	○	◆	
212 Clarke Street	Westleigh, later Westleigh College (part)	○	○	◆	
215-217, 219 Clarke Street	Lugano and Mandalay	○	○	◆	
224 Clarke Street	House	○	○	◆	
Cooma Street	Preston Girls' High School	○	○	◆	
47 Cunningham St	House	○	○	◆	
85 Cunningham St	Mayville	○	○	◆	
57-61 David Street	Former Preston Salvation Army Barracks	○	○	◆	
92 Dennis Street	House	○	○	◆	
33 Derby Street	Residence	○	○	■	
Cnr Dundas Street and Plenty Road	Watson & Paterson Former Bacon-Curing Factory	○	■	◆	
82 Dundas Street	Barunah	○	○	◆	
1 Flinders Street	Residence	○	○	■	
6 Francis Grove	Benvenula	○	○	◆	
9 Gooch Street		○	○	■	
12 Hanslope Avenue	Hanslope	○	○	◆	
9- 11 Harold Street	Residences	○	○	■	
9 Hartington St	House	○	○	◆	HO96
18 Hartington St	House	○	○	◆	HO96
24 Hartington St	House	○	○	◆	HO96
1 Hawthorn St	House	○	○	◆	HO96
Heidelberg Rd	Merri Creek Bridge	■	■	■	
184-187 Heidelberg Rd	Centenary Dairy Complex	○	○	◆	
429 Heidelberg Rd	Grand View Hotel	○	○	◆	
457 Heidelberg Rd	Shop & Residence	○	○	◆	

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		Victorian Heritage Register	Register of the National Estate	Darebin Planning Scheme	Within larger HOA
797 Heidelberg Rd	Wesleyan Church, now Uniting Church	○	○	◆	
849 Heidelberg Rd	Hills View	○	○	◆	
Helen Street	Northcote State School SS1401	○	○	◆	
12-18 Helen Street	House	○	○	■	proposed
26 Helen Street	Wesleyan Manse	○	○	◆	
74-76 Herbert Street	Houses	○	○	◆	
Cnr. High Street and Tyler Street	Uniting Church	○	○	◆	
High Street	Thornbury Regent Theatre	○	○	◆	
High Street	Northcote (Merri Creek) Bridge	○	○	■	proposed
14-16 High Street	All Saints Church	○	○	◆	HO102
38 High Street	Durham	○	○	◆	HO102
42 High Street	Shop	○	○	◆	HO102
50-56 High Street		○	○	◆	HO101
60 High Street		○	○	◆	HO101
89 High Street	Westgarth Theatre	○	○	◆	HO101
99-103 High Street	Howe Leather Factory	○	○	■	
136-144 High Street	Houses and Shops	○	○	◆	
185-187 High Street	Northcote Free Library	○	○	◆	HO97
197-201 High Street	Northcote Town Hall & Municipal Offices	○	○	◆	HO97
203-205 High Street	Shop and residence pair	○	○	◆	HO97
210 High Street	Peacock Hotel	○	○	◆	HO97
212-220 High Street	Northcote Theatre	○	■	◆	HO97
223-243 High Street	Wallis Buildings row, shops and residences	○	○	◆	HO97
226-232 High Street	Shop row	○	○	◆	HO97
234-240 High Street	Shop row	○	○	◆	HO97
245 High Street	Shop and residence	○	○	◆	HO97
248-250 High Street	Wesleyan Chapel & School Room, former	○	○	◆	HO97
249-251 High Street	Former Wesleyan Church	○	○	◆	HO97
262 High Street	Shop and Residence	○	○	◆	HO97
285 High Street	Shop and Residence	○	○	◆	HO97
301 High Street	Commercial Hotel	○	○	◆	HO97

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		Victorian Heritage Register	Register of the National Estate	Darebin Planning Scheme	Within larger HOA
312 High Street	Former National Bank of Australasia	○	○	◆	HO97
329 High Street	Shop and dwelling	○	○	■	
342 High Street	Former London Chartered Bank of Australia	○	○	◆	HO97
350 High Street	Preston Town Hall and Municipal Offices	○	○	◆	
356-358 High Street	Shop and Residence	○	○	◆	HO97
466-468 High Street	Shop and dwelling	○	○	■	
496 High Street	Northcote Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hall	○	○	◆	
509-513 High Street	Shops and dwellings	○	○	■	
581-599 High Street	Shops and dwellings	○	○	■	
607-617 High Street	Croxton Park Hotel	○	○	■	
626 High Street	Former Cable Tram Engine House	○	○	■	
703 High Street	Shop and dwelling	○	○	■	
707 High Street	Shop and dwelling	○	○	■	
711 and 715 High Street	Shops	○	○	■	
718-730 High Street	St Mary's Roman Catholic Church	○	○	◆	
718-730 High Street	St Mary's Presbytery	○	○	◆	
737 High Street	Shop and residence	○	○	■	
759-761 High Street	Shops and dwellings	○	○	■	
56-82 Hotham Street	Builders' Terrace	○	○	◆	
37 Howitt Street		○	○	◆	
21 Hutton Street	"Thornbury"	○	○	■	
25 Jackson Street	Greendale	○	○	◆	
1 James Street	House	○	○	◆	
19 James Street		○	○	◆	HO97
36 James Street	Wallingford	○	○	◆	HO97
40-42 James Street	Presbyterian Church & Hall	○	○	◆	
43 James Street	Police Station and residence	○	○	◆	
51 James Street	Buena Vista	○	○	◆	
57 James Street	House	○	○	◆	
68 James Street	Yarrook	○	○	◆	
69 James Street	House	○	○	◆	
34 Jenkins Street	Residence	○	○	■	

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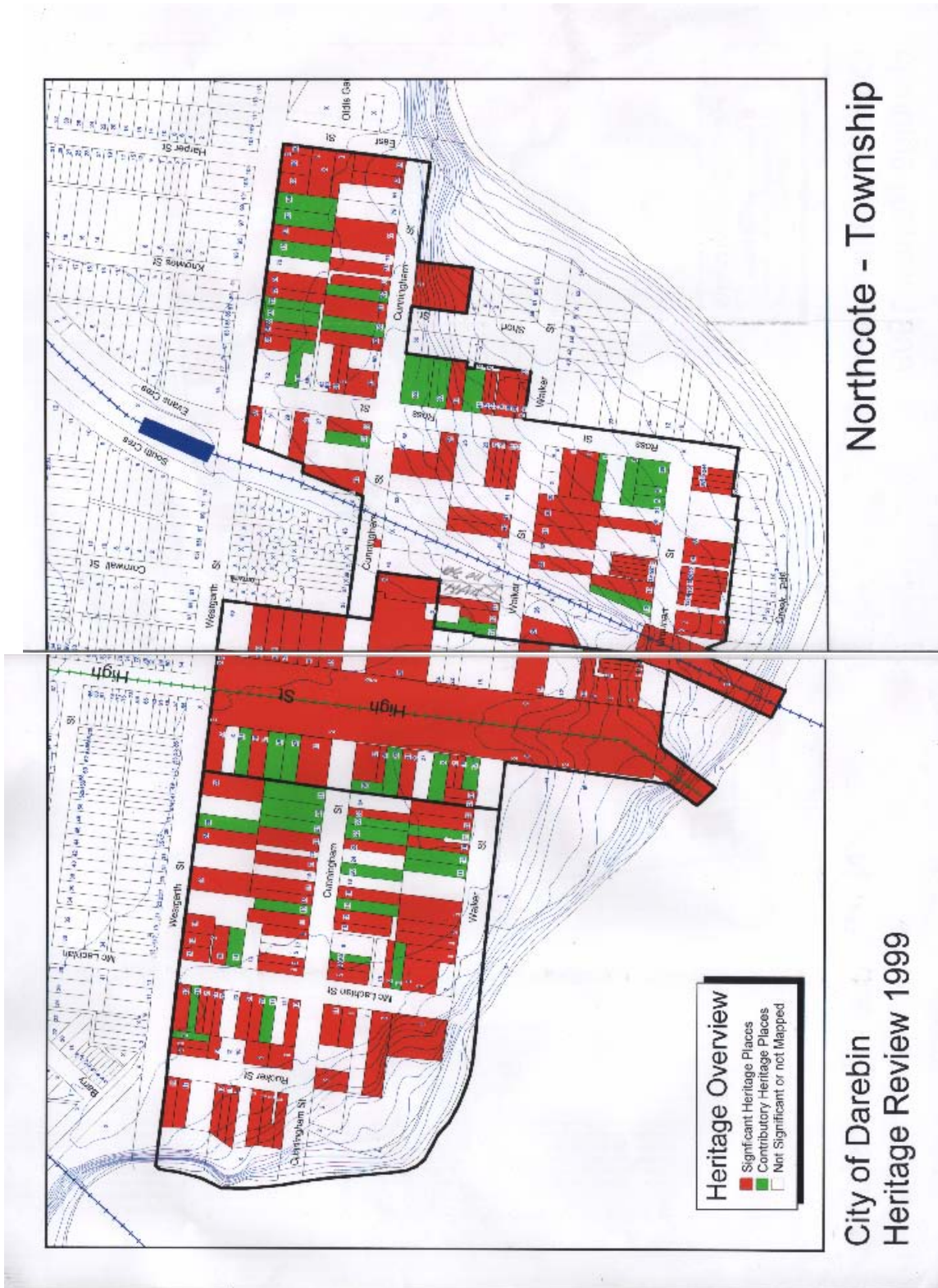
		Victorian Heritage Register	Register of the National Estate	Darebin Planning Scheme	Within larger HOA
36 Jenkins Street	Residence	○	○	■	
Langwells Pde and Robbs Pde	Row houses	○	○	◆	HO98
1-3 Leonard Street	Residence	○	○	■	
34 Martin Street	Residence	○	○	■	
3 McLachlan Street	Terracedale	○	○	◆	
4,4a McLachlan Street	Kimbrae	○	○	◆	
5 McLachlan Street	West Bend	○	○	◆	
10 McLachlan Street	House	○	○	■	proposed
Miller Street	Public Transport Corporation Tramway Workshops	■	■	■	
18 Mitchell Street	Primitive Methodist Church, now Salvation Army Hall	○	○	■	
70 Mitchell Street	Shop and residence	○	○	■	
76-82 Mitchell Street	Terrace	○	○	■	
2-4 Normanby Avenue	Terrace	○	○	■	
Plenty Road	Bundoora Park Homestead	■	■	◆	
339 Plenty Road	House	○	○	◆	
13 Prospect Grove	Iolanthe	○	○	◆	HO97
15 Prospect Grove	Olinda	○	○	◆	HO97
19 Prospect Grove	Pisgah	○	○	◆	HO97
25 Prospect Grove	Grand View	○	○	◆	HO97
66 Raleigh Street	Residence	○	○	■	
2 Rowe Street	Avalon	○	○	◆	
Shaftesbury Parade	Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Vicarage and Parish Hall	○	○	■	
40 Shaftesbury Parade	Former S.G. Tomkins Pty. Ltd. Dairy and residence	○	○	■	
52 Shaftesbury Parade	Residence	○	○	■	
112 St Georges Road	Former Little Sisters of the Poor Home for the Aged	○	○	◆	
140 St Georges Road	House	○	○	◆	
12 Stafford Street	Oakover Hall	○	■	◆	
Station Street	Fairfield signal box	○	○	◆	
Station Street	Fairfield railway station	○	○	◆	

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		Victorian Heritage Register	Register of the National Estate	Darebin Planning Scheme	Within larger HOA
43 Station Street	Carmelea, later Georgiana House	○	○	◆	
31 Station Street	Maristowe	○	○	◆	
36 Station Street	House	○	○	◆	
61 Station Street	House	○	○	■	
Sylvester Grove	Preston East Primary School	○	○	◆	
1 Thomson Street	Shop and dwelling	○	○	■	
9-15 Union Street	Terrace	○	○	■	
26 Urquhart Street	House	○	○	◆	
44 Urquhart Street	House	○	○	◆	
Wales Street	Wales Street State School, SS 3139	○	○	◆	
1-3 Walker Street	Row houses	○	○	◆	
7 Walker Street	House	○	○	◆	
24 Walker Street	Northcote Police Station	○	○	◆	
27-29 Walker Street	Row house pair	○	○	◆	
34 Walker Street	House	○	○	◆	
45 Walker Street	Row house	○	○	◆	
3 Wardrop Grove	House	○	○	◆	
74 Waterloo Road	Residence	○	○	■	
Westbourne Grove	Court House	○	○	◆	HO97
92 Westbourne Grove	House	○	○	◆	HO97
93 Westbourne Grove	House	○	○	◆	HO97
95 Westbourne Grove	House	○	○	◆	HO97
103 Westbourne Grove	Baringo	○	○	◆	HO97
106 Westbourne Grove	House	○	○	◆	HO97
112 Westbourne Grove	House	○	○	◆	HO97
134-136 Westbourne Grove	Highfields Villa and Shrewsbury Villa	○	○	◆	HO97
140 Westbourne Grove	St Joseph's Church	○	○	◆	HO97
140 Westbourne Grove	St Joseph's Presbytery	○	○	◆	HO97
153 Westgarth Street	"St. Helens"	○	○	■	
117 Wood Street	Pleasant View	○	○	◆	
193 Wood Street		○	○	◆	
54 Woolton Avenue	Residence	○	○	■	
60 Woolton Avenue	Woolton	○	○	■	
Yann Street	Greek Orthodox Church	○	■	◆	
25 Yarana Road		○	○	◆	

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## 2. HERITAGE AREAS





## 2.1 NORTHCOTE TOWNSHIP AREA (Northcote South)

This Area forms the southern extremity of the Municipality and is defined on its southern side by the meandering deep valley of the Merri Creek. Busy Westgarth Street establishes a division along the north side and forms its northern boundary, the road reserve for Westgarth Street dropping down to the Merri Creek in the west and running past the Oldis Gardens and cricket ground to the east which also have a frontage to the Merri Creek. Whilst the valley defines the southern boundary of the Area, the ground forming the creek bank is excluded since this land to the west of High Street was redeveloped by the Housing Commission of Victoria during the Post-War period and the land to the east predominantly also in the second half of the twentieth century.

### 2.1.1 Description

#### Generally

The Merri Creek forms a dramatic southern edge to this Area being located in a deep treed valley. It is spanned by the High Street bridge carrying the Bundoora tramway and by the single line viaduct of the Hurstridge railway. Both structures are of red brick construction and constitute exceptionally dramatic modes of entry to the Municipality. They are, however, best appreciated from the level of the creek (fig 2.1). The road bridge of 1875 has two sweeping red brick arches visually anchored by coupled dressed bluestone pilasters and a central axe finished cutwater. There are carefully detailed entablatures beneath the slightly cantilevered walkways above. By contrast, the railway viaduct of 1887-88 is entirely devoid of ornamentation having slender tapering red brick piers with bluestone copings and riveted iron girders supporting the railway above. It is distinguished more by its height and length, these elements combining to form the largest structure of its type on the suburban passenger railway system. The creek banks constitute a wilderness of narrow tracks and shady glades.

The transport routes facilitated by these two bridges cut the Area into three parts and whilst the railway route passes discretely through by means of the viaduct and railway reserve, the road route is exceptionally wide and has been developed with central and side avenues separated by gardens now graced by mature elms of consistent height. This Area, therefore, falls naturally into its *Boulevard* and *Residential* components.

#### High Street

This section of High Street is short, commencing at the Merri Creek bridge in the south, where it changes direction to cross the river and terminating at Westgarth Street to the north. It has been laid out in the form of a grand boulevard, recalling such longer stately thoroughfares as St. Kilda Road and Royal Parade. The central avenue accommodates a double line electric tramway and a single carriageway with kerbside parking on either side. The plantations or gardens have mature elms providing a shady buffer to the street



**2.1** The High Street bridge (left) and the railway viaduct seen through an arch of the High Street bridge (right).



**2.2 High Street and its gardens, looking north to the Westgarth centre.**



**2.3 One of the cannon placed in 1913 in the gardens at the entry to the Municipality. Notice the remnant rockery edge, the glimpse of the former Church of the Epiphany and the former premises of the Sutton Tool and Gauge Manufacturing Co. Pty. Ltd.**



**2.3** Small villas on the west side of High Street at the Walker Street intersection.



**2.4** Urquhart Street, looking east to the railway viaduct.

architecture and creating a strong sense of perspective. Unfortunately, the corner buildings facing south at Westgarth Street which have the potential to punctuate the High Street vista as the roadway narrows are architecturally disappointing. There are two cannon and associated shells located at the south ends of the plantations that serve to reinforce the point of entry to the City. Remnants of early rockeries survive but the garden beds, pre-cast concrete street lamps and seats seen in the views of the 'thirties have been removed. The overhead wires tramway span poles are the aluminium painted poles of the former Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board that are presently being replaced throughout Melbourne with less elegant galvanized poles. Today there is only one footpath facing the central avenue whereas the original vision accounted for two.

On the east side, All Saints Church of 1860 is a dominant element being located on an appreciable rise. Its understated bluestone façade with tri-partite lancet arched windows, porch and peppercorns recall its early date whilst the rockery is consistent with the earlier treatment of the plantations in its vicinity. There are representative Inter-War and Victorian period houses to the south of the Church as the ground falls to Urquhart Street. This short street marks the edge of the Area, the bluestone cottage seen in an early view on the south-east corner having been replaced by a Post-War factory. To the north of the Church a short run of Post War factories is terminated by the former premises of the Sutton Tool and Gauge Manufacturing Co. Pty. Ltd. of c.1933 (now Kennedy-Taylor (Vic) Pty. Ltd, engineers, contractors and manufacturers) at nos. 26-36. The success of this company was outlined in the Northcote Jubilee Celebrations programme of 1933, the site at the gateway to the City no doubt being seen at the time as highly appropriate. It is a utilitarian structure characteristic of its period but is aesthetically important on account of its size and location in the centre of the Area. The houses to the north, between Cunningham Street and Westgarth Street are representative small villas from the Federation period with a Victorian period house at Cunningham Street. There are public toilets at the north end and a recent non-contributory office complex at the Westgarth Street corner.

On the west side, the two streets blocks between Walker and Westgarth Streets are made up with one exception of small Victorian, Federation and Inter-War houses with reconstructed fences of various periods. There are a number of recent high fences obscuring the houses from view.

### **The Residential Areas**

The residential land to the east of High Street is disrupted by the railway line which includes the site of the former Northcote South railway station. Walker and Cunningham Streets are terminated either side of the railway which is protected by recent fences but at Urquhart Street, the viaduct carries the railway over the roadway and it too is protected by recent railings. The housing stock is predominantly of the Federation and Victorian periods with some high fences intruding, the two storeyed terrace west of the railway being a prominent element. Elsewhere, the houses are single storeyed of timber and brick construction adopting detached and terraced forms. One house, no.5, backs onto Urquhart

Street, facing Creek Parade. It is one of three formerly overlooking the creek and is in this sense a unique reminder of the past.

In Ross Street recent road works cause the carriageway to meander between small plantations stocked with native shrubs and around traffic islands generally creating an environment that compromises its historic values. The road rises steeply as it runs north to Westgarth Street, the greatest concentration of contributory Edwardian and Victorian houses being situated between Walker and Cunningham Streets where there are Edwardian period attached pairs and a Victorian period terrace. Mid Victorian houses presumably dating from the earliest phase in the development of the Area survive at no.25, in Ross Street and elsewhere at no. 24 Walker Street (the former police station of 1861), no. 34 Walker Street of c.1864 and nos. 77 and 85 Cunningham Street of c.1872. The timber house at no. 47 Cunningham Street may have been built in 1866 or 1872 and is also differentiated from its neighbours by means of its ornamental verandah and slate roof. Cunningham Street is made up predominantly of representative Victorian, Federation and Inter-War houses, at times defaced but not irretrievably, common unsympathetic alterations including overpainting, poorly rebuilt verandahs and low but unsympathetic front fences. On the west side of the railway in Cunningham Street there is a picturesque but abandoned sub-station, situated at the rear of the former Sutton Tool and Gauge Manufacturing Co. Pty. Ltd. premises. It faces a small Victorian cottage which may have been associated with the demolished dye works at the rear, now forming part of a large residential development. Further east between the railway and Ross Street, the Post-War housing and Inter-War house at no....mark the site of the Exhibition Boot Company factory facing Westgarth Street. Beyond Ross Street there is a very high percentage of contributory houses of the Victorian, Federation and Inter-War periods, a number having been defaced in different ways.

To the west of High Street a similar situation prevails along the south side of Westgarth Street. The houses in Rucker and McLachlan Streets survive with a reasonably high level of integrity although recent unsympathetic front fences of varying heights serve to compromise their consistency. The houses in Cunningham Street are small and often defaced but it is to the south end of McLachlan Street and Walker Street that one must look to see a number of individually significant Victorian and Inter-War period houses, now often concealed by leafy gardens and shaded by the massive plane trees in Walker Street. The Walker Street houses face a group of peppercorns and there is a wire mesh fence marking the division between the residential and wilderness environment associated with the Merri Creek. It was previously a post and rail fence<sup>1</sup>. No. 1-3 is a large two storeyed Classical Revival villa residence of 1887 distinguished by its projecting window bays with surmounting wrought iron railings whilst no. 7 is in the picturesque Gothic Revival mode. "Kimbrae" at nos. 4-4A McLachlan Street has a low tower from which the Merri Creek valley could be clearly seen and it faces a small villa of c.1875 called "West Bend". To the south of Walker Street, a public housing estate is excluded from the Area but marks the site of a number of nineteenth century houses long demolished.

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<sup>1</sup> See view in Swift, W.G., *The History of Northcote From its first settlement to a City*, The "Leader" Publishing Co. Pty. Ltd., 1928, facing p.90.



2.5 “Kimbrae” at the south end of McLachlan Street with a *Phoenix caanariensis* in the front garden.



2.6 “Mayville”, erected by John May c.1872, overlooks the treeclad Merri Creek valley at the east end of Cunningham Street.



**Tree clad Walker Street, at its western end.**

### **2.1.2 History**

This section by the Merri Creek had been set aside from the 1839 and 1840 land sales, and by 1853 was thought ready to become a hub of settlement in the area. Epping Road, later High Street, was surveyed by Hoddle in 1842, and formed the north-south axis dividing all of Hoddle's 1839-40 parish sections. Later it would directly bisect the township reserve of Northcote. On 14th. September 1853 the Colonial Government announced that this site on the Merri Creek had been set aside for a township to be called Northcote. It was the first time the name had been used in the district<sup>2</sup>. Its three main streets were named after prominent land purchasers who acquired land to the north in the 1840 land sales<sup>3</sup>.

The township was surveyed and by Assistant Surveyor Richard Larritt in 1853. It had broad streets and generous allotments. Five reserves were incorporated in the original township plan, including a police reserve<sup>4</sup>, though all but the original police reserve have

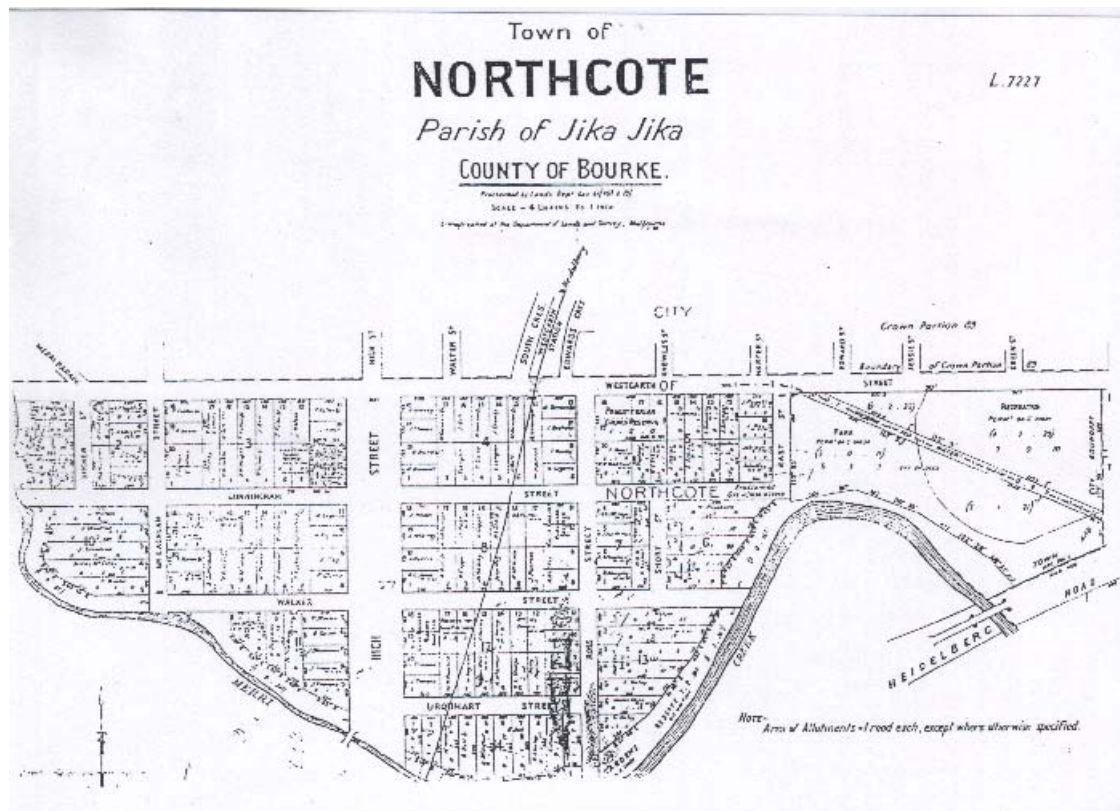
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<sup>2</sup> Lemon, p. 39.

<sup>3</sup> Urquhart, who bought allotment 89, Walker, allotment 94, and Cunningham, allotment 106. The northernmost street was named after the well known merchant William Westgarth. Source: Summerton, p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> The reserves were located on the corner of Cunningham and McLachlan Streets, Cunningham and High Streets (originally planned to be on the corner of Westgarth Street), Cunningham and Ross Streets, and





### 2.7 Plan of the Township of Northcote, 1853.

Ross and Westgarth Streets. The police reserve was situated at the south-east corner of High and Walker Streets.

**2.8 Extract from MMBW drainage plans nos. 50 and 63 c.1910.**

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since disappeared. Despite access to this new township having been improved by a temporary bridge built by the Government over the Merri Creek at High Street in 1850, little residential development ensued. There were only nine sales of the township land between October 1853 and October 1855, with most of the Northcote Township lots in the first sale being bought up by speculators. It was Ruckers Hill, to the north, that saw the first private subdivision, in the mid 1850s. By the 1860s it had become clear that the focus of settlement in Northcote was to be this higher ground<sup>5</sup>, upsetting Hoddle's plans for the Northcote Township area by the Merri Creek.

The poor land sales were brought about presumably by the economic recession of 1854 which resulted in land prices falling dramatically from an unrealistic peak. Thomas Fulton, land speculator and foundry owner, Lachlan Mackinnon, a squatter and Frederick Sargood, the softgoods merchant, took advantage of the situation and together acquired 12 of the 28 lots. It did little to develop the township. Seven years later only 37 houses had been built within its boundaries<sup>6</sup>.

The All Saints Church of England church and school on the corner of High and Walker Streets was designed by Nathaniel Billing<sup>7</sup> and built in 1859-60. It was constructed on the original police reserve, of which part was temporarily transferred to the Church of England in 1857 or 1858<sup>8</sup>. This became permanent a year after the church was opened. In 1860 it was the first building in Northcote by ten years to receive gas, being supplied by the Collingwood Gas Works<sup>9</sup>. The school closed in 1874. There were additions made in 1873 and 1885<sup>10</sup>. A strong Anglican presence could be seen in five other Anglican churches being built in the area before the turn of the century<sup>11</sup>.

Also constructed in the early Northcote township were the extant police station built on the remaining portion of the reserve facing Walker Street in 1861<sup>12</sup>, and the Bridge Hotel on the west side of High Street by the creek in 1864. The latter was run by a Captain Webster in 1890. It was still there in 1920 but appears to have been closed by 1930<sup>13</sup>.

Anne Grindrod's "West Bend", which survives in part, was built in McLachlan Street from c.1853 and may have been the township's first residence. William Henry Dennis' Walker Street residence (now number 34) followed c.1864/5. Dennis served as a Northcote councilor (1883-1904) and Jika Jika Shire councilor (1872-82). He was elected president of the Jika Jika Shire in 1879, and Mayor of the Township from 1902 to 1903. He was probably second only to Edwin Bastings as Northcote's most prominent

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<sup>5</sup> Summerton, p. 94.

<sup>6</sup> Lemon, p. 41.

<sup>7</sup> Summerton, p. 93.

<sup>8</sup> Plan of the Township of Northcote, 7.10.1855, <sup>8</sup> Butler, G., Allom Lovell and Associates, *Northcote: Building Citations*, [draft], (City of Darebin, 1997), p. 94.

<sup>9</sup> Swift, p. 44.

<sup>10</sup> <sup>10</sup> Butler, G., Allom Lovell and Associates, *Northcote: Building Citations*, [draft], (City of Darebin, 1997), p. 165.

<sup>11</sup> Summerton p. 98.

<sup>12</sup> There were temporary quarters at Northcote since about 1854. Source: Lemon, p. 50.

<sup>13</sup> Sands and McDougall directories: 1890, 1920, 1930.

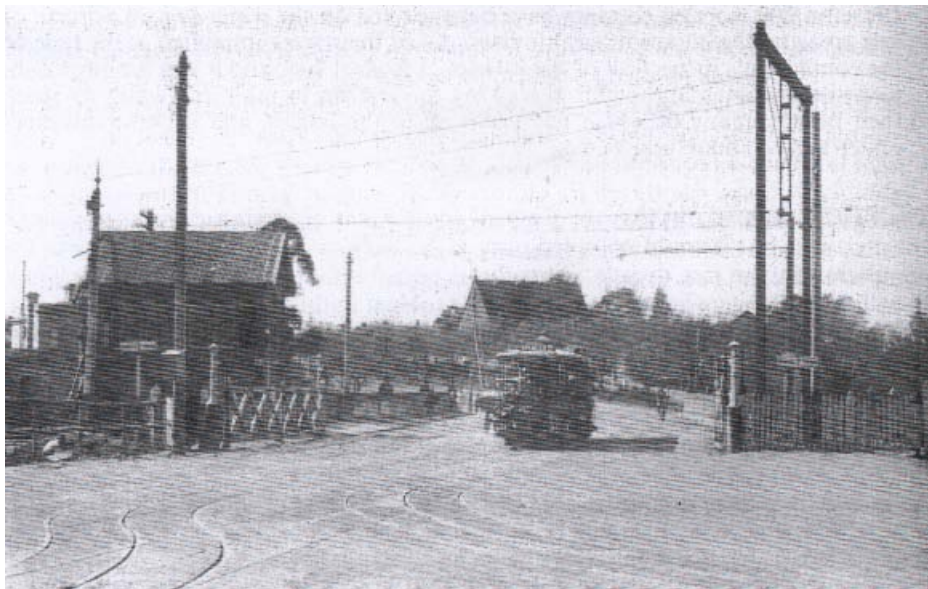
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*Urquhart Street bridge.*

(Local History Collection)

**2.9** Urquhart Street and the railway viaduct prior to the construction of the surviving two storeyed terrace to the left (see fig. 2.4).



*The Clifton Hill level crossing at High Street, looking towards All Saints Church, about 1922. A railway overpass replaced the crossing in 1925.*

**2.10** The level crossing and Clifton Hill cable tramway looking towards the south end of High Street and All Saints Church. Notice the High Street gardens continuing to the creek crossing. Source: Lemon, A., *The Northcote Side of the River*, City of Northcote, 1983, p.192.

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resident<sup>14</sup>. The house is a single storey building erected in a number of stages. John May, who was on the committee which successfully lobbied for the creation of a Church of England reserve and was one of the township's earliest contractors, built "Mayville" in Cunningham Street (now located at number 85) c.1872. It is a well preserved bluestone residence having a cellar, concave-roofed verandah with timber posts, capitals, brackets, frieze and decorative floor.<sup>15</sup> No. 47 Cunningham Street, was built in either 1866 or before 1871<sup>16</sup>, and is one of the few remaining houses from this era. It is a double-fronted weatherboard house with a gabled slate roof and a concave-roofed verandah. The walls are clad in ship lapped boards to resemble ashlar. Of particular note is the timber verandah with its elegant slim brackets and posts and turned pendant mouldings that pre-date the widespread use of cast iron. The original owner was Richard Westlake<sup>17</sup>. These houses may be the oldest surviving dwellings built within the township of Northcote<sup>18</sup>. It was also in a house in Cunningham Street that Northcote established its own grammar school in 1890<sup>19</sup>.

The temporary bridge over the Merri Creek of 1850 was replaced in 1857, presumably justifying the movement of the toll bar and house to the north side of the Merri, at Westgarth Street in the late 1850s<sup>20</sup>. This crossing was again replaced in 1875 and widened to accommodate the privately owned Northcote cable tramway in 1889-90. The lines were paved with wood blocks, since removed, the bridge surviving as one of a number of structures that testify to the checkered career of this remarkable tramway venture.

Industry had also established in the Area at least by 1883 when William Lawrence operated a Dyeworks in Cunningham Street. James Bate and Sons ran their engineering establishment on the east side of High Street in 1890 where there was also a coach builder (John Evans), two engineers, and other "builders"<sup>21</sup>. There was a post office receiving pillar at the corner of High and Cunningham Street in that year when the High Street frontages were finally being rapidly built upon. The boom years had by this time resulted in the construction of the following houses:

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<sup>14</sup> Butler, G., Allom Lovell and Associates, *Northcote: Building Citations*, [draft], (City of Darebin, 1997), p. 380.

<sup>15</sup> Butler, G., Allom Lovell and Associates, *Northcote: Building Citations*, [draft], (City of Darebin, 1997), p. 94

<sup>16</sup> Graeme Butler and Allom Lovell and Associates state the house was built in either 1866 or 1872. In the 1871 Sands and McDougall Directory it gives a "R. Westlake" living in Cunningham Street. However this does not necessarily mean that the current house is the one he lived in. Tenders were called for a timber cottage residence in Cunningham Street during 1872: this may have been this one.

<sup>17</sup> Butler, G., Allom Lovell and Associates, *Northcote: Building Citations*, [draft], (City of Darebin, 1997), p. 47.

<sup>18</sup> Butler, G., Allom Lovell and Associates, *Northcote: Building Citations*, [draft], (City of Darebin, 1997), p. 95.

<sup>19</sup> Summerton, p. 106.

<sup>20</sup> Butler, p. 5.

<sup>21</sup> 1890 Sands and McDougall Directory.

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- on the south side of Westgarth Street: 8 houses, Cunningham 23 as well as a Presbyterian church, Walker 22, Urquhart 19, McLachlan 5, Ross 9, Rucker and East Streets nil.<sup>22</sup>

The table below shows the housing (occupied) development of the township of Northcote<sup>23</sup> from 1871 to 1930:

street/date	1871	1883	1890	1895	1900	1910	1920	1930
Westgarth (s)	n/a	n/a	8	13	13	27	30	31
Cunningham	6	20	23	33	35	49	57	66
Walker	4	10	22	28	27	32	37	35
Urquhart	4	13	19	23	23	22	30	30
Rucker	0	0	0	0	1	5	2	11
McLachlan	1	5	5	7	8	10	16	22
High	n/a <sup>24</sup>	n/a <sup>15</sup>	17	18	20	32	41	41
Ross	3	8	9	14	18	22	39	45
East	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	1

In 1901 the newly formed Northcote South Ratepayer's Association resolved to beautify the entrance to the Municipality. Landscaping works were undertaken between 1905-7 under the supervision of the Curator of Essendon's Queens Park, and both sides of High Street were planted, complementing the elms that had been introduced in 1885. In 1913 two obsolete guns that had protected the South Channel in Port Phillip Bay since 1887 were moved to the High Street gardens to complete the work. These gardens represented the fulfilment of Hoddle's earlier vision of a grand boulevard and were subsequently further beautified by the introduction of pre-cast concrete street lamps that avoided the use of overhead power lines and reinforced the Garden Suburb theme that continues to strengthen the cultural heritage of the Municipality today. By 1933 industry had commenced to make a major impact on the boulevard with the construction of the Sutton Tool and Gauge Manufacturing Co. Pty. Ltd. factory. Finally, in October 1940 the cable tramway was closed in favour of double deck buses, the provision of the present electric tramway service being delayed until June 1955. In recent years the gardens and lamps have been removed but the boulevard treatment over this section of High Street continues to set the old Northcote Township apart from its neighbours to the north.

<sup>22</sup> 1890 Sands and McDougall Directory.

<sup>23</sup> Source: Sands and McDougall Directories, Rate Book (1883).

<sup>24</sup> The High Street addresses for this year don't specify whether they are north or south of Westgarth Street.

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**High Street, c.1933, showing the ornamental gardens with pre-cast concrete street lamps and mature elms that celebrated the point of entry to the Municipality in the then fashionable Garden Suburb mode.**

### **2.1.3 Statement of Significance**

#### **Generally**

The Northcote Township Area, later known as South Northcote, is located on a bend in the Merri Creek to the south of Westgarth Street. It was subdivided and sold between 1853 and 1855 and has historic and aesthetic importance. It is historically important (Criterion A4) as a discrete area designated for Township purposes by the Surveyor-General Robert Hoddle and subsequently named by his successor Andrew Clarke. It is aesthetically important (Criterion E) for the manner in which it is contained by the Merri Creek valley and Oldis Gardens, which together impart a sense of identity found rarely in the metropolitan area.

#### **High Street**

High Street was laid out at the time of the Government Survey of 1853 and is historically, aesthetically and socially important. It is historically important (Criterion A) for its capacity to demonstrate the Government's intention to establish this thoroughfare as the principal boulevard of the Township, comparing in this respect with Whitehorse Road as it passes through the Box Hill centre and the Nepean Highway at Mordialloc. The

presence of the Merri Creek bridge is historically important as a reminder of the exceptional infrastructure established by the former Clifton Hill to Northcote and Preston Tram Co. when constructing its Northcote cable tramway. It is aesthetically important (Criterion E) as a planned grand boulevard attaining full expression during the period just prior to the Great War and concluding during the Inter-War years. Today the plantations with their mature elm tree avenue, cannon and rockery remnants are the principal elements that demonstrate this vision. This importance is enhanced by the number of surviving houses from the Victorian and subsequent eras up to the Second World War that face High Street and demonstrate each phase in the evolution of the place. The premises of the Sutton Tool and Gauge Manufacturing Co. Pty. Ltd. are aesthetically important as the largest building facing the street, recalling through its architectural treatment the growth of industry in the Municipality during the Inter-War years. High Street is socially important (Criterion G) for the value placed on this section of the thoroughfare by the community as an entry to the Municipality for well over a century.

### **Residential Areas**

The Residential Areas are situated to the east and west of High Street and they excluded those houses directly facing this thoroughfare. They are historically and aesthetically important. They are historically important (Criterion A) for their capacity to demonstrate the tentative earliest stages in the development of the Northcote Township Area, commencing in the 1850s and continuing until the Second World War, subsequent change having generally been undertaken at the expense of this heritage. They are important also for their capacity to demonstrate the range of life styles attracted to the Area, the high ground affording the most scenic views having attracted the earliest and most opulent development with the remaining areas being made up of the terraced rows, attached pairs and small villas and bungalows more characteristic of the Municipality.

#### **2.1.4 Policy Recommendations**

The following general recommendations are framed with a view to conserving the cultural heritage values of the entire Area.

- the Northcote Township Area should be included in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay Table in the City of Darebin Planning Scheme with control over the removal of the elm tree and plane tree avenues and other listed trees.
- those buildings within the Area for which interior alteration and outbuildings controls should apply should be documented to provide adequate means of control through the Planning Scheme provisions.
- control over exterior paint colour schemes is not a requirement arising out of the significance of the place.
- those buildings within the Area considered to have individual cultural heritage significance should be documented so as to provide appropriate means of control through the Planning Scheme provisions.



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- proposals to carry out works should be assessed in terms of their impacts on the cultural heritage values of the Area as they have been summarized in the Statement of Significance.
- the stylistic diversity of the area should be maintained.

The following specific recommendations apply to the discrete components of the Area:

### **High Street**

- A Management Plan should be prepared for the High Street Area addressing the need to recover the significance of the former garden entry to the Municipality especially by the reconstruction of removed public lighting, to the bridge and the boulevard, and by the reconstruction of the mostly removed rockeries.
- The conservation of the contributory buildings facing High Street should be encouraged together with the progressive replacement of non-contributory front fences with more sympathetic structures.
- The existence of the former cable tramway route, the Bridge hotel, the police station and toll gate should be remembered by means of discrete plaques thereby facilitating the interpretation of the locale's distinctive history.
- Special development controls should apply to the non-contributory corner sites at the High Street/ Westgarth Street intersection with a view to ensuring that they realize their potential to impart urban character to this section of High Street.
- Signage controls should conserve the civic character of the Area by remaining subordinate to its identified aesthetic values.

### **Residential Areas**

- The interfaces between the public reserves and the residential areas and the railway and the residential areas should be developed so as to recover their historic ambience through the reconstruction of removed elements such as railings and pathways and to improve their level of amenity.
- Traffic engineering and public landscaping works should be reviewed with the dual intention of managing the safe movement of traffic and underscoring the historic character of the Areas.
- Non contributory front fences should be progressively replaced with fence types appropriate to the periods of the contributory houses.
- Where possible, the physical context of contributory places should serve to enhance their cultural values.
- The exposure of contributory places to public view should be encouraged by limiting the heights of front fences and by imposing appropriate controls over intrusive developments.

## 2.2 NORTHCOTE-WESTGARTH AREA

This Area occupies the generally level ground to the south of Rucker's Hill and to the north of the Northcote Township area on Westgarth Street. Whereas its western boundary is defined by the Epping railway line which passes through Merri at this point, its eastern boundary is less clearly defined. Here, the Hurstbridge railway bisects the Area at Westgarth station and is functionally defined by a reasonable walking distance from this station. On the north side, the steep south-facing slopes of Rucker's Hill have been extensively redeveloped during the Post-War period and constitute a barrier in this direction.

### 2.2.1 Description

#### Generally

The Area is defined by suburban railway lines on the west side and at the east end and bi-sected north-south by High Street, the impact of which is enhanced by the presence of the High street ramp built to accommodate the Northcote tramway. From the elevated (north) end of the ramp there are views across the residential areas on both sides of High Street. These areas have a majority of Federation period villas although the number of Victorian cottages and terraced rows west of High street is considerably greater than on the east side. On the lower slopes of the Hill, there are two areas of Inter-War bungalows, one on either side of High Street, suggesting that the more difficult terrain was the last to be subdivided.

#### High Street

High Street may be subdivided readily into two parts; the southern section, which forms the Westgarth shopping centre and the north section consisting of the ramp up to Rucker's Hill. The south section is made up of an uninterrupted row of single and two storeyed shops with the late Victorian, Federation and Inter-War periods well represented. They are dominated by the three storeyed Westgarth Theatre of 1921 which retains its Classical Free style façade with lead light signage and cast cement ornamentation. It is centrally situated and helps terminate the vista looking east along Barry Street to High Street. The two storeyed brick building on the north-west corner of High and Union Street is also a prominent structure with picturesque parapet treatment marking the northern edge of the centre. Elsewhere, the shops, which are parapeted, form rows or single buildings, occasionally dominating the street corner which they overlook. The Westgarth centre is small and survives with a high level of integrity, enhanced by the aesthetic values of many of its contributory buildings. Its identity in High Street is strengthened by the elms tree avenue of the old Northcote Township Area to the immediate south and by the High Street ramp of 1889-90.

Built to facilitate the ascent of the Northcote cable tramway up Rucker's Hill, this prominent engineering work is marked at roadway level by a gradual incline and brick





**High Street, west side, showing the Westgarth Theatre in the centre and a dominant corner building at right.**



**High Street, east side, from the foot of the ramp, looking towards the treed avenue south of Westgarth Street.**



The Westgarth Theatre of 1921.



The High Street ramp and drinking fountain, looking north. Note the treed avenue and the absence of abutting land uses that separate the Westgarth shops from Rucker's Hill. Note also the visual importance of the tramway staunchions.

wall with sawn bluestone capping, now partially truncated, on the west side. Its unusual nineteenth century urban form is enhanced by the rows of peppercorns and elms on either side and as a consequence of its elevation, by the absence of abutting land uses which cause it to separate the Westgarth area from Rucker's Hill to the north. It offers a highly individual counterpoint to the broad boulevard south of Westgarth Street, both sections of High Street being distinguished by the high level of visual amenity in the public domain. This section retains its aluminium painted overhead wire span poles which can be seen as a group on account of the absence of other features and there is a drinking fountain at the southern end of the ramp erected in 1914 to commemorate the attainment of cityhood by the former Municipality of Northcote. The ramp and fountain form a dignified approach to the Council's town hall and municipal offices at the top of the Hill.

### **Residential Area west of High Street**

The street grid in this sub-area has been determined by the pattern of land subdivision and the alignment of the Yan Yean pipe track in the south-west corner. Westgarth Street in the south and its western extension as Merri Parade is a busy thoroughfare effectively dividing the residential areas on either side. This is true also of High Street but the residential streets within the Area are quiet and made up typically of workers' cottages in terraced rows, pairs and single dwellings in terraced form. Construction is both in timber and brick. There is a higher proportion of late Victorian period dwellings in this sub-area when compared with the residential sub-area on the east side of High Street. This is due at least in part to its proximity to public transport routes, the railway through Merri having opened in 1889, a year prior to the opening of the High Street cable tramway and comparing with the railway through Westgarth which was linked with Princes Bridge as late as 1901. Bridge Street is of special note in this respect for its western axis is terminated by the Merri station building of 1910 and its eastern vista by the bluestone revetment of the cable tramway ramp. Charles Street enters a narrowed section as it proceeds east to the ramp and it is here that there is a high percentage of Californian bungalows amongst the Edwardian housing stock. Elsewhere, diversity is added to the sub-area by the occasional long closed "corner shop" and the survival of its fully pitched rear lanes.

During the Post-War years, unsympathetic alterations have been undertaken, generally confined to the replacement of front fences, windows and verandah posts and the removal of cast cement ornamentation as it has become unsound. In more recent years, though, there is considerable evidence of conservation works being undertaken in response to the community's awareness of the value of its heritage.

### **Residential Area east of High Street**

The Hurstbridge railway curves east as it runs out of Westgarth station and divides this sub area into two parts. Whilst having a divisive impact it also serves to unify the sub-area in the following respects:

- the station complex consists of two prominent timber buildings and a footbridge of the Great War period,

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**West of High Street: The north side of Westgarth Street, showing the high level of integrity of this street frontage and the low but invariably unsympathetic front fences.**



**West of High Street: The west end of Barry Street is unusual for its curved alignment dictated by the railway to the immediate west.**

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**West of High Street: Bridge Street, looking to the Merri station building from the George Street corner. Notice the recently planted trees obscuring the view of the station building and the small concrete islands with keep left signs that constitute unnecessary visual clutter.**



**West of High Street: A late Victorian terrace, one of a number that distinguishes the western sub-area from the east.**



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**West of High Street: Charles Street, showing the Inter-War bungalows on the lower slope of Rucker's Hill.**



**East of High Street: Evans Crescent. Note the pitched channels and attached pair of dwellings closing the vista at the end of the crescent.**

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**East of High Street: South Crescent showing the way in which the houses are stepped along the curved street alignment.**



**East of High Street: Plant Street, subdivided by the Railways Department, looking south to the railway line. The footbridge and station buildings are just visible at the end of the street.**

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**East of High Street: Knowles Street (?) showing the workers cottages characteristic of the sub-area.**



**East of High Street: South Crescent showing the mature trees in the railway reserve and the houses attracted to this location.**

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- The curved alignments of South and Evans Crescents create an interesting urban landscape characterized by stepped façade lines, and
- The railway reserve has been planted on its northern alignment and has attracted more pretentious houses than those of the “back” streets to the north.

The integrity of the sub-area diminishes beyond Roberts Street and west of Jackson Street and it is as a consequence of this that the northern and western boundaries have been cut back from the Rucker’s Hill slope and the High Street ramp respectively. Elsewhere within the sub-area, Candy Street has been largely reconstructed at its east end (south side) and there has been sporadic defacement elsewhere. In spite of the changes, however, the housing stock remains highly representative of the period of growth sustained after Federation when rows of workers cottages, usually of timber construction, were erected. There are isolated examples of Victorian period cottages in Jackson Street, towards the High Street end, but these are more the exceptions and serve to demonstrate the beginnings of the sub-area’s development during the late nineteenth century. Generally, the houses are small and adopt Victorian single fronted forms with Edwardian period detail or assume commonly recognized Edwardian period forms with characteristic ornamentation including timber verandahs with ladder friezes, pyramidal roofs, sometimes terra cotta tiled and decorative gable ends. In Tobin Avenue timber bungalows constitute a marked change in the streetscape character. This street is located on the northern edge of the sub-area where the level ground commences its climb up the side of Rucker’s Hill and it may be that development was delayed here on account of the more difficult terrain and increasing distances from public transport services. Today, Tobin Avenue is unusual on this account and adds interest to the sub-area. So too does the occasional corner shop, usually closed, but through its presence recalling an era when communities depended on these outlets for their daily shopping requirements. Finally, the slightly larger and more decorative Edwardian villas attracted to the railway frontage along South Crescent are a noteworthy element, demonstrating the perceived attraction of the railway reserve and causing the sub-area to extend in a single row of dwellings for four street blocks towards Dennis station.

Although many of the streets have been reconstructed with concrete kerbs and channels, some pitched gutters remain, Evans Crescent being a fine example of pitched spoon drains.

South of the railway, the housing stock is substantially the same, with the occasional late Victorian style group. Timber is the predominant construction material and as the sub-area extends east it becomes less cohesive, leading to its termination in Edward Street with a minor extension to Jessie Street on the Westgarth Street frontage.

### **2.2.2 History**

This Area was initially alienated in the form of Crown allotments nos. 89, 94 and 95 in the 1840 land sales to George Urquhart, A. Walker and Charles J. Gerrard respectively. Urquhart had come to Port Phillip in 1837, purchasing land at North Coburg at the 1839 land sales. He also acted as agent for a large property at Port Fairy. He had other

squatting interests and subsequently moved to Queensland<sup>25</sup>. Gerrard sold his entire portion to a Sydney speculator, a Dane named Severin Kanute Salting in 1854. The shape of the allotments dictated long access roads, and following the lead of other nearby developers, and sharing a common desire to maximize profits, Kanute immediately built Clarke Street which led to the Surveyor-General's house at its western end. Salting sold four pieces of land in 1854 and the following year disposed of another dozen. Many of the buyers at once divided their land further for subsequent sale.

By the 1860s it was clear that the focus of settlement in Northcote was to be Rucker's Hill. The Westgarth area retained an essentially rural character into the 1870s, and despite its proximity to the City, many small farms continued to produce oat crops for hay, and allow grazing<sup>26</sup>, this phase recalling the status of the land c.1864 as "Accommodation Paddocks" to the north of the envisaged Government township of Northcote.

During the 1880s land subdivisions were undertaken in anticipation of railway and tramway extensions through the Area. It led, however, to comparatively little development, especially east of High Street where the railway through Westgarth was not linked with Princes Bridge until 21<sup>st</sup>. October, 1901. The new Northcote Council, formed in 1883, was committed to industrial expansion and residential subdivision.. Because of competition from other suburbs a number of companies and syndicates were registered in this decade to purchase, subdivide and trade in land, and to advertise through auctioneers "land with an excess of superlatives"<sup>27</sup> and enticements such as free transport and elaborate lunches on sale days. Most of the housing development was for workers, particularly the flat stretches devoid of water whilst the hills, however small, were considered to be "ideal for Gentlemen's Residences"<sup>28</sup>. Building restrictions were negligible, with the standard of housing decided on the basis of market forces only, and although regarded as being superior to the overcrowded suburbs immediately to the south, many buildings and terraces designed to house the working classes were of poor design and construction. Westgarth was attractive at this time because it was within reasonably close proximity to the main sources of employment in Fitzroy and Collingwood.

The perceived greed of developers was matched only by the unwillingness of councillors to introduce restrictions which might hamper development. In Northcote, none of the subdivisions set aside land for recreation; the only planned open space being the Northcote Park (now Oldis Gardens) south of Westgarth Street in the original Northcote township reserve. Before the introduction of building regulations in 1887 whole terraces of timber houses were constructed, posing a fire risk which would have been unacceptable in other suburbs<sup>29</sup>. One housing subdivision was the "St. George's Park, Fitzroy Junction" estate, bounded by Charles Street, High Street, Union Street and the

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<sup>25</sup> Lemon, p. 9.

<sup>26</sup> Swift, p. 17.

<sup>27</sup> Summerton, p. 22.

<sup>28</sup> Summerton, p. 23.

<sup>29</sup> Summerton, p. 29.

City of Darebin Heritage Review: 2000  
Andrew Ward  
Architectural Historian

**GREAT CENTRAL SUBDIVISION SALE**  
UPSET PRICE £2 per FOOT FOR ALL LOTS

**SATURDAY 28<sup>TH</sup> NOV. R.**

**ST. GEORGE'S PARK**  
147 Lots

**FITZROY JUNCTION**

TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION ON THE GROUND BY  
**MACMEIKAN, COOTE & CO.**

**SATURDAY, 28<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER, 1885.**  
GREAT SUBDIVISIONAL SALE.

**St. George's Park, Fitzroy Junction.**

MACMEIKAN, COOTE & CO.  
AUCTIONEERS, 100, ST. GEORGE'S PARK,  
FITZROY JUNCTION.

**TERMS: £5 DEPOSIT.**  
Interest at 5% a year to be paid at 10 per cent.  
Title - Crown Certificate.  
And a 25 cent. fee, in addition to the above.

Drawings of the lots and plan of the ground  
may be seen at the office of the Auctioneers, 100, St. George's  
Park, Fitzroy Junction, from 10 o'clock till 4 o'clock  
on any day.

Printed and Published by the Auctioneers, Macmeikan, Coote & Co.,  
100, St. George's Park, Fitzroy Junction.

Merri Creek on the west side of High Street. Typical of its time, the auctioneer's flier did its best to boast an "excess of superlatives" to be realized by the successful purchasers at auction on 28<sup>th</sup>. November, 1885. It showed the new bridge over the Merri Creek at St. Georges Road that was completed the following year and the proposed Grand Junction railway station that never eventuated. The termini of the cable tramways to North Fitzroy in St. Georges Road (opened 2<sup>nd</sup>. October, 1886) and Clifton Hill in Queens Parade (opened 10<sup>th</sup>. August, 1887) were both shown as accomplished facts. 147 lots were to be sold by MacMeikan, Coote and Co. St. Georges Park was a large holding facing St. Georges Road between Westgarth and Charles Streets, of which this estate was the northern half.

William Swift provides a snapshot of the Westgarth area of Northcote in 1885:

*"On the west [side of High Street at Westgarth Street] there was very little settlement; on the east ...were about four wooden shops, low buildings with quaint verandahs ...The north side [of Westgarth Street to the east] was mostly open land, with here and there ancient dwellings. During the winter the roadway about Bower Street was a lagoon, which was used by the residents as a duck pond. This was caused by a cutting made in the road for drainage purposes by the Jika Shire Council [and with] the funds running out, it remained unfinished for some years. On the corner of High and Westgarth Streets was a large paddock, which ran back to the creek and along High Street to the rear of a row of houses which stood between what is now Barry and Union Streets. Standing in the paddock was the homestead, a double fronted brick house... On the east side of High Street in this section there was one large brick house... Candy Street was then known as Herbert Street, in which there were a few houses on the south side. Leaving Candy Street, the area on both sides of Ruckers Hill embankment, from what is now Union Street, up to the rear of properties in Clarke Street from the Merri Creek nearly to Fairfield, was a grazing area mainly used for pasturing sheep. High Street road, from about the position of Union Street, nearly to Clarke Street, was about half its present width. On the west side was an elevated footway or footbridge, with battens (narrow boards) to walk upon. The structure followed the grade of the road, but stood clear of the embankment, the side slope of which passed under it to the foot of the supporting posts; this footway had handrails. On the east side was a strong fence, in which were about four recesses at equal distances. These recesses were provided for the safety of pedestrians when mobs of cattle were being driven through to Melbourne, which in the early days was a frequent occurrence, as this road was a main stock route. On the east side of the embankment... was Burgess' blacksmith's shop, a low old fashioned building, the entrance being down a graded track just wide enough for vehicles to pass."*<sup>30</sup>

Burgess' shop and the buildings in the vicinity were removed to allow the embankment to be widened when the cable tramway was under construction in 1889-90. Just as Northcote and Preston were left out of the railway boom of the 1880s, so the Melbourne Tramway and Omnibus Company was also disinterested in running cable trams into the area. The difficulties of extending the line over the Merri Creek and up Rucker's Hill appeared to outweigh any potential for profit. It was not until 1890, when Northcote was declared a town, that the bridge over the Merri Creek was widened and a massive bluestone embankment was constructed up the hill. Despite its erratic service (including

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<sup>30</sup> Swift, p. 58.

no service between 1898 and 1901), the tramway reportedly doubled the value of High Street's frontages<sup>31</sup>.

The only shops on High Street by 1890 were occupied Charles Griffiths, a greengrocer, situated south of Clarke Street and R. Williams, who operated a "store" between Barry and Westgarth Streets. By 1895 T.W. and T.L. Taylor, "modellers" were running their business, as were a builder, ironmonger, grocer and a greengrocer. By 1900 there were ten businesses operating in this section of High Street, of which eight were on the western side.<sup>32</sup>

After the Depression of the 1890s Northcote's population growth rate recovered to overtake the expansion of the preceding decade. Plant's Paddock, a 40 acre block north of the Westgarth Railway station was an example of development undertaken during the first decade of the twentieth century. Named after George Plant who sold it with its trotting track for 4,000 pounds in the early 1880s, it was also the home of the Northcote Cricket Club which played near the bowling club. Subdivided in 1903 by the Railways Department which agreed to pay the full cost of street making, the new purchasers were given free railway travel if they built houses on their land immediately. It was an action without precedent in Northcote<sup>33</sup>. The Department flattered the Council by naming most of the streets after its councillors. Among the first houses to be constructed on this estate were the surviving timber single fronted cottages at 16-20 Candy Street<sup>34</sup>. 90 of the 117 lots sold<sup>35</sup>. The present bowling green was bought in 1906. The more affluent South Crescent had larger blocks, especially between Westgarth and Yeomans Streets.

Housing development was aided by the eventual improvement in railway transport. The first railway line to be built in Darebin was the Clifton Hill to Alphington line in 1883. However it was dubbed the "nowhere to nowhere line"<sup>36</sup> as the population at each centre was sparse, and the line was not connected at either end or connected with Princes Bridge until 1901.

A former Northcote police constable, W.B. Jones, built the extant (?) two storeyed grocery store on the corner of Westgarth and High Streets in 1904. He opened a butcher's shop next door later in the same year. By 1910 High Street north of Westgarth Street was firmly established as a commercial centre. Amongst a total of 33 shops were a chemist, tea merchant, hairdresser, real estate agent and dentist<sup>37</sup>.

Tobin Avenue was not listed in the Sands and McDougall directory in 1924. At that time a Mrs C.E. Tobin lived at no. 22 Clarke Street. The next property was numbered 224, indicating there was land between the two places. It was the following year that Tobin Avenue was listed, with eight houses being built on the east side, and six on the west.

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<sup>31</sup> Summerton, p. 66.

<sup>32</sup> Sands and McDougall Directories 1890, 1895, 1900.

<sup>33</sup> Lemon, p. 141.

<sup>34</sup> Summerton p. 33

<sup>35</sup> Lemon, p. 142.

<sup>36</sup> Lemon p. 63.

<sup>37</sup> Sands and McDougall Directory 1910.



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These were completed by the following year. A summary of the development of streets within the Area is set down below.

Street	1890	1900	1905-6	1910-11	1915-16	1920-21	1929-30
Charles St	25	35?	n/a	42	n/a	62	
Bridge St	9	12	n/a	44	n/a	43	
Union St	16	28	49 <sup>38</sup>	55	63	76	
Barry St	8	8	49	55	58	64	
Westgarth St	5	18	29	46	54	54	
McLachlan St	0	1	4	5	10	12	
George St	not listed		8	8	8	8	
Timmins St	not listed	not listed	not listed	listed under High St?	listed under High St	6	
High St <sup>39</sup>	3	10	13 approx	25	28	32	
High St <sup>40</sup>	1	1	3	19	?	10	
Roberts St	not listed	0?	0	0	0	0	
Candy St	not listed	5	22	29	30	32	
South Cres	not listed	not listed	12	29	42	46	
Jackson St.	not listed	1	8	27	33	32	
Plant St	not listed	not listed	5	27	32	32	
Tobin Ave	not listed	not listed	not listed	not listed	not listed	not listed	
Cornwall St	not listed	not listed	not listed	not listed	not listed	not listed	
Evans Cres	not listed	not listed	<sup>41</sup>	9	9	9	
Knowles St	not listed	not listed	23	26	26	26	
Harper St	7	12	23	33	35	37	
Edward St	not listed	not listed	not listed	23	23	23	

The High Street tram line was finally extended through to the city in 1925 putting an end to the need to change trams at Clifton Hill. This service was the longest running of Melbourne's cable trams, with the last tram crossing the Merri and climbing Rucker's Hill in 1940. It was replaced by a bus service which continued until 1955 when electric trams were introduced.

### 2.2.3 Statement of Significance

#### Generally

The Northcote-Westgarth Area occupies the level ground between Westgarth Street and the lower slopes of Rucker's Hill. Suburban subdivision commenced in the western end of the Area in the 1880s and continued throughout the Area during the first decade of the twentieth century with the majority of housing lots being built on by the time of the Great War. The Area is historically and aesthetically important. It is historically important

<sup>38</sup> This figure is for the section west of High Street only.

<sup>39</sup> West side between Charles and Westgarth Streets

<sup>40</sup> East side between Westgarth and Candy Streets.

<sup>41</sup> Originally named Plant Street, it was renamed by 1910 after being Westgarth Station (opened 1906).

(Criterion A4) for its capacity to demonstrate the impact of suburban railway and cable tramway services on the expansion of the City during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and in particular on the consolidation of this Area as a working class suburb. The manner in which the Westgarth shopping centre serviced the locale in conjunction with isolated corner shops enhances this aspect of the Area's historic importance for it demonstrates the physical characteristics of a community established prior to the age of the motor car and the consequent necessity to avoid pedestrian communication with the higher ground on Rucker's Hill.

The area is aesthetically important in that it constitutes a readily identifiable component of the urban landscape being situated to the north of the Government's Northcote township and to the south of the higher ground on Rucker's Hill.

### **High Street**

The High Street centre and its surviving electric tramway service are historically and aesthetically important. They are historically important (Criterion A4) as the commercial and entertainment centre of Westgarth from the commencement of settlement demonstrating traditional urbanisation forms, the tramway recalling the fixed rail street transport that has served the locale since 1890. The architecture of the place demonstrates its growth principally from that time until the end of the Inter-War period.

The centre is aesthetically important (Criterion E1) as a discrete strip shopping centre along the High Street route through the Municipality. It is isolated from the much longer centre commencing on Rucker's Hill to the north by the old Northcote township subdivision with its wide treed avenue to the immediate south and by the High Street ramp with its parallel lines of trees either side to the immediate north. The aesthetic importance of the place is enhanced by the dominance of the Westgarth Theatre, prominent contributory corner buildings and by the view obtainable of the centre looking south from the High Street ramp.

### **Residential Area to the west of High Street**

This sub-area is historically and aesthetically important. It is historically important (Criterion A4) as the earliest land in the Area to be subdivided and settled as a suburb for the working classes, in anticipation of the opening of the railway and cable tramway routes and the Merri Creek crossing planned at the time. In this respect it demonstrates the dynamics of the Land Boom era with all of the elements that lead to its successful development remaining imprinted on the urban landscape. The subsequent eras of Federation period recovery and the completion of settlement during the Inter-War period constitute subsequent phases that were important in its development.

The sub-area is aesthetically important (Criterion E1) for its streetscapes which demonstrate the periods of growth through their architectural styles. The characteristically small dwellings demonstrate the working class nature of the sub-area whilst the patterns of terraces and row houses amongst the detached dwellings and

occasional shops constitute an intact urban environment of the period of significance of the place. The visual dominance of the Merri railway station and the High Street ramp revetment are contributory elements that recall its evolution during this time.

### **Residential Area to the east of High Street**

This sub-area is historically and aesthetically important. It is historically important (Criterion A4) as a predominantly Federation period subdivision demonstrating the sub-area's comparatively late development as a consequence of the absence of railway communication with the City until 1901. It is important as a representative working class subdivision of the period and noteworthy for its inclusion of the Plant's paddock subdivision undertaken by the Railways Department which subsequently relocated its railway station from Northcote South (south of Westgarth Street) to its present location at the south end of Plant Street.

It is aesthetically important (Criterion E1) for its cohesive and highly representative post Federation working class residential environment made up of uniform rows of small dwellings. These are enlivened by the crescents either side of the railway reserve which attracted slightly more ostentatious houses and by the visually prominent railway station of c.1913 with its timber and steel footbridge that both visually and functionally links the two parts of the sub-area. The subsequent Inter-war period development in Tobin Avenue is of interest as an isolated development of the period standing in contrast with the Federation period character of the locale.

#### **2.2.4 Policy Recommendations**

The following general recommendations are framed with a view to conserving the cultural heritage values of the Area.

- the Northcote-Westgarth Area should be included in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay Table in the City of Darebin Planning Scheme with control over the removal of the mature trees associated with the High Street ramp and the Westgarth railway reserve.
- those buildings within the Area for which interior alteration and outbuildings controls should apply should be documented to provide adequate means of control through the Planning Scheme provisions.
- control over exterior paint colour schemes is not a requirement arising out of the significance of the place.
- those buildings within the Area considered to have individual cultural heritage significance should be documented so as to provide appropriate means of control through the Planning Scheme provisions.
- proposals to carry out works should be assessed in terms of their impacts on the cultural heritage values of the Area as they have been summarized in the Statement of Significance.

The following specific recommendations apply to the discrete components of the Area:

## High Street

- the continuous street façades of the High Street centre should be maintained.
- the visual dominance of the Westgarth Theatre should be maintained.
- the dominance of contributory corner buildings should be maintained. Any re-developments on non-contributory corner sites should adopt building envelopes that address the street corners in the established tradition of the sub-area.
- signage controls should be introduced to ensure high design standards that give prominence to the above verandah level contributory facades.
- the truncated brick wall at the south end of the High Street ramp should be reconstructed.
- the existing tramway overhead wire stanchions on the High Street ramp should be conserved, given the manner in which they reinforce the street environment.
- A program should be instigated to encourage the re-construction of removed posted verandahs.

## Residential Areas

- the distinguishing scale of dwellings and stylistic characteristics of the sub-areas should be maintained, having in mind the importance of development during the late Victorian, post Federation and Inter-War periods.
- Front fence types historically associated with the house styles represented in the Area should be reconstructed according to their stylistic compatibility with the house to which they are related.
- The re-construction of windows and verandah supports appropriate to the style and period of houses should be encouraged.
- The architectural characteristics of the Merri and Westgarth station buildings and their surrounds should be conserved and enhanced by the sympathetic adoption of street furniture, notably seating and fencing, and tree planting to reinforce the post Federation character of the complexes. Trees should be removed and/or planted to give emphasis to the buildings in the immediate surroundings.
- Street tree species generally should be selected to correspond with practices expressive of the periods of significance of the sub-areas.
- Surviving pitched street channels should be conserved and existing concrete kerbs and channels progressively replaced with pitched drains.
- Traffic management devices such as roundabouts should be understated in their treatments so as to effectively control vehicular movement but not conflict with or detract unnecessarily from the historic context of buildings.

## 2.3 NORTHCOTE-RUCKER'S HILL

This Area is bounded on its east, west and south boundaries by the steep slopes of Rucker's Hill. To the north, Separation Street marks the northernmost limit of the Area. Whilst Rucker's Hill itself has the form of a flat topped plateau, the sides are quite steep with the result that it constitutes a discrete element in the urban landscape.

### 2.3.1 Description

#### Generally

The principal north-south routes through the Area have had a dramatic impact on its urban form. The Epping (former Whittlesea) railway plunges into a cutting as it ascends the western face of Rucker's Hill on a 1 in 50 gradient. It is crossed over by a steel road bridge in Westbourne Grove with brick abutments and dressed bluestone cappings, a part of the east capping and wall having been demolished. The bridge marks the only vehicular point of entry to the Area from the west. Northcote station is located at the top of the grade and faces Turnbull Street at the north-west end of the Area. It represents the second point of entry from the west side and is distinguished from Westbourne Grove in that it is of course solely a pedestrian point of entry, the station building itself having been rebuilt in the Arts and Crafts mode of the Post Federation period.

High Street bisects the Area and is approached from the south by the former cable tramway ramp (see Northcote-Westgarth Area). It constitutes a remarkable point of entry to the Area from the south as well as a zone of transition between the Areas identified as Northcote-Rucker's Hill and Northcote-Westgarth. In spite of this element, however, and the very obvious land form, the southern boundary of the Area is fragmented as a result of factors including the defacement and demolition of places and the diminution of the aesthetic value of early housing stock at the base of the hill.

There is also a reasonably clear definition of the Area along its eastern boundary in that Waterloo Road marks the base of the Rucker's Hill slope on this side. To the north, the logical boundary along Separation Street has been rendered impractical on account of the extensive Post-War reconstruction undertaken along this thoroughfare.

#### Public Buildings Precinct

It is the public buildings which establish the core of the nineteenth century city and in this respect, Northcote is no exception. Here, the Free and Public Library (1911) and the Municipal complex, Post Office and Police Court (1888) dominate the High Street block between James Street and Westbourne Grove. They have a commanding position in that this site represents the first area of level ground at the top of the Rucker's Hill rise. Both buildings are imposing Renaissance Revival edifices demonstrating the principles of Palladian symmetry in richly decorated stucco work. Their architecture demonstrates the importance of their public functions which is confirmed by the visual prominence of their



corner locations. To the immediate west of these buildings the former second court house (1929) is now occupied by the Koorie Education Centre. Its façade uses Classical motifs including a Serlian (Palladian) window linking it with the earlier Police Court next door. The Rechabite Hall (...) is opposite, and St. Josephs Church (1916-17) and presbytery (1898) alongside. The church is a massive red brick and stuccoed building in the Italian Romanesque manner, cruciform on plan with a tower in one of the angles so formed and an arcaded porch. The presbytery next door adopts a common architectural form for buildings of its type distinguished by the peripheral two storeyed cast iron verandah and hipped slate roof.

Proceeding west along James Street from the Free and Public Library, the next building is the Northcote Police Station and residence (1891) adopting an avant guard design for its time in the Elizabethan manner. In this respect it compares with other buildings of the Victorian Public Works Department of the day and is distinguished by its picturesque gabled roof and dominant corbelled chimney in the Arts and Crafts manner. There is an engaged tower and gable ends with strapwork, the design having close links with the work of such English architects as Philip Webb and Richard Norman Shaw who were noted for their work in the Old English mode. These are remarkable buildings yet their setting lets them down in important respects. The space between the library and town hall is presently vacant, having been earlier occupied by buildings of less architectural consequence including a baby health centre. There is a car park and a high brick wall separating the police station from the library in James Street that causes the two buildings to be seen as unrelated structures rather than as a cohesive group. The former Presbyterian church and hall is diagonally opposite the police station. The church is an imposing polychrome brick structure in the French Romanesque manner with the dominant brick colour being red and linking it with the station and St. Joseph's Church further to the north.

This dominant group of predominantly nineteenth century public buildings compares with others in the metropolitan area including Brighton (municipal offices, court house Presbyterian church), Camberwell (municipal offices, police station and court house, school), Essendon (municipal offices, court house, Anglican Church complex and Queens Park), Hawthorn (municipal offices, post office, police station), Malvern (municipal offices, police station and court house, Malvern Cricket Ground), Prahran (municipal offices, post office and police station and court house) and South Melbourne (municipal offices, court house and police station and post office). At Northcote, Hawthorn, Malvern and Prahran the complexes have a cohesive nineteenth century character.



**The Free and Public Library (centre) and Northcote Municipal complex (right). The police station and residence in James Street is at far left.**

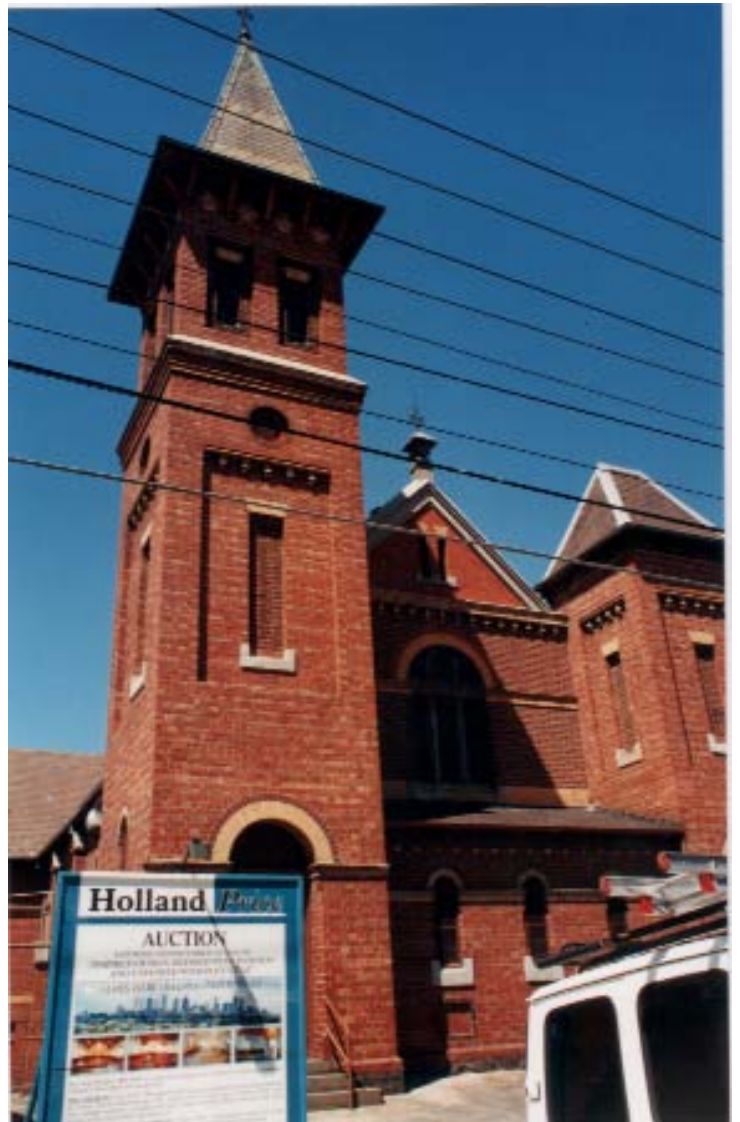


**The police station and residence (right) and former Presbyterian church and hall in James Street.**



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**The former Presbyterian church.**



**The police station and residence with St. Joseph's church (right). Notice the brick wall and car park which separates the buildings in the precinct from each other.**



## High Street

The Northcote shopping centre runs north from the public buildings precinct along High Street to Separation Street. North of Separation Street and beyond this Area, the Croxton shops form a continuous strip with Northcote. The properties facing High Street extend back to Eastment Street on the west side and to a series of narrow dead end roads on the east side. The buildings themselves have a higher percentage of nineteenth century shops than both the Westgarth centre in the south and Croxton in the north. These shops consist of rows of two storeyed terraces, the original shop fronts and posted verandahs having been replaced but the upper level stuccoed facades surviving with a high level of integrity. The shops at 245 and 356-358 High Street are of special interest for their early date, having been erected c.1860, the treatment of the upper level façade exhibiting the attention to proportion and simplicity of form characteristic of the time. Later shops from the Post Federation and Inter-War periods add architectural diversity to a section of High Street which is remarkably free of post Second World War structures. The rows of shops are punctuated by two grandiose Boom style nineteenth century banks, the early Wesley Church (1869) with its former chapel and school room opposite, three hotels and the dominant Classically derived Northcote Theatre (1912) at the Bastings Street corner. This building is highly comparable with the nearby Westgarth Theatre but is some nine years earlier, placing it in the vanguard of the motion picture industry. The former Anglican Church of the Epiphany (1926) at Bayview Street is located south of James Street and marks the southern limit of the High Street centre on its east side. Like the other churches, it is very large but, being of a later date, demonstrates an Arts and Crafts influenced Gothicism. It forms a landmark and can be seen from many points not only within this Area but beyond.

Eastment Street is a narrow service lane, overlooked by the backs of the High Street buildings but giving access also to industrial premises of various periods on its west side. These buildings are of importance to the extent that they retain several pulley beams (including nos. 11,18, 54 and 58) for the receipt of goods, thereby demonstrating an aspect of commercial operations not apparent from High Street.

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High Street, looking south from Separation Street. The Commercial hotel was the site of the Shannon Inn



High Street, looking north from the Northcote Theatre at Bastings Street



**Eastment Street, looking north.**

### **Residential Areas**

The residential areas of the Area are diverse, the more pretentious dwellings being concentrated on the eastern and western slopes of the Hill with the far more extensive areas of workers' accommodation jostling for space on the lower slopes and level high ground forming the Rucker's Hill plateau. Victorian and Post Federation period houses are the dominant contributory elements although the Inter-War houses on the south-eastern slopes are also important.

Most of the substantial houses of the Victorian period are concentrated in Westbourne Grove where they take the form of large houses (including nos.95 and 112) or small to medium houses given distinction by their ornamentation and attention to details (including nos. 92, 103 and 134-136). Houses such as these extend from the public buildings precinct west to the bridge over the railway. Elsewhere, there are opulent villas in Mitchell Street and Bastings where no. 11 of c.1867 recalls the early origins of the Area. The large houses of the Post Federation years predominate in Bayview and Clarke Streets. They include nos. 9-13 and 15 in Bayview Street which is a dead end street consisting essentially of houses on the north side only that overlook the slightly less elevated back fences of houses facing Clarke Street. These include Lugano (nos.215-17) and Mandalay (no.219), both erected in 1912 and both exhibiting the flamboyant characteristics of the Queene Anne influenced Federation period villa more commonly seen in the middle eastern suburbs of Camberwell, Kew and Malvern. Importantly, there

are other Federation period houses that establish the historic context of these places and which collectively facilitate contemporary interpretation of the processes of consolidation and change on the Rucker's Hill slopes.

From Westbourne Grove, Herbert, Henry and Helen Streets head north on a slightly falling grade. These streets have undergone considerable change since first settlement yet the standard of accommodation characteristic of these working class streets is clearly evident as is their relationship with the Northcote State School, no.1401, and the High Street shops. Accepting these changes, which extend to Hawthorn Road, their importance lies in their capacity to illustrate the kind of residential neighbourhood that was established and which prospered during the years of substantial growth a decade or so either side of Federation. Today, the rows of repetitive single and attached Victorian and Federation cottages in brick and timber establish a somewhat monotonous urban landscape, relieved by the reconstructed picket fences, tiny front gardens and obvious care being shown by their present owners. There is a sense of intimacy here too imparting its own character and being formed by the narrow streets with asphalt paths but no room for nature strips. The "walls" of the streets are formed by the single storeyed cottages previously mentioned and it is only the new car parks provided to serve the High Street shops that have irreversibly destroyed this cohesive character in certain locations and placed sharp geographical limitations on the Area.

East of High Street, the housing stock on the high ground is predominantly Victorian and consists of rows of the ubiquitous simple timber cottages of the period with fully paved streets and footpaths. Balgonie Place and Lawry Street survive with a reasonably high level of integrity whilst recent development in Frank Ford Court and in the vicinity of the Darebin Community Health Centre on Separation Street cause the Area to be sharply defined. There is also a marked change south of Mitchell Street and east of Prospect Grove. Separated from High street by the steep climb for pedestrians up the east face of Rucker's Hill, development was delayed. As a consequence, the contributory houses in this area, extending south to Clarke Street, are either of the Federation or Inter-War periods. An exception is .....s house at the south-west corner of Waterloo Road and Bastings Street. Elsewhere, the same cohesive character typical of the other working class areas is apparent and is made up of single storeyed timber and brick (?) cottages which become gradually more likely to be defaced and less common as one proceeds east beyond the Area boundary.

During the post war years, unsympathetic maintenance practices have included the replacement of the timber posts to verandahs, the timber windows with aluminium frames and the presumed original picket and crimped wire front fences with low brick and wire mesh fences. They are, however, reversible changes, and there is clear evidence to show that the historic character of the streets has been recognized by the community and is now being more sympathetically managed.

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The Westbourne Grove road bridge over the railway.



Westbourne Grove, looking to St. Joseph's church with the presbytery immediately to the right.

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**Mandalay and Lugano in Clarke Street showing the slope of Rucker's Hill**



**The Mitchell Street slope with the Salvation Army citadel in the distance.**

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Bayview Street with the tower of the former Church of the Epiphany on the skyline.



Herbert Street, looking south.



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Architectural Historian



Turnbull Grove, looking west to the railway station.



Hawthorn Road, looking east from Herbert Street. Notice the gable roof of the State School in the centre distance.

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**Northcote State School.**



**Balgonie Place.**

### 2.3.2 History

Charles Garrard bought crown allotment no. 95 (123 acres), William Rucker allotments nos. 100 and 101 (128 and 134 acres respectively), J. Cunningham allotment no. 106 (139 acres) and Henry Lake Worsley no. 107 at the 1840 land sales. Together, these narrow blocks extending west to a water frontage on the Merri Creek occupied the whole of the land identified as the Northcote-Rucker's Hill Area.

Garrard sold his entire portion to a fellow Sydney speculator, a Dane named Severin Kanute Salting in 1854. He set about subdividing his holding for sale and, given its elongated shape, laid out a long east-west access road which he called Clarke Street because it led to the Surveyor-General's house at its western end. Salting sold four pieces of land in 1854 and the following year disposed of another dozen. Many of the buyers at once divided their land further and with no minimum block size, the process often continued unhindered.

In 1835, after arriving from London, William Frederick Augustus Rucker established himself as a wine merchant in Hobart. In 1837 after moving to Melbourne, he opened one of town's first stores. In February the following year he also opened Melbourne's first bank, an agency for the Derwent Bank of Hobart. This merged with the Union Bank, of which Rucker became a director. He had bought the most expensive of the Merri Creek allotments in 1840 for a total of 2,266 pounds and ten shillings<sup>42</sup> and would have agreed with Joseph Gellibrand's description of the locale as a "...*flat-topped hill, thereby affording a most eligible situation for a homestead.*"<sup>43</sup> In 1841, at the age of 36, he retired and built a large mansion "The Alpines" (later "Sunnyside") on the brow of what was to become Rucker's Hill. The house was described a few months later as "the most extensive country house in the district"<sup>44</sup>. Also in 1841 Rucker bought the adjoining block, allotment 106, on the north side of Mitchell Street, from J. Cunningham. Later that year Patricus Welsh bought into partnership with Rucker and Rucker's wife. Soon afterwards the housing boom ended with financial collapse following for Rucker in February 1843 when he followed Welsh into insolvency. In 1842 his land was forfeited to the Union Bank.

Henry Lake Worsley, who bought crown allotment 107, had arrived at Port Phillip only months before these land sales. He, like Rucker, suffered from the economic depression of the 1840s, being declared bankrupt in 1842. His holdings were transferred to Dr. Peter Macarthur, who built Arthurton<sup>45</sup> off Arthurton Road near the Merri Creek. The site of Arthurton is now occupied by Zoe Court, to the west of the Area.

In July 1851 Macarthur sold a few acres at the east end of his property. It did not have a frontage to the main Upper Plenty Road (High Street), so to give access he created a

<sup>42</sup> Lemon, A., *The Northcote Side of the River*, (Melbourne: Hargreen Publishing Company, 1983), p. 10

<sup>43</sup> Lemon, p. 5.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, p. 10. It was demolished in 1925 and replaced with the Church of the Epiphany.

<sup>45</sup> According to Lemon (Lemon, p. 37) it was Dr Peter Macarthur who owned Arthurton, but Swift states that it was the residence of Major-General Sir Edward Macarthur, appointed Acting Governor of Victoria for the whole of 1856. (Swift, p. 13)

private road which he named Separation Street to commemorate Separation of the Colony of Victoria in that year. It was a narrow road, given the narrow width of the allotment, and it remains so today. In April, 1852 the young brothers, Horace and Edwin William Bastings bought a few acres in Separation Street and seven German immigrants also bought blocks, mostly on the flat ground at the bottom of the Hill. Decades later they were to be a focus of German settlement, recalled today by the small cemetery on the north side of Separation Street. Beilby Hawthorn bought land from the Macarthurs on Arthurton Road about 1853 and he soon extended his holding down to Hawthorn Road, by which time Macarthur had sold 16 blocks, mostly between one and five acres, while keeping most of the section between the Merri Creek and High Street.

The Union Bank, along with many speculators, also cashed in during the boom period that followed the early gold discoveries, in late 1852 and 53. It had held onto Rucker's forfeited land since 1842, patiently waiting for such a moment. Like Macarthur the bank had to put access roads into the property, but because it held three sections compared to Macarthur's one, it provided for wider thoroughfares. These roads, now called Mitchell and Bastings Streets, date from this subdivision of 1853. On the west side of High Street the Bank allowed for two half chain roads: today's Westbourne Grove and Hawthorn Roads.

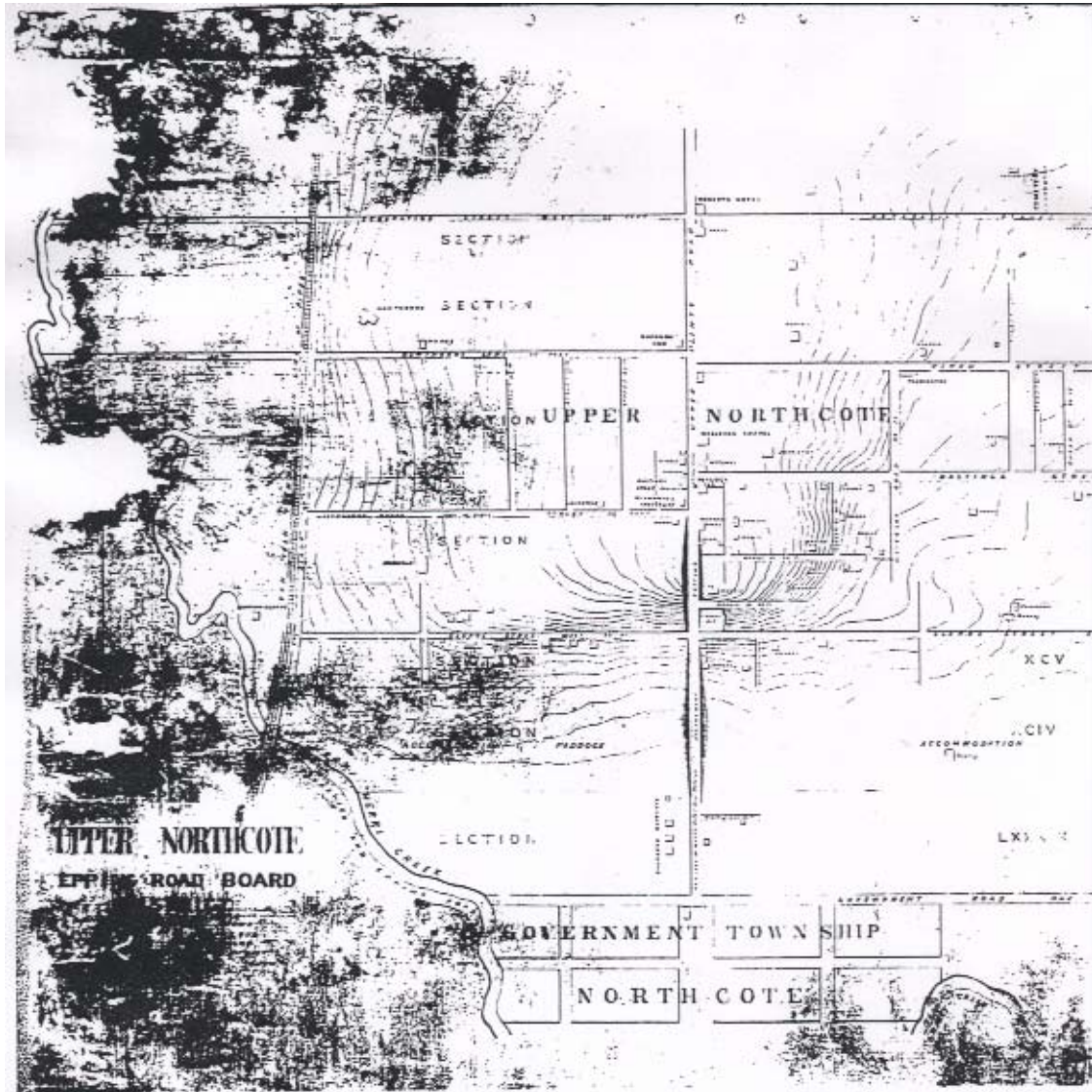
By the mid 1860s<sup>46</sup>, the principal streets of Rucker's Hill, then known as Upper Northcote to distinguish it from the Government's township of Northcote to the south, had been formed along with a small number of secondary north-south streets connecting the main roads previously noted. There were commercial premises along High Street including Weaver's store, Basting's store and the Peacock Inn, since rebuilt and the Shannon Inn at the Hawthorne Lane (now Hawthorn Road) corner on the site of the Commercial Hotel. The mechanic's institute was located at the Westbourne Grove corner where the municipal complex now stands and the Wesleyan Chapel was already in use on the east side of High Street. To the east of High Street on the slope descending to Waterloo Road, were approximately a dozen houses. The land between Hawthorne Lane and Clarke Street, west of High Street, was vacant. The locale was already showing signs of ascendancy over Northcote Township to the south. As the boom years of the 1880s gained momentum, the eclipse of this latter settlement was confirmed and made possible by the arrival of the railway to the west and cable tramway along High Street in 1889 and 1889-90 respectively. A Government school had been established in Helen Street on land acquired from Kirk in 1874. Two brick rooms and an office were added in 1886 with accommodation for infants following in 1888. More classrooms were erected in 1909 and a pavilion classroom in 1914. The history of the school mirrors the expansion of the district<sup>47</sup>.

The Bellevue Park Estate would have been a typical subdivision of the boom years leading to the suburban development of the section between the railway and High Street

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<sup>46</sup> See Epping Road Board Map of Upper Northcote.

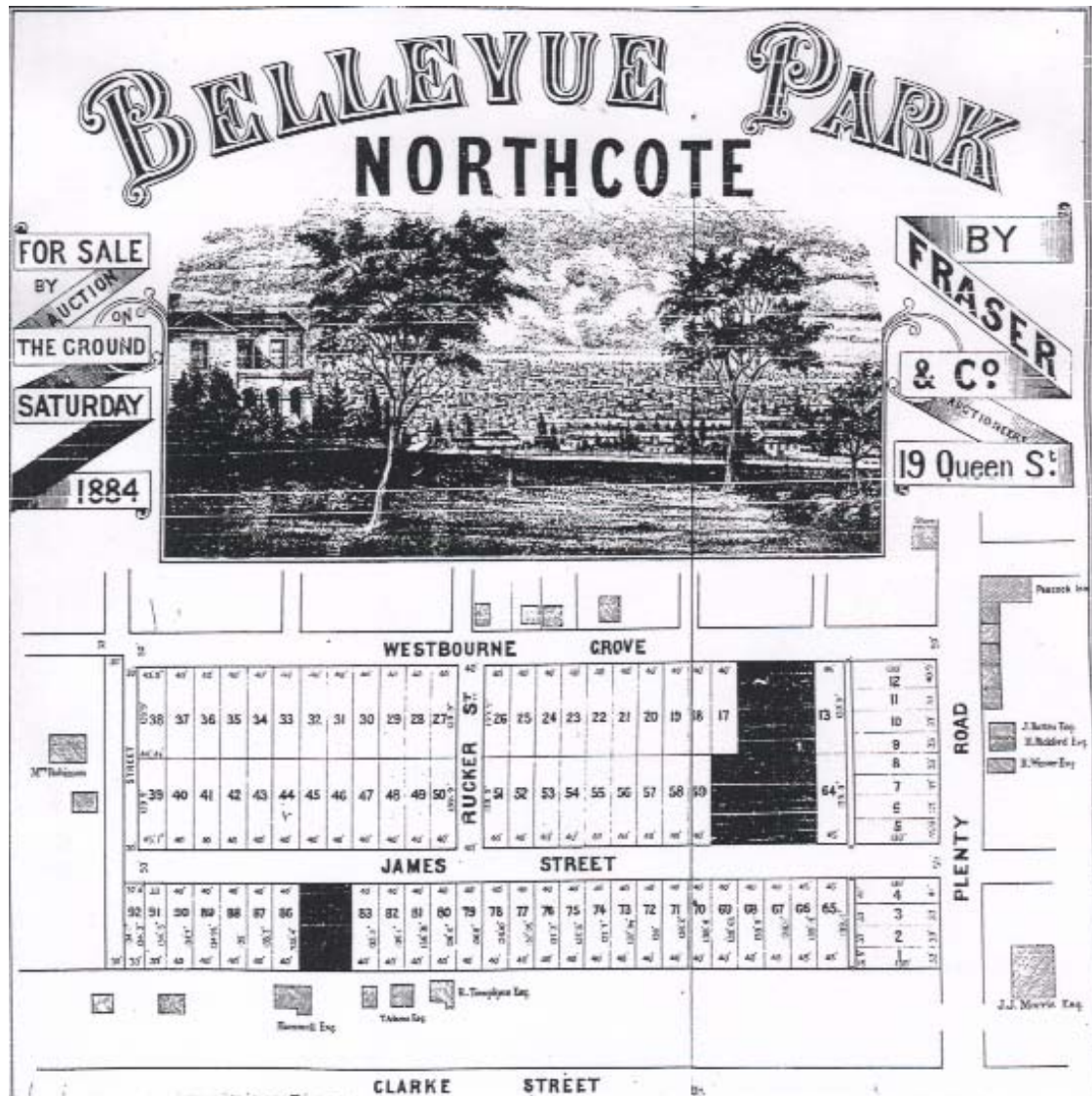
<sup>47</sup> See Education Department of Victoria: *Vision and Realisation*, (1973), v.3, p.64.



c.1864 Plan of Upper Northcote showing the extent of development at that time.

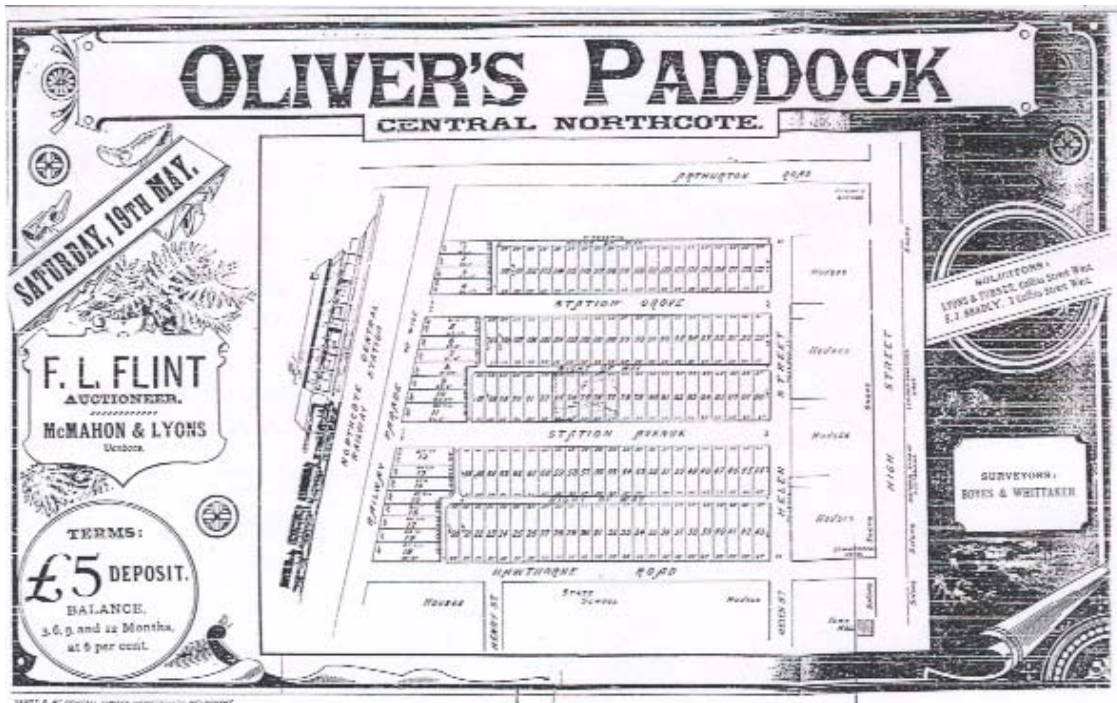
Source: City of Darebin Archives (?)

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Bellevue Park Estate auction poster (1884).  
Source: SLV

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Oliver's Paddock Estate, Northcote  
Source: SLV

(“Plenty Road”) bounded by James Street in the south and Westbourne Grove in the north. The lithograph on the estate agent’s poster encompasses the reasons for the popularity of the Hill, the views of the cramped metropolis to the south beyond the Merri Creek contrasting with the parkland setting of the estate. It was attractive land, appealing to the Shire which acquired the land facing High Street as a site for its municipal offices. The sale was held in 1884 but it is possible that a more important auction was that of Mitchell’s Corner which the auctioneers, Flint, Munro and Baillieu advertised as the “*central spot of Northcote*”. This land sale effected the area bounded by High Street, Bastings Street and Union Avenue (now Oldis Avenue) as far north as the point where this street changes width. “*The rush of business to this Prince of Northern Suburbs is simply immense*” stated the auctioneers, and whilst allowing for the superlative descriptions characteristic of the Boom period posters, there was truth in the assertion.

On the other side of the tracks, Mrs. Kirk’s Park Estate created Harrington, Herbert and Henry Streets in 1882<sup>48</sup> whilst further to the north, the opening of “*Northcote Central*” railway station was celebrated in the names of the new streets opened up, present Herbert Street being called “*Railway Parade*”, Claude Street “*Station Avenue*” and Turnbull Grove “*Station Grove*”. By the 1930s these names had lost their attraction and substitutes had been found. The blocks were offered on terms and were only half the size of those of the Bellevue Estate. The table below provides an indication of the extent to which development followed the first land sales and subsequently throughout the Area.

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<sup>48</sup> See hand written date on Estate plan.



street/date	1890	1910	1920	1930
Balgonie Pl	15	15	15	15
Bastings St *	4?	17?	18?	25?
Campbell Gr (St)	1	9	9	8
Clarke St *	4?	7?	19?	16?
Claude St (Station Ave)	17	18	34	34
Eastment St <sup>49</sup>	4	13	13	12
Frederick St	2	2	1	4
Garden St	4	2	2	5
Hawthorn Rd(lane)*	11	18	23	21
Helen St (Ellen St)	24?	53?	65?	62?
Henry St	na	na	na	na
Herbert St	31	44	45	69
High St *	62?	86?	131?	147?
Ilma Gve	not listed	2	11	16
James St <sup>50</sup> (Merri St)*	15?	20?	33?	38?
James Ave	not listed	not listed <sup>51</sup>	not listed	2
Lawry St (Lawrey)	22	25	26	30
Major St	not listed	not listed	6	6
McIntosh St	not listed	not listed	not listed	not listed <sup>52</sup>
Membrey St	not listed	not listed	8	9
Mitchell St *	7?	11	12	13
Oldis Ave	not listed	not listed	not listed	13
Prospect Gve	5	6	5	7
Separation St *	na	12?	13?	13?
St Neots Ave	not listed	not listed	not listed	3
Turnbull Gve (Station Gve)	9	16	24	24
Waterloo Rd*	not listed	10?	26?	32?
Westbourne Gve*	16?	18?	32	37
Wimble St	not listed	8	11	11

### 2.3.3 Statement of Significance

<sup>49</sup> Possibly named “Eastman Street” or “Easement Street” until after 1920, and before 1930.

<sup>50</sup> Until after 1920 and before 1930 the section east of High Street was called Merri Street.

<sup>51</sup> By 1920 there was a street of such name but yet to have houses.

<sup>52</sup> By 1930 the street existed, but was yet to have any houses.

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The Northcote-Rucker's Hill Area, known for a period as Upper Northcote, has its origins in the first land sales of 1840 and subsequent settlement which was consolidated during the late Victorian Land Boom and entered its final phase during the Inter-War years following a period of recovery following Federation. It is historically important as the central area of the former Municipality of Northcote which gained ascendancy over Northcote Township laid out by the Government Surveyor south of Westgarth Street. This importance is demonstrated by the inclusion within its limits of the principle shopping centre, first Government school, the seat of Local Government and public services and the principal churches of the former City.

### **Public Buildings Precinct**

The public buildings precinct was established in 1884 with the acquisition of a site for the municipal offices of the Jika Jika Shire, court house and post and telegraph office. The first building was erected in 1888-1889 a year prior to the opening the cable tramway service in High Street and the majority of buildings within the precinct followed during this century. St. Joseph's Church, the Free and Public Library and the second court house were erected during the first three decades of the twentieth century. The precinct is of historic, aesthetic and social significance.

It is historically important (Criterion A4) as the seat of Local Government for the Northcote area from 1889 until 1995(?), as a centre of police services since 1891 and as a centre of worship for the Catholic and Presbyterian sections of the community since 1898 and 1894 respectively. This importance is enhanced by the capacity of the place to demonstrate the importance of the public service during the late nineteenth century and subsequently and the manner in which its buildings traditionally imparted identity to an area. Finally, the precinct derives importance from the manner in which it exploits the topographical advantages of Rucker's Hill, the dominance of the High Street buildings being especially important in this respect.

It is aesthetically important (Criterion E1) as a collection of very fine buildings of their type, the characteristics of the various architectural styles evident being demonstrated with sophistication and having been designed by the leading architects of their time including George R. Johnson, Henry Barstow, Twentymen and Askew and E. Evan Smith. The stylistic sympathy shared by the Municipal offices and the library is especially noteworthy in that it enhances their presence in the High Street streetscape.

It is socially important (Criterion G) for the value placed on the buildings by the community, especially on account of its status as a meeting place and centre of Local Government services and as a centre of Catholic worship and education.

### **High Street**

The High Street centre and its surviving electric tramway service are historically and aesthetically important. They are historically important (Criterion A4) as the commercial

and entertainment centre of Northcote from the commencement of settlement demonstrating traditional urbanisation forms, the tramway recalling the fixed rail street transport that has served the locale since 1890. The architecture of the place demonstrates its growth principally from that time until the end of the Inter-War period and has special cultural value on account of the extent of its nineteenth century fabric which confirms the ascendancy of the centre over neighbouring centres on High Street to the north and south.

The centre is aesthetically important (Criterion E1) as a discrete strip shopping centre along the High Street route through the Municipality. It is distinguished by the manner in which its buildings demonstrate the evolution of architectural styles from the mid Victorian period to the late Victorian Boom years and subsequently. The concentration of the most important buildings on the corner sites is especially noteworthy.

### **Residential Areas**

The residential areas of Rucker's Hill and historically and aesthetically important. They are historically important (Criterion A4) on account of their capacity to demonstrate the attraction of the sloping land of Rucker's Hill to attract Northcote's middle classes at various times during the Municipality's history but especially during the late Victorian Boom period and the Post Federation recovery. They are important also for their capacity to demonstrate the confirmation of Northcote as a working class suburb of the metropolis, linked with the industry of the City by the tramway and railway services that facilitated its development.

They are aesthetically important (Criterion E1) on account of the imposing early villa residences of the middle classes and the residential environments of the lesser streets established by the rows of representative small cottages and absence of nature strips creating a strong relationship between the streets and street facades characteristic of the working class suburbs of the metropolis. Here, the stylistic diversity resulting from the various periods of expansion is important in that it enables these processes of growth and consolidation to be interpreted.

#### **2.3.4 Policy Recommendations**

The following general recommendations are framed with a view to conserving the cultural heritage values of the Area.

- the Northcote-Rucker's Hill Area should be included in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay Table in the City of Darebin Planning Scheme.
- those buildings within the Area for which interior alteration and outbuildings controls should apply should be documented to provide adequate means of control through the Planning Scheme provisions.
- control over exterior paint colour schemes is not a requirement arising out of the significance of the place.

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- those buildings within the Area considered to have individual cultural heritage significance should be documented so as to provide appropriate means of control through the Planning Scheme provisions.
- proposals to carry out works should be assessed in terms of their impacts on the cultural heritage values of the Area as they have been summarized in the Statement of Significance.

The following specific recommendations apply to the discrete components of the Area:

### **Public Buildings Precinct**

- The visual dominance of the contributory buildings should be maintained and attention given to the creation of a sympathetic context for them so as to enhance their presence in their immediate environment. Whenever practicable this should be achieved by the re-construction of removed elements seen in early photographs. The impact of intrusive elements should be removed or softened and the opportunities presented by vacant land exploited with a view to reinforcing the historic significance of the precinct.
- The visual impacts of changes of use arising from the closure of services on the fabric of contributory buildings should be minimized.
- The skyline established by the contributory buildings should not be compromised by new structures including mobile phone antennae and the like.

### **High Street**

- the continuous street façades of the High Street centre should be maintained.
- the visual dominance of the former Church of the Epiphany should be maintained.
- the dominance of contributory corner buildings should be maintained. Any re-developments on non-contributory corner sites should adopt building envelopes that address the street corners in the established tradition of the sub-area.
- signage controls should be introduced to ensure high design standards that give prominence to the above verandah level contributory facades.
- A program should be instigated to encourage the re-construction of removed posted verandahs.

### **Residential Areas**

- the distinguishing scale of dwellings and stylistic characteristics of the sub-areas should be maintained, having in mind the importance of development during the late Victorian, post Federation and Inter-War periods. Incompatible building styles, materials and forms should not be introduced unless special circumstances apply.

- Front fence types historically associated with the house styles represented in the Area should be reconstructed according to their stylistic compatibility with the house to which they are related.
- The re-construction of windows and verandah supports appropriate to the style and period of houses should be encouraged.
- The architectural characteristics of the Northcote station buildings and their surrounds should be conserved and enhanced by the sympathetic adoption of street furniture, notably seating and fencing, and tree planting to reinforce the post Federation character of the complex. Trees should be removed and/or planted to give emphasis to the buildings in their immediate surroundings.
- Street tree species generally should be selected to correspond with practices expressive of the periods of significance of the sub-areas.
- Surviving pitched street channels should be conserved and existing concrete kerbs and channels progressively replaced with pitched drains.
- Traffic management devices such as roundabouts should be understated in their treatments so as to effectively control vehicular movement but not conflict with or detract unnecessarily from the historic context of buildings.
- The part demolished brick wall to the Westbourne Grove road bridge should be re-constructed.

## 2.4 NORTHCOTE –MERRI

This Area is defined by St. Georges Road on the west side and the Epping railway on the east. It commences at the south end in the vicinity of the Merri Creek and finishes at the north end abruptly where the former Little Sisters of the Poor had sold off land facing Westbourne Grove.

### 2.4.1 Description

Northcote-Merri is a residential area with a small mostly defunct group of shops in Charles Street at the railway near Merri station. The streets run generally east-west between St. Georges Road and Park Street which follows the railway route and forms the eastern boundary of the Area. The topography is quite level until the north-east corner is reached at which point the climb up the west side of Rucker's Hill commences and is most noticeable in Westbourne Grove. The dominant workers' cottages are principally of the Victorian and Post Federation periods as is typically the case in that part of the Municipality overlooked by Rucker's Hill. They are either of brick or timber construction. Here, the mix of periods tells a story with Victorian cottages and terraced rows predominating in Gordon Street and to the south of this line. To the north the streets are lined with detached Post Federation period cottages and pairs and there is an occasional Inter-War villa in Park Street. The building stock is representative of workers' accommodation in the 1880s through to the Great War and there is strong evidence that its cultural values are acknowledged if the numbers of new picket fences and instances of sensitive maintenance practices are an indication.

In Aberdeen Grove, the view west is dominated by the Northcote District High School and east by Rucker's Hill. The St. Georges Road frontage has survived with a high level of integrity and whilst being dominated by houses, there are notable exceptions, the Albion Family Hotel (1887) at the Charles Street corner being a local landmark. At Gordon Grove, the corrugated iron clad building was a fuel and produce merchant's premises in the 1920s.

The streets are of a constant width, with the exception of Charles which links St. Georges Road with Clarke Street. There are no nature strips, the pavements being relieved by native street trees planted along the footpaths and the foliage of the small private gardens.



City of Darebin  
Heritage Review 1999

Northcote - Merri

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**Charles Street, looking east to the railway and showing the shops that remain on both sides of the street at the Park Street corner.**



**Clarke Street showing recently constructed picket fences and Victorian cottages typical of the Area.**



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A typical terraced row in Clarke Street.



The northern boundary of the Area in Westbourne Grove, showing the recent houses on the former Little Sisters of the Poor land at left.



St. Georges Road, showing the high level of integrity characteristic of this section of the thoroughfare.

#### 2.4.2 History

The natural contours of the land were not foremost in Robert Hoddle's mind when he surveyed the area that would become Northcote. Intended for farming, it was desirable to achieve the maximum number of 100 acre allotments possible with frontages to the tributaries of the Yarra River, hence long, narrow sections mostly running east west<sup>53</sup>. In the main Crown land sales did not result in a district of yeomen farmers but rather absentee owners or speculators<sup>54</sup>. After a brief period dominated by economic depression, speculators began cashing in on their investments. Land was subdivided and access roads were formed, many of them characteristically long and narrow, today's legacy of a distinctive pattern of survey and investors' greed for returns.

The south side of Westbourne Street to the south side of Bridge Street encompasses portions of sections 94, 95 and 100, the private ownership of which began with Crown land sales on the 10<sup>th</sup> June 1840<sup>55</sup>. Sections 94 and 95 were granted to Sydney speculators Archibald Walker and Charles J. Gerrard and were 114 acres and 123 acres respectively. Section 100 went to the Melbourne businessman William F.A. Rucker who

<sup>53</sup> Lemon, A., *The Northcote Side of the River*, North Melbourne, Hargreen Publishing Company, 1983, p35.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p.9

<sup>55</sup>

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also bought the adjoining section 101, giving him an initial holding of 262 acres<sup>56</sup>. He became one of Northcote's few settlers in the 1840s building a mansion for his residence on the brow of Rucker's Hill in 1841<sup>57</sup>. At the same time Thomas Wills built his place *Lucerne* on section 121 at Fairfield<sup>58</sup>. Neither house survives today but it is understood that there were few neighbours between them for some years. Settler Richard Howitt commented that *Land...as it lay unoccupied and unclaimed* was used by bounty emigrants named O'Shanassy who depastured their cattle with *nothing to pay for-neither rent nor taxes- for at least a thousand acres of land*<sup>59</sup>.

The apparent disinterest of speculators in their investments was possibly the onset of economic depression which dogged much of the 1840s. Some investors sold early but most realised little return during this time, apparently not even succeeding in acquiring tenants. In time many "went to the wall" including Rucker. He had emigrated to Hobart and established himself as a wine merchant before taking his business to Melbourne in 1837. He retired just four years later having established Melbourne's first bank, an agency of the Derwent Bank of Hobart. Its merger with the Union Bank with Rucker as director gave him access to financial backing. He bought land extensively but his prosperity was not to last and in 1843 the Union Bank assumed ownership of his properties<sup>60</sup>.

It is uncertain how Walker and Gerrard managed their land initially. Gerrard's was intact in 1853 when Robert Hoddle's successor Captain Andrew Clarke leased it for his sheep farm *Lucre's Run*<sup>61</sup>. It appears Clarke continued tenancy of the western part of his lease when Gerrard sold the entire section to another Sydney speculator, Severin Kanute Salting in 1854<sup>62</sup>. Salting immediately subdivided with Clarke Street his access road, so named as it led to the Surveyor-General's house. He sold *four pieces of this land in 1854 and the following year disposed of another dozen. Many of the buyers at once divided their land further...*<sup>63</sup>

Salting was not alone. Existing settlers and land holders including the Union Bank and the Government were also actively forming roads and selling land<sup>64</sup>. In contrast to the previous decade, the 1850s were a boom time fueled by the discovery of gold. Emigration soared as did the demand for all commodities including land. High Street, surveyed in 1842, was linked to Melbourne via a bridge over the Merri Creek in 1850<sup>65</sup>. It cut across the original Crown sections as did another north south track, the Yan Yean pipeline which was commenced in 1853.

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<sup>56</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Lemon, op.cit., p.10

<sup>58</sup> *ibid.*, p.8

<sup>59</sup> *ibid.*, p.10

<sup>60</sup> *ibid.*, pp.9-11

<sup>61</sup> Swift, William George, *The History of Northcote: From, its First Settlement to a City*, 1928, pp.8-9

<sup>62</sup> Lemon, op.cit., p.42

<sup>63</sup> Lemon, loc.cit.

<sup>64</sup> Lemon, op.cit., p.39

<sup>65</sup> *ibid.*, p.41

During this time settlement at Rucker's Hill flourished and several expansive mansions were built, one of them on the less precipitous western slope where a Melbourne merchant named Gutheridge spent an immense sum on his "Turret House". Built about 1854, it looked up the Merri Creek valley and has since been demolished. Gutheridge sold it about 1860 to a Melbourne draper, Leonard Robinson<sup>66</sup>. In 1885, it was described as being on the south side of Westbourne Grove, *a lovely place, the grounds extending to the pipe track...and back to Clarke Street, with a sweeping drive to the house; an artificial lake, with willows surrounding it...on the flat at the foot of the hill*<sup>67</sup>.

At that time the area on both sides of Rucker's Hill embankment, from what is now Union Street, up to the rear of properties in Clarke Street from the Merri Creek nearly to Fairfield was a grazing area mainly used for pasturing sheep<sup>68</sup>. The houses referred to in Clarke Street may have been *Portsdown Terrace* numbers 62 to 84 as 12 cottages were depicted on subsequent auctioneers' notices. However *Clausen's Terrace* numbers 28 to 44 built in 1884<sup>69</sup> and renamed *Mall's Terrace* by 1895<sup>70</sup> would have also existed. From the above information, it appears that in 1885 this Area provided a microcosm of settlement in Northcote to date, that is a gentleman's mansion residence, small farms and emerging subdivisions for workers' cottages. The hub of the district was just to the east in High Street at Westbourne Grove.

Such was the boom of the 1880s that by the end of the decade, all of the streets within this Area had been formed except Aberdeen Grove. The grazing land in its south went under the hammer on 28 November 1885 as *St. George's Park, Fitzroy Junction*<sup>71</sup>, 147 lots with frontages mostly of 34 feet between Merri Parade and High Street stretching from the north side of Union Street to the south side of Charles Street. They were auctioned by Macmeikan, Coote and Co. who had established an office on the east side of St. Georges Road between Charles Street and the bridge by 1890<sup>72</sup>. The entire *St. George's Park* estate extended from Westgarth Street to Charles Street<sup>73</sup>.

Subsequent sales in this vicinity were described as *St. George's Park Extension* and *Fitzroy Extension*<sup>74</sup>, the latter c.1886 being the first release of land from what is thought to have been the grounds of *Turret House* by then owned by Mrs. Robinson. This first sale offered 43 lots between St. Georges Road and Park Street from Clarke Street to Gordon Grove. Again most lots were 34 feet wide. Like the previous subdivision, rights-of-way ten feet wide<sup>75</sup> were provided giving rear access to all lots. Initially used by night

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<sup>66</sup> *ibid.*, p.43

<sup>67</sup> Swift, *op.cit.*, p.59

<sup>68</sup> *ibid.*, p.58

<sup>69</sup> Michelle Summerton, *Darebin An Environmental History*, 1997, p.29

<sup>70</sup> *Sands and McDougall Directory of Victoria*, 1895

<sup>71</sup> *St. George's Park Fitzroy Junction*, 28 November 1885. SLV Maps, Vale Collection, Vol.2, p.117.

<sup>72</sup> Snads and McDougall, *op.cit.*, 1890

<sup>73</sup> Lemon, *op.cit.*, p.90

<sup>74</sup> *Fitzroy Extension*, 29 August 18?? SLV Maps, Vale Collection, Vol.2, p.118.

<sup>75</sup> MMBW litho plan no.95, 26 June 1906.

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**GREAT CENTRAL SUBDIVISION SALE**  
UPSET PRICE £2 per FOOT FOR ALL LOTS

**SATURDAY 28<sup>th</sup> Nov. R.**

**ST. GEORGE'S PARK FITZROY JUNCTION**

147 Lots

TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION ON THE GROUND BY  
**MACMEIKAN, COOTE & CO.**

CLARKE STREET  
CHARLES STREET  
BRIDGE STREET  
UNION STREET  
DIVING ROAD  
BARBLY STREET  
FITZROY ROAD

**SATURDAY, 28th NOVEMBER, 1885.**

**GREAT SUBDIVISIONAL SALE.**  
**St. George's Park, Fitzroy Junction.**

**MACMEIKAN, COOTE & CO.**

**TERMS: £5 DEPOSIT.**  
Balance of £. 5. 0. and in Money at 5 per cent.

**TITLE-GROWN CERTIFICATE.**  
ISSUED BY THE GOVERNMENT.

The St. George's Park Fitzroy Junction Estate auction poster of November, 1885

men and some residents to access stabling, in later years they were used by the MMBW for laying sewerage pipes.

Notices of auction at the time used all manner of persuasion to entice would-be buyers. They commonly depicted a new vehicular bridge over the Merri Creek, a fully formed St. Georges Road and a proposed northern railway line, all still to be realised. The bridge opened in 1886<sup>76</sup> through the action of the Fitzroy, Northcote and St. Georges Road League which then proceeded to raise funds to acquire land to form the roadway, the pipeline track being private and unavailable for public use. The railway line to Whittlesea arrived in 1889<sup>77</sup>, bisecting the estates and the corridor formed by High Street and the newly developing St. Georges Road. The Northcote (later renamed Merri) station was built where the line cut Bridge Street. Effectively this Area became contained within the bounds of these developments and shaped by their influences, close proximity to public transport and places of work.

The last street to be formed in this Area was to be carved out of the paddocks of *Turret House* which were bought by the Chairman of the St. George's Road League, John McMahon from Mrs. Robinson in 1887<sup>78</sup>. He resold them as the *Crown of Northcote* with cottage sites on the south side of Westbourne Grove, both sides of Aberdeen Grove and the north side of Gordon Grove. This subdivision generally produced places with wider frontages, especially where the land sloped away from Rucker's Hill, however development was slow particularly in Aberdeen and Westbourne Groves. By the turn of the twentieth century, only eight places were there<sup>79</sup>, one of them in St. Georges Road being a coffee tavern in 1890 and the other in Park Street facing Aberdeen Grove, presumably *Turret House* occupied by William Thompson.

Through out the rest of the Area at that time much of the housing was indicative of investor and speculative building there being many pairs and rows of cottages<sup>80</sup>. Clarke Street was the most densely built on in 1890, there being 20 places on the north side including the farriers Bell Bros near St. Georges Road and Coburn's dairy near Park Street. Six houses were vacant, perhaps newly built. The most distinctive feature of the south side was the two long terraces before mentioned. Additionally there were two bakeries, one near St. Georges Road and the other mid way down the street. On or near the corner of Park Street there was a store/boot factory. In all there were 26 places south side<sup>81</sup>.

Five years later 11 more places had been built including the gate keeper, William Barrett's house. Out of the 55 places in Clarke Street, 13 were vacant perhaps due to the depression. In 1900, the pattern was little changed, there being 56 places, the first five north side from St. Georges Road identifiable as shops-a grocer, fruiterer, butcher, farrier (Bell) and grocer. The dairy continued near Park Street, a music teacher living on its

<sup>76</sup> Lemon, op.cit., pp.88-89

<sup>77</sup> Swift, op.cit., p.81

<sup>78</sup> Lemon, op.cit., p.90

<sup>79</sup> Sands and McDougall, op.cit., 1890, 1895, 1900

<sup>80</sup> MMBW litho plan no. 95, op.cit.

<sup>81</sup> Sands and McDougall, op.cit., 1890

opposite corner. South side one of the bakeries had been taken over by a boot maker and a dairy had been established<sup>82</sup>.

Like Clarke Street, Charles Street and Gordon Grove attracted immediate development upon subdivision, especially the north side of the former and the St. Georges Road end of the latter where by 1890 there were 16 and about 25 places respectively. There were 9 new places built north side of Charles Street five years later making it almost fully developed. They included a grocer on the Park Street corner with an estate agent next door. This situation was unchanged in 1900 except that a dairy had opened. Gordon Grove was completely residential there being only another four places built there by 1900<sup>83</sup>.

The south side of Charles Street and Bridge Street began with similar promise there being 15 places in the former and 8 places in the latter in 1890. Both ends of Charles Street had commercial properties, the most distinctive in this Area, the Albion Family hotel with John Coleman as licensee on the corner of St. Georges Road. Shops were at the Park Street corners opposite the railway gates with perhaps some more scattered further along. There appears to have been no further places built for at least another twenty years. Bridge Street was residential the houses there increasing to only 15 by 1900, one of them the home of nurse Reid<sup>84</sup>.

Another early development was the seven timber houses in Park Street between Gordon Grove and Clarke Street and those opposite, which were built before 1890. Little else occurred in this street for several decades<sup>85</sup>. Development limped along in St. Georges Road, there being just 6 places there in 1890, one of them W. Coomber's butcher shop between Gordon Grove and Clarke Street which continued as a family business into the 1930s. Three of the places including Macmeikan's auctioneering office before mentioned between Charles Street and the bridge had been removed five years later. In 1900 there were only 5 places<sup>86</sup>.

During the years leading up to the Great War the extent to which the Area had been populated was reflected in the Railway Department's decision to rebuild the station building at Merri. A contract was let to F.E. Shillabeer in September, 1910. Much of the development undertaken in the first decades of the twentieth century, however, was in the north of this Area. By 1920 Gordon, Aberdeen and Westbourne Groves were fully or almost fully developed. It was in the 1920s and 30s that many of the remaining vacant blocks in the Area filled, the most dramatic change being to St. Georges Road, described in the early 1900s as *the backyard of Northcote, with few houses and with the road little used as a thoroughfare*<sup>87</sup>. The impetus to development there was the opening of the long promised tramway in 1920 and a beautification scheme announced in 1928.

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<sup>82</sup> *ibid.*, 1895, 1900

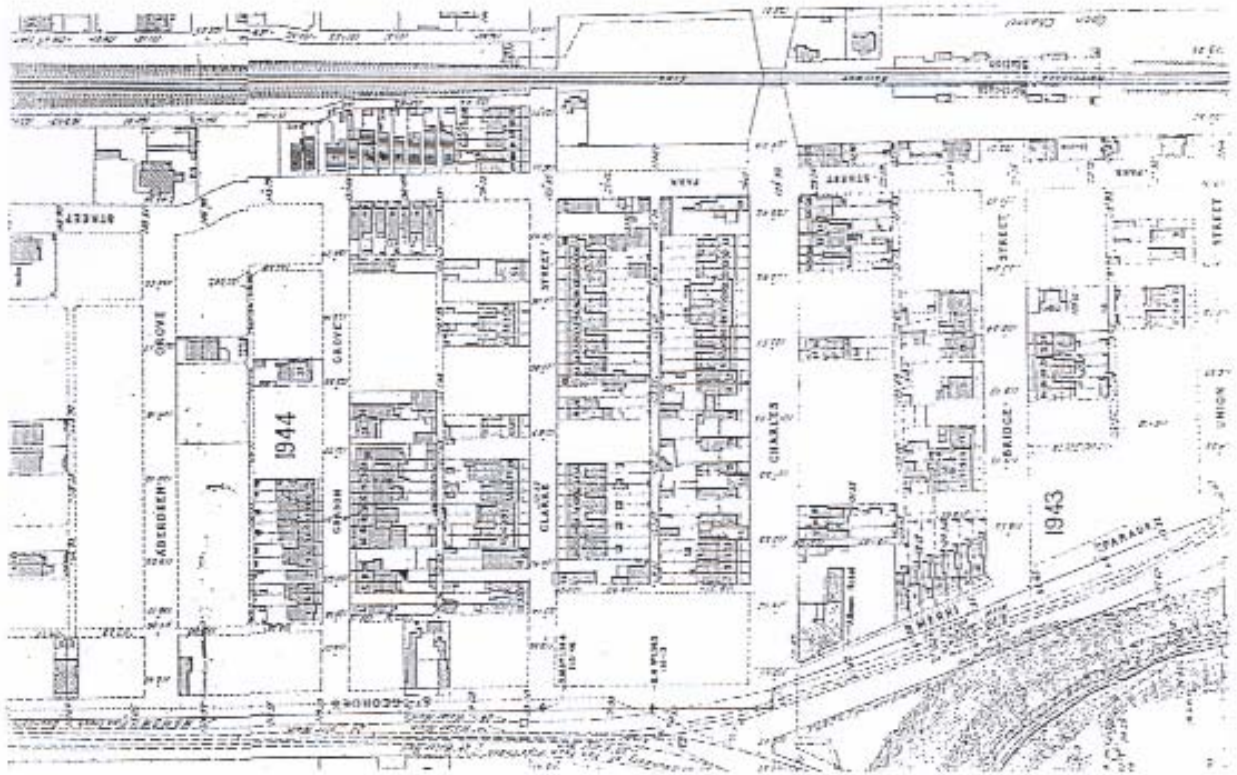
<sup>83</sup> *ibid.*, 1890, 1895, 1900

<sup>84</sup> Sands and McDougall, *op.cit.*, 1890, 1895, 1900, 1920

<sup>85</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> Lemon, *op.cit.*, p.156



The area in 1906, showing Merri station, then Northcote, prior to its reconstruction in 1910.  
Source: M.M.B.W. drainage plan litho no.95, 26.3.1906.

### 2.4.3 Statement of Significance

The Northcote-Merri Area was established initially as a residential location during the 1850s and subdivided for suburban development during the Land Boom of the 1880s. Subsequent development occurred predominantly in the northernmost streets during the period of Post Federation recovery whilst there are also isolated instances of housing construction during the Inter-war years. The Area has historic and aesthetic significance.



It is historically important (Criterion A4) on account of its capacity to demonstrate the patterns of land development during the late Victorian Land Boom and the Post Federation recovery, this Area having significance for its artisans' accommodation consisting typically in the first phase of development of small cottages to pattern designs and terraces of varying lengths. Subsequently, the popularity of the terrace was eclipsed by that of attached pairs during the Post Federation years. The Area has aesthetic importance (Criterion E1) for its high level of integrity and consistent representative housing stock demonstrating the periods of significance of the place. The frontage to St. Georges Road is aesthetically important for the manner in which it imparts a sense of history to this thoroughfare established predominantly by the surviving numbers of small Post Federation villas.

#### **2.4.4 Policy Recommendations**

The following general recommendations are framed with a view to conserving the cultural heritage values of the Area.

- the Northcote-Merri Area should be included in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay Table in the City of Darebin Planning Scheme.
- those buildings within the Area for which interior alteration and outbuildings controls should apply should be documented to provide adequate means of control through the Planning Scheme provisions.
- control over exterior paint colour schemes is not a requirement arising out of the significance of the place.
- those buildings within the Area considered to have individual cultural heritage significance should be documented so as to provide appropriate means of control through the Planning Scheme provisions.
- proposals to carry out works should be assessed in terms of their impacts on the cultural heritage values of the Area as they have been summarized in the Statement of Significance.
- the distinguishing scale of dwellings and stylistic characteristics of the Area should be maintained, having in mind the importance of development during the late Victorian, post Federation and Inter-War periods.
- Front fence types historically associated with the house styles represented in the Area should be reconstructed according to their stylistic compatibility with the house to which they are related.
- The re-construction of windows and verandah supports appropriate to the style and period of houses should be encouraged.
- The architectural characteristics of the Merri station building and its surrounds should be conserved and enhanced by the sympathetic adoption of street furniture, notably seating and fencing, and tree planting to reinforce the post Federation character of the complexes. Trees should be removed and/or planted to give emphasis to the buildings in the immediate surroundings.
- Street tree species generally should be selected to correspond with practices expressive of the periods of significance of the sub-areas.

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- Surviving pitched street channels should be conserved and existing concrete kerbs and channels progressively replaced with pitched drains.

Traffic management devices such as roundabouts should be understated in their treatments so as to effectively control vehicular movement but not conflict with or detract unnecessarily



City of Darebin  
Heritage Review 1999

Northcote - Clarke St

## 2.5 NORTHCOTE-CLARKE STREET

This small Area consists of the western end of Clarke Street, west of St. Georges Road. It is bounded by the houses facing St. Georges Road at one end and by the Merri Creek at the other.

### 2.5.1 Description

Charles Street is narrow with pitched street channels. There are representative Victorian terraces on either side built to the street alignment with the result that it has an intimate scale formed by the effectively continuous rows of terraces on either side and the trees at the western end which close the vista towards the Merri Creek. The terraces are of masonry construction with ornamental stucco work and bi-chromatic brickwork typical of their time. Two timber Victorian period cottages overlook the sloping ground falling to the Merri Creek and demonstrate the attraction of the location.



Clarke Street, looking west to the Merri Creek bank.

### 2.5.2 History

Clarke Street bisects Crown Allotment 95 granted to the Sydney resident Charles J. Gerrard at the district's second land sale on 10 June 1840.<sup>88</sup> The allotment of 123 acres at 95 shillings per acre cost Gerrard 584 pounds and 5 shillings.<sup>89</sup> It extended from the Merri Creek eastward to present day Rathmines Street, its north/south boundaries being approximately in line with the present day James and Charles Streets respectively.

Gerrard never occupied his land preferring to lease it. In 1854 he *sold the entire portion...to a fellow Sydney speculator, a Dane named Severin Kanute Salting*.<sup>90</sup> It is understood that at the time the lessee was Robert Hoddle's successor, Captain Andrew Clarke who lived in a two storeyed blue stone house, now demolished near the present day corner of St.Georges Road and Eunice Avenue. Clarke ran sheep, the farm at the time being known as *Lucre's Run*.<sup>91</sup>

Prior to emigrating, Clarke had been Captain of Royal Engineers. In Victoria as Surveyor-General he was a Government representative in the Legislative Council and as such *played an important role in reorganizing municipal government*.<sup>92</sup> It has been claimed his *worst failing was to abandon Hoddle's and La Trobe's vision of great boulevards leading out of Melbourne...*<sup>93</sup> demonstrated in Northcote where High Street crosses Westgarth Street. Clarke was instrumental in moves towards a National Museum in 1854,<sup>94</sup> his interest in science also leading him to membership of the Philosophical Society of which he was elected the inaugural president.<sup>95</sup> This society was a forerunner of the Royal Society of Victoria, which struggled to survive after the tragic Burke and Wills expedition of 1860.<sup>96</sup>

Upon purchase of Crown Allotment 95 Salting began subdividing, his main access road being the same as his allotment, long and narrow. It ran east/west and led to the Surveyor-General's house, hence its name Clarke Street.<sup>97</sup> Salting realised a return on his investment almost immediately. He *sold four pieces of this land in 1854 and the following year disposed of another dozen. Many of the buyers at once divided their land further...*<sup>98</sup> A map of *Upper Northcote, Epping Road Board c.1864*<sup>99</sup>, depicted Clarke

<sup>88</sup> *Northcote Crown Grantees*, Part Parish Jika Jika cited in Butler, G., *Northcote Urban Conservation Study*.

<sup>89</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> Lemon, A., *The Northcote Side of the River*, North Melbourne, Hargreen Publishing Company, 1983, p42.

<sup>91</sup> Swift, William George, *The History of Northcote: From its First Settlement to a City*, 1928, pp.8-9.

Also see Lemon, *op.cit.*, pp.37 and 42. Lemon disputes details of Swift's account.

<sup>92</sup> Cannon, Michael, *Melbourne After the Gold Rush*, Main Ridge, Loch Haven Books, 1993, p.250-51.

<sup>93</sup> *ibid.*, p.251.

<sup>94</sup> *ibid.*, pp.382-83.

<sup>95</sup> *ibid.*, pp.374-77.

<sup>96</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> Lemon, *op.cit.*, p.42.

<sup>98</sup> Lemon, *loc.cit.*

<sup>99</sup> *Upper Northcote, Epping Road Board*, c.1864, SLV m821.08 Northcote 1864?

Street east and west of High Street without its extension over St. Georges Road to the Merri Creek. That is, it terminated at St. Georges Road which at the time was an unnamed *right-of-way* (private road) along side the *Yan Yean Tramway and Main Line of Pipes*. A building identified as *Captain Clarke* implies he was in residence at that time and that the part of C.A.95 between the Merri Creek and St. Georges Road had till then escaped subdivision. If Clarke were still running sheep, it was on a greatly reduced section of C.A.95.

Despite this activity, Northcote remained largely rural into the 1870s. Specific to Clarke Street there was the district's first bluestone quarry which was *certainly operating in the early 1860s*<sup>100</sup> and boiling down works, complaints about which were largely ignored by Council into the 1880s.<sup>101</sup> Lack of roads and amenities dogged the area however the next decade brought rapid change. While parliament debated northern railway routes a vehicular bridge over the Merri Creek was completed in 1886 and the St. George's Road League handed over 1000 pounds to Council to facilitate road works to its approach.<sup>102</sup> The North Fitzroy cable tramway was opened as far as the Merri Creek on 2<sup>nd</sup>. October of the same year and promises of a railway line and gas connections encouraged subdivision. The Fitzroy railway followed on 8<sup>th</sup>. May, 1888.

During this time, James Eunson, who described himself as *an orchardist and a gentleman*, lived in a bluestone house (probably Clarke's) in the vicinity of Clarke Street.<sup>103</sup> His land was subdivided to form that portion of Clarke Street from St. Georges Road to the Merri Creek and later Eunson Avenue. Eunson's house and its surrounds and the Clarke Street subdivision can be seen in situ on the MMBW plan of 1905.

Of the two brick duplex houses on the north side of the street, Butler et al recorded...*they were constructed in 1890. The first lessees of these four houses included Walter Miller, a printer, Joseph Varey, an engineer, James Johnson, a cabinet maker and Lewis Jones who was an insurance agent. The owner of nos.9-11 Clarke Street changed quickly to become Walter Mitchell and, in the mid 1890s, the Standard Bank of Australia took the other pair, indicating that Eunson encountered financial difficulties. Occupants came and went but Joseph Varey, who eventually became owner of 7 Clarke Street remained there well into this century.*

The Sands and McDougall directories of the 1890s indicate four pairs of brick duplex houses in Clarke Street, two on each side of the street, were built at the same time. They had the street nos.5-11 and 4-10 and in 1890 were occupied by Mrs.Clifton (no.5), Mrs.Verey (no.7), W.Mitchell (no.9), ? Johnson (no.11), C.H.Lodge (no.4), George Burrell (no.6), Joseph Butler (no.8) and J.H.Mathewman (no.10). At the same time a weatherboard house (no.2) existed on the south side of the street occupied by Aaron

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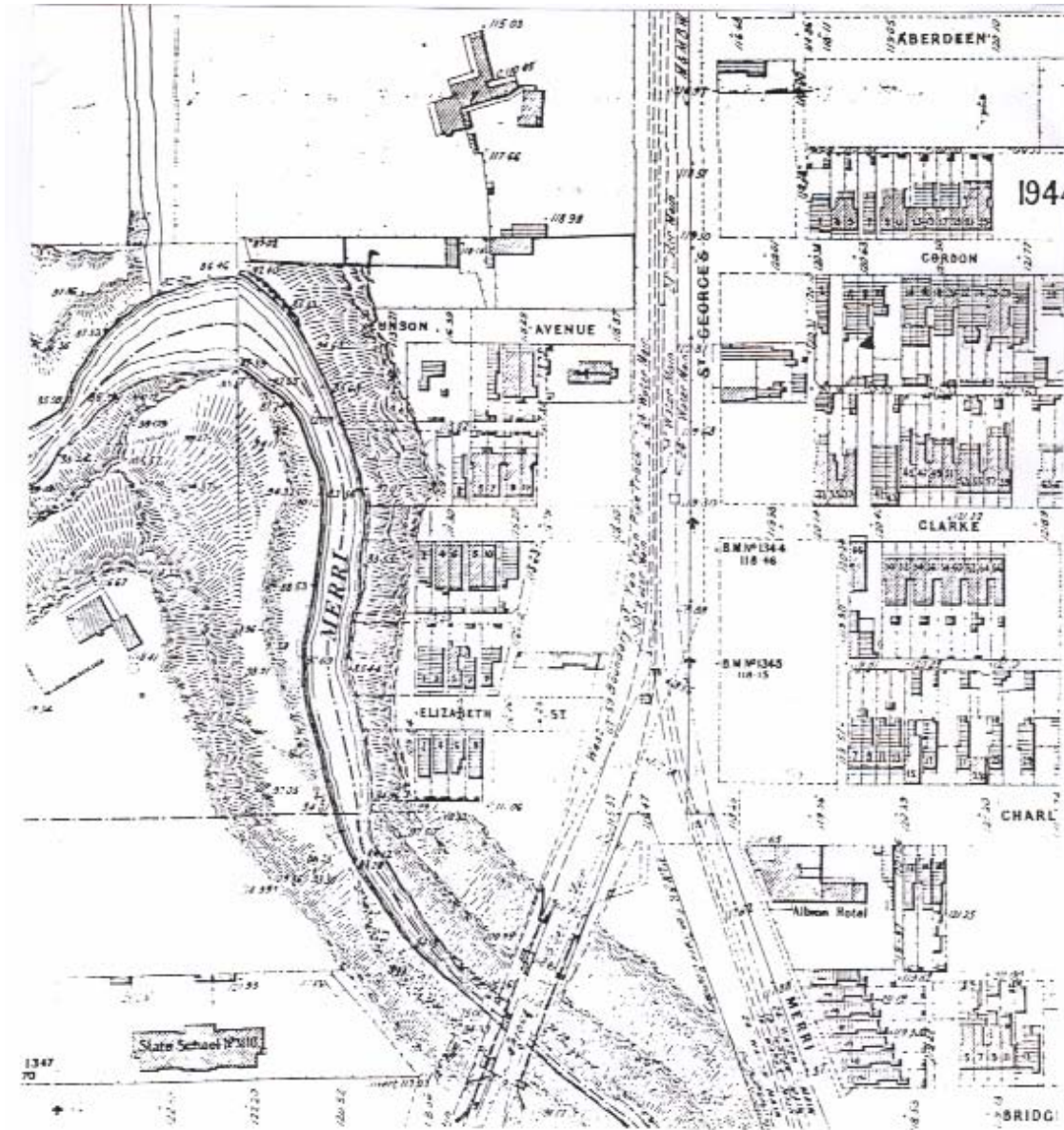
<sup>100</sup> Lemon, op.cit., p.72.

<sup>101</sup> Lemon, op.cit, pp.72-72.

<sup>102</sup> Lemon, op.cit., pp.88-9

<sup>103</sup> Butler, Graeme and Allom Lovell & Associates, *Northcote Building Citations prepared for the City of Darebin*, 1997, 5-11 Clarke Street.

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MMBW Drainage Plan of 1906 (Litho no. 95) showing the development in existence at the time west of St. Georges Road. Notice the absence of development facing St. Georges Road in anticipation of the construction of a railway.

Eatwell and Eunson continued to live in his St. Georges Road house just south of Charles McCarthy's Inebriates Retreat established seven years earlier.

In 1895, there were five houses on each side of the street, the pattern on each side being the same, a weatherboard house by the Merri Creek abutting two duplexes. The weatherboard house on the north side (no.3) had become James Eunson's new residence. The other houses were occupied by Joseph Verey, Mrs. Sarah Miller and James Johnson. No.5 was *vacant*. Eatwell continued at no.2 however the duplexes had new residents namely David Sarkies, John Pilley, Edmund Soutter and George May. Five years later only Eunson and Eatwell continued to live there. Even Verey (Verey?) had moved however he was listed as occupant of no.7 again in 1910, 1920 and 1930. Eunson was the other long term resident continuing at no.2 in 1930.

In 1910, a *Water valves shed* was situated on the north side of Clarke Street near the corner of St. Georges Road however in later years it was not mentioned. A Methodist Church building associated with the St. Georges Road property faced Clarke Street by 1920 completing the development of that side of the street. By 1920, the south side had also acquired another house at no.12.

### 2.5.3 Statement of Significance

Clarke Street, Northcote, was subdivided and developed in 1890. It is historically and aesthetically significant.

It is historically significant (Criterion A4) for its capacity to demonstrate the impetus to suburban settlement west of St. Georges Road provided by the North Fitzroy cable tramway and the Merri Creek road bridge of 1886 and the Fitzroy railway of 1888. This importance is enhanced by the high level of integrity of the place comparing with the vestigial evidence of similar settlement in nearby Elizabeth and Eunson Streets. It is aesthetically important (Criterion E1) on account of the scale and setting of the street established by the construction of the houses to the property alignment and by the treed west end and forms a unique residential environment in the Municipality. The stylistic consistency of the housing stock is a contributory element.

### 2.5.4 Policy Recommendations

The following general recommendations are framed with a view to conserving the cultural heritage values of the Area.

- the Northcote-Clarke Street Area should be included in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay Table in the City of Darebin Planning Scheme with control over the removal of the mature trees visible at its west end.
- control over exterior paint colour schemes is not a requirement arising out of the significance of the place.
- proposals to carry out works should be assessed in terms of their impacts on the cultural heritage values of the Area as they have been summarized in the Statement of Significance.



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- Given the intact nature of this street and its stylistically consistent single storeyed character, demolition of contributory buildings is discouraged.
- Upper level additions should be set well back from the façade lines to ensure that they are discrete elements.
- Contributory front fences should be conserved.
- New fences should be limited in height to 1.2 metres.
- The pitched kerbs and channels should be conserved.

## 2.6 NORTHCOTE – SUMNER ESTATE

This Area is situated between the Merri Creek reserve on its west side and St. Georges Road on the east. The southern boundary is marked by Merri Park and the north by the backs of properties facing Arthurton Road. The Area rises very gradually from south to north as far as Auburn Avenue at which point it commences to climb quite steeply up the face of the same slope that forms Ruckers Hill to the south-east.

### 2.6.1 Description

This Area consists of five north-south streets meeting Auburn Avenue in the north and Sumner Avenue in the south. Sumner Avenue includes a curved crescent section evoking Garden Suburb images. The Merri Creek reserve forms a natural barrier on the west side, visually reinforced by a row of mature palms along the west side of Winifred Street. The houses in Winifred Street have a planned relationship with this reserve on account of their western aspect. On the east side, St. Georges Road is a broad landscaped boulevard also recalling Garden Suburb planning principles to the extent that it retains its central plantation and electric tramway service to West Preston. Today, a row of Californian bungalows with a small number of houses of different periods complete this cohesive urban environment of the Inter-War years. Auburn Avenue includes a row of Post Federation period houses at its east end, north side, where there is a curve. They are typically of timber construction having asymmetrical fronts with window bays and decorative turned timber posted verandahs. There are only three points of entry to this Estate, the limitations on access and the consequent street pattern being unusual in the area and largely responsible for its discrete character.

The remainder and by far the largest part of this Area is made up of single storeyed Californian Bungalows, predominantly of timber construction with corrugated iron and terra cotta tiled roofs. The gable ends and window bays are often shingled in the manner of the period and the pre-cast concrete verandah columns vary from being twisted in the Spanish Mission style, through trapezoidal to Tuscan, invariably fluted. There are decorative gable end vents, the forms of the bungalows being highly representative of their time with dominant shallow pitched roofs adopting chalet forms.

In recent years restoration works have shown a tendency to the introduction of Edwardian period elements, ornamental picket fences being especially popular. Elsewhere, upper level additions ...(?) No. 38 Traill Street, whilst on the one hand having been unsympathetically altered, is on the other now extraordinary in its own right, the owners having covered every surface and element with pebbles and shells, the only exception being the porch gable end which has painted marine scenes. Whilst many houses have been altered, the greater number survive in a substantially intact condition. Original elements include early timber framed wire mesh fences.

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The Sumner Estate

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**St. Georges Road, looking south from Auburn Avenue.**



**Winifred Street, looking south from within the Merri Creek reserve.**

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**Auburn Avenue, looking west from Winifred Street.**



**Auburn Avenue, looking west from St. Georges Road and showing the Federation period houses on the north side of the street.**



The “Shell house” at 38 Trail Street.

### 2.6.2 History

The grantees of crown allotments 107, 106, and 101 were William Rucker, Henry Lake Worsley and J. Cunningham and respectively. These large allotments were very narrow in their north-south dimension but very long in their east-west dimension, the arrangement giving each owner a frontage to the Merri Creek. The present Sunner Estate is located at the extreme western end of the three holdings. William Frederick Augustus Rucker bought the most expensive of the Merri Creek allotments in 1839 for a total of 2,266 pounds and ten shillings<sup>104</sup>. It was in 1841 that he built his home “The Alpines” (later “Sunnyside”) on the brow of Rucker’s Hill, described a few months later as “the most extensive country house in the district”<sup>105</sup>. Also in that year he bought the adjoining block, allotment 106, on the north side of Mitchell Street, from J. Cunningham. Later that year a Patricus Welsh formed a partnership with Rucker and his wife. An economic downturn was to follow their decision and by February 1843 Rucker had followed Welsh into insolvency. In 1842 his land was forfeited to the Union Bank, of which he had been a director until his retirement the previous year.

Worsley, who had bought crown allotment 107, had arrived at Port Phillip only months before these land sales. He like Rucker suffered from the economic depression of the 1840s, declaring himself bankrupt in 1842. Dr. Peter Macarthur then bought allotment

<sup>104</sup> Lemon, A., *The Northcote Side of the River*, (Melbourne: Hargreen Publishing Company, 1983), p. 10

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid*, p. 10

107. Macarthur, a justice of the peace, built “Arthurton”<sup>106</sup> and the road so named that ran west from High Street to his property by the Merri Creek. This location is now occupied by Zoe Court. He bought Rucker’s forfeited land to the east and in July 1851 created Separation Street, which celebrated Victoria’s independence from New South Wales in that same month. Beilby Hawthorn bought land from Macarthur on Arthurton Road about 1853 and soon extended his holdings as far as Hawthorn Road.

Theodotus John Sumner (1820-1884), a merchant and MLC from 1873 to 1883, arrived in the Colony in 1842, purchasing allotments 96 and 99 from the bankrupt estate of William Rucker on the Brunswick side of the Merri Creek about 1852<sup>107</sup>. This forfeited land had also been held by the Union Bank since 1842. Sumner subsequently built his family home “Stony Park” on this land near the Merri Creek. This site is now occupied by Brunswick Electrical Terminal Station.

Richard Grice, a successful merchant who had built a large warehouse in Melbourne in 1853, took into partnership his clerks Sumner and Benn. The firm traded for many years as Grice Sumner and Co.<sup>108</sup> By 1875 they were described as merchants, free and bonded store proprietors of the Maldon Island guano stores<sup>109</sup> in 24 Little Flinders Street West<sup>110</sup>.

Sumner extended his house, “Stony Park”, to accommodate his growing family, and in the 1860s bought the Macarthur family’s holdings on the Northcote side of the Creek as far as St. Georges Road. He was now in possession of the land subsequently developed as the Sumner Estate. He built a weir across the Merri Creek in 1864 and allowed public access to it as a crossing place for people and cattle, and source of fresh water. It was also of use for irrigation purposes as a pump had been installed<sup>111</sup>. On the Northcote side a narrow lane called Sumner Lane led to this spot. It was of great advantage as there was no reticulated water in any part of Northcote until 1869<sup>112</sup>, despite the passage of the Yan Yean pipe line through the Shire. In 1885 Stony Park was destroyed by fire. In that same year Sumner died but his wife Sarah lived on at “Stony Park” until 1929, retaining ownership of the Area<sup>113</sup>. By 1890, Auburn Avenue was in existence with five persons listed in the Sands and McDougall directory of that year. This land had been sold off as the Fitzroy Extension Estate, referring to a spurious extension of the Fitzroy branch line running north as far as Auburn Avenue itself. It was never built but Shakespeare Grove was formed along with a pattern of lots that was not realized to the immediate east of Auburn Vale, the home of .... Today, Auburn Avenue takes a curious bend on its route to

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<sup>106</sup> According to Lemon (Lemon, p. 37) it was Dr Peter Macarthur who owned Arthurton, but Swift states that it was the residence of Major-General Sir Edward Macarthur, appointed Acting Governor of Victoria for the whole of 1856. (Swift, p. 13)

<sup>107</sup> Lemon, A., *The Northcote Side of the River*, (Melbourne: Hargreen Publishing Company), 1983, p. 193.

<sup>108</sup> Cannon, Michael, *Melbourne After the Goldrush*, (Main Ridge: Loch Haven Books, 1993), pp. 198, 199

<sup>109</sup> Guano is a sea bird whose dung was used for fertilizer.

<sup>110</sup> Sands and McDougall Directory of Victoria, 1875.

<sup>111</sup> Swift, p. 40.

<sup>112</sup> Lemon, p. 57.

<sup>113</sup> Northcote rate book 17/1/1921. Note: this land does not include her holdings on the east of the Merri Creek.





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<b>wood</b>					2	9	19	21	25
<b>popn.</b>					5	16	64	75	71
<b>valn £</b>	84	84	84	112	149	316	803	904	972

### Nash Street

	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929
<b>brick</b>									
<b>wood</b>				1	5	17	19	22	23
<b>popn.</b>					17	30	73	77	78
<b>valn £</b>	52	52	52	85	211	470	721	809	858

### Winifred Street

	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929
<b>brick</b>									
<b>wood</b>						15	15	15	15
<b>popn.</b>						60	57	61	65
<b>valn £</b>	60	60	60	60	60	467	513	521	561

### Auburn Avenue

	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929
<b>brick</b>									
<b>wood</b>									
<b>popn.</b>									
<b>valn £</b>									

### Sumner Avenue

	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929
<b>brick</b>									
<b>wood</b>					2	8	16	22	25
<b>popn.</b>						38	63	75	96
<b>valn £</b>	91	91	91	92	156	307	637	807	1038

## 2.6.3 Statement of Significance

This Area, whilst having its origins in the Sumner's ownership of the site from the 1860s, was developed as the Sumner Estate during a period of rapid growth sustained by the City of Northcote. Land sales were held between 1921 and 1924 and by the Depression of the late 1920s, the estate had been fully developed. The former Sumner Estate has historic and aesthetic importance.

It is historically important (Criterion A4) as a discrete area demonstrating an aspect of Northcote's residential expansion during the Inter-War period when large tracts of open land west of St. Georges Road and north of the railway between Dennis and Alphington were subdivided and developed. It is historically important also for its capacity to

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demonstrate suburban estate planning practices at a time when the Garden Suburb Movement was gaining acceptance but had not yet been successfully exploited in Victoria.

Elements that anticipate the arrival of the Garden Suburb estates of the late 1920s and which impart aesthetic importance (Criterion E1) to this Estate include:

- the planned relationship between the houses in Winifred Street and the Merri Creek reserve.
- the aspect enjoyed by the St. Georges Road residents over the plantations of that thoroughfare, complemented as they were by a modern public transport route and ample accommodation for increasingly popular motor vehicles.
- the curve in Sumner Avenue, whilst necessitated by the alignment of the Merri Creek, also embraced it by introducing the notion of a changing vista in the manner of later subdivisions.
- the manner in which the Estate forms a discrete locale with only two points of entry to St. Georges Road and one to Arthurton Road.

It is, however, also the consistent design of the housing stock, predating the more picturesque designs of the late Inter-War years, that impart aesthetic significance to the Area. The Californian Bungalows, whilst being individually unremarkable, collectively demonstrate the Area's cultural values determined by the Estate's position in time during the first decade of the Inter-War period.

Finally, the small number of Federation period houses that pre-date the development of the Estate but which form a part of it, impart stylistic diversity.

#### **2.6.4 Policy Recommendations**

The following general recommendations are framed with a view to conserving the cultural heritage values of the Area.

- the Northcote-Sumner Estate Area should be included in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay Table in the City of Darebin Planning Scheme with control over the removal of the mature palm trees along Winifred Street.
- control over exterior paint colour schemes is not a requirement arising out of the significance of the place.
- proposals to carry out works should be assessed in terms of their impacts on the cultural heritage values of the Area as they have been summarized in the Statement of Significance.
- The following contributory elements of the houses should be conserved and enhanced:
  - their facades
  - their roof forms

- their building envelopes to the extent that they contribute to the cohesive streetscape character
- absence of garages at the façade line
- The following significant elements of the front fences should be conserved:
  - surviving early fences and gates
  - the low heights of fences between the façade line of the street and the front property alignments
  - corner splays and corner gateways
- The stylistic consistency of the Area which is dominated by Californian Bungalow forms with the exception of the east end, north side of Auburn Avenue should be conserved.
- New buildings within the Area should interpret the Inter-War character of the streets in which they are situated and should avoid the use of materials, forms, colours and envelopes that contrast with the period of significance of the Area.
- New structures should not be erected in the frontage setbacks which establish the garden character of the Area but should be set back from the existing façade lines by not less than 500mm.
- New garages and carports should be recessive and not dominate the composition of new building designs as seen from the street.

## 2.7 NORTHCOTE-CROXTON

This Area forms an extension of the Northcote-Merri Area but is separated from it by the former Little Sisters of the Poor complex with its extensive grounds. As with Northcote-Merri, the west boundary is formed by St. Georges Road and the east by the Epping Railway. Whilst the residential land continues to the Sir Douglas Nicholl's Reserve in Thornbury, the numbers of substantially intact houses of the Post-Federation period diminishes, the houses of subsequent periods including the Post-War era being well represented. Thus, the Post-Federation period houses cease to dominate the urban landscape north of Gladstone Avenue and it is for this reason that the Area has been terminated at this point.

### 2.7.1 Description

This is a residential area having Batman Park at the centre, facing St. Georges Road. Whilst the Post-Federation period dominates and is largely responsible for its cultural significance, there is a number of late Victorian cottages and short terraces which add stylistic diversity. The larger allotments in Hawthorn Road, facing the wall of the former Little Sisters of the Poor and Hartington Street alongside Northcote railway station have resulted in the construction of entire streets of middle class Federation period villas with picturesque corrugated iron clad roofs, timber weatherboards, bullnosed verandahs and extensive use of pressed metal linings.

The lot sizes facing Batman Park vary sufficiently to relieve the monotony so characteristic of the subdivisions to the south. Whilst narrow single fronted cottages abound, there are also quite wide blocks with larger Post Federation timber villas demonstrating changing standards of residential accommodation and the gradual demise of the terrace and its associated single fronted cottage. There is a high level of architectural integrity in Arthurton Road and Elm Street which constitutes an important aspect of the cultural significance of Batman Park. Here is an opportunity to stand back from the footpath and view entire streetscapes through the open parkland.

The St. Georges Road frontage has been partly rebuilt with the result that entire street blocks have been excluded from the Area. Nevertheless, sufficient remains to impart significance to the thoroughfare, due principally to the representative Post-Federation period and Inter-War bungalows that have survived. At one point, the Area faces the northern end of the Sumner Estate Area and underscores the historic character of this roadway.

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**Hawthorn Road. The wall of the former Little Sisters of the Poor is at right.**



**Hartington Street, looking south from Arthurton Road with Northcote station at left.**

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Two views of the Batman Park streetscape, Elm Street (above) and Arthurton Road (below).





The St. Georges Road frontage between Arthurton Road and McCracken Avenue.

### 2.7.2 History

Frederick Wigan bought crown allotment no. 123 (143 acres) at the 1839 land sales, whereas J. Cunningham bought crown allotment no. 106 (139 acres), Henry Lake Worsley allotment no. 107 (140 acres), and William Minnethorpe allotment no. 112 (135 acres) at the 1840 land sales. Together, these lots encompassed all of the land between the Merri Creek and High Street north of Hawthorn Road up to Beaconsfield Parade.

Wigan was an accountant at the Union Bank in Melbourne, and little is known of the early events relating to his allotment. J. Cunningham sold his allotment, on the north side of Mitchell Street, to William Frederick Augustus Rucker in 1841. Rucker bought the most expensive of the Merri Creek allotments in 1839 for a total of 2,266 pounds and ten shillings<sup>114</sup>. Also in that year he built the large mansion “The Alpines” (later “Sunnyside”) on the brow of Rucker’s Hill, described a few months later as “the most extensive country house in the district”<sup>115</sup>. Later that year Patricus Welsh bought into partnership with Rucker and his wife. The housing boom ended, and financial collapse followed in 1840. By February 1843 Rucker had followed Welsh into insolvency, his land having been forfeited to the Union Bank, a company of which he was director until his retirement the previous year.

<sup>114</sup> Lemon, A., *The Northcote Side of the River*, (Melbourne: Hargreen Publishing Company, 1983), p. 10.

<sup>115</sup> Lemon, p. 10.



William Minnethorpe was a Sydney investor and land speculator. Henry Lake Worsley had arrived at Port Phillip only months before these land sales. He like, Rucker, suffered from the economic depression of the 1840s, and became bankrupt in 1842. Dr. Peter Macarthur, a Justice of the Peace, then bought his land. Macarthur sold off many of the back blocks of his property, particularly those east of High Street during the boom years of late 1852 and 53 and concentrated on acquiring the Merri Creek frontages of his neighbouring landholders. However Beilby Hawthorn bought some of Macarthur's land west of High Street on Arthurton Road about 1853 and soon extended his property down to south of the present Hawthorn Road, purchasing some of Rucker's original land. Soon afterwards Hawthorn built himself a grand house immediately south of Hawthorn Road called "Thornbank".

The Union Bank, which had held Rucker's land to the south and east since 1842 felt also that the boom of 1852-53 was the time to sell. The bank put in access roads, which included upgrading Plant Street and renaming it Hawthorn Road<sup>116</sup>. It subdivided the land, putting it to auction in 1853. The area between Charles and Arthurton Road / Separation Street had been mostly cut up into five to ten acre farmlets prior to 1880. However, the whole of allotment 112 bought by Minnethorpe in the 1840 land sales had been acquired by J.C. Tyler and was divided into three lots prior to September 1885. Minnethorpe Estate, as it was known, was then sold by a syndicate headed by the Hon. Thomas Bent, who had been Minister for Railways up to 1883, and who had land interests around Melbourne. The estate had Beavers Road as its northern boundary, Elm Street as its southern, the Merri Creek to the west and extended to the vicinity of Gillies Street in the east.

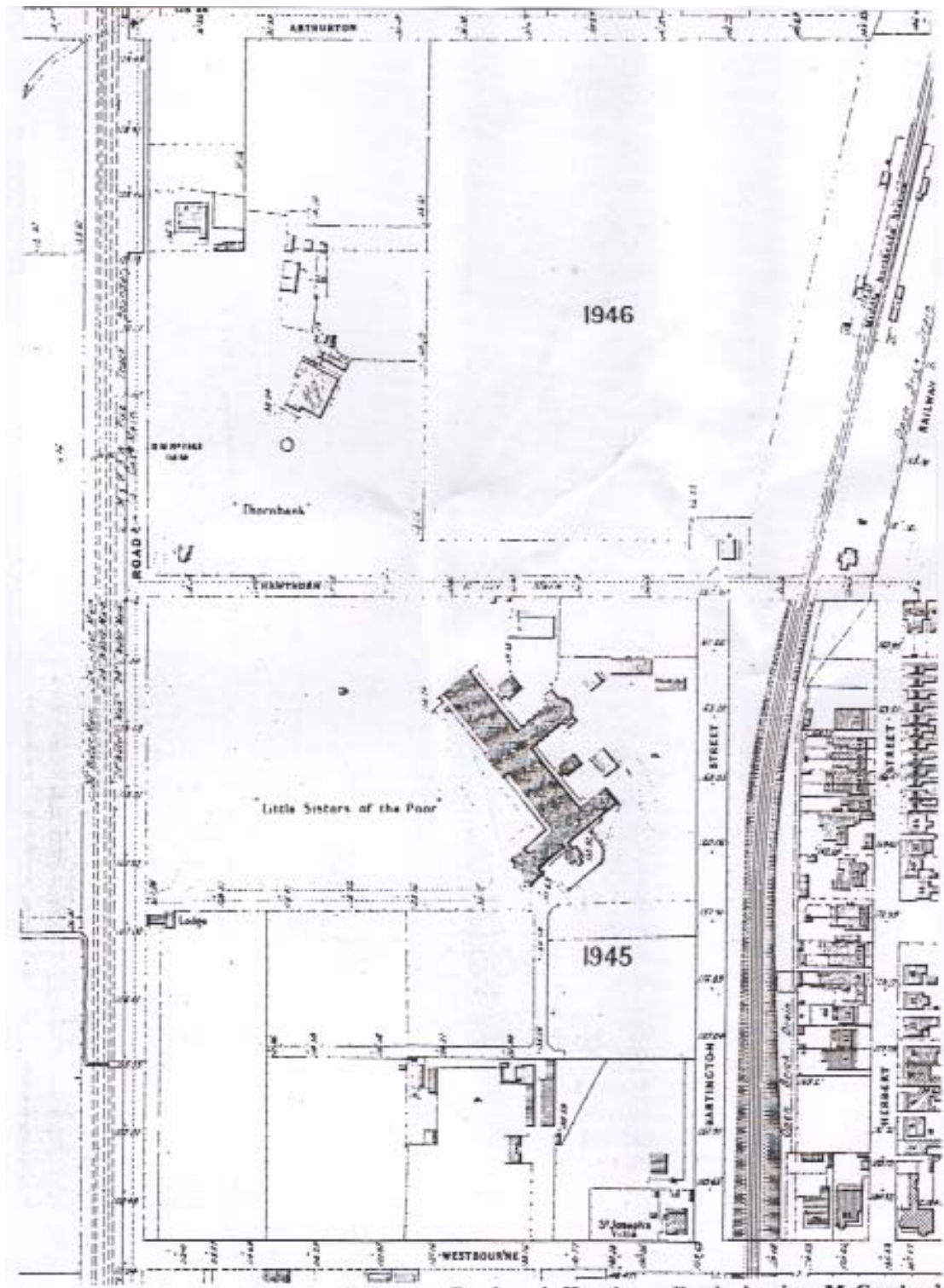
By 1885 Hawthorn's Thornbank estate had been acquired by Peter McCracken. His new house, since demolished, stood on the south side of McCracken Avenue, and had grounds laid out as a park with paddocks for cows and horses. Also by 1885 Francis E. Beaver, MLC, owned a residence that occupied the area bounded by High Street, St Georges Road, Beavers Road (late Bevers Street) and Beaconsfield Parade, the latter being only about half of the present width and known at the time as Jeffries' Lane. Before this it had been named Erskine Street. The Hon. Beaver sold his property in September 1887 when he retired in ill health from the Northcote Council. The Erskine Estate had been sold off prior to his death, two months later.

By 1888 the only important substantially unoccupied sites between High Street and St Georges Road were McCracken's Thornbank and two or three small farms to the south. These latter properties, along with the ground once occupied by Hawthorn's house, were bought by a Catholic Charitable Order, the Little Sisters of the Poor. This site is now occupied by a Greek Orthodox monastery, and the St Joseph's Home. The Whittlesea

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<sup>116</sup> Sands and McDougall Directory, 1890.

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1906 plan of the area between Arthurton Road and Hawthorn Road showing McCracken's "Thornbank". Notice the absence of development and the railway crossing in Hawthorn Road with a Railways Department gatehouse and the pre-1910 configuration of the railway station, then known as Middle Northcote.

Source: M.M.B.W. Drainage Plan, litho no. 95, 26.3.1906.

railway was opened on its east side, defining the eastern boundary of this Area, in 1889. Croxton station was open by 1895.

By 1890 Arthurton Road, running along the south side of Batman Park, had four residences between St. Georges Road and the railway. There was only one house each in Hawthorn Road and Elm Street, two in Bent Street, eight in Beavers Road, seven in Gladstone Avenue and eleven in Latham Street.

McCracken's paddock was finally subdivided in 1907, one of the last areas west of High Street to be settled. Today the surviving Post Federation period houses bear testimony to the late release of this land. It was also in this year the construction of a system of stormwater and sewerage drains was commenced. It ran via Elm Street, Arthurton Road, St Georges Road and on to the Merri Creek. An old gully of about four acres at the corner of St Georges Road and Arthurton Road which had acted as a natural catchment was then sold to the Town Council later in 1907 to form Batman Park.

To the immediate north of the Park the construction of houses was proceeding apace with the majority of blocks being developed by 1910<sup>117</sup>. Further north, the Erskine Estate was also following suit. The northern side of Elm Street had 26 residences and was the headquarters of the Northcote Cycling Club, Bent Street had 29, Beavers Road 16 and Latham Street 14. There were 30 houses in Gladstone Street<sup>118</sup>. The Railways Department rebuilt the station buildings at Croxton in their present form in 1910, contracting F.E. Shillabeer who undertook similar work at Merri in the same year.

By 1930 the Area was fully developed as follows:

- Gladstone 70 dwellings, Beavers Road 72, Bent Street 63, Elm Street 48, Arthurton Road 37, McCracken Avenue 34, and Hawthorn Road 15<sup>119</sup>.

### 2.7.3 Statement of Significance

The Northcote-Croxton Area was sold off by the Crown in 1839-40 and occupied in small rural holdings until the Land Boom with the sale of blocks commencing in 1885. The construction of houses, however, lagged behind with the greatest number of surviving contributory houses being built during the first two decades of this century. The Area is historically and aesthetically important.

It is historically important (Criterion A4) for its capacity to demonstrate the growth of the locale during the late Victorian Land Boom and more particularly during the period of economic recovery following Federation in 1901. It is aesthetically important (Criterion E1) as a predominantly Post-Federation period residential area, having some representation from the late Victorian Land Boom and the Inter-War years. This importance is enhanced by the range of dwellings including artisans' cottages to the north and more opulent and aesthetically diverse timber houses to the south especially in

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<sup>117</sup> MMBW plan 105.

<sup>118</sup> Sands and McDougall Directory, 1910.

<sup>119</sup> Sands and McDougall Directory, 1930.

Hawthorn Road and Harrington Street, facing the railway reserve and Croxton station buildings. Furthermore, the high levels of integrity shore up the Area's cultural values and are especially apparent in Elm Street and Arthurton Road facing Batman Park and along the St. Georges Road frontage.

#### 2.7.4 Policy Recommendations

The following general recommendations are framed with a view to conserving the cultural heritage values of the Area.

- the Northcote-Croxton Area should be included in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay Table in the City of Darebin Planning Scheme.
- control over exterior paint colour schemes is not a requirement arising out of the significance of the place.
- proposals to carry out works should be assessed in terms of their impacts on the cultural heritage values of the Area as they have been summarized in the Statement of Significance.
- The following contributory elements of the houses should be conserved and enhanced:
  - their facades
  - their roof forms
  - their building envelopes to the extent that they contribute to the cohesive streetscape character
  - absence of garages at the façade line
- The following significant elements of the front fences should be conserved:
  - surviving early fences and gates
  - the low heights of fences between the façade line of the street and the front property alignments
  - corner splays and corner gateways
- The stylistic consistency of the Area which is dominated by Post Federation period dwellings should be conserved.
- New buildings within the Area should interpret the Post Federation, late Victorian and Inter-War character of the streets in which they are situated and should avoid the use of materials, forms, colours and envelopes that contrast with the period of significance of the Area.
- New structures should not be erected in the frontage setbacks which establish the garden character of the Area but should be set back from the existing façade lines by not less than 500mm.
- New garages and carports should be recessive and not dominate the composition of new building designs as seen from the street.
- A landscape plan should be prepared for the railway reserve to complement the period of significance of the Croxton station buildings and villas in Harrington Street.

## 2.8 ALPHINGTON AREA

This Area is situated immediately to the south of the railway line as it passes through Alphington railway station and to the north of Heidelberg Road. It excludes the commercial premises facing this thoroughfare. Its western extremity is formed by Clive Street and its eastern extremity by Miller Street. The land is almost level, the steep incline dropping down to the Darebin Creek being a short distance further to the east.

### 2.8.1 Description

This Area is made up of four residential streets running north-south between the railway and Heidelberg Road. Proceeding from west to east, they are Clive Street, Lowther Street, Harker Street and Miller Street. With the exception of Miller, there is a dog leg in the street alignment as it leaves the Heidelberg Road properties and turns into the residential sections of each street. The southern boundary of the Area is aligned with the change of direction, being marked by a right of way. Both Clive and Miller Streets are distinguished by mature avenues of plane trees that form arches over the roadways. The intervening streets have smaller and more recent trees including melaleucas. There is evidence in Lowther Street of the original pavement formation, the stormwater channels being pitched to form both spoon drains and kerbs and channels and the shoulders being defined by pitched edges. Whilst they have now been surfaced in asphalt, it would appear that the shoulders were formerly occupied by trees. The north ends of the westernmost streets terminate at the railway line. There is a bikeway in the railway reserve which is defined at the streets by pine log rails. The north end of Harker Street is similarly protected although there is also an unpaved turning area on the railway land.

The architectural styles encountered in the Area reflect its development which has generally proceeded from the eastern end, near the railway station to the west. In Miller Street timber Federation period cottages dominate and are mainly double fronted with rough cast work, decorative gable ends and shingled weatherboards in the manner of the period. There is one double fronted dwelling in the late Victorian mode with ashlar boards and a faceted projecting wing and a relatively smaller number of timber Californian bungalows. The number of Federation period cottages diminishes as one proceeds west and is replaced by timber bungalows, a group in Lowther Street being distinguished by their Arts and Crafts forms suggesting a slightly earlier date than the more common Californian bungalow houses in the vicinity. Harker Street has been substantially re-built in recent years but retains examples of Federation and Inter-War houses seen elsewhere in the Area. In Lowther Street the now closed St. Judes Anglican Church complex of 1913-62 is a dominant element that forms a stylistically cohesive group in spite of its construction over an extended period. The parish hall is distinguished by its stuccoed cartouche, the church by its sympathetic extension at the front and the vicarage for its understated Classically influenced façade treatment. It is the use of red bricks and gable ended forms that unifies the group. In Clive Street, the impact of the Federation years is not seen, the buildings being mainly timber bungalows with two

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Colonial Revival and a single English Domestic Revival house of the late Inter-War period.

At the north end of Miller Street are two shops demonstrating the impact of the railway station and the practice of the period wherein local shopping centres were established around wayside railway stations. Whilst there are other shops to the north of the line and a footbridge that still makes a connection between them, it is the Miller street shops that impact on the Area. There is a third considerably defaced former shop opposite at the Rowe Street corner.

### 2.8.2 History

The land to the south of the Alphington railway station formed part of Crown allotments nos. 117, 118, 119 and 120 which were purchased by Arthur Kemmins, H. Dowling, Richard and Godfrey Howitt and Charles Roemer respectively at the land sales held on 10<sup>th</sup> June, 1840. Arthur Kemmis was a merchant and auctioneer. He was born in London and came to Sydney in 1828, moving to Melbourne eleven years later. Richard Howitt moved in the “most select literary circles in London”<sup>120</sup>, while his brother Godfrey was a doctor. They had been in Port Phillip for barely two months when the land was purchased. In these early months Richard found himself “in wild open country, our cottage being the only one for miles.”<sup>121</sup> In 1842 the brothers left their property to their



**Mature plains in Miller Street.**

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<sup>120</sup> Lemon, p. 8.

<sup>121</sup> Lemon, p. 12.

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Closed shops near the railway station, Miller Street.



Typical Federation period cottage, Miller Street.



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**Harker Street showing recent roadworks.**



**Lowther Street showing original roadworks.**

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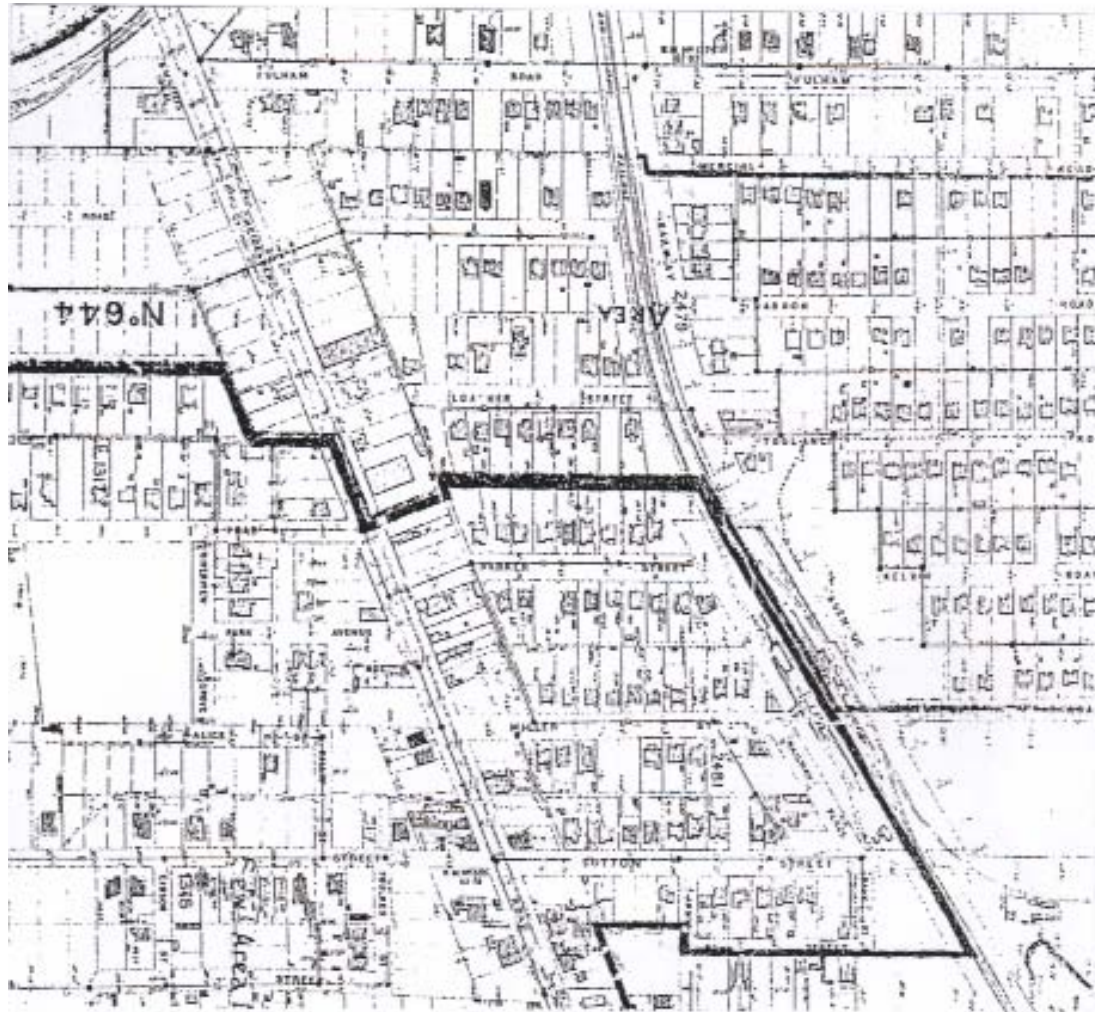


The St. Jude's complex, Lowther Street.



Lowther Street houses.

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MMBW Drainage Plan no. 116 (nd). Notice the outline of the Presbyterian Church in Clive Street, in existence in 1925. The pattern of houses suggests that the drawing was prepared in the late 1920s. Notice also that the St. Jude's vicarage of 1930 is not shown.

nephew Tom. Charles Roemer bought allotment 120 as an investment. He could not sell it promptly, although he did sell the southern section to the Sydney investor James Manning. In 1852 Manning's brother William, Solicitor General of New South Wales, formed a partnership with James and subsequently took exclusive possession. Following subdivision into 130 lots his land was advertised for sale in 1854 as the Village of Alphington, named after Manning's home town in Devon. He formed Yarra Street, running from the Yarra River north towards the Darebin Creek and east of present day Miller Street. It survives in part today as Yarralea Street. By the end of 1856 only 16 lots had been sold with John Sharp Adams opening a general store in February 1856 and becoming official postmaster for the district. Within two years there was also a baker and a butcher and two hotels. Today, the former Wesleyan Church of 1859 and the two storeyed bluestone shop at 756-8 Heidelberg Road are the sole survivors of this period of activity.

A railway between Clifton Hill and Alphington was completed in 1883. George Augustus Sala, the English journalist who gave the metropolis its now widely recognized title of Marvelous Melbourne, referred to it as the "nowhere to nowhere line"<sup>122</sup>, since the population at each centre was sparse and the line was not connected at either end. It remained that way until the Princes Bridge to Collingwood line was opened on 21<sup>st</sup>. October, 1901, following the extension of the earlier line to Collingwood and Heidelberg on the 8<sup>th</sup> May, 1888. As a consequence, the corridor through which trains were to pass missed out largely on the development associated with the Boom years. The station at Alphington was not opened until 1896, being replaced in 1914<sup>123</sup>. It has since been rebuilt although the footbridge is a survivor of earlier times.

Land speculation and subdivision in the locale was undertaken by Charles Henry James, a noted land boomer, and others. By 1891, the Sands and McDougall directory for that year recorded a single house in Miller Street, occupied by Thomas Freeman. By 1900 there were two occupied buildings on the north side of Heidelberg Road between Fulham Road and Miller Street and a Church of England and second house in Miller Street. This church was the precursor of the present complex of St. Judes (now closed) in Lowther Street. By the end of the decade thirteen houses had been built in Miller Street which was directly in line with the railway station. By 1917 there were sixteen, in 1922 seventeen, and by 1930 there were twenty buildings. They included Miss Mackay's drapery and Mrs. Walker's confectionery in the surviving pair of shops at the north end.

In 1910 there were four families living in Harker Street, increasing to nine by 1914 and nineteen by 1930. It was during this first sustained period of growth around the time of the Great War that the congregation of St. Judes Church witnessed the laying of the foundation stone of its brick church in Lowther Street. The year was 1913 and the event was followed by the opening of the parish hall in 1918, the kindergarten hall in 1926 and the construction of a vicarage in 1930<sup>124</sup>. Thus the growth of the church reflects the growth of the Area and the process of family formation leading to the establishment of

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<sup>122</sup> Lemon p. 63.

<sup>123</sup> Jungworth, A,N, Lambert K.W, p. 4.

<sup>124</sup> See *St. Judes Church of England Lowther Street Alphington Centenary Service 1890-1990*, nd.

the kindergarten hall. Nevertheless, there were only three houses in the street by 1917 but they were soon followed by another seven in 1922 and twelve in 1930. Clive Street was developed last with its first property being listed in 1927<sup>125</sup> when a Presbyterian church was built on the west side (see MMBW drainage plan). By 1924 there were three properties with three more being built. In 1930 there was a total of 21 properties including the church.

Today, much of the present housing stock has survived although it would appear that the sense of community demonstrated by the existence of the two churches and shops has diminished.

### 2.8.3 Statement of Significance

This section of Alphington bounded by Heidelberg Road and the railway line and Clive and Miller Streets sustained its first development with the opening of the railway station in 1896. It witnessed strong growth leading to its present urban form during the three decades from 1900 to 1930 with settlement being concentrated initially in Miller Street near the railway station and extending west to Clive Street. The Area is historically, aesthetically and socially important.

It is historically important (Criterion A4) for its capacity to demonstrate the first phase in the suburban settlement of Alphington. It should be compared with the earlier isolated development on Heidelberg Road that followed the first land sales during the mid Victorian period and the later development north of the railway in the Inter-War period. Its historic importance is enhanced by the survival of the St. Judes Church complex and shops which collectively point to a past way of life established prior to the widespread use of the motor car. It is aesthetically important (Criterion E1) as a discrete residential enclave defined by major transport corridors and with sufficient numbers of contributory Federation and Inter-War period houses to establish a cohesive historic character, enriched by the architectural diversity characteristic of these periods. Typical contributory elements include the quite small double fronted timber house forms, the use of half timbering, rough cast, shingled and rusticated weatherboards, chalet form roofs and stylistic elements associated with later house styles of the 1930s. Surviving shops and the former St. Judes Church complex enhance the aesthetic values of the area by virtue of their varied architectural forms and ornamentation. The matured treed avenues in Clive and Miller Streets reinforce the special aesthetic values of the Area. It is socially important (Criterion G1) to the extent that the contributory housing stock is valued by its residents for its architectural character which, in conjunction with the factors noted, is seen to create a discrete neighbourhood of high residential amenity

### 2.8.4 Policy Recommendations

The following general recommendations are framed with a view to conserving the cultural heritage values of the Area.

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<sup>125</sup> Or as early as 1920.

- the Alphington Area should be included in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay Table in the City of Darebin Planning Scheme.
- control over exterior paint colour schemes is not a requirement arising out of the significance of the place.
- proposals to carry out works should be assessed in terms of their impacts on the cultural heritage values of the Area as they have been summarized in the Statement of Significance.
- The following contributory elements of the houses should be conserved and enhanced:
  - their facades
  - their roof forms
  - their building envelopes to the extent that they contribute to the cohesive streetscape character
  - absence of garages at the façade line
- The following significant elements of the front fences should be conserved:
  - surviving early fences and gates
  - the overall average height of the contributory fences, being approximately 1.2 metres
- The stylistic diversity of the Area which is dominated by Post Federation and Inter War period dwellings should be conserved.
- New buildings within the Area should interpret the Post Federation and Inter-War character of the streets in which they are situated and should avoid the use of materials, forms, colours and envelopes that contrast with the period of significance of the Area.
- New structures should not be erected in the frontage setbacks which establish the garden character of the Area but should be set back from the existing façade lines by not less than 500mm.
- New garages and carports should be recessive and not dominate the composition of new building designs as seen from the street.
- The surviving shops within the Area should be conserved.

## 2.9 PRESTON-TRAMWAY

This Area is closely associated with the Bell Primary School Area. It is distinguished from the neighbouring streets by its high level of integrity, is made up of Stephen and Gillingham Streets and a portion of Davies Street. It is located half a street block to the north of the West Preston tramway in Murray Road and is terminated on its north side by Post-War industrial premises in Oakover Road. Devon Street is an especially wide thoroughfare on account of its location over the Preston main drain. It forms a logical boundary on the west side of the Area when taken in conjunction with the side boundaries to the houses in Stephen and Gillingham Streets which face this street.

### 2.9.1 Description

This Area is situated on level ground. The contributory houses in this Area are typical Californian bungalows of the early Inter-War period. They are mostly of timber construction although there are also some of solid brick. Common stylistic elements other than the characteristic asymmetrical form include the curved and circular corner bays that lend themselves to shingling, rough cast work and curved arches to a number of porches. The roofs are hipped, jerkin headed, transverse and often tiled, the gable ends being invariably shingled.

Instances of unsympathetic maintenance practices include the replacement of timber posts to the porches with decorative wrought iron work, the substitution of aluminium framed windows, the glazing in of the front porches and the construction of recent picket fences that would be more in keeping with the architectural character of the City's Post-Federation streets. There is an exceptional small shrine in the front garden of the house at no.29 Stephen Street that points to the cultural changes sustained during the Post-War years.

The frontage setbacks are generous when compared with the workers' suburbs to the south, the public landscape being softened by the introduction of narrow nature strips capable of supporting street trees. They foreshadow the arrival of the mature Garden Suburb of the late 1920s. Side fences within the frontage setback are low, occasionally timber framed with wire mesh infills, or non-existent, as is often the case with the front fences.



City of Darebin  
Heritage Review 1999

Preston - Tramway



Andrew Ward  
Architectural Historian



**Gillingham Street, looking west from Davies Street.**



**The shrine in the front garden of no. 29 Stephen Street.**

### 2.9.2 History

The arrival of a permanent administrator and magistrate in the Port Phillip district in 1836 led to the survey for the Crown of the Preston lands by Robert Hoddle and William Wedge Darke. Within three years the whole of the present area of Preston was sold at auction<sup>126</sup>. John Carey bought crown allotment 139 of 385 acres for 808 pounds. This area was bounded by Bell Street, Miller Street, the Merri Creek and High Street. This land, being on the southern border of Preston and the closest to Melbourne was the most expensive per acre of all the 1838 and 1839 Preston sales<sup>127</sup>.

Generally the initial purchasers, who in most cases were land speculators caught up in the land boom affecting Melbourne at the end of the 1830's, were quick to sell off their land at a profit, selling and reselling with little real development taking place during the 1840s. Carey, however, held onto his land until October 1849 when he sold it to Thomas Webb Goodwin for 1,800 pounds, more than doubling his purchase price. Goodwin established his Oakover estate, being all of allotment 139, with his house near the Merri Creek. He then subdivided and began to sell off many farmlets in December 1853. Aided by the impact of the gold rush, he realised 7,820 pounds within two years.

Goodwin's land was one of the earliest areas to be subdivided and by 1860 the area south of Bell Street was occupied by small farms with some small businesses and shops<sup>128</sup>.

In the early 1880s a horse drawn tramway along St Georges Road followed the route of the original water pipe from the Yan Yean Reservoir to Melbourne. To facilitate the construction of the pipeline and tramway some of the land along its length was purchased by the Commissioners of Sewers and Water Supply requiring the division of the properties into smaller land parcels. Suburban subdivision ensued during the boom of the 1880s but it led to little development. An 1894 plan shows only Oakover Road, Austral Avenue and Erin Street in the vicinity of the Area<sup>129</sup>.

In 1890 a tramway was opened by the Clifton Hill to Northcote and Preston Tramway Company via High Street to Dundas Street. Services were sporadic, however, until 1901 when the Northcote (?) Council began running the service on a more business like footing. From 1904 a direct rail connection with the City was provided with the completion of the Collingwood or Northcote loop line. Neither of these events, however, led to the closer subdivision and sale of the land in the Area.

There was some settlement on Oakover Road but the St Georges Road frontage remained vacant in 1920<sup>130</sup>. This may be explained in some part by the building in 1907 of two bacon factories in Oakover Road immediately to the north of the Area and the subsequent emission of unpleasant odours and liquids. The situation had not improved much since

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<sup>126</sup> Forster, p. 1.

<sup>127</sup> Forster, p. 14.

<sup>128</sup> See Carroll, p. 27.

<sup>129</sup> Carroll, p. 65, Sands and McDougall Directory, 1900.

<sup>130</sup> Sands and McDougall Directory, 1920.

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Thomas Smith had written to the Council as early as 1890 and described the: “abominations flowing from number of Obnoxious Trades that have congregated in this otherwise lovely locality”<sup>131</sup>. Ultimately, the situation was relieved by the construction of the Preston main drain.

Agitation for electric tramway services increased, however, leading to the formation of the Fitzroy-Northcote-Preston Tramway Trust in October, 1915. Construction had commenced by the time of the formation of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board in 1919. It was this body, however, which opened the new lines from North Fitzroy via St Georges Road, Miller Street and Gilbert Road to Regent Street, West Preston, and via Miller Street and Plenty Road to East Preston in April, 1920. The Railways Department responded to the threat of competition by electrifying its line through Thornbury and Bell in the following year.

The first stage of the Preston tramway workshops located immediately to the east of St Georges Road was constructed in 1924-27<sup>132</sup>, and within four years 508 people were employed there<sup>133</sup>, providing a major fillip to development in the locale. Also in 1925 the “Preston Tramway Corner Estate” immediately to the west of this Area was auctioned. By the following year all of the houses in the streets of the Area had been completed, many of them by the local building firm of Stewart and Davies. Whilst they accommodated persons working in a variety of occupations, a number appear to have been directly linked with the tramway workshops, including clerks, electricians, carpenters, fitters and “tramway employees”<sup>134</sup>. The present manager of the workshops grew up in the Area and recalls that it included body makers, motor and coach painters and fitters<sup>135</sup>.

### 2.9.3 Statement of Significance

The Preston-Tramway Area was developed in 1924-26 and as a consequence of the opening of the West Preston tramway in 1920 and the impetus to development created by the opening of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board workshops at the St. Georges Road/Miller Street corner. It is historically and aesthetically important.

It is historically important (Criterion A4) as a substantially intact example of an Inter-War residential area developed in conjunction with the expansion of the suburban electric tramway system and the construction of the Tramway Workshops to the immediate east and foreshadowing the spacious Garden Suburb approach to suburban development of the late 1920s and 1930s. It is aesthetically important (Criterion E1) in that it demonstrates the hallmarks of residential subdivision at the time, the principal characteristics of which were the dominance of the Californian bungalow, the grid iron street plan and the beginnings of the notion of a landscaped public environment created by the introduction

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<sup>131</sup> Lemon, p. 95.

<sup>132</sup> M.&M.T.B. Annual report, 6/27, p.11.

<sup>133</sup> Summerton, p. 66.

<sup>134</sup> Refer Rate Book, 1930-31 (1/12/30).

<sup>135</sup> Pers. comm. between Andrew Ward and Brian Carter, 24<sup>th</sup>. November, 2000.

of nature strips, deep front gardens and low front and side fences causing the entire streetscape to be seen as a single entity.

#### 2.9.4 Policy Recommendations

The following general recommendations are framed with a view to conserving the cultural heritage values of the Area.

- the Preston-Tramway Area should be included in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay Table in the City of Darebin Planning Scheme.
- control over exterior paint colour schemes is not a requirement arising out of the significance of the place.
- proposals to carry out works should be assessed in terms of their impacts on the cultural heritage values of the Area as they have been summarized in the Statement of Significance.
- The following contributory elements of the houses should be conserved and enhanced:
  - their facades
  - their roof forms
  - their building envelopes to the extent that they contribute to the cohesive streetscape character
  - absence of garages at the façade line
- The following significant elements of the front fences should be conserved:
  - surviving early fences and gates
  - the low heights of fences between the façade line of the street and the front property alignments
  - corner splays and corner gateways
- The stylistic consistency of the Area which is dominated by Californian bungalows should be conserved.
- New buildings within the Area should interpret the Inter-War character of the streets in which they are situated and should avoid the use of materials, forms, colours and envelopes that contrast with the period of significance of the Area.
- New structures should not be erected in the frontage setbacks which establish the garden character of the Area but should be set back from the existing façade lines by not less than 500mm.
- New garages and carports should be recessive and not dominate the composition of new building designs as seen from the street.
- The contribution made by the existing single storeyed dwellings to the cultural values of the Area should be conserved by avoiding the construction of additions which impact on this aspect of the significance of the place.

## **2.10 PRESTON-STATE SCHOOL**

This Area is closely associated with the Preston-Tramway Area. It is distinguished by its comparatively high level of integrity when compared with the neighbouring streets and also by the presence of the Bell Primary School. Its north and south boundaries are formed by Bell Street and Oakover Road, respectively. On the west side, the redevelopment of properties facing the West Preston tramway along Taylor Street constitutes a marked decrease in the level of integrity of the housing stock. On the east side a similar process has led to the termination of the Area in Scotia Street.

### **2.10.1 Description**

The land rises gradually from south to north in this Area with the school site being almost level. The housing stock is typically timber and brick Californian bungalows. There are two Post-Federation period houses to the north of the school and a small number of recent buildings. Stylistic elements include the characteristic low pitched gabled roofs arranged to present not less than two but sometimes more gable ends to the street. They are often half timbered and have decorative vents. Shingled weatherboards, casement windows and shady porches with oversized pillar supports are also common. In many instances brick houses are really of timber construction with brick front porches being given prominence. In Orient Grove, they have shallow arches supported by decorated pillars. The Preston primary School is a substantial red brick two and three storeyed building set in spacious grounds and having a Neo-Grecian portico as its principal façade element.

The frontage setbacks are generous when compared with the workers' suburbs to the south, the public landscape being softened by the introduction of narrow nature strips capable of supporting street trees. They foreshadow the arrival of the mature Garden Suburb of the late 1920s. Front and side fences within the frontage setback are low. In recent years a number of picket fences have replaced the early timber framed fences with wire mesh infills.

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Preston - State School

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**Orient Grove, north of the School and showing the brick porches forming the most prominent elements of the timber bungalows in this street.**



**Scotia Street, alongside the Bell Primary School.**

### 2.10.2 History

The arrival of a permanent administrator and magistrate in the Port Phillip district in 1836 led to the survey for the Crown of the Preston lands by Robert Hoddle and William Wedge Darke. Within three years the whole of the present area of Preston was sold at auction<sup>136</sup>. John Carey bought crown allotment 139 of 385 acres for 808 pounds. This area was bounded by Bell Street, Miller Street, the Merri Creek and High Street. The land, being on the southern border of Preston and the closest to Melbourne was the most expensive per acre of all the 1838 and 1839 Preston sales<sup>137</sup>.

Generally the initial purchasers, who in most cases were land speculators caught up in the land boom affecting Melbourne at the end of the 1830's, were quick to sell off their land at a profit, selling and reselling with little real development taking place during the 1840s. Carey, however, held onto his land until October 1849 when he sold it to Thomas Webb Goodwin for 1,800 pounds, more than doubling his purchase price. Goodwin established his Oakover estate, being all of allotment 139, with his house near the Merri Creek. He then subdivided and began to sell off many farmlets in December 1853. Aided by the impact of the gold rush, he realised 7,820 pounds within two years.

Goodwin's land was one of the earliest areas to be subdivided and by 1860 the area south of Bell Street was occupied by small farms with some small businesses and shops<sup>138</sup>.

In the early 1880s a horse drawn tramway along St Georges Road followed the route of the original water pipe from the Yan Yean Reservoir to Melbourne. To facilitate the construction of the pipeline and tramway some of the land along its length was purchased by the Commissioners of Sewers and Water Supply requiring the division of the properties into smaller land parcels. Suburban subdivision ensued during the boom of the 1880s but it led to little development. An 1894 plan shows only Oakover Road, Austral Avenue and Erin Street in the vicinity of the Area<sup>139</sup>.

In 1890 a tramway was opened by the Clifton Hill to Northcote and Preston Tramway Company via High Street to Dundas Street. Services were sporadic, however, until 1901 when the Northcote Council began running the service on a more business like footing. From 1904 a direct rail connection with the City was provided with the completion of the Collingwood or Northcote loop line. Neither of these events, however, led to the closer subdivision and sale of the land in the Area. The Gilbert Road track, known during the 1890s as Elizabeth Street, passed by to the west and, curiously, there were eight households in Scotia Street by 1900, situated presumably in the duplex units which survive in part today as extremely early buildings<sup>140</sup>. At this stage, Scotia Street ran south from Bell Street and terminated at a fence probably coinciding with the site of Chinese

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<sup>136</sup> Forster, p. 1.

<sup>137</sup> Forster, p. 14.

<sup>138</sup> See Carroll, p. 27.

<sup>139</sup> Carroll, p. 65, Sands and McDougall Directory, 1900.

<sup>140</sup> Sands and McDougall directory, 1900.



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market gardeners' holdings. In 1920 a market gardener by the name of Sin Sing was cultivating land here. The gardens occupied more than half of the Oakover Road frontage between Scotia and Etnam Streets, impinging on the site of the present Primary School.

Agitation for new tramway lines, which had begun in 1912 did not bear fruit until eight years later when in April 1920 a new electrified tramway with extensive sections of single line from North Fitzroy via St Georges Road, Miller Street and Gilbert Road to Regent Street, West Preston was opened to traffic. It was in the following year that the suburban railway service, a short distance to the east, was electrified.

By the end of 1921<sup>141</sup>, Ivy Street had been formed and the land subdivided but it was unoccupied. There were several houses in Etnam Street and a number of vacant lots owned by You Foon, presumably a market gardener. Foon also owned one of the six brick houses in Scotia Street and two vacant lots but it is presumed that the blocks facing Scotia Street towards the southern end were still vacant. F.W. Schulz of Bell Street owned the land facing Latona Avenue and Orient Grove, the latter being sold and built on. By 1923 the situation in Ivy and Etnam Streets was substantially the same but the number of houses in Scotia Street had increased to 13 and development of both Latona and Orient Grove was proceeding. By the end of 1926, the numbers of houses were as summarised:

- Etnam Street: west side 10, east side 15
- Ivy Street: north side 1, south side 2
- Latona Avenue: north side 12, south side 9
- Orient Grove: north side 2, south side, 6
- Scotia Street: east side 3.

The first stage of the Preston tramway workshops located immediately to the east of St Georges Road was constructed in 1924-27<sup>142</sup>, and within four years 508 people were employed there<sup>143</sup>, providing a major fillip to development in the locale. Also in 1925 the "Preston Tramway Corner Estate" immediately to the west of this Area was auctioned.

The Bell State School, number 4309 was opened in 1928 with Robert O'Brien as headmaster. The amount of housing development sustained in the district was reflected in the enrolment of 569 students accommodated in thirteen classrooms. Within two years this number had grown to 700, and the nearby Methodist Church was acquired to house additional children<sup>144</sup>. The school occupied low lying swampy land, previously owned by Chinese market gardeners, and hundreds of loads of earth had to be spread in the yard

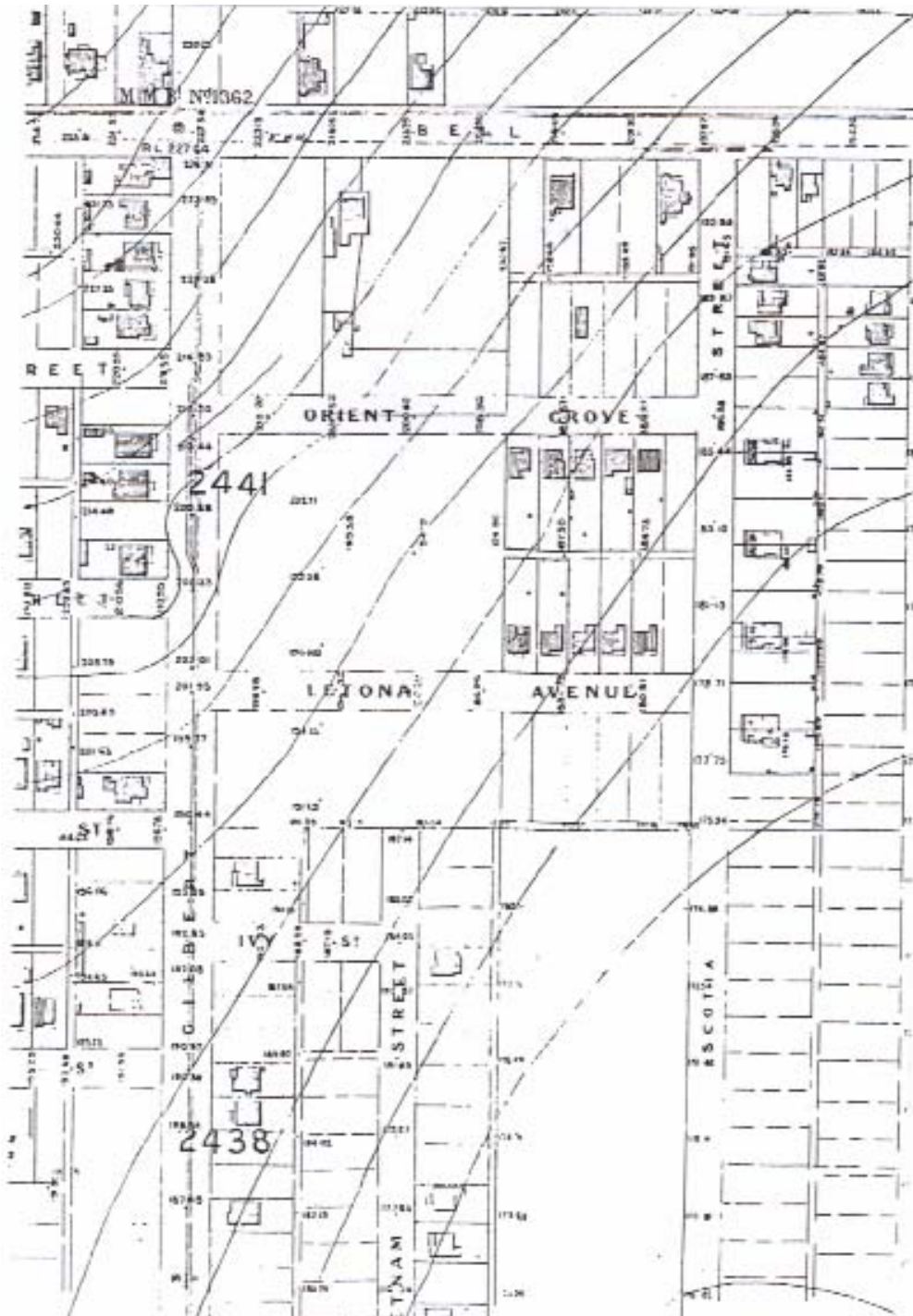
<sup>141</sup> Rate Book, 1921-22 (22/12/21).

<sup>142</sup> M.&M.T.B. Annual report, 6/27, p.11.

<sup>143</sup> Summerton, p. 66.

<sup>144</sup> Appleby, 4309: *Bell* in Vision and Realisation: A Centenary History of State Education in Victoria (Melbourne: Education Department of Victoria, 1973) p. 143.

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Part plan of the Preston-Primary School Area showing the pattern of development shortly before 1930.

Source: M.M.B.W. drainage plan litho no. 111, 20/10/30.

to form a playground. Scotia Street on the east side was an unmade road at the time and the first pupils experienced great difficulty in even reaching the school after heavy rains.

This school was a belated attempt to catch up with the rapid residential development that occurred in the Inter-War period, encouraged by the new availability of public transport, employment opportunities, and the State Savings Bank housing program. In 1926 Preston's population was 22,000 and the old Shire had reached City status. By 1930 the population had risen to 31,100<sup>145</sup>, with the Gilbert Road and Plenty Road tram lines attracting settlement away from High Street and the railway.

### 2.10.3 Statement of Significance

The Preston-State School Area was developed in two phases, the first occurring as a consequence of the late nineteenth century Land Boom and the second and most important as a consequence of the opening of the West Preston electric tramway of 1920, leading to its complete development by the mid 1930s. This Area is historically and aesthetically important.

It is historically important (Criterion A4) on account of the rare (Criterion B2) surviving late Victorian houses and for its Inter-War houses and associated Government School demonstrating growth over two important periods in the history of the district. The latter aspect is important as a substantially intact example of an Inter-War residential area developed in conjunction with the expansion of the suburban electric tramway system and foreshadowing the spacious Garden Suburb approach to suburban development of the late 1920s and 1930s. It is aesthetically important (Criterion E1) in that it demonstrates the hallmarks of residential subdivision at the time, the principal characteristics of which were the dominance of the Californian bungalow, the grid iron street plan and the beginnings of the notion of a landscaped public environment created by the introduction of nature strips, deep front gardens and low front and side fences causing the entire streetscape to be seen as a single entity.

### 2.10.4 Policy Recommendations

The following general recommendations are framed with a view to conserving the cultural heritage values of the Area.

- the Preston-Primary School Area should be included in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay Table in the City of Darebin Planning Scheme.
- control over exterior paint colour schemes is not a requirement arising out of the significance of the place.
- proposals to carry out works should be assessed in terms of their impacts on the cultural heritage values of the Area as they have been summarized in the Statement of Significance.

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<sup>145</sup> Forster, p. 88.

- The following contributory elements of the houses should be conserved and enhanced:
  - their facades
  - their roof forms
  - their building envelopes to the extent that they contribute to the cohesive streetscape character
  - absence of garages at the façade line
- The following significant elements of the front fences should be conserved:
  - surviving early fences and gates
  - the low heights of fences between the façade line of the street and the front property alignments
  - corner splays and corner gateways
- The stylistic consistency of the Area which is dominated by Californian bungalows should be conserved. The late Victorian period houses should also be conserved.
- New buildings within the Area should interpret the Inter-War character of the streets in which they are situated and should avoid the use of materials, forms, colours and envelopes that contrast with the period of significance of the Area. New building designs should not relate with the few surviving late Victorian period houses.
- New structures should not be erected in the frontage setbacks which establish the garden character of the Area but should be set back from the existing façade lines by not less than 500mm.
- New garages and carports should be recessive and not dominate the composition of new building designs as seen from the street.
- The contribution made by the existing single storeyed dwellings to the cultural values of the Area should be conserved by avoiding the construction of additions which impact on this aspect of the significance of the place.
- The visual prominence of the School should be maintained and its fabric conserved with a view to maintaining its visual presence in the Area as a school.

## **2.11 BELL-RAILWAY**

This isolated residential Area includes the east side of Bell railway station and extends to its immediate east and south on gently sloping land. The railway establishes a logical boundary on the west side and the commercial properties facing High Street on the east. The properties facing Bell Street terminate the Area on its north side and the industrial premises in Showers Street mark the southern edge.

### **2.11.1 Description**

Brick and rough cast Arts and Crafts cottages and Californian bungalows are the dominant house types in this small area. Garnet Street, which runs to the station where the main building is visible, is of an earlier date, the houses in this street being asymmetrical Post-Federation period timber villas with turned timber posts, window bays, decorated gable ends and tall red brick chimneys. Here, the numbers of bungalows is significantly less. The northbound station building at Bell erected during the Post Federation period has been demolished.

Elsewhere, though, the Arts and Crafts cottages impart a distinctive architectural character to the short streets that run east-west across the narrow strip of land separating the railway from High Street. Whilst some have been defaced, they typically have simple tiled pyramidal roofs with broad shady eaves supported on coupled timber struts and tall rough cast chimneys with pre-cast concrete caps and surmounting terra cotta pots in the Arts and Crafts mode. The walls are also rough cast and there are corner porches, a number of which have round arched openings. Importantly, these houses establish the cultural values of the Area especially on account of their readily identifiable form. The bungalows are small brick buildings with transverse gables and shingled weatherboards cement lintels to the windows.

Unsympathetic maintenance practices include overpainting to reduce the visual impact of the stylistic elements, the building in of the corner porches and the replacement of the presumed original front fences, more recently with Federation period pickets.

The small front gardens are defined by low front fences, mostly rebuilt, with low side fences running back to the façade lines in a manner characteristic of the Garden Suburb. There are narrow nature strips.

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City of Darebin  
Heritage Review 1999

Bell Railway



**Garnet Street, looking west to Bell railway station.**



**Post Federation period villas on the north side of Garnet Street.**



**Gertrude Street is typical of the Area.**



**No.11 Adeline Street is a substantially intact example of the distinctive Arts and Crafts cottage imparting significance to the Area.**



### 2.11.2 History

The arrival of a permanent administrator and magistrate in the Port Phillip district in 1836 led to the survey for the crown of the Preston lands by Robert Hoddle and William Wedge Darke. Within three years the whole of the present area of Preston was sold at auction<sup>146</sup>. John Carey bought crown allotment 139 of 385 acres for 808 pounds. This area was bounded by Bell Street, Miller Street, the Merri Creek and High Street. This land, being on the southern border of Preston, and the closest to Melbourne was the most expensive per acre of all the 1838 and 1839 Preston sales<sup>147</sup>.

Generally the initial purchasers, who in most cases were land speculators caught up in the land boom affecting Melbourne at the end of the 1830s, were quick to sell off their land at a profit, and selling and reselling, with little real development taking place in the 1840s. However Carey held onto his land until October 1849 when he sold the whole of the allotment to Thomas Webb Goodwin for 1,800 pounds, more than doubling his purchase price. Goodwin established his Oakover estate, being all of allotment 139, with his house near the Merri Creek. He then subdivided and began to sell off many farmlets in December 1853. Aided by the effect of the gold rush, he realised 7,820 pounds in the first two years for these lots, with prices up to sixty pounds per acre being paid for land in Bell Street<sup>148</sup>.

Isaac Berry was one of the first to buy one of these farmlets, buying fifteen acres of this land on the corner of Bell and High Streets for 752 pounds in December 1853. In the same month William Warr bought land on High Street for 504 pounds. Goodwin's land was one of the earliest areas to be subdivided, but by 1860 this area south of Bell Street became covered with small farms, with some small businesses and shops<sup>149</sup>.

In the early 1880s a horse drawn tramway along St Georges Road followed the route of the original water pipe from the Yan Yean Reservoir to Melbourne. To facilitate the construction of the pipeline and tramway some of the land along its length was purchased by the Commissioners of Sewers and Water Supply, requiring the division of the properties into smaller land parcels. By the 1880s William Warr was in business as a tanner on four acres of it fronting Oakover Road. Suburban subdivision ensued during the boom of the 1880s but it appears it was not until much later that the land was developed. Two such subdivisions were Yann's Reserve between High and Plenty Road to the east in April 1888, and "Railway Place" which took place in March. This area was bounded by Bell Street, High Street, the Yan Yean pipe track (St Georges Road), and the new Showers Street. By this stage there were only three houses listed within this area, all of which were on High Street. One belonged to D. Clifton Esq<sup>150</sup>.

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<sup>146</sup> Forster, p. 1.

<sup>147</sup> Forster, p. 14.

<sup>148</sup> Forster, p. 14.

<sup>149</sup> See Carroll, p. 27.

<sup>150</sup> Messrs Patterson and Sons Auctioneer's plans.

Much of the successful subdivision of Preston was done on the promise of improved transport facilities, which only eventuated in part. As was the case in Northcote, it was the prospect of the railways that helped sell building blocks; this prospect turning out to be more potent than the reality<sup>151</sup>. The line from Clifton Hill to Whittlesea was opened in 1889, with Bell being one of the original stations. It was a small single storey weatherboard building. But despite this Area being in the midst of early settlement in Preston and adjacent to the new railway, development lagged behind. In 1890 Garnet Street, which stretches east from Plenty Road was partially built up, but the distribution of settlement is unclear. The entire length of Showers Street had only two houses. One reason for slow development in this area may have been the fact that the land near Bell Station was, for a period, occupied by holding yards for pigs awaiting processing in the bacon factories<sup>152</sup>.

In 1890 a cable tramway built by the Clifton Hill to Northcote and Preston Tramway Company was completed as an extension from Clifton Hill via High Street to Dundas Street. However the company soon ran into trouble and it was only from 1901, when the Council began running the service that it provided a consistently regular service. It was also in 1901 that the continuation of the railway from Collingwood (now Victoria Park) to Princes Bridge was finally agreed upon and opened. However it was not until 1904, with the completion of a few hundred metres of track which constituted the Collingwood or Northcote loop line that direct railway passage to the City was offered to the residents of Preston. These developments made the area more attractive for residential use.

By 1910 Garnet Street had six houses, although Showers Street still had one house in this section. The present station building was also erected in that year. Gertrude, Adeline and Esther Streets had been formed by 1915 and the land subdivided. Whilst a number of lots had been sold, only three houses had been built, all of which were in Gertrude Street. The balance of the land remained in the hands of the executors of D. Clifton<sup>153</sup>. David Clifton had been a director of the cable tramway company. The brickworks which he had established to the immediate west of the railway line at Bell station in 1890 prospered during this period as the suburbanisation of Preston gained momentum and it is therefore not surprising that he was connected with the construction of new houses, possibly for his employees, in Gertrude, Adeline and Esther Streets. By 1918, most of the land was still vacant<sup>154</sup> but by the end of 1921 most of the allotments had been built on.

Agitation for new tramway lines, which had begun in 1912 did not bear fruit until eight years later. April 1920 saw the official opening take place of a new electrified tramway from North Fitzroy via St Georges Road, Miller Street and Plenty Road to Tyler Street. By this year Garnet Street had eleven houses in this section, and Showers Street six.

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<sup>151</sup> Lemon, p. 98.

<sup>152</sup> Carroll, p. 222.

<sup>153</sup> rate Book 1915-16 (1/12/15).

<sup>154</sup> Idem, 1917-18 (21/1/18).

Gertrude Street, now on the scene, had three<sup>155</sup>. In 1921 the Whittlesea railway line was electrified, greatly speeding up transportation to the city and points in between.

Rapid residential development ensued in the Inter-War period, encouraged by improved public transport services, employment opportunities, and the State Savings Bank housing program. In 1926 Preston's population was 22,000 and had reached city status. By 1930 its population had risen to 31,000. Garnet Street, with fifteen houses was fairly developed, as was Showers with thirteen. Gertrude Street was fully developed with twenty two, as was Esther (north side only available) with eleven and Adeline Street was not far behind with 20 houses<sup>156</sup>.

### 2.11.3 Statement of Significance

The Bell Railway Residential Area includes the eastern platform and main station building at Bell railway station as well as all of the properties facing Garnet, Gertrude, Adeline and Esther Streets between the railway line and the properties facing High Street on the east side. Those places located on the north side of Showers Street mark the southern boundary of the Area. It was settled in its present form between 1910 and 1921. The Bell Railway Residential Area is historically and aesthetically significant.

It is historically significant (Criterion A) for its association with David Clifton, founder of the Clifton Brickworks on the present site of the Ray Bramham Gardens and director of the Clifton Hill to Northcote and Preston Tramway Company. The similarity in the design of the houses suggests that they may have been built for his employees, the construction of company cottages erected nearby the brickyards being a not uncommon practice in Preston.

The Area is aesthetically significant (Criterion E) for the high proportion of distinctive and consistently designed Arts and Crafts influenced cottages, the simple repeating forms, bracketed eaves, pyramidal and transverse gable roofs, tall capped chimneys, porch archways, rough cast walls and red brick construction being characteristic. The Area is aesthetically significant also for the consistent Post Federation period houses in Garnet Street, the position of the station building of the same period terminating the western vista being an important contributory factor.

### 2.11.3 Policy Recommendations

The following general recommendations are framed with a view to conserving the cultural heritage values of the Area.

- the Bell Railway Area should be included in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay Table in the City of Darebin Planning Scheme.

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<sup>155</sup> Sands and McDougall Directory 1920.

<sup>156</sup> Sands and McDougall Directory 1930.

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- control over exterior paint colour schemes is a requirement arising out of the significance of the place because the cultural values of the Arts and Crafts cottages depends to an extent on the consistency of their appearance.
- proposals to carry out works should be assessed in terms of their impacts on the cultural heritage values of the Area as they have been summarized in the Statement of Significance.
- The following contributory elements of the houses should be conserved and enhanced:
  - their facades
  - their roof forms
  - their building envelopes to the extent that they contribute to the cohesive streetscape character
  - their repetitative character
  - absence of garages at the façade line
- The following significant elements of the front fences should be conserved:
  - surviving early fences and gates
  - the low heights of fences between the façade line of the street and the front property alignments
- The stylistic consistency of the Area which is dominated by Arts and Crafts bungalows south of Garnet Street and by Post Federation period villas in Garnet Street.
- New buildings within the Area should interpret the character of the streets in which they are situated and should avoid the use of materials, forms, colours and envelopes that contrast with the period of significance of the Area.
- New structures should not be erected in the frontage setbacks which establish the garden character of the Area but should be set back from the existing façade lines by not less than 500mm.
- New garages and carports should be recessive and not dominate the composition of new building designs as seen from the street.
- The contribution made by the existing single storeyed dwellings to the cultural values of the Area should be conserved by avoiding the construction of additions which impact on this aspect of the significance of the place.

## **2.12 REGENT-G.E. ROBINSON PARK**

This Area is bounded on its west side by the Epping railway line and by High Street on the east. To the north, the Melbourne Water reservoirs served by the Yean Yean supply are located in a reserve that effectively terminates the Area. King William Street marks the southern boundary of the Area, the levels of integrity and aesthetic value diminishing markedly beyond this thoroughfare. The land is reasonably level at the east end but falls sharply as one proceeds west.

### **2.12.1 Description**

The Gilbert E. Robinson Park occupies an elevated site falling towards the west and affording fine views over the suburbs in this direction. Many of the houses in the area are more substantial than would normally be found in Regent, the natural advantages of the locale having attracted investment in property from an early date. The Victorian period villa at 16 King William Street, the Federation period villas at nos. 2 and 8 Garden Street and the Bungalow at no.22 Down Street are amongst other houses that demonstrate this development pattern. Elsewhere, the brick and timber bungalows and presumed Post Federation period houses are representative of their time and survive with a comparatively high level of integrity, the numbers of recent redevelopments being low. Federation and Victorian period villas predominated on the north and south sides of the Park whilst Down Street is occupied almost exclusively by Inter-War bungalows.

The frontage setbacks in Down Street are generous when compared with the workers' suburbs of Northcote, the public landscape being softened by the introduction of narrow nature strips capable of supporting street trees. They foreshadow the arrival of the mature Garden Suburb of the late 1920s. Side fences within the frontage setback are low, although there is evidence that the garden character of the streets has been misunderstood to the extent that a number of higher paling fences has emerged in recent years.



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Regent -  
G. E. Robinson Park



**High Street, Regent, with the Gilbert E. Robinson Park at right.**



**No. 16 King William Street, sited with an aspect over the Yan Yean pipeline reserve and the suburbs to the west.**

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Two views in Down Street showing the garden character of the public environment (upper) and the more substantial bungalows towards the north end of the street (lower).





### 2.12.2 History

This Area occupies a small section of the land known as Crown allotment no. 147 acquired by Alexander Spark at the 1838-39 land sales. It was exactly one square mile in area and Spark sold his holding to George James in November, 1840. James immediately cut it up into tenant farms varying in size between 39 and 160 acres with access being created along the alignments of the future Regent and Spring Streets. In September, he sold his interests to William Francis Splatt, MLC for the Wimmera (1851-54). The Splatt brothers were Melbourne merchants, whilst Splatt himself occupied several pastoral runs in the west and north-west of Victoria<sup>157</sup>. He re-subdivided and sold the holding in much smaller farms in November, 1853, purchasers engaging in gardening, floriculture, pig-raising and dairying.

Construction of the Yan Yean water supply system commenced in December, 1853, the Commissioners of Sewers and Water Supply acquiring land for the pipe track, the reservation for which passed diagonally through the Area from that time. The supply of water was turned on in 1857 and a delivery reservoir was established in Preston on the northern boundary of Spark's original holding in 1864. This site forms the northern boundary of the Regent-G.E. Robinson Park Area whilst the pipeline reserve to the south connects with it and establishes a parkland corridor identified by a row of mature date palm (*Phoenix canariensis*) trees.

David Munro, the contractor and a partner with Thomas Bent in certain land dealings, was awarded the contract to build a railway between Fitzroy and Whittlesea in November, 1887<sup>158</sup>. The construction work had advanced as far as Reservoir by October, 1889, the whole line being opened to traffic in December of that year. The railway route created a barrier to development along its course and marks the western edge of this Area. Nevertheless, there was some beneficial impact, leading to the construction of three houses in Crawley Street by 1900<sup>159</sup>. The farmer, Charles Crawley, however, had been in the locale since at least 1871<sup>160</sup>, remaining in Crawley Street in 1890 but having departed the district by the turn of the century. Today, the houses at nos. 6, 8 and 16 date from this period. Garden Street had also been formed by 1900<sup>161</sup>.

Further development was sustained around the time of the Great War, three houses in Garden Street of which two survive having been built at this time. The west side of High street was also built up and additional development sustained in Crawley Street. Crawley's farm house (?), however, remained in isolation on the west side of the pipe line reserve. (Check rate books for construction of Down Street and research origins of park).

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<sup>157</sup> See entry for W.F. Splatt in Thomson, K. and Serle, G., *A Biographical Register of the Victorian Parliament 1859-1900*, ANUP, 1972.

<sup>158</sup> *Annual Report of the Victorian Railway Commissioners* for the year ending 30.6.1889

<sup>159</sup> Sands and McDougall directory, 1900.

<sup>160</sup> *Idem*, 1871.

<sup>161</sup> *Idem*, 1900.

### 2.12.3 Statement of Significance.

The Regent-G.E. Robinson Park Area was established in part by various public works most notably including the Yan Yean pipe line of 1853-57 and the G.E. Robinson Park itself of ... Settlement has its origins in the occupation of the Area by the farmer, Charles Crawley from at least 1871 and by subsequent villa development during the 1890s, the Post-Federation and Inter-War periods. It is historically and aesthetically significant.

It is historically important (Criterion A4) principally on account of its early establishment as a comparatively sought after residential location during the late Victorian and Federation periods in association with the opening of the Reservoir railway station with the Whittlesea railway in 1889. This importance is enhanced by the overlay of development during the Inter-War period especially in Down Street which has importance as a substantially intact example of an Inter-War residential street foreshadowing the spacious Garden Suburb approach to suburban development of the late 1920s and 1930s. It is aesthetically important (Criterion E1) for the manner in which the housing stock demonstrates the unusually early phase in its development and for the high standards of accommodation that were attracted to its elevated position and aspect over the present G.E. Robinson Park. The pipeline reserve, Park and reservoir to the immediate north impart a sense of identity that is of special value underscored by the housing stock. Down Street is aesthetically important in that it demonstrates the hallmarks of residential subdivision during the Inter-War period, the principal characteristics of which were the dominance of the Californian bungalow and the beginnings of the notion of a landscaped public environment created by the introduction of nature strips, deep front gardens and low front and side fences causing the entire streetscape to be seen as a single entity.

### 2.12.4 Policy Recommendations

The following general recommendations are framed with a view to conserving the cultural heritage values of the Area.

- the Regent-G.E. Robinson Park Area should be included in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay Table in the City of Darebin Planning Scheme.
- control over exterior paint colour schemes is not a requirement arising out of the significance of the place.
- proposals to carry out works should be assessed in terms of their impacts on the cultural heritage values of the Area as they have been summarized in the Statement of Significance.
- The following contributory elements of the houses should be conserved and enhanced:
  - their facades
  - their roof forms
  - their building envelopes to the extent that they contribute to the cohesive streetscape character

- absence of garages at the façade line
- The following significant elements of the front fences should be conserved:
  - surviving early fences and gates
  - the low heights of fences between the façade line of the street and the front property alignments
  - corner splays and corner gateways
- The stylistic diversity of the Area should be conserved.
- New buildings within the Area should interpret the Inter-War or Post Federation character of the streets in which they are situated and should avoid the use of materials, forms, colours and envelopes that contrast with the periods of significance of the Area. New building designs should not relate with the few surviving late Victorian period houses.
- New structures should not be erected in the frontage setbacks which establish the garden character of the Area but should be set back from the existing façade lines by not less than 500mm.
- New garages and carports should be recessive and not dominate the composition of new building designs as seen from the street.
- The contribution made by the existing single storeyed dwellings to the cultural values of the Area should be conserved by avoiding the construction of additions which impact on this aspect of the significance of the place.
- A landscape plan should be prepared for the management of the landscaped reserves in the Area including the Yan Yean pipe line reserve and the G.E. Robinson Park.

## **2.13 PRESTON-OAKHILL AVENUE**

Oakhill Avenue forms the north-south spine of this Area which extends into the east-west side streets that run into this thoroughfare. It commences in the south at Tyler Street which forms a T intersection with Oakhill Avenue and runs north to Southernhay Street, beyond which the numbers of Inter-War houses diminishes markedly. The land falls away sharply east of Oakhill Avenue to the Plenty Road.

### **2.13.1 Description**

The Area is distinguished by its Garden Suburb character established not only by the characteristic low front and side fences and narrow nature strips but also by the diversity of housing styles characteristic of the late 1920s and the following decade. Whilst the numbers of Californian bungalows continue to be high, the new styles of these years are emerging. They include English Cottage houses, Modernist and Colonial Revival houses. The bungalows vary in aesthetic quality and are at times unusually picturesque with cross ridged and transverse gables, buttressed porches and flat roofed verandahs exploiting the finer points of the style. Gable ends exhibit strapwork, shingling and flared treatments and there are the characteristic window bays in many instances imparting character to the streetscape. Importantly, the houses of the area are unquestionably middle class. They are of mostly of red brick construction with decorative brick and rendered front fences, the visual impact of which has been at times compromised by traffic engineering devices which diminish their visual dominance in the streetscape. The front gardens are larger than more commonly seen in the earlier subdivisions to the south. They are usually well cared for and play their part in giving the locale the Garden Suburb appearance characteristic of the decade preceding the Second World War.

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Heritage Review 1999

Preston -  
Oakhill Avenue

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**Tyler Street, looking east and showing the substantial bungalows common to the Area. This street is unusual in that there are no nature strips.**



**Walsal Avenue, looking west to Oakhill Avenue.**



Looking north from no. 45 Oakhill Avenue in the English cottage style at the King William Street intersection.



The King William Street/Oakhill Avenue intersection showing the traffic management devices that impact negatively on the Garden Suburb character of the Area.

### 2.13.2 History

Thomas Walker bought crown allotment 146 in August 1839 at the second of three Crown land sales for the Preston district for 1,172 pounds. Bounded by High Street, Northernhay Street, the Darebin Creek, and Murray Road, it was the largest allotment at 1117 acres. Known as a “public benefactor”,<sup>162</sup> he was a Sydney merchant and stockbroker who had visited Melbourne in 1837, and within a few years had bought thousands of acres in the Port Phillip district. He began selling off allotment 146 in December 1839 to capitalize on the land fever at the time. General Charles Howard bought 238 acres of Walker’s land south of Tyler Street between High Street and the Darebin Creek for 654 pounds, paying nearly twice the original purchase price per acre.

In 1843, Walker represented the Port Phillip District in the New South Wales Legislature during the period when this task was undertaken by Sydney people. Two years later he was one of the six members of the Legislative Council who partitioned that Port Phillip should be made a Colony separate from New South Wales.<sup>163</sup>

A Major St. Lawrence Webb obtained 327 acres of Walker’s land in March 1845. Later that year he sold a section bounded by Tyler Street, and roughly where Oakhill Avenue, Kinkora Road and Rubicon Street run today<sup>164</sup> to James Tomkins. Webb had a connection with early Preston families who had also immigrated. In November 1846 he sold land north facing Plenty Road north of Tyler Street to the Colonial-born trio of Baldwin Doolan, Charles Doolan, and Ezra Kay. The seventeen acres bought separately by Kay became the site of the Rose, Shamrock and Thistle Hotel, which was opened prior to 1854.<sup>165</sup> That sold to the Doolans became the site of their blacksmith’s shop adjacent to the hotel. By 1850 Patrick and James Parnell had bought land immediately to the west of Tomkins, to around present day Foch Street. To the south, on the corner of Tyler Street and Plenty Road, Howard donated land for St. Mary’s Anglican Church built in 1865.

During the 1860s, however, the area remained as *mainly wooded country, with here and there a little cultivation*.<sup>166</sup> Prior to 1880 Alexander Brock took over either all or most of Tomkins’ land, and by around 1890 had built himself the house “Oakhill” on his estate. It was situated to the north of “Brock’s Corner” at Tyler Street and was later accessed by Oakhill Avenue. By 1900 there was only two occupied houses on Plenty Road between Tyler Street and the Rose, Shamrock and Thistle Hotel, and one between the present Preston Primary School (opened in 1875) and Plenty Road. It was only by 1907 that a nearby settlement had formed around Wood’s store, on the corner of Wood Street and High Street to the west, as the Metropolis expanded northwards. In 1918 Oakhill Avenue had been formed with one house on the western side, and around 10 ½ hectares being in the hands of Jean Brock’s executors.

<sup>162</sup> Forster, H.W, *Preston: Lands and People: 1838-1967*, (Melbourne: F.W. Cheshire), 1968, p. 9.

<sup>163</sup> See Forster, *Ibid*, p. 13.

<sup>164</sup> Carroll, B., Rule, I., *Preston: An Illustrated History*, (Melbourne: City of Preston), 1985, p. 20.

<sup>165</sup> See Summerton, M, Allom Lovell & Associates, *Darebin: An Environmental History*, Draft, 1997, p. 92.

<sup>166</sup> Carroll. *Ibid*, p. 27.

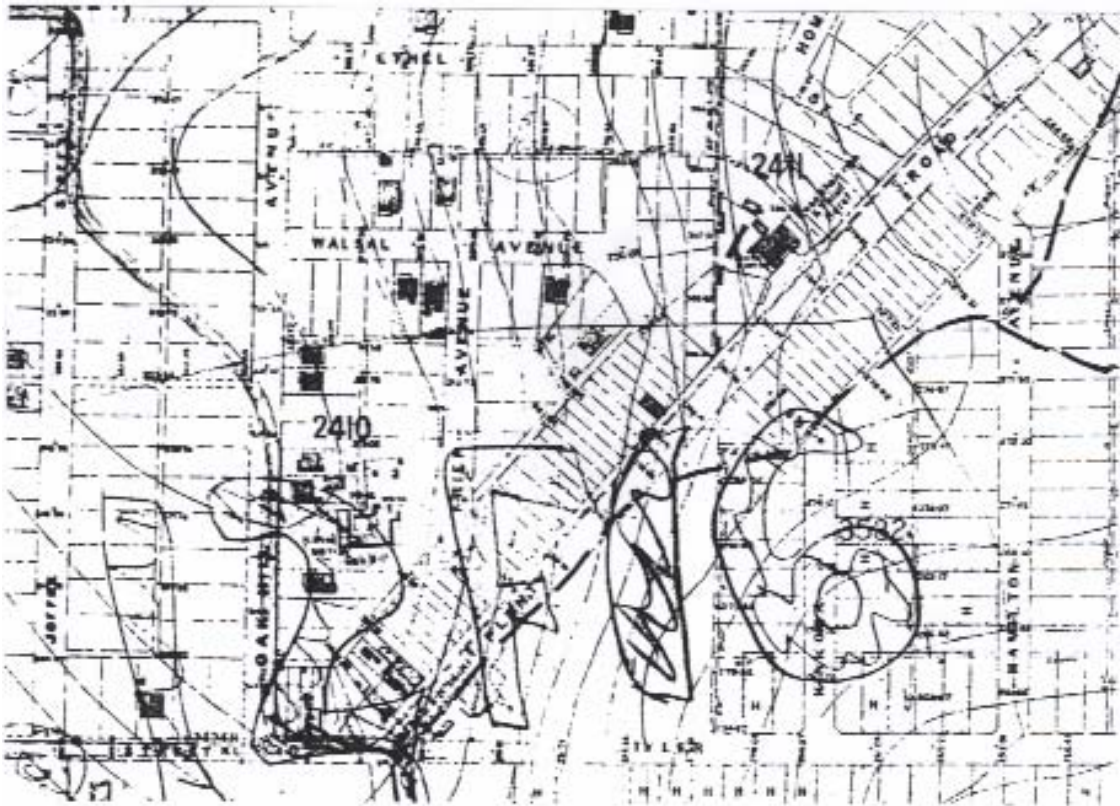


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**The Rose, Shamrock and Thistle on Plenty Road.**

Source: Carroll, B., Rule, I., *Preston An Illustrated History*, City of Preston, 1985, p.83.



**Drainage Plan of Area showing locations of "Oakhill" and the Rose, Shamrock and Thistle Hotel.**

Source: MMBW Litho plan no. 122 (12.1.29)

The expansion of settlement during the 1920s was closely associated with improvements to public transport services. April 1920 saw the official opening of the new electrified tramway from North Fitzroy via St Georges Road, Miller Street and Plenty Road to Tyler Street. Prior to this, the only tramway in the district ran up High Street and terminated at Dundas Street. The new service was a major factor in the spread of settlement independently of the High Street axis.

The Oakview Estate was advertised for sale on 4<sup>th</sup> December, 1920. This *finest position for a home in the northern suburbs* was situated immediately to the east of Oakhill Avenue encompassing the area from Queen Street to south of Southernhay Street and three house blocks west of McCarten Street. By the end of 1920 Oakhill Ave and Xavier Grove had been subdivided and sold on both sides. Walsal Avenue was yet to be subdivided. Only Henry Smith, who ran a poultry farm, had a house on six lots on the north side of Ethel Grove<sup>167</sup>. By the end of 1923 Oakhill Avenue had six houses, with three in course of erection and Xavier Grove had two in course of erection. Ethel Street had one house and Walsal Avenue had three in course of erection<sup>168</sup>. By the end of 1926 Oakhill Avenue had 13 houses with three in course of erection, Xavier Grove four houses and three in course of erection, Ethel Grove two houses and one in course of erection, and Walsal seven houses with three in course of erection.<sup>169</sup>

In 1930 Oakhill Avenue had thirty-two occupied houses, Xavier Grove nine, Ethel Grove nine, Walsal Avenue twenty, and King William had eight on the north side to McCarten Street, and sixteen on the south side to Alexander (now Alexandra) Street. By this time the strip shops on Plenty Road extended to around the Rose, Shamrock and Thistle Hotel on Walsal Street.

### 2.13.3 Statement of Significance

The Preston – Oakhill Avenue Area has Oakhill Avenue as its north-south spine and is located to the north-west of the Plenty Road/ Tyler Street intersection where the higher ground commences its descent to the Darebin Creek. Whilst Alexander Brock's house "Oakhill" had been built there by the 1890s the suburbanisation of the Area took place between 1920 and the Second World War. It is aesthetically significant.

The Area is aesthetically significant (Criterion E) as a cohesive middle class Inter-War garden suburb populated by a diverse range of houses representative of the period including many Californian Bungalows and also English Cottage, Spanish Mission, Modernist and Colonial Revival villas. The front gardens are spacious and there are low fences separating them from the public environment which is softened by narrow nature strips. The housing stock is generally single storeyed and the tiled roofs hipped and gabled. Whilst the houses are not remarkably different to others in the nearby streets, it is evident that the natural attractions of the Oakhill Avenue ridge generated a concentration

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<sup>167</sup> Preston Rate Book, 20/12/1920, p. 62

<sup>168</sup> Preston Rate Book, 3/12/1923, p. 106.

<sup>169</sup> Preston Rate Book, 20/12/1926, p 91.

of predominantly brick houses of the Inter-War years that remains clearly evident today. The survival of an outbuilding from Alexander Brock's "Oakhill" has a symbolic importance (Criterion A) for its capacity to recall the earliest days in the settlement of the locale when the Tyler Street intersection was known as "Brock's Corner".

#### 2.13.4 Policy Recommendations

The following general recommendations are framed with a view to conserving the cultural heritage values of the Area.

- the Preston – Oakhill Avenue Area should be included in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay Table in the City of Darebin Planning Scheme.
- control over exterior paint colour schemes is not a requirement arising out of the significance of the place.
- proposals to carry out works should be assessed in terms of their impacts on the cultural heritage values of the Area as they have been summarized in the Statement of Significance.
- The following contributory elements of the houses should be conserved and enhanced:
  - their facades
  - their roof forms
  - their building envelopes to the extent that they contribute to the cohesive streetscape character
  - absence of garages at the façade line
- The following significant elements of the front fences should be conserved:
  - surviving early fences and gates
  - the low heights of fences between the façade line of the street and the front property alignments
  - corner splays and corner gateways
- The stylistic diversity of the Area should be conserved.
- New buildings within the Area should interpret the Inter-War character of the streets in which they are situated and should avoid the use of materials, forms, colours and envelopes that contrast with the periods of significance of the Area.
- New structures should not be erected in the frontage setbacks which establish the garden character of the Area but should be set back from the existing façade lines by not less than 500mm.
- New garages and carports should be recessive and not dominate the composition of new building designs as seen from the street.
- The contribution made by the existing single storeyed dwellings to the cultural values of the Area should be conserved by avoiding the construction of additions which impact on this aspect of the significance of the place.

## 2.14 NEWMARKET STREET

### 2.14.1 Description

The buildings consist of three types of semi-detached brick housing types that are mostly determined by specific roof styles. The first consists of an elongated gable structure, the second type consists of a main gable flanked by a smaller gable roof at either end of the main roof and the third type is a main pitched roof with a smaller pitch, again at either end of the main roof. All houses are adorned with several tall brick chimneys that are similar in style and detail.

Windows generally have sliding sashes with horizontal glazing bars. Doors and windows are made of timber. The houses generally have generous eaves lining and exposed quad guttering. All houses are made of the same red brick and terra cotta roof tiles. Setbacks vary from approximately 3 to 6 meters from the street boundary. Gardens are well developed and tended to. The garden setting is further enhanced by the existence of a mature stand of identical street trees identified as Desert Ash. This consistency in the landscaping of the precinct further enhances its unique character and nature.

### 2.14.2 History

The estate of single storey detached housing is reminiscent of British Council Housing. It is further influenced by typical housing types that are linked with the Australian urban post-war expansion.

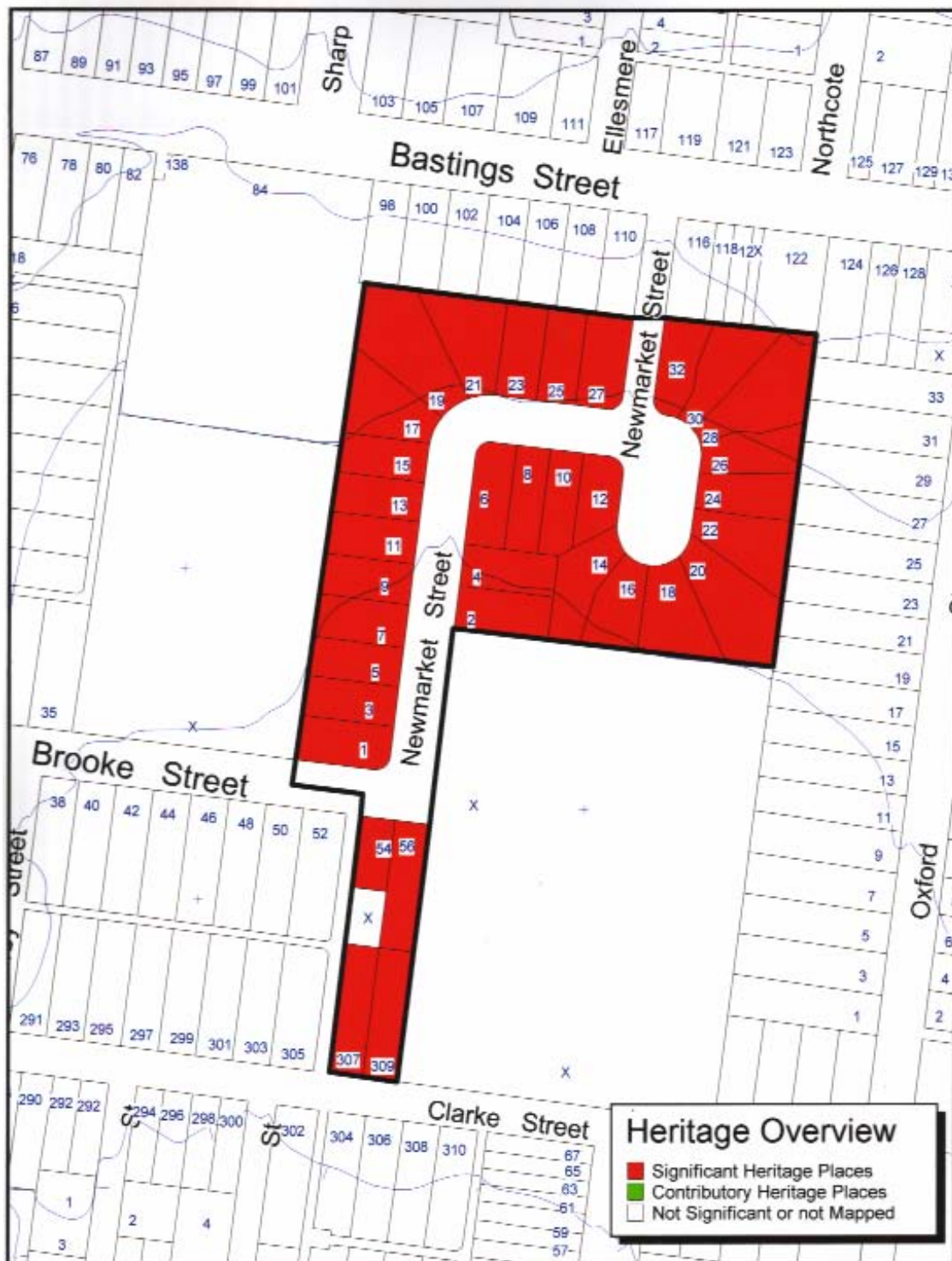
Many features that were the latest in town planning and the Garden Suburb idea are incorporated in the Clarke Street housing development. The development is entered from Clarke Street via a narrow lane and extends over most of Newmarket Street.

Although there are other similar projects in Melbourne, the location and small nature of the precinct, its proximity to much older neighbourhoods and its unique and distinct character certainly ensure that it remains a good example of the Victorian Housing Commission's endeavour and commitment to provide more equitable housing solutions during a period of rapid increase and change in the demographic lay-out of Post-War Melbourne. The Victorian Housing Commission was constituted on 1<sup>st</sup> March, 1938 and although its first and better known estate was located at Fisherman's Bend, the Commission reported in its first annual report that a contract had been entered into for the purchase of an estate off Bell Street in Preston to accommodate 80 houses<sup>170</sup>. Others were to follow as a part of the Commission's initiative to clear 1,178 houses identified by the Housing Investigation and Slum Abolition Board in the inner suburbs. Those families displaced were to be accommodated in the new estates. By 1940, the Commission was committed to seven estates in Preston alone with another two in Northcote<sup>171</sup>. Whilst the Fisherman's Bend estate remained the largest single venture, the Preston and Northcote estates accommodated a total of 416 new houses, being slightly more than the 412 at

<sup>170</sup> See *First Annual Report of the Housing Commission of Victoria: 1/3/38-30/6/39*, p.4.

<sup>171</sup> See *Second Annual Report of the Housing Commission of Victoria: 1/7/39-30/6/40*, p.11.

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City of Darebin  
Heritage Review 1999

Northcote - Newmarket St

Fisherman's Bend and significantly more than any other suburban municipality at the time. By 1942, the Newmarket Street development, accommodating 34 houses and referred to at the time as the Clarke Street estate, had been completed. They were of brick construction with Marseilles tiled roofs. At that time, a total of 984 brick houses had been built in metropolitan areas by the Commission together with only 128 concrete houses. Today, the Newmarket Street houses are in private ownership.

The design is based on variations of a Ministry of Housing design. The house design and street patterns are based on urban design ideas that are reminiscent of English Urban Planning design at the time. The basic idea consists of creating a Garden setting to increase urban amenities. In this particular case, the large street trees generously contribute to these ideals.

### **2.14.3 Significance**

The Newmarket Street housing estate is situated in Northcote alongside the Westgarth Primary School, to the north of Dennis railway station. It was developed during the period of the Second World War and completed in 1942. It is historically and aesthetically significant.

It is historically significant (Criterion A) as one of several estates undertaken by the newly established Housing Commission of Victoria in its earliest phase of slum abolition and resident relocation arising out of the findings of the Housing Investigation and Slum Abolition Board. This importance is enhanced by the strategic role of Preston/Northcote in the fulfillment of the Commission's objectives, the two municipalities collectively accommodating more houses than any other metropolitan area at the time. Finally, the historic value of the estate is underscored by the use of brick construction, which, whilst being commonplace for the Commission at the time, predates the widespread use of concrete construction after the Second World War. It is aesthetically significant (Criterion E) as a local exemplar of Victorian Housing Commission planning contrasting with the earlier housing stock characteristic of the locale. The consistent use of materials and architectural forms together with the disposition of individual buildings and the overall garden concept of the estate are important design elements that collectively cause this estate to stand out as an exemplar of the Commission's estate planning practices at the time. The high level of integrity of the houses, fences, gardens and public environments enhances the aesthetic values of the estate.

### **2.14.4 Policy Recommendations**

The following general recommendations are framed with a view to conserving the cultural heritage values of the Area.

- the Newmarket Street Area should be included in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay Table in the City of Darebin Planning Scheme.

- control over exterior paint colour schemes is not a requirement arising out of the significance of the place.
- proposals to carry out works should be assessed in terms of their impacts on the cultural heritage values of the Area as they have been summarized in the Statement of Significance.
- The following contributory elements of the houses should be conserved and enhanced:
  - their facades
  - their roof forms
  - their building envelopes including single storeyed forms to the extent that they contribute to the cohesive streetscape character
  - their situation on their allotments with side and front boundary setbacks
- The following significant elements of the front fences should be conserved:
  - surviving early fences and gates
  - the low heights of fences between the façade line of the street and the front property alignments
  - corner splays and corner gateways
- The stylistic consistency of the Area should be conserved.
- New structures should not be erected in the frontage setbacks which establish the garden character of the Area but should be set back from the existing façade lines by not less than 500mm.
- New garages and carports should be recessive and not dominate the composition of new building designs as seen from the street.
- The contribution made by the existing single storeyed dwellings to the cultural values of the Area should be conserved by avoiding the construction of additions which impact on this aspect of the significance of the place.

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