Moonee Valley Post-War Thematic Precincts Heritage Study

2012 - 14

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose

This report comprises the *Moonee Valley Post-war Thematic Precincts Heritage Study*, 2012-14, and has been prepared for the City of Moonee Valley.

Background

At its Council meeting on Tuesday 18 September 2012, Council adopted the Moonee Valley Thematic Environmental History (TEH) authored by Living Histories.

As part of the TEH, a number of historical themes requiring further investigation were recommended for further research. Council flagged the investigation of two of these themes as a high priority for the 2012/2013 financial year and engaged Context Pty Ltd to carry out this work. One of these themes looked at the early development of the Mt Alexander Road corridor, while the second was about the early post-war development in Moonee Valley. This Study addresses the second of these two themes.

Brief

Context Pty Ltd was engaged in November 2012 to carry out additional work recommend as part of the TEH.

The first stage was the preparation of a history on the a key theme, noted as a gaps in the TEH, and the identification of places or precincts in the municipality that best represent it. This theme is:

- Immediate Post Second World War development and dreams in Moonee Valley.
  Page 227 of the TEH states:

  Significant public housing estates, at Ascot Vale and Aberfeldie were developed in the early years after the Second World War. In addition areas at West Essendon, Aberfeldie (west), Buckley Park and parts of Niddrie were rapidly developed and a sense of community created. At the same time many earlier subdivisions in Moonee Valley were finally filled up. A study of development in Moonee Valley in the years between 1945 and 1950 and the impact of returned servicemen and their families is recommended.

The second stage was the heritage assessment of the precincts identified that best represent this theme.

Key findings

Stages One and Two identified six precincts that are considered to meet the threshold for local significance when assessed against the HERCON criteria, and thus are worthy of protection under the Heritage Overlay.

Table 5-1 – Precincts recommended for the Heritage Overlay

Name	Street address	Suburb
Ascot Housing Commission Estate Precinct	Blamey Street, Churchill Avenue, Cunningham Court, Dunlop Avenue, Farncombe Street, Morshead Street, Portal Street, Rothwell Street (part), Savige Street, Sturdee Street, Vasey Street, Waller	Ascot Vale

Name	Street address	Suburb
	Court and Wingate Avenue	
Arthur and Caroline Streets Precinct (Aberfeldie Housing Commission Estate)	1-21 Arthur Street, 2-22 Caroline Street	Aberfeldie
Fawkner Street Precinct (Earlsbrae Estate)	34b-44 and 37-55 Fawkner Street	Aberfeldie
Valencia and Derry Streets Precinct (May Park Estate)	6, 8 & 17 Derry Street, 1-25 & 2-28 Valencia Street	Aberfeldie
Nimmo and Forrester Streets Precinct (Buckley Park Estate)	13-39 & 22-44 Nimmo Street, and 42-50 and 55-59 Forrester Street	Essendon
Bradshaw Street Precinct (Buckley Park Estate)	80-100, 137A-141 & 149-153 Bradshaw Street	Essendon

The following potential precinct was also investigated during Stage Two of the Study, but in the end was found to fall below the threshold of local significance, so is not recommended for protection on the Heritage Overlay.

Table 5-2 – Precincts researched and not recommended for the Heritage Overlay

Name	Street address	Suburb
Ogilvie Street Precinct (Buckley Park Estate)	28-48 Ogilvie Street, 76-84 & 79-83 Forrester Street, and 29-31 Deakin Street	Essendon

Recommendations

On the basis of the key findings in this report, it is recommended that the City of Moonee Valley:

- Adopt the *Moonee Valley Post-war Thematic Precincts Heritage Study*, 2012-14.
- Implement the *Moonee Valley Post-war Thematic Precincts Heritage Study*, 2012-14.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report comprises the *Moonee Valley Post-war Thematic Precincts Heritage Study*, 2012-14, and has been prepared for the City of Moonee Valley.

1.1 Background

At its Council meeting on Tuesday 18 September 2012, Council adopted the Moonee Valley Thematic Environmental History (TEH) authored by Living Histories.

The TEH documents how the municipality has developed and how the culture of the area has influenced the natural and built environment, and traces the major historical themes that have resulted in the physical development of the area since European settlement.

The TEH does not list all potential heritage places in the municipality, but instead identifies a sample of historic buildings and features that illustrate how the different themes manifest in the built environment.

As part of the TEH a number of historical themes requiring further investigation were recommended for further research. Council flagged the investigation of a number of these themes as a high priority for the 2012/2013 financial year and engaged Context Pty Ltd to carry out this work. One of these themes looked at the early development of the Mt Alexander Road corridor, while the second was about the early post-war development in Moonee Valley. This Study addresses the second of these two themes.

1.2 Brief

Context Pty Ltd was engaged in November 2012 to carry out additional work recommend as part of the TEH.

The first stage was the preparation of a history on the a key theme, identified as a gap in the TEH, and the identification of places or precincts in the municipality that best represent it. This theme is:

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The tasks were to be carried out over two stages, as set out in the methodology, in chapters 2 and 4.

1.3 Acknowledgements

The assistance of Essendon Historical Society, which provided historic photos and research on post-war subdivisions, is gratefully acknowledged, as is the assistance of Michael Tsiakos, Kim Roberts, Clive Jackson from the Department of Human Services for providing copies of the original plans for Ascot and Aberfeldie estates.

2. STAGE ONE METHODOLOGY

2.1 Purpose

The purpose of Stage One was to prepare a histories of the key theme, and identify places and precincts that illustrate it.

2.2 Inception meeting

The first step in the project was an inception meeting held in November 2012 between Council planners Bridget (nee Schajermann) Maplestone and Lisa Dunlop with Context project manager, Natica Schmeder, and project historian, Michele Summerton. The Council planners handed over material related to the project and there was discussion of the detailed project timeline.

2.3 Preparation of thematic history

Research was carried out on the key theme, drawing upon the Moonee Valley Thematic Environmental History, local histories and extensive archival resources such as contemporary newspaper accounts and historic photos. The Essendon Historical Society was a particularly useful source of historic photos and information on post-war subdivisions.

On this basis a history was prepared on the immediate post-war development in the wider municipality (1945-50). It is found in Appendix A of this report.

2.4 Preparation of short-lists of thematic places

During research on the theme the location of the most significant residential and commercial developments in the 1945-50 period was noted. These were mainly private subdivisions and housing commission estates that developed primarily in 1945-50, and not individual places. Community buildings were sought specifically from this period as well, but it was found that their construction followed the initial development of post-war residential estates by some years, so did not fall into the definition of the theme.

To determine areas or individual buildings worthy of further assessment, a windscreen survey was undertaken through these areas and particularly consistent and intact streetscapes were recorded (see section 3.2.2). No buildings of potential individual significance from the 1945-50 period were identified. This is a consequence of two factors. First, community buildings were built at a later period, as noted above. In addition, the houses constructed immediately after World War II were constricted by the restrictions on use of building materials, resulting in the so-called 'austerity style'. These houses are modest in their design and ornamentation and of the type that would be contributory to a precinct, but not individually significant.

Note that a recent heritage study – *City of Moonee Valley Gap Heritage Study* (Heritage Alliance, 2005) – assessed a number of places and precincts from the early post-war period, some of which are now protected on the Moonee Valley Heritage Overlay. As part of this work, North Essendon and Strathmore's interwar and early post-war development was surveyed and assessed, so this area was not revisited during the present study.

This preliminary assessment to prepare a shortlist of thematically linked post-war places and precincts considered the following:

- The strength of the associations with one of the key theme.
- The condition and integrity of the place/precinct and how well any historic associations are demonstrated by the fabric, particularly when compared to similar places/precincts.

- The extent to which modifications have diminished the ability to understand and interpret the significance of the place/precinct.
- Whether the place type or theme is already represented in the Moonee Valley Heritage Overlay.

The shortlist of early post-war precincts drawn up in Stage One is found in Chapter 3. This list was further refined as part of the research and fieldwork during Stage Two.

2.5 Presentation of findings

Stage One ended with the presentation on 20 March 2013 to Council planners, Colin Harris and Lisa Dunlop (note that Mr Harris took over project management of the project as Bridget Schajermann had gone on maternity leave), of two key outcomes:

- The thematic history;
- The short-list of potential early post-war precincts of potential significance linked.

A site visit was considered the most appropriate way of showing the planners the proposed post-war precincts. This took place on 27 March 2013. This site visit led to the refinement of the post-war precincts in the Buckley Park Estate.

On the basis of the presentation and the site visit, the planners approved full assessment of six post-war precincts, as noted in section 3.2.

3 STAGE ONE OUTCOMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Early post-war precincts

In relation to the theme 'immediate Post Second World War development and dreams in Moonee Valley', only residential precincts were identified for further assessment. These were identified by windscreen survey of the private and public housing estates discussed in the thematic history (see Appendix A).

As discussed above, while there was an effort to identify community facilities (halls, scout halls, tennis courts, bowling clubrooms, etc.) associated with new subdivisions, they all appear to have been developed in the 1950s at the earliest, and therefore post-date the thematic period of investigation (1945-50). In addition, every attempt was made to identify buildings of 1945-50 that met the threshold of individual significance, but no good candidates were found.

The areas associated with this theme recommended for further assessment as potential precincts were the following:

Table 3-1. Initial areas identified as potential precincts

Post-war estate	Potential significance
Ascot Estate, Ascot Vale	*Housing Commission of Victoria estate of flats and duplexes* Late 1940s cream-brick flats designed by Best Overend, as well as the red brick duplexes surrounding them.
Aberfeldie Estate, Aberfeldie	*Housing Commission of Victoria timber and concrete houses and brick duplexes* Caroline Street was initially flagged for investigation, as it includes examples of concrete and brick houses. Initial assessment then revealed that the real significance lay in the concrete houses of the north part of the estate. It was found that the south side of Arthur Street and the north side of Caroline Street had the most intact and cohesive collection of these houses within the estate.
Earlsbrae Park Estate, Aberfeldie	*Private residential development in the Earlsbrae Estate* The north end of Fawkner Street was investigated, as it had a cohesive collection of late interwar and early post-war brick and timber houses that are consistent in style, massing and setbacks. Those on the west side (22-44) were constructed prior to 1946, those on the east side (37-55) are post-1946.
May Park Estate, Aberfeldie	*Private residential development in the May Park Estate* Valencia Street was investigated, as a very intact streetscape which appeared to have developed during a short period of time in the early post-war period. The initial extent investigated was 1-23 & 2-28 Valencia Street, with a possible extension up to Derry Street as these houses close the view.
Buckley Park Estate, Essendon	*Private residential development in the Buckley Park Estate* Initially, Nimmo Street was identified by the thematic history as the seat of early post-war development, and the southern end earmarked for a potential precinct. Additional research into the extent of the Buckley Park Estate and reference to a 1946 aerial photograph identified more areas of potential interest. Three potential precincts were investigated: Around the intersection of Nimmo and Forrester streets – brick & timber houses at 13-39 & 22-44 Nimmo Street, 34-54 & 49-61 Forrester St, and 25-27 & 30-32 Price St. Possible extension to 41-47 & 46-68 Nimmo Street. Primarily post-1946 housings, with a few examples from the 1920s and '30s on Price Street.

Post-war estate	Potential significance
	Around the intersection of Ogilvie and Forrester streets – brick & timber houses at 28-48 Oglivie St, 76-84 & 79-83 Forrester Street, and 29-31 Deakin St. All houses but two built post-1946. Around the intersection of Bradshaw and Market streets – brick & timber houses at 80-100 Bradshaw St, 84-98 Market St, and 27 Gilbertson St. Possible extension to 95-99 & 100-104 Market St and 135A-147 Bradshaw St. Almost all houses (except for those on Gilbertson Street) built post-1946.

3.2 Identifying and protecting Victoria's 'recent heritage'

Twentieth century heritage, also known as modern, post-war or recent heritage is often considered 'too new' to conserve and be given statutory protection at the municipal or state level, but there is no set age at which places become old enough to be 'heritage'. If we lose the heritage fabric of the second half of the twentieth century, we are in danger of losing an understanding of this time for future generations.

This danger is clear when we look at 1920s precincts that were identified in the late-1980s, but were not given heritage protection by councils that considered them 'too new' at the time. Now that heritage reviews are revisiting these potential precincts, 25 years down the line, we find that little is left to protect, though there is now a widespread appreciation of the California Bungalows, Spanish Mission, and Arts and Crafts houses of that time. If the protection of post-war streetscapes and landmarks is left, in the same way, for another 10 or 20 years, there will be little left of this part of our heritage in Moonee Valley and in the wider metropolitan area.

The recognition and protection of post-war heritage is not a recent phenomenon, as our more recent heritage has been included on the state's statutory registers for more than 20 years. While there is no set age to determine when a place becomes heritage, 25 years, or roughly a generation, is often considered a reasonable period of time in which to be better able to assess its heritage values.

In recognition of gaps in the Victorian Heritage Register from the post-war period, Heritage Victoria commissioned two-stage *Survey of Post-War Built Heritage in Victoria* in 2008, which covered the period of 1945 to 2000 (with emphasis on the first 30 years). Its purpose was two-fold: both to identify places of potential state heritage significance from this period, and to prepare a historical and architectural framework for development in Victoria. The agency is now systematically adding post-war places of state significance to its register, setting a positive example for local government to act before this part of our past is lost.

4 STAGE TWO METHODOLOGY

4.1 Purpose and approach

The purpose of Stage Two was to undertake detailed documentation and assessment of significance of those precincts that were identified to be of potential heritage significance in Stage One. This would then inform recommendations for statutory protection.

The approach to Stage Two addressed the tasks specified in the Brief and followed the principles and procedures set out in *The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance* (1999). The methodology also drew upon the VPP Practice Note 'Applying the Heritage Overlay' (Sept. 2012), the Heritage Victoria model brief for the preparation of heritage studies (2010), as well as relevant Independent Panel reports and the Advisory Committee report in relation to the *Review of Heritage Provisions in Planning Schemes* (The Advisory Committee Report), which was completed in August 2007. Context's standard approach to assessing heritage places and precincts is set out in more detail in section 4.3.

The final part of Stage Two involved consultation with property owners affected by the statutory recommendations, and finalisation of this heritage study report for adoption by Council.

4.2 Assessment of significance

Assessment of each precinct was informed by two site visits (one initial windscreen view, then one on foot), precinct history prepared, and comparative analysis. Assessment was carried out against the HERCON criteria (see section 4.2.4).

4.2.1 Site visits

The Stage Two fieldwork was carried out in a number of phases.

The thematic history of early post-war development did not identify any individual places, instead housing estates developed wholly or largely in that period. For this reason, a windscreen survey was undertaken first, to identify potential precincts and any individual places. This resulted in the preliminary recommendations for further work in section 3.2, above.

These precinct boundaries were refined by on-foot survey of the potential precincts, during which individual houses and streetscapes were documented (photographically and in notes). In particular, intact sections of streetscape were identified, as were intrusive elements. The potential gradings of each building was recorded (in this case, Contributory and Non-contributory – see section 4.3.3 for definitions).

On the basis of these site visits, final precinct boundaries were drawn, with the goal of encompassing the area or areas within a given public or private housing estate that most legibly and consistently illustrate the early post-war period. High consistency in form and built date was sought – both in the date of original development, and in minimising the number of recently redeveloped sites – particularly those considered intrusive (e.g., much larger scale, minimum setbacks). It was noted that the areas of early post-war development are currently undergoing rapid redevelopment, so it was very difficult to identify large areas with intact streetscapes. A further challenge to delineating visually cohesive areas was the prevalence of recent two-storey unit developments on corner sites. The bulk and setbacks of these units generally make them intrusive to the single-storey streetscapes with generous front and side setbacks, and their key corner locations fragmented what would have otherwise been visual continuity continuing around the corners. Due to these changes in the Aberfeldie and Essendon estates, the resultant precincts were relatively small.

4.2.2 Research

The histories of the early post-war precincts were based on information largely from aerial photos (the set of 1946 aerials held at the University of Melbourne were especially useful), subdivision plans, and street directories, creating a picture of how and when each discrete area was developed. This detailed information was put into the context of the given housing estate, drawn from the thematic history.

4.2.3 Comparative analysis

Comparative analysis is an important part of the assessment process. The analysis compares precincts identified and assessed by this Study as well as examples already in the Heritage Overlay elsewhere in Moonee Valley, or in metropolitan Melbourne as considered appropriate.

It was often difficult to find suitable comparisons for the post-war precincts within Moonee Valley, as this era of the city's heritage is underrepresented on the Heritage Overlay. In most cases, it was necessary to compare the potential precinct with similar streetscapes within the given housing estate, demonstrating that the most intact streetscapes had been chosen for protection.

4.2.4 Assessment against criteria

Each precinct was then assessed against the HERCON criteria to determine what is significant about it. The HERCON criteria are the model heritage criteria recommended by the Victorian Planning Provisions Practice Note 'Applying the Heritage Overlay' (Sept. 2012). They replace the Australian Heritage Council (AHC) criteria (also known as the Register of the National Estate – RNE criteria) that were until recently used in many local heritage studies, and are quite similar in use.

The HERCON criteria are as follows:

Criterion A: Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).

Criterion B: Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).

Criterion C: Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).

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

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

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

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

Criterion H: Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).

While the HERCON criteria refer in a general way to 'our history', this should be understood as 'Moonee Valley's history' in the context of this heritage study.

4.2.5 Documentation

All information complied about a precinct was included in a citation (found in Appendix B). The significant features and elements of each place are described in detail under Description, and then summarised in the Statement of Significance.

A history was prepared for each precinct, which also links it to the relevant themes identified in the *Moonee Valley Thematic History*, as appropriate.

For each precinct, the following elements are identified, as appropriate:

- Individually significant buildings/places
- Contributory buildings/places
- Buildings/places that are not contributory to a precinct; and
- Other contributory elements within the precinct (e.g., buildings, structures, trees, street furnishings, etc. that contribute to the heritage area).

Maps were prepared for each precinct showing contributory and non-contributory elements and the precinct boundaries.

4.2.6 Statutory recommendations

The statutory recommendations for precincts assessed to be local significance were made in accordance with relevant policies and guidelines including the 'Local Government Heritage Guidelines' (1991) and the VPP Practice Note 'Applying the Heritage Overlay' (Sept. 2012).

They include whether a precinct is recommended for statutory protection on the Moonee Valley Heritage Overlay. If yes, then any specific controls in the HO Schedule are recommended. These include: External Paint Controls, Internal Alteration Controls, Tree Controls, Fence or Outbuilding Controls, Prohibited Uses Permitted, and Incorporated Plan. In this Study, the only specific controls recommended are Fence Controls for precincts where consistent original fences are a significant part of their character, and Incorporated Plans are recommended for all precincts.

The Incorporated Plans should provide a permit exemption policy, tailored to each precinct, which set out the types of works and development that can be exempted from the permit requirements of the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01 of the Moonee Valley Planning Scheme). This removes the requirement to obtain a planning permit for minor works of a defined nature that would have a negligible impact on the heritage significance of that precinct.

The statutory recommendations are given at the end of each precinct citation, and are summarised in Chapter 5 of this report.

One precinct which, after assessment, was not recommended for statutory protection is discussed in section 5.3. There are no citations for it.

4.3 Context's assessment methodology

The standard methodology used by Context Pty Ltd in the assessment of heritage precincts and places is set out below. It takes into account relevant Independent Panel reports and, in particular, the Advisory Committee report for the *Review of Heritage Provisions in Planning Schemes* (The Advisory Committee Report), which was completed in August 2007.

4.3.1 What is the threshold of local significance?

The Heritage Victoria standard brief for Stage 2 heritage studies notes that local significance can include places and precincts of significance to a town or locality, however, whether the 'threshold' of local significance is achieved depends how relevant heritage criteria are applied and interpreted.

The Advisory Committee Report notes that the related questions of the application of appropriate heritage criteria and establishing 'thresholds' that provide practical guidance to distinguish places of 'mere heritage interest from those of heritage significance' have been the subject of continuing debate in recent times. While there was agreement that the AHC criteria may be appropriate for use at the local level, the question of what establishes a threshold remains open to interpretation.

The Advisory Committee Report defines 'threshold' as follows:

Essentially a 'threshold' is the level of cultural significance that a place must have before it can be recommended for inclusion in the planning scheme. The question to be answered is 'Is the place of sufficient import that its cultural values should be recognised in the planning scheme and taken into account in decision-making?' Thresholds are necessary to enable a smaller group of places with special architectural values, for example, to be selected out for listing from a group of perhaps hundreds of places with similar architectural values.[1]

How is a threshold defined?

The Advisory Committee Report cites the Bayside C37 and C38 Panel report, which notes that:

With respect to defining thresholds of significance, it was widely agreed by different experts appearing before this Panel that there is a substantial degree of value judgment required to assess a place's heritage value, so that there is always likely to be legitimate, differing professional views about the heritage value of some places.

There is a wide range of matters that can be taken into account in making any assessment (e.g. a place's value in relation to historic, social, aesthetic, cultural factors, its fabric's integrity and so on), leading to further grounds for differences between judgments.[2]

While there are application guidelines for the use of the AHC criteria (Developed in 1990 these are known as the AHC *Criteria for the Register of the National Estate: Application Guidelines*), they are designed for application at the regional or National level and the Advisory Committee Report cited a report prepared by Ian Wight for Heritage Victoria, which noted that they may require rewriting to 'make them clearly applicable to places of local significance'. While the Victorian Planning Provisions Practice Note 'Applying the Heritage Overlay' (2012) now recommends the use of the 'HERCON' model heritage criteria, they are quite similar in use to the AHC criteria, and the application guidelines are still useful.

On this basis, the Panel made the following conclusions:

As also discussed, a fundamental threshold is whether there is something on the site or forming part of the heritage place that requires management through the planning system.

As we have commented, we see the development of thresholds as something which responds to the particular characteristics of the area under investigation and its heritage resources. Nevertheless the types of factors that might be deployed to establish local thresholds can be specified State-wide. They would include ***rarity in the local context, condition/degree of intactness, age, design quality/aesthetic value, their importance to the development sequence documented in the thematic environmental history****.* (Emphasis added)

This process is essentially a comparative one within the local area. That area may not coincide with the municipal area. Its definition should be informed by the thematic environmental history.[3]

Conclusion

In accordance with the Advisory Committee comments a series of local 'tests' have developed to determine whether a heritage place or precinct meets the threshold of local significance to the City of Moonee Valley using the HERCON criteria. It is noted that a precinct need only meet one 'test' or criteria in order to meet the threshold of local significance. Meeting more than one 'test' does not make the precinct more significant – it simply means that it is significant for a variety of reasons. The tests are:

- The place/precinct is associated with a key theme identified in the thematic environmental history. The place will have a strong association with the theme and this will be clearly illustrated by the fabric, when compared with other places (Criterion A).

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[1] Advisory Committee Report, p.2-41
[2] Advisory Committee Report, p.2-32
[3] Advisory Committee Report, p.2-45

- The place/precinct may be rare within the municipality or to a township or locality. It may contain or be a very early building/s, or be of a type that is under-represented within Moonee Valley (Criterion B).
- If it is a representative example of a place/precinct type it will usually have the typical range of features normally associated with that type – i.e. it will be a benchmark example – and it will usually have a high degree of integrity (i.e. for a precinct, a high proportion of the places will be considered to be contributory) or particular aesthetic characteristics (Criteria D or E).
- The place/precinct is an exemplar of an architectural style or represents significant technical or artistic/architectural innovation or achievement when compared to other similar places in the municipality. The places will usually have a high degree of integrity when compared to other places (Criterion F).
- The place/precinct has strong social or historic associations to an area (Criterion G) or to an individual or organisation (Criterion H) and, in particular:
  - There is continuity of use or association, meanings, or symbolic importance over a period of 25 years or more (representing transition of values beyond one generation).
  - The association has resulted in a deeper attachment that goes beyond utility value.
  - The connection between a place and a person/s or organisations is not short or incidental and may have been documented – for example in local histories, other heritage studies or reports, local oral histories, etc.

By comparison, places and precinct that do not meet the threshold of local significance will generally be those where:

- Historical associations are not well established or are not reflected in the fabric because of low integrity, or
- The place/precinct is common within the municipality or already well-represented in the Heritage Overlay, or
- If a precinct, it has a high proportion of non-contributory buildings, or
- It is a typical, rather than outstanding example of an architectural style or technical achievement and there are better comparative examples in the area or municipality.
- The social or historical associations are not well established or demonstrated.

4.3.2 What constitutes a precinct?

At present there are no definitive guidelines that provide assistance in identifying and defining a heritage precinct. This was acknowledged by the Advisory Committee appointed to undertake the *Review of Heritage Provisions in Planning Schemes*, which made the follow comments in the final report submitted in August 2007:

> *Various Ministerial Panels have considered the question of the conceptualisation of the extent of a significant heritage place, particularly in relation to heritage areas or precincts, industrial sites and large rural properties. The Greater Geelong Planning Scheme Amendment C49 Ministerial Panel (February 2004) pointed out that the Practice Note Applying the Heritage Overlay does not provide any guidance on identification of heritage precincts. It noted that practice within the profession suggested that precincts should contain a substantial proportion of buildings that were assessed as being of precinct heritage significance, as defined in the statement of significance. A statement of significance should outline what is significant, why it is significant and how the place demonstrates the heritage significance.* [4]

[4] Advisory Committee Report, p.2-48

The Advisory Committee Report considered a number of submissions and various relevant Independent Panel reports. The final conclusions and recommendations suggested that the criteria for the definition of a precinct should take into account:

- the geographic distribution of the important elements of the place, including buildings and works, vegetation, open spaces and the broader landscape setting.
- whether the place illustrates historic themes or a particular period or type of development.
- whether it is a defined part of the municipality recognised by the community.
- whether non-built elements such as the subdivision pattern contribute to its significance.

Finally, with regard to the proportion of significant (or significant and contributory) buildings that is desirable within precincts, the Advisory Panel considered that:

> *...the stress on built fabric inherent in this question is misleading. Precincts need to be coherent, thematically and/or in terms of design, and need to be justifiable in relation to protection of significant components. It is neither possible nor desirable to set hard and fast rules about percentages.*[5]

Conclusions

Section 4.3.1 already provides guidance for determining whether or not a precinct meets the threshold of local significance. For the purposes of this study, a precinct is considered to possess one or more of the following characteristics:

- They contain contributory places that individually or as a group illustrate important themes set out in the thematic history.
- Where places with a strong and demonstrated thematic association do not form a contiguous grouping, they may become a serial listing.
- Places in a contiguous grouping will have largely intact or visually cohesive streetscapes that are either aesthetically or historically significant (or both).
- Precincts that are historically significant will include elements such as housing styles and subdivision layouts that are representative or typical of a particular era or type.
- Precincts of aesthetic significance will be distinguished by the high or exceptional quality of the housing design and/or estate layout and features when compared to other examples.
- They may contain a high proportion of Significant or Contributory properties as defined above.

4.3.3 When is a place Significant, Contributory or Non-contributory?

For heritage precinct areas Context use the following definitions, which are based upon those from *The Heritage Overlay: Guidelines for Assessing Planning Permit Applications* (2007) prepared by the Heritage Council:

- A *Significant* place is a single heritage place that has cultural heritage significance independent of its context. That is, if the precinct did not exist, they are places of local significance that would be eligible for individual inclusion in the HO. These places may also contribute to the significance of a precinct. *Significant* places will usually have a separate citation and statement of significance.
- *Contributory* places are those that contribute to the significance of a heritage precinct, but would not be significant on their own.
- *Non-contributory* places do not contribute to the significance of a heritage precinct. In some instances, a *Significant* place may be considered *Non-contributory* within a precinct. For example, an important Modernist house within a Victorian era precinct.

[5] Advisory Committee Report, p.2-54

Whether a place is 'Significant', 'Contributory' or 'Non-contributory' will depend on the reasons for significance expressed in the statement of significance. 'Non-contributory' places will include the places that are not associated with the reasons for significance and may include places that would otherwise be considered 'Contributory', except that they have been substantially altered and have a low level of integrity. On the other hand, a building may have been altered (new windows, changed colour scheme, minor additions) and still be considered Contributory. Table 4-1 provides a broad outline of how the integrity of a building affects the level of significance of a place within a precinct.

Table 4-1 – Integrity and level of significance within a precinct

Integrity	Comments	Level
High	The building appears to be very intact externally with little change to the principal elevations (i.e. façade and side walls) – i.e. weatherboards and/or roofing iron may be original, windows and front door are original. Most if not all of other original detailing is intact. Other features that contribute to the setting of the place such as fences, garden plantings etc. may be intact. Note: This term may be applicable to a building where an addition/s has been made, but the form and detailing of the original section of the building remains intact.	Contributory or Significant
Moderate	Minor alterations have been made, but much of the original form and detailing remain intact. Where materials or detailing have been replaced, similar or 'like for like' materials have often been used. Where changes have been made they are often reversible, such as the replacement of windows and doors within existing openings. Where additions have been made they are sited or of such a scale that they do not overwhelm the original building, e.g., they have been made to rear or secondary elevations and do not affect the principal or primary elevations of the building or are smaller freestanding structures.	Contributory
Low	Major alterations or additions have been made to the building, often to the extent that the original form and style is hard to recognise. Cladding materials have been replaced using different materials. The roof has been significantly modified or removed entirely. Chimneys have been removed, windows and door have been replaced, and the form/size may also have been altered. Many of the changes are not readily reversible.	Non-contributory

In accordance with the above definitions:

- Places of individual significance will usually have a high degree of integrity. Exceptions to this rule may include places that because of their rarity are considered to meet the threshold despite having a lower degree of integrity – this is often true of very early places, or places that have primarily archaeological values.
- The majority of places within a precinct will be assessed as 'Contributory' unless:
  - They are a place of individual significance that has an individual citation and/or is individually listed in the HO Schedule.
  - They have low integrity or are Non-contributory for other reasons.

5 STAGE TWO KEY FINDINGS

5.1 Overview

In accordance with the VPP Practice Note 'Applying the Heritage Overlay' (Sept. 2012), a place or precinct of local significance 'includes those places that are important to a particular community of locality', so it does necessarily have to be considered significant to the municipality as a whole. Some of the places of local significance may also be important at a regional level (e.g., the metropolitan region), but this requires further research to establish and would not result in any additional statutory protection.

Places that fall beneath the threshold of local significance are not recommended for any form of protection. These are places or precincts that have some heritage values, however, for various reasons they are more limited when compared to places of local significance. They are discussed in section 5.3.

5.2 Local significance

Stages One and Two have identified six precincts that are considered to meet the threshold for local significance when assessed against the HERCON criteria, and thus are worthy of protection under the Heritage Overlay.

Table 5-1 – Precincts recommended for the Heritage Overlay

Name	Street address	Suburb
Ascot Housing Commission Estate Precinct	Blamey Street, Churchill Avenue, Cunningham Court, Dunlop Avenue, Farncombe Street, Morshead Street, Portal Street, Rothwell Street (part), Savige Street, Sturdee Street, Vasey Street, Waller Court and Wingate Avenue	Ascot Vale
Arthur and Caroline Streets Precinct (Aberfeldie Housing Commission Estate)	1-21 Arthur Street, 2-22 Caroline Street	Aberfeldie
Fawkner Street Precinct (Earlsbrae Estate)	34b-44 and 37-55 Fawkner Street	Aberfeldie
Valencia and Derry Streets Precinct (May Park Estate)	6, 8 & 17 Derry Street, 1-25 & 2-28 Valencia Street	Aberfeldie
Nimmo and Forrester Streets Precinct (Buckley Park Estate)	13-39 & 22-44 Nimmo Street, and 42-50 and 55-59 Forrester Street	Essendon
Bradshaw Street Precinct (Buckley Park Estate)	80-100, 137A-141 & 149-153 Bradshaw Street	Essendon

5.3 Researched not recommended

The following precinct was investigated during Stage Two of the Study, but in the end was found to fall below the threshold of local significance, so is not recommended for protection on the Heritage Overlay.

Table 5-3 – Precincts researched and not recommended for the Heritage Overlay

Name	Address	Rationale
Ogilvie Street Precinct (Buckley Park Estate)	28-48 Ogilvie Street, 76-84 & 79-83 Forrester Street, and 29-31 Deakin Street, Essendon	Upon revisiting and careful analysis, it was determined that this potential precinct had too many alterations to the early post-war houses combined with a number of intrusive buildings. Many of the alterations are such that create great confusion as the real built date of the houses (e.g., Federation details added to houses of a traditional form). Due to this, the area no longer provides a clear picture of early post-war development, despite containing mostly houses of this era.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This section provides key recommendations of this Study, which are considered to be fundamental to the achievement of an effective heritage strategy for the municipality.

They are:

- The adoption of the *Moonee Valley Post-war Thematic Precincts Heritage Study*, 2012-14 by the City of Moonee Valley.
- The implementation of the *Moonee Valley Post-war Thematic Precincts Heritage Study*, 2012-14 by the City of Moonee Valley.

6.2 Adoption of study

It is recommended that Moonee Valley City Council formally adopts the *Moonee Valley Post-war Thematic Precincts Heritage Study*, 2012-14, which comprises this report.

APPENDIX A THEMATIC HISTORY

Moonee Valley post-war estates 1945-1950

In 1946, the *Argus* newspaper published a weekly series for potential home-owners who were despairing over finding a place in which to live. It was the height of the housing shortage after World War II and Victoria had 80,000 people looking for accommodation. The series follows the story of returned soldier Bill Brown, his wife and two grown-up children as they tell of 'rent rackets', long queues, shortages of building materials and 'black marketeers' who were selling existing houses for extortionate prices. At first Bill considered joining thousands of battlers in the ballot for Housing Commission accommodation. As an ex-serviceman, he knew his chances of obtaining a commission home were good, and he was impressed by the state government's plans for various schemes. But then he realised he was competing with families 'a damned sight worse off' than himself, and gave up the quest for housing assistance.[1] He came to the conclusion that 'we can manage somehow for the present, and I reckon that we can build our own little place'.[2] He had realised that all he needed was enough cash for a small deposit to obtain a loan from a government bank. A house and land package through the bank could allow him to buy 'a good sort of block in Ascot Vale with a 50ft frontage' and 'plan the conventional, safe suburban home, passage more or less in the centre, rooms off to the left and right, kitchen down the back, and bathroom off the hall'.[3]

Land was available; there were an estimated 20,000 vacant building blocks within the metropolitan area, as well as many more on the outskirts not covered by water and sewerage services. After 1945, the building industry had diverted to domestic housing and achieved a record peak in production, but the number of homes built could still not meet the demand. Robin Boyd wrote that even by 1950 'many thousands still lived in unsatisfactory accommodation: in temporary, converted army camps, in tents, in caravans, and with in-laws'.[4] Rising costs also made the purchase of a home prohibitive. Boyd noted that the average brick, five-roomed home cost about £1,200 in 1939 at the start of the war. By the end of the war it had risen to £1,700, and five years later, in 1950 it had reached £2,500.[5] As a consequence, timber houses increased in number, brick veneer replaced solid brick, and new, easily mass-produced materials such as concrete blocks, cement tiles and asbestos cement sheeting were chosen for their affordability.

To further reduce costs and cope with labour shortages, many people decided to tackle the job of building their own homes, and Boyd estimated that by 1951, every third new house 'was being built by its owner', a practise that was acceptable to banks providing the housing loans.[6] Indeed, as early as 1945, a Gallup poll of people sharing accommodation revealed that one-third intended to build their own house as soon as they could. The 'austerity' style we associate with the immediate post-war years reigned, with common red bricks and weatherboards, standard windows and unpretentious, functional lines predominating. As observed by Boyd, 'material shortages and economy ruled every detail' during this period.[7] The 'new social phenomenon of owner builders' endured into the 1950s, and the playwright David Williamson (b.1942) remembers visiting his cousin's house at Niddrie, then an outer suburb, and seeing 'all these guys building their houses. It used to be the Australian pastime; they'd work all week and then spend the weekends building their homes-to-be…'.[8]

May Park Estate

Because domestic building had virtually ceased between 1939 and 1945, the acute housing shortage endured through the war years as well. It prompted the Victorian government to introduce a regulation that restricted land 'sales to one allotment to each person provided they do not already own an allotment suitable for a house'.[9] The *Argus* reported that the sale of 52 blocks of land in Essendon's May Park Estate, on Saturday 13 February 1943, was the first subdivisional auction held after the introduction of the regulation. The land extended on the west side of Aberfeldie Park, in Vida Street (made road) as well as in Valencia and Derry

streets (both unmade), and although about 200 people attended the auction, only 9 of the blocks were sold.

The estate was originally subdivided in the late nineteenth century although little development occurred before the inter-war period when a number of houses were built in Vida Street.

Ascot Estate

Throughout World War II, the Ascot Racecourse between Union and Ascot Vale roads, Ascot Vale, was used by the Australian government for military purposes and served as a transport park and general storage area. For several years local residents had been arguing that the racecourse of 77½ acres (31.36 hectares) was superfluous to the needs of the municipality and that the land could be used to better advantage. In February 1945, even before the war had officially ended, a large and enthusiastic gathering of residents met to form the Ascot Racecourse Abolition Committee. Supported by the Essendon City Council as well as the Australian Labor Party, they pressed to have the land developed into a residential precinct, and by May they had collected a petition with 6,000 signatures for presentation to the State Government.[10] The war officially ended in August 1945, and that same month on the 18th, Victorian Premier Albert Dunstan announced that the Government would endeavour to acquire the land from the owner, John Wren, and develop it for public housing. When negotiations with Wren became protracted, the government issued a notice of compulsory acquisition in March 1946 under the Slum Reclamation and Housing Act, with the purchase price of £142,648 determined by Arbitration in October that year.[11]

Architect Best Overend (1909-1977) was deputy chairman of the Housing Commission of Victoria's Architects' Panel from 1945 to 1955. By March 1947, his firm had completed drawings for the Ascot Estate on behalf of the Commission and had also submitted these to the Essendon Council. In April 1948, the *Essendon Gazette* reported that the first block of ten flats on the estate was nearing completion. These were two-bedroom units that would be rented for 45 shillings per week.[12] The first stage of the project comprised 51 house units and 202 units in blocks of flats, containing one to three bedrooms. The majority of the houses were pairs of semi-detached dwellings known as maisonettes, and a number of these were two-storey with three bedrooms and attached sleepouts.[13] Contractors, Messrs Dawson and Smith and Messrs John R. and E. Seccull Pty Ltd., completed most of the building work, which included additional two and three-storey blocks of flats in 1949 and 1950. By July 1949, there were 130 tenants in residence, with an additional 15 about to move in.[14] In total, homes for 2,600 people were provided on the estate, which eventually comprised 400 flats, 100 maisonettes and 50 freestanding houses, all set in five acres of parkland. In 2010 there were just 1,500 residents. While this related to smaller family and single occupancies, it was also due to the Victorian Government selling some of the units, a trend that commenced in the late 1980s.[15]

The red and cream brick complex displays a mix of low-rise, walk-up flats and maisonettes with gable and flat roofs, which are set in small-scale communal and green spaces. As observed by architectural historian and academic Phillip Goad, it 'represents the social realist design approach of the Housing Commission of Victoria's Architects' Panel before their embrace of precast concrete construction for houses and apartment towers in the late 1950s.[16] The estate's 'garden suburb' design extends to the pleasantly curved streets and avenues, which were named in honour of distinguished Australian and British officers who served in World War II.

Aberfeldie Estate

By June 1947, the Housing Commission had completed construction of another building project in west Essendon, the Aberfeldie Estate, which comprised 145 brick, concrete and weatherboard houses on elevated land overlooking the Maribyrnong River.[17] Planning for the estate had commenced during the war when the Victorian government began to compulsorily acquire land around metropolitan Melbourne for thousands of public housing allotments.[18] The purchase of Aberfeldie land for this purpose brought strong protest from

the Essendon Council in August 1944, particularly in response to the government's proposal to build an estate that included houses of timber and concrete construction. This, they argued was 'a fine forward building area' and it 'was a scandalous shame to put houses of the type proposed by the commission on the splendid sites at Aberfeldie'.[19] The council's plea was not heeded and the concrete and timber houses proceeded, along with a great many brick maisonettes.

In October 1945, the *Argus* reported that the Housing Commission had commenced building the estate's 47 concrete homes and good progress had been made.[20] The following month the Essendon Council invited tenders for construction of streets in the estate.[21] By March, however, the project had lost momentum due to the shortage of bricks and tiles, which were the most difficult supplies to source. Harold Bartlett, chairman of the Housing Commission's Architects' Panel, estimated that the State's program was falling behind by 200 homes per week. Only 16 of Victoria's 54 brick and tile-making kilns were operating, and at the Aberfeldie estate 29 homes had been waiting three months for roofing tiles.[22] It was less than six months since the war had ended and a great deal of adjustment was still being made in all sectors of the community. The concrete homes were constructed by the firm, A.V. Jennings Pty Ltd, which went onto adopt this company name in 1947. The Aberfeldie estate was their first contract for the Victorian Housing Commission and their first venture into 'large volume building'. Jennings built thousands of homes for the commission, including 2,454 in 1950, before deciding in the mid-1950s to focus solely on private housing estates.[23]

In 30 June 1946, 134 of the Aberfeldie houses had been completed, with the final eleven in the course of construction.[24] The 15 acre estate, which included 64 brick and brick veneer houses, 47 concrete and 34 timber, was located on the south side of William Street (now known as Ramsay Street), both sides of Arthur and Caroline Streets, and parts of Allan and May Streets.[25] Many, if not all, of the Aberfeldie commission houses have since transferred to private ownership.

Earlsbrae Park Estate

The Ascot and Aberfeldie public estates were not the only housing projects making headway in the City of Essendon by the middle of 1949. The *Argus* reported that private home building was also making progress, despite the lingering shortages of materials:

> *Hundreds of other homes have gone up in this [Aberfeldie] area to the west of the Essendon High School, and on either side of Buckley st. To the north they extend to Keilor rd …*
>
> *Only a few years ago this was open country, having a truly rural appearance …*
>
> *Some of the old homes still remain, but the large estates have all been subdivided to the west as far as Hoffman's rd, which is the Essendon City boundary. If the city keeps extending, building areas will go farther west and extend on both sides of Buckley st to the Maribyrnong itself. [26]*

The Earlsbrae Park Estate (described as the 'beauty spot of Essendon') was first subdivided and offered for sale in 1924. However, it appears that limited development occurred. A small number of 1920s houses survive.

Private house construction in the Aberfeldie area recommenced during the war, starting with the first stage of the Earlsbrae Park Estate. Advertised in February 1940, the new subdivision offered 200 home sites with frontages that included The Boulevard on the Maribyrnong River.[27] Not all the blocks sold, and a further sale of Earlsbrae land was held in October 1949 with an auction of '75 choice villa sites' that had frontages to The Boulevard (made road), Clifton, Allan, May and Afton streets (unmade). By then, many new houses had already been built on the estate and more were in the course of erection.[28]

Fairview and Buckley Park Estates

The extension of the electric tram to the Essendon Airport in 1943 stimulated building and subdivisional activity after the war, for factories as well as housing. Advertised in November 1948, the Fairview Estate was reported by the *Argus* to be 'the first new subdivision, in an outer area, to be offered at auction for several years'. Situated in Niddrie, off Keilor Road, the

76 blocks in Hood, Hanson, Hotham, and Goble streets, and Haldane Road, were auctioned on 20 November, with about half selling.[29]

Home sites in the Buckley Park Estate, which included frontages to the made road of Nimmo Street, were advertised in June 1949.[30] This part of Essendon, between Buckley Street and Keilor Road, received a great deal of public attention in June 1947, when the Essendon Council's Parks and Grounds Committee proposed to sell 12 acres (4.85 hectares) of land it had bought in 1928 for £9,500. Residents had expected the council to eventually develop the site for parkland, not sell it off for housing as it was proposing. Their strong protests forced the council to reconsider the matter, and in October 1947, the Essendon Ratepayers League met in the North Essendon Presbyterian Hall to form a committee and work with the council to improve and develop Buckley Park as a community facility.[31]

Commonwealth War Workers' Housing Trust Dwellings

During the war, the Commonwealth War Workers' Housing Trust had used the Buckley Park reserve and adjoining land as a site for temporary dwellings. In October 1942, the Essendon Council's War Effort Committee had consented to a Federal Government proposal to erect 160 temporary homes within the municipality. The dwellings were to be provided for workers essential to war production such as chemists, accountants and engineers who were brought from the country or other states to work in the nearby munitions industry and other strategic areas.[32] Forty houses were built on Maribyrnong Park, on The Boulevard facing the river, and the balance went up on Buckley Park, and Clifton Park over on Afton Street. The Council required a written undertaking that the houses would be removed within 12 months of the war ending. Designed by the Housing Trust's chief architect, Campbell Jackson, and costing about £287 each, the timber cottages were to have flat roofs, but this was later changed to a gable roof of corrugated asbestos. Some councillors on seeing completed examples at Footscray were outraged by the poor quality of these 'dog boxes', which they argued would not comply with municipal standards in Essendon.[33] The 40 houses built on the Maribyrnong Reserve stood around the perimeter of the upper part of the park and were not removed until 1961.[34] Those on the other reserves appear to have been removed much earlier, as indicated by the improvements negotiated by the Buckley Park residents in 1947, and levelling, raking and sowing lawn at Clifton Park by Aberfeldie Men's Club in 1949.[35]

References

[1] *Argus,* 24 April 1946, p23.
[2] *Argus,* 24 April 1946, p23.
[3] *Argus*, 8 May 1946, p19.
[4] Boyd, Robin, *Australia's Home*, Ringwood: Penguin, 1968 [1952], p115.
[5] Boyd, *Australia's Home*, p115.
[6] Boyd, *Australia's Home*, p118.
[7] Boyd, *Australia's Home*, p118.
[8] Cited from Tony Dingle, 'Necessity the Mother of Invention', in Patrick Troy (ed.), *A History of European Housing in Australia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p.68.
[9] *Argus*, 15 February, 1943 p9.
[10] Chalmers, R.W., *The Annals of Essendon Volume 2 (1925 to 1962)*, Essendon Historical Society, 1998, p238, cited from *Essendon Gazette*, 8 March 1945; and p243 cited from *Essendon Gazette*, 21 June 1945.
[11] *Ninth Annual Report of the Housing Commission of Victoria*, July 1946 to June 1947, p22.
[12] Chalmers, *The Annals of Essendon Volume 2*, p284, cited from *Essendon Gazette*, 22 April 1948.
[13] *Ninth Annual Report of the Housing Commission of Victoria*, 1946 to 1947, p22.
[14] *Argus,* 16 July 1949, p6.
[15] Wong, Marcus, *History of the Ascot Vale public housing estate*, 3 October 2012, <http://wongm.com/2012/10/history-ascot-vale-public-housing-estate/>, accessed 24 January, 2013.
[16] Goad, Phillip, *A Guide to Melbourne Architecture*, Sydney: Watermark Press, 1999, p159.

[17] *Ninth Annual Report of the Housing Commission of Victoria, 1946 to 1947*, p9.
[18] *Seventh and Eighth Annual Reports of the Housing Commission of Victoria, 1945 to 1947*, volume 2, p9.
[19] *Age*, 11 October 1945, p8.
[20] *Argus*, 24 November 1945, p27.
[21] *Argus* 24 November 1945, p27.
[22] *Argus*, 1 March 1946, p3.
[23] Don Garden, *Builders to the Nation: The AV Jennings Story*, Carlton: The Book Printer for Melbourne University Press, p64. See also *Residential Developer*, <http://www.residentialdeveloper.com.au/Article/NewsDetail.aspx?p=129&id=222>, accessed 31 January 2013.
[24] *Ninth Annual Report of the Housing Commission of Victoria, 1946 to 1947*, p9.
[25] Pers. Comm., Bob Chalmers, Essendon Historical Society, 1 February 2013.
[26] *Argus*, 11 October 1945, p8.
[27] *Argus* 24 November 1945, p27.
[28] *Argus*, 1 March 1946, p3.
[29] *Argus*, 16 July 1949, p6.
[30] Chalmers, *The Annals of Essendon Volume 2*, p174, cited from *Essendon Gazette*, 8 February, 1940.
[31] *Argus*, 8 October 1949, p17.
[32] *Argus,* 22 November 1948, p7.
[33] *Argus*, 24 June 1949, p9.
[34] Chalmers, *The Annals of Essendon Volume 2*, p278, cited from *Essendon Gazette*, 16 October, 1947.
[35] Chalmers, *The Annals of Essendon Volume 2*, p211, cited from *Essendon Gazette*, 22 October 1942.
[36] Chalmers, *The Annals of Essendon Volume 2*, p213, cited from *Essendon Gazette*, 5 November 1942 and 19 November 1942.
[37] Chalmers, *The Annals of Essendon Volume 2*, p447, cited from *Essendon Gazette*, 11 July 1962.
[38] Chalmers, *The Annals of Essendon Volume 2*, p297, cited from *Essendon Gazette*, 5 May 1949.

APPENDIX B POST-WAR PRECINCT CITATIONS

Purpose

The heritage precinct citations provide a description of the history of the heritage precinct and its surviving fabric (including buildings, trees, fences, etc.) and, on this basis, provide an assessment of the significance of the precinct.

The purpose is to assist Council, property owners and managers and other key stakeholders in making decisions about the future use, development or management of the precinct by providing information about the significant heritage values that should be considered when preparing a development application in accordance with the Moonee Valley Planning Scheme.

How to use

Introduction

The precinct citations are listed by locality. Each has a map, which shows the Contributory and Non-contributory places within the precinct. (Note that no Significant properties have been identified within these precincts.)

The citations use a standard report layout recommended by Heritage Victoria. In summary, the citations explain the reasons why the places are significant and provide recommendations for future conservation and management. The information that will be relevant to most users is included under the following headings:

- Description
- History
- Comparative Analysis
- Statement of Significance
- Recommendations

Note that while every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in the citations is accurate, it is possible that more detailed investigation may reveal further information about the significance of the precinct and the elements within it. For example, internal inspections were not made of houses within the precincts at the time of assessment. In the time since the place was first assessed it is also possible that the condition of buildings may have changed.

The information contained in the citation should therefore be reviewed at the time that it is proposed to make changes to a property. This would likely require a more detailed assessment of any significant or contributory element that is affected by any proposed buildings or works.

Description

This provides a description of all the surviving physical fabric (such as buildings, trees, fences, etc.) that illustrates the history of the precinct and contributes to its significance. It may also describe elements that are considered intrusive or non-contributory to significance. Note: Further investigation may be required as outlined above.

History

This provides a history of precinct on the basis of the information available at the time of that it was originally identified and assessed. It is not intended as a complete history of the precinct, but rather an outline of the key events and influences that shaped its development. For example, the history would not usually provide the precise built dates of ever building in a

precinct, but rather provide information on the earliest development and principal development periods of significance. The extent of history depends on the availability of primary and secondary source material about a precinct.

Comparative Analysis

Each precinct given a full assessment has a comparative analysis, looking in detail at comparative examples within the City of Moonee Valley, as well as further afield in the Melbourne metropolitan area, where appropriate. These comparative examples might be areas developed at a similar time with buildings of a similar style and level of architectural pretension. The purpose of the comparative analysis is to 'benchmark' a given precinct with others in the municipality to see if it is a particularly rare, important or high-quality example. Where possible, comparisons already included on the Moonee Valley Heritage Overlay were chosen.

Statement of significance

The statement of significance is based upon the information known about a precinct including its history and the surviving physical fabric that illustrates that history. On this basis, it seeks to describe the principal reasons for the significance of the precinct and is intended to be:

> *... a brief, pithy but comprehensive statement of all the ways in which the place is significant. It should not just be a list of every conceivable reason for significance that the assessor can think up, however, it must state clearly and unequivocally the major reasons why the place is important. It must be supported by the presentation of sufficient evidence to justify the assessment judgement.* (Pearson & Sullivan, 1995)

The citations use the format of '*What*, *How* and *Why'*, as set out in the VPP Practice Note 'Applying the Heritage Overlay' (Sept. 2012):

> ***What is significant?*** *- This section should be brief, usually no more than one paragraph or a series of dot points. There should be no doubt about the elements of the place that are under discussion. The paragraph should identify features or elements that are significant about the place, for example, house, outbuildings, garden, plantings, ruins, archaeological sites, interiors as a guide to future decision makers. Mention could also be made of elements that are not significant.*
>
> ***How is it significant?*** *- A sentence should be included to the effect that the place is important because of its historical significance, its rarity, its research potential, its representativeness, its aesthetic significance, its technical significance and/or its associative significance. These descriptors are shown in brackets at the end of the heritage criteria listed above. The sentence should indicate the threshold for which the place is considered important.*
>
> ***Why is it significant?*** *- This should elaborate on the criteria that make the place significant. A separate point or paragraph should be used for each criterion satisfied. The relevant criterion should be inserted in brackets after each point or paragraph. Each point or paragraph may include the threshold for which the place is considered important.*

The statements of significance also make reference to model heritage criteria, known as the HERCON criteria, as recommended by VPP Practice Note 'Applying the Heritage Overlay' (Sept. 2012):

> ***Criterion A:*** *Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).*
>
> ***Criterion B:*** *Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).*
>
> ***Criterion C:*** *Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).*
>
> ***Criterion D:*** *Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).*
>
> ***Criterion E:*** *Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).*

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

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

Criterion H: *Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).*

Recommendations

This provides recommendations for inclusion to the Heritage Overlay of the Moonee Valley Planning Scheme and a list of specific controls, if any, (e.g., fence controls, tree controls, etc.) that should apply in addition to the general HO controls in Clause 43.01.

Ascot Housing Commission Estate

Blamey Street, Churchill Avenue, Cunningham Court, Dunlop Avenue, Farncombe Street, Morshead Street, Portal Street, Rothwell Street (part), Savige Street, Sturdee Street, Vasey Street, Waller Court and Wingate Avenue, Ascot Vale

KEY

Significant

Contributory

Non-contributory

Description

The Housing Commission of Victoria's Ascot Estate occupies a large site of just over 77 acres, which is bounded to the east by Ascot Vale Road, to the south by Ascot Street, to the west by Epsom and Union roads and to the north by the rear boundaries of properties facing Francis Street. The internal streets within the estate are Blamey Street, Churchill Avenue, Cunningham Court, Dunlop Avenue, Farncombe Street, Morshead Street, Portal Street, Rothwell Street (part), Savige Street, Sturdee Street, Vasey Street, Waller Court and Wingate Avenue.

The HCV Ascot Estate contains over 1000 dwellings, comprised of approximately 846 flats and about 190 houses.

Flats

The flats are contained in one, two and three-storey blocks set within open lawns dotted with mature specimen trees (see below for description of landscape).

The three-storey flats, which are constructed of cream or red brick with tiled hip or gable roofs, are the most distinctive feature of the estate. The three-storey flats are in two basic types – those with rooftop laundries and drying areas and those without. The former type has three basic variations, all with private balconies:

- A hipped roof example with a 'stepped' façade and rooftop drying areas at either end – this is the 'Type A' referred to in the History (46 Ascot St, 61 Churchill Ave; 3 & 5 Dunlop Ave; 2 & 4 Morshead St; 2 Wingate Ave).
- A gabled roof type with centrally placed rooftop drying areas (40, 42 & 44 Ascot Street (45, 47, 49, 41 & 53 Churchill Ave; 2 Portal St).
- A gabled roof type with rooftop drying areas in an almost detached wing at one end (1 Portal St; 64, 72, 78 & 80 Union Rd, 4 Vasey St).

The above types originally had steel framed windows with side-hung casements (windows in some blocks have been replaced). All have rectangular brick chimneys (the early flats had open fires, later changed to gas heaters). The balconies have solid brick or rendered balustrades. Access is via external stairwells and balconies. The three-storey types without rooftop drying areas are simple rectangular blocks with a gabled roof. They are also all (bar one) distinguished from the above type by the lack of balconies. There appear to be about seven sub-types, which may be categorised according to the treatment of the common stairways/wells:

- Two external stairways that project on one side (6 Blamey St; 24, 26, 28 Churchill Ave; 1 Dunlop Ave; 11 Vasey St; 4 Wingate). The main façade of this type features four chimneys placed symmetrically across the façade. Windows are steel framed with side-hung casements.
- Two open stairways that are fully internalised (3 & 7 Blamey St). These have single double hung windows arranged in groups of two and four, symmetrically arranged across the façade.
- Two semi-internalised stairwells that are enclosed on one side (9 Vasey St; 2 Savige St; 23 Wingate Ave). This type has a distinctive flat-topped chimney. The windows are double hung, arranged in banks of two, three and four.
- A long block with external stairways at either end and balcony access (2 Blamey St; 25 Wingate Ave). This type has the same distinctive flat-topped chimney as the above type. The example at 25 Wingate Avenue is the only rendered flat block in the estate (and possibly the only example in any of the Commission estates).
- Two enclosed semi-projecting stairwells (the glazing to the stairwell appears to be a later alteration and all examples have a c. 1980s hipped roof porch on round concrete columns. Some examples have double hung windows in banks of two and three arranged symmetrically on either side of the stairwells (4, 6, 8, 10, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22 Churchill Ave; 1, 3 & 5 Savige St).
- Two enclosed stairwells with small square windows, with the same c.1980s hipped roof porch (2 Churchill Ave; 11, 15 & 17 Wingate Ave).
- Two semi-projecting glazed stairwells with balconies either side (24, 26, 18, 32, 38 & 44 Dunlop Ave).

The entrances to the flats along Dunlop Street (and possibly other locations) originally had ribbed frosted glass to the main windows, while the front door and surrounds had frosted wire glass. A low pipe-and-chain-link wire fences originally enclosed the lawned area surrounding the flats along Dunlop street (David Talbot, owner, personal communication, March 2014).

The three-storey blocks are all in good condition. The external integrity varies from moderate to high – common alterations include replacement of windows in some blocks, possibly enclosure of/modification to stairwells, replacement of timber battens providing weather protection to entrances with metal screens, and construction of new porches as noted above.

The two-storey blocks include 'quartettes' containing four flats (two on each level) accessed by an open central stairway (1 Blamey Street; 30, 34, 36, 40, 42 Dunlop Ave; 4 Savige Street; 19 and 21 Wingate Ave) and one pair of maisonettes (Union Road). All two-storey blocks are in good condition and have a high degree of external integrity.

The single-storey flats (55, 57 & 59 Churchill Ave; 66 & 70 Union Rd, 6 Vasey Rd) are constructed of brick with tiled roofs. The brick types have double hung windows and integral planter boxes – the Vasey Road flats, in particular, have distinctive porch treatments incorporating a full height wing wall on one side for privacy, a low 'hit and miss' brick balustrade and wrap around planter box. All the single storey flats are in good condition and have a high degree of external integrity.

The concrete 'lone person' flats, once situated at the east corner of Churchill Avenue and Wingate Avenue, have been demolished.

Houses

The houses almost exclusively comprise semi-detached pairs, mostly single storey with some combinations of single and double storey pairs, and a small number of double storey pairs. As at other Commission estates (e.g., Fisherman's Bend) the double storey house pairs are usually situated at street corners to provide 'skyline interest'.

The houses are all constructed of red brick and have tiled low-pitch hip and/or gable roofs, which extend to form small porches over the entrances at either the front or side. A small number have original rendered upper walls (e.g., the house at 18 Farncombe St, and the attached pairs at 167-169 Ascot Vale Rd, 3-5 Churchill Ave, 7-9 Morshead Street and 4-5 Waller Ct).

Windows were originally double-hung timber frame with horizontal glazing bars (usually arranged in pairs or triple to the main elevations) or steel frame. A slight Moderne influence is demonstrated by use of horizontal glazing bars in the timber type and the occasional placement of the metal type at the wall corner. Each house has at least one rectangular brick chimney in an end, or side, wall. Decoration is minimal – some chimneys have contrasting bands of clinker brick (e.g., 177 Ascot Vale Rd).

The houses are built in a range of standard designs or 'types'. In accordance with the principle of 'ordered variety', streetscape interest is achieved by variations in roof form (main hip or gable roof with or without minor projecting hips or gables to the front, side or rear), 'mirror image' plan layouts, variations in window placement and type, placement of chimneys and porches and the placement of double storey houses primarily at intersections. Some of the 'types' include:

- Single-storey house with a traverse gable roof in two sections (e.g., 15 Morshead St, 17 & 36 Rothwell St, 10 Waller Ct).
- Single-storey house with transverse gable roof and projecting front gable (e.g., 10 Ascot St, 10 Dunlop Ave, 3 Waller Ct).
- Single-storey house with hip roof and projecting hip (e.g., 3 Cunningham Ct).
- Single-storey pair hip roof with one front projecting hip (e.g., 32-34 Ascot St).
- Single-storey pair with transverse gable (e.g., 28-30 Ascot St).
- Single-storey pair with transverse gable and one front projecting gable (e.g., 30-32 Wingate Ave).

- Single-storey pair with transverse gable and one front projecting gable (e.g., 26-28 Wingate Ave).
- Single and double-storey pair with transverse gable and two front projecting gables (e.g., 20-22 Ascot St).
- Double-storey pair with main gable roof and minor projecting gables at each end (e.g., 16-18 Ascot St, 13-15 Rothwell St, 11-12 Waller Ct).
- Double-storey pair with single gable roof and twin projecting gables at the front (e.g., 12-14 Ascot St). A variant of this type has metal windows placed at the corner with the chimney in the gable end of one of the projecting gables (e.g. 175-177 and 139-141 Ascot Vale Road).

The houses, on the whole, appear to be in good condition externally. The majority have moderate to high external integrity when viewed from the street and most streetscapes are, as a consequence, very intact. The most common alterations include the replacement of windows, alterations to the entry porches and building of front and side fences within front setback areas (early photographs show that few houses had front or side fences within front setback areas) and in a smaller number of cases the replacement of the original roof tiles. Some originally face brick houses have been rendered (e.g. 181 Ascot Vale Rd and possibly the attached pairs at 183-85 and 191-93 Ascot Vale Rd), while the render and brick pair at 4-5 Waller Ct have been over-painted.

Some houses have had visible additions (rear single storey additions that are not visible from the street were not assessed). The majority of which are single storey and do not detract from the original house (e.g., single storey additions to the two storey houses at 139 Ascot Vale Rd and 61 Dunlop Ave). Second storey additions to single storey houses are rare – in three of the examples noted 11 Churchill Ave, 8 Cunningham Crt and 43 Dunlop Ave, the additions are set back so that the original single storey form can be understood. On the other hand, the formerly single storey house at 10 Cunningham Court has been so completely changed into, or possibly demolished and replaced with, a two-storey house.

Overall, the housing areas have a high degree of integrity to the 1955 completion date. Non-original houses (i.e., built after 1955) include:

- The dual occupancy at 193A Ascot Vale Rd
- The c.1970s houses at 1 & 41A Churchill Ave
- The aforementioned altered house at 10 Cunningham Court
- The units at 10A Dunlop Ave
- The dual occupancy house at 9A Rothwell St

Community facilities

As described in the History, community facilities were planned at the Ascot Estate. One of the surviving c.1950s buildings appears to be the former Youth Club Hall, which now forms part of the Community Centre on the south side of Wingate Avenue. It comprises the western section of the building with the gabled roof and highlight windows in the side walls and the section with the low skillion/flat roof on the east side. The section to the east with a flat roof and timber fascia was constructed c.1980s.

Landscape

Aerial photographs of the site when the estate was under construction show that it was almost completely devoid of vegetation. As noted in the history, trees were planted according to a landscape plan as the estate was developed and some of those early plantings survive today. The earliest trees comprise a mix of exotics and some native trees.

The most common exotic species (presumably because of their ability to withstand drought) are various Cypress species including a number of fine specimens of Bhutan Cypresses (*Cupressus torulosa*) and Italian Cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens*) and several Monterey Cypresses (*Cupressus macrocarpa*) along Union Road. Other exotics include Desert Ash (*Fraxinus sp.*), Poplars (*Populus sp.*), Elms (*Ulmus sp.*), and Norfolk Island Hibiscus (*Lagunaria patersonia*). The Norfolk Island Hibiscus appears to have been the original street tree planting, but only a few survive today (and are being replaced by native species). There are several mature Eucalypts, some which appear to be early plantings, which are supplemented by more recent native plantings.

The Bhutan Cypresses, in particular, are a notable and prominent feature of the estate's cultural landscape. As well as individual specimens there is a notable group adjacent to the car park between 21 and 23 Wingate Avenue.

Original or early built landscape elements include some of the concrete footpaths throughout the estate and the low rock-faced retaining wall beginning on the south side Dunlop Avenue near the Union Road corner and extending into and along Union Road until the car park area near the flats at 76 Union Road.

Later accretions include additional hardstand car parking areas in front of and behind the flats (originally only small indented parking areas within road reserves were provided) and installation of low metal fencing along the property boundaries and to enclose private clothes drying areas throughout the estate. The large car parking areas detract from the setting of the flats and appearance of the estate.

History

Thematic history

In 1946, the *Argus* newspaper published a weekly series for potential home-owners who were despairing over finding a place in which to live. It was the height of the housing shortage after World War II and Victoria had 80,000 people looking for accommodation. The series follows the story of returned soldier Bill Brown, his wife and two grown up children as they tell of 'rent rackets', long queues, shortages of building materials and 'black marketeers' who were selling existing houses for extortionate prices. At first Bill considered joining thousands of battlers in the ballot for Housing Commission accommodation. As an ex-serviceman, he knew his chances of obtaining a commission home were good, and he was impressed by the state government's plans for various schemes. But then he realised he was competing with families 'a damned sight worse off' than himself, and gave up the quest for housing assistance. He came to the conclusion that 'we can manage somehow for the present, and I reckon that we can build our own little place'. He had realised that all he needed was enough cash for a small deposit to obtain a loan from a government bank. A house and land package through the bank could allow him to buy 'a good sort of block in Ascot Vale with a 50ft frontage' and 'plan the conventional, safe suburban home, passage more or less in the centre, rooms off to the left and right, kitchen down the back, and bathroom off the hall' [1].

Land was available; there were an estimated 20,000 vacant building blocks within the metropolitan area, as well as many more on the outskirts not covered by water and sewerage services. After 1945, the building industry had diverted to domestic housing and achieved a record peak in production, but the number of homes built could still not meet the demand. Robin Boyd wrote that even by 1950 'many thousands still lived in unsatisfactory accommodation: in temporary, converted army camps, in tents, in caravans, and with in-laws'.[4] Rising costs also made the purchase of a home prohibitive. Boyd noted that the average brick, five-roomed home cost about £1,200 in 1939 at the start of the war. By the end of the war it had risen to £1,700, and five years later, in 1950 it had reached £2,500. As a consequence, timber houses increased in number, brick veneer replaced solid brick, and new, easily mass-produced materials such as concrete blocks, cement tiles and asbestos cement sheeting were chosen for their affordability [1].

The Housing Commission of Victoria (1938-45)

Note: This background history of the Housing Commission of Victoria (the Commission) includes extracts from Homeward: The Thematic History of Public Housing in Victoria*, which was prepared in 2012 by Context & Way Back When for Department of Human Services, Division of Housing & Community Building.*

The passing by the Victorian Parliament in December 1937 the *Housing Act* 1937 brought the Housing Commission of Victoria (the Commission) into existence. Once it commenced work in March 1938 there were two separate but related tasks the Commission faced when addressing the housing problem in Melbourne. The first was clearing these inner city slums. The second was providing housing for those whose homes were being reclaimed or who were generally living in poverty.

Within months the Commission made a series of recommendations to the state government. These recommendations formed the basis of two Acts, both passed in 1938 – the *Slum Reclamation and Housing Act* and the *Slum Reclamation and Housing (Financial) Act.* Detailed in these two Acts were the duties of the Commission as well as its legislative authority.

With slum reclamation a key role of the Commission, it was hoped that these slum areas would soon be removed from Melbourne's landscape. However, in reality, it was not that straightforward. One of the major criticisms of previous legislative reforms that attempted to eradicate slums and improve housing conditions was that there was no provision for the rehousing of those living in these areas should their homes be demolished in the process of slum clearance. The Commission was eager to provide a sustainable solution that addressed both the problem of slums and the rehousing of those who lived in them. In its first Annual Report the Commission noted that:

> *… it has been difficult to synchronize these two functions – demolition and the building programme … in order to implement effectively a sound policy of slum reclamation, there must be a supply of unoccupied houses of varying sizes and types completed and ready to accommodate occupiers of houses to be demolished.*

Despite being a major impetus for the creation of the Commission, slum reclamation gradually slipped to the bottom of its agenda. What emerged instead was an emphasis on the types of homes the Commission was providing and the importance of the design and layout of any new housing estates or clusters of Commission-built homes. Over the first few years of its existence the Commission focussed upon acquiring land and building houses. By 1942 the Commission had acquired, by various means, sites for 2,040 houses across Victoria [2].

Estate design and layout

In 1938 the Commission conducted a national architectural competition for the 'design and planning of low cost houses' on the first estate (which became known as Fisherman's Bend) in Port Melbourne 'with a view to obtaining the advantage of the best brains of the architectural profession in the design and planning of low-cost houses'. It was from among the winners of this competition that the Commission in 1939 appointed the members of the Commission's first Panel of Architects (also known as the Architects' Panel). The Panel provided advice to the Commission on the design, planning and specification of housing and estates to be built by the Commission in metropolitan areas [3].

The design and layout of estates was considered equally important as the construction techniques and standards and great emphasis was placed on open space, gardens and the right balance of public and private space. The design philosophy of the Commission, which sought to develop new estates according to 'modern' town planning ideals and principles, was strongly influenced by the Garden City movement and the Panel of Architects strived to achieve a balance between public and private open space. A principle of 'ordered variety' was applied with regard to the placing of dwellings and the general street pattern [4].

The second Annual Report of the Housing Commission of Victoria, published in 1940, described its flagship Fisherman's Bend development as 'laid out on modern town planning lines with provision for parks, gardens, playing areas, community centre and shopping

facilities'. In accordance with Garden City principles approximately 95% of the houses were planned to overlook park areas.

The Panel of Architects, at the direction of the Commission, experimented with the design and construction of the houses on the Fisherman's Bend Estate. The most economical forms of construction, building materials, finishes and internal fittings were investigated, as were economies of scale in construction and design. Houses were in general erected in pairs to save money on roofs, verges and wall construction as well as sewerage and water services. The more economical the design and construction, the more people the Commission could afford to house.

The building 'experiments' carried out at Fisherman's Bend were continued at other new Commission estates around Melbourne and the annual reports and literature of the Commission from the early 1940s proudly display images of newly constructed homes and broad, largely traffic-free streets. The image captions emphasise that great care had been taken in the planning and layout of homes and the importance of open space, parks and communal play areas.

Providing community and retail facilities

The provision of community facilities and retail facilities was seen as critical for the large numbers of families and children that were relocated to new estates and the Commission sought to include community centres and shops in larger estates wherever possible.

The provision of retail facilities to serve local needs was another component of the community facilities that the Commission sought to provide on its estates. Shops were constructed at Fisherman's Bend in the early stages of the estate's development. After World War II the Commission decided to erect and retain ownership of shopping centres as part of the development of larger housing estates to ensure that tenants did not have to travel long distances for their local shopping needs.

Meeting post-war housing shortages – 1945-55

The Commission's 1944 Annual Report confirmed that the housing shortage had reached unprecedented heights. Despite the dedicated efforts of the Commission, only 2,022 new homes had been built between 1939 and 1944 [5]. It was projected that the crisis would worsen at the end of the war and it was forecast that up to 18,500 homes would have to be constructed in Victoria for the housing crisis to be overcome [6].

The warnings of a worsening housing crisis were indeed correct - the number of Victorians seeking housing from the Commission escalated from 5,161 in 1945, to 17,355 in 1946 and 42,949 in 1949 [7]. In light of this additional strain on the housing situation, the Commission was forced, as it was in its early days of operation, to place slum reclamation and demolition activity on hold. It was during this period that Commission policy shifted from 'rehousing inner suburban residents, to developing large estates' [8].

The scale of the housing shortage after World War II and the additional funds provided by the first Commonwealth State Housing Agreement in 1945 finally gave the Commission the means to embark upon a period of major house construction and the decade following the war saw an emphasis on the building of large housing estates across the outer metropolitan areas of Melbourne and in rural Victoria.

From 1945 to 1955 the Commission concentrated almost exclusively on what it described as 'villa' estates on broad-acre subdivisions, which presented few encumbrances to planning and building operations and gave the greatest return, in terms of dwellings produced, for the economic resources available. [9] By the end of 1968, 'about 146 million pounds [had] been spent to produce 47,800 dwelling units located in 103 metropolitan estates and 125 country towns' [10].

The Concrete House project

During the war years when materials and labour were in short supply, the Architects' Panel experimented with different designs and improved standards and methods of construction. Much of this time was spent perfecting experimental techniques so that in the post-war years, houses could be mass-produced to achieve both standards of housing and cost efficiency [11].

One of the most significant experiments undertaken by the Commission involved constructing homes with pre-cast concrete panels using a technique originally developed by T.W. Fowler of Werribee for manufacturing walls for houses by casting them on an elevated flat metal table, and at the same time making provision for door and window openings, conduits and pipes. After the death of Mr Fowler in 1942 the Commission took over the mobile Fowler plant and, with the assistance of the Panel of Architects, the method of construction was improved [12].

The first concrete houses using the original Fowler method were constructed at the Fisherman's Bend Estate in 1939 and the Fowler (Albion Street) Estate, West Brunswick in 1941. Later estates, such as Newport (developed 1942-44) and Aberfeldie (1945-47), utilised the improved methods developed by the Commission.

After World War II, the acquisition by the Commission of the Holmesglen Factory in 1946 enabled it to commence mass production of concrete houses, which facilitated the production of houses with a 'never-before envisaged volume and efficiency' [13]. The Concrete House Project, as it became known, changed the landscape of Victoria and helped solve the post-war housing crisis. The first concrete houses produced by the Holmesglen Factory were erected at the Sandringham Estate in August 1946.

Building flats

From the beginning the Commission recognised the importance of flats in providing an appropriate form of accommodation particularly for childless couples, which comprised up to 15% of the occupiers of substandard housing [14; 15]. At its third meeting the Commission requested a report on flats, however, initially it was reluctant to proceed with what was termed 'group housing' due to a perceived 'anti-flat ethos' in Melbourne' [16].

The attitude of the Commission appears to have been changed by Best Overend, a member of the Architects' Panel and a supporter of flats (see below). He arranged for the Commissioners to inspect one of his 'minimum' flat developments (Cairo) in Fitzroy. Soon afterward the Commission decided to develop a slum reclamation area in Pigdon Street (to be designed by Overend) with flats instead of houses and in 1939-40 nine 'quartettes' (i.e., two-storey buildings containing four flats) were constructed in Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, on a site adjacent to the Government Housing Scheme of 1936. These were the first flats built by the Commission [17, 18].

Figure 1: Artist's impression of Quartettes, Fisherman's Bend Annexe (HCV Annual Report 1939/40)

After World War II the Commission saw the building of blocks of flats that could house higher numbers of people as another solution to the housing crisis and also to checking the 'unplanned growth of Melbourne'. A paper prepared for the Commission in the late 1940s, 'Flats or Houses', noted that flats "are more economic in the use of land and provision of amenities" [19]. This was of critical importance in inner city areas where land values were higher and higher densities were needed to reduce the average cost per unit of housing.

Flats were therefore increasingly used on the larger estates built by the Commission after World War II and were a feature of the estates at North Melbourne and Ascot Vale. Best Overend of the Architects' Panel designed the flats at North Melbourne and Ascot Vale. Overend was a pioneer of flat development in Australia and had advocated communal housing for low-income earners since the mid-1930s [20]. He is credited with introducing the 'Minimum Flat' concept to Australia, which offered 'space, economy and modernity' at minimum cost [21].

Providing housing for single people and the elderly

For the first decade of its existence the focus of the Commission was upon providing housing for families with young children. Nonetheless, the Commission also recognised that included in the occupiers of slum housing were 'persons living alone', many of whom were elderly, and that housing would have to be provided for these people. As the housing crisis began to ease by the early 1950s the Commission began to turn its attention towards specific housing for the elderly and 'lone persons'. Among the first examples in the metropolitan area were one and two-storey flats in the Ascot Estate, which were constructed 1953-54. In country Victoria the Commission issued contracts in 1955 for the first elderly people's 'cottages' at Wangaratta and Norlane [22; 23].

HCV Estates in the City of Moonee Valley

The City of Moonee Valley contains two estates built by the Commission in the immediate post-war period: Aberfeldie or West Essendon (developed 1945-47) and the Ascot Estate (1947-57). The third Commission estate in the City of Moonee Valley, Debney Park Estate at Flemington, was developed in the late 1960s as part of the slum reclamation programme.

Place history

HCV Ascot Estate

Throughout World War II, the Ascot racecourse between Union and Ascot Vale Roads, Ascot Vale, was taken over by the Australian government for military purposes and used as a transport park and general storage area. For several years local residents had been arguing that the course of 77½ acres (31.36 hectares) was superfluous to the needs of the municipality and that the land could be used to better advantage. In February 1945, even before the war had officially ended, a large and enthusiastic gathering of residents met to form the Ascot Racecourse Abolition Committee. Supported by the Essendon City Council as well as the Australian Labor Party, they pressed to have the land developed into a residential precinct, and by May they had collected a petition with 6,000 signatures for presentation to the State Government.[10] The war officially ended in August, and that same month on the 18th, Victorian Premier Albert Dunstan announced that the Government would endeavour to acquire the land from the owner, John Wren and develop it for public housing. When negotiations with Wren became protracted, the government issued a notice of compulsory acquisition in March 1946 under the Slum Reclamation and Housing Act, with the purchase price of £142, 648 determined by Arbitration in October that year [24a].

After the Commission compulsorily acquired the former Ascot Racecourse in 1946 the Architects' Panel immediately commenced planning the Ascot Estate, which was to contain a mix of one and two-bedroom flats, and three-bedroom 'maisonettes' (semi-detached houses) and single houses, as well as a 'doctor's residence, infant welfare centre, and kindergarten' (the plans were prepared in office of Best Overend). The Commission estimated that the total cost of development was likely to exceed 2,500,000 pounds [24b].

As originally planned the Ascot Estate was intended to contain 55 blocks containing 650 flats and 224 houses resulting in a density of 14.4 units to the acre [25]. However, the site density of the estate was reviewed in 1949-50 and one section originally planned for houses was redesigned to accommodate an extra five blocks, each of 12 flats (believed to be the area between Wingate Ave and Dunlop Ave at the eastern end). Variations to the original scheme subsequently added increasing the overall number of dwellings to just over 1000 including 852 flats [26; 27].

Streets within the estate (Blamey, Churchill, Cunningham, Dunlop, Morshead, Savige, Sturdee, Vasey, Waller and Wingate) were given names of men who 'served the British Commonwealth well in World War II' [28].

Estate design and layout

In accordance with 'Garden City' principles the flats were contained in six separate groups (later increased to seven) in 'open parks … they will not be crowded into the area; in fact, very much more open space is being provided that is called for the uniform building regulations'. The open space as originally planned included five acres set aside in the centre of the estate for a sportsground, as well as four separate children's playgrounds and four groups of tennis courts. It appears that some of these planned facilities did not eventuate or were later removed [29].

Best Overend of the Architects' Panel is credited with the design of the flats at the Ascot Estate. Overend's original plan for a thirteen-storey building was rejected in favour of two and three storey blocks instead [30]. It appears that the decision to include large numbers of flats may have been influenced by the higher than expected price paid for the acquisition [32]. A newspaper article [33] noted:

> *While many people are always prepared to condemn flats, they disregard the fact that they are the logical solution to housing in inner areas, where land values are high. Had the Housing Commission developed the Ascot area with single-unit dwellings the capital cost of each would have made the rents prohibitive.*

Several types of flats were planned for the estate. An early artists' impression of the 'Type A' flats (see Figure 2) show that they were originally intended to have a flat roof, however, when built a more conventional hip or gable roof was used instead. The flats were carefully oriented on site so that all living rooms and balconies would receive afternoon sunshine.

In the 'Type A' example the 'stepped' façade ensured 'complete privacy' to the balconies and access to each flat was from an open balcony running along the rear to allow an 'uninterrupted view from the front rooms and balcony'. Balconies were coloured in a 'remarkably daring and successful' chequerboard pattern and entrance doors were given individuality by painting each a distinctive colour ranging from turquoise to Chinese Red [34].

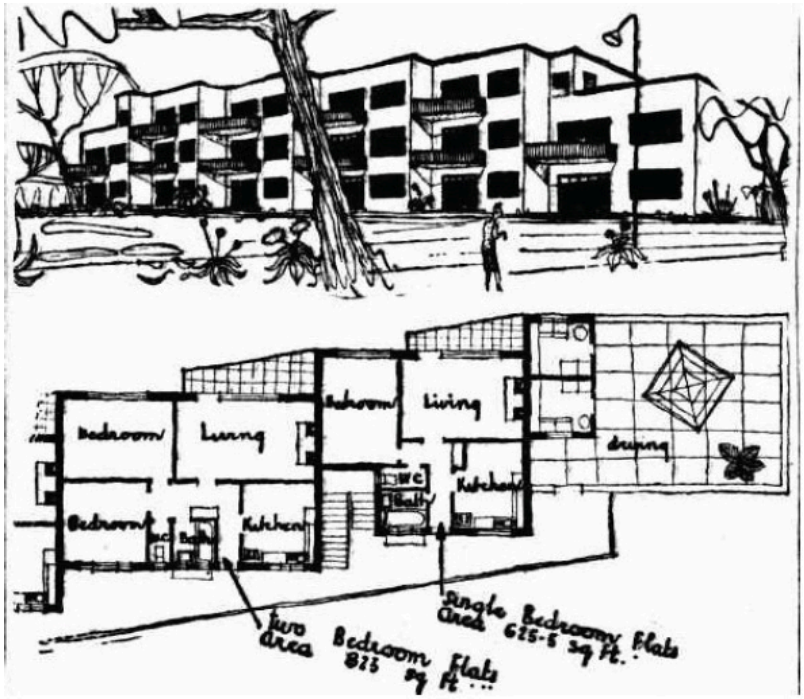

Figure 2: Type 'A' Flats elevation and plan (The Argus, 10 April 1947, p.14)

Another distinctive feature of the 'Type A' flats was the open drying area with two laundries on the third floor at each end. This allowed one laundry for each four flats. This arrangement (also used in the flats designed by Overend at the North Melbourne slum reclamation area) was intended to provide the 'maximum amount of unencumbered open space on the site' [35].

The houses in the estate were designed by the Architects' Panel and followed the precedents set in the development and planning of earlier estates. The 'high capital cost' of the land also made it 'very necessary for the Commission to plan the sites economically'. The single-storey house pairs were built on allotments 40ft by 100ft set back 25 ft from the building line, and placed so that a common drive served adjoining houses (see Figure 4) [36].

The design, described as 'simple but effective' included space-saving details such as a front entrance door, protected by a glazed screen, that opened directly into the living room and only a small hall (see Figures 3 and 4). A feature of the plan was the 'large amount of window space – windows in the living room at the front were carried from floor to ceiling height – which ensured that 'all rooms have a good outlook' [37].

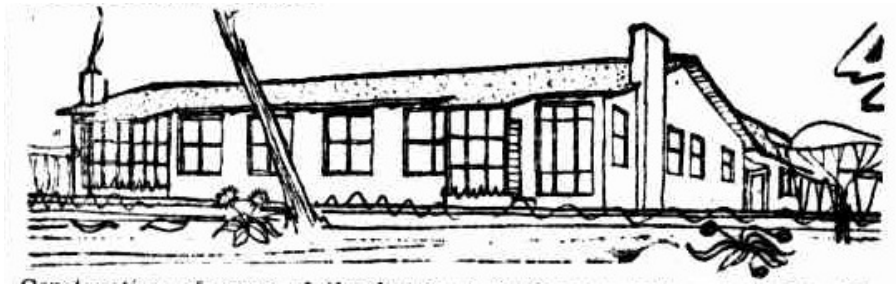

Figure 3: Typical attached house pair elevation and floor layout (The Argus, 28 August 1947, p.21)

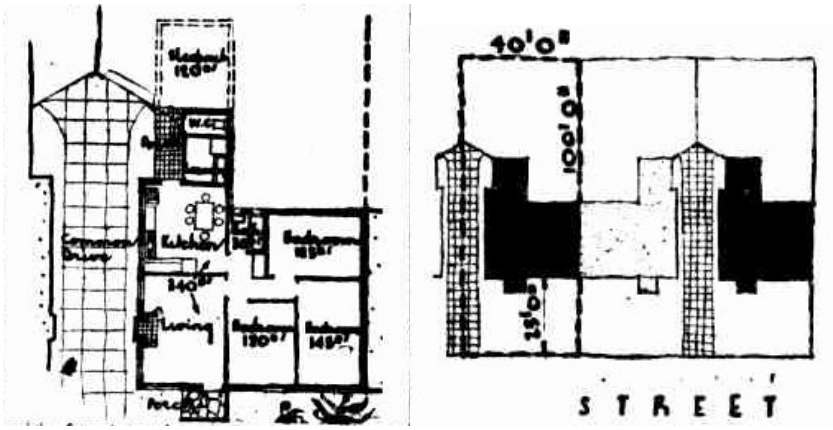

Figure 4:Housing layout and siting plans (The Argus, 28 August 1947, p.21)

Development of the estate

The first area to be developed was the section containing several blocks of flats bounded by Ascot Street, Epsom Road, Portal Street, Churchill Avenue, and Morshead Street. The first block in Ascot Street was completed by May 1948 and all flats within this section were completed by 1949 [38].

By August 1947 the Commission had accepted the tender by Messrs. H.M. and R.R. Gyngell for the erection of the first 10 pairs of one and two-storey houses and tenders had been invited for a further 44 brick pairs and single dwellings [39]. Figure 5 shows the development of the estate in May 1948. The section containing the first flats (the flats now known as 40, 42 & 44 Ascot Street are well advanced) is in the foreground and the first houses can be seen in the upper right.

The first two residents of the estate moved into their houses on 20 December 1947, while the first flats were occupied soon after completion in May 1948. By 30 June 1949, 13 contracts had been let for 446 flats in 38 Blocks and 195 houses on the Estate. Of these, 112 flats and 39 houses were completed and tenanted by that date [40; 41].

Figure 5: Ascot Estate under construction in 1948 (Source: SLV, Charles Daniel Pratt, Accession No. H91.160/378)

The Essendon City Council originally undertook the 'garden development' of all open spaces on the estate to the design of the Architects' Panel, but early in 1949 the Commission appointed a Curator as a full-time officer. By the middle of 1949 planting had been carried out surrounding the flats already completed in Ascot Street and was progressed as the estate developed [42].

By 1950 the Commission described the Ascot Estate (along with the North Melbourne Reclamation Scheme) as one of the 'Metropolitan Feature Projects'. In 1949-50 two further contracts for a total of 282 flats in 22 blocks making a total of 13 contracts that had been signed, which covered almost all the flats and houses as originally planned. By the middle of 1950, 154 flats and 84 houses were occupied and service roads, internal pathways and parking areas had been laid down in each completed area. Other features included a public lighting scheme, street identification signs, designated wood chopping areas (balconies had been damaged by tenants chopping wood), and sanded play areas for young children [43].

By June 1953 the Ascot Estate was nearing completion. 721 flats and houses had been completed and a further 288 were under construction [44]. The 1952/53 Annual Report included numerous images of the estate showing the completed buildings and landscaping (refer to Figures 6-10). The final 64 dwellings in the estate were completed by 1955.

At completion the Ascot Estate contained 1033 dwellings including the largest number of flats (846) in any one Commission estate in Melbourne. The next largest group was at the Olympic Village estate in Heidelberg (494), followed by Moorabbin (236), Heidelberg (230), Ashburton (184), Reservoir East (148) and North Melbourne (134) [45]. This would remain the largest concentration of flats until the building of the large inner-city slum reclamation estates of the 1960s.

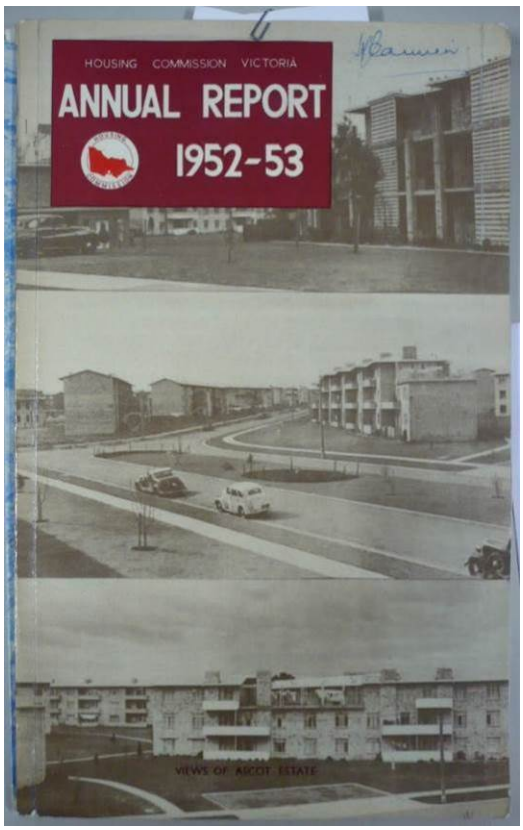

Figure 6:Cover of 1952/53 HCV Annual Report showing flat development in the Ascot Estate.

Figure 7: View looking south along Vasey Street showing 'various designs and external finishes' of flats on the east side between Wingate Avenue and Churchill Avenue. The house at left is 5 Vasey Avenue

Figure 8: Various views of the estate featured on the rear cover of the 1952/53 Annual Report. View of flats on north side of Dunlop Street looking west from Vasey Ave corner.

Figure 9: Various views of the estate featured on the rear cover of the 1952/53 Annual Report. Type A' flats at 61 Churchill Ave with single storey flats at Nos. 55-59 at left.

Figure 10: Various views of the estate featured on the rear cover of the 1952/53 Annual Report. Looking west along Dunlop Avenue.

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Applicable themes

This precinct illustrates the following themes, taken from the *Moonee Valley Thematic Environmental History* (Living Histories, 2012):

2.7 Promoting settlement

6.3 Shaping the suburbs

6.7 Making homes for Victorians

Comparative analysis

As noted in the History, the Ascot Estate is one of two estates constructed by the Commission in the immediate post-war era. While the Aberfeldie and Ascot estates contain some similar housing, they are not directly comparable. The Ascot Estate compares with other large[6] 'master-planned' estates constructed by the Commission in the immediate post-war era that comprised a mix of flats and houses, with open space and community and/or retail facilities including the Newlands/Spring Meadows Estate in Coburg, Moorabbin and Heidelberg. By comparison the Aberfeldie estate is much smaller, and contains only houses built within an existing street network.

The design and layout of the Ascot Estate demonstrates the strong influence of the 'Garden City' movement and modern town planning ideals and principles upon the planning of Commission estates and the emphasis placed on the provision of open space and the right balance of public and private space. Just as Fisherman's Bend was considered a 'model' estate the description of the Ascot Estate in annual reports as one of the 'Metropolitan Feature Estates' (the other was the North Melbourne Reclamation Area) suggests that Commission also intended Ascot to be a 'model' estate that demonstrated the Commission's philosophy and approach to the provision of well-designed affordable housing for Victorians. This is demonstrated by the generous provision of parks, gardens and playing areas, the variety of flat designs and their setting within generous garden areas, and the setting aside of areas for a community centre and recreation.

The housing within the Ascot Estate, which predominantly comprises semi-detached 'maisonettes' is typical of the housing developed by the Commission in the 'inner-city' estates where land values were greater and a higher density needed to be achieved. By comparison most of the other post-war estates, which were built on cheaper sites in the 'outer' suburbs had a higher proportion of detached housing. The careful arrangement of the standard house designs including placement of two storey dwellings in selected locations demonstrates well the principle of 'ordered variety' applied by Commission to enhance the visual interest of streetscapes.

However, it is the sheer number of flats and the variety of their designs that sets the Ascot Estate apart from other Commission estates of the immediate post-war era. It had by far the largest number of flats of any estate and it would remain the largest concentration of flats in a single estate until the slum reclamation program re-commenced in the mid to late 1950s. It is evident that the Commission tried to overcome public prejudice against flats as a form of housing and used the Ascot Estate to demonstrate how well designed flats could play an important role in meeting post-war housing shortages.

The variety of flat designs is also a distinguishing feature of the Ascot Estate, which sets it apart from other HCV estates with large numbers of flats (particularly the later slum reclamation areas, which are characterised by monotonous rows of identical flats built by the Concrete House Project).

[6] Broadly speaking Commission estates can be categorised according to size: Small (less than 100 dwellings), Medium (100-500 dwellings) and large (500 dwellings plus). The large estates are often distinguished by the inclusion of retail and community facilities.

The unique design of some of the three-storey flats is also notable for showing the influence of Best Overend who was a pioneer of flat development in Melbourne. This is demonstrated by distinctive features such as the roof-top laundries and drying areas and the private balconies. These features were incorporated in some of the flats built at the North Melbourne Reclamation Area but presumably proved too expensive as they were not included in flats built at other Commission estates in the immediate post-war era. Balconies would reappear in some of the first high rise blocks constructed as part of the slum reclamation programme in the 1960s (again, they were discontinued in later examples) and roof-top drying areas were provided in some of the 'walk-ups' constructed in the same period.

The Ascot Estate is also notable for:

- Some of the earliest housing developed specifically by the Commission for 'lone persons' and the elderly.
- The comparatively high degree of intactness when compared to the other Commission estate in the City of Moonee Valley at Aberfeldie, and to other Commission estates included in the heritage overlay in other municipalities such as Fisherman's Bend (City of Port Phillip), and Newlands (City of Moreland) and Spring Meadows (City of Darebin). The flats are generally very intact with some minor alterations and additions. While the intactness of the houses varies, the majority have a moderate to high degree of external integrity. Notably, there have been few complete demolitions and many streetscapes are almost completely intact.

Assessment of significance

The following statement of significance sets out the cultural heritage significance of this precinct against the Hercon model criteria for the assessment of heritage values:

What is significant?

The Housing Commission of Victoria's Ascot Estate comprising over 1000 dwellings including over 800 flats and almost 200 houses set within landscaped grounds, which were built between 1947 and 1955. The significant buildings and features are:

- The estate layout, which is based on 'Garden City' principles and the Commission's philosophy of ordered variety with generous areas set aside for parks and open space and as garden settings for the flats.
- The houses, flats and community buildings built by the Commission between 1947 and 1955.
- The remnant mature landscaping.

Non-original alterations and additions to the buildings built between 1947 and 1955 (including non-original front and side fencing), buildings and structures (including car parking areas) constructed after 1955, and the very altered/reconstructed house at 10 Cunningham Court, are not significant.

How is it significant?

The HCV Ascot Estate is of local historic, architectural and aesthetic significance to the City of Moonee Valley (and potentially to the State of Victoria).

Why is it significant?

Historically, the HCV Ascot Estate is significant as one of the large estates built by the Commission to meet the post-war housing shortage. It is especially notable as one of two 'Metropolitan Feature Estates' and as the first Commission estate to predominantly comprise flats. The estate demonstrated that well-designed flats could play an important role in meeting post-war housing shortages, particularly in inner-city areas where land values were high and to

provide a range of housing also suitable for childless couples and elderly people living alone. (Criterion A)

The variety of flat designs is historically significant as it demonstrates the continuous experimentation of the Commission with different building types in order to determine the most efficient and economic method. The flats are notable for the inclusion of design features such as rooftop laundries and drying areas and private balconies, which were based on European models. These features provide an important insight into the influence of Best Overend of the Architects' Panel upon the design of flats built by Commission. Although these features would disappear from many of the standard flats built during the 1950s, they would reappear once again in the flats built as part of the slum reclamation programme of the 1960s. (Criterion A)

The HCV Ascot Estate is historically significant for its important associations with the Housing Commission of Victoria as one of two 'Metropolitan Feature Estates', that was intended to be a 'model' example, which demonstrated the philosophy and approach of the Commission in the provision of well-designed affordable housing for Victorians in the post-war era. It also has important associations with Best Overend who is credited with the design of the flats. Overend, who was one of the original Panel of Architects appointed by the Commission, is known as a pioneer of flat development in Melbourne and was an advocate for flat development within the Commission. (Criterion H)

The HCV Ascot Estate is aesthetically as an intact example of a post-war Housing Commission of Victoria estate laid out in accordance with 'Garden City' principles and the Commission's own philosophy of ordered variety. The significant aesthetic characteristics include:

- The consistent post-war streetscapes created by predominantly single storey housing with deliberate placement of two storey elements to create visual and 'skyline' interest, the use of a consistent palette of materials including face brick (with a few examples with rendered upper walls), tiled roofs and timber or steel framed windows.
- The careful and deliberate placement of a limited range of standard design house 'types' to create visual interest in accordance with the Commission philosophy of 'ordered variety'.
- The diversity of flat designs, which are set within generous garden/park settings.
- The remnant mature landscaping elements including mature trees and rock retaining walls.

The 'Type A' flats designed by Best Overend are of architectural and aesthetic significance as a fine example of post-war flat design, which are notable for their stepped facades that create visual interest and enhance the privacy of the flats. The incorporation of features such as private balconies, rooftop drying areas demonstrate the influence of European models and represent the high point of flat design by the Commission, which was not replicated in later flats designed and built by the Commission until the early 1970s. (Criteria E & F)

The significance of the 'Type A' flats designed by Best Overend is enhanced by their rarity value for the design features such as rooftop laundries and drying areas and private balconies that are only found in one other immediate post-war estate developed by the Commission - the North Melbourne Reclamation Area, which contains similar flats also designed by Overend. (Criterion B)

Statutory recommendations

For the area located between Union Road, Portal Street and Dunlop Avenue, recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay for the Moonee Valley Planning Scheme. This includes any landscape elements and mature trees.

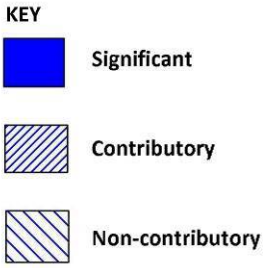
For the area located between Ascot Street, Morshead Street, Churchill Avenue and Portal Street, recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Moonee Valley Planning Scheme. This includes any landscape elements and mature trees.

For the area located between Ascot Vale Road, 7 Dunlop Avenue, 6 Wingate Avenue, recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Moonee Valley Planning Scheme. This includes any landscape elements and mature trees.

For the remaining area indicated as contributory or non-contributory, not recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Moonee Valley Planning Scheme as a precinct.

Arthur and Caroline Streets Precinct (Aberfeldie Housing Commission Estate)

1-21 Arthur Street and 2-22 Caroline Street, Aberfeldie



Three house types in the precinct on Arthur Street: transverse gable with front chimney (left, No. 17), concrete with gable end (centre, No. 19), and hip roof (right, No. 21).

Looking west from 11 Arthur Street.

Three houses type on Caroline Street: Type 611-16, long front gable (left, No. 6); Type 411-15, transverse gable with front chimney (centre, No. 4); and Type 411-17, hip roof (right, No. 2).

Description

As described in the History the HCV Aberfeldie Estate, when completed, contained 145 houses: 64 constructed of brick or brick veneer, 47 of concrete and 34 of timber. In recent years more than 50 of the original houses have been demolished or significantly altered to the extent that they no longer resemble the original houses as built. This includes more than half of the timber houses, just under a third of the concrete examples, and just over a quarter of brick houses including, in some instances one half of a 'maisonette', have been demolished and replaced with new dwellings. This has affected the integrity of the precinct, as follows:

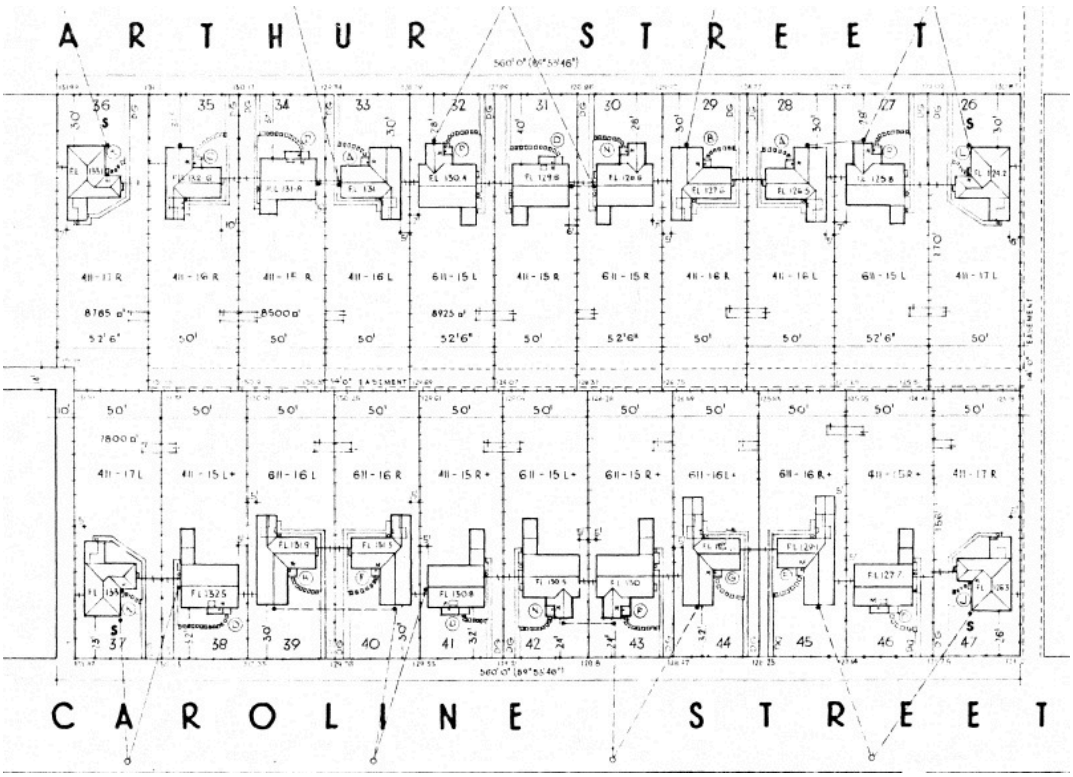
- The timber houses, which include 84 Fawkner Street, 2, 4, 12 & 16 Jean Street. 1, 3, 9 & 15-19 May Street, 1, 3, 4 & 7 Rita Street, are now separated by Non-contributory houses, which are often visually dominant, and do not form visually cohesive groups or streetscapes.

- The brick duplexes, which include some relatively intact groups on the north side of Alan Street and the south side of Caroline Street, have also been affected by Non-contributory development, and do not form visually cohesive streetscapes, particularly when compared to the very intact groups of similar houses at the HCV Ascot Estate (see Comparative Analysis).
- Most of the demolitions of the 'Fowler' concrete houses have occurred in Ramsay Street and on the north side of Arthur Street reducing the visual integrity of the northern section of the estate.

The most intact groups of the 'Fowler' concrete houses within the HCV Aberfeldie Estate are along the north side of Caroline Street and the south side of Arthur Street. Of the five standard designs or types for concrete houses used by the Commission within the estate, all of which are represented within this group in Arthur and Caroline streets (refer plan, below), all of which have tiled roofs:

- Type 411-15 – Small cottage with transverse gable roof, front porch at centre of façade and tall, red-brick slab chimney next to it. Porch balustrade of red or clinker brick. This type is seen at 11 & 17 Arthur Street and 4, 14 & 20 Caroline Street.
- Type 411-16 – L-shaped plan with gabled roofs of equal size to the front and side with a small porch at the internal corner. Corner windows to the front and side wings. Very short slab chimney to side wing. This type is seen at Nos. 7, 15, 19 Arthur Street.
- Type 411-17 – L-shaped plan with a very wide, hipped roof to the front and a narrower hip to the side. Front porch in the internal corner. Corner window and tall red-brick slab chimney to the side wing. This type is seen at Nos. 1 & 21 Arthur Street and Nos. 2 & 22 Caroline Street. No. 22 Caroline Street has been altered, but retains its characteristic form.
- Type 611-15 – Similar to Type 411-15, it has a transverse gable roof with a small projecting front gable, and a porch in the inner corner. A short red-brick slab chimney is on the side elevation. This type is seen at No. 13 Arthur Street and Nos. 12 & 14 Caroline Street.
- Type 611-16 – Very similar to Type 411-16. L-shaped plan with gabled roofs to the front and side with a small porch at the internal corner. The front gable is very long (differentiating it from Type 411-16). Corner windows to the front and side wings. Very short slab chimney to side wing. This type is seen at Nos. 6 & 18 Caroline Street.

All five, house types have variegated Marseille tiles on the roofs and double-hung timber windows with horizontal glazing bars (except where altered). All have small entrance porches beneath a small skillion continuous with the main roof, supported on square timber posts, often with a low red-brick balustrade and/or planter boxes enclosing the porch. All gable ends are decorated with a simplified half-timbering detail. All chimneys have external chimney breasts.



Detail of Housing Commission of Victoria Drawing No.6969, dated 1945, showing locations of house types in Arthur and Caroline streets. (Source: Department of Housing)

Houses have undergone the following alterations: replacement of timber windows with aluminium units (Nos. 1, 15, 16 & 26 Arthur Street, Nos. 12 & 20 Caroline Street), the addition of faux-Federation detailing (No. 13 Arthur Street), and the overpainting of a number of brick chimneys.

The public domain of the precinct is distinctive, with very wide nature strips. Street trees are immature. Driveway crossovers alternate between being paired and single. A few houses (Nos. 11, 16, 17, 19 & 21 Arthur Street and Nos. 2, 4, 6 &18 Caroline Street) retain their original two-track driveway paving. It appears as if the houses were built without front fences, creating an American suburban-style openness, though two houses retain relatively early low front fences (on Arthur Street No 17. has chain-link wire, and No. 19 has a cream-brick wall).

History

Thematic history

In 1946, the *Argus* newspaper published a weekly series for potential home-owners who were despairing over finding a place in which to live. It was the height of the housing shortage after World War II and Victoria had 80,000 people looking for accommodation. The series follows the story of returned soldier Bill Brown, his wife and two grown up children as they tell of 'rent rackets', long queues, shortages of building materials and 'black marketeers' who were selling existing houses for extortionate prices. At first Bill considered joining thousands of battlers in the ballot for Housing Commission accommodation. As an ex-serviceman, he knew his chances of obtaining a commission home were good, and he was impressed by the state government's plans for various schemes. But then he realised he was competing with families 'a damned sight worse off' than himself, and gave up the quest for housing assistance. He came to the conclusion that 'we can manage somehow for the present, and I reckon that we can build our own little place'. He had realised that all he needed was enough cash for a small deposit to obtain a loan from a government bank. A house and land package through the bank could allow him to buy 'a good sort of block in Ascot Vale with a 50ft frontage' and 'plan the

conventional, safe suburban home, passage more or less in the centre, rooms off to the left and right, kitchen down the back, and bathroom off the hall' [i].

Land was available; there were an estimated 20,000 vacant building blocks within the metropolitan area, as well as many more on the outskirts not covered by water and sewerage services. After 1945, the building industry had diverted to domestic housing and achieved a record peak in production, but the number of homes built could still not meet the demand. Robin Boyd wrote that even by 1950 'many thousands still lived in unsatisfactory accommodation: in temporary, converted army camps, in tents, in caravans, and with in-laws'.[4] Rising costs also made the purchase of a home prohibitive. Boyd noted that the average brick, five-roomed home cost about £1,200 in 1939 at the start of the war. By the end of the war it had risen to £1,700, and five years later, in 1950 it had reached £2,500. As a consequence, timber houses increased in number, brick veneer replaced solid brick, and new, easily mass-produced materials such as concrete blocks, cement tiles and asbestos cement sheeting were chosen for their affordability [i].

The Housing Commission of Victoria (1938-45)

Note: This background history of the Housing Commission of Victoria (the Commission) includes extracts from Homeward: The Thematic History of Public Housing in Victoria*, which was prepared in 2012 by Context & Way Back When for Department of Human Services, Division of Housing & Community Building.*

The passing by the Victorian Parliament in December 1937 the *Housing Act* 1937 brought the Housing Commission of Victoria (the Commission) into existence. Once it commenced work in March 1938 there were two separate but related tasks the Commission faced when addressing the housing problem in Melbourne. The first was clearing these inner city slums. The second was providing housing for those whose homes were being reclaimed or who were generally living in poverty.

Within months the Commission made a series of recommendations to the state government. These recommendations formed the basis of two Acts, both passed in 1938 – the *Slum Reclamation and Housing Act* and the *Slum Reclamation and Housing (Financial) Act*. Detailed in these two Acts were the duties of the Commission as well as its legislative authority.

With slum reclamation a key role of the Commission, it was hoped that these slum areas would soon be removed from Melbourne's landscape. However, in reality, it was not that straightforward. One of the major criticisms of previous legislative reforms that attempted to eradicate slums and improve housing conditions was that there was no provision for the rehousing of those living in these areas should their homes be demolished in the process of slum clearance. The Commission was eager to provide a sustainable solution that addressed both the problem of slums and the rehousing of those who lived in them. In its first Annual Report the Commission noted that:

> *… it has been difficult to synchronize these two functions – demolition and the building programme … in order to implement effectively a sound policy of slum reclamation, there must be a supply of unoccupied houses of varying sizes and types completed and ready to accommodate occupiers of houses to be demolished.*

Despite being a major impetus for the creation of the Commission, slum reclamation gradually slipped to the bottom of its agenda. What emerged instead was an emphasis on the types of homes the Commission was providing and the importance of the design and layout of any new housing estates or clusters of Commission-built homes. Over the first few years of its existence the Commission focussed upon acquiring land and building houses. By 1942 the Commission had acquired, by various means, sites for 2,040 houses across Victoria [ii].

Estate design and layout

In 1938 the Commission conducted a national architectural competition for the 'design and planning of low cost houses' on the first estate (which became known as Fisherman's Bend) in Port Melbourne 'with a view to obtaining the advantage of the best brains of the architectural profession in the design and planning of low-cost houses'. It was from among the winners of

this competition that the Commission in 1939 appointed the members of the Commission's first Panel of Architects (also known as the Architects' Panel). The Panel provided advice to the Commission on the design, planning and specification of housing and estates to be built by the Commission in metropolitan areas [iii].

The design and layout of estates was considered equally important as the construction techniques and standards and great emphasis was placed on open space, gardens and the right balance of public and private space. The design philosophy of the Commission, which sought to develop new estates according to 'modern' town planning ideals and principles, was strongly influenced by the Garden City movement and the Panel of Architects strived to achieve a balance between public and private open space. A principle of 'ordered variety' was applied with regard to the placing of dwellings and the general street pattern [iv].

The second Annual Report of the Housing Commission of Victoria, published in 1940, described its flagship Fisherman's Bend development as 'laid out on modern town planning lines with provision for parks, gardens, playing areas, community centre and shopping facilities'. In accordance with Garden City principles approximately 95% of the houses were planned to overlook park areas.

The Panel of Architects, at the direction of the Commission, experimented with the design and construction of the houses on the Fisherman's Bend Estate. The most economical forms of construction, building materials, finishes and internal fittings were investigated, as were economies of scale in construction and design. Houses were in general erected in pairs to save money on roofs, verges and wall construction as well as sewerage and water services. The more economical the design and construction, the more people the Commission could afford to house.

The building 'experiments' carried out at Fisherman's Bend were continued at other new Commission estates around Melbourne and the annual reports and literature of the Commission from the early 1940s proudly display images of newly constructed homes and broad, largely traffic-free streets. The image captions emphasise that great care had been taken in the planning and layout of homes and the importance of open space, parks and communal play areas.

Meeting post-war housing shortages (1945-55)

The Commission's 1944 Annual Report confirmed that the housing shortage had reached unprecedented heights. Despite the dedicated efforts of the Commission, only 2,022 new homes had been built between 1939 and 1944 [1]. It was projected that the crisis would worsen at the end of the war and it was forecast that up to 18,500 homes would have to be constructed in Victoria for the housing crisis to be overcome [2].

The warnings of a worsening housing crisis were indeed correct - the number of Victorians seeking housing from the Commission escalated from 5,161 in 1945, to 17,355 in 1946 and 42,949 in 1949 [3]. In light of this additional strain on the housing situation, the Commission was forced, as it was in its early days of operation, to place slum reclamation and demolition activity on hold. It was during this period that Commission policy shifted from 'rehousing inner suburban residents, to developing large estates' [4].

The scale of the housing shortage after World War II and the additional funds provided by the first Commonwealth State Housing Agreement in 1945 finally gave the Commission the means to embark upon a period of major house construction and the decade following the war saw an emphasis on the building of large housing estates across the outer metropolitan areas of Melbourne and in rural Victoria.

From 1945 to 1955 the Commission concentrated almost exclusively on what it described as 'villa' estates on broad-acre subdivisions, which presented few encumbrances to planning and building operations and gave the greatest return, in terms of dwellings produced, for the economic resources available. By the end of 1968, 'about 146 million pounds [had] been spent to produce 47,800 dwelling units located in 103 metropolitan estates and 125 country towns' [5].

The Concrete House project

During the war years when materials and labour were in short supply, the Architects' Panel experimented with different designs and improved standards and methods of construction. Much of this time was spent perfecting experimental techniques so that in the post-war years, houses could be mass-produced to achieve both standards of housing and cost efficiency [6].

One of the most significant experiments undertaken by the Commission involved constructing homes with pre-cast concrete panels using a technique originally developed by T.W. Fowler of Werribee for manufacturing walls for houses by casting them on an elevated flat metal table, and at the same time making provision for door and window openings, conduits and pipes. After the death of Mr Fowler in 1942 the Commission took over the mobile Fowler plant and, with the assistance of the Panel of Architects, the method of construction was improved [7].

The first concrete houses using the original Fowler method were constructed at the Fisherman's Bend Estate in 1939 and the Fowler (Albion Street) Estate, West Brunswick in 1941. Later estates, such as Newport (developed 1942-44) and Aberfeldie (1945-47), utilised the improved methods developed by the Commission

After World War II, the acquisition by the Commission of the Holmesglen Factory in 1946 enabled it to commence mass production of concrete houses, which facilitated the production of houses with a 'never-before envisaged volume and efficiency' [8]. The Concrete House Project, as it became known, changed the landscape of Victoria and helped solve the post-war housing crisis. The first concrete houses produced by the Holmesglen Factory were erected at the Sandringham Estate in August 1946.

HCV estates in the City of Moonee Valley

The City of Moonee Valley contains two estates built by the Commission in the immediate post-war period: Aberfeldie or West Essendon (developed 1945-47) and the Ascot Estate (1947-57). The third Commission estate in the City of Moonee Valley, Debney Park Estate at Flemington, was developed in the late 1960s as part of the slum reclamation programme.

Place history

HCV Aberfeldie Estate

The Commission purchased land at 'West Essendon' (Aberfeldie) in 1944, just prior to the end of World War II, for an estate planned to contain 145 'units' – 64 to be constructed of brick or brick veneer, 47 of concrete and 34 of timber. Planning for the estate had commenced during the war when the Victorian government began to compulsorily acquire land around metropolitan Melbourne for thousands of public housing allotments [9]. It appears that the land for the estate at Aberfeldie was acquired by compulsory acquisition. In December 1945, a court found that the Commission had 'underestimated the true value of five blocks of land', which were required for the erection of pre-fabricated houses [10].

The compulsory purchase of land for this purpose brought strong protest from the Essendon Council in August 1944, particularly in response to the government's proposal to build an estate that included houses of timber and concrete construction. This, they argued was 'a fine forward building area' and it 'was a scandalous shame to put houses of the type proposed by the commission on the splendid sites at Aberfeldie'. Essendon Council was particularly concerned with the possibility of duplexes and maisonettes being constructed here, but invited tenders to construct the roads in November 1945 [11].

Almost half the houses (65) were completed by 30 June 1945 and a further 69 by 30 June 1946. The final 11 houses in the estate were completed by the following year [12]. The delay in constructing the final houses was due to the shortage of bricks and tiles, which were the most difficult supplies to source. Harold Bartlett, chairman of the commission's architects' panel, estimated that the State's program was falling behind by 200 homes per week. Only 16 of Victoria's 54 brick and tile-making kilns were operating, and at the Aberfeldie estate 29 homes

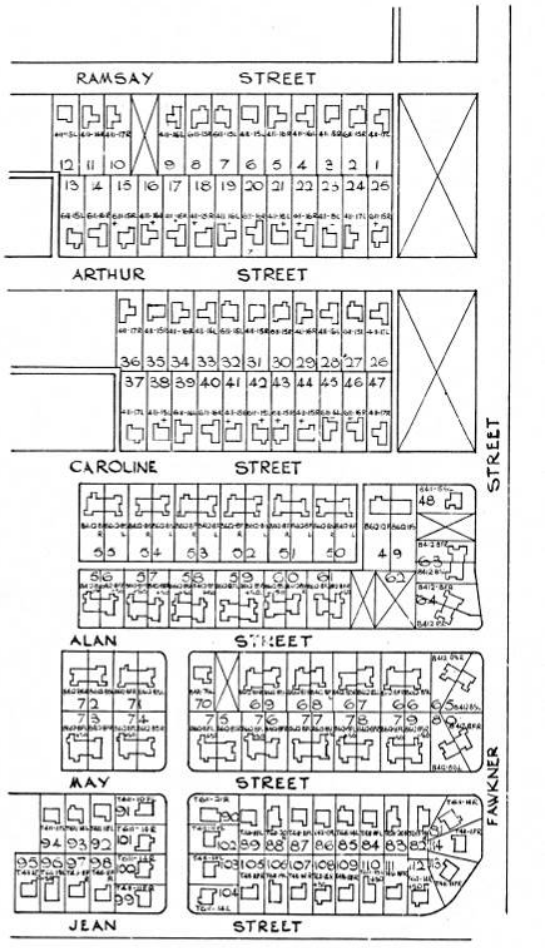
had been waiting three months for roofing tiles [13]. It was less than six months since the war had ended and a great deal of adjustment was still being made in all sectors of the community.

The concrete homes were constructed by A.V. Jennings Pty Ltd. The Aberfeldie estate was their first contract for the Commission and their first venture into 'large volume building'. Jennings built thousands of homes for the Commission, including 2,454 in 1950, before deciding in the mid-1950s to focus solely on private housing estates [14].

Unlike most of the larger Commission estates, which were constructed on 'greenfields' sites that allowed the Commission to design the street layout, the estate at Aberfeldie was developed within the existing grid of streets originally subdivided and laid out in the 1920s. Typical of the Commission's early post-war estates the housing comprised a mix of semi-detached 'maisonettes' and detached houses.

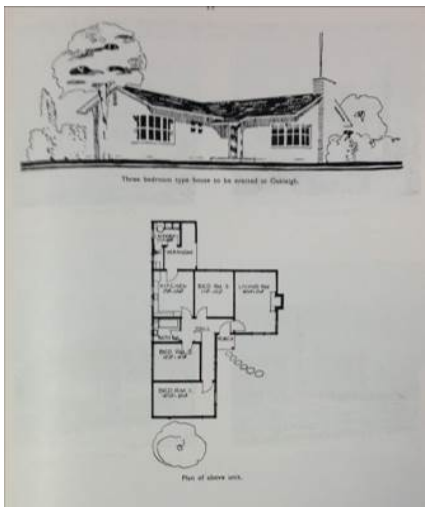
The concrete houses were in Arthur Street, on the south side of Ramsay Street and the north side of Caroline Street. Brick houses and maisonettes lined the south side of Caroline Street, both sides of Alan Street, the north side of May Street and the west side of Fawkner Street between Caroline and May streets. The timber houses were confined to the southern part of the estate between May and Jean streets including some in the short section of Rita Street, and along the west side of Fawkner Street between those streets (see plan, below).

The concrete houses at Aberfeldie, which were amongst the first to be completed on the estate, were constructed using the mobile 'Fowler' method, where the concrete wall panels were cast and erected on site using the improved techniques developed by the Commission. These were amongst the last concrete houses built using the mobile method prior to the commencement of mass production at the Holmesglen Factory in 1946 [15].



Aberfeldie Estate site layout (Housing Commission of Victoria. The Architects Panel Dwg. No. 537 dated 26.2.45)

The design of both the timber and concrete houses appears to have been the same, or similar as those used on the Oakleigh Estate. The timber houses appear to have included some of the 'experimental' types first used at the Oakleigh Estate that are clad in a resin-bonded plywood in lieu of weatherboards which were difficult to obtain due to post-war materials shortages. A design of one of the concrete types used at Oakleigh featured in the 1943-44 Annual Report appears to be the same as some of the concrete houses constructed in Arthur Street (see Description) [16].



Three bedroom concrete house type erected at Oakleigh (HCV Annual Report 1943/44, p.17).

References:

[i] Summerton, Michelle, *Moonee Valley Post-war estates 1945-1950*, 2013
[ii] Howe, R (ed.), *New houses for old: fifty years of public housing in Victoria 1938-1988*, Ministry of Housing and Construction, Victoria, 1988, p.33
[iii] Housing Commission of Victoria (HCV) Annual Report 1941/42
[iv] HCV Annual Report 1939/40
[v] HCV Annual Report 1939/40
[1] HCV Annual Report, 1944/46
[2] HCV Annual Report 1942/43
[3] Howe, R (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.71
[4] HCV Annual Report 1944/46
[5] *Housing Commission of Victoria, First 25 years,* 1963, pp. 9, 2
[6] HCV Annual Report 1940/41
[7] HCV Annual Report 1943/44
[8] Howe, 1998, p.192
[9] Seventh and Eighth Annual Reports of the Housing Commission of Victoria, 1945 to 1947, volume 2, p 9
[10] *The Argus* 'Court awards higher price for Essendon land' 5 December 1945, p.6
[11] *Age*, 11 October 1945, p.8
[12] HCV Annual Report, 1944-46, p.12; 1946-47, p.12
[13] Summerton, op cit.
[14] Don Garden, *Builders to the Nation: The AV Jennings Story*, Carlton: The Book Printer for Melbourne University Press, p.64. See also Residential Developer, http://www.residentialdeveloper.com.au/Article/NewsDetail.aspx?p=129&id=222 (accessed 31 January 2013)
[15] *Argus*, 1 March 1946, p.3
[16] HCV Annual Report, 1943/44, pp. 23-26; *The Argus* 'Concrete Housing Project begun', 11 October 1945, p.8
[17] HCV Annual Report 1943/44, p.17

Applicable themes

This precinct illustrates the following themes, taken from the *Moonee Valley Thematic Environmental History* (Living Histories, 2012):

2.7 Promoting settlement

6.3 Shaping the suburbs

6.7 Making homes for Victorians

Comparative analysis

As noted in the History, the HCV Ascot Estate is one of two estates constructed by the Commission in the immediate post-war era. While the Aberfeldie and Ascot estates contain some similar housing, they are not directly comparable. The HCV Ascot Estate compares with other large[7] 'master-planned' estates constructed by the Commission in the immediate post-war era that comprised a mix of flats and houses, with open space and community and/or retail facilities including the Newlands/Spring Meadows Estate in Coburg, Moorabbin and Heidelberg. By comparison the HCV Aberfeldie estate is much smaller, and contains only houses built within an existing street network.

The HCV Aberfeldie Estate compares with other estates planned by the Commission prior to 1945. However, although it contains a range of typical Commission housing including brick, timber and concrete houses, the estate was developed on an existing grid subdivision, which limited the ability of the Commission to 'master plan' the layout and design in accordance with 'Garden City' principles. Therefore it lacks many of the defining characteristics of comparable Commission estates that are included in the heritage overlay in other municipalities (e.g., Newport, Williamstown) such as curving street layouts, use of cul-de-sacs and housing facing areas of open space.

In addition the intactness of the Aberfeldie Estate has been diminished by the demolition and replacement of original houses and unsympathetic alterations to others. There has been a great deal of redevelopment of Commission houses, particularly on the south side of Ramsay Street, the north side of Arthur Street, the south side of Allan Street, both sides of May Street and in Jean Street.

The brick housing, which predominantly comprises semi-detached 'maisonettes' is typical of the housing developed by the Commission on the pre-1945 estates, and the 'inner-city' estates where land values were greater and a higher density needed to be achieved. However, the brick house pairs are, generally speaking, less intact than the comparable brick house pairs at the HCV Ascot Estate. The Aberfeldie Estate includes a number of unfortunate examples where one house in a pair has been demolished replaced with a new house completely unrelated in scale and design to the original house.

The timber houses are also of interest in a local and metropolitan context. Timber houses were only built by the Commission in the metropolitan area in the immediate post-war period and (with the exception of overseas prefabricated timber houses used in a limited number of estates in 1951-53) appear to have been phased out by 1950. Of the 10,000 houses erected by the Commission in the metropolitan area up until 1950 only 689 were in timber. The largest numbers of timber houses were built at Heidelberg (225), Coburg (133), Footscray (99), Albion (60) and Braybrook-Maidstone (60). There are no timber houses in the Ascot Estate. Unfortunately, the demolitions have reduced the intactness of the timber sections of the estate so that they no longer meet the threshold of local significance as a precinct. In addition it

[7] Broadly speaking Commission estates can be categorised according to size: Small (less than 100 dwellings), Medium (100-500 dwellings) and large (500 dwellings plus). The large estates are often distinguished by the inclusion of retail and community facilities.

appears that none of the 'experimental' timber types clad in a resin-bonded plywood in lieu of weatherboard (and which may have been of individual significance) have survived.

The concrete houses within the estate, however, are significant. The concrete houses were constructed using the 'improved' mobile 'Fowler' method developed by the Commission and were among the last to be built prior to the commencement of production at the Holmesglen factory. There are several pre-1946 estates containing concrete houses in Melbourne, but this estate contains the only concrete houses in the City of Moonee Valley. The concrete houses demonstrate the diversity of housing erected by the Commission as part of its continuous experimentation with building design and materials to build houses cheaply and quickly, and to find solutions to materials and manpower shortages caused by World War II. The deliberate placement of the standard designs so that no two identical designs are directly adjoining (although some 'matching pairs' – i.e. two houses with the same design reversed - were included) also demonstrates the Commission's philosophy of 'ordered variety' within its estates.

The demolitions of concrete houses have reduced the intactness in Ramsay Street and the north side of Arthur Street. However, two relatively intact groups survive along the south side of Arthur Street at Nos. 1-21 (includes three Non-contributory places at Nos.3, 5 & 9) and the north side of Caroline Street at Nos. 2-22 (includes three Non-contributory places at Nos.8, 10 & 16), which form a small precinct.

Statement of significance

What is significant?

The 'Fowler' concrete houses, constructed as part of the Housing Commission of Victoria Aberfeldie Estate in 1945-46, at 1-21 Arthur Street and 2-22 Caroline Street, Aberfeldie are significant. Builder AV Jennings constructed a total of 134 houses on the 15-acre estate. Of them were 64 brick duplex units, 47 concrete houses and 34 timber-framed houses, located on the south side of Ramsay Street, both sides of Arthur and Caroline streets, and parts of Allan and May streets.

The concrete houses were the first to be erected, using the mobile 'Fowler' method, and were built in a range of five standard designs alternating to prevent monotony, which differ in their plan form and roof form (L-shaped or rectangular, gable or hipped roof). All of them have simple slab red brick chimneys, terracotta tiled roofs, exposed rafter ends beneath the eaves, a simplified half-timbering detail to gable ends, and timber sash windows with horizontal glazing bars which are often located at building corners exhibiting a functionalist influence. They also have a simple skillion porch roof, often with a brick planter box or brick balustrade defining the entry.

The following features and elements are integral to the significance of the precinct:

- Type 411-15 – Small cottage with transverse gable roof, front porch at centre of façade and tall, red-brick slab chimney next to it. Porch balustrade of red or clinker brick. This type is seen at Nos. 11 & 17 Arthur Street and Nos. 4, 14 & 20 Caroline Street.
- Type 411-16 –L-shaped plan with gabled roofs of equal size to the front and side with a small porch at the internal corner. Corner windows to the front and side wings. Very short slab chimney to side wing. This type is seen at Nos. 7, 15 & 19 Arthur Street.
- Type 411-17 – L-shaped plan with a very wide, hipped roof to the front and a narrower hip to the side. Front porch in the internal corner. Corner window and tall red-brick slab chimney to the side wing. This type is seen at Nos. 1 & 21 Arthur Street and 2 & 22 Caroline Street. No.22 Caroline Street has been altered, but retains the characteristic form.

- Type 611-15 – Similar to Type 411-15, it has a transverse gable roof with a small projecting front gable, and a porch in the inner corner. A short red-brick slab chimney is on the side wing. This type is seen at No. 13 Arthur Street and Nos. 12 & 14 Caroline Street.
- Type 611-16 - Very similar to Type 411-16. L-shaped plan with gabled roofs to the front and side with a small porch at the internal corner. The front gable is very long (differentiating it from Type 411-16). Corner windows to the front and side wings. Very short slab chimney to side wing. This type is seen at Nos. 6 & 18 Caroline.
- The homogenous early post-war character of the precinct, with overall consistency in the wide nature strips, garden setback, side driveways with shared or single crossovers and divided concrete tracks, and the single-storey scale;
- The extent to which development of one period is apparent in the precinct;
- The relatively high integrity of most of the contributory dwellings when viewed from the street.

Non-original alterations and additions to the Contributory houses and the following properties are Non-contributory to the precinct: Nos. 3 (Units 1-3), 5-5A, and 9 Arthur Street, and 8, 10 and 16-16A Caroline Street.

How is it significant?

The Fowler concrete houses are of historical and architectural significance and of rarity value to the City of Moonee Valley.

Why is it significant?

The Aberfeldie Estate is of historical significance as a tangible illustration of the Housing Commission's response to the housing shortages that followed the Second World War. It was during this period that Commission policy shifted from rehousing inner suburban residents, to developing large estates. The 'Fowler' concrete houses demonstrate the diversity of housing erected by the Commission as part of its continuous experimentation with building design and materials to build houses cheaply and quickly, and to find solutions to materials and manpower shortages caused by World War II. (Criterion A)

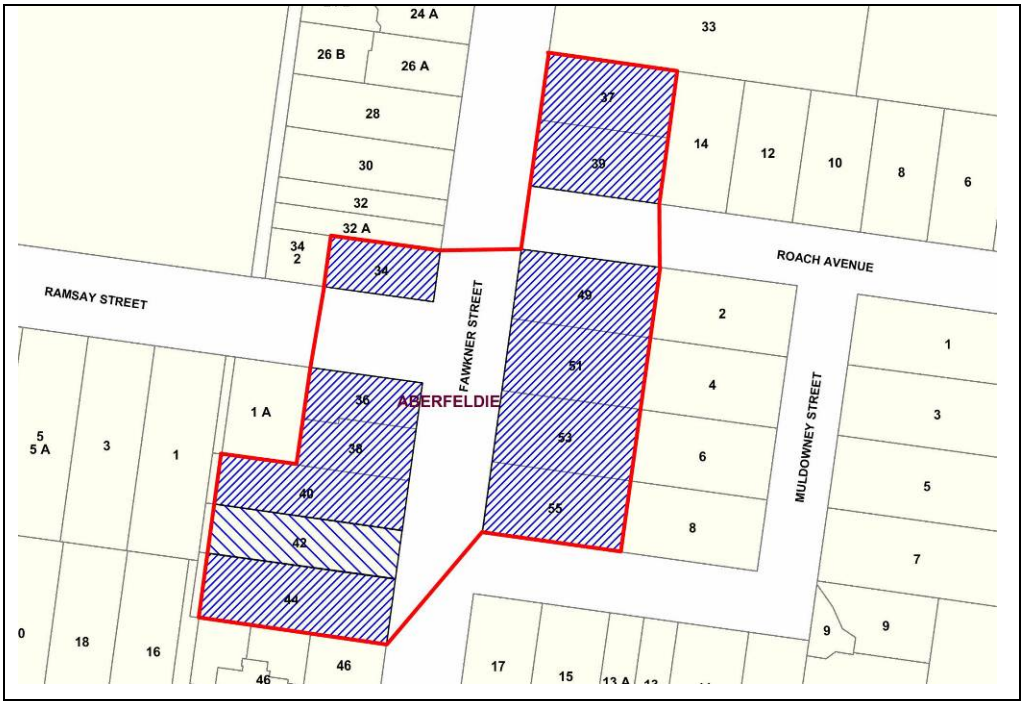
The Aberfeldie Estate is historically significant as a representative example of a typical post-war Housing Commission estate. The deliberate placement of standard designs so that no two identical designs are directly adjoining demonstrates the Commission's philosophy of 'ordered variety' within its estates. The concrete houses are significant as examples constructed using the 'improved' mobile 'Fowler' method developed by the Commission in the early 1940s. They were among the last to be built prior to the commencement of production at the Holmesglen factory, and are the only examples in Moonee Valley. (Criteria D & B)

Statutory recommendations

Not recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Moonee Valley Planning Scheme as a precinct.

Fawkner Street Precinct (Earslbrae Estate)

34b-44 and 37-55 Fawkner Street, Aberfeldie



KEY

Significant

Contributory

Non-contributory

Description

The precinct is a residential area comprising houses at the north end of Fawkner Street which were constructed from about 1940 to 1946 along the western side of the precinct, and in a similar style between 1946 and 1951 along its eastern side.

Many houses in the precinct are of brick, although there are weatherboard examples (No. 37) including those that have been rendered (Nos. 40 & 42), but hipped terracotta tile roofs of similar pitch are common throughout, and all of these appear to be original. Most feature simple square chimneys, although some slab forms are present among the later buildings. Porches are simple concrete hoods, cantilevered on the western side of the street and supported by brick pillars or wrought iron supports on the eastern. Windows are generally steel framed, with one or two examples of aluminium replacements, and corner windows are evident across the precinct, illustrating the continuity of this functionalist feature from before the War.

Nos. 36-38 on the corner of Fawkner and Ramsay streets is a duplex with front gables at each end to form a U-shape, although No. 36 now has a sympathetic rear extension. The gables are in an Old English form with detailing including hit and miss brickwork gable vents and bands of tapestry half bricks running above and below the windows, supported under the eaves by brick corbelling and extending over the porch hood. The Old English style is followed on the eastern side of the road by the facades of the somewhat more austere Nos. 49 and 51 in variegated red brick, and by that of the probably later cream brick No. 53 which also features a decorative brick motif and corbelling. The U-shape floor plan of Nos. 36-38 is also mirrored on the opposite side of the street by No. 55 which is a good example of a cream brick post-war villa. It retains the original decorative mild steel inserts to the brick fence, in the gate and supporting the porch hood.

The majority of the houses retain their original low brick front fence, punctuated by pillars and sometimes with decorative crenelations. The staggered cross-roads formed by the junctions of Fawkner Street with Ramsay Street and Roach Avenue at the centre of the precinct is defined by the original knee-high matching brick front fences on Nos. 34b, 39 and 49, although that to No. 36 has been replaced by a high modern fence.

In general the level of alteration is low and most houses have a high degree of external integrity when viewed from the street (roller shutters over windows are the only obvious addition to some of the houses). The most common alteration is the replacement of original windows with aluminium units (Nos. 38, 49). Major alterations of form in the precinct include upper storey extensions to Nos. 39 and 42. In the case of No. 39 it sits behind the ridge line and the original portion of the house remains contributory to the significance of the precinct. The addition at No. 42 is more intrusive, as it has a minimal setback from the front wall. For this reason, it is considered non-contributory, though it retains the same set-back and scale as the adjacent properties and is not intrusive.

As is typical of houses of the late interwar and early post-war period, none have contemporary garages attached to the house, but some have later carports set alongside and a few have recently constructed garages. A number of houses retain the original two-track driveways.

Gardens consist of front lawns with borders containing flowers, shrubs and small trees which are overshadowed by street trees lining the large grass nature strips which provide a consistent approach to the public realm.

History

Thematic history

Post-war Estates 1945-1950

In 1946, the Argus newspaper published a weekly series for potential home-owners who were despairing over finding a place in which to live. It was the height of the housing shortage after World War II and Victoria had 80,000 people looking for accommodation. The series follows the story of returned soldier Bill Brown, his wife and two grown up children as they tell of 'rent rackets', long queues, shortages of building materials and 'black marketeers' who were selling existing houses for extortionate prices. At first Bill considered joining thousands of battlers in the ballot for Housing Commission accommodation. As an ex-serviceman, he knew his chances of obtaining a commission home were good, and he was impressed by the state government's plans for various schemes. But then he realised he was competing with families 'a damned sight worse off' than himself, and gave up the quest for housing assistance. He came to the conclusion that 'we can manage somehow for the present, and I reckon that we can build our own little place'.[1] He had realised that all he needed was enough cash for a small deposit to obtain a loan from a government bank. [1] A house and land package through the bank could allow him to buy 'a good sort of block in Ascot Vale with a 50ft frontage' and 'plan the conventional, safe suburban home, passage more or less in the centre, rooms off to the left and right, kitchen down the back, and bathroom off the hall'.[2]

Land was available; there were an estimated 20,000 vacant building blocks within the metropolitan area, as well as many more on the outskirts not covered by water and sewerage services. After 1945, the building industry had diverted to domestic housing and achieved a record peak in production, but the number of homes built could still not meet the demand. Robin Boyd wrote that even by 1950 'many thousands still lived in unsatisfactory accommodation: in temporary, converted army camps, in tents, in caravans, and with in-laws'.[3] Rising costs also made the purchase of a home prohibitive. Boyd noted that the average brick, five-roomed home cost about £1,200 in 1939 at the start of the war. By the end of the war it had risen to £1,700, and five years later, in 1950 it had reached £2,500.[4] As a consequence, timber houses increased in number, brick veneer replaced solid brick, and new, easily mass-produced materials such as concrete blocks, cement tiles and asbestos cement sheeting were chosen for their affordability.

To further reduce costs and cope with labour shortages, many people decided to tackle the job of building their own homes, and Boyd estimated that by 1951, every third new house 'was being built by its owner', a practise that was acceptable to banks providing the housing loans.[5] Indeed, as early as 1945, a Gallup poll of people sharing accommodation revealed that

one-third intended to build their own house as soon as they could. The austere style we associate with the immediate post-war years reigned, with common red bricks and weatherboards, standard windows and unpretentious, functional lines predominating. As observed by Boyd, 'material shortages and economy ruled every detail' during this period.[6] The 'new social phenomenon of owner builders' endured into the 1950s, and the playwright David Williamson (b.1942) remembers visiting his cousin's house at Niddrie, then an outer suburb, and seeing 'all these guys building their houses. It used to be the Australian pastime; they'd work all week and then spend the weekends building their homes-to-be…'.[7]

Earlsbrae Park Estate

The Earlsbrae Park Estate (described as the 'beauty spot of Essendon') was first subdivided and offered for sale in 1924 and then again in 1926. However, it appears that there was limited development during these early years.

After a halt to domestic construction during the Second World War, in 1949 the Argus reported that private home building was also making progress, despite the lingering shortages of materials:

> *Hundreds of other homes have gone up in this [Aberfeldie] area to the west of the Essendon High School, and on either side of Buckley st. To the north they extend to Keilor rd …*
>
> *Only a few years ago this was open country, having a truly rural appearance …*
>
> *Some of the old homes still remain, but the large estates have all been subdivided to the west as far as Hoffman's rd, which is the Essendon City boundary. If the city keeps extending, building areas will go farther west and extend on both sides of Buckley st to the Maribyrnong itself.* [8]

Subdivisions for private housing in the Aberfeldie area had recommenced during the war, starting with the first stage of the Earlsbrae Park Estate. Advertised in February 1940, the new subdivision offered 200 home sites with frontages to The Boulevard on the Maribyrnong River.[9] Not all the blocks sold, and a further sale of Earlsbrae land was held in October 1949 with an auction of '75 choice villa sites' that had frontages to The Boulevard (made road), Clifton and Afton streets (unmade). It additionally offered blocks in the unmade Allan and May streets, where a number of Aberfeldie Estate housing commission homes had been completed by mid-1946. By the end of the decade, many new houses had been built on the Earlsbrae Park Estate and more were in the course of erection.[10]

Place history

There was very little development within the precinct prior to the late 1930s. Development occurred along most the western side of Fawkner Street during the early 1940s, with further intensive development taking place during the mid 1940s. By 1951 the precinct was fully developed.

The Sands and McDougall directories show that in 1930 the area along the eastern side of Fawkner Street, between Buckley and Arthur streets, had not been developed. Only one house had been constructed on the western side of Fawkner Street, between Doone and Ramsey streets. By 1936 there was still no development on the eastern side of Fawkner Street, between Buckley and Arthur streets (Sands and McDougall directory 1937).

The Sands and McDougall directories show that limited development had occurred along the eastern side of Fawkner Street during 1940, with six houses constructed, and two houses 'being built'. Houses on the western side were equally scarce, with only five houses listed. By 1941 the eastern side of Fawkner Street was still slow to develop, with only one further house under construction and one further house occupied. Three houses had been constructed along the western side of Fawkner Street (between Doone and Ramsay streets) during this year. No houses had yet been built between Ramsay and Arthur streets.

Within two years there had been further development along the eastern side of Fawkner Street, with houses lining Fawkner Street, from Arthur Street to the Boulevard (see 1944 the Sands and McDougall). However the directory only lists three houses between Roach and Arthur

streets. The western side of Fawkner Street was almost fully developed by 1944, with a total of seven occupied houses between Doone and Ramsay streets, and a total of four occupied houses between Ramsay and Arthur streets.

An aerial photo taken of Aberfeldie in 1946 [11] shows a number of houses stretching along the western side of Fawkner Street, Doone Street and Arthur Street. However, the eastern side of Fawkner Street, between Muldowney Street and just north of Roach Street appears empty. There appears to be only one house on the eastern corner of Fawkner and Roach streets. The Sands and McDougall directory from the same year (1946) lists 11 occupied houses along the western side of Fawkner Street, between Doone and Arthur streets, with only 3 occupied houses between Arthur Street and Roach Avenue (outside of the precinct boundary).

By 1951 it appears that nearly all of the houses within the precinct were built and occupied, apart from number 55 Fawkner Street (built in 1954). Muldowney Street is listed in the directory for the first time.

Resources:

[1]*Argus,* 24 April 1946, p 23.
[2] *Argus*, 8 May 1946, p19.
[3] Robin Boyd, *Australia's Home*, Ringwood: Penguin, 1968 [1952], p115.
[4] Boyd, *Australia's Home*, p 115.
[5] Boyd, *Australia's Home*, p 118.
[6] Boyd, *Australia's Home*, p 118.
[7] Cited from Tony Dingle, 'Necessity the Mother of Invention', in Patrick Troy (ed.), *A History of European Housing in Australia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p.68.
[8] *Argus*, 16 July 1949, p6.
[9] Chalmers, *The Annals of Essendon Volume 2*, p174, cited from *Essendon Gazette*, 8 February, 1940.
[10] *Argus*, 8 October 1949, p17.
[11] University of Melbourne, 2012. 1945 photo-map (Aberfeldie), <http://www.lib.unimelb.edu.au/collections/maps/historical/1945melb/index.html>, accessed 13 May 2013

Applicable themes

This precinct illustrates the following themes, taken from the *Moonee Valley Thematic Environmental History* (Living Histories, 2012):

6.3 Shaping the suburbs

6.7 Making homes for Victorians

Comparative analysis

Housing construction slowed with the outbreak of the Second World War, but did not halt entirely until early 1942, when a ban was placed on the construction of all new houses within a radius of 25 miles from the Melbourne GPO.[1] After a slow start in the pre-war years, construction in the area around the precinct appears to have begun in earnest in the early war years, with the west side of the precinct built up by 1944. In 1945, construction material shortages remained and to combat this, the Commonwealth Government placed restrictions on the maximum size of dwellings. A timber house could be no larger than 1200 square feet (about 110 square metres) and a brick house no more than 1250 square feet (about 115 square metres) until 1952. As the result of these two factors, houses of this era, including all of those on the eastern side of the precinct, were compact with small, single-purpose rooms, and they lacked spacious front porches or verandahs.[2]

The trend toward functionalism and clean lines was continued from the late 1930s, and amplified by the materials shortage and rising cost of labour. These stripped-back houses, with

the slab-like chimney and functionalist corner windows often the only decorative feature, are know as the 'austerity' style. Post-war brick houses were first built of red and clinker brick or occasionally rendered, carrying over preferences from the 1930s, but this transitioned to the use of cream brick which predominated from around 1950, first in a darker apricot colour and then a light yellow. Roofs were generally clad in terracotta tiles.[3] When brick was not available, the materials shortage caused creativity in sourcing other cladding materials such as traditional timber weatherboards, of which one example is present in the precinct, with other materials including fibro-cement sheet, mass concrete and steel.

The precinct contains a compact collection of houses that provide a good representation of the stylistic and material changes and continuities that were seen just prior to the ban on construction in 1942 and the immediate post-war development in the area. Unlike much of the surrounding estate, this original grouping has not been fragmented by more recent development, and all of the contributory houses retain a high degree of integrity. A modest expression of pre-war styles is visible in the earlier houses, and while this is echoed in the post-war structures, it is restrained by the material austerity of the time.

While the theme of post-war residential development is an important one in the history of Moonee Valley, as it represents the third major phase of expansion in the City, few heritage places or precincts have been identified to illustrate these themes.

While some precincts protected for their interwar housing stock, such as the Woodland Street Precinct (HO352), Strathmore, the Newhall Avenue Precinct (HO326), Moonee Ponds, and the Peterleigh Grove Precinct (HO3), Essendon, include as contributory a few early post-war houses as they are complementary in scale, form and materials, no precincts demonstrating post-war development are on the Moonee Valley Heritage Overlay as yet.

There are a small number of post-war buildings protected individually on the Heritage Overlay, but only one of them is a residence (HO333 – 38 Henry St, Keilor East, of 1966). The others include a school, three churches, a community centre, and a shop. None of them provide an appropriate comparison for the Earlsbrae Estate.

Sources:

[1] Cuffley, P. *Australian Houses of the Forties & Fifties*, 1993, p 56.
[2] Cuffley, P. *Australian Houses of the Forties & Fifties*, 1993, p 73.
[3] Burchell, L. *Recognising House Styles, 1880s-1990s*, 1991, p 22.

Assessment of significance

The following statement of significance sets out the cultural heritage significance of this precinct against the Hercon model criteria for the assessment of heritage values:

What is significant?

The Fawkner Street Precinct, comprising 34b-44 and 37-55 Fawkner Street, Aberfeldie, is significant. The precinct is a residential area comprising houses at the north end of Fawkner Street which were constructed prior to 1946 along the western side of the precinct, and in a similar style between 1946 and 1951 along its eastern side. The precinct contains a compact collection of mainly brick houses that provide a good representation of the stylistic and material changes and continuities that were seen just prior to and after World War Two. The majority of the houses retain their original low brick front fence, punctuated by pillars and sometimes with decorative crenelation.

The following features and elements are integral to the significance of the precinct:

- The extent to which the slow nature of the transition in housing styles just prior and after World War, and the simplification of these styles by post-war austerity measures is apparent;

- The relatively high integrity of the contributory buildings and their setting when viewed from the street;
- The authentic unified streetscape of original brick front fences presented at the staggered cross-roads formed by the junctions of Fawkner Street with Ramsay Street and Roach Avenue.

The heavily altered house at 42 Fawkner Street and non-original alterations to the contributory houses or front fences are not significant.

How is it significant?

The Fawkner Street Precinct is of local historical and architectural significance to the City of Moonee Valley.

Why is it significant?

The Fawkner Street Precinct is historically significant as tangible evidence of the major period of development of Aberfeldie and the Earlsbrae Park Estate. While the first subdivision of the 'beauty spot of Essendon' dates to the 1920s, there was minimal growth until the end of the interwar period. Subdivision recommenced in 1940, with a few houses built within the precinct prior to the ban on new housing construction from 1942. After the lifting of the ban in 1945, the pent up demand for housing resulted in the rapid development of the remainder of the precinct, and the rest of the Earlsbrae Estate, by the mid-1950s. (Criterion A).

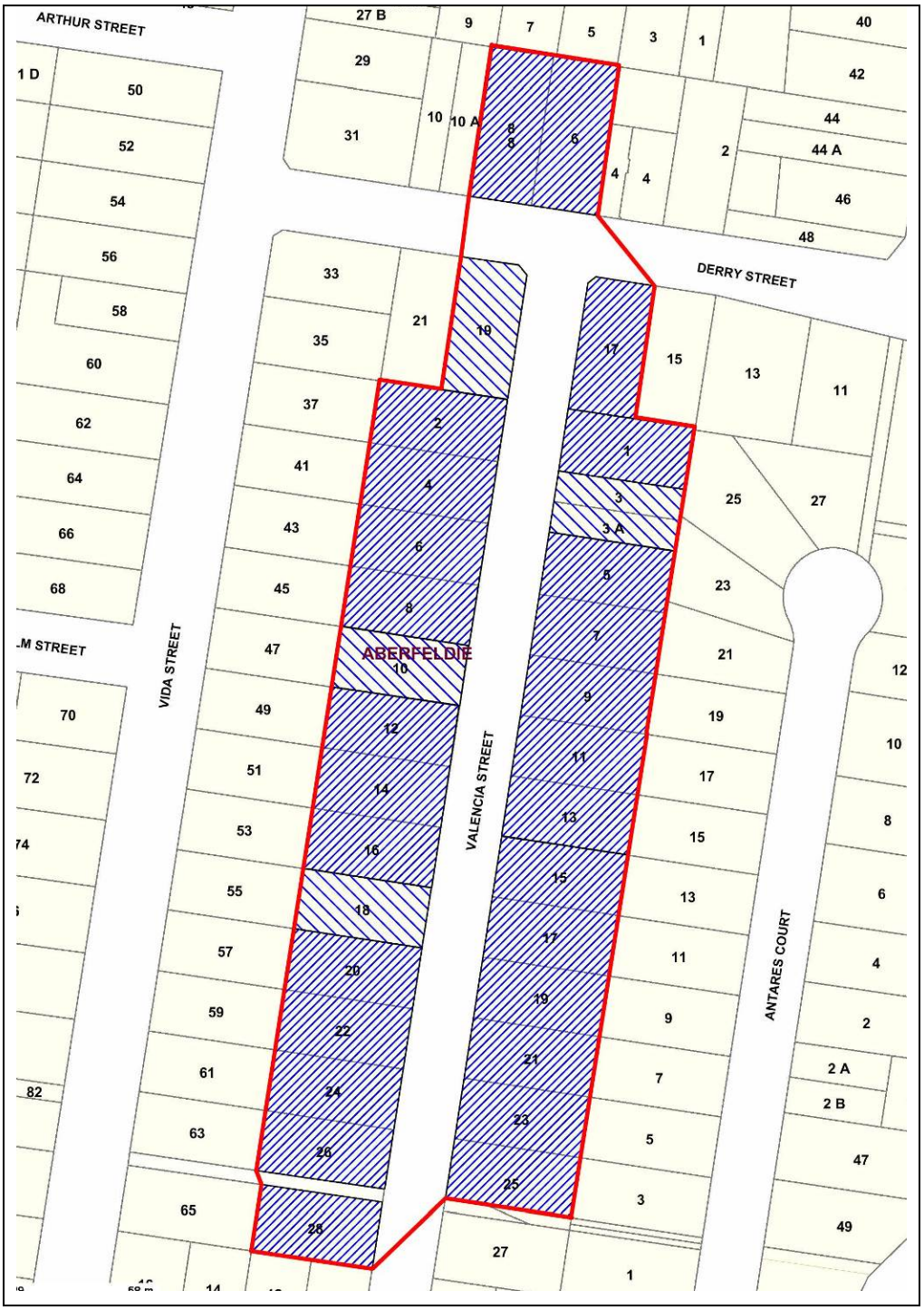
The Fawkner Street Precinct is architecturally significant as a particularly intact example of a suburban vernacular streetscape within the Earlsbrae Estate, comprising a collection of related house types and styles which demonstrate the stylistic continuity from the early war years to the post-war period, with some simplification of the interwar styles due to post-war austerity measures (Criterion D).

Statutory recommendations

Not recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Moonee Valley Planning Scheme as a precinct.

Valencia and Derry Streets Precinct (May Park Estate)

6, 8 & 17 Derry Street, 1-25 & 2-28 Valencia Street, Aberfeldie



Description

The precinct includes 6, 8 and 17 Derry Street and 1-25 and 2-28 Valencia Street, comprising a residential streetscape of houses constructed at the end of the 1940s and in the first half of the 1950s. Broadly speaking, the houses on the north side of Derry Street are earlier, dating to the late 1940s, followed by those at the southern end and western side of Valencia Street, most of which date to the early 1950s. The precinct as a whole, which was fully built up by 1956, demonstrates the progression and retention of styles through the later post-war period.

Earlier houses in the sequence are constructed of clinker red brick, while the later are in cream or clinker cream brick and weatherboard examples occur throughout. Of the brick houses,

many use more than one type of brick, with some of the earlier examples having decorative banding and lintels, and only Nos. 9 and 19 have been more recently rendered. The clinker cream brick house at No. 11 features a red brick plinth and concrete window hoods. Functionalist corner windows and horizontal window panes are prevalent, and most retain their original steel fixtures although some have aluminium direct replacements and a few examples have been replaced with large picture windows and a later bay window at No. 25.

House forms almost all incorporate complex hip roofs with projecting front bays, although 23 Valencia Street, the L-shaped 24, and 25 all have simple gable end roofs, as does 15. The latter is a weatherboard building with a chevron floor plan aligned differently from the adjacent properties to provide a northern aspect. It may be architect designed, possibly deriving from the *Age* newspaper's Small Homes Service. Roofs are covered with terracotta or concrete tiles, the exception being that of 19 Valencia Street which has been replaced with Colorbond corrugated steel.

Chimneys are generally square or slab forms, with the slab chimney of 6 Derry Street featuring a simple Art Deco stepped motif that matches the pillars of its original garden fence, but the fancier waterfall motif is present in the form of those of 5 and 17 Valencia Street and in relief detail for that of 7. Porches are generally simple concrete hoods supported on metal posts, decorative mild-steel supports or a single Doric column in the case of 9 Valencia Street. That of No. 16 retains its mild steel decorative balustrade.

Amongst the contributory buildings, additions are largely limited to simple carports and roller blinds over windows. No. 13 Valencia Street features a new porch which borrows elements of the original structure. There are recessive rear additions to the houses at 6 and 24 Valencia Street. All appear to be in good condition and retain their original form, and most have a high degree of integrity. Four non-contributory buildings, each of two storeys, are present in the precinct, including a c.1970s house at 18 Valencia Street, heavily altered earlier houses at 19 Derry Street and 10 Valencia Street and a modern duplex at 3-3A Valencia Street. All maintain the same setback as the rest of the houses in the precinct, and the latter three include/retain elements of roof-line which replicate those of the surrounding structures. The original forms of 19 Derry Street and 10 Valencia Street are however largely unrecognisable.

Many properties retain their original low front fences, in the same brick as the house and sometimes decorated with crenelations or Art Deco pyramidal brickwork on the pillars. These present a fairly uniform street frontage, with some variations including an original chain-link fence at No. 8. There are also some high replacement fences. No. 25 Valencia Street has stone 'crazy paving' flower beds, at the front corners of the garden, which are said to date from the 1960s. Similar fences are seen at 16 and 28 Valencia Street. The original brick front fences of 6, 8 and 17 Derry Street, together with that of the non-contributory 19 Derry Street (although part of this has been topped with a high wooden fence), extend the unified streetscape up to the junction of the two roads at the northern end of the precinct.

Front gardens are almost always open lawn surrounded by beds containing flowers, shrubs and small trees. Nos. 20 and 22 Valencia Street are fine examples, possibly containing their original 1950s plantings of roses and fruit trees. Two-track driveways are common, often with later garages that are usually set back from the house. The wide nature strips, punctuated by Prunus trees and the street's original bluestone gutters provide a consistent and authentic approach to the public realm for the length of the street.

History

Thematic history

Post-war Estates 1945-1950

In 1946, the Argus newspaper published a weekly series for potential home-owners who were despairing over finding a place in which to live. It was the height of the housing shortage after World War II and Victoria had 80,000 people looking for accommodation. The series follows the story of returned soldier Bill Brown, his wife and two grown up children as they tell of 'rent rackets', long queues, shortages of building materials and 'black marketeers' who were selling existing houses for extortionate prices. At first Bill considered joining thousands of battlers in the ballot for Housing Commission accommodation. As an ex-serviceman, he knew his chances of obtaining a commission home were good, and he was impressed by the state government's plans for various schemes. But then he realised he was competing with families 'a damned sight worse off' than himself, and gave up the quest for housing assistance [1]. He came to the conclusion that 'we can manage somehow for the present, and I reckon that we can build our own little place'. [2] He had realised that all he needed was enough cash for a small deposit to obtain a loan from a government bank. A house and land package through the bank could allow him to buy 'a good sort of block in Ascot Vale with a 50ft frontage' and 'plan the conventional, safe suburban home, passage more or less in the centre, rooms off to the left and right, kitchen down the back, and bathroom off the hall'.[3]

Land was available; there were an estimated 20,000 vacant building blocks within the metropolitan area, as well as many more on the outskirts not covered by water and sewerage services. After 1945, the building industry had diverted to domestic housing and achieved a record peak in production, but the number of homes built could still not meet the demand. Robin Boyd wrote that even by 1950 'many thousands still lived in unsatisfactory accommodation: in temporary, converted army camps, in tents, in caravans, and with in-laws'.[4] Rising costs also made the purchase of a home prohibitive. Boyd noted that the average brick, five-roomed home cost about £1,200 in 1939 at the start of the war. By the end of the war it had risen to £1,700, and five years later, in 1950 it had reached £2,500.[5] As a consequence, timber houses increased in number, brick veneer replaced solid brick, and new, easily mass-produced materials such as concrete blocks, cement tiles and asbestos cement sheeting were chosen for their affordability.

To further reduce costs and cope with labour shortages, many people decided to tackle the job of building their own homes, and Boyd estimated that by 1951, every third new house 'was being built by its owner', a practise that was acceptable to banks providing the housing loans. [6] Indeed, as early as 1945, a Gallup poll of people sharing accommodation revealed that one-third intended to build their own house as soon as they could. The austere style we associate with the immediate post-war years reigned, with common red bricks and weatherboards, standard windows and unpretentious, functional lines predominating. As observed by Boyd, 'material shortages and economy ruled every detail' during this period.[7] The 'new social phenomenon of owner builders' endured into the 1950s, and the playwright David Williamson (b.1942) remembers visiting his cousin's house at Niddrie, then an outer suburb, and seeing 'all these guys building their houses. It used to be the Australian pastime; they'd work all week and then spend the weekends building their homes-to-be…'. [8]

May Park Estate

Because domestic building had virtually ceased between 1939 and 1945, the acute housing shortage endured through the war years as well. It prompted the Victorian government to introduce a regulation that restricted land 'sales to one allotment to each person provided they do not already own an allotment suitable for a house'.[9] The *Argus* reported that the sale of 52 blocks of land in Essendon's May Park Estate, on Saturday 13 February 1943, was the first subdivisional auction held after the introduction of the regulation. The land extended on the west side of Aberfeldie Park, in Vida Street (made road) as well as in Valencia and Derry

streets (both unmade), and although about 200 people attended the auction, only 9 of the blocks were sold.

Place history

There was little development within the precinct prior to 1950. By 1955 there were twice as many houses along the western side of Valencia Street, compared to the eastern side. The precinct was fully developed by 1956.

The May Park Estate was first subdivided and offered for sale in 1942 [10], with Valencia, Vida, Derry and Tilba streets marked out. However an aerial photo taken of Aberfeldie in 1946 [11] shows that Valencia Street had not yet been laid and that no development had occurred along it. However, housing stock can be seen along Derry Street, with what appear to be 5 houses between Vida and Aberdeen streets, and facing onto Derry Street.

The 1948 Sands and MacDougall directory lists one occupied house along Derry Street and notes that another house was 'being built'. A year later, the directory shows that there is a further occupied house on the northern side of Derry Street, adjacent to Valencia Street, and it lists the numbers as 6 and 8.

The 1950 Sands and McDougall directory shows that there was no development along the eastern side of Valencia Street, but that there were 2 occupied houses along the western side of the street with a further '3 houses being built'. One of these would have been 26 Valencia Street, built in 1947 (Pers. comm., J Clark, 2014). A year later there was one newly occupied house at the eastern side of Valencia Street, and another house being built, while there were another 3 houses being built on the western side of the street.

The directory shows that by 1953 there was a total of 5 houses constructed along the eastern side of Valencia Street (numbers 9, 17, 19, 23 and 25) and that a further 3 houses were 'being built'. Along the western side of Valencia Street 5 newly occupied houses are listed (now a total of 10 houses along the western side, at numbers 2, 6, 10 ,14, 16,18, 22, 24, 26 and 28), while

another 4 house were 'being built'. There was a single house on the southern side of Derry Street between Aberdeen and Valencia streets (11) and one other was 'being built'.

By 1956 it appears that the entire lengths of Valencia and Derry streets had been developed.

References:

[1] Argus, 24 April 1946, p23.
[2] Argus, 24 April 1946, p23.
[3] Argus, 8 May 1946, p19.
[4] Robin Boyd, *Australia's Home*, Ringwood: Penguin, 1968 [1952], p115.
[5] Boyd, Australia's Home, p115.
[6] Boyd, Australia's Home, p118.
[7] Boyd, Australia's Home, p118.
[8] Cited from Tony Dingle, 'Necessity the Mother of Invention', in Patrick Troy (ed.), *A History of European Housing in Australia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p.68.
[9]Age, 11 October 1945, p8.
[10] Plan of Subdivision LP 16052 Parish of Crown Allotment 3, Section 7, Parish of Doutta Galla.
[11] Department of Land and Survey, Aerial Survey of Victoria, Melbourne 848 B2A, 1946, held at University of Melbourne.

Applicable themes

This precinct illustrates the following themes, taken from the *Moonee Valley Thematic Environmental History* (Living Histories, 2012):

6.3 Shaping the suburbs

6.7 Making homes for Victorians

Comparative analysis

Housing construction slowed with the outbreak of the Second World War, but did not halt entirely until early 1942, when a ban was placed on the construction of all new houses within a radius of 25 miles from the Melbourne GPO[1]. After the war's end, in 1945, construction material shortages remained and to combat this, the Commonwealth Government imposed restrictions on the maximum size of dwellings until 1952. As the result of these two factors, houses of this era were compact with small, single-purpose rooms, and they lacked spacious front porches or verandahs [2].

The trend toward functionalism and clean lines was continued from the late 1930s, and amplified by the materials shortage and rising cost of labour. These stripped-back houses, with the slab-like chimney and functionalist corner windows often the only decorative feature, are know as the 'austerity' style. Post-war brick houses were first built of red and clinker brick or occasionally rendered, carrying over preferences from the 1930s, but this transitioned to the use of cream brick – first a darker apricot colour – which predominated from around 1950. Roofs were generally clad in terracotta tiles [3] When brick and terracotta tiles were not available, the materials shortage caused creativity in sourcing other cladding materials including traditional timber weatherboards and concrete terracotta-coloured tiles, both of which are common in the precinct, as well as fibro-cement sheet, mass concrete, and steel.

The houses in the precinct were all constructed at the end of the 1940s or during the first half of the 1950s. They thus lie towards the end of the austerity period, and while they continue the architectural styles of the 1930s and employ the same suite of materials available to the austerity house builder, the houses in the precinct also permit slightly more decorative features than are evident in some immediate post-war houses, probably reflecting a gradual relaxation of the materials shortage.

The houses on Valencia Street were all constructed within about a five year period, and, together with the three contributory houses on Derry Street, the precinct has a very consistent built form and streetscape and a high degree of integrity. In comparison with most of the May Park Estate, it has few recent and/or intrusive houses. It is thus an authentic and highly representative example of a late 1940s/early 1950s suburban estate which is predominantly comprised of houses that exhibit the continuation of post-war restraint into this decade, both in terms of stylistic development and material use, but also contains contemporary indications of deviation and progress, for example in the possibly architect designed No. 15.

While the theme of post-war residential development is an important one in the history of Moonee Valley, as it represents the third major phase of expansion in the City, few heritage places or precincts have been identified to illustrate these themes.

While some precincts protected for their interwar housing stock, such as the Woodland Street Precinct (HO352), Strathmore, the Newhall Avenue Precinct (HO326), Moonee Ponds, and the Peterleigh Grove Precinct (HO3), Essendon, include as contributory a few early post-war houses as they are complementary in scale, form and materials, no precincts demonstrating post-war development are on the Moonee Valley Heritage Overlay as yet.

There are a small number of post-war buildings protected individually on the Heritage Overlay, but only one of them is a residence (HO333 – 38 Henry St, Keilor East, of 1966). The others include a school, three churches, a community centre, and a shop. None of them provide an appropriate comparison for the Valencia Street Precinct.

Sources

[1] Cuffley, P. *Australian Houses of the Forties & Fifties*, 1993, p 56.
[2] Cuffley, P. *Australian Houses of the Forties & Fifties*, 1993, p 73.
[3] Burchell, L. *Recognising House Styles, 1880s-1990s*, 1991, p 22.

Assessment of significance

The following statement of significance sets out the cultural heritage significance of this precinct against the Hercon model criteria for the assessment of heritage values:

What is significant?

The Valencia Street Precinct, comprising 6, 8 and 17 Derry Street and 1-25 and 2-28 Valencia Street is significant. The houses in the precinct were all constructed at the end of the 1940s and the first half of the 1950s. They thus lie towards the end of the austerity period, and whilst they continue the architectural styles of the 1930s and employ the same suite of materials available to the austerity house builder, the houses in the precinct also permit slightly more decorative features than are evident in some immediate post-war houses, probably reflecting a gradual relaxation of the materials shortage.

The following features and elements are integral to the significance of the precinct:

- The form and stylistic details of the houses which demonstrate the extent to which pre-war styles persisted into the 1950s as a result of post-war austerity;
- The materials which were employed through this austerity period, particularly plain red, and later cream, brick and weatherboard, with concrete and terracotta tile roofs;
- The relatively high integrity of the contributory buildings when viewed from the street;
- The authentic unified streetscape of original brick front fences and constant setbacks.

The non-original houses at 18 and 3-3a Valencia Street, the heavily altered original houses at 19 Derry Street and 10 Valencia Street and non-original alterations to the contributory houses or front fences are not significant.

Although it is non-contributory, 19 Derry Street retains its original brick fence, and this contributes to the unity of the streetscape at the northern end of the precinct.

How is it significant?

The Valencia and Derry Streets Precinct is of local historical and architectural significance to the City of Moonee Valley.

Why is it significant?

The Valencia and Derry Streets Precinct is historically significant as tangible evidence of the rapid post-war development of Aberfeldie and the May Park Estate. While parts of May Park were first subdivided in the mid-1920s, it was in the immediate post-war period that most of the area was developed. The small subdivision of 1942 comprising Valencia Street and part of Derry Street provides a very cohesive picture of residential development in this period. (Criterion A).

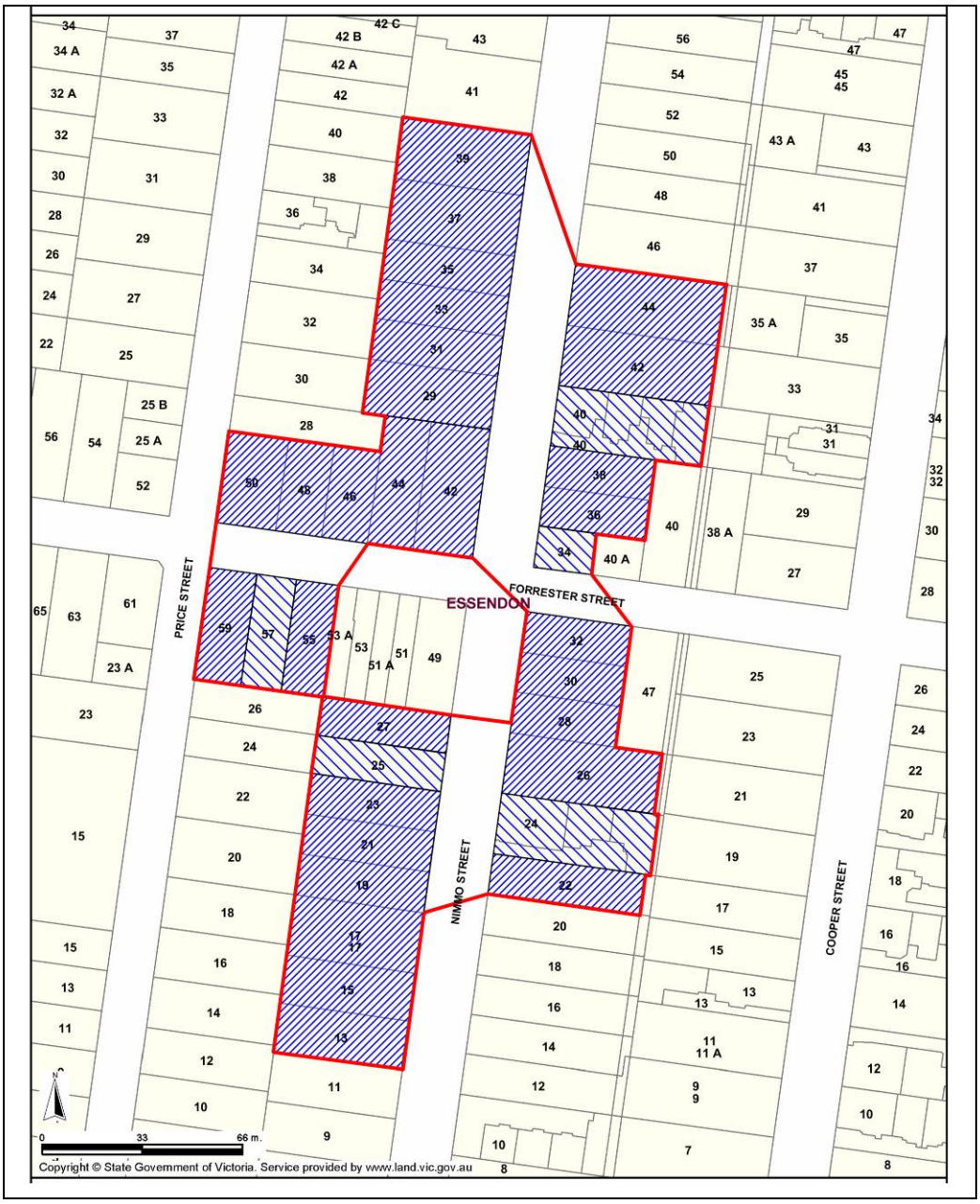
The Valencia and Derry Streets Precinct is architecturally significant as a good example the styles and materials employed in the suburban vernacular housing in the late 1940s and the first half of the 1950s, towards the end of the austerity period. It has a very consistent built form and streetscape with a high degree of integrity. (Criterion D).

Statutory recommendations

Not recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Moonee Valley Planning Scheme as a precinct.

Nimmo and Forrester Streets Precinct (Buckley Park Estate)

13-39 & 22-44 Nimmo Street, and 42-50 and 55-59 Forrester Street, Essendon



KEY

Significant

Contributory

Non-contributory

Description

The Nimmo and Forrester Streets Precinct in the Buckley Park Estate is centred on the junction of Nimmo and Forrester streets, containing 13-39 and 22-44 Nimmo Street, and 42-50 and 55-59 Forrester Street. These comprise some pre-1944 houses, with a few examples from the 1930s, to the north-east of the intersection of Nimmo and Forrester streets (with contemporary or earlier houses which have since been demolished on the opposite corner, to its south-west), a few late 1940s houses to the north west of the junction (46, 48 & 50 Forrester Street) and houses across the remainder of the precinct which date to the early 1950s.

House forms in the precinct almost all incorporate complex hip roofs with projecting front bays, although the opposing numbers 27 and 26 Nimmo Street and number 50 Forrester Street has a gable end roof. The former was originally an L-shape (although it now has a later extension to the rear) while the others also feature projecting front bays. All of the

contributory buildings are single-storey with the exception of the U-shaped number 17 Nimmo Street which is a good example of a virtually intact block of early 1960s cream-brick flats.

The majority of the houses in the precinct are constructed of brick, either variegated red or cream (sometimes with a red brick plinth) and some red clinker brick examples – this the case for all of those on Nimmo Street to the south of Forrester Street, and many employ a variety of brick types for decorative effect. Examples include the red brick Nos. 19, 42 and 44 Nimmo Street which feature bands of cream half bricks around the windows while No. 22 Nimmo Street also employs cream bricks to create a sloped window sill. No. 27, which has a corbelled gable with brick detailing in the Old English style also now features large rendered patches which may cover further decorative brickwork.

A few houses (Nos. 28, 30, 36, 38 Nimmo Street) appear to have been rendered in recent years, but 32 Nimmo Street and 46 Forrester Street were originally rendered and feature Art Deco stepped motifs in exposed brick, a motif which is also exhibited in the brick porch and over the window hoods of number 55 Forrester Street. Each of these three fine examples, which all sit near the centre of the precinct, also exhibit additional decorative features, such as the Old English style catslide tiled roof to the porch of 32 Nimmo Street. In the Art Deco style, 55 Forrester Street features a mild steel fence while 46 Forrester Street features decorative lead-lighting, stepped parapet porch on Doric columns, 'waterfall' chimney and decorative tile band in the front fence.

There are some weatherboard houses in the precinct, of which No. 31 Nimmo Street has a brick porch with a small gable roof. No. 33 Nimmo Street has a (recently) rendered porch, which creates a parapet above the porch in the Art Deco style.

Roofs throughout the precinct are generally clad in concrete tile with some terracotta tile examples, while chimneys are mostly simple square or slab types, with the exception of 55 Forrester Street and other Art Deco stepped examples at 42 and 48 Forrester Street and 30 Nimmo Street. Windows are timber or steel with some aluminium replacements and a few examples of enlargements. Functionalist corner windows are common throughout the precinct, with the remainder three-light examples with fixed centre panes and side sashes.

The original two-track driveways are retained by approximately half of the houses, and a slightly higher number still have their original low front brick fences, while original low timber and timber and wire fences are retained by 36 and 22 Nimmo Street, respectively. This proportion of original boundary treatments is sufficient to preserve the open relationship between front gardens, most of which still comprise grass lawns with planted borders and the very wide nature strip of Nimmo Street, which was one of the first streets in the area to be paved after the war. Despite the intrusive section on the opposite side of Forrester Street, the original fence of 42 Forrester Street plays a strong role in uniting the precinct.

A number of properties have rear additions which are not visible from the street, and later garages are generally set back from the house. Roof apexes with half timber detailing have been added to several houses, for example at the fairly heavily altered 48 Forrester Street where they now adorn the main hipped roof, the projecting front bay and the adjoining garage. Neo-Federation hoods have also been added to 21 and 35 Nimmo Street. Most houses in the precinct have simple concrete hood porches, cantilevered or supported on metal poles, and a couple of these have been filled in with large picture windows. Some windows have been replaced, most commonly with aluminium units, though most retain the original size of window openings. Reportedly, bands of cream brick above the windows of 27 Nimmo Street have been rendered over, as have the entire walls of 46 Forrester Street. At 29 Nimmo Street, reportedly half of the external brickwork has been replaced, along with approximately half of the roofing tiles, all of which has been done in a sympathetic manner. Overall, the contributory houses in the precinct exhibit a high level of integrity and appear to be in a good condition.

Non-contributory buildings in the precinct possess fairly sympathetic front fences and retain the original setback, and the two storey modern structures at 24 and 25 Nimmo Street make an attempt to maintain the character of the adjacent properties by employing similar first-storey

roof lines and brick first-storey facades. The style, scale and setback of the new house at 34 Nimmo Street on the north east corner of the junction of the two roads creates a sympathetic element at this very visible location. The recent French 'Second-Empire' mansion at number 57 Forrester Street is an exception to this, as it is visually intrusive.

A group of intrusive houses, including a significantly altered 1920s bungalow at the corner of Forrester and Nimmo streets (49 Forrester Street) and a series of four modern duplexes on half blocks (51-51A and 53-53A Forrester Street) are omitted from the precinct.

History

Thematic history

Post-war Estates 1945-1950

In 1946, the Argus newspaper published a weekly series for potential home-owners who were despairing over finding a place in which to live. It was the height of the housing shortage after World War II and Victoria had 80,000 people looking for accommodation. The series follows the story of returned soldier Bill Brown, his wife and two grown up children as they tell of 'rent rackets', long queues, shortages of building materials and 'black marketeers' who were selling existing houses for extortionate prices. At first Bill considered joining thousands of battlers in the ballot for Housing Commission accommodation. As an ex-serviceman, he knew his chances of obtaining a commission home were good, and he was impressed by the state government's plans for various schemes. But then he realised he was competing with families 'a damned sight worse off' than himself, and gave up the quest for housing assistance.[1] He came to the conclusion that 'we can manage somehow for the present, and I reckon that we can build our own little place'.[2] He had realised that all he needed was enough cash for a small deposit to obtain a loan from a government bank. A house and land package through the bank could allow him to buy 'a good sort of block in Ascot Vale with a 50ft frontage' and 'plan the conventional, safe suburban home, passage more or less in the centre, rooms off to the left and right, kitchen down the back, and bathroom off the hall'.[3]

Land was available; there were an estimated 20,000 vacant building blocks within the metropolitan area, as well as many more on the outskirts not covered by water and sewerage services. After 1945, the building industry had diverted to domestic housing and achieved a record peak in production, but the number of homes built could still not meet the demand. Robin Boyd wrote that even by 1950 'many thousands still lived in unsatisfactory accommodation: in temporary, converted army camps, in tents, in caravans, and with in-laws'.[4] Rising costs also made the purchase of a home prohibitive. Boyd noted that the average brick, five-roomed home cost about £1,200 in 1939 at the start of the war. By the end of the war it had risen to £1,700, and five years later, in 1950 it had reached £2,500.[5] As a consequence, timber houses increased in number, brick veneer replaced solid brick, and new, easily mass-produced materials such as concrete blocks, cement tiles and asbestos cement sheeting were chosen for their affordability.

To further reduce costs and cope with labour shortages, many people decided to tackle the job of building their own homes, and Boyd estimated that by 1951, every third new house 'was being built by its owner', a practise that was acceptable to banks providing the housing loans.[6] Indeed, as early as 1945, a Gallup poll of people sharing accommodation revealed that one-third intended to build their own house as soon as they could. The austere style we associate with the immediate post-war years reigned, with common red bricks and weatherboards, standard windows and unpretentious, functional lines predominating. As observed by Boyd, 'material shortages and economy ruled every detail' during this period.[7] The 'new social phenomenon of owner builders' endured into the 1950s, and the playwright David Williamson (b.1942) remembers visiting his cousin's house at Niddrie, then an outer suburb, and seeing 'all these guys building their houses. It used to be the Australian pastime; they'd work all week and then spend the weekends building their homes-to-be…' [8].

Buckley Park Estate

Buckley Park was initially subdivided in 1891[12], however, little development occurred until well into the twentieth century and unsold land within the estate was offered for sale at various times over the years. In 1914, lots at the south ends of Ogilvie and Bradshaw streets were offered for sale [13].

The extension of the electric tram to the Essendon Airport in 1943 stimulated building and subdivisional activity after the war, for factories as well as housing. Home sites in the Buckley Park Estate, which included frontages to the made road of Nimmo Street, were advertised in June 1949 [10]. This part of Essendon, between Buckley Street and Keilor Road, received a great deal of public attention in June 1947, when the Essendon Council's Parks and Grounds Committee proposed to sell 12 acres (4.85 hectares) of land it had bought in 1928 for £9,500. Residents had expected the council to eventually develop the site for parkland, not sell it off for housing as it was proposing. Their strong protests forced the council to reconsider the matter, and in October 1947, the Essendon Ratepayers League met in the North Essendon Presbyterian Hall to form a committee and work with the council to improve and develop Buckley Park as a community facility [11].

Place history

Development did not occur within the precinct until well into the twentieth century, and this was limited to the south and eastern sides of the estate. Fitful development occurred during the mid 1940s, and again during the early 1950s. By 1955 the precinct is nearly fully developed.

This interwar development was largely limited to the south and east sides of the estate. The Sands and McDougall directories (which are usually a year or two out of date) list only two houses within the precinct in 1941. These were 40 and 42 Nimmo Street. There was also a small amount of development occurring at the southern end of Nimmo Street (but outside of the Precinct).

The 1944 directory lists 8 newly occupied houses along the eastern side of Nimmo Street, among them were numbers 22, 34, 36, 38, 40, 42 and 44. Along the western side, there were '3 houses being built'.

A 1946 aerial of Essendon [14] shows the development in full swing along the eastern side of Nimmo Street, with housing stock visible between Mary and Buckley streets. The western side of Nimmo Street is a different story; there appear to be only two small pockets of development - where Nimmo and Forrester streets intersect there appears to be 3 houses. The area north-west of Nimmo and Forrester streets is vacant.

By 1947 the Sands and McDougall directories show that there was still limited development along Forrester Street with no occupied houses within the Precinct boundaries, and only one further house built and occupied along the western side of Nimmo Street (total now 4) . Three years later (1950) the directory lists 2 houses along the northern side of Forrester Street at 46 and 50, and 3 along the southern side at 49, 51, 53 Forrester Street. A 'house being built' is listed after number 53 Forrester Street. Price Street is listed for the first time. There also seems to be small flurry of development along Nimmo Street at this time. The directory notes that along the eastern side of Nimmo Street there is a 'house being built' and along the western side the directory lists 4 newly occupied houses and another 2 'houses being built' (8 total along western side).

By 1955 the precinct was very nearly fully developed. The Sands and McDougall directory lists Bradshaw Street for the first time and lists newly occupied houses along the northern side of Forrester Street including number 42. The directories also show a total of 7 houses are listed along the southern side of Forrester Street, with a further 2 'houses being built'. Nimmo Street appears to be fully developed by 1955, with housing stock along its eastern side at 22, 24, 26, 28, 30, 32, 34, 36, 38, 40, 42 and 44 and along the western side of the street at 13, 15, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 31, 33, 35, 37 and 39.

The block of cream brick flats at 17 Nimmo Street was slightly later than the rest of the precinct, as the site was still listed as vacant in the 1957 street directory. Current owners report that it was built in 1962.

References:

[1] *Argus,* 24 April 1946, p23.
[2] *Argus,* 24 April 1946, p23.
[3] *Argus*, 8 May 1946, p19.
[4] Robin Boyd, *Australia's Home*, Ringwood: Penguin, 1968 [1952], p115.
[5] Boyd, *Australia's Home*, p115.
[6] Boyd, *Australia's Home*, p118.
[7] Boyd, *Australia's Home*, p118.
[8] Cited from Tony Dingle, 'Necessity the Mother of Invention', in Patrick Troy (ed.), *A History of European Housing in Australia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p.68.
[10] *Argus*, 24 June 1949, p 9.
[11] Chalmers, *The Annals of Essendon Volume 2*, p278, cited from *Essendon Gazette*, 16 October, 1947.
[12] Plan of Subdivision LP 16120 Parish of Crown Allotment A and Pat of B, Section 13 and Part of Crown Allotment12, Parish of Doutta Galla.
[13] The Essendon Gazette and Keilor, Bulla and Broadmeadows Reporter, 2 April 1914, p.2.
[14] Department of Land and Survey, Aerial Survey of Victoria, Melbourne 848 B2A, 1946, held at University of Melbourne.

Applicable themes

This precinct illustrates the following themes, taken from the *Moonee Valley Thematic Environmental History* (Living Histories, 2012):

6.3 Shaping the suburbs

6.7 Making homes for Victorians

Comparative analysis

Housing construction slowed with the outbreak of the Second World War, but did not halt entirely until early 1942, when a ban was placed on the construction of all new houses within a radius of 25 miles from the Melbourne GPO [1]. After the war's end, in 1945, construction material shortages remained and to combat this, the Commonwealth Government placed restrictions on the maximum size of dwellings. A timber house could be no larger than 1200 square feet (about 110 square metres) and a brick house no more than 1250 square feet (about 115 square metres) until 1952. As the result of these two factors, houses of this era were compact with small, single-purpose rooms, and they lacked spacious front porches or verandahs [2].

The trend toward functionalism and clean lines was continued from the late 1930s, and amplified by the materials shortage and rising cost of labour. These stripped-back houses, with the slab-like chimney and functionalist corner windows often the only decorative feature, are know as the 'austerity' style. Post-war brick houses were first built of red and clinker brick or occasionally rendered, carrying over preferences from the 1930s, but this transitioned to the use of cream brick – first a darker apricot colour – which predominated from around 1950. Roofs were generally clad in terracotta tiles [3]. When brick was not available, the materials shortage caused creativity in sourcing other cladding materials including traditional timber weatherboards, fibro-cement sheet, mass concrete, and steel.

The Nimmo and Forrester Streets Precinct contains houses which span the length of the austerity period – from examples dating to just prior or during the Second World War through to houses with features that begin to evidence the styles of the post-austerity period, for

example the cream brick flats at 17 Nimmo Street. The precinct comprises a representative collection of houses, which clearly illustrate the retention of pre-war styles into the early 1960s, progress having been restrained by post-war restrictions.

There has been a great deal of recent demolition in the Buckley Park Estate of early post-war houses and their replacement with new houses and units, many of them unsympathetic or even intrusive in their setbacks and massing. The area around the intersection of Nimmo and Forrester streets contains some of the most intact and cohesive streetscapes in the Buckley Park Estate, comparable only to the proposed Bradshaw Street Precinct.

While the theme of post-war residential development is an important one in the history of Moonee Valley, as it represents the third major phase of expansion in the City, few heritage places or precincts have been identified to illustrate these themes.

While some precincts protected for their interwar housing stock, such as the Woodland Street Precinct (HO352), Strathmore, the Newhall Avenue Precinct (HO326), Moonee Ponds, and the Peterleigh Grove Precinct (HO3), Essendon, include as contributory a few early post-war houses as they are complementary in scale, form and materials, no precincts demonstrating post-war development are on the Moonee Valley Heritage Overlay as yet.

There are a small number of post-war buildings protected individually on the Heritage Overlay, but only one of them is a residence (HO333 – 38 Henry St, Keilor East, of 1966). The others include a school, three churches, a community centre, and a shop. None of them provide an appropriate comparison for the Nimmo and Forrester streets Precinct.

Sources:

[1] Cuffley, P. *Australian Houses of the Forties & Fifties*, 1993, p 56.
[2] Cuffley, P. *Australian Houses of the Forties & Fifties*, 1993, p 73.
[3] Burchell, L. *Recognising House Styles, 1880s-1990s*, 1991, p 22.

Assessment of significance

The following statement of significance sets out the cultural heritage significance of this precinct against the Hercon model criteria for the assessment of heritage values:

What is significant?

The Nimmo and Forrester Streets Precinct, comprising 13-39 and 22-44 Nimmo Street, and 42-50 and 55-59 Forrester Street, is significant. The precinct contains houses which span the length of the austerity period – from examples dating to just prior or during the Second World War through to those with features that begin to evidence the styles of the post-austerity period. The precinct comprises a representative collection of houses, and even a good example of mid-century flats that were built amongst them (17 Nimmo Street).

The following features and elements are integral to the significance of the precinct:

- The form and stylistic details of the houses which demonstrate the extent to which pre-war styles remained evident through the war years and then persisted into the 1950s as a result of post-war austerity;
- The materials which were employed through this austerity period, particularly plain red, and later cream, brick and weatherboard, with concrete and terracotta tile roofs;
- The relatively high integrity of the contributory buildings when viewed from the street;
- The authentic unified streetscape created by the original brick and wire front fences, constant set-backs, two-track driveways, and the wide nature strip along Nimmo Street.

The recent houses at 24 and 40 Nimmo Street and 52 and 57 Forrester Street and non-original alterations to the contributory houses or front fences are not significant. The recent house at 34 Nimmo Street is not contributory, but together with the original front fence and garden of 42 Forrester Street, its sympathetic design helps to tie the precinct together.

How is it significant?

The Nimmo and Forrester Streets Precinct is of local historical and architectural significance to the City of Moonee Valley.

Why is it significant?

The Nimmo and Forrester Streets Precinct is historically significant as tangible evidence of the rapid post-war development of the part of Essendon known as the Buckley Park Estate, which is situated between Buckley Street and Keilor Road. While the estate was first subdivided in 1891, the 1893 depression halted its development, with only a small amount of prewar houses constructed around the eastern and southern edges. It was only from the 1940s that the majority of the estate was developed, stimulated by the extension of the electric tram along Keilor Road as well as the general post-war housing shortage. (Criterion A).

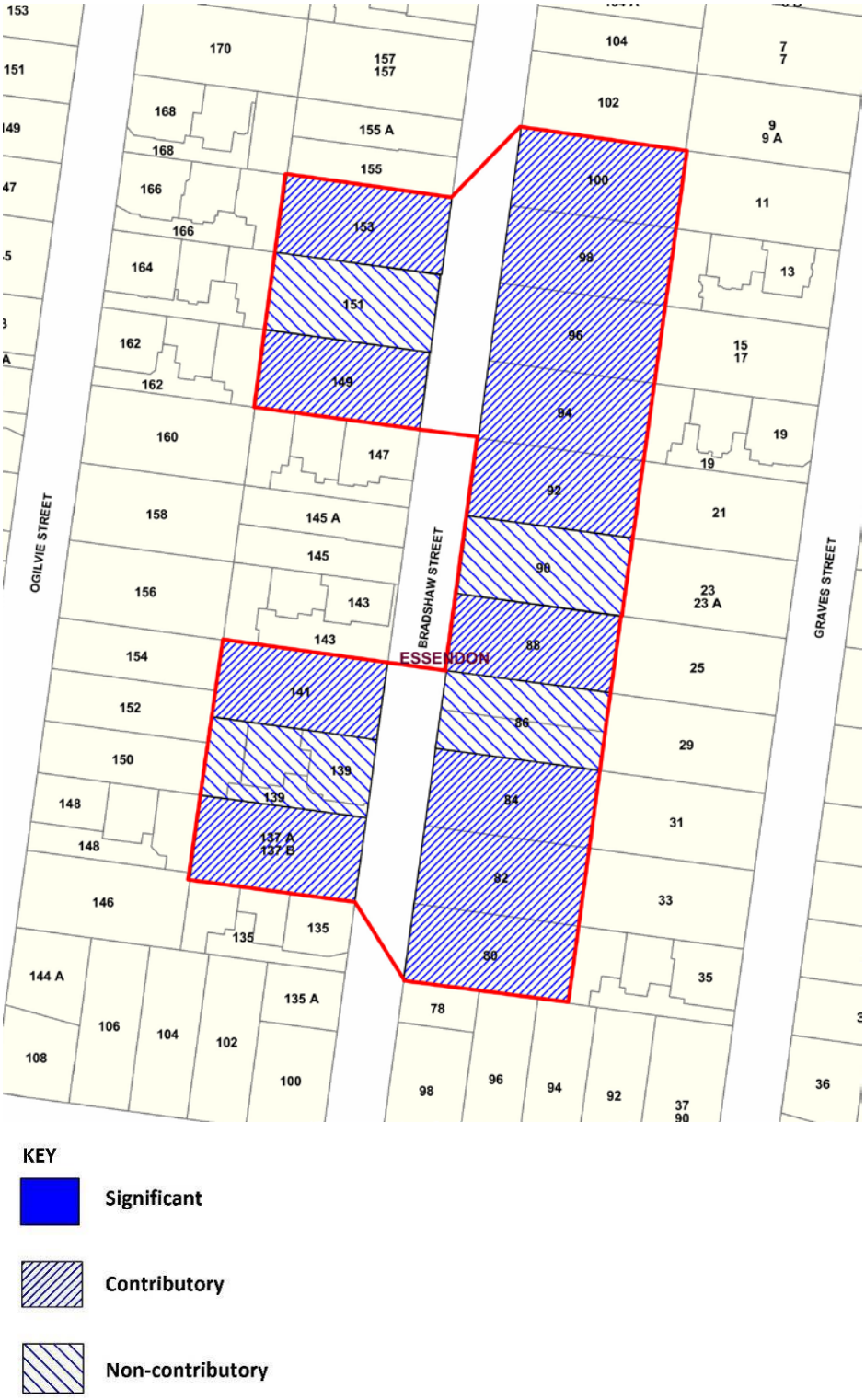
The Nimmo and Forrester Streets Precinct is architecturally significant as a good cross-section of the suburban vernacular housing stock created through the 'austerity period', from the early 1940s to the mid 1950s, illustrating the retention of pre-war styles and the employment of available materials to achieve them (Criterion D).

Statutory recommendations

Not recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Moonee Valley Planning Scheme as a precinct.

Bradshaw Street Precinct (Buckley Park Estate)

80-100, 137A-141,149 &153 Bradshaw Street, Essendon



Place description

The Bradshaw Street Precinct in the Buckley Park Estate comprises all of houses on the east side of Bradshaw Street, numbered 80 to 100, together with Nos. 137 (a & b) to 141 and 149 to 153 on its west side. All of these houses appear to have been built in the years between c.1950 and 1957, and together they display a good range of post-war austerity housing styles within a single street.

The predominant house form features simple or complex hipped roofs with front hipped, or occasionally gabled, bays. Roofs are all covered in terracotta or terracotta-coloured concrete

tile. Wall materials include variegated red brick, cream or rendered brick with a red brick plinth and weatherboard in roughly equal proportions. The houses are fairly austere, but decorative brickwork is visible on several examples, including an Art Deco motif on the chimney of No. 98 and recessed panels on the slab chimney of No. 80.

Chimneys are generally a simple square or slab in form, with the stepped examples at Nos. 88 and 98 the only exceptions. Windows are generally of the three-light timber variety with fixed centre pane and side sashes, and a few houses have corner windows, showing the continued influence of the functionalist style. Original timber and steel fittings survive, but approximately half appear to have aluminium replacements. However, replacement windows and the installation of roller blinds on many of the houses aside, the contributory houses generally retain a high degree of integrity and are in good condition.

Porches are recessed beneath the roofline of several of the houses on the west side of the street, while those on the east have concrete hoods supported on brick or classical columns. Those of Nos. 94 and 100 each have low brick parapet with Art Deco detailing to the front porch, possibly indicating the same builder. No. 141 has a stone 'crazy paving' letter box at the entrance to the two-track driveways.

Some of the contributory properties have low brick front fences, but the majority are open or defined by garden beds. The result is an open streetscape complementing the grassed nature strip.

The houses are generally intact, though many have had their original timber or steel windows replaced with aluminium units. An addition was constructed on the north side elevation of 94 Bradshaw Street in 1977, widening the façade by one bay. The walls have been faced with matching brick and the hip roof extended with the same terracotta tiles, so it blends in to the original extent of the house.

The contributory Old English house at 151 Bradshaw Street was demolished in 2014.

History

Thematic history

Post-war Estates 1945-1950

In 1946, the Argus newspaper published a weekly series for potential home-owners who were despairing over finding a place in which to live. It was the height of the housing shortage after World War II and Victoria had 80,000 people looking for accommodation. The series follows the story of returned soldier Bill Brown, his wife and two grown up children as they tell of 'rent rackets', long queues, shortages of building materials and 'black marketeers' who were selling existing houses for extortionate prices. At first Bill considered joining thousands of battlers in the ballot for Housing Commission accommodation. As an ex-serviceman, he knew his chances of obtaining a commission home were good, and he was impressed by the state government's plans for various schemes. But then he realised he was competing with families 'a damned sight worse off' than himself, and gave up the quest for housing assistance.[1] He came to the conclusion that 'we can manage somehow for the present, and I reckon that we can build our own little place'.[2] He had realised that all he needed was enough cash for a small deposit to obtain a loan from a government bank. A house and land package through the bank could allow him to buy 'a good sort of block in Ascot Vale with a 50ft frontage' and 'plan the conventional, safe suburban home, passage more or less in the centre, rooms off to the left and right, kitchen down the back, and bathroom off the hall'.[3]

Land was available; there were an estimated 20,000 vacant building blocks within the metropolitan area, as well as many more on the outskirts not covered by water and sewerage services. After 1945, the building industry had diverted to domestic housing and achieved a record peak in production, but the number of homes built could still not meet the demand. Robin Boyd wrote that even by 1950 'many thousands still lived in unsatisfactory accommodation: in temporary, converted army camps, in tents, in caravans, and with in-laws'.[4] Rising costs also made the purchase of a home prohibitive. Boyd noted that the

average brick, five-roomed home cost about £1,200 in 1939 at the start of the war. By the end of the war it had risen to £1,700, and five years later, in 1950 it had reached £2,500.[5] As a consequence, timber houses increased in number, brick veneer replaced solid brick, and new, easily mass-produced materials such as concrete blocks, cement tiles and asbestos cement sheeting were chosen for their affordability.

To further reduce costs and cope with labour shortages, many people decided to tackle the job of building their own homes, and Boyd estimated that by 1951, every third new house 'was being built by its owner', a practise that was acceptable to banks providing the housing loans.[6] Indeed, as early as 1945, a Gallup poll of people sharing accommodation revealed that one-third intended to build their own house as soon as they could. The austere style we associate with the immediate post-war years reigned, with common red bricks and weatherboards, standard windows and unpretentious, functional lines predominating. As observed by Boyd, 'material shortages and economy ruled every detail' during this period.[7] The 'new social phenomenon of owner builders' endured into the 1950s, and the playwright David Williamson (b.1942) remembers visiting his cousin's house at Niddrie, then an outer suburb, and seeing 'all these guys building their houses. It used to be the Australian pastime; they'd work all week and then spend the weekends building their homes-to-be…'.[8]

Buckley Park Estate

The extension of the electric tram to the Essendon Airport in 1943 stimulated building and subdivisional activity after the war, for factories as well as housing. Home sites in the Buckley Park Estate, which included frontages to the made road of Nimmo Street, were advertised in June 1949 [10]. This part of Essendon, between Buckley Street and Keilor Road, received a great deal of public attention in June 1947, when the Essendon Council's Parks and Grounds Committee proposed to sell 12 acres (4.85 hectares) of land it had bought in 1928 for £9,500. Residents had expected the council to eventually develop the site for parkland, not sell it off for housing as it was proposing. Their strong protests forced the council to reconsider the matter, and in October 1947, the Essendon Ratepayers League met in the North Essendon Presbyterian Hall to form a committee and work with the council to improve and develop Buckley Park as a community facility [11].

Place history

There was no development within the precinct before the late 1940s. During the early 1950s there was a flurry of development along Bradshaw Street and by 1957 the precinct was fully developed.

Buckley Park was initially subdivided in 1891[12], however, it remains largely undeveloped well into the twentieth century despite land within the estate being offered for sale at various times over the years, including lots at the south ends of Ogilvie and Bradshaw streets which were offered for sale in 1914 [13].

A 1946 aerial of Essendon [14] shows that Bradshaw Street had not been laid and that there was very limited development along it, or within its vicinity. There appears to be one house along the eastern side of Bradshaw Street, where it meets Market Street, and very few houses along Graves and Ogilvie streets. It does however appear that development was imminent, as looking east of Bradshaw Street, houses line each street.

The 1950 directory notes 2 occupied houses along the eastern side of Bradshaw Street, and a total of 4 houses 'being built'. Along the western side there were 3 occupied houses and 3 houses 'being built'. One of these was the Old English house at 151 Bradshaw Street, said to date from 1949 by a previous owner (demolished in 2014).

The 1951 directory lists 2 'houses being built' and 3 occupied houses along the eastern side of Bradshaw Street, at numbers 72, 82 and 90. Along the western side of Bradshaw Street 3 houses are listed as 'being built', one house to the south of number 145 and two to the north of it. There appears to be change in the numbering for Bradshaw Street for this year, as numbers along the western side, towards Keilor Road appear higher than they should, for

example the 1951 directory lists J. N Perth as occupying number 167 Bradshaw Street when by 1953 Perth is listed at number 155.

By 1955 we see more intensive development, with 8 newly listed houses at 80, 86, 90, 92, 94, 96, 100 Bradshaw Street. Another house is listed as 'being built' along the eastern side (in between numbers 96 and 98). However, there is no house listed at number 84. The western side of Bradshaw Street lists only one 'house being built', and occupied houses as 137, 139,143, 151 (demolished) and 153 Bradshaw Street.

Bradshaw Street appears to be fully developed by 1957, with occupied houses at numbers 80, 82, 84, 86, 88, 90, 92,94, 96, 98 and 100 Bradshaw Street (east side) and houses at 137, 139, 143, 147, 149, 151 and 153 Bradshaw Street (west side). The directory notes that a 'house is being built' between numbers 143 and 147. The 1959 Sands and MacDougall directory note that details are not available for number 145 Bradshaw Street.

References:

[1] *Argus,* 24 April 1946, p23.
[2] *Argus,* 24 April 1946, p23.
[3] *Argus*, 8 May 1946, p19.
[4] Robin Boyd, *Australia's Home*, Ringwood: Penguin, 1968 [1952], p115.
[5] Boyd, *Australia's Home*, p115.
[6] Boyd, *Australia's Home*, p118.
[7] Boyd, *Australia's Home*, p118.
[8] Cited from Tony Dingle, 'Necessity the Mother of Invention', in Patrick Troy (ed.), *A History of European Housing in Australia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p.68.
[10]*Argus*, 24 June 1949, p9.
[11]Chalmers, *The Annals of Essendon Volume 2*, p278, cited from *Essendon Gazette*, 16 October, 1947.
[12] Plan of Subdivision LP 16120 Parish of Crown Allotment A and Pat of B, Section 13 and Part of Crown Allotment12, Parish of Doutta Galla.
[13] The Essendon Gazette and Keilor, Bulla and Broadmeadows Reporter, 2 April 1914, p.2.
[14] Department of Land and Survey, Aerial Survey of Victoria, Melbourne 848 B2A, 1946, held at University of Melbourne

Applicable themes

This precinct illustrates the following themes, taken from the *Moonee Valley Thematic Environmental History* (Living Histories, 2012):

6.3 Shaping the suburbs

6.7 Making homes for Victorians

Comparative analysis

Housing construction slowed with the outbreak of World War Two, but did not halt entirely until early 1942, when a ban was placed on the construction of all new houses within a radius of 25 miles from the Melbourne GPO [1]. After the war's end, in 1945, construction material shortages remained and to combat this, the Commonwealth Government placed restrictions on the maximum size of dwellings. A timber house could be no larger than 1200 square feet (about 110 square metres) and a brick house no more than 1250 square feet (about 115 square metres) until 1952. As the result of these two factors, houses of this era were compact with small, single-purpose rooms, and they lacked spacious front porches or verandahs [2].

The trend toward functionalism and clean lines was continued from the late 1930s, and amplified by the materials shortage and rising cost of labour. These stripped-back houses, with the slab-like chimney and functionalist corner windows often the only decorative feature, are know as the 'austerity' style. Post-war brick houses were first built of red and clinker brick or

occasionally rendered, carrying over preferences from the 1930s, but this transitioned to the use of cream brick – first a darker apricot colour – which predominated from around 1950. Roofs were generally clad in terracotta tiles [3]. When brick was not available, the materials shortage caused creativity in sourcing other cladding materials including traditional timber weatherboards, fibro-cement sheet, mass concrete, and steel.

The Bradshaw Street Precinct comprises a collection of houses which illustrate all of the above characteristics of austerity housing but date from the early to mid 1950s, towards the end of the period. The contributory houses generally occupy larger blocks than are seen in contemporary estates elsewhere in the area, and 141 is larger than the other contributory buildings in the precinct, indicating that that it was constructed after 1952 and the lifting of size restrictions. Thus, while the houses in the precinct retain pre-war architectural styles, muted by post-war austerity, they also clearly demonstrate the gradual abandonment of the functionalist approach (for example in the relatively few corner windows) and the beginnings of post-austerity progression.

There has been a great deal of recent demolition in the Buckley Park Estate of early post-war houses and their replacement with new houses and units, many of them unsympathetic or even intrusive in their setbacks and massing. Key corner sites are particularly at risk, due to the ease at fitting in multiple units. The east side of Bradshaw Street, north of Market Street contains one of the largest intact streetscapes in the Buckley Park Estate. The west side of the precinct has, unfortunately, been broken into two discrete parts by a stretch of very intrusive development at its centre (143-147 Bradshaw Street, which has been excluded from the precinct). Despite this, the north and south section (137A-141 and 149-153) still interact with and reinforce the contributory houses opposite them.

While the theme of post-war residential development is an important one in the history of Moonee Valley, as it represents the third major phase of expansion in the City, few heritage places or precincts have been identified to illustrate these themes.

While some precincts protected for their interwar housing stock, such as the Woodland Street Precinct (HO352), Strathmore, the Newhall Avenue Precinct (HO326), Moonee Ponds, and the Peterleigh Grove Precinct (HO3), Essendon, include as contributory a few early post-war houses as they are complementary in scale, form and materials, no precincts demonstrating post-war development are on the Moonee Valley Heritage Overlay as yet.

There are a small number of post-war buildings protected individually on the Heritage Overlay, but only one of them is a residence (HO333 – 38 Henry St, Keilor East, of 1966). The others include a school, three churches, a community centre, and a shop. None of them provide an appropriate comparison for the Bradshaw Street Precinct.

Sources:

[1] Cuffley, P. *Australian Houses of the Forties & Fifties*, 1993, p 56.
[2] Cuffley, P. *Australian Houses of the Forties & Fifties*, 1993, p 73.
[3] Burchell, L. *Recognising House Styles, 1880s-1990s*, 1991, p 22.

Assessment of significance

The following statement of significance sets out the cultural heritage significance of this precinct against the Hercon model criteria for the assessment of heritage values:

What is significant?

The Bradshaw Street Precinct, comprising all of the houses on the east side of Bradshaw Street, numbered 80 to 100, together with Nos. 137 (A & B) to 141 and 149 to 153 on its west side, is significant. It comprises a collection of houses which illustrate the characteristics of austerity housing but date from the early to mid 1950s, towards the end of the period.

The following features and elements are integral to the significance of the precinct:

- The form and stylistic details of the houses which demonstrate the extent to which pre-war and functionalist styles persisted into the 1950s, as a result of post-war austerity, but began to give way as the decade progressed;
- The materials which were employed through this austerity period, particularly plain red, and later cream, brick and weatherboard, with concrete and terracotta tile roofs;
- The relatively high integrity of the contributory buildings when viewed from the street;
- The open streetscape created by low brick fences or open gardens along the grassed nature strip.

The modern houses at 86, 90 and 139 Bradshaw Street and non-original alterations to the contributory houses are not significant.

How is it significant?

The Bradshaw Street Precinct is of local historical and architectural significance to the City of Moonee Valley.

Why is it significant?

The Bradshaw Street Precinct is historically significant as tangible evidence of the rapid post-war development of the part of Essendon known as the Buckley Park Estate, which is situated between Buckley Street and Keilor Road. While the estate was first subdivided in 1891, the 1893 depression halted its development, with only a small amount of prewar houses constructed around the east and south edges. It was only from the 1940s that the majority of the estate was developed, stimulated by the extension of the electric tram along Keilor Road as well as the general post-war housing shortage. (Criterion A).

The Bradshaw Street Precinct is architecturally significant as a good representation of the suburban vernacular housing stock created through the continuation of the 'austerity period' into the mid 1950s, illustrating the retention of pre-war styles and the employment of available materials to achieve them, but also the gradual easing of these restrictions as the decade wore on. The later houses clearly demonstrate the gradual abandonment of the functionalist approach (for example in the relatively few corner windows) and the beginnings of post-austerity progression. (Criterion D).

Statutory recommendations

Not recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Moonee Valley Planning Scheme as a precinct.

Moonee Valley Language Line

عربي	Arabic	9280 0738	Ελληνικά	Greek	9280 0741	Español	Spanish	9280 0744
中文	Cantonese	9280 0739	Italiano	Italian	9280 0742	Türkçe	Turkish	9280 0745
Hrvatski	Croatian	9280 0740	Somali	Somali	9280 0743	Việt-ngữ	Vietnamese	9280 0746

All other languages 9280 0747

National Relay Service 133 677 or iprelay.com.au

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