

PRECINCT - WARRANDYTE TOWNSHIP

Place No. 34

ADDRESS Yarra Street, Brackenbury Street
Warrandyte

Last Update 28/06/2005

DESCRIPTION INTRODUCTION

Warrandyte Township precinct comprises the properties on either side of Yarra Street extending from Tresize Street in the west to Russell Road in the east (including parts of adjoining side streets), as well as Brackenbury Street between Mitchell Avenue & Mullens Road. At its core are commercial and civic buildings, which define the Warrandyte town centre and form the historic centre of the precinct. This is surrounded by residential areas at either end, and areas of informal parkland and open space between Yarra Street and the Yarra River. The overall character of the precinct is of an informal almost semi-rural village where the buildings are often secondary to the landscape elements, particularly the mature vegetation, which comprises a mix of native and exotic species that creates a distinctive cultural landscape character.

The buildings within the precinct that illustrate the key phases in the historic development of the Warrandyte township can be broadly grouped as follows:

CIVIC & COMMERCIAL GROUP

This group of buildings are generally situated between Whipstick Gully Road and Mitchell Street and is defined by two landmark buildings; At the western end, the two storey Grand Hotel, which dates from the Federation era, while the eastern end is terminated by the Warrandyte Mechanics' Institute. This forms the historic core of the centre and, along with the related group further to the east, best demonstrates the beginnings of the township during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

In between these buildings on the south side is a row of single storey shops of various dates, which includes an early twentieth century shops at Nos. 152-56 and 158. Although very altered, these retain some early elements including parapet detailing.

Development on the north side of Yarra Street is more intermittent. Notable buildings include the former Gospel Chapel at No. 103, the former Warrandyte Post Office at No. 111-17, and the group of three gabled, weatherboard shops at Nos. 183-197. There is another weatherboard shop at No. 207. There is a curious concrete ruin just to the east of this shop. These buildings are interspersed with areas of open space that allow views to the Yarra River. The trees are a mixture of native and exotics, which include Elm and Cherry trees. A local landmark is the 'Diary Tree', an old Monterey Cypress situated in a car park, which is in very poor condition.

Other elements, which contribute to the character of this commercial and civic group include kerb and channelling, and retaining walls fashioned out of Warrandyte stone, and a bluestone pitched drain on the Yarra leading through a car park to the River - this is situated almost directly opposite Mitchell Avenue. Toward the east end adjacent to the Yarra River is the ruins of the Warrandyte Dairy.

WARRANDYTE WAR MEMORIAL GROUP

A second node of buildings is situated around the intersection leading to the Yarra River bridge, which date from the late nineteenth century until the post-war period. On the south side of the bridge is the Warrandyte War Memorial, constructed of Warrandyte stone with stone pathways and terraces. To the east of the memorial is an intact Inter-war house, now used as a shop, which is adjacent to the former Warrandyte Wine Hall. The Wine Hall is a two story Victorian weatherboard building, built close to the street and is a local landmark. It is now used as a shop and residence. Opposite the Wine Hall is a postwar amenities block of unusual design. The angled walls are constructed of Warrandyte Stone on a lava rock base and there is a floating roof above. On the street side is a bus shelter, while toilets are located on the opposite side.

WARRANDYTE STYLE RESIDENTIAL

This part of the precinct comprises eastern end of Yarra Street and that part of Brackenbury Street between Mitchell Avenue and Mullens Road in Warrandyte, which is a narrow, serpentine road that winds around the side of the hill at the rear of the Warrandyte town centre. The steepness of the hill means the houses on the west side are mostly set down low beneath the road, while the houses to the east are elevated. The topography, together with the dense bushland and gardens means that many houses are partly or fully concealed from the road.

This part of the precinct includes the greatest number of houses in the 'Warrandyte Style', which were designed or built by Alexa Goyder and Myrtle Houston. The style refers to the use of random-rubble or earth construction sub-floor and chimneys, with the use of the lapped vertical timbers for first floors. The 'Warrandyte Style' houses include those designed by Goyder or Houston at 300-02 (Goyder's own house), and 314 and 318 Yarra Street.

The other houses in this part of the precinct are mixed in style, but are often simple rectangular plans, without architectural pretension, set in bushland. Some, while not pure examples of the 'Warrandyte Style' exhibit influences of it in the use of the materials, and in form and layout – these include 119, 130, 139, 151, & 152 Brackenbury Street and 306 Yarra Street.

YARRA STREET (WEST) RESIDENTIAL

The houses throughout this part of the precinct (generally to the west of the commercial area) are mixed in terms of their style and materials, however, most are detached and predominantly single storey and are set within gardens with mature trees. Of most interest are the inter-war era dwellings that illustrate the re-building of Warrandyte in the wake of the 1939 bushfires. A number of these dwellings exhibit elements the Warrandyte Style', which includes the use of local stone for chimneys and feature walls. Many of the other inter-war houses utilise light-weight materials such as fibro-cement that demonstrates the shortage of materials at the time of re-building during and after WWII. Such materials were also fire-resistant, which no doubt added to their appeal. Good examples of these houses are found at Nos. 48, 56, 64, 70, 76, 96 & 98 Yarra Street. A small number of interwar houses are constructed in brick including the former police station at No. 65, and at 71 & 212 Yarra Street.

CONTRIBUTORY ELEMENTS

Brackenbury Street
(odd) 119, 139 & 151*
(even) 130 & 152

Mitchell Avenue
Warrandyte Fire Station (former)*

Stiggant Street
9

Tresize Street
9*

Yarra Street
(odd) 45-55, 65*, 71*, 77* (Oak trees), 95, 103*, 111-17* (former Post Office), 183-87*, 189*, 193-97*, 207
(even) 18*, 32, 36-8*, 44, 48, 56, 64*, 70*, 76, 78, 96, 98, 112* (Grand Hotel), 152-56, 158 (former butcher), 180-86* (Mechanics' Institute), 204, 212, 220-30, 232-34* (former Wine Hall), 286, 300-04*, 306, 308, 314, 318*, 322*
Warrandyte War Memorial*, Diary Tree*, Elm trees, Cherry trees, stone retaining walls and kerb & channel, bluestone pitched drain (opposite Mitchell Avenue), Warrandyte Dairy ruins*, South Caledonia Mine ruins*

The places marked with an asterisk (*) have an individual citation in this Study, which provides additional information.

Condition	-	Integrity	Not known
Threats		Key elements	Buildings Landform Landscape Tree(s)
Designer			

HISTORY

GOLD RUSH TOWN: 1851-1915
Permanent settlement in the Warrandyte Township area followed the discovery of gold along Andersons Creek near Warrandyte in 1851 [1]. This was said to be the first officially recognised

gold discovery in Victoria. By 1856, when the Township of Warrandyte was surveyed, some alluvial gold workings in the vicinity were worked already worked out. These included the workings at Anderson's Creek, Specimen and Whip Stick Gullies. Other gold sites in the district continued to be worked until c1925 [2].

An early map of the Township of Warrandyte prepared on 20 August 1856 by C. Hodgkinson, District Surveyor, showed seven township blocks, which followed the curve of Yarra Street along the river [3]. The worked out alluvial gold sites were shown on this map. Blocks 1 to 7 were separated by the various worked out areas. It was noted that at each of these gullies 'Alluvial sinkings (were) worked out'. Quartz reefs were indicated at Fourth Hill, Garaghty's Hill and Scotchman's Hill. The new road, Yarra Street, followed the old track from Melbourne. At least four buildings were indicated, some in the middle of the new road. 'Littledale's Boundary Tent' was shown in Yarra Street beside the track from Melbourne and near Anderson's Creek. A 'Bark Hut' was indicated south of Anderson's Creek Gully, and also beside the old track. There was also a 'Warden's Tent' in the middle of Yarra Street, close to Shicher's Gully (site of the present Anderson Street). 'Garaghty's Store' stood beside the old track, near to Specimen Gully (near the site of Webb Street) [4].

During the 1860s and 1870s, there were gold workings along the Yarra River. The construction of the Pound Bend River Tunnel dates from 1870 and was planned so that 'the river bed could be worked for gold' [5]. Later, in 1895, a crushing machine, attached to the Warrandyte Government Battery, operated along the river bank [6]. From the 1880s, despite some continuing mining activity, the Warrandyte settlement became more pastoral in character. Market gardeners worked the river flats and orchards were planted in more hilly areas [7].

Little physical evidence remains today of the 19th century Warrandyte township. A very few buildings, or parts of them, have survived, the earliest dating from the 1870s. These include McAuley Cottage at 2 Russell Road, Hastings Cottage at 322 Yarra Street, the 1890s Grand Hotel, a local landmark, the former Post Office (c.1875) at 111 Yarra Street, and the former Wine Hall at 232 Yarra Street. There are also a number of township buildings that date from the first decade of the 20th century [8].

In c1904-5, there was a revival of mining activity at Warrandyte. It was reported at this time that Warrandyte was a thriving township. A Progress League was formed as well as a Masonic Lodge and an Independent Order of Oddfellows. Several sporting bodies were founded or re-formed. A Warrandyte Branch of the Political Labour League of Victoria (later known as the ALP) was formed on 23 March 1912 [9].

A c1908-9 map of the Town of Warrandyte still showed a small country village with a mere scattering of buildings along Yarra Street and down Webb Street [10]. A 1909 map of the 'Warrandyte Goldfield' showed some of the historic goldmining sites in the vicinity of Yarra Street, while others extended down to the Anderson's Creek area [11].

However, there was a gradual decline in mining in the Warrandyte district between 1910 and 1920 [12]. In 1923, miners of the Caledonia Mine obtained their last significant gold from this location and in 1925 the Warrandyte Government Battery's crushing machine was dismantled [13].

HOLIDAY RESORT & ARTISTS' RETREAT: 1915-39

During the first decades of the 20th century, as gold mining declined, other activities grew more important. With improvements in the district transport system, more visitors were attracted to the Warrandyte area, guest houses were opened and, later, holiday shacks were built [14]. Many artists moved into the Warrandyte area, attracted by the 'pretty little wooded village', particularly at holiday times [15]. One of the first in 1905 was Clara Southern, a successful artist, who married John Flinn, a Warrandyte miner. In c1908 they lived at 'Blythe Bank' on the Warrandyte-Research Road in present Warrandyte North on the other side of the river from the township. Southern encouraged other artists to come to the district. These included painters like Penleigh Boyd, Harold Herbert, 'Jo' Sweatman and Louis McCubbin (son of Fred). Jo Sweatman lived next door to Southern in 1910 [16]. There were friends of these artists who lived in the Warrandyte township side of the river, such as Olive Houghton, an amateur artist [17].

By the middle of the 20th century, Warrandyte was 'renowned as a spot for artists'. The little village encircled by woodland inspired many paintings including Southern's 'Evensong' and Sweatman's 'The Village', which depicted the township from the north side of the river [18]. One writer summed up the role of the district artist community in the development of Warrandyte township in these words:

“The majority of Warrandyte’s famous painters throughout the first half of the twentieth century lived north of the river... No matter where their houses were, however, artists came into the town for much of their social and artistic life, and influenced the social and cultural character of Warrandyte.” [19]

The township retained its village-like character. A 1919 Army Survey map still showed only a scattering of buildings along Yarra Street with the landmark hotel, church and a school [20]. From the 1920s, however, with the advent of the motor car, the ‘sleepy country town’ began to change into ‘a holiday resort packed by thousands of visitors every weekend ..’ [21]. Nevertheless, the town’s permanent population remained small and was only 400 in 1925 and again in 1935 [22]. A 1935 Army Survey map showed the emergence of a small shopping strip along a section of Yarra Street with a post office and shop, a general store and a recreation reserve. There was a brick house and tennis courts near the bridge across the river. A dressing shed (for swimmers) and a public toilet were located on the river bank, and there was a motor garage on the corner of Webb and Brackenbury Streets. Improvements in transport were indicated with Yarra Street shown as ‘a First Class Road’ and Webb Street as a ‘Second Class Road’. The township was located in a timbered area enclosed within the curving banks of the Yarra River[23].

On the eve of the Second World War, Warrandyte was described in Victorian Directories as a ‘residential and tourist resort on the Yarra River’, with a bridge across the river, public camping grounds and recreation reserves. Transport was by rail to Ringwood or by direct bus service to Melbourne [24].

The Victorian Directories, however, always referred to the alluvial and quartz mining sites in the area. Although mining had virtually ceased by c1925, the Warrandyte community always liked to look back to the gold discovery years. In 1935 a ‘Gold Miners Cairn’, marking the sites of the first payable goldfields in the district, was unveiled in Gold Memorial Road near Anderson’s Creek in Warrandyte [25].

AFTER THE BUSHFIRES: CREATING A ‘WARRANTDYTE STYLE’ 1939-

The 1939 bushfires had a devastating effect on the small Warrandyte township and the surrounding district. Many houses, including a number of old miners’ cottages and weekend shacks (‘weekenders’) were lost. After the fires, many small bungalows were built and there were new buildings constructed in the town. It was about this time that two local architects, Alexa Goyder and Myrtle Houston began to design and construct houses using local materials such as random-rubble sandstone or earth construction with a first floor of lapped vertical timbers. This became known as the ‘Warrandyte Style’ and was first formally identified by architect, Robin Boyd, in his 1952 work, ‘Australia’s Home’ [26].

Alexa Gordon-Cumming first visited Warrandyte in 1919 arriving in Australia from New Zealand. She worked as a journalist and wrote articles for the Argus newspaper. In 1925, Alexa married Guy Goyder, an accountant. They continued to visit Warrandyte [27]. During the Depression, the Goyders gave up their South Yarra flat and moved to Warrandyte. In 1934-35, Alexa became the owner of a tiny timber cottage at 32 Mullens Road, most probably built in 1919-20 for Mary Reddie [28]. During the same decade, they rented a Warrandyte cottage from Dora Southern, sister of the famous artist, Clara Southern. This was an old miner’s cottage of wattle and daub in Research Road, North Warrandyte, outside the present City of Manningham. This house was used as the first Potters Cottage [29]. In the late 1950s, a group of local potters formed a co-operative and moved into the cottage. This group became well-known for the production of handmade Australian pottery [30]. Through their associations with this group of artists and potters, the Goyders played an important role in the cultural and social life of the Warrandyte district.

During the 1930s, the Goyders also bought land in Warrandyte township, in Yarra and Brackenbury Streets. Their own house at 300-02 Yarra Street is a random-rubble, sandstone house. Local sandstone quarried from Victory Gully was used. The Goyders engaged a local stonemason, Kevin Sloan, ‘known for his work on various stone buildings in the area’ (including the Warrandyte war memorial in 1922) to help them [31]. In a 1973 interview when Goyder was 81, she told how this house was damaged in the 1939 fires which ‘burnt the entire upper story’, and had to be rebuilt [32]. By 1973, when Goyder was living still at 300 Yarra Street, she was reported to be as alert and mentally active as ever, but suffering from arthritis and failing sight. She had ‘a devoted family of cats’ and still enjoyed entertaining her friends in ‘the charming living room of the house she built so long ago’. Alexa died in 1975 [33].

The other female designer-builder, Myrtle Houston, who designed and built houses in Yarra and Brackenbury streets, was also operating in the Warrandyte area in the post-1939 years and may have collaborated with Goyder on some projects. She was associated with the construction of houses at Nos. 314 and 318 Yarra Street [34].

The Warrandyte style pioneered by Goyder and Houston was adopted by many other home owners and builders in the Warrandyte area and many houses and other buildings designed in (or inspired by) this style contribute to the special character of parts of the Warrandyte and Eltham districts today. A recent local history 'Manningham. From Country to City', commented on the importance of the 'work of local stonemason Kevin Sloan and the dwellings designed by Alexa Goyder and Myrtle Houston in the 1930s and 1940s', and told how in the 1980s the 'stone houses together with adobe (mud-brick) houses on both sides of the river in Warrandyte were of such interest to the public that the Warrandyte Post Office Preservation Group ran tours of them' [35].

In the 1950s, Warrandyte was described still as a 'tourist resort' with public camping grounds and recreation reserves' [36] By the 1970s, it was described as a 'residential township' with a recreation reserve but there was still a reference to the district's mining history, that is, the 'old alluvial and quartz mining area' [37]. This interest in its golden past was illustrated yet again on 30 June 2001 when Manningham City Council celebrated the 150th Anniversary of the discovery of gold at Warrandyte [38]. Former gold mining sites at Warrandyte have continued to be major tourist attractions and gold discovery is seen as a major theme in the history of Warrandyte and Manningham City Council.

Today, Warrandyte remains attractive to tourists, particularly to those interested in the history of gold and the arts. Visitors are drawn to the craft shops, the little tea rooms, now often converted into coffee shops, where craft work is sold and paintings by local artists are displayed. Currently, a room in the Warrandyte Museum is devoted to an exhibition of artists' history on both sides of the Yarra. Although there are many buildings of the 1940s, 1950s and later, Yarra Street is still dominated by a few buildings from earlier days.

SOURCES

- [1] Pertz & Walters, 'Manningham. From Country to City', p.218.
- [2] *ibid*, p.219.
- [3] 'The Township of Warrandyte', C. Hodgkinson, District Surveyor, 20 Aug. 1856.
- [4] *ibid*.
- [5] Louis R. Cranfield, 'The Golden History of Warrandyte', 1982, p.51.
- [6] Information supplied by Murray Houghton, Warrandyte Historical Society.
- [7] *ibid*.
- [8] Carlotta Kellaway, 'Doncaster & Templestowe Heritage Study. Additional Historical Research', July 1984.
- [9] Cranfield, *op.cit.*, pp.101-105.
- [10] Town of Warrandyte, 1908, Map W30K, Land Victoria.
- [11] Warrandyte Goldfield, 1909, reproduced in Pertz & Walters, p.51.
- [12] Houghton, *pers. comm.*, May 2005.
- [13] Pertz & Walters, *op.cit.*, pp.218, 219, 221.
- [14] Houghton, *pers. comm.*, May 2005.
- [15] Cranfield, *op.cit.*, p.101.
- [16] Pertz & Walters, *op. cit.*, p.103.
- [17] *ibid*, p.104.
- [18] *ibid*.
- [19] *ibid*.
- [20] Yan Yean, Army Survey map, 1919.
- [21] Cranfield, *op. cit.*, pp.101, 109.
- [22] Victorian Municipal Directory, 1925, 1935.
- [23] Yan Yean, Army Survey map, 1935.
- [24] Victorian Directories, 1939, 1940.
- [25] Pertz & Walters, *op. cit.*, p.221; Melway 23E1.
- [26] Context Pty Ltd, 'City of Doncaster & Templestowe Heritage Study', August 1991, pp.145-146.
- [27] Warrandyte Diary, 1 June 1973.
- [28] Carlotta Kellaway, *op. cit.*, pp.81-82 cites Shire of Doncaster & Templestowe Rate Books 1934-35
- [29] Pertz & Walters, *op. cit.*, p.111.
- [30] *ibid*.

- [31] Warrandyte Diary, 1 June 1973.
- [32] *ibid.*
- [33] *ibid*; T. Hart, 'Warrandyte Place Study,' RMIT, 1987.
- [34] Carlotta Kellaway, *op. cit.*, p.84.
- [35] Pertz & Walters, *op.cit.*, p.114.
- [36] Victorian Directory, 1956.
- [37] Cranfield, *op.cit.*, p.101
- [38] *ibid*

Creation Date c.1850-1970

Change Dates

Associations

Local Themes

2.01 - Towns & settlements

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

What is Significant?

The Warrandyte township precinct comprises residential, civic and commercial buildings, as well as parkland and open space in Yarra Street (and parts of intersecting streets) generally between Trezise Street and Mullens Road and part of Brackenbury Street (see attached maps) that illustrate three key phases in the historic development of the township; the establishment and early development following the gold rush of the mid nineteenth century, the rise of the town as a tourist resort and artists retreat during the Inter-war years, and the re-building that occurred in the wake of the disastrous 1939 bushfires.

How is it Significant?

The Warrandyte Township precinct is of local historic, social and aesthetic significance to Manningham City.

Why is it Significant?

The Warrandyte Township precinct has historic and social significance as it provides evidence of one of the first townships to be established in the study area and illustrates the influence of gold discovery upon settlement in the nineteenth century. Gold continued to be a major local industry into the early twentieth century. The township is also an example of one of the first tourist resorts close to Melbourne that emerged in the inter-war years as a result of improved roads and increased motor car usage. It also has important associations with many notable Australian artists and architects, which is demonstrated by it being a subject of a number of paintings and other works. Finally, the town also provides evidence of the re-building that occurred in the wake of the disastrous 1939 bushfires. This is particularly demonstrated by the Warrandyte Style Residential precinct, which is historically significant for its associations with locally important female architect/builders Alexa Goyder and Myrtle Houston. It as a representative area of housing demonstrating the characteristics of the 'Warrandyte Style' first identified by Robin Boyd in Australia's Home in 1952, a style that was copied elsewhere in the township. (RNE criteria A.4, D.2, G.1 and H.1)

The Warrandyte Township precinct has aesthetic significance as an informal almost semi-rural village where the buildings are often secondary to the landscape elements, particularly the mature vegetation, which comprises a mix of native and exotic species that creates a distinctive cultural landscape character. It is notable for the use of local materials such as Warrandyte stone in a number of buildings and public realm elements, which gave rise to the description of a 'Warrandyte Style' that is a notable and distinctive element of the character of the area today. This is particularly evident in the Warrandyte Style residential precinct at the east end of Yarra Street and in Brackenbury Street, which contains the best examples of the style by Goyder and Houston. (RNE criterion E.1)

LEVEL

Local significance

RECOMMENDATIONS

Heritage Register Listings

Register	Reference	Zoning	Status
Manningham Planning Scheme	HO191		Listed

Extent

Heritage Schedule

External Paint Controls:	No	On VHR:	No	VHR Ref No:
Internal Alteration Controls:	No	Prohibited Uses:	No	
Tree Controls:	Yes	Aboriginal Heritage Place:	No	
Outbuildings or Fences:	No	Incorporated Plan:	No	Incorporated Plan Details

Description:

Conservation Management

In order to conserve the heritage significance of this precinct, it is recommended that the following conservation objectives, as appropriate, be given priority in the future maintenance, development or management of the precinct:

1. Conserve the fabric of the building/s or other built elements, which is identified as contributing to the significance of the precinct. This includes the original fabric as well as fabric that may demonstrate important successive stages in the historic development of the precinct and/or provide evidence of changing architectural styles or techniques.
2. Discourage the demolition of significant or contributory buildings unless the demolition is only of part of the building and it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the responsible authority that, as appropriate:
 - The fabric to be removed is not significant, or
 - The fabric to be removed is not of primary significance and its removal will not adversely affect the significance of the place, or
 - It will assist in the long term conservation of the place, or
 - It will facilitate the historic use of the place and will not result in the loss of fabric considered to be primary significance.

Note: The poor condition or low integrity of a heritage place should not be used as justification for its demolition, particularly if it appears the condition of the heritage place has deliberately been allowed to deteriorate.

3. Where there is a complex of related buildings and other elements the aim should be to conserve or reveal the historic visual relationship between the buildings and other elements in order to demonstrate the historical use and/or layout of the place.
4. Conserve significant/contributory plantings, and maintain a visual relationship between the plantings and associated buildings or other structures.
5. Encourage the removal of non-significant or intrusive elements, particularly where this would assist in understanding or interpreting the significance of the place.
6. Ensure that new development does not become a dominant visual element within the precinct by encouraging a contextual approach to new development within the precinct that is complementary in form, scale and materials to the significant/contributory buildings and other elements, but is clearly contemporary in design.
8. Retain views of significant/contributory building(s) and plantings from the street, and other views identified as contributing to the historic character of the precinct.
9. In the case of subdivision of the property, encourage the retention of the significant buildings, trees and related elements on one lot.

NOTE:

While every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in this citation is accurate, it is possible that more detailed investigation may reveal further information about the significance of the place. For example, in most cases an internal inspection was not made of buildings at the time of initial assessment. In the time since the place was first assessed it is also possible that the condition of buildings or trees may have changed.

The information contained in this citation should therefore be reviewed at the time that it is proposed to make changes to the property. This would likely require a more detailed assessment of any

significant or contributory element that is affected by any proposed buildings or works. Once this more detailed assessment has been made, a review of the significance of the place should be carried out by Council's Heritage Adviser or an appropriately qualified professional.

Extra Research

-
- BIBLIOGRAPHY** Context Pty Ltd, (1991), *City of Doncaster & Templestowe Heritage Study*, City of Doncaster & Templestowe, Doncaster, 42-44
Context Pty Ltd, (2005), *Manningham Heritage Study Review*, Manningham City Council, Doncaster