

131 HIGH STREET DONCASTER

A Report on the significance of the layout of the front garden and of the Box hedges

Prepared for the City of Doncaster and Templestowe

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1.0 This garden is one of two late nineteenth century gardens in the City of Doncaster and Templestowe, which use Box Hedges to define their geometrical layouts. The other garden is at Trinity Lutheran Church, 53 Victoria Street Doncaster, and is graded as of 'State Significance' in the City's Heritage Study 1991. In both cases, gardens are organised around the central axis of a building facade, forming a unified architectural and garden design.

2.0 Other mature plants within the garden and remaining from early plantings are —

- Irish Strawberry Tree — *Arbutus unedo*
- NSW Christmas Bush — *Ceratopetalum gummifera*
- Apple
- Rose
- Orange

3.0 A historic gardens report prepared for the National Trust of Victoria, in 1981 identified the garden as being 'of State Significance'.

A second report prepared by K Duxbury in 1987 stated that the garden is significant for the following five reasons —

1. As one of the largest and best surviving examples of a geometrical, box-hedged front garden, a type of garden which was once widespread, but which has become rare.
2. The box-hedging remains comparatively intact and in good condition, and creates a strong and dramatic pattern.
3. The garden forms an appropriate setting for an interesting house, which is in comparatively intact condition, and which is one of the few orchard homesteads remaining in the area.
4. The garden, together with the house, is of added significance as a link with the orcharding part of the Doncaster area, and for its survival in an otherwise modern residential area.
5. The property has added significance because of its links with the large German community of the Doncaster area. Further research could possibly show whether the design or planting of the garden were influenced by these links. (check)

A copy of the full report is attached.

4.0 During the past ten years the present owners have progressively replanted the garden with species planted by the original owners.

5.0 I recommend that the garden be conserved in its present form and extent for the following reasons —

1. It is an important remnant of a once extensive late nineteenth century garden.
2. It illustrates a geometrical garden form which is extremely rare, and contains old plantings which possibly belong to the original garden.
3. It is identified by the National Trust as being 'of State Significance'.

6.0 Conservation of the garden will require adjustment of the proposed horizontal alignment for the reconstruction of High Street.

The road re-alignment should also allow for the retention of the line of Monterey Pines along the opposite side of the road.

The Pines were recorded in the City's 'Roadside Environments Study' 1991.

GARDEN SUBMISSION

NAME: 131 High Street, Doncaster

TYPE: Villa garden.

LISTING STATUS: None.

LOCATION: 131 High Street, Doncaster.

CITATION: The garden at 131 High Street, Doncaster, surrounds a house which was built as an orchard homestead. The garden probably dates from about the 1890s when it is thought that the house was built. The front garden is laid out in a formal symmetrical, pattern with flower beds bordered with clipped box-hedging - which gives the garden a strong and dramatic pattern.

Apart from the box-hedging an apple tree and a mandarin tree, little mature planting survives. The front picket fence has been replaced by a six foot paling fence. Part of the garden was subdivided several years ago, but the main garden form in front of the house survives.

The front garden is of a style which was once familiar in Victoria, but is now quite rare. The garden is one of the best and largest of the few similar gardens that survive.

The significance of the garden is enhanced by its role as a link with the orcharding part of Doncaster area, and its survival in an otherwise modern residential area.

EXISTING LISTINGS: None.

OWNERSHIP: Mr. and Mrs. J.G. Eberbach, 131 High Street, Doncaster, 3108.

SIZE:

MUNICIPALITY:

City of Doncaster and Templestowe.

BRIEF HISTORY:

It is thought that the house was built in about the 1890s, and that the garden was laid out at about the same time. The house was built as the homestead for an orchard property. At this time, orcharding was the major land-use of the Doncaster area, and the area had a large German community.

DESCRIPTION:

The front garden is symmetrical in form and is dominated by a central garden bed which is edged with box-hedging. The entry path diverges around the central bed. On the outside of the path, smaller garden beds are also defined by box-hedging.

The planting in the central garden bed is of comparatively recent origin, and includes a central Magnolia grandiflora surrounded by azaleas and standard roses.

The outside beds are planted with a wide diversity of shrubs, small trees, bulbs and tubers and herbaceous plants, including camellias, a small jacaranda, and clumps of agapanthus. Most of the planting is of comparatively recent origin, but there is an old apple tree - which may have been part of the original orchard - located between the circular path and a drive which runs along the southern boundary of the property; and a mandarin tree - located near the front boundary, to the right of the central gate.

The original picket fence has been replaced by a six foot high paling fence, presumably to block out the noise and visual intrusion of the heavy traffic using High Street.

The garden forms an appropriate setting for a comparatively large, brick, villa style house, with cast iron lace around the front verandah.

The house retains most of its original character, at least externally.

The area around the property is now dominated by residential development at normal suburban densities. Most of this development is of large brick veneer houses built in the 1950s and 1960s but a large site to the north is occupied by Winter Park, an important Merchant Builders cluster development of the early 1970s, notable for its landscaping, which was one of the last projects carried out by Ellis Stones.

Despite its heavy traffic, High Street retains something of its pre-suburban character, and does not have curbs or a concrete footpath. A row of Pinus radiata, probably originally planted as an orchard windbreak, remains along the opposite side of High Street. It is likely that High Street will be "upgraded" in the near future, and much of the present character will be lost.

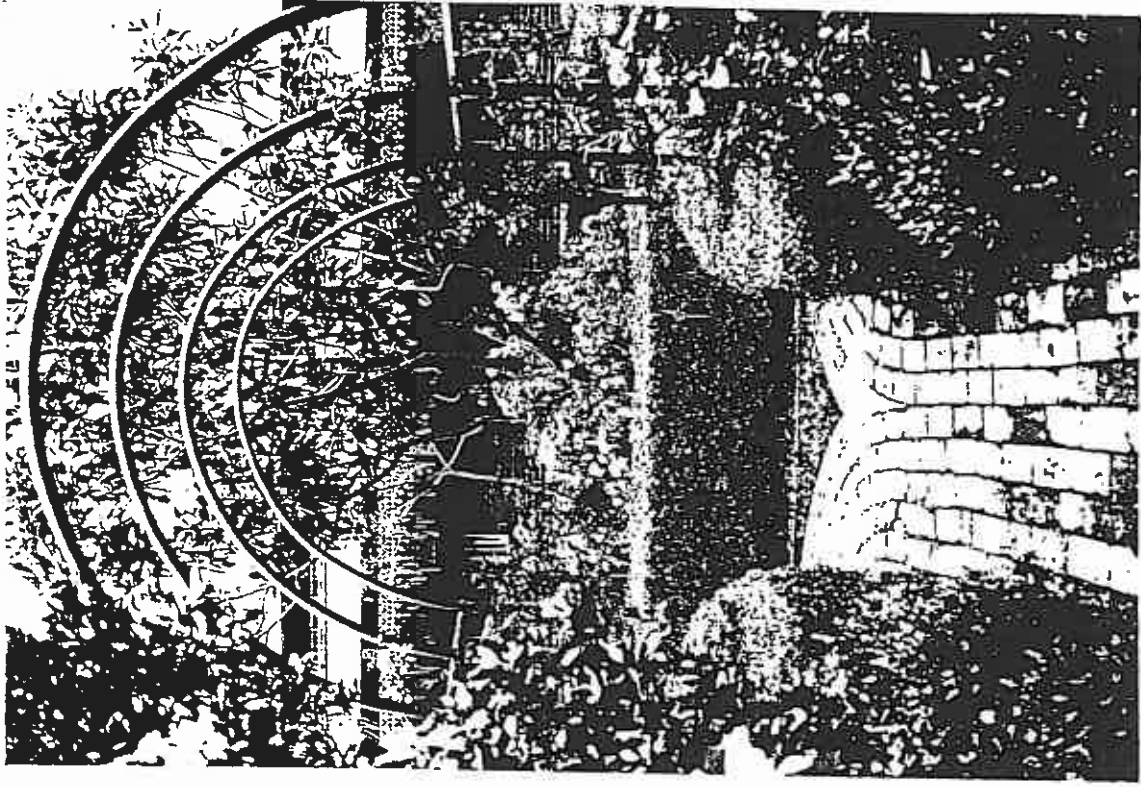
SIGNIFICANCE:

The garden at 131 High Street, Doncaster, is significant for the following reasons:

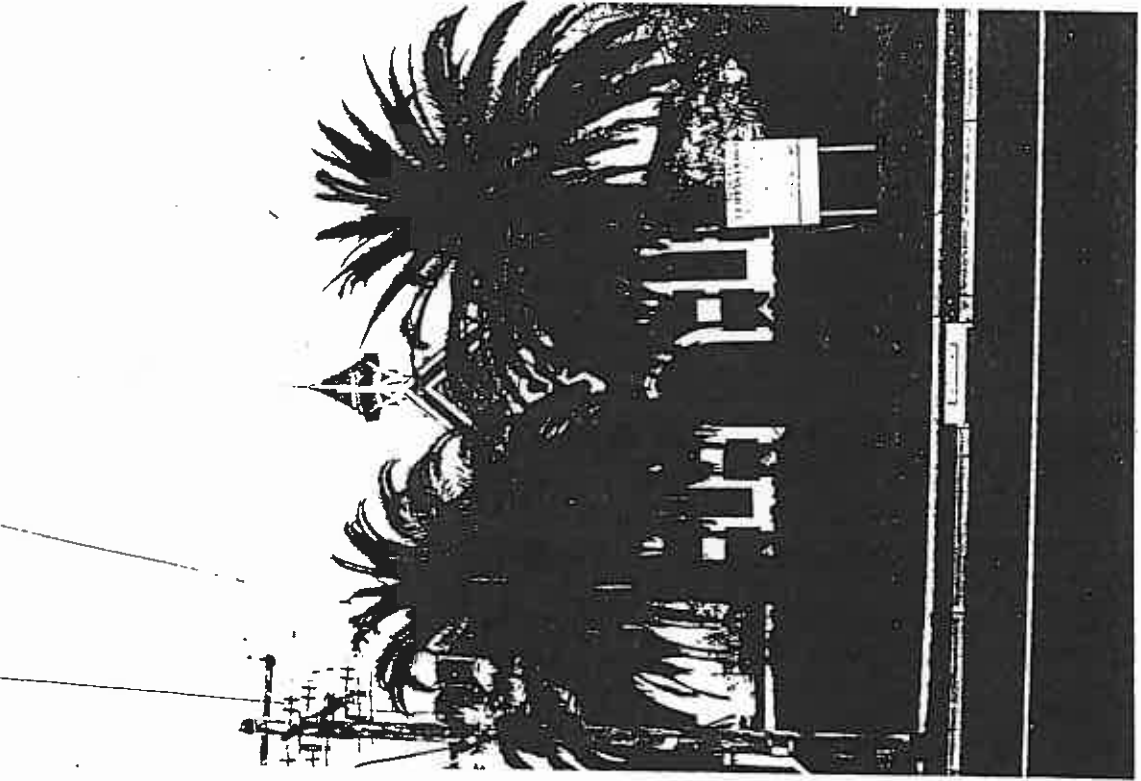
1. As one of the largest and best surviving examples of a geometrical, box-hedged front garden, a type of garden which was once widespread, but which has become rare.
2. The box-hedging remains comparatively intact and in good condition, and creates a strong and dramatic pattern.
3. The garden forms an appropriate setting for an interesting house, which is in comparatively intact condition, and which is one of the few orchard homesteads remaining in the area.
4. The garden, together with the house, is of added significance as a link with the orcharding part of the Doncaster area, and for its survival in an otherwise modern residential area.

THREATS AND
MANAGEMENT
ISSUES:

5. The property has added significance because of its links with the large German community of the Doncaster area. Further research could possibly show whether the design or planting of the garden were influenced by these links. (Check)
1. The property may be redeveloped, but this is unlikely, having regard to the large Victorian house, which remains in good condition, and the comparatively small size of the property as it now exists.
2. The intactness of the front garden is probably related to the continued ownership of the property by members of the same family. (check). If ownership was changed, it is possible that the garden would be unsympathetically changed by owners who did not understand its significance, or that misguided attempts at "restoration" would take place.
3. It appears that apart from the box-hedging, apple tree and mandarin tree, little early planting remains. However, there may be early bulbs and tubers and self-sowing annuals. The garden should be visited by a horticultural expert, preferably at different times of the year. It would be desirable to identify the varieties of apple and mandarin trees.
4. It may be appropriate to provide the owners with guidance as to the future management and planting of the garden.
5. The six foot paling fence is unsympathetic to the character of the gardens. However, a picket fence by itself would not screen the garden and house from the heavy traffic of High Street. It might be appropriate to make use of a hedge of a species such as Pittosporum undulatum, or a species known to have been planted around orchard homesteads in the area.

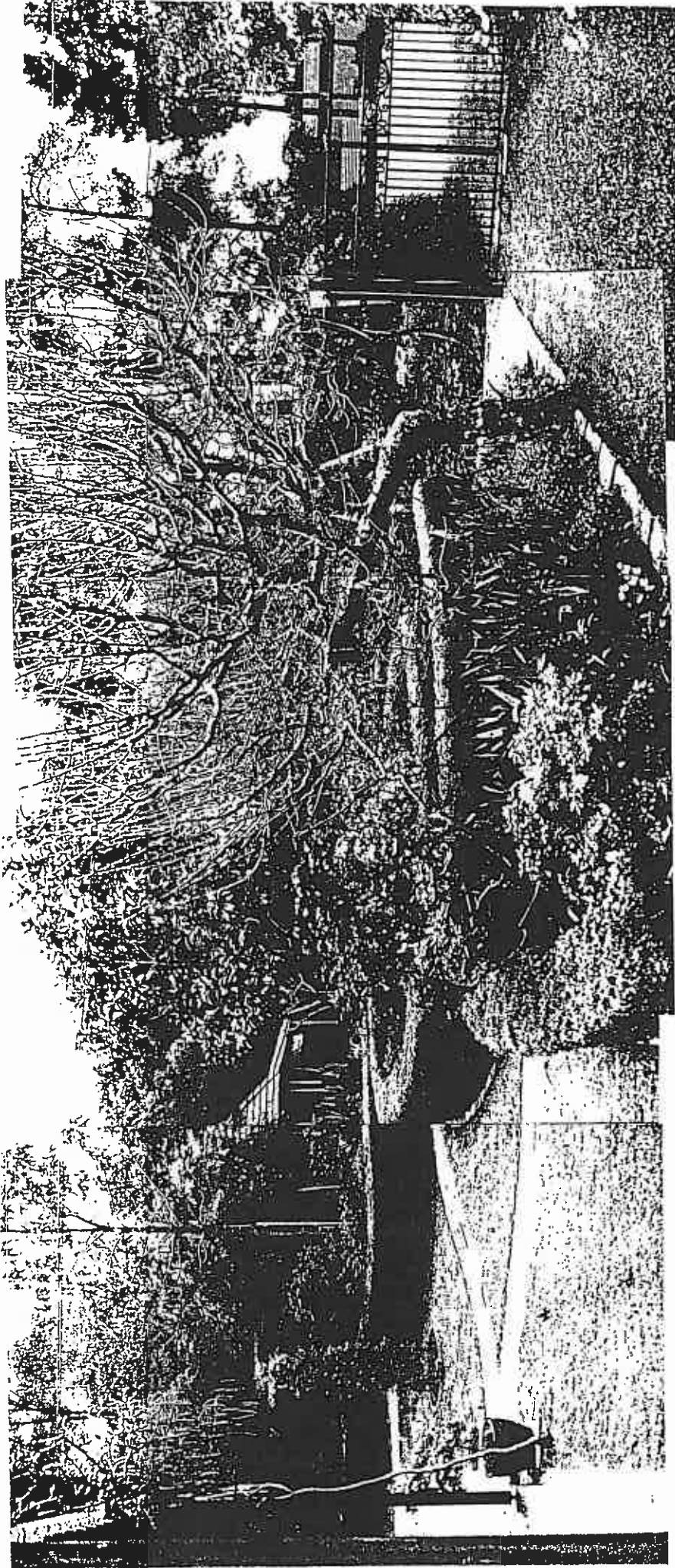


131 High Street, Doncaster



Trinity Lutheran Church
53 Victoria Street, Doncaster

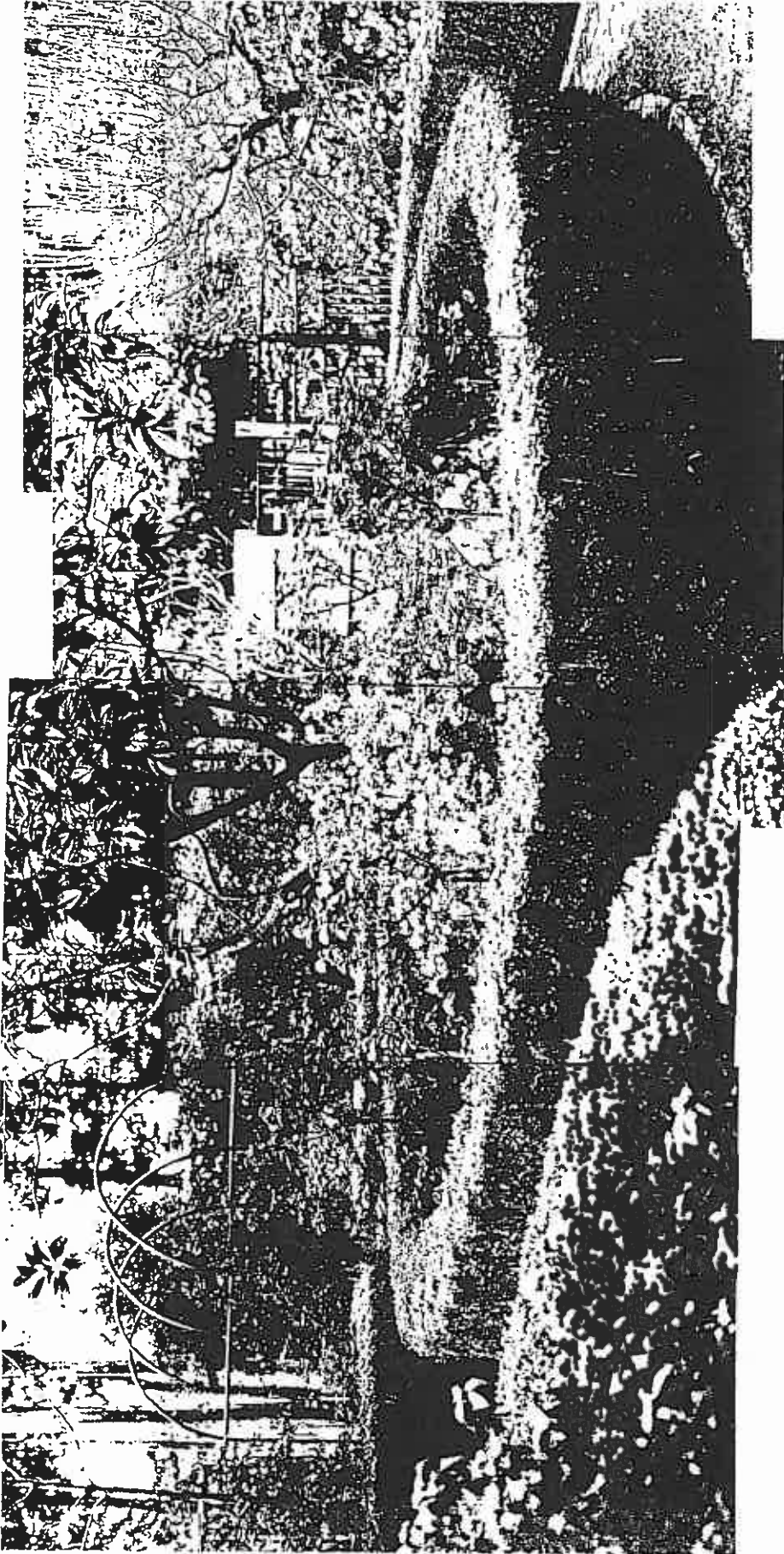
1. Two garden layouts with a central axis and Box hedges



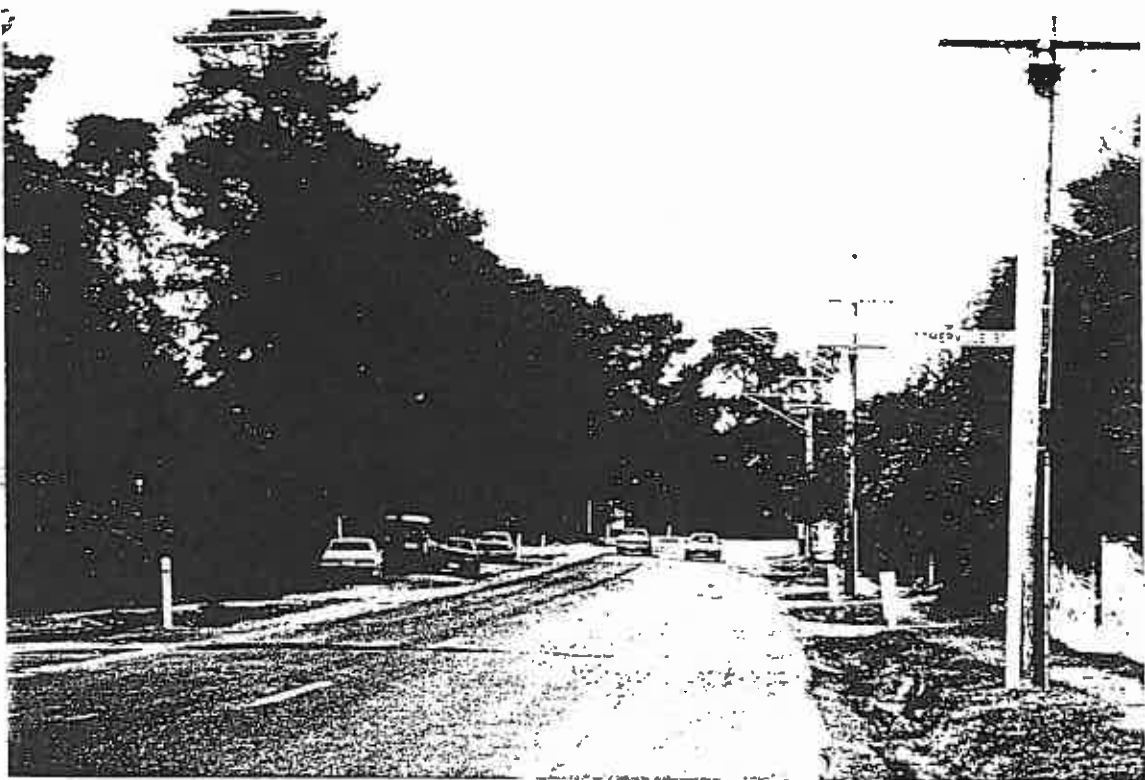
2. 131 High Street
Garden viewed from the driveway



3. 131 High Street
Garden viewed from the northern boundary



4. 131 High Street
Garden looking southwards across the central circular planting bed and Box hedge



5. Monterey Pines in High Street