

Aberdeen Road Precinct. H0121.

The following interim citation was in use from December 2007 until October 2008 when it was superseded.

History

Development in the Aberdeen Street area, a small street off the east side of Williams Road, began as early as 1855. Although much of the precinct bounded by Commercial (now Malvern) Road, Orrong Road, High Street and Williams Road, remained as wooded, undeveloped land, an area in the south-west corner close to Williams Road and High Street, already displayed a pattern of narrow streets with small allotments and some housing in the 1850s. Aberdeen Street was one of those narrow early streets.¹ By the 1890s, this early development had increased rapidly, as the pattern of narrow streets and small detached houses in the south-east corner of the precinct spread north to Spring Road. Groups of weatherboard houses without front gardens line both sides of the eastern end of Aberdeen Street in an 1895 MMBW drainage plan of the area. At a later date, Rinoldi's Spaghetti Factory, founded in 1894 and located at first off Williams Road, was moved to Aberdeen Street. In 1955, it was the largest macaroni manufacturer in Australia.² The Aberdeen Street area remains today as a cul-de-sac with a small group of unusual and elaborately detailed single-storey weatherboard houses without front gardens at the eastern end. They illustrate the early history of this area as a place where Prahran's artisans lived with their families.

Description

This small group of houses may be unique within the City of Prahran. On the north side of the street are four small brick houses - two double fronted and two single fronted, each in the form of a terrace with a single brick fire wall, but detached.

Several have timber side and rear walls. Their original brickwork comprising red and cream bricks has been painted in three of the four examples although the bichromatic brickwork in the chimneys remains exposed.

On the south side of the street are a series of timber houses each with a small gable in the veranda over the entry. No. 80 has a typical Victorian parapet, but in timber rather than the typical brick rendered construction.

At the eastern end are two houses with only part of their frontage exposed to the street. On the south side no. 82 faces the side wall of its neighbour, while on the north side that house faces west with only half its facade visible from the street.

This form of intense and somewhat unplanned urban development is now rare within the metropolitan area, most of the densely settled precincts having been

cleared by the Housing Commission after the Second World War as part of their 'slum clearance programme'.

This group of houses are set on the front property line with the balustrading on their verandas forms their 'front fences'. The eastern end of Aberdeen Street is narrower than the remainder of the street, suggesting the housing relates to the subdivision of a single allotment.

The street remains in an early form with asphalt footpath, bluestone kerb and guttering on the southern side. On the north this has been replaced with concrete.

Statement of Significance

The Aberdeen Street Urban Conservation Area has significance as a rare type of nineteenth century precinct, illustrating the density and unplanned character once common in the inner city areas of Melbourne but substantially removed in the 1960s and 70s through the slum clearance programs of the Housing Commission.

Key heritage characteristics of the area include:

The form and scale of development comprising an unusually dense, single storey character with dwellings set at the boundary without front gardens

Traditional street materials on the south side of the street contribute to the character and significance of the place.